Anthropologies of Class

Power, Practice, and Inequality

EDITED BY

James G. Carrier and Don Kalb

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Rising social, political and economic inequality in many countries, and rising protest against it, has seen the restoration of the concept of "class" to a prominent place in contemporary anthropological debates. A timely intervention in these discussions, this book explores the concept of class and its importance for understanding the key sources of this inequality and of people's attempts to deal with it. Highly topical, it situates class within the context of the current economic crisis, integrating elements from today into the discussion of an earlier agenda. Using cases from North and South America, Western Europe and South Asia, it shows the – sometimes surprising – forms that class can take, as well as the various effects it has on people's lives and societies.

JAMES G. CARRIER is an Associate at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, and the Departments of Anthropology at the University of Indiana and at Oxford Brookes University.

DON KALB is Professor of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Central European University, Budapest, and Senior Researcher in the Anthropology Department at Utrecht University, the Netherlands.

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Contents

Figures

Contributors

AUGUST CARBONELLA is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Memorial University of Newfoundland. He is author of numerous publications on labor, historical memory, the political culture of the United States and globalization and war. He is co-editor of the series *Dislocations*, and co-editor, with Sharryn Kasmir, of the forthcoming volume *Blood and Fire: Towards an Anthropology of Global Labor*.

JAMES G. CARRIER is a Research Associate at Oxford Brookes University, Adjunct Professor of Anthropology at the University of Indiana and Associate of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. He has done research and written on aspects of economy in Papua New Guinea, the United States and the United Kingdom. His publications include *Wage, Trade and Exchange in Melanesia* (1989), *Gifts and Commodities: Exchange and Western Capitalism since 1700* (1995) and the edited volumes *Meanings of the Market* (1997) and *A Handbook of Economic Anthropology* (2005, revised edition 2012).

JANE COLLINS is Professor of Community and Environmental Sociology and Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She is the author of *Threads: Gender, Labor and Power in the Global Apparel Industry* (2003), and recently co-wrote, with Victoria Mayer, *Both Hands Tied: Welfare Reform and the Race to the Bottom in the Low Wage Labor Market* (2010).

HENRIKE DONNER is a Senior Lecturer in Anthropology at Oxford Brookes University. She has undertaken extensive fieldwork in Calcutta (now Kolkata), India, and her research interests include gender and kinship, class and urban politics. Her publications include *Domestic Goddesses: Maternity, Globalisation and Middle-Class Identity in Contemporary India* (2008) and the edited volumes *Being Middle-Class in India: A Way of Life* (2011) and, with Geert De Neve, *The Meaning of the Local: Politics of Place in Urban India* (2006). Her current research focuses on processes of urban restructuring.

JONATHAN FRIEDMAN is *Directeur d'études* at the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales* in Paris and Distinguished Professor of Anthropology at the University of California at San Diego. He has done research on the anthropology of global systems and processes, Marxian theory in anthropology, and social and cultural movements as products of global systemic crisis. He has done fieldwork in southeast Hawaii, Europe and Central Africa. Among his earlier publications are *Modernity and Identity* (1992, ed. with S. Lash) and *Cultural Identity and Global Process* (1994). His most recent work includes the two volumes of *Historical Transformations* (2008, with K.E. Friedman).

DON KALB is Professor of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Central European University, Budapest, and Senior Researcher at Utrecht University. His books include *Expanding Class: Power and Everyday Politics in Industrial Communities, The Netherlands, 1850–1950* (1998) and the edited volumes *The Ends of Globalization: Bringing Society Back In* (2000), *Globalization and Development: Key Issues and Debates* (2004, with W. Pansters and H. Siebers), *Critical Junctions: Anthropology and History beyond the Cultural Turn* (2005, with H. Tak) and *Headlines of Nation, Subtexts of Class: Working Class Populism in Neoliberal Europe* (2011, with G. Halmai). He is a founding editor of *Focaal – Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology*.

SHARRYN KASMIR is Professor of Anthropology at Hofstra University. She has studied industrial workers in the Basque region of Spain and in the southern US, focusing on class, politics and ideology in "third-way" enterprises, resulting in *The "Myth" of Mondragón* (1996), "Activism and class identity at the Saturn automobile factory" in *Social Movements: A Reader* (2005, ed. J. Nash) and "Difference and dispossession: considerations on the making and un-making of a labor elite at Saturn" in *The Anthropological Study of Class and Consciousness* (2011, ed. E.P. Durrenberger). With August Carbonella she has written "Du Bois's *Darkwater* and an anti-colonial, internationalist anthropology" (*Dialectical Anthropology* 32, 2008) and "Dispossession and the anthropology of labor" (*Critique of Anthropology* 28 (1), 2008), and is working on an edited volume that calls anthropologists to turn toward a purposeful study of global labor.

MASSIMILIANO MOLLONA is a Senior Lecturer at Goldsmiths College, London. He has conducted research on class and labor in the UK and Brazil. His relevant publications include *Made in Sheffield: An Ethnography of Industrial Work and Politics* (2009) and *Industrial Work and Life: An Anthropological Reader* (2009, ed. with G. De Neve and J. Parry).

MARC MORELL is *Professor Associat* at the Universitat de les Illes Balears and a Ph.D. candidate at the Universitat de Barcelona. He has conducted research

on urban space and social class in Majorca and Malta and his relevant publications are "*Fent Barri*" (*Etnográfica: Revista de Antropologia* 3(2), 2009), "*Ġebla* and the Maltese grumbling civil society" (*En Cours: Mondes et Dynamiques des Sociétes* 11, 2009) and "Working class heritage without the working class" in *Heritage, Labour and the Working Classes* (2011, L. Smith, P. Shackel, and G. Campbell, eds.).

SUSANA NAROTZKY is Professor of Social Anthropology at the Universitat de Barcelona. She has studied social reproduction, work, class and political mobilization in different regions of Spain. In 2012 she was awarded a European Research Council Advanced Grant for her project "Grassroots Economics: Meaning, Project and Practice in the Pursuit of Livelihood". She has recently published (with Niko Besnier) "Crisis, value, and hope: rethinking the economy" (*Current Anthropology* 55 (S9), 2014), "Moral outrage and political mobilization: emergent reactions to austerity measures and the economic crisis" (*Suomen Antropologi* 38 (4), 2014), "Europe in crisis: grassroots economies and the anthropological turn" (*Etnográfica* 16 (3), 2012) and "Alternatives to expanded accumulation and the anthropological imagination: turning necessity into a challenge to capitalism?" in *Confronting Capital: Critique and Engagement in Anthropology* (2012, Barber *et al.*, eds.).

PATRICK NEVELING is Researcher at the Department for Cultural Anthropology and Sociology at Utrecht University. Research for his chapter was funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, and based on it he is writing a monograph entitled "Relocating capitalism: export processing zones, and special economic zones since 1947". His work is concerned with the problem of capitalism and includes co-edited publications on "Re-scaling the anthropology of tourism" (*Etnográfica* 13 (2), 2009, with C. Wergin) and *Traditions Within and Beyond the Framework of Invention* (2010, with S. Klein) as well as a Ph.D. in social anthropology entitled "Manifestations of globalization: capital, state, and labor in Mauritius 1825–2005" (in German).

GAVIN SMITH is Professor Emeritus in Anthropology at the University of Toronto. He has worked on large and small-scale agricultural economies and urban informal economies in Andean South America and Western Europe, as well as on recent forms of flexible labor organization and regional economies in Europe. His works include *Livelihood and Resistance: Peasants and the Politics of Land in Peru* (1989), *Confronting the Present: Towards a Politically Engaged Anthropology* (1999), *Immediate Struggles: People, Power, and Place in Rural Spain* (2006, with Susana Narotzky) and the forthcoming *Intellectuals and (Counter-)Politics: Essays in Historical Realism*.

LUISA STEUR defended her Ph.D. from the Central European University, Budapest, with the thesis "Indigenist moblization: 'identity' versus 'class' after the Kerala model of development?", and was recently a post-doctoral researcher at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, as part of the "Caste out of development" project. She is currently Assistant Professor at the Department of Anthropology of the University of Copenhagen.

Preface and Acknowledgments

Capitalism has been getting a lot of attention recently. In anthropology, and in the social sciences more generally, the work of Karl Polanyi and the phenomenon known as neoliberalism have attracted growing interest for the past decade or two. More broadly, the financial crisis that began in 2007, and that quickly turned into an economic, social and political crisis, made central aspects of capitalism visible, noteworthy and painful for many people in a way that they had not been for some time. This attention has led a growing number of people to the old, but long-ignored, topic of the organization and nature of capitalism. After all, Polanyi's (1944) *The Great Transformation* is a tale of the emergence and development of industrial and commercial capitalism, especially in England in the nineteenth century. "Neoliberalism" has become the common term for the reconfiguration of capitalism and its geographical expansion that became especially visible in the last third of the twentieth century (Harvey 2005).

This growing interest in capitalism has not, however, been matched by a growing interest in the idea of class, at least not in anthropology. Rather, anthropologists generally still seem to be bewitched by the idea of *The Death of Class* (Pakulski and Waters 1995). They seem to agree with the words of the chairman of Unilever: "The old, rigid barriers are disappearing – class and rank; blue collar and white collar; council tenant and home owner; employee and housewife. More and more we are simply consumers" (Perry 1994: 4, quoted by Gabriel and Lang 1995: 36).

Class is not dead; we are not all simply consumers. The thought that it is, and that we are, springs in part from the decrease in large-scale manufacturing in Western societies. It also, however, seems to spring from a set of disciplinary prescriptions that make the idea of class unappealing. Since the rise of postmodernism we have, after all, foresworn grand narrative, a tar with which class is liberally smeared. And we have, after all, foresworn authorial authority and, with the cultural turn, increasingly restricted our concern to What and How the Natives Think, sure in the knowledge that these are *sui generis* and that we can hope only to describe them, never to identify the things that may shape them or the things that they may shape. Worse still, class is part of the Western

conceptual universe, tainted by its provincialism and, therefore, of no help in understanding that Thinking (see Carrier 2012a).

However faintly, though, there are signs of a growing awareness that the Native's Point of View does not encompass all that is significant. However faintly, there are signs that A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (1952) was right all those years ago, when he wrote that ethnographic description should be complemented by generalization, even theory.

This volume is our contribution to this process. It has its origins in a panel that James G. Carrier and Don Kalb organized for the 2010 meeting of the European Association of Social Anthropologists, "Class, crisis and anthropology: the place of class in understanding the discipline and the world." That panel was stimulating, and we agreed that it was worth trying to produce a volume of papers from it. Some of those on the panel found that the press of their other work meant that they could not undertake a paper for this collection, and we have recruited others in their stead. The result is what you see here. In the summer of 2012, the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology invited the two of us to spend a month working on the papers for this volume. That month was fruitful, both for allowing us to think about those papers and ways that they might be strengthened, and for clarifying our own thoughts about class and about this collection. For the opportunity to do this, we are grateful to the Institute, and especially to Chris Hann, who extended that invitation.

JAMES G. CARRIER
DON KALB

Introduction: class and the new anthropological holism

Don Kalb

This book argues for the relevance of class perspectives and class language in anthropology and explores the nature of a broadly formulated anthropological approach to class. It shows the different ways in which ideas of class are presently being used by anthropologists, to what sort of questions they give rise, how they may serve as a program for exploration and discovery and how they can bolster the explanatory, comparativist and generalizing aspirations of the discipline, which many of the contributors to this collection find wanting. In being about class, this book also bolsters the sheer relevance of anthropology in an age in which the mother of all capitalisms seems to reign. In this Introduction I will consider class, capitalism, social science, anthropology and class again, and then describe the chapters that follow.

At first glance, the anthropological relevance of the idea of class must seem self-evident. Since Marx and Weber, class has been taken to be one of the key *explanatory* concepts of modern social thought (see Carrier this volume). As well, it was important to the thinking of those involved in the development of capitalism, liberalism, republicanism, socialism, social democracy, the labor movement and the welfare state, as well as of Soviet and Maoist modernizing and de-colonizing regimes. While people use "class" in different ways, commonly it refers to structural social divisions, and sees those divisions as influencing individual and collective behavior, cultural and political afflictions and social pathologies of modern and modernizing societies. A number of classes and class relationships are possible, but commonly the key classes are made up of those who hold substantial property and those who do not, and the key relationship is between them. It springs from the fact that, if they are to gain subsistence, those without property are obliged to sell their labor power to those with it, and from the fact that, if they are to generate wealth from what they own, those who have property are obliged to secure the labor power of others. This common core picture is complicated by the changing nature of subdivisions within these classes, and by the existence of surplus populations, those whose lives are not centered on the wage relationship but who seem to get by on the margins of modernity.

Exchanges between classes are not restricted to the transaction of labor power and pay. They also include rent for the use of property of various sorts, most obviously housing and land, but also patents or even money (in the form of interest), as well as the purchase of commodities produced by labor power for the profit of the owners of capital. There are also systematic differences in how classes are regulated and taxed by states, and in the likelihood that those within them will have the vote. As this suggests, great differences exist in the ability of classes to influence states and societies. With the urbanization that is characteristic of modernity, class has shaped the concentration and segregation of people and families into urban districts, which then attain a particular class character. Urban class divisions have also driven the emergence of discussions about the public sphere, public goods, public health and the like. Finally, there has been interest in how class is associated with different ideas and practices of kinship and family, gender, race and ethnicity. Though they were far from the first to talk about class, as part of their struggle to change the world Marx and Engels made it their lifelong project to point out how these issues were interrelated and came together in the question of class relations and the politics of class. And they stressed that these issues were not the incidental outcome of market processes, nor were they the product of morality or personal preference. Rather, they were the systematic consequence of the relations and processes inherent in the capitalist society that they described.

Capitalist modernization in the nineteenth century and later produced a proliferation of class notions, class connotations and ideas of class-structured social domains, which reflected the evolving and differentiating structure of modern societies and their systemic conflicts, often as self-reflections and critiques. Indeed, the modern notion of the social, and modern ideas of social explanation in general, pivoted on the idea of class more than perhaps anything else. Indeed, other notions proposed to capture the nature of the capitalist world, such as modernity, were part of the public and intellectual debates about the fact and idea of class.

While the historical and contemporary intellectual and political relevance of the idea of class is clear, its appeal to academics as the twentieth century progressed is less so. The continuing division of academic knowledge, first into disciplines and then into sub-disciplines, had never been good for class, which was conceived by both Marx and Weber more as a trans-disciplinary problematic than as a specialist subject and discipline. Turning class into an object of expert knowledge used to manage "the social question" turned it into a box amid other boxes: sanitized, measurable, reified and reduced to a mere category of income, education and occupational status. It was increasingly imagined as a line on a graph, an equation in a policy report or a correlation coefficient with significance level attached, and perennially subjected to efforts to turn its indicators – skills, education, income, residence,

status – into simple attributes of that other key symbol of modernity, the individual.

This is the class that the contemporary public, including most academics, knows about and finds boring. The class associated with Weber's iron cage of modern administration or Foucault's governmentality may have been interesting in the past, but in the closing decades of the twentieth century growing parts of the public in industrial societies found it inadequate for understanding social life. As always with class, this was, once again, an index of the evolving structure and self-reflection of societies, now purportedly edging to post-industrialism, post-Fordism, post-materialism, post-modernity, post-structuralism. Class, as Carbonella and Kasmir (this volume) remind us, was so firmly associated with the largely White and male Fordist industrial working class that, when industry began to fade from view, commentators often concluded that class itself was finally, and fortunately, disappearing.

These crumbling images of class were further obliterated by the rise of global neoliberalism, which knew only individual rational actors and their preferences, by the ongoing dissolution of the welfare state in the West and in particular by the collapse of "really existing socialism" in 1989–92. The implosion of Soviet regimes was taken to mark the bankruptcy of Marxian thought and of structuralist accounts of society and economy in general. In the 1990s and 2000s almost every publication on class in the West was about its obvious demise, whether for or against.

The death of the idea of class in the West was, however, contradicted by "really existing world history." Large populations and large areas in the Global South and East were being newly proletarianized (Kalb 2000, 2005, 2013, 2015); the majority of the world's population was urbanizing, indeed often "slummifying" (Davis 2007); the number of workers directly employed in the Western-dominated global factory was tripling (Kalb 2011); inequality and its related problems were increasing around the world; the financialization of capital, states and publics everywhere was causing increasing turbulence, insecurity and inequality (Arrighi 1994, 2000; Friedman 2003, this volume; Harvey 2003, 2005, 2010, 2012; Glynn 2007; Friedman and Friedman 2008a, 2008b; Kalb 2011). In short, hegemonic middle classes in the West and elsewhere, including their academic representatives, seem to have been afflicted by wholesale cognitive distortion, fed by various "methodological nationalisms" in official knowledges as well as a tangible, narcissistic self-obsession in their moment of triumph. A majority of the world's population was being subjected to an unleashed global capitalism in ways that resemble what happened in Europe in the nineteenth century. At the same time that this was happening, a key element of that century's thought, the idea of class, was being energetically rejected by the aspiring arrivistes in the West and elsewhere, who believed that they had transcended it.

The attractions of the idea of class were fading, but this was never total, as the existence of this volume attests. I now want to look at the changing nature and significance of class among anthropologists and other academics over the past few decades. In this, I adopt a loose definition of class, which allows me to reflect the ways that the people I describe use it.

Historians and sociologists: from the forward march of labour halted to *la misere du monde*

That changing nature and significance is most visible, and perhaps most consequential, in social history. Inspired by the work of authors such as E.P. Thompson (e.g. 1966, 1978b, 2009; Kaye and McClelland 1990), Eric Hobsbawm (e.g. 1964, 1969, 1984) and Charles Tilly (1968), "the new social history" had turned the making and remaking of classes into its defining object (see also Eley 2005; Dworkin 2007; Eley and Nield 2007).

It was the *new* social history because it refused the "boxing in" of the class concept, the core of its anti-scientistic mission. Thompson was most eloquent about this. For him, class was not about this position or that one, nor was it just about money. Rather, it was about social being, about moralities, about the nature of social relationships and about how people became aware of, publicly thought about and organized themselves against the social forces that were preventing the full flowering of their human capacities. The Chartist movements in England in the 1830s and 1840s were an example of how the English working class had made itself, not out of people's positions but out of their experience of their particular forms of social being, and in doing so helped Marx to talk about workers in "bourgeois society." At the same time, the new social historians approached class as an intimate sensation, a structure of feeling, a public identity and a collective process of making history, what Gavin Smith (this volume) calls "praxis." Thus, those historians took more seriously than other social researchers (perhaps with the exception of anthropologists) the feminist dictum that the political was by definition personal. Also, their work was programmatically interdisciplinary (for the conjunction of anthropology and history, see Kalb and Tak 2005). Characteristically, the new social history tended to study smaller regional and local areas, rather than whole countries, creating the same sort of sense of place that good ethnography offered. As well, it used popular literature and oral history to produce fairly dense and culturally thick analyses.

In the late 1970s and 1980s, however, Hobsbawm's (1978) "Forward march of labour" halted. This change in the world corresponded to change in the ways that historians studied class. The older interest in cultural textures shaped by class tended to give way to a culturalism that was wrapped in the language of post-structuralism and that increasingly relied on high literary sources. The

most influential publication encouraging this change was probably Gareth Stedman Jones's *Languages of Class* (1984), which reduced class to discourse and so transformed the social into a discursive event (other historians moved in a similar direction in somewhat different ways; for overviews, see Dworkin 2007; Eley and Nield 2007; for a comparison with revisionist work in anthropology, see Kalb 1993). Social explanation became increasingly suspect among historians, smacking of an obsolete Marxism or an unsophisticated structuralism. The argument that the social had to be articulated in language first for it to be perceived "out there" turned the social and people's perceptions of it into a discursive effect, rather than a lived reality.

While some argued for retaining at least a bit of the class heritage, the new social history lost much of its momentum in the 1990s and was displaced by the "new cultural history" (Hunt 1992).[1] This sort of shift in orientation occurred as well in cultural studies, which had arisen in the 1970s from the work of Raymond Williams (e.g. 1971, 1977, 2005) and Stuart Hall (e.g. Hall and Jefferson 1976; Hall *et al.*). Starting with a Gramscian–Marxian interpretation of capitalist society and its social and cultural contradictions (e.g. Willis 1977), it devolved into a post-structuralist study of discourse, often guided by a thin culturalist reading of Foucault. Similarly, the Subaltern Studies School (Guha and Spivak 1988), once a source of insightful work on class and culture, abandoned social explanation in favor of the problems of language, signification and cultural esssentialism (Chibber 2009, 2013).

In sociology there were similar intellectual trends, but the opposition to post-structuralist culturalism was more formidable. Rooted in quantitative methods and oriented toward welfare-state bureaucracies, the sub-field of occupational and stratification research kept an interest in class and class positions (see, e.g., Wright 1989, 1997; Lee and Turner 1996). However, those in these sub-fields increasingly were absorbed in technical discussions of categories, measurement and interpretation. Also, commonly they remained focused on those in formal employment and did not study the growing number of the unemployed and those employed informally. After André Gorz (1980) had said that they should bid *Farewell to the Working Class* and Alain Touraine (1988) had argued that the "new social movements" were driven by culture and identity rather than by class and material factors, class research in sociology generally tended to take a discursive or a subjectivist turn. As in history, this was signaled by a growing interest in consumption and the middle classes, which celebrated the mirage of the neoliberal epoch (Carrier 2012b; Kalb 2014). This, of course, reflected

[1] For a view from anthropology, see Kalb and Tak (2005). For an argument by one of the key advocates of culturalism in historical scholarship, see William Sewell (2005a). For a critical, retrospective reappraisal of culturalist history that draws on more materialist concerns, see Sewell (2005b).

some of the trends in the social structure and dominant discourses of Western societies themselves, as well as sociology's continued infatuation with Western countries as its prime focus. For those oriented toward the advanced welfare state, capitalism as a global force was hard to discern, and sociologists often invoked instead the sort of vision contained in things such as the knowledge economy, the creative economy or, minimally, the new economy.

However, scholars such as Pierre Bourdieu (esp. 1998, 1999) and Charles Tilly (1998, 2001a, 2001b) remained squarely focused on varieties of inequality and their structural bases, and so were aware of the need to rescue non-individualist methodologies. Tilly in particular advocated a focus on relational mechanisms and thought that anthropology, with its proclivity for close and situated observation, was well equipped to study them. Working in the more politicized French context, Bourdieu began to study the new class formation processes in France in the early 1990s and became more openly partisan (see, e.g., Bourdieu 1999). Unlike his earlier *Distinction* (1984), he embraced ethnography as a key method and the political–intellectual essay as his prime weapon. His main collaborator, Loïc Wacquant (2008, 2009), used ethnographic work on ghetto populations, the urban poor and the penitentiary state in the West to keep track of the costs of neoliberalism in Europe and North America.

Perhaps above all, however, it was the global ethnography of Michael Burawoy (1985, 2000, 2009) that kept a steadfast focus on capitalism, capitalist social changes and the worlds of workers. Exceptionally for sociology, his research interests and vision had always been broad, encompassing Southern Africa and Central and Eastern Europe. Also exceptionally for sociology, he remained explicitly concerned with the Marxian tradition. In addition, class has remained important in the work of Jan Breman (2004, 2008, 2010), with his ethnographic attention to "footloose labor" in India's neoliberal capitalist transformation, and of Guy Standing (2011), on "the precariat." This more leftist concern with class was encouraged by world-system theory, as the sustained work of authors such as Wallerstein and Arrighi helped to maintain a critical pressure on the discipline of sociology. It was encouraged as well by a disciplinary environment in which the New Economic Sociology was flourishing, in which research on the welfare state was discovering the growing number and increasing variety of people who were falling through the widening cracks of the neoliberal workfare system, in which urban studies was rediscovering social polarization and segregation and in which discussions about the varieties and trajectories of capitalism seemed to intensify.

Many of the sociologists concerned with class that I have mentioned engaged with anthropology and anthropologists; indeed, Breman and Burawoy refused to distinguish the two disciplines. This was not fortuitous. The re-appropriation of ethnographic methods by sociologists, in particular when coupled with a concern for what was happening outside the West, seems to have been an important

condition for the renewal of interest in the big questions of class broadly conceived. Significantly, against the historical background of a powerful wave of capitalist globalization and the splintering of class, it was the re-entanglement of culture and class in place and space that made those big questions interesting. This was, in a sense, the recapture of holism, this time concerned with the social and the structural as revealed in the relationship between the local and the global. Moreover, scholars seemed to hold that the structures at issue were linked in something like a system and that their existence and ordering could be explained. This marked a sharp break with the older postmodernism and postructuralism and their concern with cultural expression. Against that fragmentation, a sense of structured totality was re-emerging.

Anthropologists in search of an object, a theory and a method

Particularly in the American form that has been so influential, anthropology has tended to oscillate between a number of opposed movements. These include the movements for practice or for structure (especially Ortner 1984) and movements for local forms of knowledge or for global forms. As well, there has been an opposition between what might be called movements for culture and movements for class. The former, sometimes called cultural interpretivism, focus on understanding meanings and symbols within separate, and often small, cultures or groups; the latter, sometimes called political economy, focus on relationships of inequality within wider contexts of states, empires and world-systems. The boundary between these two sorts of movement is far from watertight, and crossing it is possible, though rarely safe. The most prominent anthropologists of the second half of the twentieth century, such as Wolf, Mintz, Godelier, Sahlins and Geertz, straddled that boundary while locating themselves primarily on one or the other side.

The difference between those two movements is not just a preference for idealist or materialist approaches. As well, it is about a preference for the synchronic study of smaller, bounded units of research or for the diachronic study of larger, hierarchically networked ones; associated with this is a difference in the conception of participant observation in research. Adherents of these two movements debated the spatial and temporal characteristics of their preferred units of analysis simultaneously with the relative importance of symbols and cognition as opposed to production and reproduction. Such combination of the issue of place and space with the question around culture and class occurred in debates within anthropology much more than in history and sociology, whose units of analysis were less in dispute. This, I will argue, proved to be central for the possibility of recapturing class under the conditions of emerging globalizing capitalism after 1989.

In the United States, the symbolic–interpretivist side long had the stronger institutional base. Before World War II, anthropology departments there shared a Boasian program focused on (indigenous) culture, and after the War the public image of anthropology was shaped by the work of the Culture and Personality School. In Parsons's influential attempt to impose order on the social sciences in the 1950s, culture, seen as norms and values, was assigned to cultural anthropology. In the course of the revolts of the 1960s and 1970s, anthropological political economy emerged, with a very different view of the field's scope (for overviews, see Nash 1981; Smith 1984; Roseberry 1988). Political economists were suspected of Marxist leanings of the "gut" sort that Firth (1972) described, as distinct from the "cerebral" Marxism of the French structuralists. Such suspicions were justified, as the label "political economy" was often an attempt, not very successful, to hide a Marxian kernel. While that political economy attracted supporters in the discipline, its significance declined during the rightward shift of the 1980s and 1990s, though it did not disappear. Cultural interpretivists continued to predominate.

Other histories would have been possible. Carbonella and Kasmir (this volume) remind us that Black, Italian, Polish and Anglo-Saxon workers were rebelling against exploitation and repression in American cities at the end of World War I. It was not necessary for American anthropologists to focus instead on the isolated reservations of the remaining Native Americans as the preferred bounded sites for the study of culture. In different terms, it was not necessary for so many anthropologists in the US to focus on "the savage slot" (Trouillot 1991), with its presumed neat boundaries and shared values, instead of investigating the intersections of race, ethnicity and class that were being played out in contested urban terrain. Certainly British social anthropology had a different trajectory, particularly after World War II. As Carrier (this volume) reminds us, Radcliffe-Brown emphasized the importance of transcending the local through comparison and generalization. The Manchester department and the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute began to study what had been left out of pre-War US anthropology: urbanization, labor markets, spatial networks, class and ethnicity. In doing this, they laid the foundations of the Manchester School and the extended case study (Evens and Handelman 2006).

The anthropological political economy that I have described emerged in the shadow of the urban rebellions of the 1960s and 1970s in its Western homelands and the anti-colonial revolutions in the Third World. Left-oriented anthropologists responded by developing analyses based on world-system and modes of production models derived from a Marxian tradition now interlaced with feminism and often focusing on peasants, peasant movements and possibilities for social transformation. Arguments about the development of underdevelopment and the articulation of modes of production flourished in the 1970s, following the work of Wallerstein, Gunder Frank and the French structural Marxists, and

later influenced by the work of E.P. Thompson, Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall. Reflecting the growing interest in these approaches, the works of Marx, Lenin, Luxemburg and Gramsci were translated and began to appear in the bibliographies of graduate students.

Culture was far from absent from their problematic, certainly not if the inspiration came from the British cultural Marxists and Gramsci, but it became problematized, world-historically embedded, dynamized, approached as a contested terrain rather then a consensual one (see, e.g., Sider 1986a). In building their models and understandings of culture, these anthropologists turned to the history and geography of world capitalism and Western imperialism, and asked how the people and places that they studied were inserted into those world histories of violence and exploitation. In this, they rejected the splendid isolates of an earlier anthropological imagination. Power, politics and history became the tools for analyzing culture and transformation. However, as illustrated by Wolf's *Europe and the People without History* (1997 [1982]), these tools were part of a vision inspired more by a class analysis of large-scale social change than by anything else. It was this that allowed researchers to relate what they saw in their fieldsites to global processes, history and explanatory general models. I note that the resulting studies were as yet rarely about the urban workers who attracted social historians in Europe and the US. Instead, they were about agricultural workers, small and middling peasants, swidden cultivators and mobile migratory groups, often approached via Gramsci's concept of subalterns. Anthropological perceptions of class, thus, kept a degree of distance from the canons of Marxism and labor in the West, while at the same time expanding their empirical and conceptual scope.

This state of affairs did not last. It was clear by the 1980s that the impetus of the rebellions of the 1970s was petering out. Global capitalism was getting stronger, and the associated neoliberal Washington Consensus was burying really existing socialism and Third World developmentalism under a mountain of debt and dependency. At the same time, academic departments in the West stopped adding tenured faculty and started hiring contract lecturers. The surge in anthropological political economy, like Hobsbawm's forward march of labor, went into reverse. In anthropology, especially in the US, culturalism was ascendant once more, as was the case in history as well. This was the culturalism of Geertzian hermeneutics, disconnected from his more historical and comparative work. The growing influence of this hermeneutics helped to reinstate synchronic studies of small places as the distinctive anthropological method, marginalizing the more historical and larger-scale frames that the political economists had used.

Whatever macroscopic, diachronic and exploratory energies survived the rise of Geertz's synchronic culturalism were pushed to further irrelevance by the rise of postmodernism in the middle of the 1980s. Much of the

discipline retreated to micro-ideography, often based only on people's talk, a retreat justified by radical post-structuralism, *nouvelle vague* existentialism and postmodernist condemnation of grand narratives of the "end of history" type. With the denial of system, history and theory, the ambition to explain or even see spatio-temporal or relational logics collapsed, and the discipline increasingly retreated to the semiotic interpretation of what people said. As a result, all that anthropologists had to offer as an intellectual product was the Native's Point of View, what people themselves think. And this product was being offered elsewhere, as history, sociology and cultural studies underwent their own subjectivist, discursive and culturalist movements (Carrier 2012a; Smith 2014).

By the close of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the dominance of this culturalist approach was beginning to unravel. Postmodernist quietism was losing its appeal. This was marked by George Marcus's (2008: 2) unhappy observation that the discipline is "in suspension," with "no new ideas and none on the horizon" and with "no indication that its traditional stock of knowledge shows any signs of revitalization." Neoliberal faith in free markets looked foolish, as spreading financial deception and fraud accompanied the systemic descent into crisis. This was marked by the words of Alan Greenspan, arch-passivist head of the Federal Reserve while the system was unraveling. Famously, he expressed his "shocked disbelief" that, when left to itself, the financial sector made such a mess of things.

How is the unraveling of that postmodernist and neoliberal dominance likely to appear in anthropology? At this point this Introduction becomes partisan. The respected investor Warren Buffet spoke of class conflict, when he said that there has been class warfare and that his class won (Stein 2006). The Occupy Wall Street movement spoke of class, with its invocation of the 1 percent and the 99 percent, which was repeated around the world by people protesting against government policies that promised support for capital and austerity for citizens. What did we get from anthropology? Amidst the implosion of the European project under the weight of financial crisis, the consequent perversion of its democracies and the accelerated neoliberal slashing of the remnants of welfare, European anthropologists convened in Paris to discuss nothing less than "Uncertainty and disquiet" (EASA conference, July 2012). Canadian anthropologists, meanwhile, were meeting to reflect on "The unexpected" (CAS conference, April 2012). Things can be worse: the Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness gathered to inquire about "Plants and consciousness" (SAC conference, February 2012), while Oxford University Press's sponsorship of the American Anthropological Association meeting in 2011 was dedicated to pondering "What it means to be human." These are not signs of a discipline anxious to escape from its culturalist reveries and engage with the larger scales and longer terms of political economy.

This impression is supported by the title of a recent book by Henrietta Moore, who is William Wyse Professor of Anthropology, probably the most senior such post in Britain: *Still Life: Hopes, Desires and Satisfactions* (2011). A cover illustration of a clown without a head balancing on a world that is turning (and warming) suggests that in this book Moore is keen to engage with the crises of capitalism and globalization. However, she earnestly says how annoying it is that academic definitions of the elephants in the room such as capitalism and globalization are steadily multiplying and shifting. Lightheartedly, she dismisses all this and, perhaps like her clown on the cover, jumps over the relevant literature and refuses to offer any insights of her own about those changing ideas of the elephants. The reason she (2011: 140) gives, again like that clown, is surprisingly innocent: "Reading Fredric Jameson, David Harvey and Giorgio Agamben does not generally make one's spirits soar!" Since she wants to write as an anthropologist about things such as hope in Africa, why deal with all those depressing Western theorists? Anthropologists ought to study how local individuals make their own local worlds, she says, and who would want to deny them the freedom to follow their own perceptions? The message is simple: anthropologists have little business grasping the bigger structural things. Her book focuses on hope and agency among people such as young, educated NGO workers in Africa. A hopeful and agentic bunch indeed. This is not to say that large questions are completely absent. In fact, she (2011: 171) asks one of them herself: "What does it mean to be human?"

This inward turn of anthropology may serve to protect the discipline from the threats that loom in the present financial crisis. There are growing government attacks on the social sciences, with the partial exception of those handmaidens of liberal governance, economics and psychology. Anthropologists may be excused for seeking shelter behind fieldwork, ethnography, the cultural, the spiritual, hope, the vernacular and the local, and then claiming these as their indispensable and distinctive own. Is this perhaps an appeal for a shared humanity, rescued for posterity by the anthropologist in the form of bounded ethnographic stories of alterity and cultural aspiration to be told at night around the fire? Will anthropologists leave it to others to address the agonistic big structures and events? Make no mistake: the intimate ethnography of what it means to be human and the big historical process are treated as two separate worlds, empirically and stylistically disconnected, as they are in Moore's otherwise enjoyable book. One purpose of this volume is to show that such a stance is a mistake.

Anthropology is notoriously diverse, and in that diversity political economy did find a few institutional niches, generally well away from the commanding heights of the discipline. As a result, anthropology is presently home to some of the most insightful work on class in the academic world. David Harvey, a Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, is one of the most widely read authors

in the social sciences. One of the most influential academics associated with the Occupy movements of 2011 is David Graeber, a professor of anthropology distinguished in his own way. The recent publications of both authors excel in global reach and historical depth and thrive unashamedly on comparison and theorization. Harvey's CUNY website is one of the most visited within the social and human sciences and Graeber's (2012) book on debt and the financial crisis has sold more than 100,000 copies in English alone. Anthropologists, some of them represented in this collection, have studied neoliberalism, globalization, financialization, imperialism and indeed class and capitalism, and have actually called them by their proper names. This work draws on, and reinforces, the revitalization of economic anthropology, urban anthropology and political anthropology over the past two decades, as well as the emerging anthropology of finance. And, of course, it draws on the work of Wallerstein, Arrighi and others, concerned with the world-system and always already well read in anthropology. Meanwhile, a resurgence of philosophical Marxism and left-wing public philosophy, from Badiou, via Hardt and Negri, to Zizek, has challenged the postmodern and right-liberal theoretical environment of the 1980s and 1990s. In the wake of the earlier alter-globalist protest wave (1999–2005), which was rudely interrupted by war, and the current popular anti-crisis mobilizations that began in 2011, the air seems no longer filled mainly by an existentialist anti-politics of the private, but potentially by a public counter-politics of the commons. A critical anthropological political economy clearly is flourishing.

Intriguingly, that anthropology has been boosted by the work of those who have foregone the discipline's conventional focus on alien societies and "exotic practices" and, instead, carried out anthropology "at home" and in urban industrial settings. That anthropology has helped us to see the connections that link the different parts of the global system. This made it easier to consider processes of global class formation as they appear in the places where researchers do their work, and the same is true for the growing anthropological interest in neoliberal welfare transformations, urban development and immigrant lives in Euro-America.[2] This made it clear how the de-industrialization, outsourcing, social polarization and urban decay that have appeared since the 1970s are parts of more universal processes, other faces of which appear in the Global South and East: IMF-imposed austerity and post-socialist economic collapses (Harvey 2003; Kalb 2005). It became harder to ignore the ways that the

[2] For work considering processes of global class formation, see, e.g., Barber *et al*. (2012), Blim (2004, 2011), Collins (2003, 2011), Carbonella and Kasmir (2014), Kalb (1997, 2011), Mollona (2009b), Narotzky and Smith (2006), Ong (1987, 2006, 2012), Parry (2013), Rothstein and Blim (1992), Rofel (2007), Ross (2004), Susser (19822, 2013), and Tsing (2005, 2009, 2012). For work on neoliberal transformations, see, e.g., Collins and Mayer (2010), Lem and Barber (2010), and Maskovsky and Susser (2009).

experiences of different places in the global system were intensely and ever more tightly linked. In facilitating the emergence of world-encompassing conversations undisturbed by the old demarcations of home versus abroad, developed versus under-developed, North versus South, and West versus East, let alone by the old methodological nationalisms, this anthropological political economy can claim to be in the scholarship best placed, as Saskia Sassen (2007) rightly remarked, to capture the emerging new global realities.

In the preceding pages I have sketched some of the changes in anthropological political economy from the stance of the 1970s, concerned with the articulation of modes of production, to that of the present, concerned with the full global dominance of the capitalist value regime. I want to close this section of my Introduction by considering an important aspect of the difference between these two stances. That is their different views of the position of the state. Writers of the 1970s generally assumed that the state mediated between mobilized postcolonial populations on the one hand, and Western capital, states and markets on the other. They appeared to hold that people's lives would improve if Third World states were to come under the control of emancipatory popular movements. And it was not these writers alone. Rebellion and revolution were in the air, both on the streets of the Third, Second and First Worlds and among academics, and that rebellion and revolution focused on getting control over the state.

By 2010, things looked different. The idea of revolution seemed at best to be a largely imaginary act of sheer willful rejection of a capitalist mode of life by surplus populations, the urban multitude or, just imagine, the 99 percent. It is largely imaginary because the idea of concerted collective action, like the idea that the state is worth the rebellion, has all but vanished, and not only in the Global North. Just as anarchic strains have supplanted the debates between Lenin and Luxemburg, so the potent state has been supplanted by the courtesan state (Mittelman 2000), the centaur state (Wacquant 2012), the vampire state (Friedman this volume). The state has sold out to finance capital and its conspiring oligarchies and networks (Kalb 2015), at best performing ever-shallower rituals of democracy, while sucking the lifeblood of its haunted subjects. Three centuries after England's Glorious Revolution and two centuries after the Storming of the Bastille, popular sovereignty seems finally swallowed by the monster of capital that bred it (Kalb 2013). Sadly, anthropological political economy has had its mission affirmed.

Class, now seriously

Thus far, as I said, I have been using "class" loosely. I want now to address the concept more systematically.

A variety of notions of class swirled around the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Underlying them, however, was a vision of modernity as capitalist. Moreover, this capitalism was not just a particular rationality invested in an actor, or a particular set of institutions and legal frameworks that underlie markets. Rather, this capitalism is a dynamic bundle of contradictory but interdependent, spatialized social relationships of inequality, power and extraction, and the mythologies that are associated with them. It is these social relationships that underpin the anthropological notion of capitalism as simultaneously a mode of production, a mode of accumulation, a mode of social reproduction, a mode of the production of space, a mode of being and a mode of becoming. It is precisely those relations that historically came to be summarized by the idea of class. Class, then, is a generic name for this bundle of unstable, uneven, contradictory and antagonistic relational interdependences, a "configuration" in Norbert Elias's terms.

This is not just the bundle of contractual relations between capitalist employers and employees in a particular place, or the distributional inequalities between people: "class as we've come to know (and dispute) it." Rather, it is a much more encompassing set of global, uneven, social and geographic power balances, surrounded by an array of unevenly assembled myths, ideologies and practices of individualism, temporal salvation ("progress"), space making ("development," "globalization") and the like. Such a view of class is absolutely necessary if we are to perceive and make sense of the interlocking exploitative, extractive, uneven and constantly transformative relational antagonisms that fire up and refuel the variable engines of global capitalism (see Kalb 1997, 2011, 2012, 2013). My sketchy discussion of theoretical developments in academic social science, above, was meant to show that those intellectual productions also are shaped by the evolving nature of global capitalism as a historical reality and a transformative force. As capitalism and the politics of class have changed, that is, so have academic attempts to understand it.

Before anything else then, class points to this bundle of relationships. It does not refer to this group or that, to this position or that, to this factor or that. Rather, it encapsulates a political and intellectual effort to point to the problematic of shifting, interconnected and antagonistic social inequalities, a problematic that continuously calls for vernacular as well as scientific discovery, identification, contestation and critique. The anthropology of class, then, is in the first place about the web of contradictory social relations itself, what Norbert Elias called the "chain of social interdependencies." In short, it is about what we used to call "the system." It describes not the dots on the map, but the ever-changing links between them.

What, then, about the notion of "class position"? With a nod to Carbonella and Kasmir (this volume), one could say that this is part of the conceptual patrimony

of class referents from the twentieth century in Europe, the USA and the USSR, in which people were inserted into slots in organizational charts: Fordism, Taylorism, large Weberian bureaucracies. Correct as this characterization may be, it would be wrong to dismiss the idea of class position out of hand. It is true that being a worker is to occupy a position, as is being a skilled worker. The same is true, however, of being a debtor, a leaser, a renter (see Morell this volume) or a consumer (see Collins this volume). Being a subaltern, a member of the reserve army of labor, of the surplus population or of "the multitude," is a position in a defined set of relations.

Nevertheless, "position" has a sociological provenance and some anthropologists may feel unhappy with the term, as Tilly (2001a) discovered with some surprise. They may object that a person is likely to be a node in a variety of different relations, not just the one that is privileged by theory, such as the wage relationship. Similarly, they may think that actual positionality must be discovered in its precise, manifold and situational nature, not simply assumed on the basis of academic models. Put simply, position may be a useful notion when you already have a robust grasp of things, but it cannot be the answer before you start. As well, the concept of position implies a stability that often is not justified, for what seems like a clear-cut position at one point in time may in fact be transient, an unstable signifier in a volatile system, and known as such by the person occupying it, whose identity would then properly be not "occupant," but "passer-by." The volatility of positions, as well as of the systems of which they are a part, has increased in the recent decades of capitalist development, as suggested by Harvey's (1989) "flexible accumulation" and Mingione's (1991) "fragmented societies." That historical increase in volatility makes ethnographic investigation better suited for revealing and tracking class in its dynamic multiplicity than are more formal approaches based on positions and systems.

However, that does not deny the importance of systematic theory, as Burawoy (2009) emphasizes. A body of theory is what connects social researchers to each other and what allows them to respond to new situations and raise fresh questions in the first place. The idea of "grounded theory," so often invoked by anthropologists, may describe some salient aspects of our research practice, but it cannot displace theory as such. The job of anthropologists is to keep a clear sense of system, described by our common efforts of theorization, while meticulously bringing out ambiguity, surprise, overlap, fluidity and impermanence, the concern of many of the chapters in this volume. As those chapters show, the system is not to be approached as a fixed, determinant entity. Rather, it is seen as a shifting field of forces that must be discovered, and those forces exert pressures and set limits while working out their own transformational and structuring logics over time, with feedback loops in all directions. The chapters show that those directions are subject to human practice, will and agency, but

also that such practice is never independent of the wider configuration upon which it seeks to act. The ability to swim against the tide, what Gavin Smith (2014) calls "historical praxis," is rare. In anthropological hands, then, class is less an already-defined position that determines both consciousness and action, and more an invitation to discover people's shifting historical, situated and antagonistic social interdependences. And that discovery is necessary if we are to maintain a body of theory about capitalism in its current form, while confident that the form will change with the passage of time. We must, then, see positions as the expression of relations and not the other way around; and when relations become precarious, difficult to live in, the supposed determinism of positions must give way to the discovery of livelihoods.

What about "classes" then? The older notions of the working class, the petite bourgeoisie and the peasantry are yielding to such sprawling notions as the multitude of Hardt and Negri or the subalterns of Gramsci. This change in terminology reflects the spread of populations that appear, precariously, as simultaneously inside and outside of capitalism, a characteristic of what Bauman (2007) has called our "liquid times." But what, then, of the "financial class" or the "business class"? These are staple concepts of *Fortune* and the *Financial Times*, and few appear to think that such notions evoke no significant reality. Liquid times are, of course, the times of liquid capital as a dominant relationship, and equally of liquidated or mortgaged assets. It should not surprise us that the class that commands this liquid capital identifies itself as a class for itself (in the old Hegelian sense), an identification that its members use to justify their loud and self-conscious demands on others, even though those demands are couched in terms of progress and the common good. That is what ruling or dominant classes must do if they are to rule or dominate (Therborn 2008).

Class vocabulary, as Thompson (1966) knew, does not emerge from a position. It emerges from struggle. Class struggle comes before the language of class, chronologically and logically, and struggle in a capitalist context is initiated more often from above than from below. It is in such struggle that classes are made. The contemporary vocabulary of a clear financial and business class confronting the inchoate, amorphous multitudes is telling. On the one side is a class with a secure base and class consciousness; on the other is a congeries of diffuse socio-cultural formations with no clear conception of itself and, as Narotzky (this volume) shows, with no obvious way of producing one. The dispossession and disorganization that Carbonella and Kasmir (this volume) describe have been the habitual strategies of class war from above, differentiation and fragmentation the predictable effect on those below, and our common terminologies reflect this fact.

Gavin Smith (this volume) suggests that anthropologists of class should focus less on the more sociological question of the making of actual groups

and classes ("for themselves") and more on the political and ontological one of "immanence." This is another way of saying that the anthropological conception of class is much more open and creative than a language of position and system allows. Smith's concern with immanence echoes Jonathan Friedman's (this volume) insistence that class is a relationship of social *re*-production (see Kalb 1997; Morell this volume; Steur this volume). Friedman and Smith emphasize that social life continues over time, is reproduced, within large networks that cannot be controlled or even perceived clearly by those who are part of them. Friedman adds that such reproduction is necessarily destabilized by the contradictions in these wider networks, which he calls "global systems." The contradiction that is arising with the globalization of capitalist production threatens the social reproduction of the former peasants in the Global South and East, pushed into new proletarian dependences, as well as the former Fordist workers in the Global North, exposed to downward pressures on their livelihoods. The immanence that Smith describes is likely to emerge from the connections that people experience and conceive that link past, present and future. The tensions and contradictions that people perceive in those connections can make visible the pressures that limit people's social reproduction. For some, the consequence is creative experimentation in social relationships of support and solidarity, which eventually enable them to confront history and power.

Anthropologists are good at describing this process, tracking the intimate and ambivalent politics of subalternity as people learn, support each other and inevitably confront countervailing forces. Smith gives intimate examples of this, as does Steur (this volume), with her two trajectories of political identifications of Adivasi activists in Kerala, and as does Morell (this volume), with his cats, vagabonds, bohemians and neighborhood organizations in a gentrifying part of urban Majorca. These stories capture the intimate relational antagonisms and contradictions that are the substance of what more formally oriented social scientists would call "indigenous mobilization" or "rent-gap theory." The uncertainties of social reproduction and the immanent cultural formations of class mean that Gramsci was right: we need to pay close attention to emergent organic intellectuals and the new political articulations they help to produce, as Narotzky (this volume) and Mollona (this volume) show.

The chapters in this book demonstrate what should be obvious, that describing and analyzing class requires keen attention to time and space. Political–economic anthropologists knew this, though they struggled to find the best balance between local knowledge and spatio-temporal vision. As the past thirty years have seen the globalization of the capitalist regime of value and the consequent accelerated compression of time and space, the need to think clearly about the spatio-temporal embedding of our research sites has become pressing, and the chapters in this volume show that clear thinking. They describe how

the flow of time exposes contradiction, produces events and creates immanent possibilities for praxis, and how that flow is shaped by changes in globalizing capitalist forces, such as Narotzky's EU steel policies that forced restructuring on Spanish shipbuilding, Steur's South Indian agriculture in an increasingly hostile world market and the increasing global appeal of the politics of indigenous protest, and Morell's externally driven real estate funds and tourism-oriented economy of the Balearics. The identification of the critical junctions between the local and the global, indeed between local and global history, are essential for this sort of investigation. It is here, around the discovery and identification of such critical junctions, that theory and the extended case study meet.

In addition, in their chapters in this volume Neveling and Friedman show that anthropological inquiry should also try to confront the macroscopic forces head on in their own global realms. Powerful people in those realms are hard to capture by ethnographic tools, which means that it is necessary to complement them with methods derived from history, in particular world history, and journalism, as Eric Wolf knew well. In their different ways, Neveling and Friedman study world historical patterns of ruling-class formation and the practices and outlooks of new dominant historical blocs. Neveling's historical work on the spread of export processing zones allows us to perceive and understand the relational forces that are driving both the capitalist engine and its entangled forms in local life, as he shows in particular with his Mauritian example. Friedman has long been a singular voice in anthropology, urging us to take global systemic and long-run historical perspectives seriously (see Friedman and Friedman 2008b, 2008a, 2013; Kalb 2013; Nonini 2013).

I have shown how the work presented in this book testifies to the anthropological ability to study class through the alternation of intimate perspectives on particular places and times, and systemic perspectives on global processes and relations. This combination of perspectives is different from Geertz's (1973) hermeneutic "hopping back and forth" and Marcus's (1995) "multi-sitedness," which seem in retrospect to be half-way houses at best. Combining those perspectives in a multi-scalar approach is a skill that we will need to cultivate if we want to keep revealing the interconnected social predicaments and antagonisms produced locally and globally by the current crisis and the coming transitions (see Collins 2003, 2011; Kalb 2009; Kalb and Halmai 2011; Carbonella and Kasmir 2014).

Finally, the chapters in this book reject any a-priori assumptions about the mechanism of class reproduction. They do not presuppose that class emerges primarily from the point of production, that the labor theory of value reigns supreme, that wider market conditions determine exploitation or life chances, that class is about individuals or households or families or that the urban or state context is determinant. This is to be expected given their emphasis on

spatio-temporal relationships. Endless extraction and exploitation may well, in the famous "last instance," depend on surplus labor in production, but none of the authors in this book would bet that the last instance necessarily has much to say about what they describe. Circulation, credit and debt, urban and territorial development – all sorts of social relations figure in the equation, as do the mythical and ideological forms in which they become represented. In fact, they suggest that a prime focus for ethnographic research should be what I call the critical junctions among these dimensions as they come together in particular ways in particular sites, and so make up the particularities of that site, its occupants and passers-by (Kalb 1997, 2005, 2011). Rather than the disjunctures celebrated in research on cultural globalization in the 1990s (especially Appadurai 1996), studying class anthropologically requires a grasp of the critical junctions between place and space, between local time and world time, between production and reproduction and among local pasts, presents and futures, as well as the ways that these are connected to the rituals of everyday life. It is asking how people and things, more or less visible and more or less emplaced, come together in agonistic and antagonistic determination to live and survive that allows us to start to discover the manifold contradictions that the intellectual and political patrimony of class tells us to be ready for. If we then look long and closely enough, we can also begin to see how they come apart as they unfold.

About the chapters

The first chapter in this collection is James G. Carrier's "The concept of class", and it is first because it describes something that I have mentioned already, our conceptual and political patrimony from the nineteenth century. If we are to understand current notions of class, especially among intellectuals, we need to know their historical background and the sort of world that background described. Carrier's chapter sketches that background primarily in terms of the two central figures in the history of work on class, Karl Marx and Max Weber. The ideas these writers put forward are more subtle than many current critics seem to think, for they understood that the processes and pressures that they described and analyzed are always contingent, and can never be assumed naively. As well as describing these classic writers, Carrier's chapter considers developments in work on class in the twentieth century, and especially since the 1960s. Those developments reflected changes in the world that writers described, but they also reflected changes in disciplinary preferences that became marked after the Neo-Marxist academic wave around 1970 began to recede. The result was that, for many in the social sciences in the 1980s and 1990s, the idea of class came close to being nothing but consumption and identity.

The remaining chapters help to reverse that disciplinary preference, by exploring the critical junctions that I have identified. They help to show how class describes the various relationships of localities and sites to global capital accumulation and global history; how such junctions relate to other relations and dimensions of social life, such as ethnicity, race and gender, and hence how class can be significant in areas that, at first glance, do not seem to entail class relations at all. Taken together, they also show how the concept of class can help illuminate key dimensions of power and weakness, privilege and disadvantage, and the confrontations and conflicts – momentous, structural or biographical – that revolve around them as people and classes try to make history under conditions not of their own choosing.

In "Dispossession, disorganization and the anthropology of labor," August Carbonella and Sharryn Kasmir note something that I have mentioned already, that people often associate "class" with the massed ranks of factory workers. With the decline of such production in many Western countries, the story goes, we could say *Farewell to the Working Class* (Gorz 1980). But class, like capital, does not disappear, but rather is remade, as the sorts of relationship involved, the geographies implied and their visibility to the public eye change. Carbonella and Kasmir argue that, if anthropologists and other social researchers are to understand the nature and effects of those changes, they need to take labor seriously. Not only the labor of the factory hand or the shop clerk, but all the labor that is involved in the production of value, ranging from salaried managers and wage workers to the family members who keep house and so help reproduce the labor power of other family members, as well as all the labor that goes into the reproduction of social life when people have no wage. Uniting many of the points that Carbonella and Kasmir make is Marx's notion of the multiplication of the proletariat. This occurs because the expansion of capital is accompanied by an expansion of those who have been dispossessed of earlier resources and must work for pay, and because of pressures and strategies that fragment the proletariat, and so make it more pliant. They illustrate this with W.E.B. Du Bois's analysis of the racial fragmentation of the proletariat in the US in the early years of the twentieth century. This fragmentation makes it difficult for analysts and participants alike to see the ways that class can underlie, but also be obscured by, cleavages such as race or gender, religion or ethnicity.

This issue is also described in Susana Narotzky's "The organic intellectual and the production of class in Spain." Narotzky's site is Ferrol, a declining shipbuilding city on Spain's northwest coast. It explores the ways that those in the labor movement think about the city's workers and its population more generally, and about themselves, their movement and the present crisis. Narotzky is interested in local discussions about class and class politics in the context of creeping de-industrialization, class fragmentation and the eurozone crisis.

Class has figured in various ways in Ferrol, and in Spain more generally, and militant illegal unions were important in the opposition to the Franco government. However, with the ending of the Franco era, militancy was rejected in favor of the corporatism and gradualism associated with social democracy in the European Union.

For a while this seemed to work, but at a cost. That cost included a succession of reorganizations of Spanish industries that threatened workers. In Ferrol, as in many other places, shipbuilding was separated into the main yard with permanent jobs and fringe yards with only short-term work. Workers in the main yard became indifferent to the position of their fellows in the fringe yards. As well, the rapid increase in the availability of credit allowed people to ignore their declining economic position while satisfying their desire to achieve middle-class status through consumption. The result was the rise of the *desclasados*, the declassed, those who ceased to see their own class location. Such illusion was possible until the crisis of 2008 hit. Government policies worsened the position of workers in order to protect powerful corporate and banking interests; people's loans fell due as their income was falling; the main Ferrol yard appeared ready to close. As Narotzky describes, thinking about class and labor was made difficult by the fact that the immediate threat that people confronted emerged in the realm of circulation, the credit market, not in the realm of production, the workplace. The splits within the left and within labor also did not help, as Trotskyites, anarchists, communists and the old social democrats differed in style and analysis, and in the composition of their constituencies.

The problem Narotzky describes is that of understanding the position of ordinary people in terms of class and common experiences and positions, which are always also diverse. This is the same problem that concerns Gavin Smith in the next chapter in this collection, "Through a class darkly, but then face to face: praxis through the lens of class." Both ordinary people and anthropologists have problems thinking in terms of class for similar reasons. Ordinary people live in the complex particularities of daily life; most anthropologists seek to uncover those complex particularities; neither has much cause to see the commonalties and patterns that are part of that life. Smith tells the stories of two individuals, one in the Bolivian highlands and one in coastal Spain, to illustrate how people can come to see themselves in class terms. In both, the protagonists come to see themselves outside of the complex particularities of their daily lives, and the habits and assumptions that support them. They do so, says Smith, when their concern to secure their livelihoods in their current situations is replaced by a concern to change their current situation to make their livelihoods more secure. This marks the appearance of a class orientation, a concern with the practices and relationships that affect one's dealings with powerful others. This observation helps to show the subtleties of analysis in terms of class. For one

thing, it underlines my earlier point that class positions can only be understood as class relations: not simply in terms of where people stand, but also in terms of whom they confront. Further, when people begin to think in terms of class they begin to act in ways that change their relationships with others, so leading to further changes in the ways that they think about themselves. Their sense of who they are, then, is always evolving as they engage in the praxis that changes them from being the subject of history to the makers of history, on however small a scale.

Smith's chapter points out how class analysis entails attending both to the particularities of people's lives and to the larger frames and processes at work within those particularities. The next two chapters make similar points in different ways about different settings. The first is by Jane Collins, "Walmart, American consumer-citizenship and the erasure of class." It is concerned with the biggest and most powerful retail corporation in the world. Being so powerful, it was able to facilitate and take advantage of a change in the ways that Americans, at least, appear to have understood their purchasing and consumption. By the time of the New Deal, US government programs that addressed the problems of the Great Depression, a common, even preponderant, form of that understanding was that of the "consumer-citizen." In it, people were to think about their potential purchases in terms of a set of values about what is fair or just. In this sense it resembles present-day ethical consumption, but its focus was not on what goes on in coffee plantations in Central America or tea plantations in Kenya. Rather, it was about what went on in the shirt factories and farms in the United States that produced what people confronted in stores, as well as what went on in those stores themselves. Consumers, then, were linked to nearby producers and merchants, and sought to assure that the lives and working conditions of laborers were reasonably just. This could take the form of publicized campaigns, but also it took the form of quiet, ingrained habit, such as making sure that what one bought was made by union labor.

Gradually, however, this idea of the consumer-citizen was displaced by that of the purchaser. Such people were concerned more purely with price, with buying the cheapest. As Collins notes, the rise of Walmart coincided with this cultural change and was an expression as well as a driver of it. Walmart's business strategy was increasingly attractive: large stores in the suburbs selling wares well below the prices of their more conventional rivals. The low prices also became an increasingly powerful and popular justification of the practices that helped Walmart sell so cheaply: few staff, ill trained, poorly paid, plus the acquisition of more and more of its wares from low-wage overseas locations, notably China and Bangladesh, where Walmart's demands put suppliers under harsh delivery requirements. Collins's is again a story of class processes as connections and as changing relational and spatial configurations. As Smith

enjoins and as Collins demonstrates, we must attend to the larger frames and processes at work in those connected lives, even if we want to understand the structure of their particularities.

Marc Morell's "When space draws the line on class" also pursues relationality and the making of space within large-scale economic flows, but now in a context of urban development, real estate markets and gentrification. It is concerned with Es Barri, an area near the center of Palma, the capital of Majorca. Es Barri had been a working-class quarter with residents employed in the area's manufacturing and commercial enterprises. By late in the twentieth century it was a decayed inner-city area populated by pensioner widows, stray cats, drug dealers and prostitutes. Local newspapers began to report its dire state, the low rents led some of the city's intelligentsia to move in, the city government got involved and the area began to be gentrified.

The story of Es Barri is that of many other urban areas: decline, regeneration, gentrification. For Morell, this story is not simply one of an abstract cycle of urban change. It is also a story of the processes by which a variety of different people cooperated, however unknowingly, in the production of value, significant parts of which were then extracted by capitalist landlords and speculators. The process started with urban deterioration, rapacious landlords, drug dealers and prostitutes. It continued with public concern for the area's decayed state, encouraged by newspaper reporters and politicians. Then new bohemian residents began appearing, attracted by low rents and the prospect of turning Es Barri into a desirable and interesting residential area, supported by the city government. In the final phase we see capitalists and developers pushing out the earlier groups, in unison with the new neighborhood organizations, which increasingly were run by higher-income gentrifiers from elsewhere, able and willing to pay increasing rents to real-estate owners. All of these actors, in their own way, were classes, even if they were not aware of it, and they were so in relation to each other and to a process of accumulation based on international credit and real-estate development.

The first five chapters explore some of the macroscopic linkages, relational bases and situated manifestations of class. The next three are concerned with something different: how particular sets of people experience class as part of their public identities and how those public identities, in their turn, are shaped by the relational logics of class. In these chapters there is again a strong emphasis on local and global histories. The first of them is Luisa Steur's "Class trajectories and indigenism among agricultural workers in Kerala," which focuses on a group of poor laborers identified as Adivasis, a legal category of indigenous people in India, to which the government and NGOs offer some benefits and support. Scholarly writing in India overwhelmingly approaches those who claim to be Adivasi in either culturalist terms, "the pure people of the forests," or as rational actors seeking benefits. Steur says that both these approaches are

short-sighted, because they ignore the relational and historical factors that shape people's class experience and that lead them to adopt, modify, or reject Adivasi identity. She explores this among a group of poor Adivasis, many of whom regularly migrated to agricultural work elsewhere. They took part in a failed land occupation at Kottamurade in 2003, making property claims to that land based on ancestral rights. Those who had taken part in the occupation, however, had differing commitments to Adivasi identity, and those differences became more pronounced after the bloody end of the occupation. Steur focuses on two middle-aged women, and shows how analysis of their lives in terms of the slightly different micro-relational logics underlying their social reproduction helps explain why one's commitment to Adivasi identity strengthened as a result of the occupation, while the other's weakened. Steur's explanation of the different outcomes for identity employs a densely situated relational logic and puts its finger on the dynamic consequences of seemingly minute differences in class positions.

The chapter by Henrike Donner, "Making middle-class families in Calcutta," has a similar focus on issues of class and ethnicity, looking at the public identities of upper-caste Bengali Hindus. In ideal form, those people have jobs in the higher levels of the civil service, though, as she notes, changing employment prospects make this increasingly an aspiration rather than a reality, and the people she describes have to adjust their lives accordingly. Donner is interested in their notions of respectability as they intersect with developments of class, gender and consumption, an issue relevant to many who study the middle class in different parts of the world. Her chapter focuses on women's positions in the household and in relation to household work, and describes several aspects of the idea of a respectable life as it is increasingly threatened by neoliberalization and globalization. The likelihood of a career in the civil service, indeed of any respectable stable job, was dropping sharply. This meant that children's education, their supposed route to stable employment, became ever more important. Private education in English was now increasingly necessary. This affected domestic relations in three-generational households, the ideal of respectable domestic life. While mothers had always closely attended to their children's education, the effort that this involved, like the money it cost, was now increasing sharply. At the same time, the position of these mothers in the household was improving. Conventionally they had been subordinated to their mothers-in-law. However, those in-laws being older, they were less likely to be fluent in English, and so had to yield some of their domestic authority to their more fluent daughters-in-law. Similar status shifts were happening within the field of food and cooking, as foreign fast food, often consumed in restaurants in the new malls, was becoming ever more popular and the wholesome Bengali domestic meal, onerously prepared by the older women, was losing its centrality.

Massimiliano Mollona's "Working-class politics in a Brazilian steel town" is similarly a study of the experience, public politics and identities of class in a non-European context. The working class of Volta Redonda, the site of the largest steelworks in Latin America, founded in 1942, was formed within the paternalist imagery of the *Estado Novo*, a corporatist legal framework that, at that time, featured some of the world's most progressive labor legislation. The result was a working class, and a consciousness of class, that emerged without the conflict that was crucial for European history. This corporatist era, however, ended with economic crisis, the military coup in 1964, and violence and repression within the steelworks and the city built around it. This helped to shift workers to the left and to new kinds of unionism, concerned not only with the conventional issues of labor in the works, but also with integrating women, teachers and more subaltern categories in a city-wide mobilization. These and similar movements elsewhere in Brazil bore fruit in the return to democracy in 1985, itself followed by the privatization of the works in 1992 under fairly tight state regulation. This history, Mollona shows, produced a proletariat that thinks about itself and its world in ways very different from those found in most of Europe and North America, while nevertheless being afflicted by very similar forces of industrialization and subsequently neoliberalization.

Steur, Donner and Mollona show how the economics of class are thoroughly relational, embedded in sets of intertwined local and global relations that have their own multi-scalar histories, indeed their own particular critical junctions. The changes in such economic relations lead perennially to the restructuring of the forms and relations of social reproduction more broadly conceived, such as within households, within ethnic groups and among different class segments, and as a consequence these all acquire different cultural content. They also steadily lead to shifting politics and public identities, as new experiences lead to re-interpretations and re-appropriations of cultural and political knowledge. The last two chapters in this collection pursue this concern with large-scale economic changes and their influence on people's lives, practices and class configurations.

Patrick Neveling's "Export processing zones and global class formation" echoes Steur's argument that ethnicity needs to be approached in terms of class relations, and takes seriously Smith's injunction to look at the large-scale frames that shape local contexts of class. The forces that concern Neveling are those related to the globalization of capital, in particular the export processing zones (EPZs) that have proliferated since the first one was established in Puerto Rico late in the 1940s. There are now some 3,500 of them, employing about 60 million people in more than 130 countries, putting downward pressure on the standards of social reproduction of workers worldwide, as well as propelling the formation of a transnational capitalist class. Neveling studies the history of two early examples, that first one in Puerto Rico and one in Shannon, Ireland,

and shows how the transnational class is not just an economic abstraction but also a relational construction, flourishing on personal connections, favors and lifelong institutional rewards. Neveling next turns to Mauritius, which serves to make his case that anthropologists' attention to small places often means that they tend to ignore big, even global, processes of the sort that these zones embody. That case shows once more how classical anthropological concerns with ethnic identity, for example, need to be connected to questions about livelihood, social reproduction and the larger processes that tend to drive them. These are all aspects of class-relational processes through time, with scalar interconnections up–down and down–up, as well as sideways into local habitats and relations of solidarity.

The final chapter in this collection carries the global extension one step further. In "Global systemic crisis, class and its representations," Jonathan Friedman's concern is the global economy as a structured system characterized by long-term cycles. For him, the spread of Neveling's EPZs and Mollona's industrialization of Brazil are best approached as elements in a pattern, albeit one with its own uncertainties and contingencies. That pattern is the emergence of global hegemonic powers, their tendency over time to live beyond their means as compared to the costs of production elsewhere, their gradual conversion from centers of production to centers of finance and their ultimate decline. These changes can be described in terms of the making and unmaking of classes within specific sets of social and geographic relations, including those that lead to the emergence of global capitalism.

From what Friedman says, it is clear that Marx was mistaken in defining classes solely in relation to the means of production. While this did reflect the main developments in Marx's time, it is insufficient to understand class in the present in the West. As large areas of Western Europe and North America have lost their industries, the error of Marx's assumption becomes clear. While they transform, relations of class as such do not disappear, as Carbonella and Kasmir argued; and class conflict persists, as Collins underlines. The decline of industrial production in much of the West relative to services and the financial sector has shifted the bases of social reproduction, as the lives of many people have become more precarious. Global proletarianization has also gone together with the making of new surplus populations everywhere. It has not, however, done away with either the need for social reproduction or the fact that different sets of people stand in different relations to the means available for securing that reproduction, whether labor, assets, access to credit, access to networks of social support or combinations of all of these.

The second aspect of the trajectory that Friedman describes concerns class's changing political nature. The decline of mass manufacturing in the West was accompanied by the decline of the Keynesian compromise between capital and labor, of the Fordist factories that underpinned it and of the political

alliances that undergirded the welfare state. Friedman observes that the older politics of right and left have faded, to be replaced by a new division, but no new compromise. The division is now between the governing class and their associated elites and multicultural ideologues on the one hand, and on the other the "people" and "the nation," those whom they govern, and do so officially in the people's own name. Moreover, and echoing the multiplication of the proletariat that Carbonella and Kasmir describe, those ideologues divide the masses into immigrants, typically of alien ethnicity, who provide the cheap labor that supports the elite classes, and the older working class, typically of the country's dominant nationality, who increasingly are denigrated as xenophobes who need to embrace the multicultural vision of the world that the ideologues preach, but that the elites in their enclaves disdain to practice.

With Friedman's contribution, these chapters complete their cycle. They began with the relational and situated specificities of class and the ability to move from being a subject of history to being a maker of history, even at a local level. They then addressed the ways that people understand and experience the different relational logics that define their class location, and how such class locations intersect with other sets of relations in their lives, such as households, ethnic groups and identities, and political alliances. They concluded with considerations of the larger forces, national and global, that shape the class contexts in which people live. In completing that cycle, the chapters in this volume do not only illustrate different aspects of class in people's lives, relationships and societies. They also show how class is much more relationally, historically and culturally complex than is often assumed, far more complex and dynamic than the multiplication of classes and class segments in Western sociological research suggests. In addition, they point to the fruitfulness, even the centrality, of class for anyone, such as anthropologists, who wants not merely to describe people's lives, but also to understand the relationships and processes that shape them and that constrain some people while enabling others in their efforts to secure the existence and reproduction of themselves and the people, things and relationships that they value. All in all, they show that class is never just economics, but is at the center of an identifiable grid of interconnected social, geographical and historical relations: the critical junctions of class.

1 The concept of class

James G. Carrier

The concept of class has been around for a long time, but its salience in anthropology has varied a great deal since the middle of the twentieth century. Its association with Karl Marx made it suspect among many Western academics, especially during the Cold War. It enjoyed a boom around 1970, the era of Neo-Marxism (Bottomore 1979: 135–43), but interest declined after that. With the cultural turn and the rise of postmodernism in anthropology, and in the social sciences more generally, it was assigned to the discipline's pre-history: of interest to few and appearing on even fewer syllabi. As a result, many of the readers for whom this volume is intended are likely to be fairly unfamiliar with the concept and its foundations. For these reasons, it is worth presenting a sketch of the concept's historical core, together with a sketch of changes in key areas of society since that core was laid down, changes that affect how we might now approach or interpret it. That core is not merely of antiquarian interest, for it underlies more recent work that is concerned with class, and hence is important for understanding the analytical grounding of that work.

Foundations

There are two central formulations of class. One is by Marx, who some claim as part of the anthropological canon (e.g. Patterson 2009). The other is by his classic critic, Max Weber, who anthropologists generally ignore but who has influenced sociologists interested in class (see Carrier 2012b). Their approaches are broadly similar, though they understood class in different ways. Those differences reflect, among other things, their different experiences of the nineteenth century, the era that saw the emergence and consolidation of industrial capitalism in Western Europe.

That emergence and consolidation involved processes, activities and conflicts that made especially visible the social groupings that Marx came to see as classes. During his life, or shortly before it, there was the consolidation and development of capitalism in England, as well as popular responses to that: the Luddite Riots of 1811–13, by textile workers objecting to the intensification

of labor and its subordination to capital; the Peterloo Massacre of 1819, when British cavalry in Manchester attacked demonstrators seeking political reform; the Chartists, a working-class movement for social and political reform in the 1840s. There were also, of course, the Revolutions of 1848 in much of Western Europe, the occasion for the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Marx and Engels 1848). Weber, writing near the end of that century, saw something rather different. That was the Wilhelmine consolidation of Germany in 1871, which included the creation of a centralized industrial capitalist order in a country that hitherto had little manufacturing and had a political system that rested on groups defined by status, rather than on anything like the evolving British parliamentary system.

So, the capitalism that these two men saw differed, which helps make sense of the differences in their approaches to class. However, as I said, their approaches are broadly similar. Most obviously, both saw humans as social beings, shaped and constrained by, while shaping, their context. Further, both saw that people's most important activities and relationships were those that revolve around economic activity, the production and circulation of things.

For Marx, the key economic activity was production, for people need food, shelter and clothing if they are to maintain and reproduce themselves and their world. He argued that, when people engage in productive activities, they fall into sets that stand in different relationships to the different factors of production that make up the means of production, which is to say, land (natural resources), labor (human energy and the skills that guide it) and capital (tools and equipment). These sets are his classes. They differ in their control over the processes of production and the disposition of the product, and in all known societies their relationship is characterized by conflict. The dominant classes, which control the key factors of production, exert a disproportionate control over the process of production and claim a disproportionate share of the product. In capitalist systems, they seek to extend the resources they control through what Marx (1976 [1867]: Part VIII) called "primitive accumulation," which David Harvey (2003) later recast as "dispossession." The subordinate classes, on the other hand, seek to protect themselves from, and improve the terms of their dealing with, the dominant.

For Weber, the key activities were those involved in circulation, particularly market transactions, including those in the labor market. Thus, he differed from Marx in that he saw market exchange, rather than production, as the central economic realm, but he recognized that, in the modern Western societies that concerned him, market transactions were central to people's survival. Equally, he resembled Marx in seeing classes as sets of people who stand in different relationships to the central economic realm. For Weber, these classes differ in their market power, the ability to further their economic interest in the face of

others by affecting the price of what they transact, whether as buyers or sellers. As with Marx, and as a corollary of his concern with market power, Weber saw different classes as adversaries.

Both writers, then, saw the central economic realm as characterized by sets of people with opposed interests, whether those people were aware of it or not. One question each addressed, albeit in different ways, was what made it more or less likely that these sets of people would see themselves in terms of their common interests, and in terms of their common opposition to other sets of people with different sets of interests. In other words, Marx and Weber were concerned with when and how people come to see themselves as a class that stands in opposition to other classes. This commonly is described in Marxian terms as the question of when a class *in* itself acquires class consciousness and becomes a class *for* itself. It is also called the question of class formation, the question of when and how class ceases to be only an analyst's category, but instead also becomes a functioning group in the society being studied. We must remember, however, that this formation is an uncertain process shaped, even thwarted, by other factors that influence people's understandings of themselves and their relations with others, and that affect their ability to act on those understandings and the likelihood that those actions will have the desired effects.

In stressing the importance of the economic realm for people's survival and for social reproduction, both Marx and Weber held that other areas of society were shaped by that realm, and that other areas of people's lives were shaped by their position in that realm, their class. Marx held that the economic structure influences society as a whole, shaping everything from kinship terminologies and religious beliefs to legal codes. For Weber (1946), it shapes the two other realms of society that he saw as important, and the place people occupy in those realms. One realm he called "status," effectively the social identity of different groups (*Stände*) and the official and unofficial esteem associated with those groups, and the other he called "party," effectively efforts to influence the way that government power is exercised.

For both Marx and Weber, these shapings do not only affect realms and activities outside the economic. In addition, they have consequences and lead to responses that act back on the economic realm and people's position in it. Because he describes three realms that rest on different principles and mechanisms, Weber attends to those shapings and consequences more explicitly than does Marx. However, the substance of their models is similar in this regard. So, what these two writers present is not simply economy, and what they argue is not simple economic functionalism of the sort imagined by neoclassical economists. Rather, what they describe is a political economy or, perhaps better put, a political–social economy. The economic realm may be the most important, but the economic, social and political realms influence each other,

both at the level of systemic properties and at the level of people's experiences and their relations, values and orientations toward the world.

Because the economic realm is the most important, these influences facilitate the reproduction of both the economic system and classes over time. Most obviously, they encourage people to understand the existing system as something that is natural and right, or at least as something that is inevitable and to be endured. Somewhat less obviously, they encourage people to see their own positions in that order as appropriate and just; or, again, as inevitable. An adage that encapsulates the views of many of the British people that Alexandra Ouroussoff (1993) described expresses both the justice and the inevitability: those in the upper and lower classes know that they are where they are because of who they are; only those in the middle class think that they are where they are because they have earned it. In encouraging this view, those influences also encourage people to see the positions of others and the relations among them as appropriate, or at least unavoidable. The result is a set of values, practices and institutions that tend to regenerate the political–social economy as a whole, and that tend to regenerate the position of people within it, both individuals and families, over the course of time.

I stress "tend" and "encourage" in what I say about reproduction, because it is no more complete or automatic than any other human creation. This is so at several different levels. At the simplest, individuals can move up or down the class ladder, though this movement is not evidence for the absence of the ladder itself. At a more general level, as already noted, conflict is inherent in the relations between classes. Cultural beliefs and values can dampen that conflict, and hence hinder class formation. That is, they can divert attention from that conflict or make it seem illegitimate or unwise, and those beliefs and values can be embodied in powerful institutions. However, those beliefs, values and institutions never do their job perfectly, so that conflict remains and the reproduction of the system remains partial, as does the reproduction of people's lives and relationships.

At a different level, beliefs, values and institutions can weaken the forces that facilitate reproduction. Both Marx and Weber described this. For instance, Weber (1958 [1904–05]) saw that commercial practices and economic organization in north-western Europe around the seventeenth century were so fragile that the Protestant ethic had the revolutionary effect of bringing about the emergence of what he called the spirit of capitalism. In this, Weber points to something that also concerned Marx, with his attention to the transition from feudalism to capitalism: that is, the ways that political–economic systems can change radically over time. This is obvious to anyone attending to the history of the twentieth century. National capitalism, liberal capitalism, welfare capitalism, national socialism, fascism and different sorts of socialism and communism all emerged in Europe and North America, flourished and, often

enough, disappeared. Such massive failures of the reproduction of the system as a whole meant, of course, massive failures in the reproduction of many people's lives and relationships.

Less dramatic, but closer to home, are elements of the contemporary political–social economy that appear to reduce the likelihood of reproduction. Analysts of modern capitalism from Adam Smith onward have noted systematic pressures that lead to innovation, which is the opposite of reproduction. Marx described one such pressure, the tendency of the rate of profit to fall because competitive pressure leads manufacturers to replace labor with machinery; Weber described another, the systematic and rational pursuit of ever-greater profit that was part of the spirit of capitalism. At a more purely cultural level this takes the form of a fixation on novelty and a strong faith in progress (Edgerton 2008). Famously, Joseph Schumpeter (1942) called such innovation "creative destruction," the sweeping away of existing productive practices and relationships by new ones that produce more with less cost. This means that the contemporary political–social economy has systemic pressures that decrease reproduction. New class segments may emerge or old ones gain new prominence through the creation, as appears to have happened with those associated with finance capital in recent decades. At the same time, other class segments may disappear or be weakened through the destruction, as appears to have happened with those associated with manufacturing in Britain and the United States since the 1970s.

All social systems change over time, but Marx and Weber were arguing that capitalism is especially likely to produce change in the economic realm, and to produce it rapidly. This change can take different forms. For instance, there are changes in the nature and operation of capitalism. One example is the emergence of "just in time" production (Ohno 1988), which reduced the amount of stock (and money locked up in that stock) that manufacturers kept in their warehouses, and decreased their power relative to the firms that bought what they made. Another and more recent example is the growing importance of financial capital and its effects on the practices and orientations of capitalist firms, and indeed of governments (see, e.g., Sorkin 2010). These changes in the nature and operation of capitalism often lead to changes in the ways that places in the world, and the people who live in those places, are linked to and affected by capitalism, and hence are linked to the larger world. Put in hyperbolic terms, this means that yesterday's green fields become today's green-field factory site, which becomes tomorrow's brown-field, abandoned factory town.

This tendency to rapid change has an analytical corollary. Because capitalism changes rapidly, the specific forms that classes take in capitalist societies will vary markedly. They will vary over the course of time, as capitalism changes, and they will vary across space, as different places occupy different positions

in the larger economic system. This fluidity means that careful ethnographic research is especially important for describing and understanding classes as they exist in the specific place and time of fieldwork. That research, however, has to be different from the sort of work that anthropologists are, from time to time, accused of doing. It cannot see places as relatively isolated and self-contained. Rather, it needs to identify the processes and relationships through which people produce and acquire what they need to survive, and needs to attend to these relationships wherever they lead. This is not a plea for multi-sited research. Rather, it is recognition of the fact that in the vast majority of cases, especially in industrial and post-industrial societies and in the areas affected by them, research sites are not so much places as they are nodes in a network, and that they cannot be described and understood without attention to their links to that network.

These points about reproduction, its mechanisms and its disruptions, indicate that while economy is crucial it is not all we need to know. The influence of that realm is affected by other realms in a complex interplay of interests, values, institutions and relationships, sometimes massively and shockingly, but also always routinely. Again, this is more apparent in Weber's tripartite, formal model, especially with regard to the relationship between status and class, to which I return below. Further, the point that reproduction is imperfect indicates that both Marx and Weber were aware of the importance of sheer historical contingency. In other words, their approach is not deterministic, but instead is probabilistic. Systemic pressures in the political–social economy make some things more likely than others, make some goals easier to achieve than others. However, they do not dictate outcomes any more than gravity dictates where the leaf will land when it falls from the tree. Even though the effects of these systemic pressures are contingent, those pressures are real, for Marx and Weber both see society in systemic terms. That is, for both, social configurations have properties of their own that are not reducible to the motives, perspectives, experiences and understandings of individuals.

While I have presented the ideas of Marx and Weber in terms of a structure of classes, it is important to remember that a structure is made of, and hence depends on, the relations among its parts. So, Marx's and Weber's models of class structure are based on sets of people who stand in different relations to key activities in the economic realm, and who are in relationships with each other in the daily activities of economic life, as well as in other areas of their lives. In those daily activities, people view things from a specific location in that political–social economy. As a result, they are prone to see themselves not in terms of the class structure as a whole, but in terms of their relationships with the other sorts of people, even the other individuals, with whom they interact. Indeed, given the scope and complexity of that structure, it is difficult to see how they could do otherwise.

Since the foundations

Marx and Weber presented models of class that simplify and purify the societies, groups and processes that they sought to understand. In the *Manifesto* Marx was writing polemic, inspiration rather than close analysis; in *Capital* he was identifying the basic principles and structures of the capitalism of England in the second half of the nineteenth century, not the nuances and details. Weber sought to identify the nature and bases of Western exceptionality, the appearance of rational capitalism and legal–rational authority in north-western Europe. Both writers were creatures of their times, and the nature of their simplifications and purifications became apparent as time passed. Here I will present aspects of that. Doing so will help to uncover the basic nature of the processes and relationships that concerned both Marx and Weber.

One aspect relates to Marx's model of capitalist societies. He presented them as revolving around a central, marked distinction between the capitalist class, which owned and controlled the means of production, and the proletariat, possessing only their labor power and exercising it at the command of the capitalists who hired them. This distinction made sense in England in the middle of the nineteenth century, when the people who owned the mills and factories lived near them, went to the office and ran their companies. Ownership and control marched together, clearly distinct from mere employees. It is surprising to realize how sharp was the boundary then between capital and labor, and how fiercely it was policed. An illustration of that policing is the policy, around 1900, of a large British retail firm, Home & Colonial Stores. They said that any worker buying shares in the company without permission was committing "an offence the only adequate punishment of which is instant dismissal" (Mathias 1967: 143).

By the 1930s things had changed. It became apparent, as Berle and Means (1932) described, that ownership and control increasingly rested in different sets of people. Owners increasingly were shareholders who employed agents, managers, to run the company. Ownership, control and employment became muddied in a way that had implications for the nature of classes. Those implications were considered by sociologists, the most prominent of whom were Ralf Dahrendorf and Erik Olin Wright. Dahrendorf (see, e.g., 1969 [1963]) argued for a modification of Marx's concept of class, and suggested that the crucial question was not the ownership of the means of production, but authority in production relations. Wright (see, e.g., 1978) took a different approach, and sought to make sense of the ways that people can occupy different class locations simultaneously, or can, in his terms, occupy a contradictory class location. So, for instance, managers resemble both the proletariat, because they do not own the means of production and are exploited by capital, and the capitalists, because they control workers.

Dahrendorf and Wright, like Berle and Means before them, point to a change in the organization of central economic activities in modern societies that blurs the distinction between capitalist and proletariat painted so starkly in the *Manifesto*. That change obliges us to recognize that the characters in Marx's picture were important because of what they represented, rather than because of their detailed features or particular form. What they represented was sets of people in distinct positions in a larger order that is independent of their individual wills: an order, that is, with properties of its own. Their different positions do not reflect only people's ability to control the production process, and with that their ability to command the resources that they need to pursue and reproduce their lives and relationships. In addition, they affect the ways that people understand the positions and lives of themselves and others, as well as the ways that they can envision what that reproduction entails and imagine what a good life might be.

These understandings and envisionings are made more complex by a further change in the nature of capitalism that has become insistent since Marx wrote. That is the spread and increasing importance of what can be called "global capitalism." With that, the relationship between classes increasingly took on a geographical aspect: the capitalist who had lived in the same city as the people who worked in the factory was more and more likely to be far away. In other words, class increasingly was related to place, just as Sidney Mintz (1985) describes how people in parts of the Caribbean became the sugar-proletariat of England. This means that the experience of class relations became more complex and mediated than it had been before. Increasingly, the immediate boss who workers confronted was subordinate to larger and more distant owners; increasingly, that boss was in a contradictory class location.

Weber's model of class does not rely on qualitative distinctions in the way that Marx's does, and so was not affected by the separation of ownership and control. However, his construction of status groups has been undone by history. Weber says that they are identified and characterized by their social esteem, and he distinguishes that from positions in the economic realm when he (1946: 187) says that such esteem "normally stands in sharp distinction to the pretensions of sheer property." In practice, however, status groups are closely enmeshed in the economic realm. Thus, Weber (1946: 190, 193) says that "differentiation by status goes hand in hand with a monopolization of ideal and material goods or opportunities," so that "'status groups' are stratified according to the principles of their *consumption* of goods as represented by special 'styles of life'." However, it is important to remember that Weber's status groups were distinct social entities recognized in law, of the sort that were central to political organization in Germany before the Wilhelmine consolidation (see Dwyer 2000: 9). His *Stände* might translate better as "estates" than as "status groups," legal entities with formal rights, privileges and

disabilities, important among which were those related to market activities (those "ideal and material goods or opportunities"). This was the sort of thing encoded in sumptuary legislation in Western Europe in the medieval period (see, e.g., Hooper 1915; Baldwin 1926) and, in a different way, in the laws and institutions that discriminated between the races and sexes in many parts of the United States early in the twentieth century. The legal privileges and disabilities have been repealed, so that Weber's status groups have disappeared in Europe and North America. However, as was the case with Marx, this encourages us to see what these status groups represent, rather than attend only to their detailed features.

What they represent is sets of people with identities that are social, in two senses. Firstly, those identities have to be recognized as such by others in society. Secondly, just as the existence of an identity is not a matter of simple individual will, neither is the association of a person with a particular identity. Present-day status groups do not have the legal privileges or disqualifications of Weber's *Stände*. However, there are a variety of identities in Western societies that are associated with different levels of esteem and, to a degree, with different forms of consumption and different occupations. Moreover, like *Stände*, many of them have organized and seek to influence government (the realm of politics) to secure or improve their position in the status hierarchy and their market power, and hence their ability to reproduce themselves. Class, status and party continue, then, to interact in ways that Weber's model comprehends.

I have attended to some of the important changes in the world that affect how we approach the models that Marx and Weber produced. There are others. For instance, the flurry of interest in post-material society (e.g. Inglehart 1971, 1977) and the end of the proletariat (e.g. Gorz 1980) points to the ways that changes in the economic realm affect the nature of classes and the ways that people experience and think about the world and their place in it. From the perspective granted us by all of these changes, the letter of what Marx and Weber wrote becomes suspect. The neat division between capital and labor, and the instant dismissal of employees who buy shares in the company they work for, has disappeared. So has the legal basis of *Stände* and their formal qualifications and disqualifications in the economic realm, together with things such as the formal qualifications and disqualifications of Whites and Blacks, and of men and women, in parts of the United States. Because that letter has become suspect, we are encouraged, as I have noted repeatedly, to look beyond the detailed features of Marx's and Weber's models of class, and instead consider what they express.

As I have also noted repeatedly, they express a model of the social order, of "society," to use a term that was largely erased as part of anthropological post-modernism. That society is not the bounded, self-contained and harmonious entity that postmodernist critics imagined that their predecessors had embraced

(see Sahlins 1999). Rather, it is a whole in which people occupy places in relation to other people. These are not, then, the fetishised, autonomous individuals of neoliberal dogma. Rather, they are social beings, located in, and understood in terms of, their context. This is not, it should be clear, a simple matter, in the manner of Marx's great divide between capital and labor. Outside the polemic of the *Manifesto* he knew it was more complicated than that, and the tales I have told in the preceding paragraphs show some aspects of that complexity. Underneath that complexity, though, are sets of people, standing in real and imagined relations with other sets of people. Each of them seeks to achieve the survival, reproduction and even enhancement of themselves, their social relations and through these the world that they value. They have different amounts of different resources to achieve that goal, and so are more or less able to secure their own interests in the face of other sets of people with their own interests and resources.

The implications of class

Thus far I have sketched the concept of class and the sort of social world that it portrays. The concept has implications that arise from the picture that it presents, implications that include what questions it allows us to ask and what issues it allows us to raise. In principle, people may be free to ask questions and raise issues as they like. However, as Steven Lukes (1974) argued, in practice different perspectives on events and processes in the world tend to encourage some sorts of debate and foreclose others, because they make it easier to ask some questions rather than others, easier to raise some issues and make some arguments. It is, then, pertinent to consider what questions and issues a class perspective encourages.

A number of things follow from the systemic political–social economy that the concept entails. Until around 1980, systemic views of different sorts were common in the social sciences, with the important exception of neoclassical economics, resting as it does on its formulations of individual resources, desire and choice. As the authority of neoclassical individualism increased in the 1970s and gained ascendancy in the 1980s, so systemic approaches of all sorts lost authority. In anthropology, this was marked by an increasing interest in agency, first seen as a counterweight to systemic arguments (e.g. Ortner 1984) but increasingly seen as denying system, culminating in the emergence of postmodernism, which often became a rejection of all system (see Carrier 2012a). Renewing attention to social systems allows us to return to issues and concerns that were eclipsed by that individualism and rejection of system. Two of these deserve mention.

The first is the nature and bases of inequality. Under individualist approaches, in extreme form neoclassical economics, inequality is difficult to explain in

terms other than individual attributes. These may be the varying abilities and other endowments of individuals, which generate different levels of material success. Alternatively, these may be the varying desires or utility functions of individuals, either of the person at issue or of those who deal with that person. Because individualist approaches have tended to treat endowments, desires and utility functions as the given attributes of individuals, they have failed to consider where these things come from. Consequently, they have been relatively unable to generate reasonable accounts of important forms of inequality, how they arise and how they persist and change over time.

The second issue that analysis using class allows us to address is best approached, perhaps, as two related issues: conflict and change. These are related because conflicts within society often result in change, which may be just groups moving up or down society's hierarchy but which may be more profound. Individualist approaches offer little scope for consideration of these things, and even systemic approaches frequently have failed to do so: both structural functionalism and Lévi-Straussian structuralism were criticized on those grounds. It is true that Marx and Weber, and many others concerned with class, see systems as tending to reproduce themselves. This view is not limited, of course, to academics; common wisdom tells us that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. However, as I have described, neither Marx nor Weber saw reproduction as complete. That is not only because capitalism is especially likely to produce change, but also because tension between classes is never eliminated and because historical circumstances affect the consequences of systemic forces, and sometimes even their shape.

While reproduction is never perfect, it is not, as I have already suggested, uniformly imperfect. People's ability to protect and improve their lives and social worlds varies. One factor that shapes their ability is the degree to which they can perceive the relationships that are important for maintaining their existence, and hence can protect themselves from threats that might come through these relationships. In the past several decades, increasing areas of the world have become increasingly enmeshed in relationships that are partially or wholly invisible to the people involved in them, and increasing parts of people's lives have become affected by them. At the most mundane level, more and more of what we rely on comes from places and through relationships that are opaque to us. These need not, of course, be distant to be opaque: they can be as close as the nearest financial center, but shrouded in a secrecy cultivated by those who work there. This suggests another and more purely methodological consequence for anthropology of the concept of class. Increasingly, it is apparent that, if we are to understand people's lives, relationships and the situations in which they find themselves, we cannot restrict ourselves to the Native's Point of View, fix our attention on people's cosmologies and understandings. These are important, but we should recall that even the most famous advocate of that perspective,

Bronislaw Malinowski (1922), did not restrict himself to it on Kiriwina. Had he done so, he never could have described what was invisible from the perspective of that island, the *kula* ring.

Taken together, these different issues point to a larger advantage of analysis using the concept of class. With the postmodernist rejection of authorial authority and grand narrative, anthropologists have tended to focus more on describing what they see in the world than on accounting for it (famously, Geertz 1973: Chap. 15). While there are important exceptions, many anthropologists seem to devote their attention to uncovering and describing aspects of everyday life, whether those are how people cope with poverty in a squatter settlement or how coffee moves from growers to consumers. This view has, of course, long been present in anthropology, with its history of detailed ethnographies of small groups of people. It is important, though, to remember that this was tempered by a concern for generalization and theory, for how particular events that the researcher observes relate to each other to form patterns and processes, and how the patterns and processes of one society can tell us something about nearby societies, regions or society in general. With the rejection of this tempering as a matter of principle, there was a decreasing interest in generalization and explanation, certainly in their explicit form.

To put this in more provocative terms, the drift in anthropology since the 1970s has been toward description without analysis. Obviously, some see this as a virtue: focusing on intensive fieldwork is "a vital antidote to . . . 'compulsive and mindless theorizing'" (Biehl and Locke 2010: 319, quoting Hirschman 1998); anthropologists can speak truth to power by bearing witness to what is hidden from common view. Perhaps, but the result is that much anthropological writing has come to resemble the higher journalism, substantial and even thoughtful descriptions that, however accurate or inaccurate they may be, lack an analytical frame. As John Comaroff (2011: 88) put it, the criticism is that the discipline is "doing work that could as well be done, and be done as well, by journalists." These descriptions spring from nowhere and lead nowhere. They offer no way to link what is learned in intensive fieldwork in those hidden places to other events and processes elsewhere. They offer no way to cumulate either knowledge or understanding. To invoke Radcliffe-Brown (1952), they are ethnography without the generalization that is needed to turn anthropologists' communications into intellectual conversation. Class can provide the frame that will encourage that conversation.

As a discipline, anthropology seems to need that encouragement. The title of the meeting of the American Anthropological Association in 2009 was "The end/s of anthropology." If that is any indication, some anthropologists see their discipline not so much in crisis (an ordinary state of affairs) as exhausted: as George Marcus (2008: 2) put it in a published interview, the discipline is "in suspension," with "no new ideas and none on the horizon." An important

cause of that exhaustion is intellectual. The postmodernist wave is receding; the promise of multi-sited research to locate particular places in the increasingly insistent global context appears largely unfulfilled. Anthropologists still go out and study things and describe them. However, as analytical and methodological promises look more and more hollow, there is an air of uncertainty about where this research and writing leads, what it tells us that is different from that higher journalism. If we follow the example of this volume, we can begin to ask, once more, not just questions about what and how, but also questions about why and where it leads.

2 Dispossession, disorganization and the anthropology of labor

August Carbonella and Sharryn Kasmir

Reigning academic wisdom has it that class as a social formation has simply disappeared over the last 30-odd years. It is certainly true that no small amount of theoretical cunning was marshaled against the very idea of class or its historical–geographical existence (Palmer 1994). Yet the elision of class cannot simply be attributed to a revival of the kind of Platonism that E.P. Thompson (1978b) pilloried in the late 1970s. It is at least as much a consequence of contemporary scholars' mistaking the transformation and decline of the Fordist working class, a specific historical and geographical formation, for the end of class itself.

This seems to be a recurrent theme in social and historical scholarship, not least, as Michael Denning suggests, because cultural images and understandings of class last longer than actual class formations within capitalism. He asserts that "While a capitalist economy continually reshapes workplaces and working populations, destroying old industries and working forces while drawing new workers from around the globe and moving industry to new regions, we remain caught in the class maps we inherited from family, school, and movies" (Denning 2004: 229–30). Zygmunt Bauman (1982) makes a similar point, suggesting that historical memories of class tend to outlive the very social formations they reference.

A central feature of the class maps or memories we have inherited is the opposition between "the stable working class" and "the poor". This opposition, in turn, evokes a whole chain of signifiers: the affluent worker, aristocracy of labor, labor elite on the one side; the dangerous classes, the great unwashed, lumpen proletariat, surplus populations on the other. Moreover, this opposition between the stable working class and the poor is frequently mapped on to all-encompassing distinctions between skilled industrial workers in the Global North and racially marked and superexploited laborers of the South. These nested typologies, whatever the particularities of their enunciation, greatly reduce our ability to apprehend the fluidity of class relations and experience.

It should be easy to see why our inherited class maps have become obsolete in a global era when all "fast frozen" relationships and oppositions are, if not

exactly "melting into air," at least being up-ended and remade. At the same time, no new transnational class formations have emerged to replace the national working classes of the Keynesian state-capitalist era. We are confronted instead by a world of labor in various stages of the making, unmaking and remaking of class. The current moment of capitalist restructuring and dispossession is producing a range of new labor relations. Informal, criminalized, military, child and bonded labors are once again as common as industrial and service sector work in both the Global North and South, just as structural adjustment programs, penalization and military and paramilitary violence increasingly serve to differentiate and regulate labor across the world. It is precisely these new or remade social relations of production that compel us to move beyond old antinomies of working class versus poor, formal versus informal sector, waged versus non-waged, North versus South in the search for new explanatory frameworks capable of making sense of changing experiences of labor and all they mean for social and daily life.

E.P. Thompson's strictures on essentialism in class analysis thus seem especially trenchant and timely some forty-five years after they were first lodged. As he (1966: 9) famously remarked in the opening paragraph of *The Making of the English Working Class*, "The working class did not rise like the sun at an appointed time. It was present at its own making." Thompson here focuses attention on the experiences and historical relationships of working people as they begin to make sense of their shared conditions and develop (or not) a shared identity. Thompson's emphasis on the making, rather than on the always already accomplished structure, of class is once again worth heeding in this moment of transition, and it serves as a guiding thread of our analysis here. Accordingly, we do not attempt to elucidate the already accomplished formation of a global working class (or any other such designation), nor do we suggest that outcomes can be known in advance. Rather, we draw attention to a politics of labor in the past and present as a pointer to a processual and relational approach to the anthropology of labor.

Towards an anthropology of labor

Our point of entry is what Marx called the "multiplication of the proletariat," the mirror process of capital accumulation. This notion of labor accumulation signals, for us, a sustained focus on the continual political, cultural and structural making, unmaking and remaking of labor forces and working classes from the perspective of dispossession and disorganization. Expanding on Rosa Luxemburg's indispensable insight that primitive accumulation is not a one-time event but a constant feature of capital expansion, David Harvey's (2003) concept of "accumulation by dispossession" brings the idea of labor

accumulation fully into the twenty-first century. Harvey spotlights the recurrent dispossession of labor forces through capital's strategies of privatization, creative destruction of assets, speculation, geographic mobility and the like. His consideration of the ways in which capitalism always creates its own "other" through dispossession, as well as his emphasis on the inside–outside dialectic of capitalism, refocuses attention on the contingencies of labor and its forms of social reproduction, and points to the importance of placing the politics of labor and dispossession at the center of anthropological analysis.

By rights, this reformulation of primitive accumulation as a recurrent historical process should have provided an opportunity for a whole new field of labor studies within anthropology. This field, as we see it, would have centered on the dialectic of dispossession and incorporation in people's daily lives, as well as on the ways in which working people make new divisions and alliances in the context of global capital accumulation. It would have generated myriad closely considered, holistic, ethnographic studies of working classes in their making, remaking and unmaking as this played out in kin relations, belief, social organizations, language, work relationships and the many other arenas of life that are our long-standing concerns. That this opportunity was not realized may be attributed, in some measure, to the analytical frames that Harvey uses to elaborate the concept of accumulation by dispossession. We see this, first, in the emphasis he places on capital as the driving force of this global process, while relegating labor struggles to the proverbial back seat. This is not to say that the kinds of "class struggle from above" that Harvey so well documents are not hugely important, only that his analysis remains incomplete without a reciprocal focus on a labor-fueled "class struggle from below." Second, Harvey's dualistic vision of labor struggles in the Global South and North (progressive and retrograde, respectively) only inverts the evaluative distinctions of the Keynesian-era class maps. It does not enable the urgently needed remapping of past and present geographies of labor accumulation and struggle.

In our understanding, labor is a political entity, whose social protests and quietude, formal and informal organizations, and political cultures reflect its multiple engagements with capital and state, as well as the relationships with other workers, locally, regionally and globally. Our development of this definition of labor is heavily indebted to W.E.B. Du Bois's classic monograph *Darkwater* (1969 [1920]). Du Bois well understood that dispossession and the production of difference are conjoined, simultaneous processes, and he framed the struggles of differently classified laborers within this broader context. Du Bois's mapping of recurrent processes of class composition and decomposition not only brings labor's political agency to the fore, it suggests that the outcomes of the working classes' attempts to make themselves (to return

to Thompson's phrasing) are multiple and uneven, resulting in attempts at solidarity, but also in racial, ethnic and gender violence, exclusion and hierarchy – as Karen Brodkin (2000) and Leith Mullings (2005) show in their important writings on the historical and contemporary relationship between racialization and class formation.

However, the main reason that labor did not become central to anthropological analysis rests squarely on anthropology itself. Anthropologists have always studied those who were on the margins of, or were most exploited by, capital accumulation, yet the varied processes of global accumulation themselves were long considered to be outside of the scope of anthropology's localist and presentist concerns. Even as the study of workers and work took off in the 1980s, when anthropologists explored the effects of the global economy on local populations, these efforts did not spark the kind of broad rethinking of the discipline envisioned by Eric Wolf's *Europe and the People without History* (1997 [1982]). Wolf's grand synthesis provided an opportunity, still not adequately realized, to reconceptualize anthropological subjects within historical and spatial processes of capital accumulation. In the absence of the kind of rethinking proposed by Wolf, labor as a political category largely remained an anthropological blind spot. Although his proposal for a critically engaged, global anthropology was initially eclipsed by the discipline's cultural turn (or return), we maintain that it remains extremely timely in the present.

Wolf's emphasis on the interconnected, global processes of capital and labor accumulation provides the inspiration for our elaboration of several overlapping themes that we see as important anchors for a new labor anthropology: dispossession and the production of difference, the accumulation of labor, the politics of dispossession, the violence-laden disorganization of working classes, the myth of "disposable people."

Dispossession and the production of difference

The concept of dispossession has a long history in political–economic theory, and Marx's famous sketch of primitive accumulation remains the paradigmatic formulation. The story Marx tells has to do with the centrality of force and enclosure in creating both the preconditions for capital accumulation and the reduction of human beings to commoditized laborers. This process of "conquest, enslavement, robbery, [and] murder," in Marx's remarkably succinct summary, "is written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire" (Marx 1976 [1867]: 874, 875). Fiery prose aside, in some of his writings Marx appears to assume that the plunder and terror that marked the earliest phases of capitalist development would subside with the steady advancement of

capitalist relations. The continuing exploitation of labor would thereafter be secured through the silent compulsion of economic relations and the inculcation of tradition and habit.

Yet, as Rosa Luxemburg (2003 [1913]) and Karl Polanyi (1944) pointed out long ago, primitive accumulation (Marx's "original sin" of capitalism) could not be so easily relegated to the past, and if the current Great Recession has shown us anything it is that waves of dispossession do not wash evenly over whole communities. Rather, they are important moments in the production of difference and inequality (Perelman 2000), as shown so ably in the ethnographic studies by Jane Collins (2003) of workers in different locations in the global apparel industry and by Ching Kwan Lee (2007) of rustbelt and sunbelt workers in China.

To further develop this insight, we need to decenter the wage relationship in our understanding of labor. In his provocative essay "Wageless life," Michael Denning (2008) recalls that the founding moment of capitalism is not the wage contract, but the imperative to "earn a living." This entails the wholesale divestment of the property and rights by which people had previously secured their subsistence. How a person or group enters the wage relation, *if at all*, is the stuff of multiple identities, cleavages and differences, but the moment of wagelessness is one of commonality. This point serves to remind us that solidarity, as much as difference, is always a possibility. It also reminds us that being without a wage – for the short term, for a lifetime, for generations; for whole communities or regions – is one way that people experience capital accumulation. We take this moment of wagelessness, with all its possibilities for solidarity and for difference and in all of its varied historical manifestations, as a starting point for analysis.

Denning's argument also serves as a rejoinder to the increasingly common assertion that the present neoliberal accumulation of labor is creating "surplus populations" that now constitute a permanent "outside" of capitalism, a problem we will address shortly. At the same time, what Denning says should not be taken to suggest a simple linear progression from wagelessness to wages, the trajectory usually associated with the idea of primitive accumulation. Historically, these two distinct existential relationships to capitalism have been produced simultaneously. Jane Collins's (2003) study of garment workers both in the American South and in Mexico is enormously suggestive in this regard. Following both US women who lost their jobs due to capital flight and women in Mexico who are employed in the relocated garment factories, she highlights the relational matrix that encompasses waged and wageless workers and their shifting relationship to capital accumulation. Sustained ethnographic attention to the production of both wage labor and wagelessness, then, should allow us greater theoretical purchase on lives that are lived continuously and

necessarily on the fault line of dispossession-by-accumulation and expanded capital reproduction.

The accumulation of labor

Sylvia Federici (2004) offers an illuminating example of dispossession as the production of both wage labor and wagelessness. In her masterful *Caliban and the Witch*, she documents the emergence of the sexual division of labor and the patriarchy of the wage during the long transition to capitalism in Western Europe. With other feminist scholars, she knows that women's unpaid work is fundamental to the production of surplus value. Yet her starting point is not in this moment of difference. Rather, it is an earlier moment of commonality in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when there was an emergent proletarian consciousness, political sympathies and actions that crossed linguistic and cultural lines, and widespread popular resistance (see also Robinson 2001). "Through the roads of Europe passed the tales, stories, and experiences of a developing proletariat" (Federici 2004: 82). Elites and authorities were terrified.

By the mid sixteenth century, capital, church and state coordinated their response: mass incarceration of the poor in work- and correction-houses and "transportation" to the colonies to discipline labor, and attacks on collective sociality and sexuality to enact the enclosure of social reproduction. The witch-hunt in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was central to this response, for it consolidated, materially and figuratively, a range of attacks on women's bodies that pushed them further into the private spaces of the home and family. The linguistic reduction of women's labor to domestic labor, even when it was identical to that performed by men in workshop and field, signaled the widespread process of social devaluation that marked women's exclusion from wage labor. This was compounded during the witch trials, as proletarian men turned violently on women, and the young turned on the old. Rendered within Europe, these cleavages mirrored the violent divisions of race that were mapped onto the global relationship of unwaged enslaved labor in the New World and debased waged labor in the Old. In this way, Federici (2004: 63) tells us, "Primitive accumulation . . . was not simply an accumulation of exploitable workers and capital. It was also an accumulation of differences and divisions within the working class, whereby hierarchies built upon gender, as well as 'race' and age, became constituent of class rule and the formation of the modern proletariat." If we recall that primitive accumulation is a recurrent process, then we can understand, with Federici, that the making and remaking of such divisions is the life blood of labor accumulation. Each wave of dispossession makes or remakes particular working classes again; old divisions are deployed and new ones institutionalized.

This dynamic is well captured in Peter Linebaugh's (2003 [1991]) pioneering study of the regularization of London dockworkers' wage payments at the turn of the nineteenth century. Dockworkers and shipwrights alike at that time were only nominally compensated for their labor with wages. Instead of regular money wages, dockworkers received their chief remuneration in "chips," the scraps and waste left over from shipbuilding. More specifically, though, chips referred to the prescriptive right of workers since the early seventeenth century to appropriate a certain amount of the wood as payment. Chips, along with the "takings" from other workplaces and trades along the Thames – coal, silk, sugar, coffee, tea, pins, cloth and tools – constituted the central medium of exchange among a network of ship's chandlers, grocers, street-sellers, peddlers, sex-workers, alehouse keepers and pawnbrokers. Efforts in the 1790s to regularize the money wage followed a dual strategy of criminalizing the dockworkers' customary takings and eliminating what Linebaugh calls the non-monetary community. Individuals found guilty of illegal appropriation were subject to public whipping, imprisonment, deportation and even hanging. At the same time, the non-monetary community was physically destroyed through the construction of dams to make way for a new, massive system of docks and canals. Linebaugh (2003 [1991]: 434) captures this destruction and dispossession in a heartbreakingly apt analogy: "To paraphrase Sir Thomas More's famous dictum about sheep and enclosure, where once East End people had lived by the water, after the construction of the docks the water lived upon them."

As the existing material and cultural forms of everyday life and labor were destroyed, new forms of social reproduction centering on the money wage were installed and forcefully regulated. Indeed, the newly formed Thames River Police were charged primarily with determining who would receive wages and who would not. The literal policing of the division between waged laborers and the wageless poor effectively separated the struggles of workers within the wage labor process from those outside it. Significant forms of social hierarchy developed among the river proletariat as a result of this reclassification of waged and unwaged work, thereby simultaneously intensifying gender, ethnic and racial hierarchies. This late eighteenth century policing of the boundary between wage and wageless laborers was not a novel historical development. It paralleled and was preceded by an excess of attempts to separate the mass of men and women, slaves and proletarians, Black and White workers, among significant other examples.

W.E.B. Du Bois's "On work and wealth" (in *Darkwater*) offers a more recent example of wage struggle as the production of difference and hierarchy. The essay deals with the race riots in East St. Louis in 1917. Du Bois begins his mournful sketch of the city with the growth of industrial capital in the first years of the twentieth century. In the midst of a sustained industrial boom,

large numbers of Eastern and Southern European immigrants came to East St. Louis to find work. Upon arrival, they encountered established tradesmen, mostly of Northern European descent, who held fast to their craft unions in the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and their relative privilege. Consequently, the new immigrants faced insecure employment, intermittent and inadequate wages, bad housing and social exclusion. Nevertheless, the government's new restrictions on immigration and its military conscription of White citizen-workers during World War I allowed these immigrants a greater measure of bargaining power and a rising standard of living. Industrialists confronted labor's newfound strength by looking South to "the greatest industrial miracles of modern days – slaves transforming themselves to freemen" (Du Bois 1969 [1920]: 88–89).

Rather than depress wages, though, the migration of African Americans to the city sparked fledgling attempts at solidarity between them and Eastern and Southern European laborers. During several labor actions in the months before the riots, Black, recent-immigrant and even White workers joined to confront their employers. Influenced by radical labor movements throughout North America and Europe, and in spite of the overt racism of the AFL, Black workers began to join the laborers' unions.

These small steps toward solidarity were in Du Bois's frame as he imagined the possible emergence of a socialism that aspired to equality for all. However, for Du Bois (1969 [1920]: 186–87), the constant remaking of global divisions and hierarchies cast a very dark shadow over the possibility of ethnic, racial and gender solidarity that he hoped for. He foresaw that the demand to increase wages would succeed only for White men, while people of color and White women would continue to suffer caste-like exclusion and oppression, and he understood the classification of Whiteness itself to be a highly fraught political process, one that depended fatefully on the use of terror and force.

As Du Bois well knew, capital never acts alone, and the wartime US government soon turned against radical labor organizations. In his portrait of East St. Louis, Du Bois left out the larger political context of this government suppression, which was part of a nationwide reign of terror aimed at forestalling the emerging forms of class solidarity between immigrant and African-American workers. Despite neglecting the details of this campaign, Du Bois pointed to its reign of terror as a spark that ignited the race riot in East St. Louis. As he tells us, the not-quite-White Eastern and Southern European laborers were faced with the prospect of living with increasing insecurity or joining with White workers in their attempt to banish African-American laborers to a state of wagelessness. Many immigrants ultimately took sides with White workers and engaged in racist violence. The immediate aftermath was brutal, both for those African Americans who remained in East St. Louis and those forcefully exiled to live as sharecroppers in the South.

The politics of dispossession

In addition to providing clear expositions of the relationship between dispossession and the production of difference, Federici's and Du Bois's studies simultaneously point to the larger politics of dispossession. We find Jerry Lembcke's (1991–92) development of the concept of disorganization particularly useful for expanding on their insights.

Lembcke argues that crises of capitalism are caused as much by the growth of working-class institutional, political and cultural power as by falling rates of profit. For instance, the flight of capital from the US that began in the 1960s can be seen from this perspective as a decision to flee a domestic working class that had won considerable position and influence. Beverly Silver (2003) similarly charts the dialectic of working-class empowerment and cycles of capital disinvestment on a global scale, as does Jonathan Friedman (this volume). As Harvey (2005) notes, the move to neoliberalism in the 1970s and 1980s restored power to the capitalist class after two decades of working-class empowerment through labor and urban social movements. We can see the politics of dispossession in the 1973 coup in Chile, as well as in the New York City fiscal crisis of the 1970s, when, in a very short time, working-class New Yorkers and their institutions lost their prominent role in shaping the city's social, economic and political future (Harvey 2005: 15–16, 46; see also Freeman 2000). We can also see it in the way in which the Colombian paramilitary used violence and intimidation throughout the 1980s to dismantle the organized working class of Barrancabermeja (Gill 2009) or in the ways in which Polish technocrats collaborated with transnational capital in the 1990s to privatize the factories that Polish workers previously had controlled collectively (Kalb 2009).

Lembcke introduced the term "disorganization" to capture the ways in which the successes of working classes are episodically undermined. Steve Striffler (2002) likewise uses the framework of disorganization to explain why banana workers in southern Ecuador are today unorganized and superexploited, despite the area's history of union and peasant activism. In 1962, after two decades of involvement in labor, peasant and popular struggles, union workers, who had been laid off en masse by the United Fruit Company, invaded the company's plantations and pushed the multinational out of Ecuador. The military quickly crushed their invasion, but the ex-workers, now turned peasants, joined agrarian cooperatives and expressed themselves through the language of land reform. Their struggles first had the support of the Ecuadoran state, and they met some success in the 1970s. However, once its modernizing purposes were served, and once it had successfully channeled credit and extended police forces to the local level to install a new class of domestic landowners, the state abandoned the peasant movement. Many of these expropriated peasants now work for domestic banana producers who contract with multinational firms including Chiquita (previously United Fruit).

Today, work in banana production is temporary, unstable and pays little. Workers are dispersed, mobile and employed in businesses that are intentionally kept small enough to avoid labor regulation. Industry-wide unions are illegal, but are permitted only at the level of the enterprise. This localization of struggle not only hands advantage to business owners who use legal tricks to avoid unionization, but it narrows the spatial scale of labor struggle. Gender politics is also at play. When they worked for United Fruit and were union activists, male banana workers associated their hard work with manliness. The work is now organized differently, it is less physical and women have joined the workforce; male workers consider it to have been feminized. Because of sexism, together with low wages and terrible conditions, most men work only four or five years in banana production, until they have the opportunity to move on. Women do not identify as workers, but see banana work as something they are doing temporarily to help their families. When they worked for United Fruit, the family and community had been important sources of union support. Women, men and whole neighborhoods confronted the company together, because it controlled housing, electricity and other services. The sources of union strength are now diminished as work is dispersed and the workforce mobile and temporary.

Striffler's analysis offers a holistic view of dispossession. Don Kalb (2009), Gerald Creed (2010) and Lesley Gill (2009) similarly suggest a view of dispossession that is at once economic, political, martial, social and cultural. This approach to social change resonates with the one developed by the members of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in their studies of the Rhodesian Copperbelt during the 1930s and 1940s. Godfrey Wilson, in particular, approached "detribalization" as a process of economic dispossession, cultural displacement and political disorganization (Wilson 1941–42; see Brown 1973). The concept of disorganization enriches our understanding of dispossession, for it speaks to the ways in which the alienation of political position, culture and consciousness are intimately connected with economic setback.

Disposable people? Concluding provocations

The uneven processes of capital and labor accumulation outlined so far should serve to upset any notions we may still harbor about a homogeneous, global proletariat. As feminist and African-American scholars have long argued, the singularity that some have too often attributed to "the proletariat" privileged White, male, industrial workers and their political institutions at the expense of a wider, heterogeneous social formation. Thus the continuing project of reconceptualizing labor brings us back to Wolf's insistence on the necessity of the manifold labors of slaves, peasants, petty commodity producers, coerced laborers, plantation workers and domestic labor for the production of surplus value

in previous phases of capital accumulation (see Robinson 2000; van der Linden 2013). This keystone of Wolf's reconfiguration of anthropological subjects situates them within relations of connection and mutual constitution, bridging the cultural and political divides between labor made visible by the capital–wage labor relation and the "invisible" labors outside of that relationship (Robinson 2001; Morell this volume). While this relationship is structured on a global scale, and not always readily seen at the local level where our ethnographic studies take place, it nonetheless shapes the lives we seek to understand (see Narotzky and Smith 2006; Smith this volume).

At this new moment of capitalist restructuring we need to understand how the current multiplication of the proletariat is producing a range of new labor relations. This is not a wholly novel phenomenon, but a specific instance of the "general tendency of [capitalism] . . . to create a 'disposable mass' out of diverse populations, and then to throw that mass into the breach to meet the changing needs of capital" (Wolf 1997 [1982]: 379–80). The global scale and accelerated rate at which dispossession is now taking place, though, may be unprecedented. Certainly, the recent relentless movement and financialization of capital is simultaneously producing new enclosures of land, property, commons and rights, as well as new rustbelts.

There is a growing scholarly consensus around the notion that these new enclosures are creating people and communities who are *permanently* constituted as the "outside" of capitalism. This emphasis has had the effect of dispensing with the study of labor in favor of a focus on citizenship and exclusion, which has been a central analytical move over the last decade. A range of concepts attempts to capture this outside; "the bare life," "disposable people," "surplus populations," "states of exception" and "wasted lives" all refer to what Mbembe calls "the biopolitics of permanent joblessness" (quoted by Denning 2008: 3). This perspective unfortunately reinscribes dualistic and outdated class maps, rather than confronting the actual, complicated, global "multiplication of the proletariat" that is taking place.

This perspective also leaves us with a vision of people who are seemingly never "thrown back into the breach," nor does it encourage us to chart an alternative future. The end result of this analysis, we fear, is to remove laboring people from history. The emphasis on disposability mistakes the profound disregard for laboring peoples' lives that is exhibited by states, transnational regulatory agencies (such as the IMF and World Bank) and global capital for the actual existence of a category of people who are not embroiled in social relations that matter, and who do not (and can not) act on the world stage. It also misses the various ways in which the surplus value produced by non-waged labor makes its way into the global circuits of capital (see Morell this volume) as well as the relationship between capital's prosperity and labor's deepening poverty. In this way it vaporizes their contributions into the mist of

what Marx called commodity fetishism, by concealing "the social character of private labor and the social relations between individual workers" (quoted by Merrifield 2002: 159).

Rather than simply assuming that real people actually constitute capital's outside, we need to pay more attention to what relations of production and class fragmentation now look like. Future research will have to crack open these relations to include the disciplinary arm of the state (police, immigration services, military, penal institutions, labor laws etc.), debt purveyors (large and small) and government functionaries, among others. The fact that the US-led military–financial empire, with its permanent war philosophy, has redirected the global spaces of capital and labor strongly suggests that we need to capture the relationship between the organization of oppression and the organization of accumulation to fully understand labor politics (Thompson 1966; Robinson 2001). This framework will enhance our ability to revise inherited narratives of class and social inequality. The nature and operation of the combined political and structural violence that today constitute key avenues of dispossession and the creation of precariousness have rendered our old narratives obsolete and suggest the urgency of ethnographies of actually existing forms of labor and class relationships.

3 The organic intellectual and the production of class in Spain

Susana Narotzky

> The unique and extraordinary character of working-class self-organization has been that it has tried to connect particular struggles to a general struggle in one quite special way. It has set out, as a movement, to make real what is at first sight the extraordinary claim that the defence and advancement of certain particular interests, properly brought together, are in fact in the general interest. That, after all, is the moment of transition to an idea of socialism. (Williams 1989: 249)

> Every real, great class struggle must rest upon the support and cooperation of the widest masses, and a strategy of class struggle which does not reckon with this cooperation, which is based upon the idea of the finely stage-managed march out of the small, well-trained part of the proletariat is foredoomed to be a miserable fiasco. (Luxemburg 1906)

This chapter addresses the relationship between three aspects of the concept of class. The first is as an analytical tool, particularly within anthropology. The second is as a social relation that takes particular forms in particular historical settings. The third is as a means of struggle. I will address the relationship between these aspects of class in terms of four questions: What class do we need or want? What kinds of collectivity need to be conceptualized and brought about if we want to transform capitalism? What sorts of practical politics will have to be developed? What sort of historical bloc can we help to form?[1]

Class is problematic because it has been conceptualized both as the locus of articulation of a structural position within the mode of production and as an emergent form in existing social conflict. Consequently, class is always being produced and changed through actual economic and political struggles. It is also important to recognize the strength of Gramsci's (1987) point that

[1] In Gramsci's terms, the historical bloc refers to the articulation of material realities and ideological constructs, and to the need for organic intellectuals to produce knowledge that corresponds to the actual feelings of the "popular element" and to the material structure in which they live. The historical bloc thus formed can then become a force of change (Gramsci 1987: 360, 366, 377): "If the relationship between intellectuals and people-nation . . . is provided by an organic cohesion in which feeling-passion becomes understanding and thence knowledge . . . then and only then is the relationship one of representation. Only then . . . can the shared life be realised which alone is a social force – with the creation of the 'historical bloc'" (1987: 418).

these struggles are also theoretical, for they are shaped by the common-sense interpretation of structural positions that defines collective identities and lines of struggle. I will follow Gramsci's lead and stress that what he calls the "organic intellectual," and intellectual debate in general, is central to producing understandings of the structure of the social processes that frame the realms of collective class identity and of organized and purposeful struggle.

History and place

I pursue these questions in terms of my work in the town of Ferrol, in northwestern Spain, where class became a central public concept because of the activities of the emerging unions and the clandestine Communist Party, centered on the town's shipyards, during the Franco dictatorship (1939–75). Those yards meant that Ferrol fits the classic industrial model, albeit in the political context of a dictatorship. Although the industry has been restructured repeatedly since the 1980s and unions have lost credit, they were able to mobilize more than 25,000 people in a demonstration in June 2012 to protect the shipyard jobs that remain important for most people in the town, both economically and as an expression of working-class power.

Such a mobilization was possible in part because the particular form of liberalization that the economy adopted during the dictatorship after the Madrid Treaties with the United States in 1953 served to strengthen labor organization. The orientation of the Franco government was corporatist, and with the support of international credit providers (US banks) it adopted indicative planning early in the 1950s. In favoring industries in key sectors that could benefit from economies of scale and Fordist modernization, indicative planning gave workers in those industries a job that was protected not only by labor law but also by economic policy. This strengthened workers' position within these sectors and eventually enabled the reconstruction of class-based trade unions. During the "development decade" that followed, government intervention in labor relations was progressively reduced, and, even though unions remained illegal until the death of Franco in 1975, beginning late in the 1950s workers acquired increasing rights to elect committees to represent their interests in negotiations with their employers. However, committees were framed by the corporatist national unions, which meant that the national government participated in, and oversaw, these negotiations. It was through their representatives on these committees that workers affiliated to the illegal Communist and Socialist parties infiltrated the labor movement. As a consequence, labor disputes became increasingly politicized and revolutionary, making use of heterogeneous types of intellectual analysis and tactical organization inherited from the period before the start of the Civil War in 1936 (Sánchez Recio 2002; Ramos Gorostiza and Pires Jiménez 2009).

After the death of Franco, however, a number of economic and political factors progressively led the newly legal unions to avoid the use of class as an organizational and analytical tool. It is the case that in 1975 and 1976, immediately after Franco's death, the power of unions increased markedly. The number of strikes jumped from 855 in 1975 to 1,568 in 1976 (Navarrete and Puyal 1995: 148), as unions pursued goals that were political (democracy, free unions, legalization of the Communist Party) as well as economic (better pay and working conditions, more social benefits). The result was an increased portion of Spanish GDP going to labor as opposed to capital. However, in 1977 the trend was reversed (Martínez-Alier and Roca Jusmet 1988: 52; Gutiérrez 1990: 122–26; Zaragoza and Varela 1990: 61). One reason for this reversal was the Moncloa Agreement (Pacto de la Moncloa), which was signed by the major political parties (including the Communist Party and the Catalan and Basque nationalist parties) in October 1977, and which had the tacit support of the unions based on the shared objective of a transition to democracy. This Agreement was intended to stabilize the economy and make that transition possible, and it marked the acceptance of a technocratic approach to the national economy. Government policies were oriented toward reducing the country's high rate of inflation, increasing economic growth and competition and, ultimately, integrating with the European Economic Community (later the European Union).

The Pacto de la Moncloa, and the subsequent agreements subscribed to by unions and employers under government supervision, could be seen in two different ways.[2] Justo Domínguez (1990: 98), the head of the Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT, then a Socialist union), saw the agreements as "trade unionism which is inserted in the State's institutions, a trade unionism of participation, that is or tries to be where decisions are made." Alternatively, they could be seen as neo-corporatist because they implied abandoning revolutionary objectives and subordinating trade union policies and goals to the neoliberal policies of democratic governments as "macroeconomic orientations become the basis of social agreements" (Martínez-Alier and Roca Jusmet 1988: 59). This corporatism framed workers' struggles in a "language of contention" (Roseberry 1994) that appeared to be neutral and technical but in fact was that of the dominant groups (Martínez-Alier and Roca Jusmet 1988: 56).

[2] The Comisiones Obreras (CCOO, then the Communist union) was less prone to sign the agreements, while the Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT, then the Socialist union) signed them all, arguing that "in a crisis situation a great sense of responsibility was necessary" (Domínguez 1990: 82). During the first ten years after Franco, the CCOO signed only the Acuerdo Nacional de Empleo (in 1981 a few months after the attempted coup by Colonel Tejero) and the Acuerdo Interconfederal (in 1983). The UGT signed the Acuerdo Básico Interconfederal (1979), the Acuerdo Marco Interconfederal (1980), the Acuerdo Nacional de Empleo (1981), the Acuerdo Interconfederal (1983) and the Acuerdo Económico y Social (1984).

Unions, then, were co-opted into a framework meant to banish confrontation and consolidate liberal democracy. If liberal democracy was the end point of the Transition process, what useful kind of class concept remained? Using present-day struggles in Ferrol, I attempt to show the central, albeit elusive, position of the organic intellectual for the elaboration of that concept, and hence for producing solidarity and class.

Both class itself and an awareness of class are produced through the pedagogical transmission of knowledge useful for analyzing reality and for organizing strategies of struggle, often through the commemoration of past class struggle and exemplary class strategies and tactics (see Narotzky 2011). However, that commemoration has become less effective with the passage of time. The increasing fragmentation of production, the international division of labor, delocalization and financialization, as well as the growing tendency to use consumption to mark identity, mean that past industrial struggles are of declining relevance in a city with rising unemployment, a majority of workers in the service sector and a workforce that is increasingly feminized. The older generation of union leaders continue to use class or its euphemisms in their analysis of the situation in Ferrol, but find it harder to do so with political effect. Their efforts are criticized by new radical leaders as *dirigisme* ("Leninist") and not revolutionary enough, or as not attuned to the distrust of organization that is common in new social movements. In this situation, both the old leaders and the new try, in their different ways, to become meaningful organic intellectuals as they work through a multiplicity of "militant particularisms" (Williams 1989; Harvey 1995; Narotzky 2014) that address issues of social and economic deprivation using different frameworks of analysis, which are grounded in personal, intimate, ideologically embedded experience linked to personal identities.

That is, they are faced with the challenge of creating a level of abstraction that transcends particular interests while also expressing them, and doing so in a context where leftist projects of revolutionary change have been discredited. Confronting a problem that revolutionary leaders have confronted before (notably Lenin 1902; Luxemburg 1906), they need to revise the concept of class, which means using the thorough analysis of the present-day economic structure to revise their political goals. In order to be useful, that revision should keep class as the dialectical link between structural forces shaping social production, people's feelings and existing practical struggles, and the transformation of those forces. As producers of theoretical concepts that feed back into organic intellectuals' categories of analysis, social scientists are entangled in this dialectical process whether they want to be or not (Smith 1991b, 1999; Bourdieu 2000; Susser 2010, 2011). If we are able to revise class as a scientific concept, we will help produce class as an instrument of struggle and, possibly, change.

Los desclasados

Ten years of intermittent fieldwork in the Ferrol shipyards and steel mills led me to think that present-day workers and social-movement activists were fragmented and targeted particular conflicts, while the older unionists who had fought for democracy during the time of Franco were thinking in terms of solidarity across sectors, mobilized through the commemoration of past class solidarity and a language of homogenization and commonality of struggle. My visit in May 2012 produced a very different picture: collective organization was hampered not only by mistrust of the union bureaucracy, but also by mistrust of strategies and leadership in general. The only commonality that I saw then arose from people's financial troubles in their everyday consumption practices. Why was this happening in a town that had been at the forefront of labor struggle since the 1960s?

In a conversation on my first day in town, I came across a new concept, *desclasado* (de-classed).[3] People used it to refer to those displaced from their class position and from their place in everyday social relations with family, friends and place of origin. While this displacement stressed the importance of people's dependence on capital, it was of a sort that made class links difficult. This use of *desclasado* brings to mind Siegfried Kracauer's (1998 [1930]) account of white-collar workers during the Weimar Republic, and, I was told, it was central to the demise of the idea of a relatively homogeneous class.

The concept came up in a conversation about a worker in a supermarket who had been fired for participating in the general strike of March 29, 2012. Although the firm insisted that this was not why he was fired, the union shop steward was convinced that it was, and so were all the people I talked to. The man was not likely to have been fired because he was bad at his job: he was a nice person with a serious attitude toward his work and with a wife who worked in the same company. The company's attitude, moreover, was revealed by the fact that they had asked employees to go to work on the day of the strike, even though the shops might be closed to the public for security reasons.

The firing produced support from the local union representatives, but not from the regional and national offices: they wanted to accept the company's proposed resolution of the problem (reinforcing accusations that they were colluding with the company). Several demonstrations were organized in supermarkets owned by the company for which the man had worked. The first brought together some 200 people, mostly mobilized by the socialist cultural association Fuco Buxan, and by the critical, Trotskyite branch of the CCOO (Comisiones Obreras

[3] Marx and Engels, who rarely used the term, apply it to those who do not identify with their class interest, in extreme cases by supporting a class opposed to their own.

union).[4] However, Francisco and Mario told me, there was very little support from the citizenry. Mario said that people went in to buy while the demonstration was on, even bringing their children with them, and that supermarket employees went around clearing up the pamphlets and leaflets, probably through fear of losing their jobs too.

The conversation then turned to the general lack of mobilization, and Mario gave his view. He is a steelworker, a member of the UGT (Unión General de Trabajadores),[5] and a representative of the local Socialist (Social Democrat) Party of Galicia (PSG). He said that the old, retired workers of the national shipyard, the main yard in Ferrol, who used to influence public opinion in the city, held that when it embraced democracy Spain became a society of constant progress. With this, Mario was obliquely criticizing the older union leaders who were part of the social-democratic compromise in the Transition, described above. This "constant progress" was that workers were becoming "middle class," and could not accept the reality of the present economic crisis. Mario said:

> They live with the appearances of the middle class, the idea that they can keep on consuming as before [the crisis]. Nobody wants to be identified as a "worker," they all want to be middle class. It is difficult to accept that your life will be increasingly worse and that your children will live even worse . . . that is very hard to accept [unless noted otherwise, all translations are by the author].

Consumption has been the hallmark of this ascent into the middle class (for the USA, see Fantasia and Voss 2004: 27–29), facilitated by the easing of access to personal credit and mortgages for buying cars, household appliances and homes.

Francisco, a retired bank clerk, intervened at this point. He said that Ferrol was not particularly affected by the housing repossessions that have followed the financial crisis in Spain, because every mortgage application was examined thoroughly and also because "families help debtors pay." In fact, credit was influenced by the social networks of acquaintances that linked bank employees and loan applicants. As Francisco explained, "You knew the people coming to you and you had been dealing with them for years. You knew their families. But also you didn't want to put them in a bad situation because you wanted them to keep trusting you." However, he said, some years ago a new type of bank employee appeared, one with a university degree and perhaps an MBA, and who had been abroad. While they were ordinary clerks, they had high expectations

[4] Originally, the CCOO was not attached to the Communist Party. It was, however, increasingly co-opted by the Party during the 1960s and 1970s and became associated with it in practice and in common understanding until it explicitly separated from the Party in the 1980s.

[5] The UGT had officially been the union of the Socialist Party since its inception early in the twentieth century and officially disentangled itself from the Party in the 1980s.

and saw being a clerk as only a temporary step on their move upwards. To achieve those expectations, they had to meet the objectives that management set for them, which meant selling a specified number of mortgages, junk bonds and other financial products to those who aspired to be middle class. Furthermore, banks started to move their staff around fairly often, so these young clerks were strangers to their customers and thus were not restrained by the moral obligation that comes with local social ties. Driven by the objectives they needed to meet and freed of social constraint, these young clerks were the local instruments of credit liberalization. For Francisco, these new clerks were also *desclasado*:

> they did not conceive of themselves as "workers" like us [those of Fransisco's generation] . . . even if they were working next to them as tellers. They considered themselves linked to the bank's regional manager.
>
> They were *desclasados*. They were very exploited, much more than the proper workers like us. The workers stopped their working day at 3 pm and if they were required to work longer hours it was counted as overtime and paid accordingly, whereas the others would do all the hours that were requested, sometimes they stayed until 8 pm, without any overtime.
>
> They were also *desclasados* from their places of origin – they came from other provinces, other towns – they were *desclasados* from their families, from their sweethearts that stayed in their place of origin. They did not have any support here, had no social links, so they sought recognition [from the bank]. But now you don't know if they do it to get a promotion or just not to be fired or be sent away to another branch if they've managed to make a life here.

It is interesting that in these passages "class" is used mostly to identify what should be present, but is absent among those *desclasados*. Also, in their conversations these activists talked about people's aspirations to middle-class status in terms of the emergence of an "aristocracy of labor" in the main shipyard, which seeks to distinguish itself from workers in the auxiliary yards, whose position was precarious and getting worse. Miguel, a shipyard worker in his late fifties with a history of involvement in the Communist Party, uses the idea of *desclasado* to describe this labor aristocracy:

> In the 1980s the union committee promoted solidarity with the auxiliary firms, but this process gave way to a progressive distancing, a *desclasamiento*, where the staff in the main shipyard do not consider they are a part of a class. There is a loss of perspective of the unions, which turn to a managerial unionism. There is a loss of solidarity with other firms [which had been common in the 1960s and 1970s]. And this was parallel to the collapse of parties as a political referent.

This separation of stable workers in the main firm and precarious workers in the auxiliary companies concerned many others. Jaime, who is in the critical sector of the CCOO and has been trying to set up a union committee representing both main and auxiliary workers, thinks the workers in the main firm will ignore

those in the auxiliary companies until their privileges are at stake. Others talk of how the workers in the main firm try to present themselves as "non-workers," as middle class. As was the case with Francisco's story about bank workers, those in the most awkward position are white-collar workers with university degrees. Mario said:

> They all wanted to be middle class. That is what the media sell. That was seen as democratic, it was the democratic ideal, this appearance of having overcome the class relationship through consumption. They were *desclasados* in this sense: they did not want to be a part of the working class. In the steel company [where Mario works] many technical engineers, who are for the most part sons of workers, do not want to think of themselves as workers. They went to university [and] . . . thought that with a university degree they would enter the middle class, but they are in a worse situation even [than the blue collar workers]. Their salaries are not much higher . . . and are individually negotiated. Their function in production is to control the work of people, but . . . they don't have any experience and have to learn from those under them . . . It is a question of class: you are a technical engineer but you work as a foreman, you have to do the same shifts as the blue-collar worker beside you. They are the new proletarians: they suffer pressures from above and from below.

However, not everyone agrees with this analysis. Some activists point to an increased awareness of their own proletarianization among technical and managerial workers. For example, a member of the Trotskyite faction of CCOO stresses the self-awareness of technical engineers in the shipyard. He says they are becoming increasingly aware of their proletarianized status: "They now participate like any other collective in mobilizations and assemblies. Even some of the engineers do."

While the idea of *desclasado* that these people invoke is similar to that of false consciousness, it has complex ramifications. The more salient of these are related to the transition from Franco's dictatorship to parliamentary democracy and to the role of the unions in that process. In the struggle for democracy, the revolutionary unions found themselves fighting for institutional respectability at a time when compromise and agreement between different interest groups and classes was seen as crucial. But also, the democracy at issue was a parliamentary democracy that required abandoning revolutionary projects in favor of a gradualist transformation through electoral majorities, a strategy that Lenin (1902) criticized in *What Is to Be Done?* as denying class struggle. Whatever the intention, this turned out to mean that the unions encouraged a democracy that would transcend class because all would become, or have a reasonable chance to become, middle-class consumers, especially in terms of home ownership (see López and Rodríguez 2011). In their conversations, the people I describe in this section were pointing to, and criticizing, the links between Spain's economic crisis and the combination of consumption and credit that was supposed to transcend class.

Struggles and organic intellectuals

To appreciate the work of organic intellectuals in Ferrol, it is important to understand the different problems that people in the town confront and the different efforts to deal with them. I concentrate on labor conflicts, but it is essential to remember that there are many other conflicts in the town (environmental degradation, corruption, mortgage repossessions, health and education cuts, bank scams etc.) which are also key to understanding how the possibility of a class consciousness emerges or is produced (see Narotzky 2007). However, "work" and work issues, including unemployment, appear to the observer as the central problem of people's lives today.

In Ferrol, unions have long been very strong and active. They still command wide public support, though this declined somewhat following the restructuring of shipbuilding into the main and auxiliary companies, mentioned above, and the bureaucratization of the unions. Even so, shortly before the general election in November 2011, the unions mobilized over 8,000 people in a demonstration of support for the shipyards. In May and June of 2012 there were numerous demonstrations of shipyard workers demanding more investment in the yards and an end to layoffs. Workers, their families, indeed the entire region, are anxious because the shipyards are the "motor of the region," and "if the shipyard closes, Ferrol dies."

Competition for investments in different public-sector shipyards has pushed unions toward a form of economic regionalism, so that workers in the Ferrol yard in Galicia see themselves as competing for investment (and survival) with workers in the Cadiz yard in Andalucía, also part of Navantia, the same public firm. Within Galicia, the public yard in Ferrol is in competition with smaller, private yards in Vigo for regional and national government support. In an unsigned leaflet distributed in June 2012, the radical, Trotskyite group in the CCOO called for a unified struggle and described the situation as "a crime against the workers' movement to which myopic union leaders contribute when they stir localist discourses and they represent other plants as the 'competition' that threatens the future of their own plant."

Meanwhile, the nationalist trade union CIG (Confederación Intersindical Galega) gains the support of about a fifth of the workforce with a discourse that is at once very radical and very corporatist, pointing to the common interest of local entrepreneurs and workers, and holding all parties in Galicia responsible for the abandonment of local industry and in particular the public yards. At the same time, the secretary of the union committee in the main public yard in Ferrol (a member of the mainstream section of CCOO) denounced the Popular Party government for being willing to bail out the financial system at the cost of increasing deficit, cuts in social welfare, recession and rising unemployment, but not being willing to help the productive sector, which includes the Ferrol

yards. In this context, struggle may be complex, but its goal is simple: preserving jobs and livelihoods.

A simple goal does not, however, mean unity within the labor movement, much less agreement on the nature and use of the concept of class. Rather, the different sections of the movement stress their differences from each other and the validity of their own analysis of the situation, while their leaders try to be recognized as organic intellectuals. It is not surprising, then, that they define and invoke class differently. So, the older union leaders euphemize class as the "world of work," in an explicit attempt to build bridges among people in order to promote class consciousness. The younger Trotskyites, particularly attached to classic Marxist literature, use class as their main analytical tool and seek to expand struggle through the dialectical articulation of economic and political strikes. The officials of the big unions (CCOO, UGT) make little use of class beyond occasional reference to the "needy classes" and the "wealthy classes," and their economic analysis reflects a social-democratic liberal Keynesianism. This analytical fragmentation is made more complex by the awkward position of some of the older union leaders who were part of the struggle against Franco. While they remain a model of leadership because of that opposition, those who are still active are strongly criticized for acquiescing to the compromises of the Transition, a charge they do not accept. In turn, these older leaders make the same criticism of present-day union officials, distancing themselves from those compromises. Finally, while the older leadership is accused of having traded labor struggle for social-democratic consensus, they also are often accused of remaining old-style Stalinists. I will present stories that show this complexity.

The first was told by a member of the socialist cultural association, Fuco Buxan. They had a meeting with the CCOO representatives from the shipyard to show their support, asked if the CCOO needed any help and urged that this was a time for solidarity. The answer from the mainstream CCOO representative was an ironic "Are we going to have to go back to class struggle then?" (and he added, "I'm joking . . . "). To the Fuco Buxan member, this showed the CCOO's lack of interest in anything beyond concrete shipyard concerns, and a rejection of the idea of class confrontation. That response was taken to illustrate the ways that CCOO officials saw themselves as something like a political class, distinct from workers, and to illustrate the way that main yard workers saw themselves as a labor aristocracy who were becoming middle class, but who were a classic example of the *desclasados*.

The next tale is about Ramón, one of the older leaders who was active during the Franco period and the Transition and who is now seventy. A member of the Communist Party (PC) since his youth, he was committed to democracy. He followed Santiago Carrillo, then leader of the Spanish PC, in his Euro-communist strategy of a wide alliance of the left, which eventually included urging his followers to join the Socialist Party. Ramón's colleagues called him

"a political animal" and even his rivals said he was an honest man. He was one of the founders of Fuco Buxan, which was set up in 1999 with the goal of mobilizing ordinary citizens against the ills of capitalist society, ranging from the unequal position of immigrants and women to environmental degradation and the aggressive practices of financial institutions. He became increasingly critical of the Socialist Party (PSOE) after the onset of the 2008 economic crisis, and after the Socialist government enacted a new labor law in September 2011 he publicly abandoned the party in an act of protest against what he interpreted as an attack to the historical gains of the working class, acquired through hard struggle and sacrifice. When directly addressed on the issue of class, Ramón said:

> The traditional working class has been modified and today it is much more diverse . . . I think there exists a working class but it is composed by a diversity of experiences and realities of work, but I think that today the "world of work" – I think this is a more appropriate term than "working class" – still has common elements . . . and as long as the economic, political and media power is concentrated in such a few hands, what this does generate is that the world of work has many more allies . . . The other day I read the statements of those presidents of industrial parks [saying that their main worry was not the mobilization of workers but the credit squeeze], and I thought: well, deep down, these people are focusing their attack on the financial groups . . . I think that the system managed to fragment us quite thoroughly so that big sectors of the world of work are not clear about who their adversaries are . . . but it is also true that in the present moment I observe that the focus [of opposition is centered] increasingly on the figure of the big banks and financiers . . . I think this is the head [of the system] . . . *it is what might provide the world of work with that common perspective* . . . but it will not be easy [emphasis added].

The spirit of Eurocommunism has been reconfigured by this old-timer, as the class alliance is widened to include even small and medium entrepreneurs involved in industrial parks who are suffering from the credit squeeze. For these old union leaders, the belief that democracy would be the way to achieve social goals and a transformation of the capitalist system was an article of faith. In the present, they keep that faith and see a broad alliance with other parties and interests as the key to a democratic movement toward a socialist-democratic future.

Although those in the Trotskyite faction of the CCOO agree with many of the analyses of the older activists such as Ramón, they reject their faith in social democracy and the nature of activist leadership that goes with it. Firstly, they criticize the old-timers for believing that it is possible to use the existing political structure to achieve a permanent transformation of capitalist society into a socialist one, free of exploitation. For the critics, that is the old revisionist, Eurocommunist sin. Secondly, they see the old-timers as complicit in the neo-corporatist compact after the death of Franco, which is the cause of

the present bureaucratization of unions and the gap between the leadership and the membership. Finally, they say that the old-timers are dirigiste, imposing their own views on the rank-and-file from above and not listening to ordinary members' concerns and ideas. In contrast, the Trotskyites advocate a grass-roots orientation, in which any struggle can be used to extend class consciousness and the struggle for systemic change. In fact, however, the old-timers in Fuco Buxan are active in articulating many different concerns of ordinary people through continuous mobilization. It appears that what the Trotskyites dislike is what they see as the old-timers' assertive attitude, their willingness to tell people what to do. The old-timers would retort that general assemblies are necessary, but so is strong leadership. However, they are not heeded by those in the younger generations, so that their efforts to be organic intellectuals fail.

The difference between the generations may, however, be greater in the eyes of the Trotskyites than they are in fact. For example, Ramón's analysis of why the main company workers do not support workers in the fringe companies is not very different from that of the Trotskyites. For Ramón, the main company workers "feel they are 'very important' in the region, they only mobilize for what is important, the rest is secondary. That is to say, the union leadership is pitiful." According to an unsigned leaflet produced by the critical section of the CCOO in June 2012, the Trotskyites, on the other hand, hold that the "union committee reflected the mentality that the workers of the [auxiliary] companies were only passing through Navantia and, therefore, their problems could not be at the same level as the problems of the workers in the main [company]." Again, Ramón said that, back in the 1980s, the union leaders decided that "politics was not our job . . . our job is that we have to defend ourselves in professional terms . . . that is an idea almost of a yellow unionism . . . in any case unionism lost its sense, its mobilizing capacity," while for the Trotskyites, according to that same leaflet, "During many years, the union committee of Navantia did not respond to the deterioration of the work conditions in the [auxiliary] companies and did nothing to promote the union organization of their workers; on the contrary: it opposed any process of organization in order to remain the only union power and to continue imposing its views."

Even in terms of their views on leadership, the old-time leaders and the grass-roots Trotskyites are not so far apart as the Trotskyites seem to think. Certainly, the old-timers believe in leadership. At a dinner after a demonstration in the city by workers of the shipyards in May of 2012, someone commented on the show of disunion and confrontation that ended the action, and said "We need leaders like the old ones . . . someone who holds the megaphone up and gives an orientation." During that demonstration, workers in the main company were squabbling with those in the auxiliary companies, which led some old-timers to say "This is pitiful, there is no direction, a workers' movement has to be directed and not be left to spontaneity!" Commenting on the same event, Ramón

said that "when I meet comrades they tell me: you [old leaders] should come back because the present ones do nothing, they don't do [general] assemblies, they don't inform us of anything, it is as if we, the workers, didn't exist."

Once more, the old-timer Ramón and the Trotskyites are not that far apart. For Ramón, workers demand leaders, but those leaders have to respect them, inform them of what is going on, and take their views into account. Indeed, as he explained it, leadership has to emerge from the grass roots. Referring to his work in Fuco Buxan, he says

> if we help people who have concrete problems to self-organize we can create something similar to what is happening now in Greece with Syriza . . . Based on my personal experience . . . [I see that] through the weaving of that process [of helping people to organize themselves to resolve concrete problems] you also create the favorable conditions to have some of these people become leaders . . . I am now very angry [with the situation] . . . but I can also see that this cannot be a call from above but a process that has to be woven.

For the Trotskyites, on the other hand, their concern with democracy and a bottom-up approach is matched by a desire to "guide" and "orient" action in a way that accords with their political project. As well, their leaders present themselves as more knowledgeable in their analysis of the situation and more experienced in struggle than most, and so to be heeded.

These similarities are not, however, enough to erase the factors that separate the old-timers such as Ramón from the younger Trotskyites such as Jaime. Two are especially important. The first is history. It is very difficult for those of the younger generation to understand the very deep scars that the post-Franco Transition left in the workers' movement, especially after the re-structuring phase of the 1980s. The scramble for power and the fragmenting of the left hampered in important ways those who sought to unify the labor movement, and the complexity and depth of this history means that there is always a point at which anyone can be seen to have been defending the wrong position. The second factor is the intensity of the struggle to achieve the position of a legitimate leader. Such a leader is an organic intellectual capable of a knowledgeable analysis of the underlying features of the immediate situation, and is also an activist, the speaker with the megaphone organizing and leading protest. In Ferrol, this position is one of enormous prestige and authority, one that propels people into History, and each faction aims at achieving that position.

Class

So, What class? Whose class? How is class possible in Ferrol? Is the concept useful for struggle? Is it useful for analysis? What is the responsibility of academics with regard to the concept?

The people I talked with during my fieldwork approach class in terms of their long experience of workers' mobilization and their thorough knowledge of the classic Marxist literature and more recent work, including academic debates. They know of or have been involved in the debates and confrontations in the second half of the twentieth century that transformed Communist and Socialist parties and unions in Western Europe and, of course, in Spain. My own analysis is based on a less intimate knowledge than theirs, but reflects a different perspective, from which two things stand out that appear to contradict each other. One is that the unions are able to mobilize 25,000 people in an area with a population of about 75,000, which suggests something like class solidarity and the continuing ability of unions to represent common interests. The other is the mutual disqualification between the various factions of labor leadership that I have described, a rift that seems to prevent the emergence of strong organic intellectuals and of a sustained and unified class orientation and practice.

I want to try to make sense of these contradictory ethnographic facts in terms of some others. One set of these revolves around the increased importance of consumption and people's consumption aspirations for understanding class in Ferrol. This increase is reflected in the centrality of the idea of the *desclasado* in the local analysis of class fragmentation and, simultaneously, in the potential of the financial crisis to become the basis of a new interest coalition. The remaining ethnographic fact that I want to invoke is the importance of history, the way that the different historical experiences of the two generations of labor leaders that I have described shape their perspectives on the present and their ability to cooperate.

Rereading the debate on revisionism in the 1890s, particularly within the Social Democratic Party in Germany, reveals a surprising number of similarities with the present (Gustafsson 1975). That old debate involved a number of topics, including the bureaucratization of the party; a shift away from class confrontation and direct action, and toward union negotiation and parliamentary elections, and the gradualism and collaboration between classes that these imply; the increasing importance of consumption and the associated decline in homogeneous working-class identity. These find echoes in Spain.

The Transition became a commitment to parliamentary democracy, a rejection of Marxism by much of the left, and the embrace of middle-class consumption and eventually of a welfare state of the sort common in Western Europe: the "European dream." No longer was capitalism to be superseded through class struggle. Instead, it was to be guided with tripartite agreements among the state, labor and capital; any sacrifice that the working class had to make was just a temporary adjustment required to correct the effects of state economic policies under Franco. In the process, the political aspect of the labor movement was replaced by wage negotiations carried out by bureaucratized unions, the leaders of which were co-opted by the rhetoric of the responsibility for labor peace and

democratic stability (for parallels in the United States, see Fantasia and Voss 2004). Expanding consumer credit enabled working-class families to emulate middle-class consumption starting in the late 1960s, a process that skyrocketed in the boom period around 2000, linked to the housing bubble. As a result of these events, the experience of class was depoliticized and its nature and boundaries were blurred because of expanding social benefits such as education and healthcare and consumer credit. These changes did not, however, affect all sectors of the working class equally. Those in heavy industry, including those in the Ferrol yards, have experienced repeated restructuring since the 1980s, which strengthened their identification as working class in the traditional industrial sense, facilitated by proud memories of union struggle and its victories during the dictatorship. This identification helps explain how the unions could still mobilize 25,000 people in Ferrol. It also helps us to understand how class is still a useful concept for the relatively young Trotskyites I have described, so critical of the older leadership and its embrace of revisionism after Franco.

In addition to the changes in the position of the working class that I have described, that class has been subjected to forces that produced both fragmentation and commonality. The increasing importance of identity in the past few decades was accompanied by growing differentiation in terms of gender, age and race, as well as national, ethnic and religious belonging. These latter differentiations became especially visible in the increasing voice of xenophobic groups and in outbursts of populist violence against immigrants that are driving elected parties toward exclusionary and discriminatory policies. Although Ferrol is not particularly beset by these identity divisions, the old-timers try to counter this fragmentation, stressing homogeneity within diversity through their invocation of "the world of work." The talk of *desclasados*, however, shows that other tensions of differentiation are at work.

While people's aspirations and their experiences at work point to a fragmentation of the working class in Ferrol, the mechanisms that facilitated that fragmentation recently have begun to produce a basis of commonality. This is not a commonality of work, but one of exploitation in the realm of credit and consumption. For ordinary people, employed and unemployed, and even for small entrepreneurs, the relation to credit has become the basis of their understanding of systemic dispossession. If credit became the way into middle-class identity and becoming *desclasado*, lack of credit has become the return ticket to a working-class reality and, associated with that, a declining faith in parliamentary democracy. The financial crisis and the response of a technocratic government are producing a strong feeling of class differentiation and polarization: while the rich get richer (especially those in banking), the rest get poorer.

Credit and debt have become the center of a new form of class consciousness, and even small entrepreneurs, unable to keep up their businesses because of the crunch in credit and consumption, are reluctantly abandoning their petit

bourgeois position. Financial instruments that substituted for increases in salaries have trapped people in a debt circuit that is tied to a declining middle-class standard of living, shattering the promise of a "classless democracy." Credit has ceased to be an asset and debt has become an unsustainable liability when income from salaries (or small profits) has dried up. For most people in Ferrol, then, the old relationship of labor and capital has become mediated by the relationship of credit and debt, in which people confront not employers, but financial institutions. Wages, now mostly understood as income, become not so much the expression of the exploitative relation to productive capital, but the expression of an expropriative relation to financial capital that directly affects livelihood. The unemployment that more and more people confront is feared because it undercuts people's efforts to be creditworthy, to honor their debts and keep their middle-class lifestyle, the lifestyle that they thought came with the European dream of social democracy.

What Costas Lapavitsas (2009: 138) says of the main aspects of present-day financialization fits the Spanish crisis: financial institutions are "extracting financial profit directly out of the personal income of workers," producing a decline in personal savings and an increase in debt for workers, while real wages contract. This helps explain why working people (employed, unemployed, retired) feel exploited and defrauded by banks. This is aggravated by a feeling of being despised and humiliated by those who are involved in financial institutions and the political powers that protect them: while workers are permanently and publicly defined as inadequate to the needs of the economy, bankers convicted of embezzlement are supported and pardoned by the government. Workers (and others) have become thoroughly involved in the mechanisms of finance for their everyday livelihoods and have become expropriated or exploited through them in a very immediate way. This is not, however, conventional capitalist exploitation, because profit emerges in circulation rather than in production. The extraction that comes with financialization

> should be clearly distinguished from exploitation that occurs in production and remains the cornerstone of contemporary capitalist economies. Financial expropriation is an additional source of profit that originates in the sphere of circulation. In so far as it relates to personal income, it involves existing flows of money and value, rather than new flows of surplus-value. Yet, despite occurring in circulation, it takes place systematically and through economic processes, thus having an exploitative aspect. (Lapavitsas 2009: 131)

Moreover, this situation is based on inequality of information and power between working people and the financial institutions that give them credit (2009: 132–33).

This poses a problem in terms of class theory. The processes that homogenize class experience and produce social differentiation appear to be related not so much to the ownership of capital and exploitation in the realm of production, but

to the realm of circulation, the home of finance capital. How can we articulate exploitation in production with expropriation in circulation in terms of class?

If financial institutions are to extract profit from ordinary people, those people need to have access to some kind of income, either their own or those of close kin. Also, credit for consumption requires that there be consumables, and hence people involved (and exploited) in the material activities required for their production and distribution. At the same time, however, if most people had adequate, stable incomes, they would have less need to borrow in order to maintain their basic consumption, which would hamper the system of financial expropriation. Taken together, these points suggest that the deregulation and globalization of markets has two pertinent consequences. One is the reduction of labor costs, through the relocation of production to cheaper regions and through labor migration resulting in the contraction of income for the working class in mature economies, with increased income instability. The other is the expansion of consumption based on access to credit and financial expropriation of the working class. Globally, then, the working class is simultaneously being exploited at the point of production through surplus-value extraction and expropriated through the financial system at the point of consumption. Locally, on the other hand, the changing structure of production fragments workers as a class while homogenizing them as subjects of financial dispossession. This, I think, is what *desclasado* points to: the commonality that the working class is unable to perceive at the point of production is becoming apparent to them in the realm of circulation, their common deprived position in the financial system. It remains to consider the effects of these fragmentations and commonalities for class struggle.

To begin with, we must consider some of the important things that people in the labor movement in Ferrol have to say. These include the point that those in the labor aristocracy will re-class themselves when they understand that their jobs are at stake, and that the weakening of the middle-class dream that has followed the credit crunch will awaken people to their class position. These points suggest that the articulation of people's deprived positions in production and consumption are key to the re-awaking of class consciousness and that the goal of class struggle is to reverse those deprivations and so transform the social order. Those in the labor movement also say that the experience of past struggle is valuable for those in the younger generation, but that present-day struggles need to be waged by those involved in present-day structures of capital accumulation and dispossession. These points, in turn, suggest that a new set of organic intellectuals needs to reconfigure the strategies and tactics of the past.

Access to and distribution of a variety of resources, such as property, income and knowledge, are still the central factors of a system of differentiation that is to be transformed by class struggle. Ownership, mediated by credit backed by income-generating opportunities, once seemed to be accessible to all who were

willing to work, but this dream has evaporated, and people tell themselves "We have been living beyond our possibilities." This expresses the sense of being out of place, and the idea that middle-class consumption was not meant for the working class. Once the mirage of credit is gone, what defines "our possibilities" is paid employment. And as unemployment and underemployment grow, it again becomes clear that we own only our labor power, which becomes a valuable asset only in relation to capital's demand for it. This realization can be the foundation for a re-classing of the *desclasado*. In other words, the immediate struggles around financialized expropriation are the prolegomena to a re-classing that leads back to basic class confrontation: the labor–capital dilemma and the universal search for the means of livelihood.

Conclusion

Globalization has increased differentiation within the working class, while neoliberalism has reduced state-mediated contributions to people's material welfare. The result, I have argued in the preceding paragraphs, is that large numbers of people have become subject to exploitation in production and extraction in circulation. Those people's struggle against this double form of dispossession appears commonly to take one or the other of two political forms.

The first form is efforts to protect their access to economic and political resources through exclusionary nationalism (Kalb 2011). In this, a corporatist unity is asserted on cultural and moral grounds, while economic inequalities are blamed on external causes. Although these are struggles *of* class that express class experiences, they are not class movements in the sense that they do not seek or lead to the transformation of the ownership structure, and so do not produce a historical bloc in Gramsci's sense. The second form is efforts to find a wide commonality based on people's position within the economy as producers and as consumers. In Spain, such efforts are expressed in movements such as the Indignados, which seek to re-create a political–economic sense of class beyond the workplace. There is potential here for the re-emergence of a concept of class, but in the absence of organic intellectuals who can promulgate strong arguments and a sense of direction these movements also do not result in a historical bloc.

As Polanyi (1935: 392) argued in his analysis of the rise of fascism in Europe, democracy is inherently oriented toward socialism, and such a belief may well have motivated Communist union leaders who struggled against Franco in the name of democracy. However, as I have said, the compromise of the Transition entailed renouncing the goal of the radical transformation of Spain's capitalist system, and the old economic and political elites remained in place. With the economic crisis, that compromise has become increasingly meaningless, as technocratic administrations protect the interests of the wealthy and the

powerful, under the guise of "the market," at the expense of the well-being of the mass of Spaniards.[6] Protestors in the new social movements demand "Real democracy now," indicating the corrosive effect of that technocracy on the faith that people had in a liberal–democratic system of government. Such demands also express, and help spread, the awareness that formal democracy too often, as Engels (1895) observed, favors the reproduction of the existing structure of power.

In Ferrol, we find this growing awareness among the old-timers such as Ramón, among their Trotskyite critics and among the younger activists of the Indignados movement. However, and as I have shown, shared awareness is not a sufficient basis for extending and organizing class and class struggle. The old-timers are defined both as Stalinists and as party to the revisionist compromise of the Transition. The Trotskyites, in practice, appear mostly concerned with the employed members of the working class, although in theory they address class as a multiple experience, and they are unclear about their immediate strategic project. The younger social-movement activists are allergic to any form of organization, and they analyze the situation people confront in terms that are more moral (*indignados*) than political–economic.

These divergences would matter less if the Ferrol population were as uniform and stable as it was during the heyday of industrialization around the 1960s. However, the precarious position of so many people in the region is a structural impediment to organization, as is the diversity of those people's backgrounds, ranging from ordinary industrial workers to lower-level managers and petty entrepreneurs, all with their different histories of aspirations, and frustrations, in their lives and the lives of those around them. The situation is one of a constant process of differentiation within working-class experience, springing from differences across class segments and generations, and shaped by developments within different spheres such as work and consumption. If there is to be a class movement, these new social and political–economic realities need to be matched with new analyses, ideas and programs that sustain commonality. And one of the tasks of those in anthropology, and in the other social sciences, is to help assess concepts of class in terms of their potential to explain the logic of people's experience in the present and, hopefully, to help them to change it for the better.

[6] Spain had liberal technocratic governments that produced structural adjustment under Franco, in the late 1950s and in the 1960s. These were undertaken without democracy, relying on the impending menace of violent repression against the working class's incipient collective organization. The meaning behind the apparently neutral macroeconomic language of present-day technocrats is clear, as it awakens memories of the technocrats during the dictatorship.

4 Through a class darkly, but then face to face: praxis through the lens of class

Gavin Smith

Anthropologists have long been concerned with the relationship between themselves as inquiring intellectuals and the people they study. In the course of my own career the issue has taken on an extra wrinkle, as the people anthropologists studied increasingly (albeit unevenly) began to engage in the making of history – not just their own local history, but often their sense of being part of a broader current in which ordinary people became a force in History (Grimshaw and Hart 1994; Smith 1999). Some anthropologists were especially interested in pursuing this shift (e.g. Wolf 1969) and others were less so (e.g. Geertz 1973). However, irrespective of anthropologists' responses, this shift from being the objects of anthropological gaze to being the subjects of history introduced a tension in what hitherto had been simply a rather charming discussion in the Senior Common Room. I will call it the conversation over the intimacy of ethnography versus the detachment of theory. What I mean by this is the extent to which we might learn from the intricacy of situated descriptions and interpretations versus the extent to which our monographs should seek out forms, processes and tendencies of use above and beyond the contingencies and specificities of a time and a place.

Surely the very scale at which anthropologists do their fieldwork mitigates against leaping to broad conclusions. Yet if political engagement becomes important for anthropologists, at least some stretching beyond the local, the contingent, the specific seems called for. We might take as an example class formation and its causes and consequences. This is an issue that the left has regarded as crucial in the understanding of political leverage, what I will here call "praxis." Yet, caught within that conversation between ethnography and theory, many anthropologists have been tempted to leave class aside. By contrast, I argue that, insofar as the left's interest in class is always about praxis, about people becoming the subjects of their own history, and insofar as the "autonomous practices of the self" (see below) are very much what ethnography can expose, then ethnographic study has much to offer to our understanding of class.

In contradistinction to a sociological understanding of class, then, I will argue here for a political understanding. By the former I mean a project to

understand the social world in terms of *classing* the population objectively in terms of their relative control over valued resources (broadly or narrowly defined[1]), this supposedly implying a subjective element expressed through their elective affinity (see, e.g., Goldthorpe and Hope 1974). In distinguishing this from a political understanding I come close to Rancière's (1999) distinction between *police* and *politics*. The one refers to the normative arena of debates and negotiations around the exercise of authorized power: the ruse of reason that can justify inequality. The other refers to situations in which effective demands are made for the real practice of a principle of radical equality.

> Looking at the history of the twentieth century, we may well take the view that . . . "ordinary" citizens, classes . . . have come together to force . . . the state and its institutions (schools, the legal and political systems) to civilize themselves – that is to say . . . to represent the world to themselves as a shared space in which they have their place. (Balibar 2002: 33)

Class in the first case is a way of describing social inequality as an existing (possibly unavoidable) state of being. But if we take this other, political, view, then class is an emergent phenomenon arising from the refusal to accept this social order. Far from an understanding of the subject in terms of being, it implies recognition that, inseparable from social practice, subjectivity is inherently a process of becoming.[2]

We can witness many instances of this kind of practice that are individual and situationally specific, but I reserve the term praxis for the emergence of a collective subject that has historical purchase, "history" in the sense of the making of history. Here I am departing from Rancière (whose focus anyway is not class). Balibar concludes the observation quoted above by noting that the historical trajectory he is describing "would never have got off the ground . . . without autonomous 'practices of the self' being constantly invented by those making up [the] multitude."

I call this the dimension of *class potential*. But to get at both the possible catalysts for praxis and also its effective outcome, we need to attend to the conjunctural features of the relevant social formation. We need to be able to trace the link between the contradictions that arise in the unfolding reproduction or transformation of different forms of capitalism on the one hand, and on the other cooperative and conflictual forms and practices. This allows us to explore the conditions of class that allow opportunities for praxis.

[1] For example, Marx's understanding of "capital" refers to a quite specific form of value, while Bourdieu's (1990) relies on a variety of forms.

[2] I am not referring here to the much-cited distinction between "a class in itself" and "a class for itself". Following Thompson (1978a), I find it hard to see how a class can be for itself in some *a posteriori* version of a hitherto inarticulate "thing."

This conditionality of class has to do with the fact that class is about the simultaneous mutual dependence and conflict that are inherent in capitalist relations of production: first the separation of those who control property from those who have labor power, and then their re-combining at the site of productive work.[3] The division of the fruits of production, between those who provide tools and those who provide energy, is arrived at through a process of struggle between the two. Over time these divisions may attain a kind of normative expectation and even some kind of legal endorsement, but Marx's point was that underlying such division is the balance of forces. "Hence, in the history of capitalist production, the establishment of a norm . . . presents itself as . . . a struggle between collective capital, i.e. the class of capitalists, and collective labour, i.e. the working class" (Marx 1976 [1867]: 342–44).

As we do ethnographic work, the challenge for this political way of understanding capitalist society in class terms is to uncover the possible ways in which the autonomous practices of the self could be transformed into the collective agency of historical praxis. These autonomous practices of the self are precisely what the situated descriptions and interpretations of ethnography are well suited to presenting. So, in fact, the transformation I am describing is simultaneously the intellectual one from dense ethnographic narrative to the tendencies and processes of more broadly applicable theory, and the political transformation from the isolated and situated practices of the person toward the praxis of the collective subject.

Two stories

To illustrate what this transformation might induce, I present two stories, one from each of two fieldsites. I have done most of my fieldwork in two overlapping periods, the first in the central highlands of Peru (1972–85) and the second in the coastal littoral of the Alicante region of Spain called the Bajo Segura (1978–96). Superficially, the first seems more amenable to thinking in terms generally associated with class, while the second does not. But this is only a superficial interpretation.

The first fieldwork took place during the final two years of a successful collective struggle to secure a massive area of highland pasture from the dominant haciendas, and I undertook that research explicitly to study the history of what at the time was a quite well-known example of rural rebellion in Peru (see Hobsbawm 1974). One unexpected finding had to do with the character of the

[3] It will become clear that the particular way in which I understand class analysis makes many of the principles of class relations applicable to a range of social interactions among kin, community and so on. Adapting Marx's (1976 [1867]: 1019–38) distinction, we might distinguish these in terms of the formal and the real exploitation of labor.

participants in this rebellion. The region of Huasicancha had been infamous for its rebelliousness at least since the days of the war with Chile from 1879 to 1884 (see Smith 1989), and I expected to find a strong sense of localized solidarity. However, the research revealed that the success of the struggle was at least in part the result of participation by people linked across areas well beyond the site of the struggle itself, and by no means were those links confined to people relying on rural livelihoods (those usually glossed as "peasants").

So, when I came to choose a second fieldsite I was especially interested in whether this kind of collective praxis could be found elsewhere. The issue could be posed in terms of a question about class. What had surprised me in Peru was that people who saw themselves as being exploited through a variety of social relationships (in discussion these people commonly saw their condition in terms of forms of exploitation) nonetheless combined in a collective struggle to secure the crucial means of production for arable farming: pasture. So, for the second project I sought a situation in which there was a fairly long history of working-class relations across town and country and across sectors of the economy, for this would allow me to explore the nature of the links among these heterogeneous working people.

I will begin with a story from the first fieldsite and then turn to the second.

Central Highland, Peru – Sabino 1930s

It is hard to know how to begin the first one, about Sabino Jacinto. It needs a back-story. *That* has to do with seeing a movie years ago by Francesco Rosi, *Salvatore Giuliano*, the famous Sicilian bandit. The manner in which the film was made had fascinated me, with its weird mix of actual newsreel, documentary and dramatized genres, and its almost aggressive neutrality. It had sunk into my mind as "a movie," so I was especially struck when the name arose again, first in Hobsbawm's *Primitive Rebels* (1959) and then in his *Bandits* (1969). Those who have read the former will recall that the book is written as a series of chapters, each of which is a step forward (now entirely unfashionable!) toward more sophisticated forms of rebellion. It begins with bandits, and a key figure is Turi: Giuliano.

So, living with highland farmers in the midst of a rebellion around 1970, I was increasingly fascinated by stories of an ancient loner living in a *choza* (hut) at the end of a canyon up in the mountains, who had once been a bandit and subsequently led the first successful campaign to recover land from the dominant haciendas. Many times I tried to arrange a visit to his *choza*, but he remained elusive. It became a running joke among the *huasicanchinos*. In the cemetery on *Todos Santos* (All Saints' Day) an old woman came up to me, leading a younger woman by the hand. "Here," she said, "this is Sabino's granddaughter. You should marry her. Then she would take you to him." Another

old woman pushed past her, this time with another young woman, "No marry this one. She's much better looking and she can cook." And there was a round of vigorous laughter, for this was part of the ceremonies of *Todos Santos* when older women try to get younger ones married off. One dark and stormy night (really) I was drinking with some friends when a young man came in drenched and apparently in some panic. "Sabino is dying," he said. "He wants to speak to you." I was taken by horse up the canyon to his home, where I recorded his gravelly voice between his gasps for breath.

That is the story. The rest is more like an addendum, oddly enough bringing us back to Hobsbawm. In an article on peasant land occupations in Peru, he (1974: 137) quotes an administrator of one of the haciendas writing that the campaign "has been thought up, they tell me, by one Sabino or Sabini Román,[4] who used to work on [Hacienda] Ingahuasi and who has recently been made *alcalde* [mayor]."

In his teens Sabino had killed a hacienda employee in an argument, and for some years had lost himself in the mountains as a result. A skilled pastoralist with extensive knowledge of the *puna*, he occasionally worked for one or other of the haciendas as well as accumulating livestock for himself and his extended family. In the late 1930s, now among the elders of the community of Huasicancha, he led a collective "invasion" to occupy land supposedly owned by the Tucle and Rio de la Virgen haciendas. According to his own account in subsequent months, he was accused of being a communist, imprisoned in Lima, where he was beaten with a rubber hose, bribed to sign a statement that he refers to as *un canto* and planted with political leaflets he could not himself read. He ends this chapter of his life "*He sido loco saliendo de la carcel* [I left the prison crazy]" (Smith 1989: 181).

Sabino Jacinto and his immediate kin remained on the land that was eventually settled on Huasicancha by the haciendas. In the community records of 1937 a member of the community is recorded as complaining, "One day he [Jacinto] tells me he commands here; the next day he says to me, 'Uncle? Don't call me uncle. I am no uncle of yours'" (Smith 1989: 180). In the years following the settlement Sabino was often to be found working for one or other of the neighboring haciendas.

Bajo Segura, Spain – Alicia 1978

I want to turn now to a different time and a strikingly different setting, though there is a play here too about being an uncle one minute and not the next.

[4] "Román" is almost certainly a confusion with (Martin) Ramos, a younger spokesperson for the campaign (see Smith 1989: 251).

The outcome, however, is quite different, perhaps as a result of what Bourdieu would call an entirely different habitus.

In the Bajo Segura in the 1970s there were viable commercial farms, many of them producing horticultural products such as artichokes, melons and tomatoes, as well as the famous Valencian oranges and lemons. And alongside them, in amongst them if you like, were small manufacturing enterprises producing rugs, shoes, toys and so on. Many families had a foot in both kinds of work, and while this meant experience of both farming and working on machinery in regimented workshops for some, the fact that jobbing homework was widespread meant that the rationale of manufacturing existed within the domestic arena too.

And, just as the current situation was a product of a particular historical past in central Peru, so here too. The interweaving of manufacturing and agriculture went back a long way, especially to the fact that agricultural crops had long been processed on site: esparto grass into ropes, sails, fishing nets and sandals; silk cocoons into silk; grapes into wine.

Yet, coming into this setting as I did at the end of the 1970s, rendering the landscape in class terms was not as immediately obvious as it had been in Peru. In many ways this could be explained by reference to the class literature itself. If class has to do with the experience of collective work and the clear distinction between the factory owner and disciplined workers, then neither of these features was obvious in the Bajo Segura. And yet I do not think it was my dogmatic Marxism that dissuaded me from quickly throwing out this inconvenient concept, faced with the beehive of multiple work activities and social relations of production that surrounded me. Rather, I think it would be hard for any anthropologist to live in that area and not be aware of the central role of class relations in people's lives, but now along a different plane. That was the role played by the flow of the value of their work away from these people in a complicated and shifting process; in other words, some form or other of exploitation in the technical sense. It is true that the term "exploitation" could be heard only in the talk of union organizers and social scientists. But one would have to be an especially dull ethnographer not to sense that a vast part of people's conversations revolved precisely around the winding and erratic paths taken by the flow of value: its escape from one site, its holing up in another for a time, its slipping away again, as well as the elusive mysteries of its accumulation elsewhere.

As the story begins, I was walking back from the *guardaría* where I had dropped off my daughter for the day. Walking with me was Alicia, who was on her way home after chatting to her friend who ran the daycare center (see Narotzky and Smith 2006: 78 ff.). I told her who I was. She laughed and said, "I know who you are. You're the guy who listens to my Dad talking about the old *fincas*, like a communicant listening to the priest. If you want to know about that stuff, you should be talking to Uncle Ciriaco." I knew that Alicia spent the

bulk of her day as a homeworker doing a variety of unskilled jobs that she got from her Uncle Fernando, a work distributor for the local shoe factories, and I was more interested in infiltrating myself into her work day and chatting to her while she worked than seeking out old Tio Ciriaco, who would talk to me any time.

I spent a few hours with Alicia that day, and managed to drop by casually from time to time to carry on our conversations. As the various people in her domestic life passed through the setting of her homework – one or other of her younger brothers, her mother, her father and so on – so conversation would turn to them. One day it was her Uncle Fernando who came up for discussion. She told me "He says I'm lucky he lets me have the work. He could be giving it to others. When I started out . . . perhaps then he was right. But now he gives me the hardest jobs and comes by late in the week with extra work he hasn't managed to get others to do." I had heard variations on this theme time and again from women involved in various kinds of homework, and the figure could have been an uncle, a father, an aunt or simply a close friend. The use of intimacy as the lever of exploitation in sweated labor is the way I thought of it.

I did not see Alicia for a while. The next time we met was at a local soccer game. She was with some friends, who were teasing one another, laughing and exchanging local gossip. I paused long enough to catch the brunt of one or two teasing comments, and was about to move off. Then Fernando walked past. The laughter stopped and Alicia tried to turn away enough not to make eye contact, but not enough to be openly rude. Fernando made a remark about her unreliability and walked on. I must have looked surprised at how this encounter had turned out, because Alicia waited for him to be a suitable distance away and then, turning away from her friends and dropping the lightness of tone suited to a leisurely afternoon, she put one hand on her hip and said to me "I told him I'd had enough. He said I could find work elsewhere, so that's what I'm doing."

As with Sabino's case, there is a back-story here. First of all, Alicia was the latest in a series of generations of her family for whom kin terms such as "uncle" (Tio Ciriaco was in fact her grandfather) were deeply embedded in the social economics of livelihood, commercialized or otherwise. So, her grandfather, Tio Ciriaco, had found his work through his own father who, in turn, had found his job as a coach-driver for a local landlord through his mother, the wet-nurse for one of the landlord's children. Second, though not herself a participant, Alicia had friends among a group of women who had helped me with a project. In vain I had been trying to administer a small questionnaire to homeworkers. It was mostly about factual issues, such as their household composition, how long they had taken work in and so on; there were also some questions that sought their ideas of what it meant to help somebody, what it

meant to work with or for somebody and so on. I had almost given up on the questionnaire when a neighbor who had responded to one of my first attempts offered to help me out. I needed that help for two reasons. First, women tended to be far too busy during the daytime to attend to what seemed to them to be an irrelevant and, indeed, disconnected set of questions. Second, each individual success in my quest seemed to be my final one. Unlike the case with a compact worksite, the dispersal of homeworkers made it hard to follow one interview with another. Returning home one evening with a bunch of empty pages in hand, I had complained about this to my neighbor. She responded with impatience about my ineptitude, grabbed the bunch of forms and said she would pass them through a network for people to fill out themselves.

A couple of weeks later I found myself in a heated encounter with two or three women. As the questionnaire rolled through the kitchens and patios, what started as small discussions with one another about how to answer this or that question had mushroomed into a lively debate about where being helpful began and where being taken advantage of left off. This in turn flowed into the issue of what one might call work and what one might call, well, something else. Fortunately, by the time I was confronted with all this things had gone from one state to its opposite. The women who had cornered me, now joined by my neighbor, described it like this. At first neighbors and friends had become highly sensitized to what they were asking of each other and doing for each other. Then they had begun to talk about the same issues with respect to the work distributors. Eventually, a group of eleven women had decided to meet with the three most relevant work distributors to discuss "issues."

All these women were married and had children, and since Alicia was only at the stage of saving for her marriage chest she was not among them. However, she was quite aware of them, and my guess is that when the hand went to her hip and she turned to tell me that she no longer took work from her uncle, she was aware of the discussions that had revolved around the rolling questionnaire.

Stories such as this are the stuff of my "information." They provide me with what I know about my ethnography, but they also provide an almost infinite set of referents, reminders, emotions and so on, as they touch on what I think I know of these things. For me, the ethnographer, their chaotic density almost works against the temptations of any broad conclusions. Yet, in some way or other, I want them to help me understand what use class analysis might be, mostly by challenging the way I think about class and praxis. What I especially want to think about here is the way in which we can cross scales of social interaction and practice while still employing the features of class analysis. So, I will begin by applying class analysis to the stories and their settings at a rather broad scale, perhaps less directly linked to the immediacy of fieldwork and experience: in this sense, the more obscure face of class – "Through a

class darkly." Only after that will I try to understand these stories in a more embedded ethnographic way – " . . . and then face to face."

Through a class darkly . . .

I want to focus on the way that the two cases I have presented draw us to two essential elements of class, one conditional and one potential. The conditional one has to do with a particular kind of society, one in which various ways of laying claim to, and controlling, property are used as the means for directing the flow of value from the people who produce it to the people who accumulate it. This is the actual or concrete element of class relations, and it can be found in the everyday, small-scale practices of work. Then there is a second element, which is the potential element and hence the political element. It has to do with the willed intervention of agency into the making of history to modify its unfolding: in a word, praxis.

It is worth noting that both of these elements involve development and control. In the first element, value has to be developed through *techne* and its flow has to be controlled to direct it back to the capitalist. In the second element, the one of potential, praxis has to develop where other forces hinder it doing so; some element of control by and of the collective must occur. Taken together in this way, this is surely the beginning of a way for constructing a bridge between (micro) practices and (macro) praxis.

In the Peruvian case, the way in which the *hacendada* used control of land to extract value from local people employed as shepherds, as well as the way in which monopolization of this pasture prevented people from using their labor for their own benefit, was clear. This applied not only to local residents, but also to migrants. Many of them were engaged in volatile livelihoods beyond the region, and used livestock as a form of security. So they too were related to the *hacendada* through this land. Moreover, initially at least, these practices of livelihood are closely tied to the praxis of resistance. Yet the contingency of this particular history sets the limits on just how macro things were. Though much talk in the region referred in general to *campesinos* versus landlords, this actual struggle pitted a quite clearly bounded group of *campesinos* against quite specific landlords. This means that there are limits to referring to what is happening here as an expression of class. It may be that the very intensity of the solidarity I witnessed, which is what David Harvey (1995: 71), following Raymond Williams, called "militant particularism" or what Hobsbawm (personal communication) called "idiosyncratic rural resistance," worked against a broader class collectivity.

As I said, in the Spanish case the first element of class relations appeared to be confusing and complex, while evidence that some kind of collective intervention might shift the conditions of history was likewise obscure. But

two things need to be said about this. The first is that the daily practices we observe in fieldwork may be too circumscribed to capture the scale at which the exploitative relations that frame class exist. The second is that class relations have a history: a history of the specificity of the everyday ways in which property relates to labor so as to produce and channel value, and a history of what I would call "the balance of forces." In Bajo Segura the very form that livelihood took was itself a product of the kind of oppression that shaped the labor process at the micro level and destroyed praxis at the macro level through a period preceding fieldwork, the period of the Franco dictatorship (Narotzky and Smith 2006).

So these are my initial reflections on "what class has to do with it." However, I think that it is a mistake to begin one's thinking about class in this rather academic way. Instead, before one can decide how to frame a question about the world in terms of class, one needs to think about what one is trying to do with one's life, what one is trying to avoid – physical labor perhaps, the hazards of uncertainty, the indignity of failure. And if this kind of reflection is, as Bourdieu (2000) so eloquently insists, a baseline for doing a sociology of ourselves, it might also be a similar baseline for understanding the practical activity of the people we study.

. . . And then face to face

If we go back to the distinction I made at the outset, between the ethnographic urge and the urge toward broader theory, then these ethnographic stories seem to disturb an academic kind of class analysis. But this does not mean that they stand in contrast to, or even against, the principles of such an analysis. Rather, as I said earlier, class analysis implies a concern with praxis and history, or perhaps better put, praxis *against* history. Each of these stories shows elements of defiance toward the present that is the heart of that opposition. In each of these stories, participants willfully bracket certain elements of what is happening, the better to make sense of what they *can* make happen: Alicia's denial of her uncle's invoking a kin tie; Sabino too, but for different reasons. So while the stories do disturb the tendency toward some kind of ordered symmetry in a broader analysis, I propose that the understanding of what is happening in these two small items of evidence would be severely limited if we failed to understand them in terms of class.

It is often said, or at least it used often to be said, that class is all about relationships. A class does not sit alone; it is made by the force of its opposed class. This may or may not be so, but to think of class in this way we need to go back one step further. The unfolding of our potential, the development of what we might be against the reality of what we currently are, is a struggle against the conditions that exist in the present, in order to make them into new possibilities.

This is as true for personal subjectivity as it is for collective identity. Practical work is precisely about destroying what currently exists in order to make it what needs to exist. In this work, some relations have to be created, others constrained or confronted, and through this process personal and collective forms *develop* (in Hegel's sense). Our understanding of ourselves as coherent actors with agency (as opposed to fragmented subjects with pathologies) emerges through what Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) called the dialogical interaction that occurs in these relations: *among* those with whom we identify toward our individual and collective subjectivity; and *against* the force of conditions that arise as a result of the practices of others.

I need to rehearse all this because the individual agency of the *picaresque* actor is often, and especially in ethnographic narrative, set against the emergence of collective forms of struggle. But there is always a tension between the emergence of particularistic senses of personal individuality and the *doxa* of collective membership. And the reverse is also true, and often forgotten: the development of the self is inconceivable without this process of the practical struggle to make one's agency affect the world, and the necessity, in doing so, of engaging in dialogical relationships with others that effectively develop the social person.

The puzzle then, when we try to understand the role of class at the level of what I am calling "ethnography," is not addressed by contrasting descriptions of moments when "class" supposedly arises, and others when the people that interest us appear to be fragmented into isolated individuals. Rather, if we take as fundamental that social being is nothing but social practice, and that social practice is inconceivable without the dialogics of social relations, then it is clear that we must pursue that understanding differently. At the level of ethnography, we need to uncover different things. One of these is the elements of practical work that have the effect of consecrating what *is*. Another is those moments of crisis, disturbance and the like, in which practice can go forward only by destroying not just the immediacy of the present (the undernourished sheep that has to be pastured, the shoe that has to be soled) but also by destroying the very social configuration that is responsible for the conditions of that present (the conditions of pasturage or of shoe production). Clearly this is an issue of scale, in a number of ways. Alicia's reconfiguration of the jobber–worker relation away from its kin framing is not the same as Sabino and his associates' occupation of property controlled by a legally recognized hacienda.

Class analysis necessarily involves not the ranking or nesting of scales, but their interweaving. They are the scales of interaction and practice that produce society as capitalist on the one hand, and on the other the various scales of counterforces that arise within and beyond those relations. Class, that is, has to do with a dialectical tension arising from the contradictions inherent in the

relations of capitalist reproduction and the way in which those tensions are transmitted into the forming of social subjects, subjects who are themselves engaged in creative practices within and against the conditions of their present. The challenge for analysis is to explore the way that one of these dimensions is translated into another under specific historical conditions.

Seen from this perspective, what can we learn from these stories? To begin with, we need to recognize that they are short, selective descriptions mostly at the level of the kind of social interaction that I associate with fieldwork. That is, they are not sweeping narratives of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, and they are not, for example, discussions of the current financial crisis that seek to explain elements that are not understandable simply at the level of experience: of home-owner's loss or of the dreamworld of derivatives traders. In noting this rather obvious fact, we acknowledge that social reality can be addressed at different scales both of time and of space, Alicia's work and family relations in 1978 versus the long decline of an empire, and at different depths, that of appearance and experience versus that of the underlying requirements of social reproduction that have their own elementary structures and inevitable tensions.

Anthropologists are frequently frustrated by the grand conclusions social analysts draw, especially those associated with policy. Those analysts are ignorant of the contingencies and complexities that we have, perforce, encountered in our own long engagement with ground-level practices and relationships. Nevertheless, what evidence at this level allows us to conclude has its own constraints. This is still more the case when it is presented, as I have done here, in the form of small stories or vignettes. Put another way, this particular form of evidence inflects the broader narrative that becomes a chapter (in this case) or possibly an entire monograph.[5]

Even so, I have chosen to see what we can learn from applying the notion of class to stories of this kind, as well as seeing what we can learn about the way class works by testing it against these stories. The cases here are not especially exemplary. Nor, after a fine exercise in deconstruction, will they

[5] In using stories here, I am following in a long tradition in anthropology and cultural history. Different people use such stories for different purposes, so the reader needs to approach them with caution. If the purpose is to illustrate and back up an argument, then certain wiles are involved in the process of selection. This is not quite the same as when stories are used as a theatrical device, as many writers do with initial stories. An especially spectacular case of this is in Robert Darnton's (1984) *The Great Cat Massacre*. There we are told a most extraordinary tale, surely in the realm of fantasy, and the charm of the subsequent exposition is that everything falls into place. We thus find ourselves Darnton's ally in interpretation, happy to be (almost) as perspicacious as he. A third possibility is to have the story act as the play, for which the ethnographer is the theatre critic. Here, the author first recounts an especially interesting story told by one or more of the people who are the objects of the monograph, and then interprets it for the reader. So, the author acts as both playwright and critical theorist. Especially fruitful uses of stories can be found in the work of Portelli (1985, 1991, 1997) and Sider (1986b, 2003).

reveal some hidden secret. Still less are they simply accumulated stories from the informant's point of view.

Yet these stories about the engagement of an agent in a social-relational practice do expose the way in which both the agent and the practice are always incomplete, always at a moment of potentiality. If this is so, then any critical analysis or engagement with that moment must address the degree to which that incompleteness is simply incidental and contingent, or is potentially a step toward shifting the prevailing conditions of possibility. Addressing this question means tracing the ways in which the autonomous practices of the self are articulated with other scales and levels of the social world: the interactions with those with whom we identify; the counterforce of those who restrict possibilities; the logics of reproduction and transformation specific to the kind of society in which they are embedded.

While it is no doubt true that my long-standing concern with class analysis shapes the way I have presented these stories, I intentionally wrote them down before thinking about how they might be viewed in terms of class. As I said at the outset, my particular concern is to explore the territory between the autonomous practices of the self and the potential for collective praxis.[6] My purpose is only to propose possible points where tensions in the relational practices of work may have the potential to lead to elements of historical praxis. But this is a tentative exercise in method in order to see how we might interpret this evidence in terms of class, and I will not consider how those potentials may work themselves out in each of the two cases (but see Smith 1989; Narotzky and Smith 2006). Nonetheless, we can make some observations.

There are two especially provocative thresholds in Sabino's story. Hobsbawm (1959) has discussed the role of social banditry in crystallizing subaltern people's immanent critique of prevailing social conditions. The long history of these people's resistance to the haciendas, which goes back at least as far as the War of the Pacific (1879–83) (see Smith 1989), suggests that Sabino's confrontations were themselves a product of an already-existing collective refusal of the given-ness of existing conditions. Superficially, Sabino's story can be seen as explaining local people's ability to rebel in terms of his charisma, a view supported by the fact that this story was known by everybody from childhood onward. But Sabino himself was a product of the dialogical interactions that characterized the community he lived in, and his story is both a further moment of that dialogue and also a powerful, condensed message about the threshold between the personal and familial practice of

[6] In a chapter on individual *ladino* acts of dissent, Charles Hale writes, "As individual acts, these sensibilities have important contextual and aggregate effects, *but they generally lack the transformative power achieved through organized collective action* [What I would call 'praxis']" (Hale 2006: 170, emphasis added). His exploration of this issue throughout his book, while preeminently about what he calls "racial ambivalence," parallels my own discussion here.

making a living, and the accompanying need to catalyze a moment of collective praxis to press against the conditions that were making such a living ever less possible.

There is a second threshold along the lines of what I have called the simultaneity of conflict and dependency that is essential to a class relationship. That is marked by Sabino's shifting in and out of relationships to the community and to the hacienda. We know that, both before the initiative of the 1930s and afterwards, he was especially sought by the hacienda for his skills: extensive knowledge of local topography, ability to shift herds of livestock quickly and strategically, control over family retainers and so on. We know too that he was identified as a troublemaker around the same time, no doubt at least partly precisely because of those skills. It is almost as though the ability to produce value was what put Sabino in demand as an employee and also underlay his potential to disrupt the production and flow of value. While, from the hacienda administration's point of view, this had largely to do with the person of Sabino as an individual, the evidence suggests otherwise. Not only was his ability to resist the hacienda dependent upon his position within the collective body of the community and his ability to mobilize it, but his value as an employee relied both on what he had learned through his life among these people and on the extent to which he could mobilize household and extended-family members to act as *huacchilleros* (and in other roles) on the hacienda.

There is a significant gap between the events of the story and its telling here. This makes its role as a story quite different from Alicia's, which contains her own story about how she discarded her uncle and which relies on the many narratives I gathered from her over time. It is then, after all, really my own story about Alicia, recorded pretty much over the time it was happening. There is quite a lot we learn about class praxis from the Peru story that we cannot, I think, relate to Alicia's story. That is because Sabino's story itself played a significant part in the constitution of individual and collective subjects; versions of Sabino's account, and many others in multiple variations, circulated among urban and rural participants throughout the political campaign that I studied in the field (Smith 1991a, 1997). In spite of this difference, however, we see a persistent worrying away at what previous moments of popular intervention in the making of history might uncover. This seems an important element of what we are trying to reveal about the potential for current collective praxis. Narotzky and I (Narotzky and Smith 2006; Smith 2008) have argued that it is the absence of those previous moments in Alicia's story that account for that story's lack of politics, in Rancière's use of the term. This reflects his observation that "There is . . . an essential link between memory, history and democracy. Democratic struggles always occur as reiterations of previous inscriptions of equality" (quoted by Deranty 2003: 153).

History was important to people in the Bajo Segura, but it was of a particular sort. Debate in the pubic sphere continually took up issues around the interpretation of the Republic, the Civil War, the period of Franco and the *pacto de silencio* of the Transition. Importantly, however, these debates were formulated around the need for a neat ending to the past, for a completion. Those debates appear to promise organic integralism, but only through discussions among those claiming to be representatives of the people – not of *all* the people; only of those who accept the present in these highly contained, closed-up terms.

Understood thus, history either removes the collective praxis of people as a force in its making, or condemns every moment of their temporary victories to instances of violent and misguided barbarism (Smith 2011). It is not surprising, therefore, that is hard for the people of the Bajo Segura to find in such a history a plot that is of much interest to them. The stories I have presented here can be interpreted along such lines, but also they can be given a much stronger interpretation. Even though Alicia's rejection of exploitation through kin ties was situationally specific and microscopic, it nevertheless was an instance of autonomous practices of the self. Yet it takes place in real material conditions that will affect its longer-term possibilities, material conditions that are not given but are the outcome of the balance of forces that for some time have been directed against class as a collective subject of history. And if, as I have argued, the formation of collective groups and of personal self-consciousness are interrelated, then it follows that fragmented collectivities will also produce fragmented persons, or perhaps better put, a-social persons. In other words, the mundane practices of making a living are dialectically tied to collective praxis in the constitution of the social subject.

I do not suggest that these kinds of observation are especially well grounded or that they are of specific political use for the situations I have discussed. My purpose is simply to show that we can subject relationships and practices across a range of scales to a kind of interpretation that rests on a dialectical understanding of social phenomena in terms of always incomplete force and counterforce. These phenomena are not all of a kind or always amenable to stories of people interacting in the course of their workaday lives to produce what anthropologists sometimes call their "culture." Rather, we need to attend to different levels and scales of social phenomena, for it is only by trying to address the difficult question of the specificity of their articulation at a given time and through history that we as social analysts can make a political contribution to what will enhance the potential of praxis.

Conclusion

In most current writing that refers to class, there is rarely any clear sense of which of its multiple uses is being employed. Indeed, we usually find a kind of generic use in which the author assumes the reader will accept any of a bundle

of possible meanings. In my case, taking class seriously requires accepting Marx's epistemology: an understanding of society as a historical process in which social forms emerge dialectically out of tensions and contradictions in the process of social reproduction. As the basis for an understanding of class, this lies uneasily with class understood as a static description of the empirical features of sociological categories of people. It is often the confusion of these two uses of "class" that allows people to dismiss the approach arising from Marx's epistemology.

A fundamental contradiction that arises in our society results from the garnering of value through the use of property on the one hand, and the translation of value through the sale of labor power on the other. This contradiction produces the tension between how much should go to the controllers and how much to the producers, and while this is a valid observation it does not provide a valid basis for the description of empirical social groups. Any attempt to test it by relating it to the principles of empirical class categories simply obscures what we can usefully learn from a Marxist epistemology.

This is not to say that structural features and empirical class groups are unconnected. If they were unconnected, then there would be no political point in my telling the stories of Sabino and Alicia. However, that connection cannot be made by a simplistic leap from the dialectical and historical production of social forms to the allotment of people to categories based on their social function and hence their elective affinities. Rather, now as it always has been, the challenge is to try to explore the ways in which these material tensions over the historical course of social reproduction through generations of people are transmitted, via experience, to people's actual praxis as social agents.

I hope my use of praxis has made clear how unhelpful notions of "class consciousness" are in this regard. There is no such thing as an a-historical, a-social individual (or collective) who is endowed with consciousness and engages in some kind of agency. Rather, the subject is constituted from the start through practice, which is always interactive and always shaped by the historical and social position of those who engage in it. I entitled my first book *Livelihood and Resistance* for a reason. From no insight of my own, but rather as a result of the acute and distressing struggles I had observed in the field, the challenge was to break down the line between the practical everyday work of securing a livelihood and the historically fragile business of protecting or securing the conditions that make that livelihood possible: that is to say, praxis.[7]

[7] Gramsci seems to work precisely across this divide. Unlike Thompson, for him the line between daily practice or practical sense, and historical praxis or organic ideology, is thoroughly problemetized. A perpetual challenge for Gramsci was to make possible the bridge between one apparently contingent and localized experience and another, so as to "unify a number of disparate and seemingly unconnected events," as Thompson (1966: 8) puts it. The intellectual played a crucial role in this task, together with the dogged work of organization (see Smith 1999, 2004; Gramsci 2000).

Seen in this way, there is no reason why we cannot explore quite microscopic inter-relational practices in terms of class. Moreover, by doing so, we might find a means of identifying politically useful moments when daily practice seeds historical praxis, just as we already know that it was prior historical praxis that provided the bedrock for daily practice.

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5 Walmart, American consumer-citizenship and the erasure of class

Jane Collins

Since the 1980s, the giant retailer Walmart has emerged as an icon of capitalist success, if not always of corporate virtue. Its size and highly effective business model have made it a revolutionary force in the retail sector. But as it has become a ubiquitous presence in everyday life in the United States and many other countries, it has also circulated a radical new discourse of economic citizenship, one that draws on historically popular understandings of the "consumer-citizen" but flattens and reworks them for new purposes. Walmart's discourse downplays the relationships of individuals to work and class, but highlights their identity as consumers who must choose between high prices and low wages. This chapter draws out the elements of Walmart's new model of consumer-citizenship and contrasts it with older Keynesian and labor-union versions of the concept. While acknowledging the effectiveness of Walmart's efforts in purveying this new understanding, it points to fissures that emerged during the global recession of 2008–09 and that gained public attention during Walmart workers' protests in late 2012.

The late twentieth century was a time of global economic change, as corporations and their allies worked to dismantle the Keynesian frameworks that had been designed to stabilize employment and to balance production and consumption. The undoing of these bargains was accompanied by struggle over such fundamental issues as the role of the state in the economy, the responsibilities of employers to workers and the meaning of citizenship. As Friedman notes in his chapter in this volume, this dismantling entailed a reconfiguration of class relations. Walmart's reworking of consumer-citizenship occurred within, and formed part of, this larger shift. As Lizabeth Cohen (2003) and others have shown, the idea of consumer-citizenship in the USA encapsulates a dense set of relationships among citizens, the state and employers, as well as a complex set of ideas about "the market." Examining the fate of the concept of the consumer-citizen thus provides a window into the reconfiguration of these relationships and ideas in key periods.

Walmart has played a greater role than any other corporation in shaping ideas about the consumer-citizen in the USA since the 1980s. Walmart is the leading retailer in the USA, where it serves 20 percent of demand in the sector.

With over two million workers around the globe (1.4 million in the USA), it is the world's largest employer. Through its emphasis on low prices, Walmart has arguably given new life to the idea of consumer-citizenship. The firm's retailing strategy and advertising campaigns suggest that market consumption is the most important way that an individual can pursue his or her economic interests. It offers the strategy of seeking the lowest price as an alternative route to prosperity and inclusion – a "win–win scenario" that entails less conflict than seeking a union contract or a living wage. At the same time, though, the company's efforts to keep down pay and benefits and to erode worker rights have undermined the capacity of low-wage workers in the USA to act effectively as consumers.

The recession that began in 2008 deepened this contradiction, as sharply declining consumer demand in the USA led to the unraveling of Walmart's "Always Low Price" strategy. Exploring this moment in the firm's history does not only reveal the fragility, and perhaps hypocrisy, of its commitment to economic empowerment through cheap goods. It also makes visible the damage done by the firm's rhetorical and material reshaping of the terrain of the consumer-citizen. As Tilly (2007) has pointed out, Walmart's retailing, price and labor-recruitment strategies vary markedly in different countries, so the story told here necessarily is historically and geographically specific. It reflects the unique version of consumer-citizenship that arose in the USA and the particular retailing strategies and labor practices that Walmart uses in that country. However, as a variation on a broader set of neoliberal corporate practices that undermine worker rights by appealing to the need for low pricing and that reinterpret citizenship as market participation, the insights it generates are relevant to a wider range of contexts. In this sense, Walmart is part of the continual making, unmaking and remaking of working classes that Kasmir and Carbonella (this volume) describe.

The consumer-citizen from Fordism to neoliberalism

A long stream of radical scholarship focuses on mass consumption, from Thorstein Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) to Sharon Zukin's *Point of Purchase* (2004). While much of it has decried the costs of consumerism, a certain strand has explored the social benefits and even the liberating potential of some kinds of consumption. Key among this work is Lizabeth Cohen's account of the rise of the idea of the consumer-citizen in the USA in the mid-twentieth century. In *A Consumer's Republic*, Cohen charts the emergence of two versions of consumer-citizenship that competed for ascendancy during this period. The first was the vigilant consumer-citizen, who prodded government to protect the rights, safety and fair treatment of purchasers (and also, at times, of the workers who produced goods). The second was the "purchaser-consumer,"

whose retail prowess was the motor of the economy: "individuals who contributed to society more by exercising purchasing power than by asserting themselves politically" (Cohen 2003: 19).

Drawing on forms of public participation with roots in the Progressive Era (a period of social activism and reform from 1890 to 1920), consumer-citizenship in the first sense found expression in struggles for pure food and drugs, antitrust laws, fair prices, minimum wages and just labor standards. It had roots in the National Consumers' League of the early twentieth century, which sought to pressure employers and the government to improve wages and working conditions, as well as to ensure wholesome and sanitary products. Unions also promoted this sort of ethical consumption through "union label" campaigns and boycotts and exposés of unscrupulous employers. As these campaigns and associated values found expression in the programs and policies of the New Deal, Cohen (2003: 23) argues, consumers arose as a "self-conscious, identifiable interest group on a par with labor and business whose well being required attention for American capitalism and democracy to prosper."

Alternatively, the second sort of consumer-citizenship, the purchaser-consumer, reflected the role consumers played in creating demand within the economy as a whole. Cohen illustrates this with a film produced by General Motors in 1937, which portrayed workers picking up their pay and then, accompanied by wives and children (and triumphal soundtrack), spending it in downtown stores on bicycles, furniture and household appliances. "Because America has a ready purse and gives eager acceptance to what the men of motors have built," the film proclaims, the United States will enjoy "a prosperity greater than history has ever known" (*From Dawn to Sunset*, in Cohen 2003: 20). Drawing on Antonio Gramsci (1987), many call this virtuous relationship between production and consumption "Fordism," referring to the Ford Motor Company's famous introduction of the five-dollar-a-day wage: whatever the purpose for which it was introduced, it had the effect of encouraging consumption.

Insiders in Franklin Delano Roosevelt's administration debated the degree to which efforts to recover from the Great Depression should put the worker or the consumer at the center. Keynesian economists argued for deficit spending to fuel consumer demand, and said that fostering a wide distribution of purchasing power also enhanced economic equality (Cohen 2003: 55). Roosevelt summed up the case: "If the average citizen is guaranteed equal opportunity in the polling place, he must have equal opportunity in the marketplace" (in Cohen 2003: 56). John Kenneth Galbraith (1993 [1952]) argued later that these ideas established the concept of the consumer as a "countervailing power" to balance more powerful interests such as big business. The New Deal's critics have correctly emphasized that it did not extend benefits equally to women or people of

color, and that its policies sometimes marginalized more progressive projects. Nevertheless, its vision of government's role in guiding and regulating the economy encouraged new forms of social mobilization, including around the identity of the consumer.

During World War II, the vigilant consumer-citizen participated in rationing programs, deferred spending, monitored stores for adherence to price controls and planted Victory Gardens. After the War, Cohen says, the consumer-citizen combined with the purchaser-consumer to become the "purchaser as citizen," whose house in the suburbs and modern appliances fueled the nation's economic growth, while becoming an important site for reproducing relations of family, race and class (for such reproduction in India, see Donner this volume). Corporations and government joined in their praise of the good consumer as a patriotic citizen, one who fostered the recovery of the nation's economy. The Nixon–Khrushchev "kitchen debate" of 1959, in the heat of the Cold War, featured the American housewife as the appliance-rich author and beneficiary of the prosperity that capitalist free markets could bring. Sheila Webb (2006: 3) summarizes the moment: "In the postwar years, as mass production expanded, corporations grew and living standards rose. Advertising and communications networks worked to sustain the rate of consumption, and public opinion polling began to assess not only political views but consumption patterns," and she describes how important publications such as *Life* magazine "strove to create a community of citizens who, with the proper training and knowledge, could thrive in this new society." Cohen (2003: 8) calls this convergence of the two earlier modes of consumer-citizenship an "alluring compromise," which promised that the pursuit of individual satisfaction could serve society as a whole.

By the middle of the 1970s Keynesianism had died, but the concept of the purchaser as citizen had not. In the 1970s and 1980s more women moved into the US workforce, and the media portrayed them as learning to balance their traditional role as consumer with a new one as wage earner. Paraphrasing the song "I'm a Woman," perfume advertisements proclaimed women's new ability "to bring home the bacon and fry it up in the pan." The purchaser-citizen rode the credit boom of the 1990s, and in the immediate aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center in September 2001, was called out by the President to demonstrate patriotism by spending. Cohen notes that the pervasive neoliberalism of the late twentieth century reworked consumer-citizenship once again, as it recast activities of government and political participation in market terms. She calls this newest configuration the "consumer-citizen-taxpayer-voter," pointing out how neoliberal discourse encourages citizens to view taxes, voting and other political activities as market transactions and to judge them by the equivalent of consumer satisfaction: "how well-served they feel personally" (Cohen 2003: 9).

Cohen's account might be criticized for flattening a number of dimensions of American working-class and middle-class life at mid-century, but this is to be expected. After all, the object of her study is the emergence of a model of civic participation that itself relies on such a flattening because it creates a citizenship consistent with market relationships. Nevertheless, in tracing the emergence of this new model, she consistently slights the modes of civic and political engagement that it displaces.

However, this new version of consumer-citizenship did not simply displace the older experiences of work and class, it discredited them. As James Carrier (1997: 52) points out, the version of the consumer that gained dominance in the 1980s not only erased the identity of the worker, but claimed that the interests of people-as-consumers were "more uniform, universal, and just than the interests of people-as-workers, which were often presented as unjust, sectional self-interest." He offers as an example that "everyone, which is to say people-as-consumers, is in favour of lower prices of electricity." According to this logic, the only people who might oppose lower prices are those with a narrow self-interest, who depend on the industry for an income, such as those who work in it. Carrier points to the way, under Thatcherism in Britain and Reaganism in the US, corporate interests used this framing to justify overriding the interests of workers in industry after industry in the name of the "common good" of the consuming public. Workers came to be seen as a "special interest group," while "consumer" was construed as a universal status.

Walmart reconfigures the consumer-citizen

For anyone studying low-wage work, Walmart is a metonym, a part of the consumer economy that can stand for the US economy as a whole. However, because of its size and the role it plays in setting the standards for competition in the retail sector, and in the low-wage labor market more generally, it merits study in its own right. Gary Gereffi and Michelle Christian (2009: 574) call the firm "a driver and organizer of global processes," and Gereffi (2004) claims that "whatever Walmart does in terms of the labor market, all other businesses have to follow. . . . Walmart is really determining the direction in which the US labor market is moving." As Nelson Lichtenstein (2004) put it, "Walmart is setting a new standard that other firms have to follow if they hope to compete . . . It is setting standards for the nation as a whole. It's almost legislating social policy, not in terms of votes and lobbying, but when it does something, it's so large, it's so influential, others follow it."

As the story of Walmart's rise is told, it is clear that it not only represented, but drove, a whole new type of consumerism in the USA, focused on the car, one-stop shopping and price as the main dimension of competition (Strasser 1989; Zukin 2004; Fishman 2006; Lichtenstein 2006, 2009; Moreton 2009).

Bolstering that was Walmart's folksy, Southern "hometown" advertising image, which was laden with messages about how individuals should labor, act in relation to state and market and organize intimate relationships. And behind the scenes of the firm's success lay the latest in supply-chain management technologies, the world's biggest global sourcing network and astonishingly low manufacturing wages.

Walmart has habitually justified its stingy wages in the USA and abroad by reference to an attenuated notion of the purchaser as citizen. Like the postwar version that Cohen describes, it encourages people to think of their interests primarily in relation to consumption through the market, and to see that approach as responsible and patriotic. However, Walmart's attenuated version explicitly silences other assertions of rights or interests, such as those based on being a worker, community member or citizen. The firm's argument about the appropriate way to pursue one's interests revolves around the concept of low prices and how they serve society.

Walmart's website (Walmart Corporate 2011) illustrates this logic when it declares "we know that price matters to our consumers, whether they live in the United States, the United Kingdom, Argentina or Japan." It explains that saving money is connected to living better because it can help the consumer "afford something a little extra." It offers the examples of a grandmother who can buy her grandchildren a special gift because she saved money on her prescriptions, and of a young couple who can use the savings they accrue over time to pay for a new home. Daniel Miller (2001) has argued that a deep trend in Western culture predisposes us to think of shopping as a moral enterprise, one in which making thrifty purchases represents a labor of care on behalf of the household. In its advertising, Walmart draws on this way of thinking, first to conflate spending with thrift and then to reinforce notions of shopping as social-reproductive labor: an act of care and love.

To support its advertising claims, in 2005 and 2007 Walmart hired economists at a consulting firm to estimate how much money it had saved US consumers. The firm, Global Insight, suggested a cumulative figure of $US 287 billion by 2006. Walmart published this information on its website, in news releases, in corporate interviews and in circulars with titles such as "Walmart's effect on grocery prices fact sheet" and "Walmart saves Americans money fact sheet." Based on Global Insight's studies, Walmart officials argued that the firm saved working families an average of over $US 2,300 per household per year, and lowered the grocery bills of families who shop there by 20 percent compared to competitors' prices. They claimed that their low prices meant that consumer prices were 3.1 percent less than they would have been otherwise. The former CEO, Lee Scott, called this decline "a wage increase" for the working poor in America. While economists have challenged these estimates in terms of the data used, the assumptions made, the soundness of the econometric analysis and the

logic of the argument (Bernstein and Bivens 2006), the company continues to circulate the reports' conclusions. Its insistent rhetoric about low prices as a social benefit that trumps all others led one anti-corporate activist to comment, "Every time we try to talk about quality of life, they bring up the price of underpants" (Greenwald 2005).

Critics of Walmart have argued that it hurts US workers in two ways: by pushing other US retailers and the firm's own US suppliers out of business, thus destroying jobs, and by eroding conditions in the remaining jobs in the low-wage labor market. The claim that Walmart drives out local businesses by undercutting them on price wherever it sets up a store has been well vetted (Fishman 2006; Irwin and Clark 2006; Karjanen 2006; Neumark et al. 2007). Walmart places pressure on its US suppliers' factories, demanding supply-chain innovations, quality improvements and price reductions. When these companies cannot afford to do what Walmart wants, it turns to off-shore suppliers, leading firms that have relied heavily on its business to close (Gereffi 2004).

Walmart also unleashes a race to the bottom in local labor markets by setting in motion competitive forces that are vicious rather than virtuous, in the sense that they are structured around cost-cutting rather than technological or labor-process improvements. When it moves into an area as a retailer, economists have shown, it depresses the prevailing wage rate, unleashing a cycle in which profits, lower consumer prices and poverty-level wages are intertwined (Dube and Jacobs 2004). Goetz and Swaminathan (2006) studied the relationship between Walmart and county poverty rates. Controlling for other pertinent factors, they found that counties with more Walmart stores had higher rates of poverty than those with fewer Walmart stores. They calculated that the opening of a new Walmart store increases the average poverty rate in a county, and that an additional 20,000 US families were in poverty in 1999 as a result of Walmart's presence in their areas. The mechanisms by which poverty is transmitted are primarily competitive: by offering jobs at a low wage, the company drives down competitors' wages, or at least keeps them from rising. But anti-union tactics and driving firms with unionized or higher-paid workers out of business also play a role.

At mid-century, the conventional wisdom would have criticized such an approach as killing the goose that lays the golden egg, eroding the buying power of the customer base. But a very different logic informs Walmart's strategy. The company knows that the poor are its most important customers, so it locates its stores near them, studies their habits and preferences and targets them in advertising. Liza Featherstone (2005) quotes one of the women she interviewed for her research as saying, "They plant themselves right in the middle of Poorville." In this, Walmart inverts the relationship between production and consumption that policymakers of the Keynesian era tried to

protect and that the era's concept of citizenship embodied (Collins 2010). A number of scholars have argued that Walmart's low prices and its low wages are perversely related (Featherstone 2004; Gereffi 2004; Collins 2010). As Liza Featherstone says, "In a chilling reversal of Henry Ford's strategy . . . to pay workers amply so they could buy Ford cars, Walmart's stingy compensation policies contribute to an economy where workers can only afford to shop at Walmart" (Featherstone 2004: 219). In the words of Gary Gereffi (2004), "Walmart is pushing wages down to a level where the people that work in Walmart stores are going to be forced to buy in Walmart stores, because they can't make enough money to buy goods elsewhere."

While Walmart plays a material role in undermining wages and working conditions in the low-wage labor market, it is also important to notice what is forced out of the public conversation by the company's rhetoric of consumer economizing. New Deal formulations of consumer-citizenship saw purchasing as only one of the roles a citizen could play in the economy, and emphasized a virtuous connection between high wages and the ability to consume. In contrast, in Walmart's rhetoric the consumer role trumps all other aspects of citizenship, including the economic citizenship of the worker and the voice of the rights-bearing participant in the public sphere. In claiming that society gains more from lower prices than from fair wages, Walmart implies that workers' hard-won rights and protections are rendered unnecessary by its pricing policies. Of course, unlike money in a paycheck that can be used for any purpose, the benefits of low prices can only be realized by shopping at Walmart. This formulation does not consider the worker to be an autonomous being, who might choose to save rather than consume immediately, or to invest in a home, education or healthcare rather than Walmart's wares.

Walmart's energetic and preemptive anti-union strategies speak to another aspect of citizenship that it would rather not confront, labor activism (Featherstone 2005; Lichtenstein 2009). Far from the labor–management accords of the mid-twentieth century, in which gradually rising prices were linked to gradually rising wages, Walmart's business model relies on maintaining its leadership in a global race to the bottom in production costs. This has led to its hard line against unionization and its unwillingness to give any significant ground on wages and benefits. Such a strategy depends, in part, on erasing the identity of its workers *as workers*. Walmart attempted this, famously, by referring to its employees (and requiring them to identify themselves) as "associates" and through cultivating a sense of "family" through rousing, pep-rally style meetings complete with corporate cheers. But when push comes to shove, the company is willing to wield a big stick. When worker protests over shift work emerged just before the start of Christmas holiday shopping in 2012, the busiest period of the year, Walmart responded by threatening to curb workers' bonuses and vacation days (Berfield 2012).

By shifting the conversation from rights at work or rights in the public sphere to rights in the shopping aisle, Walmart's discourse of low prices reworks the idea of the consumer-citizen. Just as the purchaser as citizen left behind the idea of the citizen as a watchdog for unfair or unsafe practices, Walmart's version leaves behind the idea of consuming to support the national economy. Despite its brief "Buy American" campaign in the 1980s, the firm has always been an aggressive importer, and its competitive strategy is based on perfecting ways to import cheaply and efficiently (Gereffi and Christian 2009: 577). Walmart's consumer-citizens exercise their citizenship through consuming, not in order to keep factories humming and employment rates low, but simply because that is the best way to pursue their own interests and those of their families. Walmart's iconic shoppers do not ask whether a toy contains lead or cadmium, or if the girls sewing the blue jeans (or the clerks selling them) are paid a living wage. They do not think about the effect that buying from Walmart will have on the small grocery store down the street, or whether their purchases will contribute to the health and strength of the local or national economy. They simply compare prices.

Following a path that Cohen describes in her book, Walmart's version of the consumer-citizen coincides with a neoliberal political rationality that portrays citizens as entrepreneurs of the self, all of whose relations, attachments and endeavors are construed in market terms. Wendy Brown (2006) has argued that this attenuated version of consumer-citizenship is a key component of what she calls "neoliberal de-democratization," and that it works through devaluing political autonomy and by transforming political problems into individual dilemmas with market solutions. The collective power of consumer movements and the state-supported rights of workers are both rendered superfluous by this vision of the consumer-citizen. These moves stifle nascent class consciousness by suggesting that it is not only out of date and inconsistent with our current economic climate, but against the best interests of the well-informed, savvy, self-interested consumer.

Walmart's consumer-citizen in the economic crisis

How did Walmart's revamped version of the consumer-citizen fare during the recession that began in the USA in 2008? Specifically, how did a consumer-citizen whose well-being had been conflated with – and reduced to – access to low prices fare in a context of increased unemployment and economic hardship across broad swathes of the working classes?

It should come as no surprise that Walmart thrived in the early days of the recession. For all of the reasons just outlined, Walmart is what has been called a "counter-cyclical firm", one whose fate moves in the opposite direction of the overall economic cycle and whose profits rise when the economy is weakening

(see Abel and Bernanke 2001: sect. 8.3). Other examples include fast-food firms such as McDonald's and Burger King, some kinds of gardening and home-repair lines, craft stores, frozen yogurt and, most sadly, hand guns. As *The Huffington Post* (Bartels 2010) put it, "Walmart was in the sweet spot of the Great Recession. As shoppers traded down to cheaper stores, Walmart gained market share." *The New York Times* (Rosenbloom 2010) declared the company "a winner amid the downturn." Walmart's former CEO, Lee Scott, put it bluntly: "I feel we are well positioned for an economic downturn. Our low prices and low-cost business model should give us an advantage over other retailers if things get more difficult for consumers" (Kavilanz 2007). The company's global sales in 2009, according to its own estimates, were up 7.2 percent over 2008, reaching $US 401 billion.

By the beginning of 2010, however, continuing unemployment and underemployment were taking their toll, and even Walmart's low-priced merchandise was no longer a bargain that its poorest customers could afford. In 2009, 43.6 million people in the US (one in six) were living in poverty. The figure was one in five for children. Nearly 15 percent of families were living below the federal poverty line (Economic Policy Institute 2010). By 2010, Walmart was struggling to hold on to its customers, as they turned to dollar stores and thrift shops for their needs, or simply stopped buying all but the most essential items. Walmart took a look at its data. "Spending patterns . . . suggest that [our] customers have been hit particularly hard by the recession," its Chief Financial Officer said (Clifford 2010; Clifford and Rosenbloom 2010). "The low income consumer appears to be the last coming out." He noted that customers' use of food stamps was up significantly, and that they were spending according to a "paycheck cycle," making their largest purchases when their salaries first come in and cutting back as the money runs out. In an article entitled "Watching us save, one cart at a time," *Newsweek* (McGinn 2009) noted that Walmart managers had observed the following recession-related behaviors among their customers: more discarded items near cash registers, greater use of grocery lists, increased purchase of generics, fewer discretionary purchases, increased consumption of take-and-bake pizzas (presumably substituting for more expensive pizza delivery), asking questions of pharmacists that might normally be part of a doctor's visit, more requests to hit the subtotal key when checking out, fewer purchases per trip, and more shopping on payday.

A *Wall Street Journal* article hinted at the desperation that underlay this pattern:

> At midnight on the first of the month, a scene unfolds at many Walmart Stores . . . that underscores the deep financial strains that many low-income American consumers still face. Parking lots come to life after 11 p.m. as customers start to stream into the stores, cramming their shopping carts full of milk, infant formula, and other necessities. Then at midnight, when the government replenishes their electronic-benefit accounts with their

monthly allotments of food stamps, nutritional grants for mothers with babies, or other aid for needy families, they head for the registers. "We're not starving or anything, but we come every month at 11:55," said Tyrel Fogle, 26 years old, early Friday morning as he loaded a cart with frozen food at a Walmart here on the northwestern edge of the nation's fourth largest city [Houston]. Mr. Fogle said he had just found work as a washer at a glass company after months of fruitless searching. "We have enough to survive," volunteered his pregnant girlfriend, Brittany Cummings, 21. "But not much more."

The article concluded with a quote from Bill Simon, Walmart's President and CEO: "If you really think about it, the only reason someone gets out there in the middle of the night and buys baby formula is that they need it, and they have been waiting for it" (Bustillo 2010).

Walmart's first response to its declining sales revenues was to cut prices, a strategy it pursued until June 2010. After its shareholder meeting that month, when some stock analysts declared the company a "little bit lost in navigating the economic downturn," it began to reconsider its options (Clifford 2010). Without much fanfare, the "Always Low Prices" firm, unable to maintain profits by undercutting its competitors, began to raise prices. In August 2010, J.P. Morgan noted an increase of almost 6 percent in the average price of a market basket of groceries at Walmart. In October, the firm found that the price of the same basket had risen a further 2.7 percent in September, seven of its items were up 10 percent or more since August and overall prices were at their highest level in 21 months (Gregory 2010; Reuters 2010). At the same time, Walmart's Sam's Club stores announced 11,000 layoffs in 2010. To make matters worse, many Walmart workers who received health insurance and other benefits through state programs saw them disappear as a result of state budget cuts.

These actions illustrate the inherent weakness of Walmart's version of the consumer-citizen: it is not about citizenship at all. There is no right to low prices that can be invoked at the checkout counter, no democratically agreed-upon criteria for what a fair price might be. It was in one sense a fabrication, a screen behind which real rights were being dismantled. Maintaining low prices became the justification for starting wages of just over $US 7.00 per hour, which amounts to $US 12,000–14,000 a year for a full-time worker. That is far below the federal poverty line and makes the worker eligible for food stamps. It became the rationale for the fact that 46 percent of Walmart workers' children are uninsured or on Medicaid. It was the reasoning that lay behind the lack of compliance with workers' compensation policies, labor laws and anti-discrimination laws that led to litigation in courts around the nation (Featherstone 2004; Bernstein and Bivens 2006).

But in another sense, Walmart's claims about its benefits to consumers were more than a smokescreen, because they did significant cultural and political work. As it wove together long-standing cultural themes of

consumer-citizenship with new ones from neoliberalism, Walmart convinced a sizeable section of the US public to engage in a national conversation about the "trade-off" between low prices and low wages. It convened seminars and commissioned studies on the topic. Its framing of the debate was adopted by scholars who tried to assess its impact (see, e.g., Irwin and Clark 2006). Just as the firm's business model inverted Fordism, this conversation replaced Keynesian insights about the virtuous connection between production and consumption with a seemingly stark either–or choice: if you want low prices, wages must also be low. Calling this a "false choice," Jared Bernstein has argued that Walmart could raise wages 13 percent, to the level of its key competitor, Costco, without raising its prices, and still have higher profit margins than Costco (Bernstein and Bivens 2006). A more recent study suggests that if all the big low-wage retailers raised wages to $US 12.25 per hour, it would lift three-quarters of a million Americans out of poverty and cost customers only 15 cents per shopping trip (Ruetschlin 2012). Clearly, Walmart does not encourage *this* kind of discussion about what constitutes a fair wage in its conferences or the media, and it need not negotiate such issues with its non-union employees. It asks its workers to forego better wages in order to serve the broader societal goal of lower prices for everyone, including their own families, and in so doing legitimizes their identity as consumers while undermining and delegitimizing their attempts to pursue their interests as workers.

Those who want to make the concept of consumer-citizenship a useful one in the US will, then, have to undo a series of ideological tricks that are entailed in Walmart's hijacking of the concept. That undoing requires recovering the figure of the worker and linked notions of economic citizenship, fair wages and just conditions of work. It requires dusting off the idea of the citizen, the rights-bearing participant in civil society whose labor is protected by the National Labor Relations Act and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and who enjoys the right to engage in collective action. Walmart's flattened version of the consumer-citizen is not going to be able to shop his or her way out of economic crises such as the one that began in 2008. But restoring a more robust notion of consumer-citizenship may help lay the groundwork for community-based labor movements, by tracing new arenas for citizen engagement with the economy, and also for new forms of democratic government in pursuit of a just and sustainable relationship between production and consumption.

Events in the late fall of 2012 suggested that Walmart workers have begun to do just that. Recognizing that decades of efforts to achieve union recognition and collective bargaining have failed, they engaged in a series of wildcat strikes and public relations maneuvers that took their grievances to the public arena. Supported by labor unions, and in coalition with a wide range of other community groups, they defied Walmart's representation of them as benefiting from its low-cost–low-wage strategy and asserted that it is not working for

them, not just as individuals and families, but also as members of low-income communities. As Dorian Warren noted, in the past Walmart was able to attack critics as liberal elitists who were hurting poor people who relied on its low prices (Eidelson 2012). Similarly, the firm attacked workers who tried to organize unions as harming the interests of their neighbors. But the new coalitions that workers have formed with other groups have allowed them to defy these criticisms and to call for a broader reconfiguration of Walmart's relationship with the places where it does business. Speaking not as isolated workers seeking better wages, but as members of communities impoverished by Walmart's policies, they have pointed to the ways that low wages, stingy benefits and just-in-time scheduling harm everyone. They have rejected the idea that they can weather ongoing economic crisis by buying cheaper products, and have begun to recuperate the discourse of laboring consumer-citizens whose well-being is linked to the health of the economy as a whole.

Like many of the Spanish workers whose struggles Narotzky recounts, as well as those in Brazil described by Mollona, Walmart workers have learned that gaining influence in the neoliberal public sphere requires demonstrating that the harm done to workers reverberates beyond the workplace. Walmart's new activists remind us that the world is not divided into those who shop and those who work, for those who shop depend upon those who work, if indeed they are not the same people. Rather, they have organized around the principle that those who shop at Walmart *and* those who work there have lives far different from those of the captains of industry, lives much poorer and more difficult than they need to be.

Acknowledgment

Some of the arguments in this chapter draw on my "Wal-Mart, American consumer citizenship and the 2008 recession," *Focaal* 61 (2011): 107–16.

6 When space draws the line on class

Marc Morell

> [The role of] class struggle . . . in the production of space is a cardinal one in that this production is performed solely by classes, fractions of classes and groups representative of classes . . . [C]lass struggle is inscribed in space. Indeed, it is that struggle alone which prevents abstract space from taking over the whole planet and papering over all differences. Only the class struggle has the capacity . . . to generate differences which are not intrinsic to economic growth qua strategy, "logic," or "system" – that is to say, differences which are neither induced by nor acceptable to that growth.
>
> (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 55)

De l'espai no te'n refies mai [Never trust space]. (Montllor 1972)

Stray cats

Most likely, López would not believe how unerring his prophetic words were when he wrote that Brechtian poem in which he enumerated the characters that were being evicted from Es Barri, a gentrifying area subject to a long renewal program in downtown Ciutat.[1] López's list includes a heterogeneous selection of people belonging mainly to the "class cloaca": whores, drug-dealers, pensioner widows, gypsies, the old shoemaker, the baker, the barber, the innkeeper, the tobacconist . . . (2003).[2] The list even includes dogs and cats. And so it was. No matter how far-fetched it seemed, the day came when the cats also had to leave. These were stray cats that had long lost the noble condition given to them by Santiago Rusiñol (1930 [1922]: 33), a Catalan artist: "But the real inhabitants of the narrow streets of Palma (their lords and masters) are the cats."

In January 2010, the Associació de Veïnats (AV; residents' association) of Es Barri found out about the municipal cat-sterilization program.[3] A new AV

[1] Es Barri (The Neighborhood), also known as Sa Gerreria (The Pottery), is the name I have chosen for this area-in-the-making since the end of the 1980s. Ciutat is the unofficial name for Palma, the capital city of Majorca and the Balearic archipelago (Spain).

[2] The "class cloaca" (Draper 1978: 476–78) is constituted by those who supposedly are of no use to, and therefore fall out of, the existing social order.

[3] *Veïnats* literally means "neighbors," but here it is probably best translated as "residents," although other neighborhood users, such as shopkeepers, can also be considered to be *veïnats*.

member, a middle-class, middle-aged female volunteer, explained the project at an AV meeting. These cats were a nuisance, especially when in heat, but most of all because they were potential carriers of HIV and many other illnesses that threatened residents and passers-by. Many AV members, who were also newcomers and considered themselves part of the all-encompassing middle class, were eager to know more about the project.

The volunteer spared no details and spelled out the strict protocol they followed to eradicate such a pest from the streets and the derelict buildings. First, they would have to contact the old pensioner widows (mostly depicted as the remnants of a pseudo-industrial working class) that fed these cats, an activity outlawed by recent municipal regulations. Then, they would license them and explain how to hide a sterilizing product in the food they would provide them with, and how to cage the odd one so that municipal vets could vaccinate it and, if necessary, "put it to sleep." The reactions to the initiative ranged from mind-boggled puzzlement to strong support. It was only a matter of time before the latter overwhelmed the former.

Within a couple of weeks, the few pensioners who dedicated their time and resources to maintaining these cat colonies found themselves with no alternative but to join the program. Whether or not they were conscious of it, their pastime had suddenly become a kind of labor. I recall them gossiping in the basement of a building that was, until very recently, the last grocery in Es Barri.[4] They disliked the role they had been assigned. They accepted it, however, because it allowed them to carry on with their pastime and because they feared the alternatives that may have crossed the minds of the city-council volunteers.

The outcome of this strategy resembles a class inversion of the case Darnton (1984) describes, how the deprived printers' apprentices in Paris in the middle of the eighteenth century captured, tried, tortured and executed cats, since these were lavishly cared for by the business owners. It appears to have been an act of vengeance that not only maintained cats as animals apt for rituals related to exorcising evils, but that also aimed at balancing, in a most peculiar fashion, the scales of social justice. In apparent contrast to Darnton's account, the "cat massacre" I have sketched tells a very different story. Ridding Es Barri of cats is just another aspect of what has become a perennial obsession in Ciutat, which

[4] This establishment was more than just a grocery; it was an institution that lived off projects that I (Morell 2009) have called *fent barri*, "making neighborhood." Such projects prescribe what neighborhood life is about in a gentrifying context that is framed by the tension between the disinvestment and investment of capital in the built environment, in the case of Majorca heavily dependent on tourism, and especially related to heritage in the case of the Center. The grocery clubbed long-term residents together to the extent that it became a neighborhood in itself, offering company, counsel and immediate aid. It was also a means for formulating opinions, keeping resources under control and making decisions. As a matter of fact, although the grocery has now disappeared, adjacent premises still serve these purposes.

can be summed up in the closing lines of López's poem: "at the end of the day the sun in the neighborhood is only for those who can pay for it."

Es Barri has experienced many other class transformations. Newcomers have increased the number of members of the AV. Many of them belong to an organic-vegetable box scheme, while the last ordinary grocery disappears. There is conflict between many of these newcomers and the owners of the mushrooming trendy "neo-bohemian" tapas bars. However, the main questions that lay at the heart of this process of gentrification have to do with how the social formation revealed by daily social interaction articulates with the particular accumulation process that is its raison d'être.[5] Most importantly for my argument in this chapter, this accumulation process involves a particular kind of labor. Thus, my main concern is not the doings and workings of those who appropriate value from the urban, nor those who manage and govern it. Rather, it is with those who destroy it and produce it anew.

Urban society and social space

Henri Lefebvre problematically explained, rather than categorically designated, "urban society" as the social formation resulting from the subsumption of industrialization under the growing spread and complexity of "urbanization" (as in, e.g., the creation and realization of surplus value by construction and real-estate speculation: Lefebvre 2003 [1970]: 160).[6] In fact, for Lefebvre (1996 [1968]: 164), urbanization is "the meaning, the end, the goal of industrialization." He expanded this formulation to "social space" (1991 [1974]), and argued that it maintained capitalism (1976 [1973]), while becoming the cornerstone of the "static/statist mode production" (1976–78).

Social space, argues Lefebvre, is produced by classes but, most importantly, through their struggle. It is "where the reproduction of the relations of production . . . is located; at the same time, it is the occasion for and the instrument of a form of planning" (1976 [1973]: 17). Social space is not "land" or "place," but is the social relations that may produce these and that, in turn,

[5] While gentrification has many aspects, I take as its core the meaning Glass (1964) gave it when she first used the term: the displacing of the working-class population that inhabits a given built environment by members of the middle and upper classes.

[6] Delgado (2007: 11) reminds us that the Lefebvrian "urban" is not the city (a place), but the practices that criss-cross it, "everything in the city that cannot detain nor catch on" (2007: 13). Castells (1977 [1972]) and Harvey (1988) reviewed Lefebvre. Whereas the former considered Lefebvre's hypothesis to be ideological, utopian and unscientific, the latter developed Lefebvre's views (e.g. Lefebvre 2009 [1970]) on the urban as a secondary circuit of accumulation based on fixed capital and consumption funds that partially solves the problem of over-accumulation that occurs in the primary circuit, the one that is about producing commodities (Harvey 2006). See Katznelson (1992) and Neil Smith's preface to Lefebvre (2003 [1970]) for a summary of these debates.

are fashioned by them. Although explicitly seeking to distance himself from the urban-Marxian Lefebvre, Georges Condominas in fact takes a fairly similar approach. Influenced by Durkhemian and Maussian thought (Condominas 1980: 16), he understood social space as "determined by the set of systems of relations, distinctive of the group considered" (1980: 14).

Despite these minor differences, I view Lefebvre's location (of domination and exploitation) and Condominas's grouping (as means of organization and action) as the distinct, but nevertheless linked, dimensions of determination and agency that social class is about. David Harvey points to this conjunction of material exploitation and social groups when he says that work-based and community-based conflicts in "advanced urbanization" show that production and social reproduction seem to overlap: "If objective classes are still to be defined in terms of the production and appropriation of surplus value, then it is now production as a totality (including the production of new modes of consumption and new social wants) . . . which defines the division between producers and appropriators of surplus value" (Harvey 1985: 86–87).[7] That said, it is not at all clear there was ever much of a divide between production and social reproduction. As Bensaïd (2009 [1996]: 187) argues, when criticizing Gorz's (1980) *Adieux au prolétariat*,

> From [the weakening of workers' identification with work] he draws the falsely innovative conclusion that contestation of capitalist exploitation has now been relocated outside of the enterprise, as if it had hitherto been confined there. If the relation of exploitation is rooted in production, the whole logic of [Marx's] Capital demonstrates that it is not reducible to it. It structures the field of reproduction in its entirety. The working-class movement did not first of all constitute itself as a movement within the enterprise . . . but as a social, civic, urban, and cultural movement.

Following Harvey and Bensaïd, I argue that class does not happen only in the workplace. Certainly class is about the relations of domination and exploitation of labor: that is, the extraction of "surplus labor." However, these relations are not confined to places such as the shop, the office and the factory. That domination and exploitation can happen outside of the established market circuits, as in the self-exploitation many see in the disparate domains of the peasantry and the household. Harris (2005), for instance, argues that peasants exploit themselves in so far as they sell their surplus products for less than they would if the labor and raw materials involved in their production were fully monetized at market prices. When they sell these products to wage workers, the peasants' subsidy is passed on to those workers, and it is ultimately realized by employers, who can pay workers less than would be the case if peasants' production were fully

[7] Harvey's later enlargement of Marx's "primitive accumulation" (Marx 1976 [1867]: Part VIII), "accumulation by dispossession" (see Harvey 2010 for his most recent insights), takes heed of and precisely brings to mind his "production as a totality" formulation.

commoditized and priced accordingly. Similar arguments have been made for the case of households and the self-exploitation of housewives (Mayer 2005). (I return to the appropriateness of the "self-exploitation" of the urban labor in my final section.)

Lefebvre's urban hypothesis is especially helpful for analyzing important aspects of the consequences of the financial crisis that began in 2008 for countries such as Spain, which have economies dependent on bricks and mortar. Here a cycle of credit crunch, financial rescues, repossessions and evictions emerged and contributed to major social unrest. The expression "owner society" encapsulates the extent of the activities propelled by landed capital in the construction and real estate sectors, especially in Spain's archipelagos and coastal areas, though it turns out that what people ended up owning was debt (López and Rodríguez 2010). The Balearics, one of the leading tourism regions in the country, have formal and informal political and economic structures that rest on the intense and recurring transformation of space demanded by tourism itself and by the real estate sector that both accompanies tourism and competes with it (Amer 2006).[8]

This urban dependency certainly rests on the wage labor of tourism and construction. In addition, however, it also heavily depends on an unwaged labor, which I call "urban labor." That labor contributes on a daily basis to the various activities that constitute social reproduction, though it is not sold as a commodity in the market. This urban labor unfolds differently from commodity labor since, for the moment, it happens outside of the market. This distinctive unfolding will be apparent in this chapter, as I use the process of gentrification to identify and make sense of that labor.

Gentrification and its class character

Class has long been a major concern in anthropology. As the nature of capital has evolved, so has our approach to class.[9] It is with this necessary shift in mind that Narotzky and Smith (2006: 219) have said that there is a "need to reinvent the crucial usefulness of class as a category or reality that captures the pervasiveness of conflict and struggle as constitutive of social relations." In addition to that need, most of the anthropological work on class ignores the importance of the production of social space and of the urban for our understanding of classes and their relationships. By looking at

[8] The area still has agrarian values and connections that draw high-spirited membership, but these have become incorporated somewhat into the "island" image of the Balearics (Miquel Novajra 2000: 25–26).

[9] Anthropologists are not alone in this. For a reflection on the struggles that surround class as a descriptive and analytical category in history and the social sciences more generally, see Dworkin (2007).

gentrification, this chapter is intended to help with the reinvention that Narotzky and Smith call for, by investigating the urban dimension of class and its spatial implications.

Anthropologists generally have paid little attention to gentrification. There are, of course, exceptions, two recent ones being Herzfeld (2009) and Franquesa (2010). Their works are theoretically informed ethnographies of gentrification in the face of what they respectively present as the moral management of an all-pervasive bureaucracy and the inexorable expansion of capital. In doing so, both stress the importance of the relations between newcomers and long-term residents, paying particular attention to the tactics that those long-term residents develop in the face of the social transformation of their area. However, while both relate class to gentrification, neither attends to the actual labor that gentrification entails: Herzfeld does not address it; although it is implicit in his work, Franquesa does not explicitly develop this dimension.

Gentrification has been important in other disciplines that take an interest in the urban, especially geography and sociology.[10] The main debates in geography have revolved around whether gentrification is economically or culturally driven, and around whether it is best seen as production led or consumption led (a comprehensive survey of gentrification in geography is Lees *et al.* 2008). I consider the "rent gap" hypothesis developed by Smith (for its developed form, see Smith 1996) to be the clearest geographical explanation of gentrification. It holds that the land-owning classes capitalize on the difference between the existing value of a site (what Smith identifies as capitalized ground rent) and its potential "highest and best use" (what Smith identifies as capitalized potential ground rent). This hypothesis has attracted criticisms, two of which are especially pertinent. One is that it ignores demand, and hence the social, political and cultural factors that shape it (Ley 1996: 42); the other is that it ignores individual agency, and so does not consider why, where and when the rent gap takes place, and how the space-consuming middle class, central to gentrification, is formed (Hamnett 2003: 169–70).

Later developments of Smith's theory emphasize the possibility that, as a result of concrete social relations, class struggles and processes, land owners and others with an economic interest in land might aim at a "lowest and worst use," the disinvestment of capital in particular sites, in anticipation of later gentrification and its associated capital investment and rising land values (see, e.g., Clark 1995). This development seems suited to Es Barri, at least in its basic principles. However, one of the main problems of the rent-gap hypothesis is that, even though it is sometimes invoked in tandem with a description of class

[10] Two recent and extensive works on gentrification show the hegemony of geography in this field (Brown-Saracino 2010; Lees *et al.* 2010). With the exception of an *en passant* reference to Herzfeld (2009), none of the titles dealt with in either of these comes from anthropology.

struggle (e.g. Smith 1996; see also Smith and LeFaivre 1984; Bridge 1995), it does not account for the labor invested in the process, or for the domination and exploitation that exist in the realization of the surplus value made possible by closing the rent gap.

Of course, much of this labor cannot be understood if we restrict ourselves to the routine focus on labor in its waged form. In what follows, I depart from that routine focus, and describe the urban labor included in the two moments that the rent-gap hypothesis envisages, that of disinvestment and degeneration and that of investment and regeneration.

Renewal and the urban labor of long-term residents

In the summer of 2010 a trendy bar opened in the premises of what had been the longest functioning business in Ciutat, one that was 500 years old. At a talk given on occasion of its opening, a local historian, surrounded by a selection of the wicker and esparto-grass objects that had hitherto been made and sold there, recalled that Es Barri had been home to all kinds of activity that had given their names to its streets: flour mills, hat factories, rigging workshops, glassworks, blacksmiths, stone masonries, potteries, furriers. The concentration of these businesses, and the associated markets, groceries, taverns and hostels, plus the fact that most of the labor force resided there, has led Escartín (2001) to refer to the Ciutat of 1840–1940 as the "piled city."

In those days, when Es Barri was the working-class neighborhood par excellence of Ciutat, cats moved freely. However, in the second half of the twentieth century things slowly started to change. In the 1950s, under the banner of sanitation, local authorities announced they would "tidy up" the built environment of the area so that landed capitalists could turn it into the touristy "historic city," though as I explain, this tidying up would not arrive until much later (a review of the evolving renewal of Ciutat is in Ruiz Viñals 2000). Meanwhile, in the 1960s most of the workshops closed down and the new generation of the working class took jobs in the expanding tourism industry and fled Es Barri in search of a less piled environment. That expanding industry was referred to as "mass" tourism because it attracted a mass of tourists, but the term also invokes the mass of workers and the mass urbanization that this tourism required, a process I call "tourbanization."

In the 1970s, the increasing presence of the class cloaca that López refers to in his poem – the whores, the drug-dealers, the pensioner widows, the gypsies, the old shoemaker, the baker, the barber, the innkeeper, the tobacconist – meant the continued existence of marginalized, unregulated and even unlawful activities that, despite being of a lower status than the old workshops, kept Es Barri alive. As well, the taverns that had served the local working class turned into shabby

cabarets and seedy bars, many of which served the US Navy's Sixth Fleet, with names such as Jimmy, Americano, Hollywood, Salem, Kentucky and Kansas. At one point there were fifty of them in a five hectare area. However, the Fleet stopped calling at Majorca in the 1980s, the bars began to close, and Es Barri was left to rot. In the midst of all this degradation many landlords enriched themselves by receiving a high return on their original invested capital, even though they were collecting only what is called "old rents," regulated under the 1964 Urban Leases Act.[11] This said, the capitalization of rents was not the final and ultimate goal in the search for profit. Ordinary landlords would soon give way to landed capitalists.

In the 1990s, the local press made more insistently an argument that began to appear in the 1980s, that Es Barri needed to be revamped. Journalists wrote about the depths that the degradation had reached: Es Barri had, for instance, the largest rat colonies in Ciutat. In their stories, the journalists blamed the inhabitants, most of them either old-rent tenants or squatters. The local press ran regular, detailed stories about the sex workers and drug dealers in the area, signs of an exotic "informal economy" and moral decay. Other features stressed statistics about Es Barri: "The functional illiteracy rate of the neighborhood residents is 40%, 41.5% have primary education, 6.7% secondary, 3.7% university studies . . . Only 24% of the population earns a living from a formal job, 21% earn a living with irregular economic activities, 30% receive some sort of pension or benefit and the rest depend on other people" (Garcés 1994). Even the cats were pressed into service: "The neighborhood hosts the fattest cats in Palma. Although children entertain themselves stoning them to death, cats never miss out on their share of rodent. The most enjoyable game needs to be revised: to hit the rats instead of their devourers" (Garcés 1991). This press attention encouraged an ever-worse image of Es Barri, and with that, ever-lower land prices.

The people I call Manolo and Manuel illustrate the process of the devaluation of Es Barri, and they represent in extreme form the eclectic class fraction, which includes the old pensioner women who now feed the stray cats, that debases the value of a site's environment while contributing to landlords' profits. Though some may question the idea that the activities of Manolo and Manuel count as urban labor, I contend that the exploitation of the destruction of value in Es Barri is a necessary step for the subsequent exploitation of its creation.

Under Spanish law, the nature and duration of Manolo's sub-tenancy of Manuel's flat meant that he had a right to remain in the building, and had to be

[11] Under that Act, tenants could extend their leases under the initial terms, which reduced landlords' income and was used to justify their neglect of their properties. In 1985, following general price deregulation, this right was abolished for all new leases.

persuaded to leave if the property was to be redeveloped. Accordingly, in May 2008, the speculator who had recently acquired the building offered Manolo € 7,500 to leave Manuel's flat, and Manolo accepted. (Manuel ultimately moved into municipal sheltered housing.) The building was in a dangerous state of decay because its owners had not maintained it, claiming that they could not afford to do so because they received only the very low old rent. The speculator also paid the owners an amount that they considered to be reasonable, but which was significantly less than what the speculator expected to receive later, when he sold the property.

Manolo, once a bricklayer, had recently turned sixty-five and become a pensioner. He had rented a room from the formal occupant of the flat, Manuel, who was eighty-five. He also took care of Manuel, who was not on the social services' rolls. Manolo handled Manuel's paperwork and ran errands for him and, with the aid of his daughter and her partner, he provided Manuel with food and kept Manuel and the flat reasonably clean. Manolo of course deducted the value of his assistance from the rent he paid Manuel. Not much of this showed up in the press article in which Manolo appeared, under the headline "The last four residents of Posada d'en Bauló" (Prieto 2008).

Even less likely to appear was the fact that, with Manuel's consent, Manolo occasionally let his daughter and her partner, who was addicted to heroin, stay in the flat, since they had no fixed home. He also brought in hired "lady friends" he met in the remains of the nearby bars where the sex trade still survived, for Manolo was a small-scale pimp and drug dealer.[12] He and his daughter's partner would buy small amounts of heroin, adulterate it and sell it on. Since the early 1980s and until his official retirement, Manolo had combined these activities with his bricklaying.

Manolo's illegal activities appeared to be necessary to an ongoing projection of decay that not only helped to bring land values, and hence housing prices, down to the lowest and worst possible, but also encouraged people in Ciutat to call for the renewal of Es Barri. They were, then, part of the urban labor necessary for a future gentrification. Thanks in part to this urban labor, the worst and lowest uses of the area were achieved, the drug trafficking, the collapse of buildings, the decay, the rats and the well-fed cats. And as they were achieved, capitalist speculators and developers, together with a concerned, even outraged, public, were able to ally with the local authorities so that the first two could expropriate property and harass and evict those who, unlike Manolo, rejected an offer to leave and instead decided to stay.

At the time of writing, by the way, Manolo is squatting in another flat in Es Barri, and he expects the owner to come up with a deal to entice him to move

[12] To a smaller extent, prostitution and drug dealing continue in Es Barri, as do Manolo's "businesses."

once more. As I noted, Manuel moved to a municipal old people's home, thanks to the pressure the speculator exercised on the municipal social services.

Residential unionism and the urban labor of newcomers

"*Allà on no hi ha moix, ses rates van a lloure*": "When the cat's away, the rats will play." The rats were soon stoned and Es Barri became a gold-rush area, but, as the well-known architect García-Delgado (1995: 71) stated, only for those who could really appreciate its qualities:

> In the face of this 21st century we have to become aware that these old cities contain an enormous unexploited treasure; they are true unexploited mines. The riches to be found . . . are huge: to know how to value the positive qualities these old centers have as places of evasion, that is, for sensual and magical enjoyment. If we become aware that in these places one can live in a very different way, with a much superior quality of life than that offered by any other space, I think these cities will be able to be valued.

A local geographer, Vives Miró, supports the rent-gap hypothesis for Es Barri. Between 1993 and 2001 the population dropped from 1,912 inhabitants to 556 (Vives Miró 2011: 10), mainly because of eviction, and then began to increase slowly: in 2007 there were 791 inhabitants. In 1991 the average housing purchase price in Es Barri was below that of Ciutat; in 1995, after the approval of the municipal renewal scheme for Es Barri but before the start of the EU URBAN Programme in 1997 (Morell and Franquesa 2011), it was already above it. A decade or so later the difference was striking: in 2008 buyers paid € 4,970 per square meter in the rebuilt core of Es Barri, while for the whole of the city the average price per square meter was € 2,342 (Vives Miró 2011: 10). This period also saw important moments in neighborhood politics in Es Barri.

In Spain, AVs date back to the end of Franco's dictatorship in the 1970s, when their "residential unionism" was a vehicle for opposition politics at a local level (recounted nostalgically by Pérez Quintana and Sánchez León 2008). That politics often revolved around the improvement of what Castells (1977 [1972]) called collective consumption, that is, the spaces reserved for the social reproduction of labor, such as housing conditions, neighborhood services such as roads and sewage, health and education facilities and so on. After all, as Bensaïd (2009 [1996]: 187) argued, class struggle was never restricted only to sites of production. However, in the 1980s, under what was called the democratic transition, the residential movement weakened. At first it fed local-authority institutions with its most highly trained members (architects, social workers etc.); it then became a springboard for party politics; finally, these very same parties co-opted the AVs and set them against each other.

In spite of this weakening, the AV of Es Barri was set up in 1991 by the only federation of AVs then existing in Ciutat. The federation encouraged the

alliance of pioneering newcomers and the odd long-term resident. The AV brought together people of various conditions who were against the project to bulldoze the built environment of Es Barri and displace its population. Although members of the class cloaca remained mostly outside of the AV organization, the AV supported their stay, a policy that helped avoid contention in the area and that made the AV more legitimate. In spite of its opposition, the proposed Es Barri renewal scheme went ahead. This weakened not only the AV, but also the federation, which in 1996 collapsed in the face of a new, city-wide right-wing resident platform that aimed at crushing the power the left had gathered in the neighborhoods during the previous two decades. However, the AV re-emerged in 2007.

If López were now to write a sequel to his poem, he would describe how edgy foreigners, hipster IT designers, bohemian bar owners, philanthropic civil servants, lovers of the past, organic vegetable consumers, providers of cultural services, university scholars, chic boutique shopkeepers and the rest refill the emptied spaces. These become new AV members, joining those who founded it back in 1991. With their arrival, an organization concerned with urban justice changed into one concerned with the revaluing of the neighborhood ("the riches to be found" that the architect García-Delgado described), carried out mostly through the attraction of the media, visitors and further residents, drawn by the "discovery" of its cultural heritage and the festivities that celebrate it.

Although these newcomers tended to have similar social backgrounds, education and political orientations, and although they appeared to share a common telos, some came as tenants, some as owners. This made a difference. Whereas those who rent are interested in what we might call the use value of the neighborhood and its attributes, those who own tend to follow the rent-gap logic. That is, they aim at the highest and best use since, unlike those who rent, they appear to be interested in future exchange values as well. In contrast to the situation with the long-term residents, domination and exploitation of the urban labor of both types of newcomer takes place under a common theme of revaluing space.

As Manolo and Manuel represented the long-term residents, the people I call Bel and Biel represent the incomers, Bel renting and Biel buying. Bel was a self-employed cultural-services provider in her mid-thirties, living in Es Barri since 2004, and well known in the cultural scene of Ciutat. In the summer of 2007 she approached Biel, who was a teacher in adult education close to retirement, who had lived in Es Barri since the late 1980s, and who had been a member of the Communist Party since the early 1970s. Together with other recent newcomers, Bel expressed an interest in reviving the AV. Shortly after, in September 2007, Biel and other pioneers witnessed, with a mixture of astonishment and skepticism, how more than fifty people showed up at the AV general meeting, some of them, including Bel, offering to

take on the positions of responsibility that the pioneers had held for almost a decade.

Biel and Bel share their neighborhood of residence and AV membership, as well as their intention to shape their surrounding social and built environment, an intention that attracted the new AV members. Together, old and new members revisited old topics: to unify the population of Es Barri, now less heterogeneous than before, through various fiestas; to pedestrianize its streets; to reverse an increase in pub tours in the area; to preserve and give use to Es Barri's built heritage. As I said, these are old issues. For instance, since the inception of the AV Biel himself had been promoting the industrial heritage of the area, first as a way to dignify the decayed condition of the neighborhood and then, unsuccessfully, to save it from renewal. As well as revisiting old topics of concern, Bel and other new AV members have raised new ones: hiring a basement to use it as a bike park; establishing an organic food co-op; applying to the Council to ban automobile traffic from one of the squares and turn it into what they called an "agora", suited to public leisure and political discussion; organizing the supply of staple food for needy families; organizing sessions to consider what the role of the AV should be.

The urban labor of these new residents has had an effect. While the media previously had decried the decayed image of Es Barri, at the same time heightening it, since 2008 they have praised the "creativeness" of newcomers and their desire to mix with the previous inhabitants: "Old and new inhabitants share the space of a changing neighbourhood" (Mateu 2008). Regardless of their different views of the transformation of the area, all the members of the AV seem to share a sense that they are accomplishing an urban labor founded upon their acquired and mastered distinctive tastes (Bourdieu 1984), an urban labor that has, perhaps unconsciously, raised the value of Es Barri's land, and hence the purchase price of each square meter.

Bel says that she has never thought of how her activities affect the revaluing of previously devalued land in Es Barri. Biel, on the other hand, seems to be well aware of what is happening and what the consequences will be. Using the alternative name for Es Barri, which is Sa Gerreria, he said "I think it is the same old story. A neighborhood needs to be degraded and pulled down so one can speculate over its ruins. And I think the case of Sa Gerreria has been paradigmatic in this sense."

Room for the unexpected

Consistent with the Lefebvrian difference between the urban and the city (see note 6), Corsín Jiménez (2003: 140) says that space "is what people do, not where they are." Indeed space does not appear to be something simply waiting for people to occupy it. Rather, and very much in accord with Condominas's

understanding of social space, it is something produced by people's agency. Yet in some respects, the sketches I have presented here bring in an aspect of space that relates both to what people do and to where people are. This "where," however, is not a matter of geographical location. Rather, it has to do with people's social location, particularly their position in a social order that is defined by the relations that the state and landed capital maintain toward urban labor.

Such relations bring us back to the question of self-exploitation mentioned earlier. Urban labor and those who carry it out certainly are very different from the peasants and household members who exploit themselves. That is because of the productive nature of the commodity at stake, land and the improvements on it, and also because of the logic that underlies the self-exploitation. After certain groups of long-term residents are allowed, even encouraged, to devalue the built environment through an urban labor that ranges from drug trafficking to cat feeding, wealthier newcomers improve the neighborhood, but not necessarily only for themselves.

From one perspective, those newcomers increase the use value of property for the people who live in the area. From another perspective, however, their activities may also be self-exploitation that produces surplus value that is passed on to landed capitalists, who realize it when they sell the property surrounded by environments improved by the urban labor of others. Here, the main difference between peasants and household members on the one hand, and on the other these newcomers, lies in the fact that the newcomers mediate the debasement of the neighborhood and the realization of value through the very improvements that they perform. It is not clear how much the cooperation of the two different moments, devaluation and revaluation, can be considered self-exploitation, since local authorities and landed capitalists have long orchestrated their coordination in order to appropriate the improvements; that is, to accumulate value via an exploitation that is based on dispossession itself. Thus, accumulation is based not only on the dispossession of the residential milieu of long-term residents, and potentially of the newcomer renters too, but also of their very same urban labor, the one invested in both worsening and improving the social environment and its built dimension.

To return to the urban society I have identified by way of gentrification, I must stress that I do not mean to dismiss other forms of capitalist organization for the study of class. Instead, I mean to highlight how social formations take their specific shapes because of the particular combination of different forms of capitalist operations at work in them. Depending on the concrete geographic and historic context, different combinations will emerge, and it is likely that in each such context one combination will become dominant and shape the whole formation. I write of these arrangements in abstract terms, as abstract as

a mode of production or, to bring it nearer to our terrain, as a class in itself. Yet, having said this, these abstractions have a worldly form at the level of social interaction of the sort that I have described here.

Thus, I argue, in order to understand what goes on in places such as Es Barri, it is necessary to delineate the relations among different groups and classes. There appears to be the capitalistic production of space, "the forever-ongoing unrest of space, securing its flexibility and its everlasting state of exception in order to justify exceptional actions that allow a permanent production of opportunities for the extraction of surplus value" (Franquesa 2010: 241). This forever-ongoing unrest calls for the labor that capital requires, but nevertheless also confronts, if it is to realize these opportunities for gain. This labor can be the classic labor power that is bought and sold in the market. However, in urban society that labor can also take other forms. Such is the case with gentrification, which appears to rely mainly on an unwaged dimension, visible in the process of cooperation that is based on the moment of devaluation and the moment of revaluation of both social space and urban land, all of which the state brings together.[13]

The transformation of Es Barri that I have described in this chapter is often celebrated. The owner of an old stationery shop that also sells party costumes and paraphernalia illustrates this celebration. At an AV meeting, she said "This neighborhood has been reborn from its ashes, just like the Phoenix. Because it now has young people, married couples, small children. They're all coming in now." In that celebration, however, class consciousness is muted at best. Moreover, where it exists it tends to set those whose urban labor leads to revaluation against those whose urban labor led to the necessary prerequisite, devaluation.[14] The failure to recognize that these two groups are part of a common process united by their exploited urban labor is illustrated in that shop owner's words, which ignore the fact that the class cloaca also included its young people, married couples, small children. It is the recognition that those involved in the two moments of gentrification, devaluation and revaluation, are part of a single process of exploitation that is also missing from the rent-gap model. In that failure of recognition, the model also fails to discern the actual class relations that take place, which means that, no matter how determined the groups and processes might seem in that model, the people involved possess their own agency, and do not always follow the script.

[13] There might not be wages, but there may indeed be rewards. Many of the long-term residents have received housing elsewhere in the city so as to make room for the best and highest uses, while most of the AV activities are funded by public grants.

[14] In fact, these fractions are so alienated that they are not even conscious of their own respective portion of urban labor, let alone its appropriation by landed capitalists.

"The city of the cats and the city of the people lie one within the other, but they are not the same city" (Calvino 1983 [1963]: 101). The same is true of the city of long-term residents and the city of the newcomers. However, while those cities are different, they touch each other. The city of cats was cleansed by the cooperation of the old widows who fed them and the newcomers who wanted them removed.

Es Barri, then, seems to produce unexpected outcomes. The Manolos and Manuels, and the Bels and Biels, are not mere individuals, the product of an extreme empiricist segmentation that offers no suggestions on how social order and change work. Rather, with Marx (1976 [1867]), they are the bearers of particular class relations and interests. They carry out urban labor, and despite their clear differences, inner diversities and blatant oppositions, when their labor is seen in terms of the process of devaluation and revaluation, and of the landed capitalists who profit from it, they form a class in itself. Through the ways that its members are dominated and exploited in their labor, they are related to the landed capitalist class, as well as to the state. Class relations are, it seems, the underlying theme for processes on the ground, processes that are identified by the terms for those who embody them: residents, residents' associations, developers, landowners, bureaucrats, politicians. However, it is yet to be seen if these urban-labor class fractions, which form a class in itself, will develop a common consciousness and become a class for itself.

Taking heed of Montllor's warning, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, we should be wary of space. If we are seeking to understand it, we need to recognize that most of the literature dealing with gentrification draws on the geographical spatialization of the classes handed down from the salad days of other sorts of capitalist formation, especially industrial systems now in their decline. We need, instead, to look directly at both how classes produce their social space and, in turn, how social space refashions them. Overall, space draws the line on how class happens and on the division of labor on which that structuring of space relies. Although I have used this insight here to illuminate gentrification in Es Barri, it applies to the urban more generally, to its struggles and its conquests.

Acknowledgment

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7 Class trajectories and indigenism among agricultural workers in Kerala

Luisa Steur

Kottamurade "colony" is a small, overpopulated and poverty-stricken rural ghetto. Situated on the edge of a large paddy field, it houses forty-four families and is part of a cash-cropping village of some 30,000 inhabitants in Wayanad, the hilly northern district of Kerala (South India).[1] As one approaches Kottamurade, Christian farmers living nearby look on curiously to see who is paying a visit to the "Adivasis," as most people refer to those living in the colony. Not everybody in Kottamurade itself, however, is so convinced of being Adivasi. "Adivasi? That's something the government calls us. We're just Paniyas," one of the women told me. Paniyas are legally a Scheduled Tribe (ST), thus denoted since colonial times in the Indian census.[2] They generally, however, consider themselves a *jati* (occupational caste): Paniya literally means "worker." Yet, since the colony participated en masse in what became known as the Muthanga land occupation, organized by the Adivasi Gothra Maha Sabha (AGMS, Indigenous Clan Grand Federation) in 2003, some people have begun to embrace their Adivasi identity as more than just a legal category. I learned about the experiences of people at Kottamurade colony during a twelve-month stint of fieldwork in 2006–07, three years after the Muthanga land occupation had been violently broken up and all Kottamurade's inhabitants had returned to the colony.

In the intervening period, some inhabitants of Kottamurade had grown skeptical of their former participation in the AGMS and of their attempt to organize as Adivasis. Others, however, had become even more convinced that the oppression and poverty they experienced was not so much a result of their position as poor agricultural workers, but rather of their status as Adivasis. Some people even started visibly embracing an Adivasi identity. The woman I will call

[1] Wayanad is the least densely populated district of Kerala and heavily involved in agriculture and the plantation economy. Almost a third of the labor force in Wayanad are agricultural laborers, twice the Kerala average.

[2] In the 2001 census the STs in Kerala collectively constitute less than 2 percent of the population. In Wayanad, however, they make up 17 percent, roughly a third of the ST population of Kerala. Paniyas are the largest ST group in Wayanad, constituting about 45 percent of the ST population.

Vellichi, for instance, had begun decorating her home with "tribal patterns" and stopped going to church, preferring to "stay with our own gods."[3] She had also decided to stop voting for non-Adivasi political parties and instead proudly stood as a candidate herself, an Adivasi candidate. In contrast, others such as Akathi had become suspicious of Adivasi culture. Talking about C.K. Janu, the Adivasi woman leading the AGMS, Akathi said she suspected that Janu was "playing a game" with them. Akathi was even more suspicious of Kannavu (Dreaming), an alternative school for Adivasi children where they learn Adivasi arts. She suspected it of being a scheme concocted by the educated head of the school to exploit the children.

How and why has indigenism emerged as a significant force in Kottamurade? Where do these divergent opinions of the politics of indigeneity come from? These questions are rarely asked in India due to a stubborn essentialism regarding the Adivasi that not only, in accordance with social evolutionist theory, collapses the indigenous and the tribal (Guha 1999), but also reduces the Adivasi to their cultural essence. This is true even of A. Aiyappan, the first ethnographer to challenge his discipline's reigning obsession with Kerala's handful of cave-dwelling "primitive tribes," and instead focus attention on the Paniya. He opened his ethnography on the Paniya by claiming they were a "happy people without any history" (Aiyappan 1992: 1). It is still generally assumed that the Paniya, like all Adivasis, are innocent and that politically they can only really be Adivasi and not, for instance, democrat, communist or conservative.

When the question does arise of how and why indigenism arose as a form of political identity, it tends to be answered with the classic Orientalist combination of calculative and culturalist arguments. The former posit that people perform their Adivasi identity and their ST status because they think that this will bring them the most material benefits from NGOs and the state. Such arguments, however, make a mockery of people's heartfelt expressions of belonging. One can hardly, for instance, imagine that Chimbren, one of the men from Kottamurade, was simply calculating the benefits of performing Adivasiness when he emotionally exclaimed, while walking through the village, "I am an Adivasi! Who dares to play with me now?" Nor, in fact, was there a great deal to be gained from performing Adivasiness, since neither the few NGOs in the area nor the state ever had any doubt that Paniyas were STs and hence Adivasis, among the poorest of the poor and so deserving of support.

This is usually where the problematic culturalist arguments come in. In these, the ST list is not a "dustbin category" (Bates 1995) into which everything was put that was difficult to classify religiously but that needed some kind of positive discrimination. Rather, people in an ST are assumed to have a substantive tribal

[3] Except for well-known public figures, all names in this chapter have been changed.

history living on in their subconscious. Beyond being a discourse of (Western) NGOs and the post-colonial state, Adivasiness is considered the authentic basis of these people's culture, connecting them to the homeland of their ancestors in the forest. It is further assumed that at times of crisis this primordial identity will become stronger and guide people's political behavior.

The liberal–culturalist synthesis of such calculative and cultural arguments into common sense (see Steur 2005) does not, however, make for the most satisfactory explanation of the rise of indigenism, certainly not in the case of Kottamurade. Here we have a group of people whose oral history tells not of a golden tribal era, but rather of ancestors who lived as slaves and were traded from one *jenmi* (landlord) to another during the annual festival of Valliyoorkavu. Whereas local anthropologists take their curly hair and the fact that they used to dig up tubers in the forest to supplement the little they got from the *jenmi* as unmistakable markers of tribal identity, people at Kottamurade were not used to seeing themselves as Adivasi. Moreover, their own history tells them that they could just as well claim benefits from the Kerala government by asserting their rights as agricultural laborers, as they used to do in former times.

The question of why people in Kottamurade colony turned to indigenism thus needs to be addressed outside the framework of liberal–culturalist common sense. What I propose instead is to look at the rise of indigenism as a historical and relational class process. In so doing, I rely on Don Kalb's (1997: 2) notion of class as "rooted in the basic and never frictionless ties and interdependences between . . . people as arising from their efforts to survive and maintain themselves." And, as Kalb emphasizes, such relational dependences happen at multiple levels, from the intimate and personal to the macroscopic. The process through which ordinary participants of the AGMS, in this case the Paniya of Kottamurade, began to see themselves as Adivasis is best understood through such a concept of class, which relates the daily necessity of securing a living and the human need for orientation and meaning to the shifting multi-scalar regimes of production and appropriation in which such experiences take place. Class, then, should not be seen as just another factor explaining the attraction of indigenism, alongside culture or self-interest. Rather, I want to use the synthetic power of the notion of class (Thompson 1965) to reject the idea that people's consciousness and interests can be separated from the ways that they make a living and organize a future within a particular, evolving set of relationships.

A class perspective envisions the rise of indigenism in Kerala in terms of its spatial and historical location in the capitalist world-system. It is telling that the rise of indigenism, the latest form of peoplehood to be produced by the world-system (Wallerstein 1987), has gained prominence as a means of combating the effects of capitalist expansion precisely when the largest ever

proportion of the world's population has become proletarianized. Though caste and all kinds of feudal social arrangement continue to be reproduced in India, local regimes of production and reproduction increasingly are shaped by their integration into global capitalism, a process necessarily shaped by regional histories, geographical location and the timing of that integration. In Kerala, for instance, the compromise between labor and capital has been institutionalized thanks to the influence of the Communist movement, which has been notably more favorable to labor than is the case in the rest of India (Heller 2000), and Kerala has not experienced the same degree of accumulation by dispossession as other parts of the country. Yet, class relations in Kerala are nevertheless affected by the pressures of global capital. Whereas most studies of the rise of indigenism see the local and the global as connected through assemblages of meaning such as the travelling discourses of indigenism (e.g. Tsing 2007) or concrete political actors such as international NGOs (e.g. Niezen 2003), a class perspective allows for a different way of connecting the local and the global. Instead of attributing disproportionate amounts of influence to discourses or NGOs, it emphasizes the power of an ever-changing capitalist world-system to shape the way people make sense of their lives while struggling to maintain themselves in the face of those changes.

In addition to being central to the frame I use in this chapter, class is also a common term in Kerala, used especially by the Communist Party that has been in and out of power ever since it won the first independent election in 1957. In the media and political debates, the rise of indigenism is often depicted as a shift from class politics (*varga rashtriyam*) to identity politics (*swathwa rashtriyam*). The CPI(M), the main Communist party, insists that the appearance of identity politics has nothing to do with existing caste hierarchies within the party or its own complicity with neoliberal restructuring, but rather is merely feeding the Hindu nationalist agenda of "communalism" and is a foreign conspiracy to fragment the working class. In contrast, those asserting identity politics reject class politics altogether (see Steur 2011). Class consciousness for itself in Kerala has thus become disconnected from class formation in itself – a clear case of the "nested typologies" of class complicating "our ability to apprehend the fluidity of class relations and experience" (Kasmir and Carbonella 2008: 6). While those in Kerala who are busy attracting foreign investment and dealing with budget deficits continue to envision themselves as governing in the name of "the working class," those whose poverty has been exacerbated by the process vehemently reject the idea of class altogether. They see themselves rather as the indigenous people of Kerala, oppressed by mainstream Malayalee society.

Finally, I should note that, for people at Kottamurade, shifts in political articulation are more ambiguous and implicit than for political leaders and activists. Thus, though the AGMS leadership declared that the Muthanga land

occupation was aimed at building an autonomous Adivasi way of life on the land of their ancestors, many participants were still ambiguously attached to the idea that used to attract Dalits and Adivasis to the Communist movement, that everybody, irrespective of caste, has the right to a piece of land as the basis of dignified Malayalee citizenship. For the people of Kottamurade, the shift from class to identity is, moreover, a political process. They never explicitly embraced the Communist Party's class discourse, but generally voted according to their patron–client relations (and since most of their patrons voted Congress, they usually did too). For these people, then, the shift from class to identity was not a matter of political party affiliation or ideology in any obvious way. Rather, it meant that they increasingly saw their lives as characterized by their oppression as Adivasis by mainstream groups who (along with the state) "robbed us of our autonomy," instead of by dependence on "people with a lot of money" in a state that "doesn't care enough for us poor people." Instead of engaging as workers in strikes for higher wages, people's main preoccupation at Kottamurade has become claiming land, not through the idea of "land to the tiller" but through the notion of Adivasi belonging.

Indigenism and "suffocation" at Kottamurade colony

Why did people in Kottamurade shift toward a politics of Adivasi belonging? From a class perspective, we can begin by looking at the way aspirations of integration into Kerala society had started to fade as the possibility of earning a decent income and having access to crucial reproductive support declined with neoliberal restructuring. In fact, the idea of becoming a worker-citizen was not one that the residents of Kottamurade had long been able to cherish.

Late in the 1960s, many poor, mostly Christian settlers from southern Kerala had come into Wayanad and started claiming land previously under the control of temples and large landowners. This upset the feudal balance of power and allowed Paniyas, for the first time, to claim plots of land for themselves. Moreover, a few of the settlers were part of the militant Maoist periphery of the Communist Party and led attacks on particular landlords whom they identified as the cruelest embodiments of state–feudal power. It was as part of this Naxalite movement that many Paniyas were freed from bondage and, through strikes and in the context of growing demand for their labor, managed to increase their wages. During the Emergency period of the mid-1970s the Naxalite movement was repressed, through violence but also through the Indian government's *Garibi Hatao* (Eradicate Poverty) campaign. Particularly significant for the Paniya were the campaign's promises to abolish bonded labor, provide housing for the poor and set up state-run cooperatives providing tribal employment.

In the 1990s, however, things deteriorated for those employed as day laborers and in the plantation sector. That was a time of drastically decreasing demand

for their labor, a result of the further withdrawal of capital from Kerala's agricultural sector, which could not compete with cheaper products produced elsewhere. It is true that the higher wages achieved as part of the labor and land reform movements of the 1960s had already led to a decreasing demand for labor in agriculture and agro-processing industries (Kannan 1999), but the idea of progress for workers, especially for peripheral workers such as those at Kottamurade, was kept alive in the 1970s and 1980s. That was because of government mediation, attempts at employment provision and a host of redistributive and social welfare policies, notably a government-subsidized pension scheme for agricultural laborers. These may have been only programs of poor-relief (Kannan 1999: 163), but they lifted rural households out of poverty. By the 1990s, however, these schemes were grinding to a halt through underfunding and mismanagement. The result was falling demand for rural manual labor: in the late 1980s about 40 percent of Adivasi workers had more than 200 days employment per year, in 2003 only 4 percent did (Aerthayil 2008: 69ff.).

These changes were rather acute in Kottamurade. Everybody complained that local employment was decreasing. During the 1980s they had already fallen behind their upwardly mobile neighbors profiting from a booming regional economy in rubber, pepper and other cash crops. Things in Kottamurade got worse in the 1990s, when the price of cash crops slumped and the overuse of pesticides and other excesses of industrial agriculture peaked (see Muenster 2011), turning agriculture in Wayanad into an increasingly speculative business and making the village that Kottamurade belongs to Kerala's suicide capital. In the place of agriculture, the booming sector in Wayanad is now tourism, actively promoted as a "growth engine" to replace the failing agricultural and manufacturing sectors (Sreekumar and Parayil 2002). Nobody at Kottamurade, however, had any prospect of being employed in tourism, though Adivasis loom large as a tourist attraction on billboards and on websites such as that of the Jungle Retreat hotel, where one can read that "spending time with these people of the forest is an enchanting and fascinating experience" (Jungle Retreat Wayanad n.d.)

Like many Adivasis in India (Breman 1996; Mosse and Gupta 2005), people at Kottamurade were increasingly forced to migrate out of Kerala in order to make a living, particularly to Kodagu (formerly Coorg) in Karnataka. There they became temporary workers in ginger and banana plantations, often leased by Malayalee farmers and pensioned civil servants trying their luck in a period of heavily fluctuating agricultural commodity prices. People from Kottamurade were drawn to the work by advances of between 500 and 1000 rupees ($US 10–20) given them by labor contractors. However, often the contractors found ways of not paying them their full wages, perhaps by selling them liquor and subtracting the cost from their wages, or simply through

fraud. In Kodagu, not only are agricultural wages lower than in Kerala, they are falling further because of the presence of migrant workers from elsewhere and because local workers do not need to be provided with food or accommodation.

People in Kottamurade said that circular migration to Kodagu started in the early 1990s. Initially they were still able to find work locally in pepper cultivation in February and March, but more recently people had to move to Kodagu even in those months. Sometimes wages were negotiated before they departed for Kodagu, other times the negotiation happened only on the way. Migration was stressful not only because of the bad working and living conditions at the plantations. As well, migration is highly stigmatized: Kodagu is generally known as a scary and immoral place. The attractive chance to take part in freer, more worldly relationships and circuits of consumption (see Shah 2010) fuels gossip in Wayanad about Adivasi workers who go to Kodagu only to buy "silly consumption items" such as Fair and Lovely (whitening) skin cream or jeans. Moreover, rumors say that Adivasi workers practice "lax morals," get drunk and have affairs. Circular migration, then, serves to exclude these people from full Malayalee citizenship. It does so as well in a more insidious way. People at Kottamurade would often tell me that they were evicted from the land occupation at Muthanga because "people were afraid that if we got our own land, we would no longer come to work theirs." But many fear that their declining economic and moral position seems to be turning into something worse: being made expendable and no longer part of local society.

The structural processes pushing the Paniya out of Kerala society were replicated in miniature and closer to home in the colony itself. Kottamurade's land is today registered in the name of Vasi, the son of the deceased *moopan*, the traditional leader of a Paniya community, a position conventionally allocated by the landlord who owned the laborers (Aiyappan 1992: 80). Everyone in Kottamurade pays rent to Vasi, who also profits from cash crops grown on the part of the *moopan*'s land that remains uninhabited. People often emphasize their gratitude to the *moopan* for letting them live on the land, but in so doing they also hint at the traditional obligation of the *moopan* to lead the community. Vasi, however, seems less interested in such collective moral claims, or in mediating between workers and potential employers at Kottamurade. Rather, he seems more interested in the land on which the houses stand. Because economic liberalization has led to rising prices, the land could be used much more profitably than it is. If he did not have to house a group of largely unemployed kin on it, Vasi could use the land to consolidate his narrow escape from poverty. He has, thus, been trying to get people to leave the colony, for instance by evicting tenants who are overdue on their rent and by refusing permission for new huts to be built or old ones to be renovated. This increases tensions within families

and often, particularly when combined with alcoholism, sparks off fights. As this "suffocation" increases, so does people's desire to own a piece of land for themselves.

Education, which used to be seen as the key to emancipation, increasingly has become a field of class polarization (Osella and Osella 2000). People in Kottamurade were first introduced to reading and writing during Kerala's literacy campaigns in the 1980s, and the literacy that a few adults acquired made them eager to see their children go to school. Children said that they dreamed of becoming teachers, movie stars or policemen; parents said that they hoped their children would at least become educated enough to know their rights, to no longer be treated as "ignorants like us," and perhaps become something better than manual laborers. Overcrowded living quarters and migrating parents do not, however, favor children's education. Some parents struggle all the harder to educate their children, by keeping the *anganwadi* (kindergarten) in the colony running, by pressuring the municipality for a vehicle to bring the children to school and by making their children promise that they will not skip classes. However, the hope that education would lead to emancipation has all but disappeared. As educational requirements rise and as "real schooling" happens only if you can afford private schools and after-school tuition, people at Kottamurade have grown cynical, saying school was now, at best, a place where their children could get a free lunch.

As I have described, the Paniya experience of changing class relations is one of their becoming increasingly expendable as agricultural workers, being pushed off the land to which they could return between periods of seasonal migration, and having few prospects of their children integrating with others through proper education. A class perspective allows us a better understanding of why people at Kottamurade increasingly stress owning land and dream of living there autonomously, apart from the rest of Kerala society, than we get from the notions of calculating self-interest and cultural proclivity. The class processes that I have sketched explain why people increasingly see their difference from others in terms of their Adivasi identity and why they wish to reclaim this identity and save it from its present suffocation. These changes in people's everyday working lives, and the outlook that they shape, also explain why Kottamurade's inhabitants chose to gather up their few belongings and join the AGMS land occupation at Muthanga in 2003. After their violent eviction from Muthanga, some people in Kottamurade, such as Vellichi, became even more convinced by the Adivasi interpretation of their situation.

Yet others, such as Akathi, moved in the opposite direction. In the following paragraphs I describe these two prominent Kottamurade women in order to see the more personal side of the turn to indigenism. As I hope to show also, people's personal political trajectories are explained better by their experiences coping with changing political–economic relations than they are by ideas of

transcendental Adivasi belonging or compliance with dominant NGO and state discourses.

Muthanga and after: divergent pathways of belonging

Their eviction from Muthanga was traumatic for most people in Kottamurade. They lost virtually everything they owned and barely escaped attacks by police and locals as they staggered back from Muthanga to Kottamurade. Some suffered permanent injuries; two men were tortured in jail and only came back weeks later, one in such a bad state that he died soon after. Many local landlords had hired other workers while the people of Kottamurade were at Muthanga, and kept this up after people returned. Children were turned away from school for missing too many classes. The aftermath of Muthanga was, thus, one of heavy loss. However, people disagreed about how this happened and about how to go on. Vellichi and Akathi differed strongly, and their difference should be seen in terms of their divergent trajectories of class.

Akathi runs a tiny shop in the colony, selling rice, soap and other basics, right beside the kindergarten where she works as a teaching assistant, a job that pays her 500 rupees a month from the municipality. This is barely enough to cover her subsidized food and rent, but it is supplemented by the income her husband Lalu derives from *cooli panni* (day labor). Akathi's job is steady, and it gives her access to wider neighborhood networks, political connections and government support programs, and allows her to prepare her two daughters for school every day. In combination with the small amount she gets from her shop, her kindergarten job gives her a more secure income than most people in the colony. As a sign of this, she has enrolled her daughters in the new government savings project for female children, which will endow them with a sum of money at the age of eighteen.[4] In addition, she arranged government-subsidized health insurance for her family through the female self-help group she chairs in the colony, and has a formal bank account. Akathi interacts a lot in her daily work with people from outside the colony and is particularly close to some of her Christian neighbors. This is partly due to her role as care-taker of the government kindergarten and her habit of attending church, but in fact dates back to her childhood as an orphan: her parents died when she was still young, and she was raised by her brothers. They, partly out of necessity, developed relatively close relations with villagers outside of Kottamurade. One brother even managed to acquire a job in a local shop and invest in a small plot of land,

[4] Presented as providing women with the necessary funds to pay for education, the policy is popularly known to help families save up for the rising costs of dowries, one of the main institutions undermining the modest emancipatory progress made in class and gender relations by a previous generation (see Lindberg 2004).

about 100 square meters, outside the colony, where Akathi started building a house for herself. Nevertheless, Akathi and her husband Lalu decided to join the others at Muthanga. They hoped to get a plot of land of their own, because they could not be sure that she could use her brother's land once his children were grown.

In contrast to Akathi, Vellichi and her husband Dasen have five generations living in their house, which is too small to allow them all to sleep inside. They have three young children, the eldest of whom was of school age, but who was mostly to be found roaming the paddy fields. In *grama panchayat* (village self-government) meetings, established during the "people's planning campaign" of the 1990s, Vellichi often is the first to speak up and is much less shy than Akathi. Vellichi often cannot attend, however, since both she and Dasen have no income other than day labor, and often have to spend weeks in Kodagu working on the ginger plantations there. Their circular migration makes it hard to maintain close ties in the village and complicates the schooling of their children. Vellichi, moreover, is not eager to admit to their frequent temporary migration to Kodagu. Whenever the issue comes up, she says that men and women at Kodagu "always have separate places to sleep . . . and if there aren't any separate places, then our men will make sure they sleep separately anyway." Eager to leave their cramped and stigmatized situation and build themselves an Adivasi life elsewhere, Vellichi and Dasan contacted C.K. Janu through the organization that initially set up literacy campaigns in the colony, and they managed to become local leaders of the AGMS at Kottamurade.

Whereas Vellichi led the preparations for Muthanga and was a leader during the occupation, Akathi went to Muthanga somewhat hesitantly, worried about leaving behind her small shop, her steady job in the kindergarten, her good connections and her children's school. Soon enough, tension erupted between Vellichi and Akathi. Akathi could not understand why the leaders had decided to occupy a wildlife sanctuary, as the last thing she wanted was to live under constant threat from wild elephants and without running water or shops, let alone schools. Conflict soon broke out over the issue of Adivasi traditions. Akathi described how the AGMS leaders told her one day that she had to stop attending church and should stick to her original Adivasi deities. This upset her, since she had "no desire to go back to the old traditions" as she was now of "many faiths." Akathi felt looked down on by the occupation's leaders and eventually claimed she preferred to live surrounded by Christian farmers than in an Adivasi community such as that of Muthanga. Tensions further intensified when some of the children at Muthanga fell ill and Akathi wanted to leave the occupation to seek medical help, but was told not to go.

The tensions between Vellichi and Akathi were partly a matter of rivalry, but were almost inevitable considering the difficult task of sustaining the Adivasi land occupation in the face of fierce opposition. Political parties and local power

holders felt threatened by the rise of a new, assertive social movement, and they started to organize en masse against the occupation. The way they organized intensified tensions between leaders and participants in the occupation: they started raising the question of authenticity. The Wayanad Environmental Protection Organization, led by local notables presenting themselves as friends of the Adivasis, claimed that the activists were not "real Adivasis" and published a "spot investigation report" in which they pointed out that "Ms C.K. Janu is not representing the real Adivasi cause now because she and her gang men threatened the local tribal people."[5] They also emphasized the threat that the occupation posed to the biodiversity of the sanctuary, ignoring the fact that the occupation was in an area that had been depleted by industrial paper production (see Bijoy and Raman 2003), and they circulated rumors that the movement had been infiltrated by "outsiders." Understandably, in such circumstances AGMS leaders felt pressure to enforce consensus, to educate participants in the discourse of authentic indigenism and to stay put to defend the occupied land in case of attack.

After almost two months of occupation things came to a climax on February 19, 2003. A large and brutal commando force was ordered to evict the occupants (Bijoy and Raman 2003). Dasen, Vellichi's husband, was caught by a group of local people and handed over to the police, who tortured and held him and his young daughter in the central district jail in Kannur for over two months. Vellichi, on returning to Kottamurade, fell ill and was unable to work for a long time, leaving the household dependent on what Dasen's mother could contribute from her earnings as a household servant to one of the neighboring families, work that is considered especially demeaning as it is very poorly paid and servants come to be treated as the household's "slave." Vellichi's family's precarious position and alienation from Kerala society strengthened her resolve to fight for a plot of land on which to live the kind of dignified, autonomous life that she had come to associate with Adivasi culture. After the occupation she stood as a candidate in local elections, not in the hope of actually winning, but instead "to make a point: that we Adivasis will only give our vote to parties that work for us, that we can withhold our vote if we wish to." Vellichi did not see the occupation only as a failure, and she looked forward to a new opportunity for claiming Adivasi land. She took pride in having participated in the struggle and saw the renewed attention that Kottamurade colony was getting from the municipality as a victory of the AGMS.

Akathi, on the other hand, looked back on Muthanga with much more bitterness, even though she escaped the violence because her elder brother, hearing of the impending commando assault, took her family away from Muthanga just

[5] I talked to some of these "local tribal people," Paniyas living near Muthanga. They felt threatened: not by the AGMS, but rather by how the policing of the AGMS might spill over and affect them.

in time. The stark difference of Akathi's outlook cannot, therefore, be attributed to the concrete losses suffered during the Muthanga incident. Moreover, there is no difference between Vellichi and Akathi from a primordial cultural perspective: they are kin and grew up in the same local context. What helps to explain the difference in their perspectives is, rather, Akathi's chance of escaping the specter of absolute expediency haunting most of Kottamurade's inhabitants.

After Muthanga, the difference between Vellichi's experience of expediency and alienation and Akathi's class trajectory of emancipation through integration into Kerala society became all the more striking. A number of NGOs that had come to Kottamurade to hand out blankets and clothes also helped to restart the kindergarten, reinstating Akathi in her former job. Through her contacts at the municipality, she managed to speed up her application for a housing grant that would allow her to build a *pukka* house on her brother's land. When I visited Akathi again in 2009, the house had been completed and she was living outside the colony, though still working in the colony's shop and kindergarten. Whereas Vellichi had recently started decorating her walls with tribal patterns, a poster of Jesus was prominently displayed on Akathi's wall. Her daughters were diligently attending school and there was a strikingly different atmosphere in her two-child, nuclear-family home than there was in Vellichi's overcrowded house in the colony. While the experience of Muthanga had hardened Vellichi's indigenist resolve, it provoked an anti-indigenist response in Akathi, who no longer wanted anything to do with Adivasi politics. Her suspicions that all this talk of Adivasis was in fact a game set up to exploit them had been confirmed by the images of women in "Adivasi dress" now plastered all over hotel billboards. Whereas Vellichi claimed this was part of the victory of the AGMS in redeeming Adivasi culture, Akathi saw it as an attempt to portray them as "animals of the forest" and wanted nothing to do with it.

Conclusion

The Orientalist tradition that has long dominated the study of India has meant that scholars are rather averse to class analysis (Chibber 2009: 32), and this is especially the case with studies of Adivasis. Yet critical voices have recently started challenging the taken-for-granted notion of the Adivasi and begun to discuss the historical colonial and bourgeois–nationalist baggage it carries with it (e.g. Bates 1995; Guha 1999; Bindu 2003). As well, a number of anthropologists have contributed ethnographies exposing the "dark side" (Shah 2007) of indigeneity discourses and the problems they often pose for "Adivasis-as-proletarians" (Baviskar 2007). Such criticism, however, often angers scholars who ally themselves with Adivasi movements and advocate a "strategic essentialist" approach (Xaxa 1999). Such challenges, they argue, are academic exercises that might help put the Western notion of "authentic indigeneity" in its

place, but too often do so by throwing the baby out with the bathwater, for they also challenge the political rhetoric and appeal of indigenous movements.

This chapter is an attempt to challenge both sides of this dispute by posing a question that makes both uncomfortable. If we understand Adivasiness as being about political representation rather than cultural essence, and if we recognize that it comes with a great deal of problematic baggage, why has indigenism nevertheless caught on? With this question, we can see why class analysis is pertinent. By building on a relational, multi-scalar and dynamic class perspective that starts with social reproduction, I have offered an answer to my question of Why: people's political trajectories reflect their struggle to make a living within and against the limited options available to them in a changing capitalist system.

I have shown how the desire of the people of Kottamurade colony to fight for an autonomous Adivasi way of life emerged out of their increasing disillusionment with an earlier, and now debauched, class compromise regarding the economic integration of agricultural workers. They were experiencing a process that Breman (1996) has called being turned into "wage hunter-gatherers," and worse, of being forced to engage in constant circular migration, haunted by the specter of absolute expediency (see Breman 2007): the experience of being increasingly excluded, both physically and morally, from the possibility of emancipation within Kerala society. In the process, it is understandable that people began to envision their future apart from Kerala society and to interpret their past as having been just that: an Adivasi past.

As I have demonstrated, both at the level of Kottamurade colony as a whole and at that of personal political trajectories, class analysis can offer insights beyond what we might learn if we were to think in terms of abstract self-interest or primordial belonging. These insights help us grasp divergent pathways of political belonging and allow us to understand why people might begin to see both their past and their future in terms of Adivasi autonomy rather than workers' emancipation.

8 Making middle-class families in Calcutta[1]

Henrike Donner

In contemporary India an ever-increasing number of citizens describe themselves as "middle class." In fact the term is so ubiquitous in popular media and everyday conversations, especially in the nation's growing urban centers, that Mazzarella (n.d.) speaks of an "obsessive public concern" with the middle class. In the wake of the economic liberalization of the 1990s, which benefited the already affluent sections of society, "the middle" has grown in weight and numbers. It is not only the reality of such upward mobility, but also the imagery that goes with it in a consumer society, that makes "the middle class" a powerful marker of urban South Asian modernity as a whole (see Ray 1996; Liechty 2003).

Until recently the Indian middle class was not often discussed in the social sciences, but today social researchers have taken an interest in the subject of the middle class. Three different approaches can be distinguished in this respect: first, the representations prevalent in the media and in planning, which see class mostly as an economic category in the narrow sense; second, Marxist authors who focus on class relations and politics; and last, those who discuss class as a cultural category.

In this chapter I will focus on the tensions within middle-class lifestyles and experiences as their reproduction has come under threat through neoliberal policies at the same time that the middle classes perpetuate and intensify their claims to cultural distinction. I argue with Ortner (2006: 69–70) that, in order to understand class, we need to understand the contingent ways in which it is constituted through social and cultural practices. Furthermore, I agree with Liechty's (2003: 13) succinct statement that it "is possible to construct a theory of middle-class cultural practice that acknowledges Weber's concerns for sociocultural complexity while at the same time envisioning a shared sphere of class practice."

[1] A significant part of my research was carried out before Calcutta was renamed Kolkata in 2001, so I retain the older name in some places. In this chapter I am borrowing liberally from the introduction to Donner (2011), which was co-written by Geert De Neve.

Much effort has been made in recent years to quantify the middle class in India, not least because its members constitute the majority of affluent consumers. This is of little interest for an anthropological debate. What is more significant are the cultural markers resulting from shared histories that characterize the Indian middle class. Fernandes (2006) points out that, from the colonial period to the recent era of economic liberalization, the politics of class in India have rested on common features shared by the middle classes across the nation. These are access to English education – and I would argue formal education rather than English-medium education alone – aspirations to cultural and political leadership, and the differentiation from lower strata of society, lower castes as well as economically marginalized groups. These features indicate a shared ideological landscape and lifestyle and assert that the middle class is diverse but engaged in a common project. This chapter deals with the resulting cultural politics of class and distinction through an analysis of the way class-based identities are reproduced and transmitted in middle-class families. Such ethnography-based studies of middle-class lifestyles contribute to wider debates on class, as they not only show how class is experienced and debated in and through middle-class family life, but also highlight the contestations and ambiguities within a class that is highly stratified internally.

The family is a crucial site for studying middle-class identity, as a sense of belonging, understood as an ideological focus and as a set of social relationships and practices, is inculcated and reproduced here. Thus, the family constitutes a main site where middle-class status is affirmed. Domestic life is therefore a fruitful starting point to discuss class-based identities and to investigate processes of class formation. This is particularly poignant where, as is the case in urban India, society is undergoing rapid social and economic change in the aftermath of economic liberalization. Taking a close look at the meaning of family and the forms of domesticity that make the middle-class home, particularly the ideal of the joint family, it will become apparent that the reproduction of middle-class identities relies heavily on specific gender relations and ethnic identifications. It will be demonstrated that local histories, which shape the all-important intersection of gender, class and ethnic or other group-based identities in contemporary Kolkata and elsewhere, determine how we can relate the ethnography presented here to the notion of an Indian middle class.

Although it has long been noted that the joint-family ideal interacts with parenting and education in order to produce middle-class persons across India, few recent studies take these sites seriously (Béteille 1993). Among them are works that discuss how historically the socialization of girls has been geared toward their roles as mothers of suitably middle-class children who are appropriate citizens in the family and at school (see for instance Bose

1994; Kumar 1994; Srivastava 1998). Given this emphasis on mothers in the family home in such accounts, it is striking to see that studies interested in the subjectivities that emerge within the context of the new middle class attend to public sites of consumption rather than the domestic sphere.

This is partly the case because commodity consumption has emerged as a way to theorize and generalize about middle classes across the globe, not least because of the perceived link between expanding consumerism and integration into global labor markets (Lange and Meier 2009: 2; see Pinches 1999). In the case of India, it appears, the emphasis so far has been firmly placed on public sites of consumption, which were seen as the most appropriate context in which to study the middle class (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1995). In much of this literature consumerism features as the main marker of middle-class identity, and it is fair to say that the study of the middle class in India has, to some extent, been reduced to the study of commodity consumption (see, e.g., Mankekar 1999; Rajagopal 1999; Mazzarella 2003; Oza 2006; Derne 2008; Munshi 2008; Lukose 2009).

Much attention has been paid to the multiple ways in which new subcultures produce new values and practices and challenge collective identities. But in addition, they are filtered and understood in relation to a range of pre-existing normative frameworks concerning middle-class upper-caste formations and kin relations, which continue to shape contemporary middle-class culture. The need to participate in these cultures in order to assert one's own status does not do away with extensive critical discourses on morality and respectability, contestations around femininity, and existing material cultures (van Wessel 2004; Ganguly-Scrase and Scrase 2008; Donner 2011). As Liechty (2003: 252) shows, however, this "narrative management" is in itself constitutive of middle-class culture and distinction.

Some ethnographically oriented studies show that the new middle class in India cannot be understood merely in terms of individualistic commodity consumption, and that questions of social mobility, educational strategies, professional worlds and persistent identities of caste, religion, language and region are equally central to the formulation of contemporary middleclassness (Fernandes 2006; Derne 2008; Donner 2011). Thus, narrow explanations of middle-class identity in terms of consumerism have been rightly criticized as too thin a basis for a serious academic engagement with class (see Liechty 2003). Here, and probably elsewhere, what Mazzarella (2003: 12) has referred to as "an entire social ontology" of middle-class consumption should be taken as just one available trope to discuss middle-class identity in relation to other domains, for example the relationship between the middle class and the state, the poor, globalization and its own past.

I will engage here with the family as central to the reproduction of middle-class identities from the perspective of Bengali-speaking middle-class

Calcuttans, focusing on maternal labor, the work of bringing up children and all it encompasses. The chapter shows how middle-class status depends on the (re)working of earlier domestic regimes in order to hold on to middle-class prestige in a world defined by consumerist lifestyles. As Béteille (1993) has pointed out, the Indian middle-class family is the prime site for the reproduction of social inequality through the socialization of children into middle-class persons and the transmission of exclusionary cultural and institutional practices. My chosen examples of such practices and sites are educational strategies and food consumption, both of which provide a good entry point into a discussion of how a sense of being middle class actually produces class differences. These social fields are also constituted as essential to middle-class lifestyles, whether these are locally characterized as lower or upper middle class.

As will become clear, if consumption is understood to include a wide range of practices beyond urban public spaces and leisure time, it appears that self-representations of social positions, as well as relationships within and between sections identified as middle class, cannot be taken at face value. Weberian approaches to class take into account the culture and institutions of middle-class life as well as the role of intra-class stratification, created, as Bourdieu (1984) famously shows, through distinctive practices. Thus, middle-class identities are continually reformulated in relation to, and as distinct from, those of others. Class boundaries are therefore shaped by wider social relations, including those between different classes. In effect, the chapter traces the middle class as constituted through practices that construct middleclassness as a social field reproduced through an "orientation toward the family." But as the chapter will show, the family as a site of class-based reproduction is coming under extreme pressure as neoliberal policies encourage disinvestment in state institutions that had earlier supported these lifestyles. Thus, while individualism and choice are promoted and consumer subjects rely on a discourse about new sites of consumption, crucially fashion and youth culture, intra-household dependences and the need for intergenerational family support increase. This tension plays out across generations and genders and has different effects on various middle-class strata. The implications of this shift are not only diverse where women and men are concerned, but are also profoundly differentiated by economic standing and cultural capital available to different sections, often defined in terms of locally relevant ethnic and religious communal identities.

With its focus on the family and the domestic sphere, this approach pushes gender relations center stage because middle-class values shape material and physical manifestations of class on a day-to-day basis in relation to gendered identities. Looking at educational strategies and regional food practices, the chapter shows how upper-caste histories and modern gender and

intra-household relations create new discourses about middleclassness that are situated within the context of post-liberalization India and the associated neoliberal policies.

On being middle class

In Kolkata, describing oneself as middle class is common among Bengali speakers, and in the public imagination middle-class status is closely associated with specific cultural traits of the Bengali Hindu ethnic and religious community. In a context where the language of class is often used, it is important to acknowledge the work this terminology does, as class is a product of historical processes but also constitutes these processes. Liechty (2003: 21) elaborates this point when he suggests that "if we understand middle-classness as a cultural project or practice – rather than a social category or empirical condition – we can begin to see how the local and the global are brought together in cultural process, not cultural outcome." In this respect, Sherry Ortner (2006: 102) asserts that theories of the middle class have to acknowledge that cultural representation "hides social difference, even as it reveals (a certain picture of) social reality; that the amorphousness of the representational process . . . hides the ways in which different parts of the mix of images actually apply to different and even antagonistic social locations; that a theorized framework allows us to begin to sort out what goes where."

Being middle class in India is associated with specific cultural markers, such as an emphasis on education, an emphasis on "traditional" gender relations and an emphasis on family values. While these cannot be realized in the same way by all those aspiring to middle-class status, it is the very engagement with these issues that defines middle-class discourses. In Bengal these traits are most fully realized by government employees, and here the association between middleclassness and ethnic identity is so strong that it brings being middle class and being Bengali into the same linguistic and symbolic domain. The resulting subjective identification with the category of being middle class points to the importance of the "language of class" (Ortner 2003), which in this context precedes the economic liberalization of 1991 but has become even more prevalent in its aftermath. In Kolkata, while "middle class" is often used as a self-descriptive term, it is also clear that this idiom is used more liberally by Bengali speakers than those belonging to other communities.

Within India, class first emerged as an important marker of identity in the colonial period, as a section of urbanites began to describe themselves as belonging to a

middle-class (*madhyasreni, madhyabitta*), bhadralok world which situated itself below the aristocracy and dewans and banians but above the lesser folk who had to soil their

> hands with manual labour in countryside and town, and who tended to be lower caste or Muslim. It largely snapped its links with the older culture . . . developing more refined and somewhat puritanical norms and distinguishing itself from both, the luxury and corruption of old-style Babus, and the "superstitious" ways of the "uneducated masses". (Sarkar 1997: 169)

While nationalism undoubtedly enhanced the role of such idioms in discussing the changing social and cultural landscapes of multicultural Calcutta, the emergence of class as a marker of identity was not solely circumscribed by nationalism. It was equally shaped by emerging inter-class relations and realized through practices and values earlier attached to specific status-group and local life-worlds, in particular to caste, which preceded class but lived on in middle-class cultures. In this sense, middleclassness is often most fully realized by those belonging to upper-caste families.

Historically, these processes informed the self-conscious representations of the Bengali-speaking urban elite and the accompanying politics of reform, which dominated colonial society from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. In the course of the nationalist movement, the present social and cultural features became more homogeneous (Ahmad and Reifeld 2001; Legg 2003). Distinctions between the upper castes gave way to an overall middle-class sensibility and more inclusive political allegiances, among them what Jaffrelot and van der Veer (2008) refer to as a cult of "self-assured bourgeois nationalism," which easily accommodated regional differences. Baviskar and Ray (2011: 5) assert that today there exists more empirical heterogeneity within the Indian middle class, but that the "iconic figure . . . of the urban, white-collar worker" still informs the imagination. I would like to suggest that, in addition to its emphasis on education, occupation and income, this dominant model crucially relates middle-class identities to family values.

In Calcutta the Bengali-speaking, mostly Hindu middle class took on a hegemonic role in the entire range of state institutions and has dominated politics ever since. However, with disinvestment in the state under conditions of neoliberal reform since 1991, the cultural, political and economic privileges this role had afforded can no longer be taken for granted. Thus, whilst the middle class on the whole might have gained from economic liberalization, neoliberal reform has weakened those sections depending on state institutions and has encouraged further stratification within this segment, often expressed through a critique of consumer identities (see Ganguly-Scrase and Scrase 2008). Commodities and consumer lifestyles have been more accessible to low-caste communities, which have also increased their political weight (for detailed accounts, see Corbridge and Harriss 2000; Fernandes 2006), but it is the terrain of middleclassness that is embattled by the new status games attached to such practices. Thus, in Bengal as elsewhere, what it means to be middle class has

come under scrutiny and is seriously contested, a contestation that is part and parcel of middle-class family life in Kolkata today.

Adjustment and homemaking

Even a cursory glance at the comparative literature on middle-class lifestyles across the globe shows that a discourse on reform of the family, gender relations and appropriate class-based domesticities plays a dominant role in class formation. India had a key role to play in these debates (see, e.g., McClintock 1995). Within public discussions, Indian middle-class women were defined as homemakers, and over time the much contested homogenization of middle-class femininity united middle-class lifestyles (see Davidoff and Hall 1992; Sangari 2000; Quayum and Ray 2003; Walsh 2004; McGowan 2006). Recent ethnographies of the new middle classes across the globe demonstrate that similar concerns appear in upwardly mobile communities, which focus on the family home and conservative gender relations in order to distinguish themselves from those above and below them. In the colonial context, appropriate maternities and conjugal relations, and thus the homogenization of multiple kinship and property relations, became subjects of reform and debates around the family. And in India as elsewhere, an idealized modern but simultaneously traditional femininity centering on motherhood, which excluded working-class women as mothers, emerged as the norm (Sen and Stivens 1998; Dickey 2000; Frøystad 2006; Oza 2006; Donner 2008a; Rutz and Balkan 2009).

Within this colonial context an ideology of a distinctive national identity rested on the opposition between the home on the one side, a safe haven of reformed indigenous culture and associated with women, and the outside world on the other. Thus, the reformed middle-class home was constructed as an arena for nationalist mobilization, and in particular through the work of women as mothers and good wives took center stage (Chatterjee 1989; Ray 1996). Symbols of selfless love, middle-class women were now constructed as idealized rational mothers and devoted wives. Their job was to embody timeless family values and to transmit such values to their children, a duty that they were educated to perform (Walsh 2004). This formulation of these ideals was possible because a specific cultural repertoire was elaborated into nationalist ideas of womanhood across the upper castes and high-status Muslim communities (Sarkar 2002). Clearly, being female and middle class intersected with ethnic and religious identities and excluded those belonging to lower castes and classes even where they spoke the same language and shared the same beliefs. Middle-class women became the main signifier of Bengali Hindu nationalism and of Indian modernity, traditional in outlook and demeanor but differentiated from their peasant sisters and the working class through access to modern education, which allowed them to sustain an appropriate family life.

A "compensatory history" (Bagchi 1990) that focused on motherhood and sons was to become their main source of identity.

Stemming from this history, domestic arrangements that are distinctively middle class continue to build on the rewriting of inequalities between the sexes, between different generations within the joint family and between members of different classes. However, my interlocutors, especially those born in the first half of the twentieth century, were not only brought up to become well-groomed and reasonably educated members of their husbands' families who could instruct servants. In my own research, housewives had always worked alongside working-class women, from whom they differentiated themselves with reference to the latter's need for paid employment and the kinds of task they performed. Younger married women were also required to withstand a gruelling regime of housework and submission to their mothers-in-law and other female affines. In this setting, women's work in and for the family naturalizes inequality of gender and class through the daily experience of working together, notably between a young in-marrying wife and her sisters- and mother-in-law, and between these housewives and their servants. By the mid-1990s, when I undertook my first period of fieldwork, domestic patterns had changed as the number of children in the generation born after 1950 had fallen drastically (many grandmothers had been among six or more surviving siblings) so that the number of kin in any one household was now much smaller. The youngest children were now living with only their paternal grandparents and their parents, although other relatives would often reside nearby. In most cases the female labor force now consisted solely of a mother-in-law, a daughter-in-law and a servant, which remains the prevalent pattern today. The authority of the first over the other two is still in place. It is significant that this pattern represented the norm among middle-class households across a wide economic spectrum: families of professionals as well as lower-middle-class civil servants and small shopkeepers live in joint families and can afford maids in Kolkata. Thus, while the feasibility and durability may vary, most families would strive to realize this kind of set-up. Sons would only ever move into a separate home if they migrated to a different city or had a severely problematic love marriage. Even where migration took place, a daughter-in-law would often stay with her in-laws, who would help her to look after her children.

In this context it is impossible to overstate the importance of hierarchical and often exploitative relationships within the middle-class home, whereby young women contribute their labor power but are barred from any control over daily affairs. Across India, the term "to adjust" is frequently used to describe a set of dispositions valued in a bride. "Adjustment" goes into the very making of appropriate marriage partners for the middle class in Bengali families.

However, while all young brides have to adjust, the duties expected of them will vary widely. A family living off the salary of a clerk is unlikely to employ

a full-time servant, and both mother and daughter-in-law might be busy all day performing household duties. The maid would appear once a day for an hour or so to clean the floors, do the laundry and probably wash the dishes, but would contribute less to the preparation of meals. In the home of an established university professor, on the other hand, the new daughter-in-law was allowed to continue her engagements as a singer provided she would assist her mother-in-law supervising servants and finishing off signature dishes in her spare time. In this, as in other rare households with working women, a small army of part-time and full-time servants might be involved in cleaning, shopping, cooking and organizing, and it is not uncommon to have live-in child labor to perform basic tasks such as cleaning floors and dishes. But it is important to point out that in no way is the number of servants related to whether or not a housewife has a job. Furthermore, where I found a working mother-in-law, it was likely that she had chosen a stay-at-home daughter-in-law for her son.

As we will see in the following sections, in the lives of middle-class women both food and education are domains in which class-based ideas about femininity come into their own. By guaranteeing the reproduction of status over time, mothers in particular link the middle-class home and the world, and both domains depend on maternal labor in distinctive ways.

The hidden labor of class

Economic liberalization and the neoliberal policies accompanying it have challenged much that was taken for granted by Bengali middle-class families. Especially in post-liberalization Kolkata, those traditionally depending on jobs in government services are worrying about their future. Government jobs, including schools and universities, provided the backbone of middle-class lifestyles, which were often modest but secure across generations. Disinvestment in the state sector has hit lower-middle-class households hard, as free education and healthcare are more limited in scope and quality. And while the salaries of some government employees, such as those in education, have risen over the last two decades, they do not match pay packets in the multinational companies that middle-class Kolkatans increasingly use as a point of reference. Furthermore, many of my interlocutors are coming to terms with the dwindling of permanent jobs and solid retirement schemes, and therefore experience the negative consequences of privatization. Despite all the hype around IT industries and the retail boom, Kolkata remains an economic backwater where employment opportunities are limited, and this leads to a tangible sense of insecurity.

As the middle-class lifestyle geared toward government service is now on the way out, family members adjust to the new culture of "self-made opportunities" and "project-related contracts" in different ways. The changes have also had an

impact on family organization, as *chakri* (the coveted "positions" of an earlier era) entailed not just the attributes associated with office work, but a whole set of associated practices (see Sarkar 1992), especially a fixed work schedule, fixed pay scales, access to credit and life insurance, subsidized healthcare and a pension – all markers of middle-class status. Middle-class domesticity in its material and immaterial forms developed in relation to these kinds of secure employment and their perks. Gender roles were very much interpreted as part of a wider domestic middle-class culture that related the provision of government service to the world of homemaking.

With economic liberalization, new opportunities have become available in the private sector that attract the younger generation because of the lifestyles associated with specific work environments such as media, IT companies and call centers. However, all these jobs challenge the kind of domestic arrangement associated with *chakri*. This is most obvious in relation to women's employment, as *chakri* implied that Bengali middle-class families brought up young women to excel in formal education, but then expected them to take on a subordinate role as in-marrying wife. Even excellent students often would get married after graduation and very few degrees would lead to meaningful employment. Furthermore, while migration had become a feasible option by the mid-1990s, time spent abroad was a privilege of young men unless a scholarship was involved. Unlike the daughters of Tamil Brahmin families studied by Fuller and Narasimhan (2006), or young Keralites going into nursing elsewhere (Osella and Osella 2008), young women from Bengali middle-class families very rarely considered going abroad or even moving to other Indian metropolitan areas. Through discourses on respectability and adjustment, they acquired "an orientation toward the home," a set of dispositions directly and indirectly inculcated throughout their childhood and youth, which made them ideal wives and future mothers.[2]

But by the beginning of the new millennium the tables had turned and it became obvious that learning both how to be modern and how to "adjust" is one of the key challenges middle-class daughters face in India. As girls get ahead in formal education, expect to have a say in partner choice and may aspire to a nuclear family, they increasingly experience a disjuncture between the new femininity suggested by the media – a middle-class lifestyle driven by commodity consumption and individual fulfillment promoted by female role models such as actresses – and the demands of the family, their reputation and marriageability, which often thwart even modest aspirations (see Liechty 2003).

[2] While they are often spoilt when young, Bengali girls' freedom is curtailed as they grow up, and indulgences are limited to the appropriate activities of watching TV, food consumption and shopping trips with relatives.

As their unpaid labor lies at the heart of Bengali middle-class lifestyles, families do their best to keep young women at home, which is often possible because a joint household is located in rent-protected accommodation. Statistics show that, since independence, the rate of female participation in formal-sector employment has always been much lower in West Bengal than in other urbanizing states and that Kolkata's rates lag behind those found in other cities. In fact, recent research suggests the rate of female employment in Bengal's formal sector, which is where most middle-class women would have worked, has declined even further in the post-liberalization period, a finding that is certainly supported by anecdotal evidence in my own work.[3] Moreover, women rarely stay in jobs once they have children. While status and income determine whether a wife and mother will be encouraged by her husband and his family to stay in full-time employment, only professions such as medicine or teaching weigh in favor of continued paid work. My interlocutors argued unequivocally that domestic arrangements, in particular the demands of formal education and the preparation of Bengali food, were responsible for this state of affairs.

Educating 4 plus 1

Education has always played a major role in the lives of Bengali middle-class families. However, it is only in the last two generations that middle-class daughters have been expected to complete an undergraduate degree, with teaching a preferred career option due to its benefits for potential children.

Most of the women I worked with agreed that young middle-class women needed to be equipped with a degree, which was also seen as an asset in the marriage market. Education not only conveys a set of skills, but literally makes a middle-class person, shaping a youngster by instilling virtues such as discipline and self-control that the working class supposedly does not have. Thus, a lack of education is at the same time a lack of good and socially valued qualities, including language and reasoning skills. But part of middle-class educational strategies involves establishing social relationships with those "above": teachers and professors in the case of lower-middle-class families; the international West Bengali establishment in the case of upper-middle-class families. Maximizing the value of such connections becomes even more indispensable given the rigorously competitive and notoriously corrupt educational system.

Very rarely have I been told about employment as being satisfying or as a way to reveal the true self familiar in Western middle-class narratives. With

[3] See Sen and Mitter (2000) and Mitra (2006) on educated women's employment until the early 2000s. For West Bengal's standing in relation to recent trends, see the annual report of the Ministry of Labour for 2010–11 (Government of India 2011).

the exception of "fancy" jobs (for the lower middle class, call centers; for the upper middle class, positions with multinationals), employment is more often than not depicted as actually getting in the way of being cultured and true to oneself. Women in employment certainly are often suspected of being less respectable than "mere housewives," and, except for work in higher education, middle-class employment for women is not associated with specific virtues. Apart from those positions in higher education, working outside the home is not considered to have a positive effect on their character, which is particularly true if women have to work with customers (for instance in a shop or a call center, or even as a doctor or nurse).

While neoliberal discourses available to women emphasize self-made careers and individuating choices in professional and personal relationships, even a cursory glance at women's magazines aiming at middle-class readers shows that to be a good homemaker is a woman's main duty (Basu 2001). However, with commodity consumption a major contributor to constructions of class, women who were earlier taught domestic skills such as cooking are today trained much more broadly in order to take on the role of chief consumers in a changing world. Thus, while a young Bengali middle-class girl may dream of becoming a scientist, her fate will be determined by the ideal of becoming a mother to an only boy and future breadwinner in a joint family. As long as her studies and even working life contribute to that boy's future, parents and in-laws will support her efforts, but science may only ever be practiced where it fits the family's aspirations to upward mobility.

Increasingly, Indian middle-class families have either one or two children, and in my interlocutors' families single boys were the norm. The need to produce male heirs and future supporters, as well as the sheer cost of raising children, encourage this ideal, often by the secretive use of amniocentesis for sex selection. In spite of the relative rise of nuclear-family living, most children spend at least some years living jointly with parents and grandparents, and this household composition found in middle-class Kolkata is strikingly similar to that created in urban China, where the "little emperors" grow up in "4 plus 1" households (Jing 2000). In China, demographic change is evident across the classes and is commonly attributed to state intervention (including the single-child policy), migration flows and housing shortages. But in India the reasoning behind a preference for joint-family life highlights the need for care for children and the elderly, independently of whether or not the mother is in employment. It is generally assumed that the joint family has many advantages, as it offers children and the elderly protection, and shelters young couples from the vagaries of the housing market. But more importantly, joint living allows for middle-class lifestyles marked as truly Bengali, which depend on the perpetuation of the gender and intergenerational hierarchies by which they are defined. Grossly overgeneralizing, the ethos of the joint family favors collective interests over

individual aspirations, and the well-being of men over the health and happiness of women, especially where the latter are young daughters-in-law or widows.

Within this framework, middle-class children, and especially boys, are brought up to see themselves as future breadwinners and carers of their parents and grandparents. Their future value is hinted at in the common saying that children are "capital" and grandchildren are "interest" (Donner 2005). Few middle-class children in fact care for grandparents, as their education postpones the age at which they begin to earn. Even so, parents, even those with pensions, emphasize that sons, and more and more only daughters as well, would look after them in old age. In the past this often implied co-residence and a daughter-in-law looking after her affines, but the recent shifts in employment patterns and the lack of jobs with proper pensions are inevitably leading toward a more pronounced dependence of parents on children. Looking after your parents is, of course, one of the central tenets of traditional Indian middle-class family ideology, but financial dependence certainly is not. Moreover, at a time when few secure jobs are available to recent graduates and parental confidence in pension schemes has plummeted, children who may rely on their parents much longer are at the same time expected to provide for them in the not-so-distant future.

This complex and conflictive dynamic is enhanced by two typical middle-class factors. One is the scarcity of affordable housing on the market and the prevalence of low rents among older tenants, which makes it unfeasible for young couples to move out and allows a daughter-in-law to remain a housewife. The other is the customary laws that postpone inheritance until after a father's death.[4] With property and businesses being major resources among more affluent middle-class families, this delayed exchange of authority and capital for support in old age has a detrimental effect on family life. While parents are paralyzed by the fear of abandonment in old age, sons in particular may feel stuck. Parents and grandparents share responsibility for the same child, but the older generation may focus even more on control over grandchildren, in the hope that this will keep the joint family together. In turn, as the new generation of fathers are struggling to secure more than temporary employment, they will remain dependent on their families for much longer. While "keeping it in the family" therefore comes at a cost for all concerned, raising middle-class children turns into the main collective project.

The changes that economic liberalization has brought and the way they affect middle-class families in Kolkata, and elsewhere in India, are

[4] Bengali Hindus follow the Dayabhaga code of inheritance. Unlike the better known Mitaksara code, it stipulates that a son has no right to inherit property until his father dies. Consequently, businesses and property are not owned jointly by fathers and sons, making it difficult for a son to raise funds to set up another enterprise or buy an apartment while his father is still alive.

particularly pertinent where schooling is concerned. Earlier, only a tiny percentage of middle-class families sent their children to English-medium schools, mostly those in the professions. But by the end of the 1980s, with government jobs already in decline, educational strategies became more diverse and competitive. When I began my research in Calcutta in the mid-1990s, talk about English-medium education, admissions and performance was the overwhelming concern of middle-class parents (Donner 2008a). Today, mothers should really have some knowledge of English, which has become a major aspect of middle-class children's upbringing and family life.

Lastly, with the spread of early learning and English-medium education, both of which prepare children to become workers in global economies, have come "intensive parenting" ideologies and practices. Not only do children attend schools much earlier and longer, the involvement of middle-class mothers in schooling has intensified. The ways in which mothers are implicated in schooling vary with the economic standing of a household, with the lower-middle-class mother more involved in bringing and fetching children to and from school, preparing "appropriate" snacks and facilitating endless homework and tuition, while upper-middle-class mothers may spend most of their time supervising and organizing the services actually provided by drivers, cooks and tutors. In both sections of the middle-class, however, the mother–housewife devotes much of her time to education-related activities, and this has led to a re-organization of relationships in the joint-family home as it challenges the authority of mothers-in-law (see Donner 2006). Furthermore, education is clearly a field in which middle-class practices and ideologies infiltrate working-class communities and the fluidity of class boundaries in the current climate becomes apparent. While economically secure middle-class families use reputed tutors in order to secure their children's success, those less well off need to rely on their association with upper-middle-class families that are able and willing to provide such support. This dependence on patronage is something that they have in common with working-class families, for instance a maid whose children receive tuition in an employer's home in return for extra hours of work.

Food and family

Economic liberalization and neoliberal reform link consumption to ideas of middle-class lifestyles. Mothers emerge as the chief consumers in a newly ordered frame of home and public realms, where their labor of love transforms commodities into suitable social relations. In the process, they experience a series of tensions. As markets targeting children and a consumerist youth culture extend into the home, maternal labor over the meaning of commodities and practices increasingly lies at the heart of family life.

A main arena that relates discourses on the family and gendered identities, food practices are a major signifier of Bengali identity, and the importance of food in Bengali middle-class families cannot be overstated. Across India, dietary habits indicate distinct religious, caste and communal origins. In the course of the nationalist movement, an "authentic Indian" cuisine developed and was popularized through cookbooks and restaurants (Appadurai 1988), as were standardized versions of regional diets. "Bengali cuisine" (*bangla ranna*) is one of these, and the purchase, preparation and consumption of food plays a pivotal role in the reproduction of Bengali middle-class families. As we will see, the demands of the diet are an important way that the discourse on the family links domestic patterns, gender roles and class-based identities through deeply internalized dispositions, conspicuous consumption and exclusionary practices.

The preparation of food in the family home from scratch on a regular basis is the task of middle-class housewives, and, while the menu might vary, all dishes comprising a full meal are extremely labor intensive. In common with Janeja's (2010) study, my research shows that Bengali middle-class families take even the most ordinary meals very seriously as representations of "everydayness," a discourse that establishes the order of things through experiences in the family home. While members of Bengali middle-class families denounce the dietary patterns of the upper class, the working class and those belonging to other ethnic communities, the so-called "typical" Bengali multi-course family meals and the household organization these impose come to blur the boundary between class and "being Bengali." Thus, inequalities of gender and age, as well of class, become invisible as the actual dishes and the maternal love they embody take center stage.

This is not to say that food preparation and consumption are not contested: on the contrary. The preparation of these elaborate meals often requires the labor of servants, and new consumer identities challenge the implied value of the family meal. Although the actual preparation of meals routinely involves servants and the mother-in-law, it is the mother who is praised again and again for preparing a meal "with her own hands." But with liberalization, new demands are made on the food-producing middle-class housewife. Firstly, consumer identities are becoming more tied to commodity consumption, and that consumption has become more complex as a result of the overlap of media representations, retail strategies and leisure habits. These include eating and shopping in up-market malls and supermarkets, and visits to restaurants and take-aways, which require new food knowledge and practices and which contradict the doctrine of the family meal. Secondly, food consumption in the home is transformed because mothers need to cater to their children's new tastes. As many of my friends commented, today a mother ought to have knowledge of a much wider range of food to be served to her family, as children in particular

tap into new consumer cultures and demand a range of new dishes at home (Donner 2008b).

Local discourses about being properly middle-class focus on such challenges to customary understandings of appropriate food practices. Firstly, preprocessed ingredients, earlier attributed to non-Bengali communities, had been clear markers of lazy housewives. Today such items are no longer so easily rejected. High-status foods of the new era, for example pizza or pasta, are not made from scratch and are consumed inside and outside the home. But much more contentious is the issue of meat consumed in the home, which reflects rising demand for meat among middle-class consumers across India and the developing world.

Preprocessed foods are widely available in Calcutta today, and such items have found their way into middle-class diets. In diminishing the work of domestic food preparation, especially for housewives who employ servants, they undercut these women's reputation for producing very elaborate, everyday meals, and so undermine the very Bengaliness that is produced through family meals. Until very recently, established categories of food such as "preprocessed" and "Western" indexed degrees of otherness, and so strengthened the distinctive practices that defined Bengali middle-class domesticity. But these distinctions are increasingly contested by the need to negotiate consumer identities through engagement with commodity consumption.

Furthermore, eating out has become more common, even where food from "outside" is largely seen as unhealthy, inauthentic and morally ambivalent (see Mukhopadhyay 2004). Today, visits to restaurants form an important part of claims to status. And as young professionals tuck into their Domino's pizza, children are driving the way that desired "modern" foods enter the realm of middleclassness. Here, it appears that the aspirational status of global convenience foods, associated with new middle-class public spaces such as shopping malls, force mothers to adapt to increasingly global dietary patterns. In the case of upper-middle-class families, global commodity consumption has become very much part of what being middle class means, and food knowledge indicates cosmopolitanism. However, for lower-middle-class mothers, whose most important contribution to their children's upbringing may consist of highly symbolic local fare on a small budget, the devaluation of their skills is hard to take. Here, while the real thing may be out of reach, meals indicating modern tastes, such as Chinese dishes, are emulated in the home simply because children commonly demanded them.

In this context, meat consumption serves as a traditional marker of caste, and therefore provides the site for new gendered and distinctive practices based on food. Vegetarianism is associated with high castes and ritual purity, and is a major point of reference in South Asian Hindu debates on status, which means that meat consumption in the domestic sphere brings the intersections of class,

ethnicity and gender sharply into focus. Drawing on upper-caste traditions, Bengali middle-class Hindu households, which constitute the majority of the Kolkata middle class today, used to be largely vegetarian (though the local definition of vegetarianism includes fish as a staple).[5] Under the onslaught of consumerism and the cultural changes associated with globalization, more and more mothers are forced to provide their children, and especially sons, with non-vegetarian items, which traditionally were not cooked at home.

While men were always more prone than women to consume meat outside the home, the tendency of male family members to demand meat at home is recent. In this context meat is a highly politicized food with strong communal connotations, as it is associated with the everyday diet of Muslims. But increasingly, young male members of Bengali Hindu families expect meat on an everyday basis, while women may subscribe to what I have called "new vegetarianism" (Donner 2008b). In many cases wives would have turned vegetarian if a couple experienced problems with conception, for excluding "heating" foods such as meat from their diet would balance the body. As women age, vegetarianism indexes a different kind of virtue, as it publicly demonstrates that a woman's reproductive phase is completed, since meat, associated with increased sexual appetites, is no longer consumed. In these ways, a vegetarian diet fits middle-class ideals, as it indicates a cultured person, it contributes to well-being and, crucially, it helps to control sexual urges. Be it through serving sumptuous amounts of virile and high-status meat or by restraining themselves, mothers are responsible for realizing the perfect middle-class family at home.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have detailed domestic practices that lie at the heart of the identity described as middle class by my interlocutors. Taking a close look at the meaning of family and the forms of domesticity that define the middle-class home, it appears that middle-class identities rely heavily on specific gender relations and ethnic identifications. These reproduce globally recognizable class positions as well as local idioms and specificities. Thus, education and food practices, major fields of middle-class practice that signify global and cosmopolitan desires while allowing for the significant notion of tradition, were discussed as sites through which middle-class aspirations, desires and personhood are articulated.

However, here as elsewhere, the processes of class formation at play are fragmented and contradictory, and are experienced as diverse and contested.

[5] Vegetarianism is indicative of high-caste status and meat, a heating food, is associated with sexual appetites. Hence, Brahmins and high-caste widows were traditionally vegetarian. In Bengal fish can be included in a vegetarian diet, but meat, onion and garlic are taboo for widows.

I contend with Liechty (2003: 253) that "any anthropology of middle-class cultural practice must combine a Weberian concern for the role of culture in social life (lifestyle, education, status goods etc.) with a Marxian insistence that cultural practice be located in the context of unequal distribution of power and resources between classes." In this sense the upper- and lower-middle-class households I worked with take part in the same discourses and share the same aspirations, but realize them differently. Both segments have cultural traits that exclude the working class while exploiting its labor on a daily basis, which is particularly pertinent with reference to the family home. As a key site for the reproduction of middle-class status through the making of appropriate middle-class persons, it also facilitates the perpetuation and intensification of gender and generational, as well as class, inequalities. The Bengali middle class reproduces its status partly by insisting on ethnic–cultural specificity, imbibed as family values through everyday practices, which rely on sharply differentiated gender roles in the home.

As pointed out, many of the contestations experienced by Kolkata middle-class families stem from the effects of economic liberalization and the neoliberal policies of the last two decades. Individualism and consumerism are promoted as part of middle-class imaginaries while social and job security are curtailed and dependence on kin and between the generations intensified. It is precisely the ongoing production and reproduction of middle-class identities in a changing historical and local context that remakes the family.

9 Working-class politics in a Brazilian steel town

Massimiliano Mollona

In this chapter I discuss the advantages of combining anthropology and class analysis through a historical ethnography of Volta Redonda, a Brazilian steel town where I conducted fieldwork in 2009 and 2010. When compared with Sheffield, another steel town that I have studied, the case of Volta Redonda shows that class is an analytical category with great heuristic value because it highlights striking similarities in the livelihoods of working people located so far away from each other. But the case also shows that working people from different countries experience and conceptualize their social positions differently according to their own material and intellectual circumstances. As a result, anthropologists face a difficult challenge. They must deal with class both as an analytical tool and as an ethnographic category, switching between analysis and description and, more importantly, between their own political framework and other intellectual traditions. Scholars of social inequality and domination, perhaps more than others, are deeply entangled in the political life of the theories that they generate (Burawoy 2010).

"Imperialist theories" impose global solutions for the labor movement, separating it from the historical and material context of its own struggles. "Populist theories" focus on the cultural specificity of political struggles, cutting them off from the broader movement of labor. Since the publication of Stefan Zweig's famous *Brazil: Land of the Future*, a romantic celebration of Brazil's socio-economic power written on the verge of World War II, Brazil has inspired both kinds of theoretical alienation among Western intellectuals. In the imperialist camp, Anthony Giddens (1994) and Ulrich Beck (2000) oppose the European model of, respectively, dialogical and cosmopolitan democracy to what they describe as the dystopian global, Brazilian scenario of labor informalization, social brutality and class antagonism. In the populist camp, some scholars have reframed subaltern studies in the urban context and elevated the Brazilian *favela* to an instance of participatory democracy (Potrč 2003).

Although I do not subscribe to the idea of Southern theories (Connell 2007), I do take seriously De Sousa Santos's (1995) suggestion that a new form of class subjectivity is emerging in the Global South, and that such new development needs to be approached from a non-ethnocentric perspective. I also consider

the claim, made by Munck (1988) and other "new unionism" scholars, that the labor movements in the South helped lead class relations away from the economistic and Eurocentric framework of the labor movements in the North. Those scholars point to the links between the working class and other social formations (NGOs, church organizations, women's associations, ethnic groups) that occur in the South, which combine factory and civic activism and oppose industry-led development through a combination of environmental and ethnic activism. The rise to power of the Brazilian Workers Party (PT) in the 1980s is an example of this sort of movement (see also Seidman 1994; De Sousa Santos 2006). Yet, once in power, the PT began to reverse its earlier participatory democracy by strengthening the state's grip on the economy and the trade unions, promoting economic nationalism and resuming the tradition of developmentalism of earlier governments.

To help explain this history of the PT, I place class formation and class fragmentation in Volta Redonda in the broader context of colonialism and uneven development. Engaging with a tradition in Brazilian sociology and anthropology that is often ignored outside the country (Ramalho and Santana 2001; Rodrigues and Ramalho 2007), I argue that the Brazilian working class is the product of both colonialism and its own proletarian struggles. Brazil was a Portuguese colony for 322 years. After independence in 1822, industrialization partly erased the old colonial economy of sugar and coffee production, gold and diamond extraction and cattle ranching, but it also reproduced old social inequalities under the new American hegemony. Drawing on Luxemburg's argument that capitalism operates through a violent process of "othering" and exclusion, Harvey (2003) frames the relationships between the Global North and South as accumulation by dispossession. In line with Harvey, I look at the struggles of the steelworkers of Volta Redonda in the light of violent processes of imperialist othering taking place on cultural, economic and spatial levels. I then compare this case with Sheffield by looking, following Kasmir and Carbonella (2008), at the gray area in which the trajectory of working-class consciousness at the margins overlaps with that at the centers.

A proletariat without a public sphere

Volta Redonda was founded by the dictator Getúlio Vargas in 1942, in Santo Antonio, a sleepy rural community in the middle of the coffee groves of the Paraiba Valley. It was centered on Brazil's first integrated steel complex, the *Companha Siderurgica Nacional* (CSN), and today is the biggest steel mill in Latin America.

Arriving from Rio de Janeiro along the Presidente Dutra Road, the industrial silhouette of the CSN's *Presidente Vargas* plant abruptly emerges. With its

smoky whirlpools, fires and columns of vapor, the works appear as an extension of the surrounding forest or a metallic membrane wrapped around it, rather than a structure contained within it. Plants, fruit trees and vapor make their way through the porous surface of pipes, walls and machines, like hairs through human skin. The steel complex penetrates back into nature in various forms. Warm chemical undercurrents run in the Paraiba River, attracting wild capybaras and iguanas; coal dust coats the mango trees with silvery pigments; the furnace's sirens overwhelm the sound of birds and crickets at sunset.

This interpenetration between steel plant and tropical nature evokes the modernist "Manifesto da poesia pau-Brasil" (Brazil-Wood Poetry Manifesto) by Oswald de Andrade (1977 [1926]), which celebrated the magic embrace of technology and nature in the new Brazil. De Andrade was the founding figure of Brazilian modernism and was influenced by European communism and artistic avant-garde, especially Italian futurism and Russian constructivism (de Andrade 1945). The hero of his manifesto was the "technological Tupi," a naive and pragmatic Amazonian *indio* journeying from the tropical forest to the workers' slums of São Paulo. This naturalization of the working class through the invocation of the indigenous was something that Brazilian intellectuals inherited from Europe, and it also inspired Getúlio Vargas.

His *Estado Novo* (New State) was to be a modern bureaucracy that would arise from the dying roots of a tropical colony. While previous presidents had emphasized Brazil's rural origin, for Vargas the core of the New State was the new industrial proletariat (Oliven 2000). The urban working class of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro was corrupted by European goods, ideas and labor unrest. However, the proletariat of Volta Redonda was pristine, autochthonous and primordial, reflecting their unspoiled natural surroundings. This was a vision of industrialization as a regenerative natural process, and it reflected a political economy that was in transition from the old, dilapidated coffee economy to the new American industrial capitalism. Photographs of the construction of the steel works, with groups of workers surrounded by long steel frames sprouting from the dry earth like metallic plants, portray foreign technology as a magical force breathing new life into the dead colonial economy of the Paraiba Valley.

Just as nature and industry interprenetrate at Volta Redonda, so do the plant and the city. Correa Lima, the planner of Volta Redonda, was inspired by the proletarian city developed by the French architect Tony Garnier, with extensive public spaces where workers and their families could relax and socialize. This model of a proletarian city clashed, however, with what CSN imposed, the American company-town style of planning that treated the city as an extension of the plant. Following that model, Volta Redonda reflected the interests and perspective of the company that ran the steel works. Public hospitals, schools and clubs served the company's welfare functions; company police were in

charge of the town's security; the managers' villas stood on the top of the hills, while working-class suburbs with their reassuring names (Conforto, Villa Rica, Jardim Primavera) were immersed in the plant's smoke and noise. At the edge of the city, temporary workers, unemployed people and farmers squatted on land owned by the local elites, who controlled the land north of the Paraiba River and what was left of the coffee economy.

If the development of Brasilia in the 1950s reflected the rational and developmentalist ideology of the Kubitscheck regime (Holston 1989), that of Volta Redonda mirrored Vargas's dictatorship. That was a mixture of state paternalism, absolute surplus value extraction and *coronelism*, together with the interpenetration of the city, the company and the nation as parts of a "steel family" (*familia siderurgica*) that cut across public and private realms. The "mother" of Volta Redonda was the CSN, with its family-based ownership, with its paternalistic style of management and with its recruitment, promotion and training organized along kinship lines. The power of the mother arose from the authority of Vargas, the "father" of Brazil, who personally selected the president and board of directors of the CSN. This further confused the plant's relationship to the public and private realms. The result was that the proletariat had no civic space for political action and the capitalists had little room for private accumulation. Up until the labor unrest of the 1980s, and in spite of the emergence of an urban movement with an emancipationist agenda in the 1950s, local politics had virtually no influence on local government.

Even today, the spaces of the town reflect multiple forms of authority: of the father, the capitalist and the president. For instance, the town's focal point, Brazil Square, is a long, rectangular space framed by lush tropical palms. Its focus is a circular fountain with two statues of androgynous young girls lazily stretched out on the flat surface of the turquoise water, their masculine hands holding industrial gears and tools with careless pleasure. In the fountain is a square obelisk, on each side of which are reliefs of CSN's departments: Coal, Coke Oven, Furnace and Steel Mill. The flat silhouettes of the workers depicted on the obelisk are snapshots of manual labor: tense, burdened and joined in collective effort. At both sides of the fountain are dark copper statues of steel smelters. With reflective screens pulled over their helmets, they use their hands to fend off the electric light of the furnace, their half-closed eyes gazing somewhere beyond the furnace, beyond the square and beyond the city. With its back to the fountain is a statue of Getúlio Vargas, less heroic, smaller and with more human proportions than the steelworkers. He welcomes visitors to the square in a soft, double-breasted suit, with one hand in a pocket and the other holding a cigar. Are the steelworkers protecting themselves from the light of the sun or the light of the furnace? Are we entering a public square or into the steel plant? And who owns this public space: the father, the mother or the children?

During the dictatorship, merchants, professionals, the working class and neighborhood associations created a citizens' movement that reclaimed the public spaces of the city, and with the advent of democracy in 1985 there were free mayoral elections. However, in 1992 the privatization of CSN led to what many people saw as the privatization of Volta Redonda. The CSN bought the hospitals, schools, welfare facilities and land, and today it controls most of the vacant areas of the town, blocking the development of public housing and facilities and, at the same time, benefiting from the economy of rents and speculation. In the face of this, civic activists, the city council, and homeless and squatters movements are reclaiming unproductive land; residents grow vegetables and graze cattle, build illegal extensions and underground houses and avoid the surveillance of the company police.

In a famous essay, Roberto DaMatta (1997) argues that Brazil's long experience of colonialism and dictatorship has resulted in a society with no clear distinction between the public and the private, the street and the household, the state and the family. As a consequence, DaMatta says, Brazilian politics lacks the dialectical reason that is based on oppositions between private and public, capitalist and bourgeois, family and state, civic and personal, and the kind of class consciousness found in fully capitalist societies. In Volta Redonda, where the street is an extension of the corporate household and nearly all private dwellings and commercial and leisure venues are half public and half owned by the CSN, the reality of Brazilian uneven development is inscribed in the urban landscape. However, as I will show, the absence of a public sphere autonomous from the company led to the powerful interweaving of factory activism and urban activism that shook the dictatorship in the 1980s.

Class emancipation withouth class conflict

The legislators who set the legal framework of the *Estado Novo* were of mixed background: technocrats, liberal lawyers, ex-army officials and young communists. However, they shared the goal of building a political model that was different from the First Republic and from the European model of democracy that inspired it. Linking the devastation of World War I and the menacing growth of Nazism to the failures of European capitalism, they set collective work (*trabalhismo*) and state ownership of the means of production as building blocks of the New State. However, equally skeptical of socialism and inspired by European Christianity, they saw citizenship as a form of spiritual attachment of the people to the president.

In 1931 the Labor Ministry of the Vargas government, inspired by Christian paternalism, produced the Labor Code (CLT), one of the most progressive codes in the world. It set workload, annual vacations, minimum pay and much else. It made unionization effectively compulsory by establishing that only

unionized workers were eligible for social benefits. It established various labor commissions and organizations for regulating trade union affiliation, training and education. With direct agreements between labor and capital playing a secondary role, the CLT turned the *Estado Novo* into an occupational welfare state in which social rights depended on labor rights. Workers were recipients of generous social and labor provisions, including training, housing, pensions and child benefits. And they received these because of their personal affiliation to state-controlled trade unions and to the PDT, the Brazilian Workers Party, and not because of their working-class organizations. To be sure, non-governmental parties and working-class activism, especially by the Communist Party, were repressed, often violently. By and large, however, the working class gained political standing without social struggle: the first workers' strike in the history of Volta Redonda did not take place until the 1980s.

Angela de Castro Gomes (1988) argues that the authoritarian paternalism of the *Estado Novo* meant that the CLT was created by the political elites as a generous gift from the father-president to his children. This turned labor relations into kinship relations, spiritualized class relations and neutralized class struggle, and some working-class organizations subscribed to this view, seeing the substance of the CLT as a gift rather than as a right. As a consequence, the Brazilian working class had high occupational status but little class consciousness, and was emancipated socially but not politically. De Castro Gomes contrasts this emergence of the working class in Brazil with the making of the working class in England. Whereas the Brazilian working class achieved labor rights without political struggle and within a relationship of moral dependency on the state, the English working class emerged as a self-conscious political agent at the end of a long struggle led by different social strata in opposition to the state and the capitalists. Unfortunately, de Castro Gomes's broad contrast makes it difficult to see the similarities between Brazil and other corporatist regimes of the times, in Latin America and elsewhere. For instance, the main inspiration for the Brazilian CLT was the Italian *Carta del Lavoro*, the most progressive labor legislation of its time, the product of an Italian Fascist corporatist and autarchic regime that was very similar to the *Estado Novo*.

De Castro Gomes's argument has received three kinds of criticism. First, some argue that the *Estado Novo* was not a monolithic entity. Rather, anarchism, socialism, cooperativism, communism and right-wing authoritarianism (French 2004: 60) combined to produce it, with the aim of building a regime that differed from the decadent European democracies, which were affected by war, social conflict and economic crisis. But against such ambitions, Brazil remained in the grip of generals, rural leaders and small-town dictators. New national industrial complexes were constructed, but local land owners still controlled the national economy. In this context, the ideology of the gift and patronage was more a reflection of the power of the old colonial elites than of Vargas's

authoritarian populism. Second, while the CLT may have been designed to produce quiescence, in practice it contributed to a politicized labor militancy, because it provided a legal language for the recognition of workers' rights. For instance, in the 1950s in Volta Redonda, the charismatic leader of the Metalworkers' Union, Allan Cruz, used the legal framework of the CLT to win important additional rights, such as additional pay for overtime and night shifts, a workers' canteen, and health and safety provisions (Monteiro 1995). Finally, the reach of the *Estado Novo* and its labor policy was limited to the formal sector, a small section of the Brazilian workforce. Even in a steel town such as Volta Redonda, informal employment was dominant.

As I will show in the next section, the CSN was unique in Brazil for its labor peace, with no strike for forty years. It is arguable that this peace was due to the CSN's exceptional capital structure, jointly owned by the state and local families (Dilnius 2010). It seems more realistic, though, to argue that the workers of Volta Redonda were loyal to the CSN because they believed that making Brazil industrially self-sufficient meant making it independent from European colonialism. However, in embracing capitalism, albeit in a mixed form, with the aim of colonial emancipation, they ended up supporting yet another colonial power, the United States. This nationalistic and anti-colonial stance, shared across different social strata and trade unions, was responsible for the inertia of the labor movement in the early stages of Volta Redonda, but also for the powerful cross-sectional alliance that shook the government in the 1980s.

Industrial revolution, colonialism and the modern proletariat in Volta Redonda

Zweig's famous *Brazil: Land of the Future* was published in 1942, the same year the CSN was founded. Zweig was a Jewish, middle-European intellectual with a privileged upbringing in the 1920s. With the growth of National Socialism he left Austria in the 1930s, and his view of Brazil was shaped by his mourning for the end of the old continent he had fled.

For him, Brazil and Europe were at the opposite ends of time and history. With its concern with history, tradition and authenticity, Europe was stuck in the past. In Brazil there was no history, origin or tradition, only an "ongoing transformation of everything" (Zweig 1942: 57). Transformations were so quick and ubiquitous that there was no standard time: "hours have more minutes than in Europe" (1942: 57). Zweig also links industrialization and racial heterogeneity. The Brazilian working class, unlike "the dark, homogenous and unnumbered masses" of European and American capitalism, is colored, fluid and in constant transformation: "It expands outside the factories to include the *cablocos* of the Amazon, the *seringueiros* in the forest, the *raqueiros* in the plains and the

Indios in the impenetrable jungle" (1942: 133). Unlike Europe, where industrialization meant the cultural and political homogenization of the working class, in Brazil industrial modernity emerged in open, fluid and heterogeneous class and temporal patterns.

Zweig's description of the sense of radical change and hope that pervaded Brazil in the 1940s captures the triumphalism that accompanied the opening of the CSN in the Paraiba Valley, under the startled gaze of the local population. At that opening, Vargas himself declared that, with the CSN, Brazil was "entering into the future." His triumphalism was shared by US diplomats, who had defeated Germany's efforts to finance the CSN, and so had secured for the United States the support of Brazil, Latin America's most important country, in the looming world conflict. The CSN was central to Vargas's plans for Brazil's "second industrial revolution," aimed at developing steel for national infrastructure and, most importantly, for armaments.

That intended revolution was also a social one. A modern city in the middle of a tropical valley, Volta Redonda attracted farmers, ex-slaves, the unemployed and migrants from all over Brazil's interior. The modern steel town, raised from the ashes of an old coffee plantation, was a utopia of social equality and industrial democracy, at a time when similar utopias were emerging elsewhere, notably the majestic steel complex of Magnitogorsk, built in the middle of the Russian steppe (Kotkin 1997). The CSN promised to break with the old colonial system of unequal relations and racial subordination between the master and the slave, and become a new model of class and ethnic integration.

Zweig's contrast between Brazil's fluidity and miscegenation and Western timeless fixity and homogeneity was not unique to him. Many Brazilian intellectuals and politicians, including Euclides da Cunha (2001 [1897]) and Freyre (1976), also argued that fluidity and miscegenation were markers of national identity, and the nationalism of the *Estado Novo* was based on a regionalist ideology that emphasized the harmonious coexistence of different ethnicities and races under the model of racial democracy. Made up of Amazonian *Indios*, peasants from the *sertao* and Italian, mestizo, Black and *cabloco* migrants, the working class of Volta Redonda demonstrated both the national ideology of multiculturalism and the corporate ideology of the steel family. However, this ideology of ethnic and racial mixture masked what happened on the shop floor: the majority of Black workers performed, and still perform, the most demanding tasks at the furnace and the rolling mill, and lighter tasks are performed by those of lighter skin. Within the ideology of class and racial equality, then, Brazil's new industrialization carried on the old colonial inequalities. In spite of the ideology of the new Brazil, the Brazilian proletariat was modeled upon regional and racial identities cast in the colonial past.

The institutional core of Vargas's utopia was the state-controlled Metalworkers' Union of Volta Redonda, founded in 1952 by CSN employees and

company representatives, and bringing together the interests of the president, the CSN and the working class. The Ministry of Labor and the Department for Propaganda controlled the union, and the union leadership shared with the CSN a corporatist and nationalist stance. First, they agreed that state-funded trade unions should be akin to public service providers, especially of legal, financial, educational and medical services. These services were delivered in the schools, hospitals, workers' associations and banks owned by the CSN, creating a peculiar situation in which the union was simultaneously in charge of the resources and interests of the workers, the company and the state. Second, the CNS, the state and the union all saw development as revolving around national autarchy and import substitution. For a short time this model worked. Between 1946 and 1949, the pay of most employees rose sharply; CSN wages were among the highest in the country; the career, salary and recruitment systems combined efficiency and care for the employees.

This did not last. President Kubitschek ended Vargas's paternalistic and autarkic model and instead pursued neo-colonial development. He pressed the management of CSN to increase production and lower wages, producing cheaper steel that would attract foreign manufacturing. He visited the plant with the US Vice President, Richard Nixon, in 1956, marking the subordination of the CSN to the interests of American capital. Management responded. The regime in the works shifted from paternalism to Taylorism, and by the end of the 1950s real wages had declined sharply. The union challenged this change in the regional labor court, without success, showing that the legal framework set up by Vargas for dealing with labor conflict became an obstacle for working-class activism. With the union controlled by the state and an elite of White workers, and in the absence of a civic movement, it was paradoxically dictatorship that sparked a new era of class activism.

New unionism

The corporatist model collapsed with the economic crisis and the military coup in 1964, and authoritarian paternalism gave way to state violence. Harmony between capital and labor was ended by a coalition that included the top management of the CSN, the army and the right-wing National Democratic Union (UDN). Open trade-union elections, political demonstrations and public meetings were suppressed, and corrupt union leaders colluded with the army and state officials who now controlled the city and the party.

One consequence of these changes was that a new group of labor leaders arose in opposition. The older leaders were mostly working-class communists from rural backgrounds, who focused on the interests of the steelworkers and spoke a legalistic and corporatist language. In contrast, the new leaders were well-educated Catholics from the urban lower-middle classes. They sought to

ally with Catholic, Black and women's' activist groups, middle-class teachers, lawyers and doctors, and employers' associations and trade unions, and they used a new political grammar that combined plant activism, urban guerrilla activity and liberation theology. This coalescence of different political groups and languages under the labor movement became the marker of the "new" Brazilian trade union movement (see Seidman 1994).

This new trade unionism commonly is associated with the struggles of the autoworkers of the ABC region of São Paulo, led by the young and charismatic union leader Lula da Silva, and only Brazilian labor scholars have attended to the new unionism of Volta Redonda (e.g. Morel 2001; Ramalho and Santana 2001). Unlike places such as São Paulo, in a steel town such as Volta Redonda operating under Vargas's corporatist paternalism, the city and the factory were strongly interwoven in ways that I have described already. However, when the Kubitschek dictatorship violently cut the umbilical cord between "mother" and "children," the workers turned this old, informal corporate network, which had been a form of subordination, into a source of political activism. Put differently, the blurred civic consciousness, the collusion with the middle class and the economic weakness that had restricted the influence of the labor movement under Vargas became important sources of strength when Kubitschek cut the symbiotic links between the city and the company.

Regina Morel (2001) argued that the absence of a clear divide between the company and the city, which had increased corporate control during the paternalistic regime of Vargas, became an important asset of the labor movement during dictatorship. Because the army controlled the plant through direct violence, neighborhood activism was the only possible form of workers' resistance. Women organized anti-police urban guerrilla activities, led grass-roots movements in *favelas* and paralyzed the nurseries, hospitals and schools. Students and teachers occupied the local university. Neighborhood associations invaded the council. Engineers confronted the senior management in corporate meetings.

In November 1988, a few months before Brazil's return to democracy, the Metalworkers' Union mobilized more than 8,000 workers in a strike against the CSN. The army and the police repressed the strike and three workers were killed. In response, the new Popular and Trade Union Front – an alliance of the Metalworkers' Union, the civic construction union and religious, women's, Black and student movements – organized the *abrazo* (the hug), a cordon of 13,000 people holding hands around the perimeter of the 20-square-mile plant. The *abrazo* led to waves of popular unrest and became a powerful symbol of Brazil's new democracy and new unionism. As well, the president of the Metalworkers' Union, Juarez Antunes, became the mayor of Volta Redonda, the first trade-union leader in Brazil's history to hold such a public office. Response was quick: a month after becoming mayor, Antunes was killed in a road accident

orchestrated by the military. The SMVR fragmented and declined, and under a new pragmatic leadership in the 1990s the union supported privatization and allied itself with the corrupt mayoral party, inaugurating an era of collaboration with management and distance from local people. The results are apparent in Volta Redonda. Bad pay and conditions have led to a staggering eighty percent labor turnover in some departments and rising industrial disputes. Most recently, under Renato Soares, the communist son of a Catholic preacher, the SMVR is trying to return to the new unionism of the 1980s by making alliances outside the conventional working class.

The CSN and the *Estado Novo* were two historical revolutions that Vargas conceived in the years before World War II, a period of transition from European to American hegemony with the specter of National Socialism looming in the background. These revolutions were sterile because they were embedded in old colonial relations, old capital, old technology and old dreams. However, the later privatization led Brazil to create its own model of "regulatory capitalism," based on state-led industrialization and financial regulation (Goldstein 1999), which diverged from the financial capitalism and privatization common in the North. Paradoxically, this process boosted the fortunes of its most vociferous opponent, the Workers' Party.

The financial crisis: a past that eternally returns

During the first wave of the financial crisis, in 2009, *The Economist* published the issue "Brazil takes off." The lead article, "Brazil, land of the future," argued that Brazil departed from most governments in the North because it combined economic growth and social redistribution through a mixture of state control and deregulation. Following in Zweig's footsteps, *The Economist* described Brazil as a young country with substantial social miscegenation, little industrial conflict and a bright future. In Volta Redonda people would have agreed. The crisis inspired feelings of pride, reciprocity and cooperation. Managers, workers, trade-union leaders and the residents of *favelas* talked about their cooperation in this difficult time and saw the future with optimism. This was very different from talk about the crisis in the UK, which was concerned with the death of capitalism and moral punishment of greed and corruption.

Partly this different mood was related to the fact that, while the world was in recession, the Brazilian economy was growing by two percent and unemployment was falling. The Tupi oil field, one of the biggest in the world, had just been discovered and Brazil was about to join OPEC. However, the mood also reflected people's endorsement of President Lula's ambitious anti-crisis package of financial regulation and credit expansion. The crisis was a moment of social regeneration and of continuity between the past and the future, increased support for the president, collaboration between the union and the CSN and a

feeling that steelworkers, managers and state bureaucrats were all part of the same *familia siderurgica*. It brought back the charismatic populism and developmentalist model of Vargas in the new incarnation of the ex-metalworker and trade-union leader Ignacio Lula da Silva. In the UK, on the other hand, the crisis marked a radical break between past and future. Politically, it marked the death of New Labour; economically, it marked the collapse of the financial economy.

Conclusion

While this story of Volta Redonda can tell us much about class history, a comparison with another steel town, Sheffield, can tell us even more. To begin with, there are some important similarities between these two places. In both, mass industrialization led to the emergence of an "official working class" that was made up mostly of skilled, White men and that generally excluded the female, the unskilled and the non-White people working less formally in the industry. The activities of the unions representing this official working class centered on wages, factory activism, corporatism and the narrow interests of the workers. Even if only briefly, new forms of labor activism emerged that linked the formal and the informal working class. The state, in its various incarnations, supported the formal working class and repressed informal patterns of class activism. The power of the formal working class and of conventional trade unionism was stronger in periods of industrial expansion and weaker during periods of financialization, privatization and extensive subcontracting.

As well as these similarities, however, there are important differences between these two cases. First, in Sheffield, known until the 1980s as the Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire, the working class emerged in the public realm of a nationalized steel industry and a socialist municipality, whereas in Volta Redonda it emerged in a privatized steel town, a mixed-capital company, and within the anti-materialistic framework of Vargas's authoritarian paternalism. Second, in Sheffield the working class obtained political rights before the emergence of the Labour Party and the Steelworkers' Union, whereas in Volta Redonda these rights were granted by pre-existing and state-controlled party and union. Third, in Sheffield both capitalists and workers thought in terms of the co-evolution of economic progress and political emancipation, although they did so in different ways. For the capitalists, profit trickles down to the lower classes and ultimately creates social integration. For the socialists, capitalist accumulation increases class inequality until, ultimately, there is revolution and social equality. For the workers of Volta Redonda, on the other hand, proletarian gains and capitalist crises were the outcome of alien colonial forces. Finally, even though the official working class in both places was, as I have noted, predominantly White and male, women and those not

White were in different positions and were understood differently in Brazil and in Britain. In particular, women's, Black and ethnic activism were central to the struggle against the CSN, especially at the height of political repression and co-optation of the trade-union movement, though paradoxically that racial, ethnic and gender activism was itself the product of colonial taxonomies and of European racism (Moritz Schwarcz 1993). In Sheffield, on the other hand, the working class never thought of itself as culturally or racially diverse, even in the face of internal British immigration to the city during the nineteenth century, and of colonial and international immigration after World War II. In Sheffield, multiculturalism only emerged with the deindustrialization and attacks on the working class that began in earnest in the 1980s. With those attacks, culture began to be more important than class and multiculturalism broke existing forms of working-class solidarity, evident in the emergence of the notion of a distinctive White working class in Britain today (for a parallel case in Poland, see Kalb 2009).

Thus it is that the industrialization and proletarianization of the two places were shaped by, and understood in terms of, different moralities, social relations and temporalities of colonialism and capitalism. For de Souza Martins (2000: 258), in Brazil industrial capitalism was another incarnation of the colonizers' modernity, an external force to be resisted (Oliven 2000), which meant that progressive anticapitalist struggles were often blurred with reactionary anti-colonial critiques of industrial progress and working-class emancipation. Also, for de Souza Martins the Brazilian working class does not strive for social change or self-organization in the way of E.P. Thompson's English working class, but instead resists change and seeks to restore tradition. Evidence from Volta Redonda supports this view. Working-class consciousness, even among the metalworkers, emerged as a critique of the notions of industrial democracy and class emancipation imported into Brazil from outside, and the radical Black and women's activism of the 1980s was as much a form of resistance against modern industry and its White male labor aristocracy as it was of working-class activism. DaMatta (1993) suggests an explanation for this. Because of its long history of dictatorship, colonialism and corruption, Brazil lacks the tradition of political individualism and class conflict that characterizes Western societies. As a result, Brazilians must reconcile two different views of society: the Western one, as made up of impersonal, utilitarian and competitive relationships among free *individuals*, and the non-Western one, as a personalistic, asymmetrical network of *persons*. The consequence is that the Brazilian working class has no settled consciousness or identity, but oscillates between democracy and violence, right and respect, class and hierarchy, interest and generosity, freedom and dependency.

It may well be, of course, that the differences between Sheffield and Volta Redonda point to the peculiarites of the making of the English working class,

rather than of the Brazilian, and hence the dangers of using it as the benchmark for a comparative anthropology of class. After all, it is clear that class in the North is often a fluid political formation, just as it is in Brazil. For instance, Don Kalb (1997) shows how the class struggles of the shoemakers of North Brabant and the "factory daughters" of the Philips Corporation in Eindhoven emerged from a cultural milieu of Catholicism and familism. Similarly, for Narotzky and Smith (2006) the "immediate struggles" of the people of Vega Baja in rural Spain are historically embedded in forces that include *Francismo*, local patronage and violence, EU bureaucracy, regional economies and global businesses.

During Vargas's *Estado Novo*, the Brazilian working class had the same sort of bureaucratic, formalized and corporate institution that the British had in the 1950s. During dictatorship, the labor movement developed a fluid political vocabulary and a new form of activism that combined the identities and interests of both the formal and the informal working class. This Brazilian new trade unionism was probably similar to what Craig Calhoun (1995) describes of the labor movement in Europe and North America early in the nineteenth century. However, we have to recognize that the revolutionary trade unions and the Workers' Party (PT) that overthrew the dictatorship in Brazil in the 1980s turned into bureaucratic, hierarchical and often corrupt organizations co-opted into the current government coalition, just as happened to the steelworkers' union in Britain during the New Labour government.

Underlying these similarities and difference between Brazil and Britain, a few points seem especially important. Central to these are people's understandings of the nature of the socio-economic development that comes with industrialization, and the political–economic context that shapes both that development and those understandings. In these matters, Brazil and Britain are far apart.

In Brazil, industrialization and proletarianization, and the development that accompanied these, were brought about by the national government and shaped by rigid, racialized and essentialist colonial taxonomies. That process led to anti-colonial resistance more than to class identification. In Britain, that development was the result of a self-directed linear process of political and economic emancipation that led the working class to identify with the terms of capitalist development, as I briefly described above. This led to what appears to have been a terminal crisis of self-representation of the labor movement following the crisis of industrial capitalism.

Although the understandings and processes are different in Brazil and Britain, they have one important thing in common: neither led to inclusive forms of livelihood for the working class or the nation as a whole. However, in Brazil that class now has greater power than it does in Britain, partly because the PT government promoted a model of regulatory capitalism that proved more successful than the financial economy supported by New Labour in Britain.

It is not clear, though, that the political power of the Brazilian working class translates into political consciousness. The electoral success of the PT was based on its inclusionary politics and its assimilation of the Northern notions of crisis, emancipation and revolution to serve its own purposes. But with Brazil becoming a world power, the PT is creating its own categories of exclusion, internally with the exclusion from government of many of the Black, ethnic and rural movements that brought it to power in the 1980s, externally with its strongly expansionist policy in the Mercosur and in Africa.

Inclusion is important. Very little has been written on the historical relationship in Britain between race and class. The "militant particularism" (Harvey 1995) of its labor movement can be read as a failure to recognize that ethnicity and race are central dimensions of class struggle and that colonialism is an important aspect of capitalism. Since colonialism (a form of violent exclusion) and capitalism (a form of illusionary freedom) are always interwoven, labor activism must be directed against both, as if in a double movement (Mollona 2009a). Circulating between centers and peripheries, such a double movement of critical distance (against capitalist illusions) and active resistance (against violent impositions) is now weakening in Brazil, but it is strengthening in other locations in the South, for instance in China, where the labor movement is weaving together subaltern, working-class and civic struggles (Lee 2007).

The task for a global anthropology of class is to incorporate this dynamic flow into its own models. It needs to weave together the contingent and precarious experiments taking place at the global margins with the traditions, practices and organizations that have consolidated in the global centers, to produce a broad and fluid mosaic in which connection between labor theories and working-class struggles is possible.

10 Export processing zones and global class formation

Patrick Neveling

Anthropologists are renown for studying small places. Even though the discipline's focus has extended well beyond the remote and fairly self-contained villages that were its characteristic subject matter through most of the twentieth century, a concern with the local remains an important part of the way that anthropologists approach the world. This orientation brings benefits to anthropologists and to those who study their works, but it also brings costs.

In particular, that concern with the local often diverts attention from the broader frame that encompasses the locality. Even anthropologists who have studied the local in terms of that frame commonly focus on the relationship between the local and the frame, rather than seeing the frame as part of their understanding of those small places (e.g. Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Ong 2006). Equally, that concern often is accompanied by an inattention to things that are not apparent from the local perspective. So, a focus on the local can accommodate slum dwellers in Mumbai or workers in a Bangalore call center, but not the places where their broader frame is shaped, such as a working group within the World Bank or a conference attracting international investors. As a result, anthropological descriptions and analyses of these small places commonly are partial, or even flawed, as they omit important factors affecting the local.

In this chapter I indicate that partiality by example, showing the sort of things that are lost, the sort of understandings that are foregone, as a result of that anthropological predisposition. The small place in this example is Mauritius, an island with a little over a million inhabitants, located in the Indian Ocean to the east of Madagascar. It had been a British colony from early in the nineteenth century, and became independent in 1968. Appropriately, given my concern in this chapter, I use Mauritius as a point of entry into a very non-local arena, the global capitalist system and its class politics after World War II. I focus on one key feature of that system, the spread of export processing zones (EPZs) as a particular configuration of capital, state and labor, which expanded from one zone in Puerto Rico in 1947 to 3,500 in 2007, employing more than 60 million workers in more than 130 countries (Boyenge 2007).

As we will see, the class relations characteristic of EPZs are particularly clear in Mauritius. There, the passage of EPZ legislation in 1970 initiated manufacturing-based industrialization on a scale that turned the once poverty-stricken country into a showcase for successful EPZ policies and that, in the 1990s, led the world in the proportion of its workforce employed in EPZs. This means that the life and times of Mauritians cannot be fully understood without looking at the way that their class relations were negotiated in places that are both within and beyond the anthropologist's "local." The key to understanding them lies in returning to the comparison and generalization that, as noted in the Introduction, was central to the founding of the discipline.

Mauritius imagined

Anthropologists commonly have approached Mauritius as if ethnic identity were the pre-eminent element of the Native's Point of View. This is an unfortunate echoing of the ideology common in former plantation colonies, that social differentiation is based on the ethnic origin of various groups of imported laborers (Wolf 1997 [1982]: 379). Rather than recognizing that shared or conflicting socio-economic interests and world-views are much more relevant than supposedly distinct geographic origins, the residents of Mauritius are said to see little more than ethnic identities when they look around. These include a Mauritian Indian-Hindu community (Eisenlohr 2006) and an Indian-Muslim community (Donath 2009), as well as an African-Christian Creole community (Boswell 2006) and a group of Christian descendants of early French colonial settlers (Salverda 2010). The roots of this concern with ethnic groups and relations can be traced to Thomas Hylland Eriksen's now semi-canonical study of Mauritius, "Common denominators: ethnicity, nation-building and compromise" (Eriksen 1998).

For observers concerned with less narrowly defined aspects of the local and its perspective, the island looks different. For some of them it may be a multicultural place, but more importantly it is an example of economic growth triggered by the establishment of an EPZ in 1970. *Mauritius: Managing Success* (World Bank 1990) and *Mauritius: Expanding Horizons* (World Bank 1992) present Mauritian government development strategies as models for impoverished nations worldwide. International Monetary Fund (IMF) working papers call the island's economic boom a "miracle" (e.g. Subramanian and Roy 2001). Unlike the anthropological approach, which highlights cultural identity and difference, this broadly economic one emphasizes the island's position in the global economy and ways of generating income.

This distinction illustrates what Kalb and Tak (2005: 10) identify as a crucial difference between the analysis of "thick history and dense space" and the synchronic analysis of "thin culture." The anthropological writings on

Mauritius mentioned above show the shortcomings of the latter, for they sideline the country's exceptional change, from an impoverished sugar-based economy in the 1960s to an "African Tiger" in the 1990s. Instead, we are presented with Burton Benedict's (e.g. 1965) characterization of Mauritius as a "plural society," which he developed when he studied Mauritian society on behalf of the UK Colonial Office around 1960. Eriksen wrote that characterization in stone when he (1998: 20) said that "Mauritian society, if anything, is a plural one." And for Eriksen, plurality refers to ethnicity, and ethnicity is important. It is "an initially more relevant concept . . . than say, class, . . . [because of] its empirically pervasive nature" (1998: 48). Ignoring class has, of course, meant ignoring the topics and issues that are important to the researchers with that broadly economic view, and to the IMF, the World Bank and other central institutions of the international capitalist system.

In this chapter I want to help fill these conceptual gaps by locating Mauritius within the global frame of EPZs. I do so first by delineating that global frame in terms of the mobility of capital, concepts, commodities and labor. Then I describe the milestones in the making of this global frame. With that background sketched, I turn to Mauritius, and particularly the class relations that developed in the island's EPZ from early in the 1970s to early in the 2000s. I will end by suggesting ways in which my story of Mauritius and EPZs can help illuminate what anthropologists can gain with the concept of class.

Class in the global EPZ regime

I said that the predominant anthropological approach to Mauritius ignores its location in the workings of global capitalism. This is not a necessary feature of anthropology, for in other small places anthropologists have studied the large issue of global flows of capital and manufacturing triggered by the establishment of EPZs. Works such as those by Fernández-Kelly (1983) and Heyman (1991) on the maquiladoras on the Mexico–US border, by Safa (1995) on several Caribbean countries, by Ong (1987) on Malaysia and by Kim (1997) on South Korea have addressed the consequences of EPZs on local, regional, national and transnational relations and dependences. Moreover, research on EPZs has been important in work on a topic of much anthropological interest, neoliberalism, and its associated idea that sovereignty is graduated (Ong 2006) because countries abstain from basic sovereign rights such as taxation and the collection of customs duties in an effort to attract foreign and local direct investment. But still, EPZs have an impact on the global system that is difficult to see if one is focused on sovereignty or on single, or even multi-zone, case studies.

In other words, my observation about the shortcomings of the common anthropological approach to small places applies to EPZs as well as to

societies. Both Mauritius and an EPZ can be seen as small. However, we cannot understand what drives the circulation of capital, concepts, commodities and labor in such small places through the synchronic analysis of their particularities (e.g. Ong 2006) or seeing them as meeting grounds of local pre-capitalist and global capitalist systems of exchange (e.g. Ong 1987). Rather, we should approach EPZs in terms of thick history and dense space, which means the general principles of the elementary structures of capitalism (cf. O'Brien 2001).

One could approach those principles in terms of rough generalizations of class interests. Thus, investors welcome EPZs, as here they find a global market with countries bidding for capital investment; international organizations such as the World Bank support EPZs as they generate development in a particular location; workers, NGOs and anthropologists object to EPZs because of their market- and employer-oriented regimes, which are often sexist and racist (e.g. Ong 1987; Kim 1997). The difficulty with such an approach is that, while it speaks of global, objective models and interests, these are seldom central to the analysis of particular sets of Natives with their particular Points of View (exceptions include Fernández-Kelly 1983; Heyman 1991; Safa 1995). Once our interest turns to the empirical dimension that could shed light on how these and other particular sets of Natives with particular Points of View have contributed to the very existence of the global, objective models and interests, we find that this remains untouched by anthropological research. We therefore need to consider the larger sets of interests and their relationships. Because EPZs are about production and circulation first and foremost, class is the appropriate analytical tool for such a consideration.

To approach class anthropologically means to identify how classes are part of long-term, global processes through which people "make their own history but . . . under relationships and forces that direct their will and their desires" (Wolf 1997 [1982]: 386). Such relationships are embedded in a system that is shaped by the struggles, complicity and collaboration of actors operating on local, national and global scales. EPZs, for example, need legal approval by national parliaments, an important step in realizing a radical vision of the social contract. And that vision is radical, for in it states mediate between capital and labor by making capital exempt from tributary obligations such as taxes and customs, while using similar tribute collected from consumers and workers to subsidize capitalists for exploiting labor. It is radical as well because states often protect EPZ capital from the bargaining power of workers by laws that define wage levels and ban collective bargaining (see also Romero 1995).

Given how radical this vision is, it is important to ask how this global web of "export enclaves" (Dicken 2003: 179) came about and is secured. I turn to that question now, describing how the world's first EPZ was set up in Puerto

Rico and another early one was set up in Ireland, paying particular attention to the relationship between the state, labor and capital, and how this developed in relation to ideological debates over the superstructure of the global system. As will become clear, the formation of a global class of EPZ workers occurred in the context of strong interpersonal links between state agencies, international organizations and capital.

From "New Deal" to "Point Four" in Puerto Rico

One justification for the spread of EPZs is the desire to bring about development by establishing manufacturing industries. Manufacturing can be presented as bringing about economic development in two different ways: as part of a policy of import substitution or as part of a policy of increasing exports. It was the latter policy, export-led development, that underlay the establishment of the world's first EPZ.

After World War II, development through industrialization became popular in part because it had become increasingly obvious that many regions of the world had been turned into little more than suppliers of raw materials for manufacturing industries located in the wealthy countries of the world. In 1950 the Prebisch–Singer thesis (see Bair 2009) identified this imbalance, and it became central to the economic calculus informing policies in many newly independent countries. It can be regarded as the forebear of a discourse of unequal class relations in the global system that provided a pragmatic alternative to the global socialist and communist movements. The thesis would shape global development policies until the reorientation of development economics in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Its importance is reflected in the fact that one of its authors, Raúl Prebisch, was then director of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and would become the first Secretary General of the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development in 1965.

The thesis was pragmatic because it suggested an alternative global division of labor based on an analysis of commodity and capital flows in the global system. In that system, raw materials and other primary commodities produced in the poor regions of the world, largely colonies or former colonies, were sold to richer, manufacturing countries, many of them colonial or ex-colonial powers. The heart of the thesis was that the price for those raw materials did not reflect the gains that manufacturing countries would realize when they converted them into finished goods and sold them to the poor countries that had provided those raw materials in the first place.

But the concern for development was also shaped by other motivations. One reason why the USA and other manufacturing nations introduced their own version of the concept was the growing discontent of a growing colonial

population in many parts of the world, suffering high unemployment and facing dim prospects. Particularly after the onset of the Cold War, the fear was that those populations would unite under the banner of socialism, and under President Truman the USA sought to counter this threat with a program called Point Four. Emblematic of this was a widely distributed brochure from The Public Affairs Institute. Locating the roots of the problem in the "Legacies of empire," this brochure presented a world map with the North Pole at the center. It showed the contours of developed countries with a population above 384 million, intermediate countries with more than 388 million inhabitants and underdeveloped countries inhabited by 1.56 billion – "two thirds of the world." This obvious, but obviously rephrased, global class divide was called a global challenge that needed to be met with "development" (Isaac 1950). The approach to development that it offered, however, was that of Point Four, not that of the Prebisch–Singer thesis.

Puerto Rico was a site where Point Four principles took concrete form. As elsewhere in the world, the start of the twentieth century saw growing economic discontent among Puerto Ricans: during the global economic crisis of the 1920s and 1930s, anti-colonial and anti-capitalist movements gained wide support. After Franklin Delano Roosevelt became President and established the New Deal, a group of moderate politicians allied itself with the administration in Washington. In 1937, they established their own party, the Partido Popular Democrático (PPD). The PPD won elections in 1940 and intensified New Deal efforts to ease economic hardship, which focused on job creation in government-owned factories. However, after Roosevelt died and Truman assumed office in 1945, US economic policies changed and the Puerto Rican employment schemes were declared too expensive. The new solution to the problem was the privatization of state-owned New Deal factories as advocated by the US consulting company Arthur D. Little (ADL). They had surveyed industrialization prospects in the dependency and concluded that US corporations would make large investments if they were offered the right incentives (Maldonado 1997: 32–45).

As *The Wall Street Journal* put it, a "Puerto Rican lure" (*Wall Street Journal* 1946) was set up, with the island's government offering what later became the central features of EPZs: low-cost leases or purchases of government-owned factories, and tax and customs exemptions. However, if this plan was to work, Puerto Rico needed a lot of money. And it had money because, under Roosevelt, the USA had returned to Puerto Rico the revenue that the federal government collected in excise when the island's products, especially alcohol and tobacco, went to the USA. Under the New Deal, that money had been given to Fomento Industrial, Puerto Rico's development corporation; but now the nature of development was changing.

That change was from the import substitution of the New Deal to the export orientation of Point Four. It produced dissent and debate, and possibly the first irony of global EPZ history. That was the way that a strike in government-owned factories strengthened the position of those seeking change, which included Teodoro Moscoso, the president of Fomento. Moscoso said that the striking workers were abusing their privileged position in state-owned factories and betraying the cause of Puerto Rican prosperity, and he presented the move toward privatization as a way to prevent further disruption.

The debate that accompanied the change in policy foreshadowed the subsequent development of EPZs. It is, then, worth describing some of the arguments used to justify the new policy. The first and simplest of these concerned the tax exemption granted to investors. Critics argued that it was a subsidy, while supporters argued instead that it compensated investors for the additional costs of establishing and operating their factories in Puerto Rico. The result, according to those advocates, would bring tax revenue to the dependency by generating local employment and the associated local expenditure.

The second argument arose because of the Partido Popular's call for independence from the USA. In response, the US Tariff Commission produced calculations by its chief economist, Ben Dorfman, and had them reported in considerable detail in the biggest Puerto Rican daily newspaper (*El Mundo* 1945). They indicated that independence would increase economic hardship, because Puerto Rico would lose its free access to the US markets, which would deprive its government of the existing rebate of US excise tax and depress the island's agricultural sector. The Tariff Commission report reversed the logic of the New Deal policies for the island and, on another level, foreshadowed the neoliberal response to the Prebisch–Singer thesis. New Deal policies sought local manufacturing in Puerto Rico to allow import substitution and to allow local small agriculturalists an outlet for their produce other than the existing processing plants for sugar, coffee and tobacco, overwhelmingly owned by mainland US interests. Instead, in an early version of the nowadays common trickle-down argument, Dorfman argued that mainland capital was fine, and even deserved government support, because its profitable investment would have benefits for the island.

The export-oriented arguments carried the day. The result was Act 184, The Industrial Tax Exemption Act of Puerto Rico, approved in May of 1948. It granted full exemption from income, property, excise and municipal taxes to any new business making goods not produced on the island before 1947, as well as to forty-two special industries (Maldonado 1997: 57). Efforts to bring mainland capital to Puerto Rico were intensified. Fomento Industrial opened promotional offices in major US cities and an "army" of sales staff, trained by ADL, went to mainland corporations advertising the island as an investors'

heaven: the only place in the US where they need pay no taxes (1997: 81–84). These efforts were complemented by newsreels and short films with titles such as "Puerto Rico: symphony of progress," produced by a US advertising agency, to be shown in Puerto Rican and mainland cinemas and at promotional events (Neveling 2015a).

The success of this effort to attract outside capital to the island, intended to produce growth through exports, made Puerto Rico the model for the EPZs that followed. Those later EPZs also echoed other important features of the Puerto Rican zone and the class relations that accompanied it, and some of them deserve mention. They are heroic nepotism, increasing inequality in the global labor market and a particular rhetoric of bourgeois patriotic generosity.

The backdating of preferences granted in Act 184 helps illuminate these features. One possible reason for that backdating was that the owner of ADL had made investment in the Puerto Rican EPZ a family affair. Arthur D. Little's adopted nephew, Royal Little, had built a significant empire of textile and garment factories producing mainly military goods during World War II. In 1948 his company, Textron, closed several cotton spinning mills in the US and sacked 10,000 workers. Crucially, in the previous year, 1947, Textron started production in Puerto Rico, when Fomento rented them a government-owned textile mill for next to nothing.

That move to Puerto Rico made Little and Textron heroes in Puerto Rico but unpopular on the mainland. In an inquiry by a US Senate sub-committee in 1948, one Senator confronted Little with a letter from the Textile Workers Union of America, which said "management's judgement cannot always be in the workers' interest. But we do not believe management should be free to wreck an entire community to further its own narrow objective. Free enterprise does not mean the freedom to use whole cities as a child uses building blocks – taking one here and discarding another one there" (Subcommittee 1948: 2).

Little's reply foreshadows the ideological justification and empirical reality of an increasing imbalance that the EPZ regime would create in the global labor market. He said that the plants at issue needed to be closed because they were "high-cost mills," but he generously addressed the union's concerns. The Jackson sheeting mill would continue operations and 1,000 jobs would be retained as the result of "a complete change in our policy" (Subcommittee 1948: 103). In that mill, "management and labor [had] agreed to sit down and discuss the possibility of making said operations profitable" (1948: 102). Thus was invented today's common rhetoric of bourgeois patriotic generosity built on voluntary wage cuts and redundancies to secure competitiveness.

Given these particular features, the Puerto Rican EPZ was an economic arena where the classical anti-market, which is capitalist enterprise (Blim 2000),

unfolded. One group of actors, investors, gained significant bargaining power over another group of actors, workers. This imbalance was facilitated by the government, which decided that the state and labor need to compensate investors for setting up production facilities and for exploiting workers. In addition, the Puerto Rican EPZ created a new kind of mobility for capital. Of course capital is genuinely mobile and flexible, but the tax and customs incentives granted in the Puerto Rican EPZ increased that mobility. Manufacturing profits are reduced and the mobility of capital is limited by investment, taxes and levies. With the help of the federal excise tax rebate, the Puerto Rican government took most taxes and levies out of the equation. Further, when it also absorbed some of the cost of factories and infrastructure, it reduced companies' need to make long-term investments in capital fixed in space (Harvey 2003). In the case of Textron, for example, this would also reduce the cost of shutting Puerto Rican operations in 1957, as little fixed capital would be left behind, and what was left behind had been paid for by local shareholders. In fact, there was $US 200,000 in local investment (*El Mundo 1948*), and this money ended up being lost (*El Mundo* 1957).

The sort of financial incentives I have described help explain why the Puerto Rican model spread so widely. The question of *how* it spread is important too, as the benefits mentioned so far accrue mostly to investors. These investors needed allies, and Leslie Sklair's model of the transnational capitalist class (TNCC) helps explain how allies are recruited. Sklair (2001: 4) says that the TNCC is made up of "corporate executives, globalizing bureaucrats and politicians, globalizing professionals, and consumerist elites" bound to no nation. The activities of and relations among members of the TNCC involved in the Puerto Rican EPZ help reveal the mobility and the economy of favors prevailing among these people, which are important for understanding the spread of EPZs.

For instance, Moscoso, the long-time president of Fomento, was appointed US ambassador to Venezuela when President Kennedy set up the Alliance for Progress to ease relations with Latin America in the aftermath of the failed US invasion of Cuba. That is, he was one of several Puerto Rican bureaucrats sent to convince Third World leaders of the symphonies of progress they would enjoy if they followed the EPZ model. But progress for himself and for his family might have meant more to Moscoso than the progress of Puerto Rico and Fomento, which was one of his lifetime achievements. Although Textron closed down operations in Puerto Rico in 1957 and thus created problems for the government, Fomento, local shareholders and Moscoso himself, he still asked ADL, the company that had brought Textron to Puerto Rico, for support when he was trying to get his son accepted to the prestigious Fay School, near Boston (Stevens 1959).

From duty-free booze to customs-free manufacturing in Shannon

It was in decidedly anti-Communist Ireland where one of the few EPZs of the 1950s was set up, in the poor region of Shannon. This zone is important not only because it was among the world's first EPZs, but also because it became a node for the subsequent dissemination of the EPZ model. The establishment of the Shannon zone illustrates the continuation of what I described in the preceding section, the anti-market orientation fuelled with heroic nepotism and the rhetoric of bourgeois patriotic gestures, the increased mobility of manufacturing capital at state expense and the economy of favors among an emerging TNCC associated with EPZs.

Although Shannon was a poor region in a poor country, it was extraordinarily well connected globally. When the emerging global air traffic was regulated in 1944, Shannon was granted rights for stopovers, necessary to refuel aircraft, on transatlantic flights, and "between 1947 and 1958 nearly fifty per cent of North Atlantic flights were routed through the airport" (Share 1992: 47). This meant significant income for the local catering business: as early as 1948, more than a million meals were served. Once Shannon became the world's first duty-free airport, income from sales and catering trade jumped to £IR 75,298 in 1955 (1992: 51). However, with improved aircraft design there was less need to refuel there, and Shannon's business was threatened in the late 1950s.

To maintain the Shannon economy, the government extended the duty-free system in order to attract manufacturing enterprises. As Moscoso led the establishment of the EPZ in Puerto Rico, Brendan O'Regan, the airport's Sales and Catering Comptroller, led the process in Shannon. Inspired by what he had seen of the EPZ in Puerto Rico and a harbor free zone in Panama, he sought permission to divert revenues from duty-free sales to develop Shannon Free Zone, and was successful (Share 1992: 58).

His success must be interpreted as part of the legacy of Ireland's struggle for national liberation early in the twentieth century, which set the political tone there for decades to come. One result was that political parties had little interest in discussing the ideological foundations of national economic policies (Ferriter 2005: 211–15). Another was the immense authority of Éamon de Valera, long central in Ireland's government, and his party, Fianna Fáil. This combination meant that matters of national economic development were an autocratic business. Such matters included the establishment of the Shannon zone, which Fianna Fáil had supported from the outset.

O'Regan was the son of the chairman of the local County Clare Council. Working in his father's hotel business, he became acquainted with "senior civil servants from Dublin," who were regular guests at the hotel. This connection led to him running the ailing Stephen's Green Club, in Dublin, "a meeting

place for decision-makers from commerce and government" (Callanan 2000: 44). When de Valera visited Shannon airport in the 1940s, he was unhappy to see the catering service run by British Imperial Airways, instead of being an example of Irish entrepreneurship. Members of the cabinet then arranged for O'Regan to take over at Shannon. He ran it as "a one-man state company" that Callanan (2000: 45) described as a "1940s style public–private partnership." O'Regan embodied both the public and the private, as he owned the subsidiary company that he, as Shannon's Comptroller of Sales and Catering, contracted to provide services.

Ireland became dramatically poorer in the 1950s. In response, Ken Whitaker, Secretary of the Department of Finance, produced the study "Economic development." It argued that "reliance on a shrinking home market offered no prospect . . . and protectionism . . . would have to give way to active competitive participation in a free-trading world" (Whitaker in Keogh and McCarthy 2005: 252). The Shannon Free Airport Development Corporation (SFADCo) that O'Regan founded in 1959 would implement this policy locally and receive continued support from Dublin. Like Fomento, SFADCo built factories, and the Shannon Free Zone (SFZ) offered tax and customs holidays similar to those of the Puerto Rican EPZ. Soon, factories producing light consumer electronics, textiles, garments and cut diamonds were set up (Callanan 2000: 82–85). As with many such factories (Safa 1995), their owners preferred women workers (Callanan 2000: 87). Recruitment programs were set up as early as 1962 and young, unmarried female workers were housed in what they called "convents," dormitories overseen by nuns protecting the women from the urban nightlife developing in the new town of Shannon. Autocratic policies continued as SFADCo expanded beyond its core business of the SFZ and the airport; it also ran the town, the first planned city in Ireland, and one with no elected government.

As with the Puerto Rican zone, promotional campaigns and glossy brochures introduced Shannon as a tax-free base for US corporations, in this case those seeking business in Europe (Callanan 2000: 82–83). Unlike Puerto Rico, however, Shannon also advertised its labor force. The brochure *Why it May Pay a U.S. Firm to Manufacture in Shannon* (Shannon Free Airport Development Corporation n.d.) illustrates this. It told potential investors that a "high standard of education" would be a capital asset, as "Ireland's output of university graduates per 1,000 population is about one-fifth higher than in much wealthier Great Britain."

Although it touted the attraction of the local working class, initial industrial activity in Shannon illustrates the limits of the EPZ strategy. As in Puerto Rico, the predominant activity was light manufacturing in "the sweatshop phase" (Merrill-Ramírez in Dietz 1986: 248), with labor relations to match. An American company, General Electric, was active both in Puerto Rico and in Shannon,

and it had a history of being strongly opposed to unions (see, e.g., Nash 1995: 197–98). In Shannon, however, GE's approach was not very successful. The first major zone labor dispute was in 1966, when a GE subsidiary confronted the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU). The subsidiary employed about a thousand workers, a third of the zone total, mainly women and 30 percent members of the union. When the ITGWU went to the subsidiary seeking higher wages, they were told that GE did not negotiate with unions. The situation deteriorated, and by October 1967 there was "intimidation at picket lines, buses transporting workers were burnt and a picket was threatened on the entire industrial estate" (Callanan 2000: 88–89). The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court intervened in favor of the ITGWU, and in response SFADCo established its own ombudsman committee, intended to control future dispute settlement and sideline the courts (personal conversation Shannon August 2010).

Governments seeking to attract investors to EPZs advertise the features that, as I have described, developed in Puerto Rico and Shannon: tax exemptions, customs holidays, good transport and infrastructure, and low rents and wages (cf. Romero 1995). However, locational advantages such as those advertised in the campaigns promoting the Puerto Rican and Irish EPZs can disappear. As the international capitalist system and its subdivision of bilateral and multilateral trade arrangements are often changing, location in fact can turn into a disadvantage. For instance, Ireland joined the European Economic Community in 1973, and EEC rules barred tax and customs holidays. Ireland adjusted by lowering the national corporate tax rate and thereby facilitated the opening of ever more Irish zones as well as preventing the demise of Shannon (Ryan 2007). More generally, as EPZs spread throughout the world, locational advantage was no longer gained from having an EPZ alone. Additional factors became important for making one zone a better spot for investment than the others, and those factors are important in explaining how EPZs went global.

Making the EPZ concept global

The EPZ model went global in the 1960s, with support from governments and international institutions. For instance, another early EPZ was established in Kaoshiung Harbour (KEPZ), Taiwan (then Republic of China), in the middle of the 1960s. It was set up after the US Agency for International Development advised the Taiwanese government to build a container harbor and "Free Export Processing Zone" in Kaoshiung. The Agency and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development put up money, and following the "cessation of American aid" (Leonard 1965), United Nations Technical Assistance money was granted. When the United Nations International Development Organization (UNIDO) conducted the first thorough, global survey of EPZs in 1970, then

called "industrial free zones," KEPZ reported five years of successful operations and growth (Wu 1970).

The establishment of KEPZ indicates the growing number of national and international development organizations ready to finance EPZ ventures in the 1960s. This was accompanied by the emergence of an interconnected group of individual EPZ experts. Mexican zones, for example, were established with the aid of Richard Bolin, who had become the head of the ADL office in Puerto Rico in 1957. Like Moscoso, Bolin and ADL were active in establishing further zones throughout the Caribbean and Latin America under the Alliance for Progress. Also, during the 1960s a regionalization of commodity flows between EPZs and export markets emerged. Zones set up in the Caribbean and in Central and Latin America traded primarily with the USA, while zones in East and Southeast Asia catered to a mixed export market, including the USA and Western Europe (see Fröbel *et al.* 1980). In contrast, investment in zones seems to have been fairly global from the early days. Asian zones were producing goods for Japanese, Western European and US companies (see Fröbel *et al*. 1980 for German investors; Ong 1987 for Malaysia; Kim 1997 for South Korea). In Shannon, a Japanese company opened shop in 1959; South Korean companies began operations in Mexico late in the 1960s.

That UNIDO survey from 1970 indicates that those involved in export-led development increasingly saw EPZs as a unified model. Only a few years later, this model would be introduced into the social sciences by a group of German macrosociologists, who counted 79 operational EPZs in 1975 in more than 20 countries with 725,000 workers, and who spoke of the zones as emblems of *The New International Division of Labour* (Fröbel *et al.* 1980). With this spread of the model and increasingly detailed documentation, investors could make increasingly nuanced decisions about manufacturing relocation.

Based on that survey, UNIDO (1971) published a brochure on *Industrial Free Zones as Incentives to Promote Export-Oriented Industries*, and through the 1980s and 1990s it continued to promote EPZs and conduct numerous feasibility studies from Bangladesh to Madagascar and even on the remote Pacific island of Vanuatu (see Fröbel *et al.* 1980: 358; Sklair 1988: 154–55). This is unexpected, because UNIDO was one of the UN agencies that came out of the non-aligned movement, and its policies reflected the Prebisch–Singer thesis. The EPZ model that I have described seems opposed to UNIDO's principles. But UN agencies are large, flexible institutions, and their policies are by no means uniform.

My own research shows that while UNIDO's General Assembly voted for the implementation of New International Economic Order policies in the Lima Declaration of 1975, which called for strengthening the rights of national governments over foreign investors, UNIDO's Export Promotions Division continued its work as before. It hired an employee of SFADCo to write a

manual on how to set up EPZs in 1976, which included a model law granting the usual investment incentives to investors with little provision for state control in EPZ operations (Kelleher 1976). It was only near the end of the 1990s that UNIDO stopped promoting EPZs, realizing that the market for such zones was more than saturated (personal conversations April and October 2010).

Possibly in anticipation of declining UNIDO support, the leading EPZ promoter in the Export Promotion Division started to set up a private umbrella organization for EPZs. That was the World Export Processing Zones Association (WEPZA), founded during a UNIDO-sponsored event in Manila in 1976 and headed by Richard Bolin, the former ADL consultant. WEPZA became a regular partner of UNIDO EPZ projects in the 1980s and the 1990s. It was involved in establishing EPZs in Eastern Europe, for example, where countries followed the example of China, which had set up an EPZ in 1979 and began incorporating socialist workers into the global class relations of the EPZ regime. In 2004, Bolin and WEPZA awarded Moscoso a medal for setting up the world's first EPZ.

With Moscoso's prize, one aspect of the story of the spread of EPZs comes full circle. Now I want to bring my argument in this chapter full circle, by returning to that small place which is Mauritius.

So what about Mauritius?

Mauritian politicians were desperate to diversify the economy at independence because of the island's reliance on sugar, its high unemployment and population growth, and the outright poverty of many households. In fact, the political economy of the country had been a matter of concern for some time, expressed in two British colonial survey missions. One was led by a Keynesian economist and later Nobel prize winner, James Edward Meade, and it suggested ways out of dependence on a mono-crop sugar economy and high unemployment (Meade 1961). The other was led by two well-known social scientists, Richard Titmuss and Brian Abel-Smith (1961), and proposed a system of social welfare and a program for population control. Implementing the recommendations of these surveys was difficult, however, because of a clash of interests between the country's political and economic elites. The ruling Mauritius Labour Party, headed by urban middle-class professionals and rural patrons, needed to accommodate interests in sugar, banking, trading and newspapers. In the wake of independence, the local bourgeoisie made it clear that altering production relations in these sectors would lead to outright civil war. The only solution was to establish new sectors. In 1968, survey missions sent to assess successful countries such as Puerto Rico, Ireland, Taiwan and Singapore found blossoming EPZs. The next year, UNIDO conducted an EPZ feasibility study on behalf of the Mauritian government (Neveling 2012: 259–97).

The 1970 act authorizing the Mauritius EPZ envisaged the standard EPZ model, but allowed for EPZ companies operating anywhere on the island. Concessions for EPZ-enterprise status would be awarded by a semi-privatized state agency, the Development Bank of Mauritius (DBM), which also was in charge of constructing the industrial zones, administering funds and engaging in marketing. On behalf of the DBM, the government of Mauritius took out several loans from the World Bank (WB). The evaluations of loan applications by WB officials provide insights into the workings of the global EPZ regime in the 1970s, especially in terms of the calculus of global competition among EPZs (Neveling 2012: 298–348).

Perhaps most expected is simple commercial advantage. A Bank mission in 1973 concluded that Mauritius was indeed able to compete with EPZs in Hong Kong and Singapore as wages were 30 percent lower and labor productivity levels were comparatively good (World Bank 1973: 3). A different sort of competitive advantage centered on state financing. Recall that in Puerto Rico and Ireland state revenues had been diverted into EPZ agencies. Mauritius, however, followed Taiwan's practice and was prepared to take on significant debt to facilitate the zone. As well, the scope of government support extended beyond investment in things such as infrastructure and industrial estates. Loans were also used to increase foreign exchange reserves and to lend money to investors so that they would have the hard currency to pay for their initial imports of machinery and raw materials (World Bank 1973). The existence of this sort of government support raises a question about the argument that zones attract foreign direct investment and so lead to success in global capitalism (e.g. World Bank 1990, 1992).

Partly because the DBM pumped money into the EPZ, indicators of Mauritian economic development improved in the 1970s, such as the number of manufacturing establishments, workers employed and export earnings. As shortages of female labor emerged, factories set up ever more production units in rural areas. With this, companies secured relatively cheap labor and also put pressure on workers from urban areas, who increasingly were protesting against their working conditions (Neveling 2015b). The socialist Mouvement Militante Mauricien (MMM), founded in the late 1960s, was a welcome ally for EPZ workers as it organized workers in the new General Workers Federation (GWF). The MMM and the GWF successfully fought the late colonial heritage of ethnically segregated political parties and mobilized a united front for general strikes in 1975 and 1979, when female EPZ workers confronted riot police and paramilitary units seeking to enforce bans on unionization in the zone. The second general strike, however, came at a time when the state was on the verge of bankruptcy and was negotiating terms for new loans with the WB and the IMF. When the MMM won all seats in parliament in the 1982 elections, the party leadership saw no alternative but to agree to the terms of yet another

package of IMF Stand-By Arrangements and WB Structural Adjustment Programs. That package envisaged no great change, as both international organizations agreed that there was not much to adjust, especially because Mauritian EPZ laws covered the whole country. However, this agreement marked the end of the MMM reform program; the party split and lost power after one year in government (Neveling 2010).

Around the same time, the Mauritian EPZ boomed as ever more investors relocated from other places. In Hong Kong, the Chinese takeover scheduled for 1997 was said to scare investors away, but their alternatives were limited. That was because the growth of EPZs in other Asian countries had been such that those countries were exceeding their quotas for exports to Western markets. Mauritius benefited. Not only did investment in its EPZ increase, but investors were ready to pay higher wages for EPZ labor. This is important, for it shows that in EPZs, as in any other industry, bargaining power can turn in favor of workers in the right circumstances.

One of those right circumstances was that the first Mauritian government had negotiated preferential export quotas in Western markets, while the Multi Fibre Arrangement of 1974 was limiting the exports of countries such as South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore (see Brewer and Young 2000: 42–47). In the face of those limits, Mauritius, with its preferential quotas, was attractive. The result was a sharp increase in manufacturing establishments throughout the 1980s (Hein 1996), and a willingness among investors to go along with the wage increases of the late 1980s. In that boom, ever more households had members working in EPZ factories, as zone employment rose from about 25,000 in 1983 to about 74,000 in 1986, creating new differentiations in Mauritian society and economy. In the face of this, it seems unfortunate that Eriksen decided to focus on ethnicity when he did research there in 1986.

By 1990, labor shortages were such that a new profession emerged for a brief period: headhunters were wooing machinists (personal conversations 2003 and 2004). The government came to the aid of corporations with a scheme to import contract labor from Asia and Africa. At the same time, there were efforts to emulate Shannon, Singapore and a few other zones, and move to a high-technology stage in the zone (Bunwaree 1994: 38). However, "high-technology" ended up meaning call centers, and in 2004 they employed only 2,500 workers. While the high-technology phase never gained momentum, the global quota system established in the 1960s and 1970s was overturned by the foundation of the World Trade Organization in 1995, and Mauritius gradually lost the advantage of its preferential quotas. As a result, countries such as China lured away a substantial part of Mauritian production. The textile and garment sector, which had once employed about a third of the total Mauritian workforce, shrank by more than a third within few years, and in 2004 factories continued to close down operations.

Conclusion

I have shown how developments that initially were fairly local, such as the introduction of broad investment incentives in Puerto Rico, became global, the worldwide spread of EPZs. As I have noted already, in 2007 there were 3,500 such zones, and in them 70 million workers produced the bulk of the world's textiles, garments and light consumer electronics. EPZs and their particular capital, state and labor relations became a structure of global political economy.

Anthropologists often argue that the world increasingly is fragmented, full of frictions and hybrid social phenomena, so that researchers should focus on how the people and places they study are connected to, and interconnected with, global phenomena (e.g. Marcus 1995). But tracing the routes and roots of one such global phenomenon, EPZs, reveals how developments that, at one point in time, fit that anthropological notion of fragmentation, can turn into global structures. If anthropologists are to analyze those structures, they need to engage with the elementary structures of capitalism from which they derive. Class is one of these, and focusing on it in relation to EPZs provides for a rich analytical harvest. I want to describe some of it.

Investigating how the global EPZ structure is embedded into a small place such as Mauritius helps us to understand the relation of Mauritian and global developments. That understanding in its turn reveals a contradiction between the presentation of Mauritius as an example of successful development on a worldwide scale (World Bank 1990, 1992) and the realities of the island's economic position. The most striking of these is the fact that successful development in Mauritius was possible because certain factors, such as the Multi Fibre Arrangement, made it impossible elsewhere, and changes that would make it possible elsewhere would harm Mauritius. As I said, when the quota system established in the 1960s and 1970s was replaced by the World Trade Organization and its stress on incorporating new areas into the contractual web of global capitalism by invoking yet another version of the myth of free trade, countries such as China took a good share of Mauritian production away. This conclusion is one example of the sorts of benefit that come from moving away from the focus on small places that characterizes much anthropology, and instead adopting a broad analytical frame. Existing anthropological research on Mauritius confines itself, I said, to a particular aspect of ethnic studies. At best, this adds a multiculturalist narrative to the World Bank's celebration of the successful Mauritian EPZ. Alternatively, the broader frame I have used in this chapter allows us to confront the World Bank's position and prove its limits on empirical grounds. It also allows us to look at the island "beyond the ethnic lens" (Glick Schiller *et al.* 2006) and to place Mauritians in their broader political–economic setting.

Aside from a very few, advanced textile and garment factories, Mauritius never made it out of the sweatshop phase of EPZ development. This meant that there was little chance for social mobility among shop-floor and middle-management workers, so that island-wide class divisions remained surprisingly stable. Wages were such that few households could live on the income of a single EPZ worker, and many households had two or more working in the zone. Mauritian developments are mirrored in the global class relations proliferating with the spread of EPZs. The zones' concomitant has been identified as super-exploitation, a situation in which capital does not provide laborers with wages adequate to sustain them and their dependents as well as being able to rear a new generation of workers (Fröbel *et al.* 1980: 350–60). Drawing on the work of Meillassoux (1981), I suggest that this superexploitation is made possible because the domestic economic sphere subsidizes EPZs. These subsidies then pay for those reproductive needs that cannot be fulfilled with EPZ wages. But we need to consider that since the late 1970s, the time of Meillassoux's analysis, the total number of EPZ workers has increased approximately a hundred-fold, from 700,000 to 70,000,000. This has not only drawn ever more households into the sphere of EPZ labor but it has also enabled households to have more and more members working in EPZ factories. In one household with several EPZ workers it is still the domestic economy that subsidizes EPZ superexploitation, but such cases tell us that we must not confine our analysis of the domestic economy to subsistence-related activities that take place outside the sphere of the market.

Aside from the pressure of economic necessity, one reason households may be willing to do this extra work is the hope of upward mobility, which has happened in some EPZs. For instance, zones in Singapore and Ireland have moved beyond the sweatshop phase and their workers can earn substantial wages. However, this occurs because normal EPZ superexploitation generated a growing surplus as more zones were set up. The bulk of this surplus was absorbed by industrial capitalists, but some trickled down to single zones and to the emerging transnational class of intermediaries running EPZ promotion agencies that I described in this chapter. That class includes the employees of companies such as ADL, as well as state and semi-state agency bureaucrats, some of whom attained global influence as they filled the ranks of UNIDO and other international organizations. The emergence of this class shows how capital has created powerful allies when it comes to regulating the global EPZ structure. Without this class of mediators, regulators and facilitators, the particular relationship between transnational capitalists and 70,000,000 workers would not have emerged on the scale that it did.

Finally, my story of these zones casts a critical light on the simple dichotomies that concern many anthropologists, whether they are analytical (e.g. center versus periphery), descriptive (e.g. global versus local) or methodological (e.g.

multi-sited versus single-sited). They are of little help in analyzing a single zone or all of them, let alone the different classes of Natives in those small places that are engaged with the zones. But above all, simple dichotomies veil, rather than disclose, the capitalism and its elementary structures of which EPZs are a distinctive part.

11 Global systemic crisis, class and its representations

Jonathan Friedman

The current crisis should not come as the surprise that shook so many of the academic elite and those who believed in the continued growth of what they simply saw as "the economy." Since it hit, many things have changed in the consciousness of elites. This does not have a direct bearing on the issue of class, but class has become increasingly salient as one of those forgotten categories, forgotten especially by the political left, whose own class position has changed significantly. The following section concerns the discourses that have arisen in the crisis, discourses that are class based in the sense that they circulate among the upper income strata: the intellectuals, experts, political elites and media professionals whose identity is tied up with the upper classes of the world-system and who produce the major cultural representations of those classes.

During the fall (in two senses) of 2008 we witnessed what some have referred to as a financial meltdown in the American economy, but also increasingly in larger segments of the world economy, except, notably, China, India and their peripheries. Many were surprised at the meltdown and there was moral indignation about the entire affair. With media support there has been a witch-hunt for the culprits who "got us into this mess." Interpretations proliferated. Some economists declared that they warned that this would happen, at least in the last year or two, but the solutions they offered raised questions about the depth of their understanding. Is the way to a healthy economy via pump priming, printing and distributing billions of dollars to important nodes in the economic institutional network? Even Paul Krugman (2011), awarded The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, often referred to as the Nobel prize in economics, recently admitted what others have argued for decades, that it was not the New Deal that got the United States out of the Great Depression, but World War II. But one might add that, without the imperial reach that emerged after that war, the USA was so heavily in debt that the Depression might well have returned.

The notion that this crisis is a unique phenomenon related to the equally new phenomenon of globalization is difficult to sustain, if that notion is taken to mean that this is a crisis of globalization itself, a problem with making the

new globalized world work smoothly (see, e.g., Evans et al. 2010). Since the 1970s we have developed an approach that we refer to as the "anthropology of global systems" (see Friedman and Friedman 2008a, 20008b), which provides an alternative approach to the crisis (that approach is not unique; see, e.g., Arrighi 1994). The approach has focused on the dynamic and cyclical nature of global systems, and the implication that Western hegemony will end and a new hegemonic center will emerge elsewhere. Where? Others who recently have been engaged in this kind of reasoning, most notably Andre Gunder Frank (1998) and Giovanni Arrighi (1994, 2009), think China is the most likely. Arrighi's last work argues cogently for a shift of capital accumulation toward the East, which surprised those who appear to assume that regions might *catch up* via the usual development processes, but not that there would be a parallel decline in the developed world. Not only is that decline now apparent, it is systemic, reflecting processes common not only in Western capitalist history itself, but also in all systems founded on the accumulation of abstract wealth in relations of competition (Friedman 1992; Friedman and Chase-Dunn 2005). If there is a moral to this story, it is that we have been part of a gigantic civilizational repetition compulsion from the very start. As we argue below, the issue of class can only be understood in this larger global context of social reproduction, and it is indeed class that enables the successful repetition of boom and bust in historical development.

Against keywords

For years there has been an excessive, almost obsessive, attempt to label reality rather than trying to account for its genesis and dynamics. This is a complex phenomenon that requires a study in its own right (Friedman 2000, 2004), but it seems apparent that in the vacuum of debate and the tribalization of academia a canon has begun to emerge in which labels and keywords have become a necessary ingredient in our discourses. Thus "globalization" has been, for quite a few years, a way of designating the nature of the contemporary situation, an epoch, a stage in history, and unlike anything we have seen previously. The discontinuity embedded in its usage implies a definition of its adepts, as those who are the new enlightened elite. It also entails a rethinking of anthropology and a rejection of what was construed as its bad old ways, in which "culture" was bounded and essentialized, along the national model that was its supposed origin. Regardless of the validity of the argument of the critics, their approach was evolutionary: "Before we were local, but now we are global." There are no specific cultures anymore; they are all globalized and hybridized and need to be approached in such terms. The vocabulary that followed from this shift included a focus on what I have referred to as trans-x discourse (Friedman 2000).

At its strongest, globalization discourse assumed a coming world of happy fusions, at least in cultural terms. But soon this image was confronted by the contradictory processes that were actually occurring in the world, with all of their fragmented violence and class polarization. More recently, globalization has been modified or even replaced by words such as "millennial capitalism" and "neoliberalism," with a new focus on the dark side of globalization. In all of these cases the words contain a kind of magic, for globalization or its successor terms explain so many things. Those who, on the other hand, have dealt with the materiality of globalization in detail are more skeptical about the authority of these terms to explain anything.

Arrighi correctly understands that neoliberalism was merely the resurrection of the normal regime of capitalist accumulation, which had been interrupted by the Great Depression and a period of strong national regulation: "This resurrection of global high finance was accompanied by the parallel resurrection of long discredited doctrines of the self-regulating market – what Karl Polanyi called the 'liberal creed'" (Arrighi and Silver 1999:118). Benjamin Cohen (1996: 268) agreed: "As a result of this reintegration and deregulation, global private finance – 'high finance,' as it was known in the nineteenth century – like a phoenix risen from the ashes . . . took flight and soared to new heights of power and influence in the affairs of nations." And so did David Harvey (2005: 8), who said that "globalization" in fact denotes "a shift from one global system (hierarchically organized and largely controlled politically by the United States) to another system that was more decentralized and coordinated through the market, making the financial conditions of capitalism far more volatile and far more unstable."

Words are used to capture a certain aspect of reality, and globalization and neoliberalism refer to real phenomena. But this does not account for the fact that they have ceased to be things that need to be explained, and instead have taken on a kind of magical explanatory value. That magical power hides the fact that they are not autonomous realities, but are aspects of larger logics or processes. In our work we have dealt with globalization as a periodic phenomenon within already-constituted global systems (Friedman 2005, 2007b), and researchers such as Harvey (2005) have dealt with neoliberalism as a historically specific structural adaptation to the declining profitability of the existing corporate structure of accumulation.

Globalization as a moment in global cycles

Understood in terms of global systemic processes, globalization refers to a period of hegemonic decline in which there is a relatively rapid decentralization of capital accumulation (via capital export) within the larger system and in which potential new centers of world accumulation begin to rise to dominance.

It is also, as we stress below, a period of increasing class polarization at home. This idea is very close to that expressed in Arrighi's *The Long Twentieth Century* (1994), itself a development of Braudel's (1977, 1979) understanding of historical European economic processes and their trajectory. The logic of this view is as follows.

1 Initial expansion by a state, either within a pre-existing global system or co-extensively with its formation. Warfare usually plays a crucial role in this initial process as a major form of primitive accumulation of wealth, making the following processes possible.
2 The formation of a hegemonic economic position, in which a center becomes a "workshop of the world," producing a large percentage of the consumption goods of the larger world.
3 Accumulation of wealth leads to increasing costs of reproduction in the hegemonic center. This is the result of the translation of increased wealth into higher standards of living, higher levels of consumption.
4 As a consequence, the center becomes relatively more expensive to reproduce than other regions of the system, so that productive investment becomes less profitable in the center than elsewhere.
   A Because capital (accumulated wealth) cannot profitably be invested in local production in the hegemonic center, it shifts to a combination of export of productive capital and investment in luxury consumption and a variety of forms of fictitious accumulation that tend to proliferate exponentially via a chain of packaging, securitization and sale that leads to the emergence of hedge funds and derivatives and, ultimately, frauds of the Madoff type.
   B Viewed broadly, this amounts to a shift from industrial to financial dominance in the accumulation process.
   C In the declining hegemonic center, this entails a double polarization (discussed below) in which there is a growing conflict both among cultural and ethnicized identities and between upwardly mobile elite factions and downwardly mobile middle and lower classes.
5 The center loses its productive activities to other areas of the world while becoming a major consumer (based on credit) of the products of its own exported capital. This is the era of financial bubbles, often driven by disastrous strategies of consumption and based on the diminishing productive base of the national economy.
6 New centers emerge, former recipients of capital investment from the now declining center, which itself becomes a major global debtor (Braudel's thesis of the autumn of hegemony).

Globalization corresponds to steps 4–6. This is different from expansive periods of colonization and empire formation, in which there is capital export, but primarily for the extraction of raw materials rather than the development

of industry. Thus, while there is plenty of cultural diffusion in periods of expansion, the globalization referred to in contemporary discussions is typical of one associated with hegemonic decline.

Neoliberalism as historical conjuncture

As with globalization, neoliberalism can be taken as a term for a set of transformations that accompany declining hegemony, and there is a logical relation between globalization and the processes referred to as neoliberalism. The transition from Fordism to flexible accumulation (Harvey 1989; Duménil and Lévy 2004, 2010) reflects the declining profitability of the vertically organized capitalist production that characterized the period of expansion, sometimes referred to as monopoly capitalism.

The Fordist model is one in which the chain of production, from the extraction of raw materials to the final product, tends to be incorporated within the same hierarchical corporate structure. When this is replaced by flexible accumulation, integrated enterprises turn into financial hubs surrounded by a slew of competing flexible (i.e., replaceable) sub-contractors, and those enterprises diversify into activities that need not have anything to do with the original productive activity. These changes release finance from the production process, so that there is massive expansion of finance capital relative to industrial capital. Thus, famously, the US firm General Electric went from making its profit from its manufacturing divisions to making its profit from GE Money. Flexible accumulation also implies flexible labor, hired on short and uncertain contracts in the wake of the gradual dissolution of labor unions.

Decentralized flexibility requires state intervention, essentially the dismantling of the former Keynesian controls, which means the deregulation and reregulation of the economic process. In this, the government establishes the conditions of liberalization, but this should not be conflated with post-Fordism as an organizational phenomenon. The fragmentation of accumulation and the subsequent global networking of the fragments have nothing directly to do with the re-liberalization of economic rules. However, these political–legal and economic aspects of what is often called neoliberalism combine to form a particularly powerful historical conjuncture.

The proportional increase in the power of finance capital, then, is a periodic phenomenon in the long cycles of capitalist accumulation associated with hegemonic cycles. Thus, the years around 1900 were the era of Hilferding's *Finanzkapital* (see Hilferding and Bottomore 1981), but that was not an era of neoliberalism since the world was already quite liberal. Thus, also, the Great Depression was not brought about by deregulation, any more than is the current economic crisis. Rather, it was brought about by the increasing divergence of fictitious and real accumulation, triggered by the global systemic configuration

of what can be called the changing gradient of profit. Following the model suggested above, the rise of any hegemonic center increases its trade surplus as well as increasing wealth levels, which leads to internal class conflict and redistribution of income that, in turn, is translated into increased social costs of production. The center thus capitalizes itself out of its former competitive success, but capital responds by moving to more lucrative areas unless checked by political means. That portion of capital that does not move is invested in non-productive sectors, where money can readily be turned directly into more money, thus creating bubbles. The shift from industrial to finance capitalism is, thus, both the consequence of the historical superiority of the center and an expression of the center's decline.

This points to a temporal logic connecting hegemony to massive capital export, financialization and speculation. This is also a process in which production in the center becomes decreasingly competitive and is replaced by imports from cheaper industrializing areas that are themselves organized in regulated, centralized and Fordist structures. The flexibilization of central economies, like their neoliberalization, is a product of this pressure that is the outcome of declining profit levels. Flexibility and deregulation are ways to counteract this downward trend; financial hubs are separated from decentralizing productive activities; enterprises diversify into more purely financial investments; flexibilizing the workforce leads to the re-creation of a lumpen proletariat.

These processes can account for things such as Sassen's (2001) global cities. They have a financial hub surrounded by a series of services ranging from law to prostitution, decentralized production units (if any) and a mass of poor, flexibilized labor, a global "multitude" full of social fragmentation and ethnic warfare. The only absent ingredient is industry itself. Manufacturing belongs to a previous era, and high-technology industries in which real costs matter are in distant industrial parks where land is cheaper. Even if one might agree that the older center–periphery structure of the world is collapsed within the confines of the global city, this is only a partial truth in global terms. If Tokyo has gone in the direction of a global financial hub, the declining industrial sector of Japan is evidence of a complementary change of massive proportions. In China, where so much Japanese capital has landed, we are back in the old world of Fordist mass production, whose products we all consume.

One lesson that can be drawn from this discussion is that globalization, neoliberalism and similar terms are not indicators of some kind of development, a social evolution. On the contrary, they are signs of the crisis typical of the decline of hegemony. Another lesson that can be drawn concerns a different popular term, "assemblages." The word may be popular, but it appears to serve mostly as a way to escape the difficult task of putting together the disparate

pieces of the world so that we might eventually understand how they are related to one another. The disparate phenomena that I have described in the preceding paragraphs can easily be subsumed under the sign of assemblage. This removes them conveniently from the realm of things to be accounted for, but does not help us to understand the world.

Discourses and moralities

Reality works, until it doesn't. But this is true not just for those who are uninitiated in economic science. Follow the columns of Paul Krugman, who thought that all we needed to do was bail things out, but that the bailout needed to be much larger. Then suddenly he got depressed, depressed about the coming depression. Now he says that the real reason for all of this, following Ben Bernanke, is that the Chinese hoarded money after their experience of the Asian crash and that since then they have been our major creditors (Krugman 2009). The real problem, in other words, was not overspending by Americans but underspending by the Chinese.

This statement borders on the absurd, for it proclaims that a zone with fairly low consumption and production costs is behaving strangely by becoming the major source of consumption goods to an area that maintains its astronomical level of consumption only by taking on astronomical levels of debt. This is not a new phenomenon, but then, contemporary economics seems to find history boring. As Alfonso Nuñez de Castro exclaimed in 1675,

> Let London manufacture those fabrics of hers to her heart's content; Holland her Chambrays; Florence her cloth; the Indies their beaver and vicuna; Milan her brocades; Italy and Flanders their linens, so long as our capital can enjoy them; the only thing it proves is that all nations train journeymen for Madrid and that Madrid is the queen of Parliaments, for all the world serves her and she serves nobody. (in Cipolla 1993: 186)

Some years later, economic crisis led to the eclipse of Spanish hegemony, replaced by its ex-periphery, Holland, and then in turn by England. The contemporary American consumer, the world's consumer of last resort, plays a similar, but magnified, role in the contemporary world economy, propped up by a now failed credit bubble, the backside of Marx's fictitious capital accumulation.

This is no mere assemblage, nor a product of neoliberalism or of any other singularity in the history of the global system. It is the working out of the very logic of the system. As Harvey (2005: 57) himself suggests, neoliberalism is not the imposition of a particular market ideology, but something made necessary by the crisis of capital accumulation of the 1970s. The neoliberal solution of that crisis has been interpreted as a restoration of the power and

wealth of the capitalist class (Duménil and Lévy 2004). Neoliberalism in this sense is really a return to the traditional liberal regimes that characterized the imperial centers before the Great Depression. If one adds the class conflict implied in this, the current phase can be understood better in cyclical than in linear terms. Harvey links globalization and neoliberalism, and we have argued here that they are elements of a single logic of transformation, in which the decentralization of production in geographical terms is simultaneously a decentralization and fragmentation of economic activity in organizational terms.

The period from the late 1970s until today might be called that of globalization, not as an evolutionary stage in the way that many in the discipline see it, but a phase in a longer historical process. In their analysis of that process, Duménil and Lévy (2004, 2010) point to four major crisis periods since 1890. The first, around 1890, and more recently that beginning in 1970, are crises of profitability. The great crisis of 1929–30, as well as the crisis beginning in 2008, are crises of hegemony. This interesting set of pairs represents a more systemic logic, as the profitability crises lead to periods of economic liberalization and especially of financialization, which in turn end with crises of financial accumulation and reconfigurations of world economic and political power (see Figure 11.1).

It is worth noting that the relation of crisis to flexibilization is less clear. The hegemonic cycle is primarily one of the shift of capital accumulation, no matter what the regimes of labor and actual accumulation. Flexibilization and neoliberalization were normal aspects of capitalism before the Keynesian intervention (Arrighi 1994: 139, 284). There is evidence of increasing flexibilization following crises of profitability, of course, but it is a tendency within an already liberal economic order rather than a historical break. Financialization, on the other hand, is systemically related to the shift of the forms of accumulation, and it entails increasing the commoditization of social reality as well as the usual associated speculative tendencies. The return of the ideology of Keynesianism following the 2008 crisis parallels the initial Keynesian solutions envisaged following 1929. The preceding period in each case is one of market dominance, one that is not the invention of neoliberals but a reaction to the previous crisis of profitability. The shift of capital from production to finance simultaneously with the massive export of productive capital is the hallmark of that kind of period.

There is thus a single complex set of relations linking the cycle of crises to the transformation of the global arena. A further component of these cycles is the transformation in the social order in the declining hegemonic center. One product of this is the relative decline in capital accumulation in the center (see Figure 11.2, below).

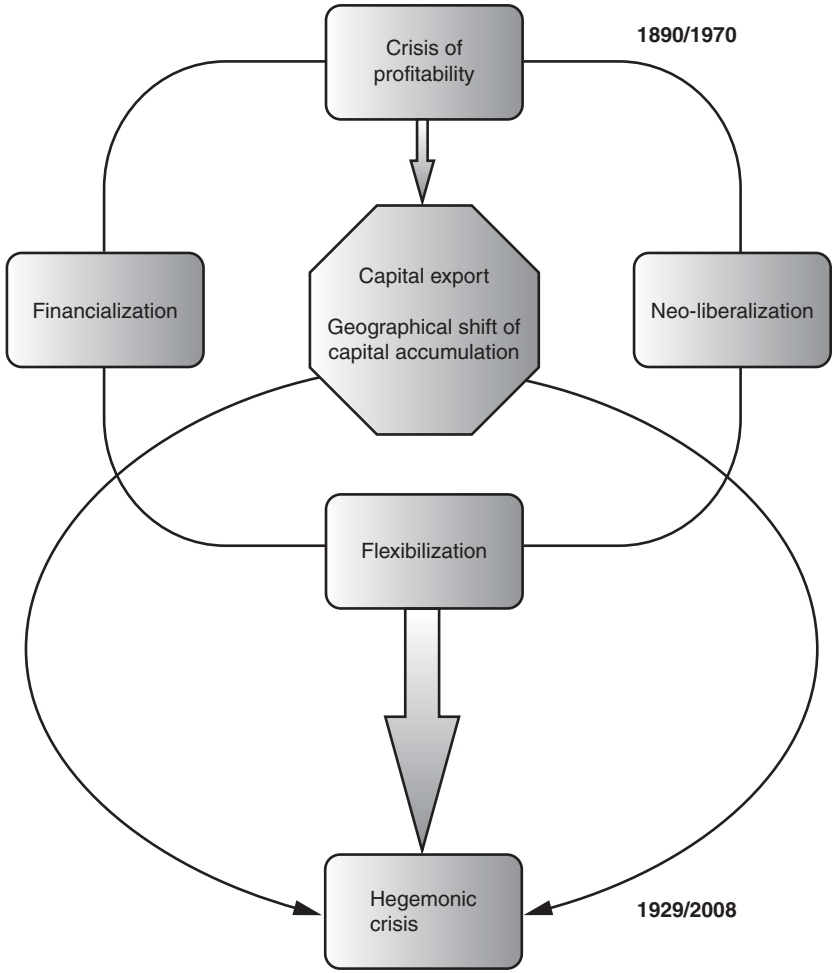

Figure 11.1. The logic of two crises

Class and crisis: making the multitude and elites (again)

A central tendency in the current long crisis is what has been referred to as the race to the bottom, at least in terms of the relation between capital and labor. This is not new, but repeats previous situations in global systemic history, and it has implications for the Marxist notion of class. Class politics and the common usage of the term "class" disappeared in the 1980s, a tendency echoed

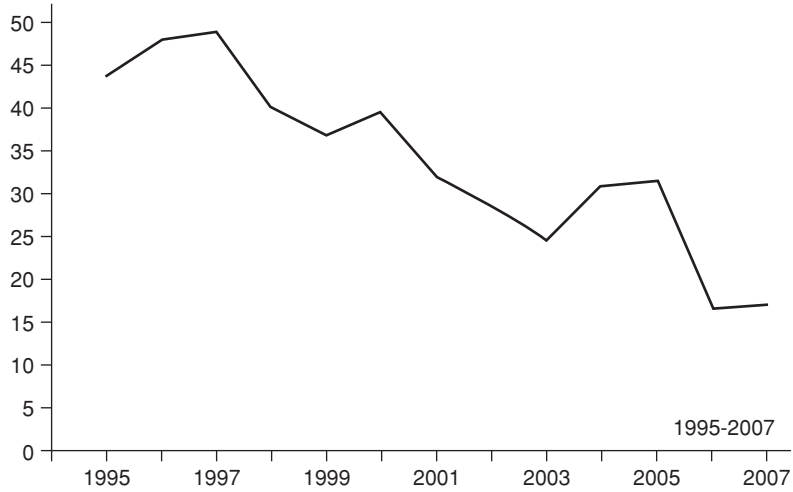

Figure 11.2. New capital raised by US corporations (percent of new capital worldwide). From: Duménil, Gérard and Dominique Lévy 2009. The crisis of neoliberalism and U.S. hegemony. *Kurswechsel* 2: 6–13. Used with permission

in the rising cultural focus of anthropology. This may now be changing, not least because inequality is increasing rapidly. In much of the Marxist literature, class is defined as a specific relation to the means of production, particularly as owner or non-owner. However, that relation is crucial only in a situation in which the reproduction process as a whole, and thus necessarily class, depends overwhelmingly on production. In a complex capitalist system, it is better to understand class in terms of the distribution of income and control over capital in the most general and abstract sense. From this perspective, class is a distribution of positions within the field of social reproduction that is a product of the logics of that reproduction, recognizing that those logics are partially shaped by disputes and class politics.

The macroscopic cycles described in the preceding section of this chapter will, then, be reflected in the changing nature of class and class strategies in both liberal and welfare states (see Friedman and Friedman 2013; Kalb 2013; Nonini 2013). Since the 1970s the Fordist model has disintegrated and class politics have declined in the West. That model is associated with a strong state, based on a strong national economy in which class compromise led to increasing welfare and state regulation of labor relations, all dependent on a steady growth of national capital accumulation. This was a period characterized by strong class movements in both the USA and Europe and by increased relative standards of living for the working classes. This was also a period of strong US hegemony

and increasing impoverishment of most of the Third World, which approached the ideal type of the periphery in the prevailing models of dependency and underdevelopment (e.g. Baran 1957; Frank 1969).

There had been a slowdown in accumulation in the 1960s, first in the USA and then in Europe, which had been the major recipient of export capital and then became the major competitor of the USA. The beginning of a major crisis of profitability begins here. It led to a long period of adjustment, even "structural adjustment," in which wages stagnated, inflation was finally tackled by draconian methods and the transition to post-Fordism and neoliberalism was accomplished. Massive capital flows were associated with this, primarily to South and East Asia, and a "New international division of labor" (Fröbel *et al.* 1980) emerged in which the periphery was no longer just about raw materials, but also about industrial production. Likewise, in the core economies finance capital became predominant not just in the increasing dominance of bank and stock market investment, but also in the restructuring of centralized companies into a financial center surrounded by outsourced production and subcontracted services. In the process, CEOs who were engineers or had industrial backgrounds increasingly were replaced by financial managers.

For the workforce, the increasing downward pressure led to de-unionization and flexibilization, with the temporary employment agency Manpower becoming the world's largest employer. And often enough, Manpower's temporary employees were cheap migrant labor working in sweatshops that undercut unionized labor. The decline of the center and the collapse of the Soviet Union were accompanied by increasing regional and ethnic re-identification, conflict and violence. These affected the old periphery, parts of which had been supply zones to Western industries or supported by core countries as part of the Cold War. With the decline of those industries and the end of the Cold War, there was massive migration out of those peripheral areas toward the center, where unemployment increased and real wages stagnated. The result was a widespread sub-proletarianization, including the potential confrontation of downwardly mobile working classes with immigrants (see, e.g., Kalb and Halmai 2011).

An excellent example of this dynamic of class and immigration can be found in Northern Italy (see, e.g., Ottati 2008; Nielsen et al. 2012). There, the town of Prato had been a prosperous area of textile production. Falling global textile prices led to the import of cheap labor from China (now a fifth of the local population), then increasing competition from Chinese production, and finally the purchase of failing firms by Chinese capital. The rise of the so-called extreme right in much of Europe is a product of this kind of process, in which the working classes lose their jobs as well as their conditions of existence to immigrant populations. The process is accompanied by a political polarization, in which cosmopolitan elites denigrate the racism of the working class and of

a minority of local upper class actors, while the latter blame the former for the ills of the nation.

This period has been described in terms of the decline of working class politics, and even of the working class itself. It began in the 1980s and saw class eclipsed by culture (sometimes also glossed as race), but a culture that was increasingly fragmented and even individualized. This was echoed in anthropology by the disappearance of materialist models, both cultural-materialist and Marxist. It seems, then, that in both the discipline and the larger society, identification increasingly was based on being rather than becoming, on substance rather than a construction of a future state of mankind, on ethnicity, gender and the like rather than material structures and processes. This shift has not gone unnoticed. Alain Touraine (1973) and Michel Wieviorka (1996) have described the end of what they call "social movements" and their replacement by scattered movements of cultural identity. Touraine's account is based on the change from industrial to post-industrial society, also noted by his colleague Daniel Bell (1973). This shift itself is related to the longer-term process of declining hegemony, which implies a decline in the attractiveness of modern and Western identity and a proliferation of the "new–old" identifications mentioned above. But the rise of such identities does not mean that class has disappeared, for the same period also saw growing inequality and class polarization, as illustrated in Figure 11.3.

The new wealthy in the West who are the beneficiaries of this polarization are not the owners of the means of production, but the owners of financial capital. This marks not so much a shift in class fractions as it does an assimilation of industrial capital to the broader projects of fictitious accumulation. This reconfiguration brings with it a reconfiguring of political culture as well, the fusion of left and right and the simultaneous enriching of the political classes and their alienation from the people they govern. In Europe, this appears as a tendency for those in the political class to identify with the cosmopolitan, the multicultural, to distance themselves from the vulgarity of the remnants of the lower classes. The range of these related changes buttresses my earlier point that approaching class as position within the reproductive process is superior to a more static vision of class based on relations to the means of production.

These processes of realignment and re-identification produce a double polarization, illustrated in Figure 11.4. First, there is a fragmentation of identification with the decline of modernist identity and the rise of ethnic and cultural identities. Second, class differentiation is expressed as an opposition between cosmopolitanized elites and indigenized working classes on the brink of unemployment. This is a picture somewhat different from that portrayed by the "multitudes" of Hardt and Negri (2004), a potential post-capitalist population of nomadic "jacks of all trades," including intellectuals such as the authors of *Empire* themselves. It is, rather, a product of the race to the bottom: mass international movements of potentially cheap labor, often from zones of the

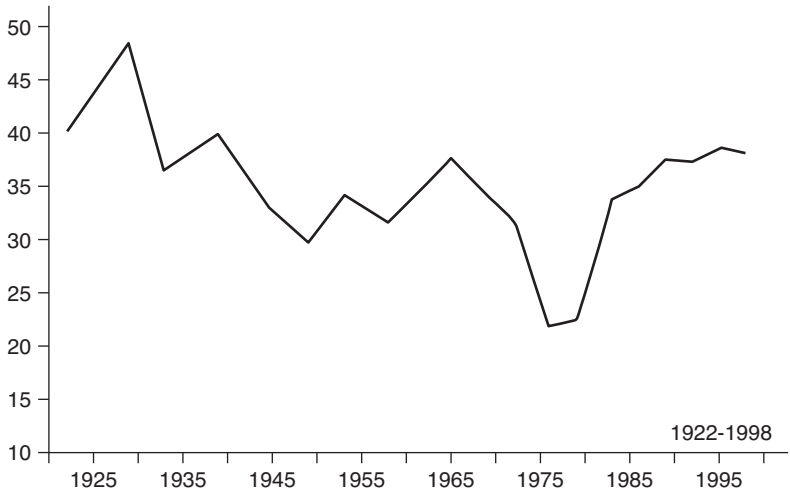

Figure 11.3. Percent of total wealth in the United States held by the richest 1 percent of households. From: Duménil, Gérard and Dominique Lévy 2009. The crisis of neoliberalism and U.S. hegemony. *Kurswechsel* 2: 6–13. Used with permission

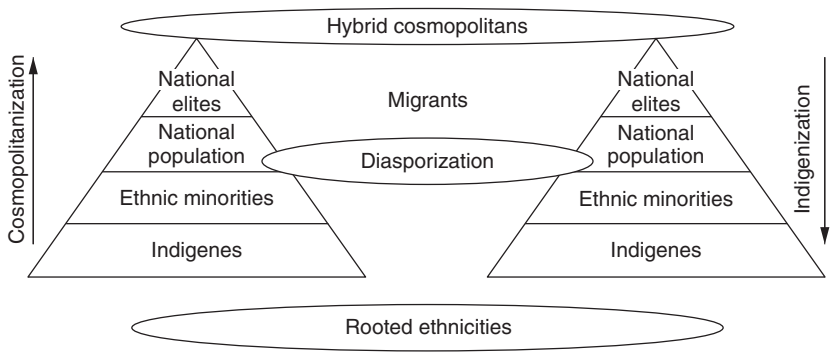

Figure 11.4. The double polarization of class and cultural identities

global system rife with internal conflicts set off or exacerbated by declining hegemony itself. When these migrants confront segments of national working classes sinking into *lumpen* status, conflict is likely.

The picture I have presented here is not of classes in the traditional sense, but rather of population categories defined by their position with respect to the larger reproductive process and its ideological manifestation. The prime such manifestation that I have described is the combined cosmopolitanization and indigenization that I have discussed elsewhere (Friedman 2004, 2007a, 2010),

accompanied by a vertical polarization which is manifested in cultural terms. The tendency to the development of gated communities among elites who see themselves as open and cosmopolitan is an excellent expression of this process. Similarly, tendencies to class and even class-fraction endogamy and endo-sociality (Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot 1998; Wagner 1998) are accompanied by the discourse of cosmopolitan hybridity and multiculturalism among the elite adherents of the new order.

The production of the elite discourses is primarily the work of a certain fraction of the academic world, or of the intellectual world more generally, for whom there is a coagulation of tendencies to distinction and a movement beyond all previous closed identities. This is all a mirage, of course, since the new identities are just as socially closed, no matter how culturally "mixed" they might be. The net effect is the reinforcement of categories of identity and a certain ideological hegemony where such ideologies become linked to the state, as in the case of Sweden. In any event, the cosmopolitans at the top loathe those at the bottom of the system; the "dangerous classes" at the bottom loathe the cosmopolitans at the top. This is reinforced when it is recognized, as Juillard (1997) and Joffrin (2001) have pointed out, that cosmopolitans see the immigrant as a figure of pity, allowing a further demonstration of the former working class as a despicable rabble that needs to be educated into multiculturalism (Zizek 1997). Put differently, class relations are culturalized just as culture is reclassified.

Centralism and the rise of the political class (again)

In this chapter I have described some of the main discourses that the crisis has generated. These are not, however, the product of the crisis itself. Rather, they are the product of the more general capitalist process and its cultural properties. They form a framework in which various positions and moralizing statements can be understood not as autonomous, but as a set of positions related in ways similar to the variants of a myth. The locus of the production of these variants is not the bottom of the social order but its upper sectors. The key terms discussed in this chapter are key precisely because they resonate with the sensibilities of these various elites. This can be seen in the transition from the celebratory "globalization" and its associated terms, such as "multiculturalism" and "hybridity," to more recent terms related to neoliberalism, understood as the nasty underbelly of this process.

It is noteworthy that the positions taken by elites with respect to these terms, positions that fill them with meaning, are primarily moral rather than political. This might be said to be the outcome of a further transformation that deserves a brief mention. That is the transformation of the political sphere, from the diametric dualism of left and right to a concentric dualism of insider elites and

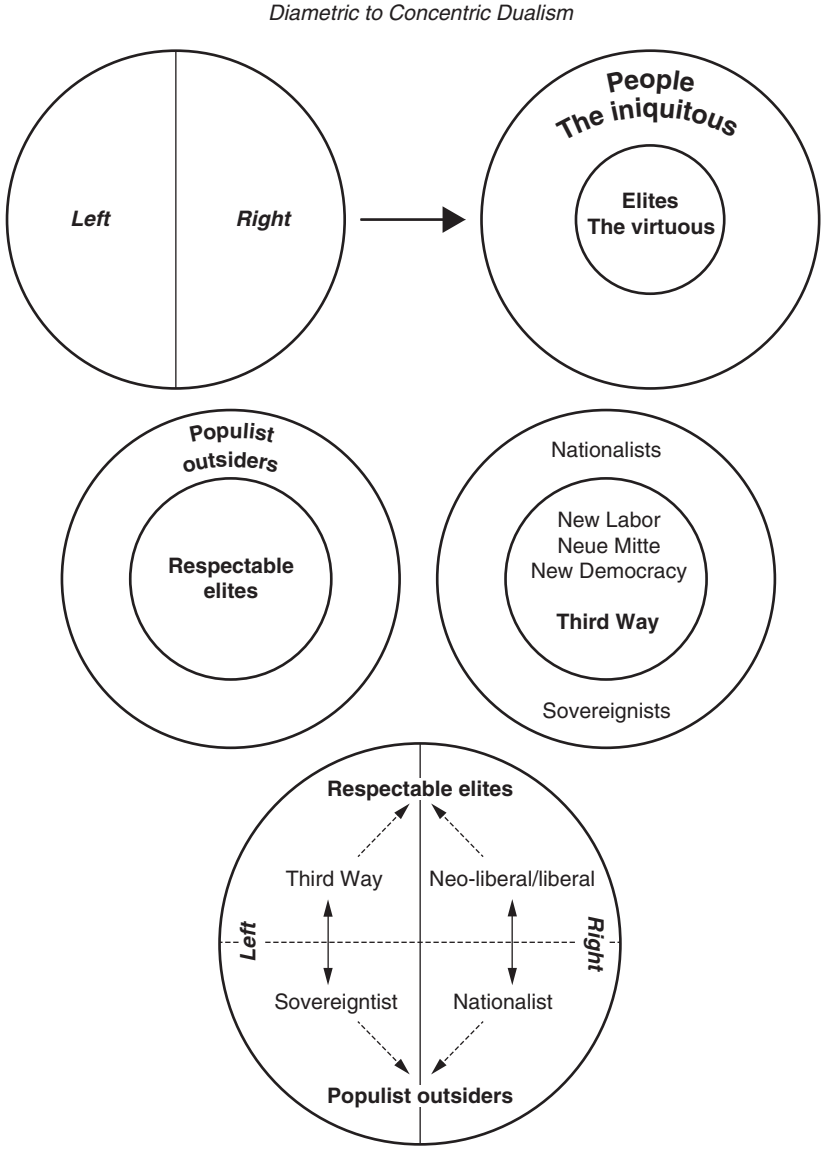

Figure 11.5. Schemes of the passage of diametric to concentric dualism

dangerous outsiders. Left politics disappeared in the various forms of centrism that emerged in the 1980s: New Democracy in the USA, New Labour in Britain, the more exact phrase *Neue Mitte* in Germany. The former French conservative government actively recruited Socialists as ministers; the New Democratic Party in Italy is a combination of Christian Democrats and various forms of leftists. In all of this, the understanding of the democratic process has changed.

For the new centrists who hold power, whose ideology is important politically, the conception of government follows the idea of *la voie unique*, a socialist notion in France and a conservative notion in Sweden (*den enda vägen*). Its core is that there is only one way to govern efficiently, and for partisans of this "New public management" approach, shared by both left and right, formal democracy becomes irrelevant and sovereignty is transferred (back) from the people to the political class. If the messy tendencies of the EU are any indication, perhaps we are on the way back to some form of absolutist state. This transformation in itself divides classes into a new (old) set of categories. The excluded, declining working class moves toward the extreme right, while those sections of the middle and upper classes that are upwardly mobile identify with cosmopolitan liberalism. The transition itself, in good structuralist fashion, can be represented as in Figure 11.5.

This is another rendition of the emergence of *Empire*, but not exactly that proposed by Hardt and Negri (2000), and of course it is in a narrower geographic setting. But there is a complementarity between empire and multitude in this interpretation. The transformation suggested here is not the outcome of the current crisis of hegemony. Rather, it began in the 1980s, more as a response to the earlier crisis of profitability and the financialization and massive export of capital that followed. If George Soros, as well as many others in the economic elite, would like to see a return to Keynesianism on a global scale, he has only himself and those like him to blame: they were important figures in the process that led to the crisis of which he so vigorously disapproves. Keynesian solutions were ways not merely of taming the market but of avoiding serious class conflict. The alliance of state and capital in the Keynesian compromise was a means to continued growth with redistribution conceived not so much as a moral gesture, but as a necessary method of maintaining effective demand and social peace. The possibility of applying that compromise globally was there early on, when Keynes himself, at the Bretton Woods conference, suggested the introduction of a global currency outside of any one state's control.

Conclusion

It appears that the discourse of globalization is not adequate for understanding the workings of the global capitalist order, since it cannot deal with the dynamics of accumulation, with the cyclical nature of globalization and deglobalization

or with the class and cultural aspects of global processes. From the perspective of the global system, class, the object of this volume, is an aspect of social reproduction that is crucial for understanding the distribution of conditions of existence and the intentionalities and strategies of social actors. It is the Kafkaesque character of global process that makes it so opaque: being embedded in a fetishized reality produces immediate reactions and strategies that often reinforce the system itself. The very struggle between state regulation and the neoliberal ideology of the free market is part of this larger logic, rather than being two separate logics. And much of this larger logic is generated among certain elites of the global order. In this chapter we have suggested that the current period of globalization is in reality a period of class polarization that is simultaneously a period of cultural (and not just ethnic) polarization in areas experiencing hegemonic decline. In contrast, in areas of rapid growth where a new global center might emerge, there is much more embrace of regulation and state, Fordist models are dominant, national identity is on the rise.

I have suggested that globalization discourses express a new cosmopolitan identity that interprets globalization as an evolutionary process as well as a political project, whether liberal or centralist. The transformation of government in all of this might seem to be a side issue, but I think that there is an important link. First, this transformation is Western and most powerful in Europe. It consists in the weakening of the national component of the nation state and the ethnic fragmentation of those countries' populations, including the rise of nationalist and xenophobic parties (Holmes 2000; Kalb and Halmai 2011). The stress on multiculturalism in Europe is a product of the decline of the ability of those countries and their governments to integrate their new populations. With the growth of that stress, elites situate themselves above the old national populations, which are demoted to the status of ethnic groups in unequal co-existence with immigrant, regional and even indigenous minorities. There is a significant risk that the state form that will emerge in these conditions is the old absolutist state, or perhaps colonial state, but one that is ethnically pluralist. With the disintegration of a nationalized population, the demos is likely to be eclipsed and the democratic process is likely to decline, or even be declared obsolete.

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Index