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Preface

Mark P. Thomas

The Global Labour Research Centre (GLRC) at York University is very pleased to publish this collection of papers from our third annual Graduate Student Symposium, which took place on 26-27 October 2017. The symposium showcased graduate student research on a wide range of issues related to the study of work and labour in a global context, and created an interdisciplinary forum for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows to share their research in a collaborative environment.

The mandate of the GLRC is to support engaged, interdisciplinary, and accessible research on pressing issues of economic and social justice, to foster a collaborative intellectual community, to cultivate and expand new knowledge mobilization activities around work, employment and labour research, and to develop international linkages with leading research and learning centres. Graduate students play a vital role in the life of the GLRC, and in advancing the study of work and labour. The graduate student symposium builds on other graduate student initiatives and creates the basis for further graduate research in the study of work and labour.

The papers in this symposium proceedings offer a reflection of the vibrant and diverse range of topics covered by symposium participants and explore a wide range of social, political, economic, and geographic factors shaping work and labour in contemporary capitalism. The proceedings are organized into two sections. The first section, 'Work and Labour in Canada', focuses on the organization and experience of work within the Canadian labour market. Articles examine themes related to unions and unionization, including the potential for union mergers to contribute to union renewal (DeLazzari), union organizing among artists (Flinn), and narratives of class consciousness amongst unionized workers in the context of workplace restructuring (King). The theme of precarious work is also central to this section, with articles that examine the longstanding and persistent conditions of precariousness experienced by racialized immigrant workers (Jefford) and the ways in which precarious work impacts forms of community participation (Maich).

In the second section, 'Contemporary Global Capitalism and Labour', contributors examine broader dynamics of capitalism on a global scale, including in regards to questions of labour. Themes related to precarious work are revisited in this

section, with connections drawn to patterns of migration, displacement, and climate change (Emami), and the rise of online communities of Amazon mTurk workers (Milland). Finally, two articles focus on global capitalism and Mexico, drawing attention to mining resistance in Oaxaca (Hayes), and situating the Mexican drug war within the wider social relations of capitalism (Schussler). Taken together, the articles in this collection present a complex and nuanced analysis of the changing nature of work in the contemporary economy, both within and beyond Canada.

The symposium also hosted a performance of *Life on the Line*, a play that captures the experiences of the 1984-85 strike at Eaton's in Toronto. The play, created by York University professor and GLRC faculty associate Patricia McDermott, and Vrenia Ivonoffski, covers the six-month Eaton's strike and engages with themes of precarious work, race, class, and gender in the retail sector. The play provided the opportunity to engage in further discussion about the longstanding nature of precarious work, as well as the role of collective struggle in contesting conditions of precariousness. The cover for the 2017 proceedings features art from a 1985 solidarity poster for this strike designed by Barbara Klunder, and held by the Rise Up! Feminist Archive (see <http://riseupfeministarchive.ca/culture/posters/oww-1985-eatonsboycottmay6thextravaganzaposterb-klunder/>).

As indicated above, a theme running through a number of the contributions to these proceedings is that of precarious work. The publication of this symposium proceedings comes just weeks after the conclusion of the 2018 strike by Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903, representing teaching assistants, contract faculty, and research assistants at York University. The strike, which lasted 143 days, and which was brought to an end by the Ontario provincial government through back-to-work legislation, sought to contest the conditions of precarious work that are prevalent and growing on university campuses across Canada. With its attention to dynamics of precarious work, it is hoped that this publication will contribute to the ongoing dialogue and activism needed to create better working conditions in academia and in all workplaces.

The 2017 GLRC Graduate Symposium and this publication were made possible through the efforts of a number of members of the GLRC community. Thank you, Rawan Abdelbaki, Matthew Corbeil, Lacey Croft, Jordan House, Jolin Joseph, Adam King, Candies Kotchapaw, Ives Polking, and the anonymous reviewers of the papers published in these proceedings.

Section One:
Work and Labour in Canada

Increasing Horsepower: Union Merger as Union Renewal

Joey DeLazzari

In 2013, the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) and the Communication, Energy, and Paper Workers (CEP) merged to create Unifor. Representing over 300,000 workers from various types of industries across Canada, Unifor became Canada's largest private sector union. The basic motivation behind the CAW and CEP merger was simple: more members will result in more power for the union in collective bargaining and organizing. Using the case of Unifor, by looking at collective bargaining agreements negotiated with the Big Three automotive manufactures (General Motors, Chrysler, and Ford), this paper examines union mergers as a strategy for union renewal. In doing so, the paper seeks to determine whether union mergers are an effective means to renew workers' collective power at the bargaining table. By specifically looking at automotive assembly plants in Southern Ontario, the paper argues that the merger to create Unifor has yet to translate into increased bargaining power for automotive assembly workers.

Mergers and Union Power

Many of Canada's larger unions are the result of union mergers. For example, CUPW, which represents public sector postal workers, and UFCW, which represents various workers in the food and commercial industries, are both the result of one or more mergers. According to some labour scholars, one means of union renewal is "organizational restructuring" through mergers. It is noted that union mergers may help unions revitalize by increasing available resources and building a larger mobilization base (Kumar and Schenk, 2006). However, it is interesting to note that while union mergers are seen as common throughout the renewal scholarship, mergers are not made out to be a primary means of union renewal. For example, while discussing union renewal for the CAW in 2006, staffers David Robertson and Bill Murningham suggest that union mergers were only part of their plan to renew the CAW. They move forward to note that their bargaining power, expansion of democracy and membership participation in their organization, and their ability to organize new members is the combination of forces behind CAW's renewal.

Gary Chaison is a leading scholar on union mergers and the impacts of mergers on union membership. Chaison (1996) examines merger trends in five countries: United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. In doing so, he develops national profiles that comment on national merger activities, legislation, union-management relations, and the evolution of worker representation. Chaison describes three traditional means of union merger: amalgamation, absorption, and affiliation. Amalgamation, as in the case for the CAW and CEP to create Unifor, is where two or more unions come together to form a single union. Absorption is simply where a larger union absorbs a smaller one. Lastly, Chaison describes affiliation as when “a national union absorbs a union that operates in a single plant, single company, or union basis” (Chaison, 5). For the case presented in this paper, CAW and CEP amalgamated to create Unifor. Therefore, when discussing union mergers, this paper will be referring to amalgamation.

Chaison further stresses that we must examine the forces, institutional motivations, and/or barriers to fully understand why mergers occur. A motivation to merge generally begins with either a lack of organizational capacity or a decline in union membership. *Union Mergers in Hard Times* presents similar cases for the five countries under examination. In the United States unions were experiencing a decline of union membership: between 1980 and 1993 American unions lost close to 3.5 million members. This was compounded by the lack of organization by American unions (Chaison, 1996). In Canada over the same timeframe, the rate of unionization slowed dramatically. While there was a slight increase in public sector organization, there was a loss in private sector unionized jobs and a lack in private sector organization (Chaison, 1996). There was a similar situation in Great Britain, as there was a shift from heavily organized manufacturing sectors to lesser-unionized service sector positions (Chaison, 1996).

Undy (2008) examines union mergers in Britain, offering some insights applicable to the Unifor case. Undy argues that we must look at unions’ external environments, and how changes to the labour market have had a general detrimental impact on trade unions. Commenting on the realities faced by the British labour movement, and the decline of union density due to neoliberal policies, Undy notes “The external environment in which unions sought to organize was therefore largely a source of difficulties for trade unions” (Undy, 32).

Additionally, union merger scholarship comments on internal issues that may arise during merger processes. Unions are not only tools for economic gains, but in

many ways also help to construct and maintain members' identities. If there are contrasting ideals and purposes within a union structure, there may be further issues related to membership solidarity, which as a result can undermine collective strength. Placed in this context, although the purpose may be to strengthen a union through a merger, it may, instead, paradoxically weaken a union's ability to act as a collective unit.

For example, Chaison along with Stephan Baraldi and Magnus Sverke examine a failed union merger and look to examine democratic issues during the union merger process (Baraldi, Syerke, & Chaison, 2008). The contributing authors note that for a union to be successful, there must be adequate communication channels that discuss the value of the merger and provide workers with enough information for them to make an informed opinion on the matter. Bednarek, Blumenfeld, and Riad (2012) fill a gap in the literature by commenting on paradoxical issues that evolve out of union mergers. The authors argue that union mergers, in many cases, are contradictory and do not represent the best interests of the membership (Bednarek, Blumenfeld, & Riad, 2012). Engaging in a case study from New Zealand, the authors conclude that union mergers, while consolidating the membership, also bring together contrasting ideals and purposes, which may lead to tension within the newly formed union.

Lastly, Yates and Ewer (1997) go so far to imply that there is also a cultural attack on unionism, which challenges workers' loyalty towards their union. While union mergers may be seen as a way to increase the size of a union, Yates and Ewer suggest this places pressure on unions to adapt their organizational and cultural practices to meet the needs to the growing and diverse membership. Moreover, during the merger process, unions pool their resources, and theoretically share the resources among the members. As highly political organizations, Yates and Ewer point out difficulties arising due to disagreement over whose staff is used and what constitutes servicing the membership. As a result, there may be no centralized control of union resources, leaving membership unable to utilize the full potential of the merger. Moreover, instead of acting like a coherent and unitary organization with a common identity, the union may find itself divided into factions that inhibit solitary and collective mobilization.

Instability and Crisis: CAW Bargaining between 2008-2009

The automotive industry was hit hard during the 2008 financial crisis. In 2009, the Obama Administration, along with the Canadian federal and Ontario provincial governments, took emergency action by funding a government bailout with taxpayer dollars. With massive layoffs across the automotive industry, labour was forced to re-

open existing collective bargaining agreements and give up many gains made in previous sessions of bargaining. Despite financial backing from taxpayers, labour lost most of its negotiating power and was at mercy of the cash strapped automotive firms.

Between 2008 and 2009 the CAW and the Big Three American Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM), such as GM, Chrysler (later FCA), and Ford, participated in two rounds of collective bargaining. Despite taking place relatively close to one another, the contract discussions in 2008 and 2009 varied in context. In 2008, the existing contract between the CAW and the sector was due to expire, thus the new contract agreed upon was supposed to stay into effect until 2011. However, as a result of the financial melt-down and subsequent bailout provisions provided by North American governments, the CAW was essentially required to re-open the CBA and further concede to the American OEMs. While in 2008 the CAW did not concede as much as the American UAW during their 2007 agreement negotiations, in 2009 they were essentially forced into a no-win situation where both parties at the table understood there were going to be concessions.

While autoworkers are essential to the Canadian economy, they tended to bear the brunt of OEM's financial situation. As noted in the May 2009 bargaining report (CAW 2009), CAW accepted many concessions that were theoretically bargained to save jobs. Concessions in the 2009 bargaining included adding a dispensing fee to existing drug plans, a two-tier system implemented for new hires, and other vacation and benefit modifications with the aim of saving costs. Additionally, CAW did note that base wage rates would remain the same during the life of the CBA with a \$.05 adjustment in cost-of-living allowance (CAW, 2009). While the union may note that there was no cut in wages, rising inflation essentially means a cut in workers' purchasing power. Moreover, an official addendum to the CBA stipulated numerous cuts to eliminate vacations, tuition refunds, semi-private health care, and other "operational savings" (CAW, 2009). Defending their actions at the bargaining table, Ken Lewenza, then CAW President, suggested that union negotiators did all they could to aid in saving the company and members' jobs. In concluding the bargaining report, Lewenza notes, "We have fought hard to preserve the things that matter most. We have stuck together as a union. And we have lived to fight another day" (CAW, 2009).

The findings here present an interesting landscape regarding the effectiveness of the CAW in collective bargaining measures. Instead of using its collective power to influence decision making at the bargaining table, the union had little leverage during negotiations. Concessionary bargaining as witnessed during these rounds of

negotiations ushered in a paradigm shift characterized as a “crisis” in the bargaining relationship between the CAW and the American Big Three OEMs.

Crisis Averted: Bargaining Post-Recession, 2012-2016

Opening the bargaining report for the 2012 rounds of negotiation, then CAW president Ken Lewenza noted that although the Big Three OEMs were profitable, they still tabled a list of concessions from the current workforce. He went on to note that they were more aggressive in the (2012) round of bargaining than in 2009 (CAW, 2012). However, reversing previous bargaining trends of pattern bargaining, the CAW leadership decided to impose a contract deadline for all three OEMs, which threatened to stop production across the industry and symbolized a high degree of cooperation and collective action across CAW local leaderships (Stanford, 2012). With this switch in bargaining tactics, it seemed as though the CAW leadership was looking to renew a sense of militancy among the automotive membership and use its collective strength to stop assembly in Southern Ontario as leverage against the big three OEMs. Moreover, if successful, this tactic could suggest a renewal in CAW collective power.

Three days before the CAW deadline to strike, Ford Canada approached the bargaining committee and agreed to negotiate a collective agreement. Eventually, both Chrysler and GM would agree to engage in pattern bargaining around the framework reached with Ford (Stanford, 2012). While the CAW showed signs of a potential renewal of militancy before negotiation, there was no militancy shown during the bargaining process. During negotiations, the CAW agreed to extend the existing two-tier system – a point that they made in previous rounds of negotiating not to concede – as a means to satisfy the OEMs (Keenan, 2012). In the end, compared to the agreement negotiated in 2009, there was little the union could take as a definitive victory. Aside from using the rounds of negotiation as a means to “secure” investment, this round of bargaining seemed to merely maintain the same level of wages, benefits, and pensions as previous agreements. With Big Three profits on the rise, CAW concessions at the bargaining table could no longer be directly linked to economic recession and the dire financial situation of the American automotive firms. Instead, it could be argued that there was an institutional problem within the CAW, and that something had to give.

Increasing Horsepower: The Promise of Unifor

Taking lessons from the 2012 rounds of bargaining, former CAW economist Jim Stanford notes that CAW negotiators learned three key lessons to take when framing

the new union (which later became Unifor). Firstly, there was recognition that pattern bargaining is important because it tended to take “wages out of the picture.” Additionally, there was the thought that merging with CEP, which also participated in pattern sectorial bargaining, will help increase the new union’s capability in future pattern negotiations. Secondly, it was understood that unions generally have a commitment to position themselves as working for the common good whenever possible, which may include taking on more of a social unionist framework. Ross (2013) describes the social unionist framework as an approach to trade unionism that seeks to move workers’ struggles beyond the workplace to address wider social, economic, and political concerns. Aiming to achieve this goal, Stanford notes the new union must not only work for its members, but also the community in which the members live. Lastly, the ability engage in effective collective bargaining is essential towards union success. In essence, unions not only have the legal right to withdraw labour power (in the context of a strike), but also the capability and leverage to do so (Stanford, 2012).

Much of the same promise and expectations of the “new union” is echoed in the proposed union merger documents (*Towards a New Union*, 2012). To be clear, prior to the merger of CAW and CEP, both unions were heavily engaged in union mergers. But, if we refer to the types of union engagement previously discussed by Chaison, those mergers were simply absorptions of smaller unions into a larger union framework. In comparison, the merger between CAW and CEP aimed to create a new union with a new identity and structure, with the goal of renewing trade union power in Canada.

The document suggests that the pooling of CAW and CEP resources would help in the revitalization of the labour movement. As both unions have strong financial backing, strong relationships, and active membership bases, it asserts that they will be able to respond to both economic and political challenges in an unprecedented way. Additionally, the document comments on how their position, as active parties in the labour movement, can help other grassroots movements fight for social causes (Stanford, 2012). This, as again argued in the merger document, can also assist the union during collective bargaining negotiations.

The CAW-CEP merger document seems to promise a stronger union based on the fact that the two unions, which were already large in size, are pooling their resources together. The logic seemed to be: the more resources, the stronger the union. Additionally, the promises of the union seem to be relatively clear. The new union will have more success at the bargaining table, educate its membership base, and

increased financial resources, which in theory will contribute to their social unionist framework.

Unifor Era: Collective Bargaining in 2016

Former CAW staffer and labour activist Sam Gindin provides a critical commentary of the 2016 negotiations, characterizing the changes made to the new hiring system as, “a robber taking your money and car, returning a fiver for coffee and bus fare, then waiting for you to express your gratitude for his generosity” (Gindin, 2016). The 2016 agreement was not popular among Southern Ontario autoworkers. The 65 percent ratification of the agreement was the lowest in the union’s history.

Moreover, as noted by Gindin and within the videos released by Unifor (Unifor 2017), the most recent rounds of negotiations were not based on making gains on top of the old collective agreements, but instead focused on investment or, as they framed it, “securing the future of the automotive industry in Canada.” In selling the agreement, Unifor executives framed the automotive situation as precarious. They claimed they had to do what was needed at the bargaining table to ensure that there was future investment in Canada. Yet Gindin notes the irony of securing investment at the bargaining table, stating “why should the company *ever* make an announcement about planned investments *before* holding it back and asserting its conditionality on more restraint/concessions from workers and subsidies from governments?” (Gindin, 2016). This was followed by non-confirmed reports that suggest the new investment announcements coming from GM and Chrysler are overflow instead of primary investments. Moreover, the bargaining report comments on small gains in wages, and mainly focuses on OEM production and investment in the future.

Defending the actions of the union, Bill Murnighan suggests that Gindin’s comments on the rounds of negotiation are misleading, as it is selecting case studies, including miscalculations, and not taking into account the union’s actions in saving the Oshawa assembly factory. Murnighan also notes, “workers must do what is in their power: including making it clear to the corporations that we do not accept their unilateral right to close productive workplaces and eliminate jobs” (Murnighan, 2016).

While both authors make valid points, it is essential that we look back on the promises made within the merger document. In essence, the document suggested that the union, by pooling resources, would have enough power to make its presence felt at the bargaining table whenever it felt like it was needed. Moreover, Murnighan’s comment seems somewhat contradictory towards the purpose of merging together in

order to create Unifor. Essentially, by creating Unifor, workers did what was in their power in order to advance their interests. Failures to make gains are not a reflection on the workers, but, arguably, are a reflection on the tactics used by the union that represents them. In the aforementioned video and commentary from Murningham, it seems that the union was unable to assert renewed power at the bargaining table, and only hoped to secure investment. Taking into account Gindin's argument, we are unable to know for sure whether or not the big three OEM's were planning to invest in Canada prior to the round of bargaining. But given the vital importance of Southern Ontario assembly plants and the relative strength (or weakness for that matter) of the Canadian dollar, one could argue that the Big Three OEM's used the union's stance at the bargaining table regarding new investment to hinder potential collective agreement gains in other areas.

A Conclusion, of Sorts

This paper has discussed the role of the merger of CAW-CEP in renewing the collective power of Big Three auto assembly workers in Southern Ontario. The literature on union mergers presents a compelling story, suggesting various positives for unions such as increased financial resources and growth during a period of union decline. However, there also seems to be some organizational problems when it comes to union mergers. In merger cases, the literature suggests that there may be internal friction between staff of the merging unions, compromising the ability of the new organizing to utilize pooled resources, and contributing to a breakdown of collective solidarity.

The case of Unifor represents a bold move by the CAW and CEP, with the goal of renewing union power through amalgamation. The 2008 crisis had a devastating impact on the automotive industry and in order to receive government assistance, collective agreements and gains made in the past were conceded. As we were able to see, during the 2016 round of negotiation, the new union, Unifor, primarily engaged in discussions surrounding investment in the automotive industry. Unifor's 2016 strategy did not veer far from the strategy taken by the CAW prior to the amalgamation. Thus, we are left questioning whether or not the union merger resulted in increased bargaining power for the union.

Given the time period in which this evaluation has taken place, we are unable to draw a concrete conclusion on the long-term impact of this union merger in the automotive industry. What we can conclude, however, is that at present the union merger itself has not been sufficient to produce a breakthrough for Big Three

automotive members. Moreover, this evaluation has brought forth many questions meriting further study relating to how we evaluate renewal of union power and what strategies unions need to take in the era of global competition. Although we may be unable to come up with a definitive conclusion at this juncture, this paper has raised critical questions that must be carefully considered in order to understand the renewal of Big Three automotive workers' collective power through their trade union.

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“Almost a Union”: Canadian Artists and the Collective Working Identity

Kelly Flinn

After a complex legal battle and ten years of negotiations, on 1 April 2015 the first scale agreement between two organizations representing artists and the National Gallery of Canada was ratified. Members of Canadian Artists Representation/Le front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC) and regroupement des artistes en arts visuels du Quebec (RAAV), which share a memorandum of understanding that facilitates members of RAAV within the national CARFAC, voted overwhelmingly in favour of the agreement. The successful negotiation means that artists will receive a minimum guarantee of fee rates for exhibitions, reproductions of work, and other services to the Gallery. The reason that CARFAC was able to enter these negotiations is because it has been certified as the collective bargaining representative for visual artists in Canada under Canada’s federal Status of the Artist Act (SAA).

On its website, CARFAC states that “While [it] is not a formal trade union, [it] negotiate[s] working conditions for visual artists” and has done so since its creation in 1968 (CARFAC, 2013, para. 1). This statement reveals an ambivalence embedded in an ongoing organizational and political discussion amongst visual artists, which reflects a history of artists’ labour-based collective organizing that struggles with its many contradictions and challenges. This history of visual artists in Canada shows them grappling with the question of the form their collective organization takes, and what that means politically. This article offers a theoretically informed historical examination of artists’ labour-based organizing, based in archival research, with comments on the political and organizing implications for the labour movement today. Visual artists face challenges to collective labour-based organizing and to developing a collective sense of working identity; nevertheless, since the Depression era, these challenges have been contested by artists intending to both better their economic conditions collectively and contribute to broader social and economic transformation.

Artistic Labour in Capitalism

In studies of cultural work in the creative industries, there is a shared concern for both how artistic labour functions economically within capitalism as well as how it engenders individual as well as collective work-based subjectivities (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005). Critics of the notion that cultural workers should and do represent “the ideal neoliberal subject” (Garett and Jackson, 2016, p. 284) or the “Creative Class” (Howkins, 2001; Florida, 2002) have begun to study the labour conditions and self-organizing of cultural workers. Greig de Peuter and Nicole S. Cohen (2015) note that while cultural industries are largely non-unionized and are sustained by widespread precarious conditions, “cultural workers are organizing in alternate constellations” that include non-traditional and emergent labour organization models and forms of “alt-labour” organizing for those who cannot legally access a union (de Peuter and Cohen, 2015, p. 306). They offer CARFAC as an example of the kind of emerging alternative cultural worker union model to which their research points (p. 311).

While this direction in the study of contemporary cultural work is much needed, it tends to blur the important differences between economic and working conditions amongst the various kinds of workers encapsulated by the term “cultural,” and thus more attention is needed to the important limitations to collective labour-based organizing for visual and fine artists. The subject of my study is visual artists who create fine art to be displayed, circulated, and sold in the context of museums, galleries, and artist-run spaces, and whose economic activity is conducted at times in relation to curators, dealers, and critics, among many others in this realm. It is crucial to note the distinction between “artistic labour,” as I employ it for this study, and “cultural work,” as it is studied in relation to the cultural industries. Can-Seng Ooi (2011) persuasively develops this distinction in her study of fine arts within the context of Singapore’s creative industry promotion. She argues that the fine arts are defined in a cluster within the creative industries, based on the foundational idea of creativity, despite fine art’s relatively small scale of production that is not primarily geared towards the production of (capitalist) profit (Ooi, 2011, pp. 120-21). While the visual arts are included in policy and industry discussions of creativity and culture, the distinction is crucial when studying artists’ labour and organizing.

Nicole S. Cohen argues that cultural work has become “a site of struggle” shaped by the exploitation in labour-capital relations and emerging worker resistance and organization (Cohen, 2012). Greig de Peuter and Cohen’s excellent work on precarious labour in the culture industries draws visual artists into its documentation of

cultural worker resistance, with a shared experience of precariousness (de Peuter and Cohen, 2015). However, the labour of visual artists is unique within a capitalist system of production. Artists have been granted rights to the products of their labour that simply cannot exist for other workers who produce under capitalist relations, including many culture industry workers. When the character of artistic labour is considered, there appear to be contradictions in the notion of artists' labour organizing and the notion of the artists' union. Artistic labour is not controlled and exploited in the same manner as other work under capitalism: artists have rights to their products that other workers do not, and artists' incomes do not arise from wages in a shared workplace, but rather from a combination of sales, state funding and grants, fees, copyrights and royalties, and secondary work (Beech, 2015). Ursula Huws states that "there is a sense in which [artistic] work contains elements of 'really free labour', which is experienced as unalienated – a form of personal fulfilment" (Huws, 2010, p. 510). Other workers in capitalism experience alienation through the abstraction of their labour, having no natural or moral rights to commodities they produce.

The character of artistic labour and the art commodity can be seen as the source of significant limitations to artists' collective organizing. Art critic Ben Davis argues from a Marxist perspective that artistic labour is *petite bourgeois* in nature; it is not directed or exploited by capital and art is geared towards the enjoyment of the wealthy. For Davis, this necessarily means that visual artists "merely form a collective of individualities" and their attempts to organize collectively run aground on this reality (Davis, 2013, p. 24). Davis rejects the notion that artists' working conditions can be compared with other cultural workers and expresses suspicion towards the notion of an artists' union, refusing to engage meaningfully with such organizations.

My own research on artistic labour supports Sarah Brouillette's assertion that scholarly analyses of artistic labour tend to lose a "sense of the contradictory, material, and constitutive histories of artists' labor" (Brouillette, 2009, p. 147). This study of CARFAC is my intervention into the history, and present, of Canadian artists' labour organizing in relation to the complex nature of artistic labour, the specificity of which has often been overlooked in the broader study of cultural work, or even dismissed by those who view visual and other fine artists as inherently complicit with capitalist society.

Artists' Unions in the Depression Era

Visual artists in Canada have struggled throughout the twentieth century to legitimize their creative practices as a form of work that is deserving of remuneration and social recognition, rather than as an elite or amateur pastime, or academic endeavour (Cliche, 1996). This struggle has included the creation of organizations, publications, and involvement in national discussions of artists' role in society and the economy. Artists have been deeply influenced by the broader development of working class labour movements and socialist politics in Canada. In the 1930s, visual artists in Canada and the United States began to think of themselves as cultural workers (Langa, 2004, p. 238). They considered the nature of their labour in relation to democratic society in the midst of a growing capitalist economy, economic depression, and the growth of fascist ideology abroad that seemed to pose a serious threat to democracy at home. In relating themselves to other workers and professionals, they attempted to articulate their own form of work and how it should be socially and economically utilized and valued. During the Depression era, visual and commercial artists in Canada, much like their American counterparts, were engaged in a cultural politics as part of the "social democratic, anti-fascist, anti-racist, and pro-labour" leftist Popular Front (Denning, 1997; Forsyth, 2006). Michael Denning (1997) argues that part of this cultural activity was the formation of artists' and cultural worker unions and institutions in which socialist ideals could be enacted. Patricia Mazepa (2003) argues that a similar trend can be identified in Canada during the 1930s, with many graphic and fine visual artists forming associations and unions.

In 1936, graphic and fine artists in Toronto and Southern Ontario received certification as the Artists' Union, Local 71 of the Trades and Labour Congress. An article in the socialist magazine *New Frontier*, written in 1937 by A.T. Vivash, states that the union's major goal was "to establish a minimum price schedule and service charge for all forms of art work" (Vivash, 1937, p. 22-23). Vivash notes that most visual artists cannot support themselves on the sale of art, and that "although it is the artist who makes an exhibition possible, the public pays and the exhibitor collects" (Vivash, 1937, p. 23). He indicates the unrest caused by this situation, but also notes that many artists are unwilling to join a trade union despite talking "freely of social improvement and 'class consciousness.'" The first issue of Local 71's newsletter, *The Canadian Artist*, published in October 1937, states that the "easel painters" are "taking a leaf from the book of their brothers and sister in the USA" by joining the Canadian union (*The Canadian Artist*, 1936, n.p.). In the USA, an Artists' Union had begun in New York in

1933 to organize artists hired with the New Deal federal arts projects (Hemingway, 2002). Local 71 did not last long, and very little survives in the archive. The atmosphere in which Local 71 emerged did not, however, recede by the beginning of the 1940s. It re-constituted itself in the 1941 Kingston Artists' Conference, which took place at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. This series of lectures and workshops brought together 150 artists, museum directors, art historians and others.

Art historical analyses highlight various political and aesthetic debates that emerged from the conference and the resulting national artists' organization, the Federation of Canadian Artists (FCA). Andrew Nurse (1991) notes the tension between the outlooks of Group of Seven member Lawren Harris and communist Fred Taylor. These men became the President and Vice-President, respectively, of the FCA. Harris believed artists to be specialist professionals who had a responsibility to bring high quality culture to the people (usually constructed as "the masses"), who were unable to truly appreciate art. Taylor, highly influenced by Georgi V. Plekhanov's Marxist approach to art outlined in his 1912 book, *Art and Society*, felt that art was to be created for the people and must have a social use that superseded the professionalism of artists (Niergarth, 2012, p. 60; Bell, 1991, p. xxvi). This tension can be seen in the conference weekend's debate over whether a national organization should be "solely a union" or a federation of existing art societies (Bell, 1991, pp. viii-ix). The result, as is well-known in Canadian art history, saw the formation of the Federation of Canadian Artists, which shied away from the union label and remained mostly a national lobby organization.

The union model supporters were heavily influenced by the New York Artists Union, yet winning out politically at the conference took precedence over the actual meaning of a union for artists. Artists in the United States who worked in the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project, created as part of the New Deal, experienced conditions similar to waged workers, making the union model and strategy of collective action and even strikes both feasible and practical. In Canada, artists were individual producers of unique art works, and the union model did not map easily onto a context preceding the post-war institutionalization and professionalization of art. Moreover, the 'unionism' of the artists was politically undeveloped, representing a general political alignment rather than a strategic response to artists' shared economic needs. This was largely due to the wide variety of economic conditions for artists, whose access to a nascent "professional" identity and its attendant opportunities was influenced by gender, race, and class background (Niergarth, 2012). And yet, this period helped constitute a new political and class subjectivity for many

artists who later began to recognize their own social and economic conditions within the development of capitalist Canada and its liberal nationalism. It would not be until the late 1960s that the closest thing to a trade union for artists was formed in Canada.

The Professional Artist in Post-War Canada

Jack Chambers, a successful and well-known artist during his lifetime, instigated the creation of Canadian Artists' Representation (CAR) in 1968 after the National Gallery of Canada reproduced images of his paintings without his permission or compensation. CAR's most significant and earliest success was initiating mandatory fees to be paid by public arts institutions to living exhibiting artists (Yates, 1989, p. 19). Chambers and others who initiated CAR were part of a pro-labour and socially progressive group of artists in Southern Ontario. From its inception, visual artists who joined CAR debated the nature of the organization, and more specifically, whether it could be both a professional association and a union. Much like the debate between members of the FCA, and illustrated by the specific exchange between Harris and Taylor, what was at stake was the nature of the membership's political goals and alignment, manifested in the issues of working subjectivities and the direction of their labour organizing.

The pragmatic sense of CAR's mission can be seen in a 1976 meeting of CAR Ontario members who noted that whether CAR was a union or not was mostly an issue of semantics, and in practice the organization was encouraging collective organization and a sense of collective identity amongst artists (Canadian Artists' Representation Ontario [CARO], 1976). These discussions were informed by the broader labour movement, as can be seen in the conversations between CAR's elected Spokesperson, John B. Boyle, and Canadian trade union organizer Kent Rowley in 1973. Here Boyle asserted that "artists are workers like anyone else and likewise entitled to a reasonable wage for the work he [sic] produces" (CARO, 1973, p. 6). Moreover, Chambers' articulation of artists' labour echoes that of Vivash in 1936: Chambers reasoned that it was artists' work which gives a gallery meaning; yet the artist was the only one involved in its economic activity whose labour was not recognized or compensated (Yates, 1989, p. 19).

The desire for recognition of artistic production as work in itself, and not simply as a practice aligned with workers' interests, emerged most strongly in a post-war context where the Canadian state developed a bureaucratic cultural policy apparatus and public funding model composed of national and provincial arts councils, the Art Bank, public galleries, and post-secondary arts education. The 'Massey Report' of

1951 is considered the cornerstone of Canadian arts policy and recognized that artists could play a central role in developing Canadian cultural sovereignty and national identity (Tippet, 1990; Finlay, 2004). Early CAR members recognized the role their labour played in the growing institutions of the art world, and Canadian society more broadly.

The 1980s in Canada saw a range of reports and amendments to copyright and taxation law that were intended to spur economic growth in the culture industries and ameliorate the continued poor economic conditions of artists (Woodcock, 1985; Audley, 1983). In 1980, UNESCO declared in its Recommendation Concerning the Status of the Artist that artistic production should be protected by member states, with economic and social security provided to encourage and support professional artists (UNESCO, 1980). Canada's response to the Recommendation led to a task force that opened the potential to amend the Canadian Copyright Act. Now known as CARFAC, having absorbed the Quebec-based Front des Artistes, the organization's members focused energy on the copyright amendments and were able to contribute to a framework that accepted artists as the primary producers of culture in Canada. In 1988, and with additional amendments in 1997, the Act adopted a view of copyrights that established the natural rights of creators to the income generated by their works, including reproductions and exhibition, as well as the moral rights of artists to have their works considered an extension of their personality (Rushton, 1997, pp. 319-20).

Also in the 1980s, a new organization emerged in Ontario—the Independent Artists Union (IAU). According to co-founding member Karl Beveridge, the IAU formed in 1985 as “an alternative and a challenge to [the Ontario branch of CARFAC]” (Beveridge, 1999, p. 25). For the IAU, CARFAC was too conservative and its cultural nationalism was problematic. CARFAC Ontario was supportive of the IAU but its existence was consistently a topic of discussion over the course of several years as it challenged the way that CARFAC conceived of its organizational and political structure. An undated note, most likely from 1988, articulates the relationship between the two organizations. According to CARFAC, the IAU had “adopted the position that the artist has a primary role as a worker” whose work is performed for society. The form of artistic employment that IAU envisioned was the notion of a “dependent contractor,” who maintained a constant working relationship with the same institutions, such as the Canada Council for the Arts and those that pay fees through grants from the arts councils (Condé and Beveridge, 2015). It envisioned artists being paid a wage by the state, with a similar status as other public service employees (IAU, 1986).

Members of the CARFAC Ontario executive wrote here that their own organization's "final direction" was to work towards helping the "visual artist as a professional" to generate income, and to employ "limited collective actions to enforce minimum reimbursements for work within the unique Canadian state-sponsored art environment" (CARO, n.d.).

Incidentally, the enactment of the Status of the Artist Act in 1992 and certification of CARFAC as the collective bargaining representative for visual artists in Canada prompted Beveridge to state in an article for Fuse magazine that the IAU was now "almost a union," closer than ever before in its history (Beveridge, 1999, p. 25). Beveridge has since joined CARFAC and served on the bargaining team for the negotiations with the National Gallery. Through the Copyright Act and subsequently the Status of the Artist Act, CARFAC, with the aid of the IAU, has helped ensure artists have a strong collective basis for claiming remuneration for their work.

Conclusion

The case of CARFAC's gradual distancing from a union identity demonstrates the shifting social and economic status of the artist in a context of labour's historic depoliticization, and the centralization of culture and the arts in the nation state. The state structures its cultural policies and funding model around a notion of the professional, individual artist, further encouraging this type of subjectivity and thereby simultaneously discouraging collective identification, especially not with the 'working class.' But the distancing could also suggest that artists recognize the differences between their own working conditions and labour processes and those of other workers within capitalism who face a more direct form of exploitation. Studying artists' collective labour-based organizing in its specificity means avoiding conflation with the experiences and labour processes of other cultural workers and their struggles against capitalist exploitation. However, such studies must still attend to the many points of convergence and potential for solidarity between artists and cultural workers, who share a general experience of precarity as well as a relation to Canada's history and present cultural policy apparatus. The growth of collective self-organization among visual artists is a positive movement for economic justice and CARFAC has managed to set a precedent for independent contractors collectively bargaining that some argue could be a model for other independent contractors in Canada (MacPherson, 1999). CARFAC's impact has also extended to the US, where the organization Working Artists and the Greater Economy (known as W.A.G.E.) in New York considers CARFAC an

inspiration for its own pursuit of artists' fees at public institutions. CARFAC and WAGE now join a contemporary context of artists' union expansion, joining Artists Union England, which became a certified trade union representing visual artists in 2016. These organizations all reflect the historic relation between socially progressive and left politics and the artists' union, making social engagement, economic justice, and anti-oppression part of their mandates.

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Hegemonic Masculinities and Intersectionality in the Past and Present: A Theoretical Feminist Critique of Canada's Immigration Policies for Chinese Railway Workers and the Live-In Caregiver Program

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Since Confederation, Canada's immigration policies have been rooted in economic and labour needs (Galabuzi, 2006; Hsiung and Nichol, 2010; Krahn, 2014; Stasiulis and Jhappan, 1995; True, 2010). Gender, a master status used for social organization, is exploited by the Canadian government to assign stratified values to immigrant bodies in a manner that produces and reproduces racism, sexism and essentialism (Nicholson, 1994). Hegemonic masculinities, the practice of how power by men is legitimized over women (Connell, 1987), can be applied with race to demonstrate how inter-racial masculinities function in immigration policy. Similar to Australia and America, Canada's labour needs have always been inextricably intertwined with stereotypical gender roles that produce hegemonic masculinities embedded in heteronormativity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Connell & Wood, 2005), as evidenced by the immigration policies created for Chinese males recruited to work on the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). Indeed, many immigrants are deliberately set up into an economic apartheid that creates a cycle of poverty based on race and gender (Galabuzi, 2006). Krahn (2014) "uses an intersectional framework to analyze the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) as feminized work, revealing the intersecting inequalities of immigration status, gender, labour market participation, and racialization" (p. 48) that promote, enforce and even coerce conforming expectations of patriarchal capitalism. Examining *The Chinese Immigration Act of 1885* and the expansion of the migration of temporary foreign workers to Canada through the LCP, created in 1992, reveals how heteronormative gender roles are institutionalized through migration policy.

Historical Context

Since the 19th century, Canadian immigration policies have created gender inequalities by supporting patriarchy. Male bodies were seen through an essentialist lens of being physical labourers or soldiers, necessary to aid settler colonialism in Canada. By complying with expectations from state actors (True, 2010), White European male immigrants were able to legitimize their presence, while white European wives and mothers gained citizenship vicariously through their husbands. As a White settler colony, Canada developed along gender, racial and ethnic hierarchies expressed through immigration policies, as well as legal and political systems (Stasiulis and Jhappan 1995). Within this context of settler colonialism, immigration policies in Canada have always been created with a view to reproducing Whiteness based on loyalty to the British Empire (Lawson, 2013). White European families were sought out by the Canadian government, with the least desirable immigrants being cited as Greeks, Italians, Romas and Jews who were still recruited for labour on farms, railways, factories, mining or construction (Green & Green, 1999). In other words, immigrants were needed to perform the jobs Anglo-Canadian males did not want to do.

For the most dangerous and exploitative work, the Canadian government developed immigration policies designed to temporarily recruit non-White labourers to work on the CPR, reflecting the economics of hegemonic masculinities. Sir John A. Macdonald famously declared to Parliament, “It is simply a question of alternatives: either you must have the labour or you can’t have the railway” (Canada, 1883). The preference for White male workers from England was held onto by the Prime Minister, who strategized that once Asian male workers served their purpose of cheap labour, the Canadian government would refuse immigration from China, saying they “will not even leave their bones behind them. They are sent back to China, almost dead; and therefore there is no permanent degradation of the country by a mongrel race” (Canada, 1883). The reprehensible comments reveal how immigration policy was effectively utilized to build a foundation for a White settler colony.

Further, *The Chinese Immigration Act of 1885* presented a spurious pathway to citizenship. The \$50 - \$500 head tax made it prohibitive to bring family from China, enabling the Canadian state to further control Asian male workers, who were resigned to living in bachelor societies as the “yellow proletariat” with less than ten Chinese women in Canada (Takaki, 1998; The Canadian Encyclopedia, n.d.). The state thereby effectively discouraged interest in citizenship by denying Chinese railway workers the same reproductive rights given to White Europeans. Out of 15,000 Chinese immigrant

workers who came to Canada under the Act, between 1000 and 3500 gave their lives to build the railway; yet their stories were never recorded (Walia, 2010). While there is the danger of ranking oppression (West and Fenstermaker, 1995), early immigrant history demonstrates how there was a deliberate strategy to exert White male hegemony over their Asian male counterparts. The *Act* was justified by stating that the Canadian government was defending itself against the “yellow peril” of procreation.

The gendered and racialized exploitation of immigrant and migrant labour continues in the present day. These dynamics are explored in the following section, focusing on Canada’s Live-in Caregiver Program.

Caregivers and Gendered Migration in Canada

In the 1950s, Canadian women began to enter the workplace, creating a labour shortage for domestic work. Unable to fill the need with British nannies, the Canadian government recruited Caribbean women (Lawson, 2013). Just like the railway workers of the 19th century, there was a labour gap created by White Europeans uninterested in working as nannies. Similar to Asian women in the 19th century, Black women’s bodies were associated with the threat of potential procreation resulting in unwanted non-White children in Canada. Stringent medical entrance examinations were applied to determine pregnancy. Husbands and children were excluded from the Domestic Foreign Worker (DFW) program, so most Caribbean women were forced into bachelorette societies and forbidden to apply for citizenship (Lawson, 2013). Once again, Canadian demand for labour surpassed the supply of ideal workers from Britain and resulted in highly racist practices that disrupted kinship bonds.

Caregivers have also been recruited from the Philippines. In Canada, around 90 percent of Live-in Caregivers (LC) are from the Philippines (Kelly, P., Park, S., deLeon, C., & Priest, J., 2011). The Canadian and Filipino governments created an agreement whereby Filipinas are offered the opportunity to become eligible for Permanent Resident cards by leaving their families behind, working as an LC for two years and receiving positive references from their employers. The incentive carries with it immense social pressure to force malleable behaviour on the part of the female migrant worker in terms of complying with their Canadian employer, most likely White families where LCs often work 48 hours per week and earn less than the legal minimum wage (Hsiung and Nichol, 2010). LCs are not well protected by labour and employment laws and are barred from joining or forming a union. Living with employers “makes it difficult to draw the line between work hours and off-duty hours” (Grande and Kerr, 1998, p. 9),

especially when there is no overtime. Instead, gifts are given to detract attention away from failure to compensate for overtime. Sometimes the sharing of nannies leads to a heavier workload with the same pay. Some nannies are forced into a trial period without any salary which is “illegal in Canada ... because they cannot remain unemployed for long periods of time” (Grande and Kerr, 1998, p. 9), but there is little accountability for transgressors. Indeed, the LCP “has contributed to increased levels of poverty, underemployment, inequality and social exclusion amongst Canada’s immigration population with a disproportionate representation of women” in precarious employment (Krahn, 2014, p. 1).

Nation State Dynamics

As a “politico-economic theory, neoliberalism is a free market, free trade paradigm that perceives the reduction of government involvement in the economy as a requisite for economic growth and prosperity” (Krahn, 2014, p. 49). Through the LCP, the Canadian government decreases its responsibility in monitoring the foreign worker as the caregiver must reside with the employer or they become ineligible to apply for citizenship. Not only does the LCP reflect concepts of how the state takes the place of kinship roles (Lawson, 2013), but it also serves the neoliberal economic agenda which sees women as a product to trade, arranged with a foreign government and then strictly monitored under household supervision once on Canadian soil. Krahn (2014) argues that “current policies under the LCP, as seen through an intersectional theoretical lens, contribute to the intersecting inequalities of participating migrant women...between various forms or systems of exploitation or oppression, revealing the necessity for domestic labour recognition” and regulation (p. 49). The Canadian state links its power to the heads of the household, usually affluent White males, to ensure compliance of the LCP.

Intersectionality

The arrangement of the export of female labour also demonstrates how masculine hegemonies work together to make decisions that benefit patriarchal capitalism. As Hsiung and Nichol (2010, p. 773) state, “[b]y recruiting female workers from overseas to carry out reproductive labour for Canadian families, the LCP perpetuates, rather than eradicates, the on-going gendered division of labour within the Canadian heterosexual family, implicitly reproducing the devaluation of gendered work in the domestic sphere”. Based on biological essentialism, the LCP enables the continuing social construction of

gender stratification in the immigration system leading to the feminization of poverty (Connell, 1987). Intersectional lenses seek to examine the ways in which the social construction of gender identity, along with race, class and ethnicity (Lawson, 2013) can lead to intersecting forms of oppression. For example, the Philippine government receives 10 percent of revenues from their export of labour (Krahn, 2014) and the placement agency “not only constructs but also reproduces racialized stereotypes of employers and employees” (Hsiung and Nichol, 2010, p. 770). Both the Canadian and Philippine governments symbiotically cooperate to engage in oppressive gendered labour practices.

One of the main reasons why LCs are under an oppressive system is because the labour of women of colour is devalued within the labour market. The domestic work that foreign women of colour provide is perceived as “non-productive work that requires little skill (and thus) has made women less likely to be protected by national legislation and institutions of receiving countries” (Hsiung and Nichol, 2010, p. 7). Emotional labour in caregiver professions is also discounted by policy makers and not recompensed. Sadly, the role of the non-White mother is also devalued as Filipina nannies are perceived to be the best caregivers because they miss their own kids and redirect affection to the Canadian child (Pratt, 2009). Unfortunately, Filipina LCs may find it difficult to confide in anyone that they have left their own children behind because they may be further stigmatized as neglectful mothers (Pratt, 2009). Life in Canada is seen as the best opportunity for the future and so many Filipina mothers feel that sacrificing their families is worth the promise of Canadian citizenship.

The LCP places caregivers in the role of ‘mothering’, defined by Risman (1998) as day to day nurturing. While 70 percent of Canadian women work outside the home, there is very little support for them (Krahn, 2014). The allocation of the female foreign worker into “the sex category/gender relationship links the institutional and interactional levels, a coupling that legitimizes social arrangements based on sex category and reproduces their asymmetry in face to face interactions” (West and Zimmerman, 1987, p. 147). Live-in caregivers are in a psychological and political-economic relationship and if housework is used as an indicator of power relations (Hartmann, 1981), then the LCs are clearly in the lowest level in both the geopolitical and private spheres. Just as Asian men were expected to sacrifice their opportunity to be husbands and fathers if they remained in Canada, Filipina women today sacrifice themselves as wives and mothers. But as opposed to the hegemonic masculinities displayed in the *Chinese Immigration Act of 1885*, the LCP demonstrates displays of emphasized femininity (Connell, 1987;

Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). More specifically, sex role socialization manoeuvres live-in caregivers to act as support for the (mainly) White women who are employed outside the home.

Family Reunification

Many LCs dream of sponsoring their children and husbands for family reunification once they become citizens. Between 2003 to 2005, however, only 50 percent of LCs were able to become permanent residents by 2007 (Krahn, 2014). The probability of a Filipina LC achieving family reunification is even less likely out of the successful PR cardholders. By recruiting Filipinas, the Canadian government is in a position to coordinate with a foreign government to recruit cheap female migrant labourers, exploit them with the promise of citizenship for themselves and their families, and ultimately reject them if they fail to live up to expectations. As Connell (1987, p. 129) states, “[t]ogether with selective recruitment and promotion, these structures form an integrated mechanism of gender relations that results in the exclusion of women from positions of authority and the subordination of the areas of work in which most women are concentrated”. By not allowing LC families to immigrate together, the state can control sexuality, procreation and emotions (Acker, 1988). Even with supportive employers, application processes for citizenship can reach \$8300. When there is family reunification, unemployment and minimum wage jobs can cause LC families to spiral into debt and poverty (Pratt, 1998). The LCs can be deported at any time during the citizenship process. Unsurprisingly then, retention rates for LCs were very low at 28 percent in 2005 (Krahn, 2014). The United Nations and the International Labour Organization have cited Canada’s exploitation of LCs in the TFWP (Cordeaux, 2014).

The system is designed so that LCs are oppressed in their role and unable to move to a different immigrant category once they come to Canada. Tungohan, et al. (2015) identified structural barriers in the LCP’s pathway to citizenship such as labour market stigmatization, exorbitant costs of upgrading unrecognized university degrees, and financial pressures of being the sole breadwinner while simultaneously working at survival jobs. Moreover, LCs’ opportunities to take educational courses are severely restricted, despite being trained as “teachers, nurses, accountants and engineers” (Pratt, 1998, p. 10). Tungohan et.al. (2015) revealed that of 627 LCs, 86 percent had bachelor degrees and almost 4 percent have Masters or higher. Immigration policy makers anticipated the potential for LCs to acquire knowledge and circumvented their potential to subvert the system. The barriers placed on LCs for

furthering their education demonstrate how women's bodies are oppressively tied to caregiving (Kanter, 1977) in a way that enforces patriarchal hegemonic masculinities and denies women upward mobility.

For the small number of LCs that do achieve family reunification, Canadian citizenship can come at a great cost. The ultimate disrespect of not allowing families to immigrate together creates untold anguish for children left behind, who may not be amenable teenagers to reconnecting with a parent who was absent during much of their childhood (Pratt, 2008). In the Philippines, nine million children were left behind as migrant parents looked for work, not just in Canada, but all over the world (Kelly, P., Park, S., deLeon, C., & Priest, J., 2011), creating increasing numbers of transnational families (Glick Schiller, Nina, Linda Basch and Cristina Stanton Blanc, 1995). Children left behind have grown up without their mothers because states undermined the maternal relationship by exploiting women's necessity in finding work through migration and coercing mothers into choosing between economic survival and familial bonds. The intersectional framework demonstrates "how the outcomes of the LCP are premised on the interacting inequalities of various socioeconomic conditions of women migrants" (Krahn, 2014, p. 42). Ultimately, Filipina migrant workers are being exploited because they are doing hidden labour (Risman, 1998, p. 42) common among women. If, as Hartmann (1981) argues, the family can be a site of struggle, then work in the home can be seen as oppressive towards women. But as Canadian women have achieved progress in their class struggle to move out of the home, their families are reshaped by a new LC who becomes an extension of gender and racial stratification. The "creation and perpetuation of hierarchical gender relations depends not only on family life but crucially on the organization of economic production" (Hartmann, 1981, p. 372). Despite LCs being able to migrate out of their own home, they are still tied to domestic work as female migrants in the host home. The LC becomes part of the new proletariat who serves Canadian families/households.

A micro-level intersectional critique of the LCP shows that marginalization occurs on a daily basis. Filipina migrant workers are held to a strict accountability while residing in their employers' homes. LCs often inhabit substandard lodgings in laundry rooms without enough food. The lack of privacy, loneliness and isolation results in LCs feeling hatred, fear, and stress due to living in a domestic apartheid (Grande and Kerr, 1998). With racism permeating households, some employers do not allow LCs to share the utensils, sheets and laundry facilities. Many LCs experience difficulties in having enough to eat, being forced to eat leftovers and missing cooking Filipino food. Entitled

children could also become verbally and physically abusive to their caregivers. Even though LCs are vulnerable to sexual harassment, they tend to minimize the impact “which speaks volumes about the overlapping crisscrossing effects of race and citizenship” (Hsiung and Nichol, 2010, p. 774). Specifically, in terms of social location, LCs are vulnerable to exploitation and termination as punitive measures against any perceived infractions with little recourse in terms of non-existing legal protection (Cordeaux, 2014; Hanley and Schragge, 2009; Krahn, 2014). In fact, under the LCP, families have the right to sue their caregiver if dissatisfied with their services (Hsiung and Nichol, 2010).

Strategies for Reform and Transformation

Various versions of the LCP have existed over the last 25 years; however one constant that has remained is that LCs are required to stay with one employer who can support their bid for citizenship. Despite the increasing popularity of the LCP, exploitation, primarily due to the stipulation of being tied to one employer, has been well documented (Choudry and Smith 2016). In 1996, Grandea and Kerr (1998) undertook a research project including 14 Filipina female domestic workers. Over six months in Toronto and Montreal, they studied the experiences of LCs who had varying levels of awareness regarding the complexity of issues. The number one recommendation made by the Filipinas was to abolish the LCP requirement of being tied to one employer, because LCs are treated as indentured workers. Other suggestions included lowering fees for immigration, making for Canadian families/employers more accountable for employment conditions, educating LCs of their rights, and providing the right to form unions. Reflecting Risman’s (1998) notion that the value of domestic work should be raised in society, the LCs called for inclusion of their labour in the points system used in citizenship application.

Conclusion

The Chinese Immigration Act of 1885 and the ensuing revisions of the LCPs demonstrate the intractability of gender roles (Risman, 1998) over the last 150 years and the power of White male policy makers who define sexual ideology for immigration. Using a hegemonic masculinity and intersectional lens, it is possible to critique the extraordinary lengths that are used to exploit im/migrants through their desire to better their lives. These include, for example, separating mothers from families, oppressing LCs from upward mobility and institutionalizing racism/sexism so Canadian males can

avoid daily menial tasks in the home as well as childcare. Resistance against the symbolic violence (Davis, Dewey and Murphy, 2016) inherent in Canadian immigration policies is necessary to diminish the omni-presence of gender as a master status (West and Zimmerman, 1987). Unfortunately, “policy makers have persistently failed to develop a comprehensive understanding of housework and reproductive labour in policy making” (Hsiung and Nichol, 2010, p. 772). Perhaps if there was a more diverse group of policy makers involved in developing structures and practices for immigration policies, inter-racial hegemonic masculinities and the global exploitation of women of colour could be addressed. Further research could explore, expose, and advocate for reshaping masculinities that may result in more equitable immigration policies and practices. Until then, it appears that labour will still be imported to do jobs Canadians do not want to do and the ensuing hierarchy will continue to reflect and reproduce White hegemonic masculinities.

Endnotes

1. This article is dedicated to all the immigrants who come to Canada seeking a better life for themselves and their children, especially mothers. Special thanks to Amber Gazso and Mark Thomas for helping with this article. I wish to acknowledge my committee Carl James, Kamala Kempadoo and Guida Man for their excellent support. Last but not least, Eve Haque for her tireless mentorship.

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Narrating Class Interests: Sudbury Nickel Miners and Class Formation

Adam King

Long a staple industry and employer in Northern Ontario, mining has undergone considerable changes in recent years (Leadbeater, 2008, 2014). From technological innovation and job loss, to foreign takeovers and labour unrest, workers in mining and mineral processing have confronted serious challenges (Peters, 2010). This short paper is part of a larger project studying how nickel miners in Sudbury, Ontario (re)construct a notion of class subjectivity and interests in light of these changes. The sample of interview data presented below engages with a longstanding debate concerning the theoretical bases of class interests and class formation. Though attempts to forge a relational topology of classes have been left to simmer on the backburner somewhat (Callinicos, 1987; Przeworski, 1993; Wright, 1997), the transformation and reconstitution of classes brought on by the so-called “new economy” — characterized by the spread of precarious work and the globalization of capital and labour — have necessitated efforts to rethink and extend who and what we mean by the “working class(es)” (Ferguson and McNally, 2015; Wood, Meiksins and Yates, 1998). This research project takes up a related, but less frequently posed, set of questions concerning the relationship between workers’ subjectivity and class formation. It asks: how do workers come to form and reproduce class subjectivities and alliances, and what sorts of issues and concerns shape and motivate class-consciousness, conflict and struggle? Refocusing our efforts on listening to and interpreting workers’ stories is of decisive importance as deindustrialization, corporate globalization, and precarious work reshape classes, as they have been doing in Sudbury.

This research utilized oral history interviews as a way to allow interviewees the space to develop their life stories and to locate themselves as historical actors. As a result, the project is largely concerned with extending what we mean by class formation through a focus on the narrative and remembering practices of workers. During interviews, workers told complex and layered stories, drawing on a broad range of themes and concerns in the formation of their class identities. Their class location, as

workers understood and articulated it, was constituted by and involved struggles over factors ranging well beyond immediate material interests. While conflicts over wages, benefits and pensions figured prominently as historic reference points, class as identity was made meaningful through lasting social bonds, cultural practices, and efforts to preserve a sense of self and community. I therefore propose that many of the previous attempts to present class interest as some variation of rational choice attempts to maximize individual or collective returns (Roemer, 1982; Wright, 1997) may confront serious difficulties when read against qualitative accounts of working class formation. It is not only a matter of dealing with the age-old issue of transforming classes-in-themselves into classes-for-themselves, but rather understanding how class identifications form and how the ways in which workers understand their position and interests influences their engagement with the world. As the mines in Sudbury are transformed by losses in union jobs and a broader employer offensive, confronting how the processes through which workers shape their identities and understand their interests will be an integral part of building effective resistance, whether directly in the workplace or in a community more broadly characterized by industrial job loss.

Theorizing Class Interests

Whether explicitly or implicitly, the concept “class interests,” in most common usages contains a rational choice component, by, for example, implying that people universally have a desire to increase their material wellbeing. A slightly more complicated version of this is to, as Wright (1997) does, include an attendant desire to minimize “toil.” As he puts it: “There is...no assumption that people universally have an objective interest in *increasing* their consumption, but they do have an interest in reducing the toil necessary to obtain whatever level of consumption they desire” (p. 36). In the latter formulation, an “objective interest” is still “rational” in that it maximizes a utility (consumption/leisure) and/or minimizes a disutility (“toil,” which Wright acknowledges is inherently difficult to define in a way that is not subjective or inexact). Capitalism is then a problem in that it frustrates the ability of workers to maximize their gains by virtue of the fact that workers must compete with one another for jobs and are structurally less powerful than owners of capital. Thus, class is both *relational* and *exploitative* insofar as some increase their capacity to realize material interests at the expense of others. In this sense, the critique of rational choice has more to do with the need for social action to realize material gains for workers because capitalism prevents them from doing so individually. While not as methodologically individualistic as other attempts to use rational choice theory to

understand class (Elster, 1994; Przeworski, 1993), it still retains a commitment to a version of class interests that posits rational calculation as fundamental [1].

A further difficulty that we encounter with this rational-choice inflected elaboration of a theory of class interests arises from the ways in which relational considerations are presented as conforming to economistic deliberation. That social actors deviate from such utilitarian calculation in a myriad of social encounters, including those supposedly in the realm of formal “economics,” has been widely demonstrated (Granovetter, 1985; Portes, 2010; Zelizer, 2011). The key point, as Marx and Engels argued, is not that rationality is a universal characteristic upon which to ground a theory of human or social action; rather, capitalist social relations have the effect of seeking to subordinate all social relations to economistic calculation (see also Wood, 2016). As they wrote in *The German Ideology*: “For [the bourgeois] only *one* relation is valid on its own account – the relation of exploitation; all other relations have validity for him only insofar as he can include them under this one relation” (Marx and Engels, 2004, p. 110). Thus, a utilitarian theory of action is a historically and socially particular form of action. It is a form of rationality specific to capitalist social relations. Though it is never entirely hegemonic, its influence on the actions of subordinate social actors is often immense. But to treat all motivations for action, especially those forms of collective action undertaken by the exploited, as arising out of efforts to maximize utility or minimize toil is far too limited to capture the range of complex social relations and considerations that influence action (Callinicos, 1987). Indeed, if bourgeois forms of rational calculation are often experienced as a hegemonic force imposing their influence on social life, collective resistance is at least as likely to be arrayed in opposition to this form of economization as to be motivated by it.

The best solution to the problem of clarifying class interests, I believe, is offered by Callinicos (1987), who, borrowing from Giddens (1979), suggests that we separate interests from wants, which allows us to retain a notion of interests that is objective but does not presuppose the rational preferences of social actors. Instead, Callinicos argues, we ought to focus on how structural capacities shape social action, irrespective of the goals to which action is directed. That is, wants may be manifold but their realization is dependent on the structural capacities of social actors. Put another way, workers have an *interest* in cooperating, even if for non-rational goals. Similarly, Thompson (1982, p. 8-9) poses the issue by describing class as both historical and relational, and thus treating the question of the articulation of class interests as an inherently cultural one. The operative question then might be: what are the “wants” or

desires that shape class formation and thus motivate collective identification or action? Over the course of this research, a small portion of which is presented below, not only are workers' narratives full of manifold wants, but also their understandings of themselves as working class arise out of efforts to preserve in their lives what they consider meaningful and under threat. This is understandable, I suggest, as work in the mines becomes more precarious, a growing supply of non-unionized service and supply workers generates class tensions in the workplace, and a local economy moving away from its former dependence on resource extraction places particular understandings of working class subjectivity under strain.

Narrating Class Formation

With respect to class formation, Ellen Meiksins Wood (2016) puts it aptly:

It is not a small, or theoretically trivial, point to distinguish between the constitution of classes by modes of production and the process of class formation. Nor is it unimportant to suggest that, however completely we may succeed in deductively situating people on a chart of class locations, the problematic question of class formation will remain and may yield answers that are both theoretically and politically more significant. The crucial point is that the main burden of a Marxist theory of class must be less on identifying class "locations" than on explaining class formation (p. 80-81).

The "burden" has been taken up in a number of ways. In the abstract, class formation is treated as a variable, dependent on and limited by the nature of the class structure (Wright, 1997, p. 27-29, 123-24). More concretely, others have suggested, drawing from the work of Thompson (1982), that a "historical turn" is generally in order to fully capture the complexity and particularity of class formation (Palmer, 1983), and to grasp class' intersection with other axes of oppression (Camfield, 2004/5). The risk with the latter has always been that generalization is lost in the richness of, otherwise illuminating and useful, historical description. Where the focus has been on "consciousness," whether *class*-consciousness or the actual consciousness of the working class, important work has been done (Dunk, 2003; Seccombe & Livingstone, 2000). However, the attention to "consciousness" can sometimes produce rather speculative conclusions. Mann, somewhat mockingly, (1973) referred to "possible consciousness" (p. 45) to characterize what Marxists claim *would* be the class attitudes of workers if they were unencumbered by the contradictions and illusions of actually existing capitalism. The spectre of "false

consciousness” haunts the study of class formation and consciousness (Somers, 1996, p. 180).

In this project, I have, by following the data, sought to understand class formation by interpreting how workers come to build and reproduce identities socially (Portelli, 1991). This involves treating classes as “historical formations,” as Camfield (2004/5) suggests, and so is therefore limited by the same issues of generalization. It is my hope, however, that the insights produced through this research might offer methodological clues applicable to other studies of class formation.

Remembering and Storytelling

For workers interviewed in the course of this research, developing a sense of working class identity was frequently tied up with hearing the stories and memories of other, often older, workers. This undoubtedly has to do with the size of the workforces at Inco and Falconbridge, the two largest mining companies in Sudbury, through the 1960s and 70s. Under these circumstances, some familial connection with the mines was nearly universal in the community. For example, one worker whose father had also worked at Inco recounted the story of how the latter had been hired:

I still remember. Dad would tell that story all the time. His dad had passed, young. He [the speaker’s father] quit school and was gunna work in the mine, there. But he was a tiny guy, hardly weighed nothing, and he was too young, you know. So, he eats like two bushels of bananas before he’s supposed to have the physical and get weighed and all that. Well, he gets there, and he’s stuffed, right? And then, Christ, they’re like “oh sorry, we don’t have time to see you today. You’ll have to come back tomorrow.” So, he did the whole thing again the next day! Got the job though.

I later heard the same story, without interview prompting, from the original storyteller. While this example was a humorous family heirloom, similar examples dealing with more pressing issues, such as strikes and the hardships endured, abound in the interview data. What is especially interesting about many of these stories is their recurrence, often in strikingly similar plot forms, across a range of different speakers. Stories, in a quite practical sense, are part of the initiation into a local space of class identity and are learned and passed forward as part of reproducing class-as-community.

The globalization of mining in Sudbury, and the subsequent attacks unionized workers have experienced from their new multinational employer, has added a new dimension to the storytelling of workers. Four workers, in the process of talking about

the Brazilian conglomerate Vale's takeover of International Nickel Company (Inco) in 2006, told a story about new Vale managers marvelling at the trucks that employees were able to afford. As one worker concluded: "That was a pretty good indication right there that they were out to break the union." This story, the origins of which are difficult to ascertain or imagine, in many respects serves a retrospective purpose. Vale would go on to force a bitter, year long strike in 2009-2010 that concluded with a contract that was widely considered concessionary (Mulligan, 2010; Peters, 2010). The 'marvelling managers' story functions as a collective way to make sense of the takeover, strike and aftermath.

For older workers (those over 55 in the sample), union history often intersected with family history. The two histories were interwoven in many narratives, each buttressing memories from the other, and leaving the listener with the impression that the culture of work and unionization are intimately connected to a sense of familial relations. This finding results in part from the centrality of a particularly gendered conception of the family and the male breadwinner's position in it. Struggles over dignity at work were simultaneously struggles over masculinity and the ability to provide for one's family (Murphy, 1997). For example, Marc tries to remember and order when he moved jobs and the first time he was on strike:

When was that, now? I started work in the smelter right around the time the little one went to school, so it must have been not long after that we were out again [on strike].

Marc followed this by talking about friendships formed while on strike, family members visiting the line, and stories he heard at the time about previous strikes. His use of the word "again" in his story is noteworthy as well, given that this was the first labour action in which he had been involved. "Again," presumably, refers to the union as a whole, not to himself or even any particular worker.

In these ways, an abstract notion like class is made a meaningful force in the immediate lives of workers. Particularly when we consider its intergenerational reproduction, working class identity is formed and shaped through such everyday practices of local history, in both its oral and written forms (Brasch, 2007, 2010; Seguin, 2008). And, consistently, when workers describe defending themselves against their employer(s), that which is to be defended extends beyond wages and benefits and includes what they see as the conditions that allow for dignity at work, a culture of

camaraderie among co-workers, and a sense of community bound up with locally embedded working lives.

Building Culture

Chibber (2017), in a recent attempt to “rescue” class from the “cultural turn,” maintains that identification and the cultural practices that sustain it are key features of collective action. He writes:

For a culture of solidarity to become a part of workers’ strategic orientation requires conscious direction and agency. In its weakest form, this means a set of *routines* inside and outside work, designed to encourage the building of relationships and, through these, the sense of trust and mutual obligation that might sustain class organizing...(p. 50-51).

I would add further that this is not only necessary to build and reproduce solidarity, but that collective efforts undertaken by workers will often be understood to be directed toward preserving those cultural forms themselves. That is, while we might theoretically understand such “routines” as serving a functional purpose or being means to the end of class struggle, workers might understand and place greater significance on them as ends in themselves.

While workers in this study described relationships forged in the process of union activity as positive side effects of the latter, many others built their stories of collective action around the preservation of these relationships. Often such narratives hinge on the notion of a “way of life.” Dale, for example, explains what job loss and company attacks have meant to the community:

It certainly seems like it’s not the same. Used to be everyone had family in the mine, you know? So that’s different. And the new companies, they don’t seem to care like Inco did. It’s bad for the money, like, obviously, mining got to be a good paying job. But it’s also a way of life, you know? People had it in common. People felt the tough times together. People worked together, went on strike together, knew the history and all that. I don’t know, I think we’re kinda losing that stuff that made us who we are.

Many others told similar stories about periods of collective action, and as a way to understand current challenges in the mining industry, as Dale does above. Moreover, the Local’s mini-documentary on the burning and rebuilding of the union hall invokes

comparable themes of cultural preservation, with the union hall serving as a physical symbol of working class community (USW 6500, 2012).

Locality as Source and Obstacle

As Portelli (2011) has shown in his oral history of Appalachian coal miners, local culture can be a significant source of collective inspiration in the labour movement. Local cultural practices and traditions, as well as social and community relations, can often provide the ingredients for impactful working class action. Certainly, Sudbury fits this description quite well. However, forms of class-consciousness built out of strong local and workplace cultures are also characterized by what Harvey (1995), borrowing from Raymond Williams, referred to as “militant particularism.” Indeed, as Williams (1995) noted:

Remember the argument was that the proletariat had no country, the factor which differentiated it from the property-owning classes. But place has been shown to be a crucial element in the bonding process--more so perhaps for the working class than the capital-owning classes--by the explosion of the international economy and the destructive effects of deindustrialization upon old communities. When capital has moved on, the importance of place is more clearly revealed (p. 80).

But as Harvey tries to show, the crucial issue becomes the broader projection of local loyalties necessitated by the interconnectedness of capitalism. For workers at Vale’s mines in Sudbury, this tension is playing itself out as class-consciousness bred of a militant local tradition attempts to forge international alliances to meet the challenges of internationalized capital. Where workers recognize the necessity of forging international alliances to counteract Vale’s multinational power, imagining what this would logistically look like, as well as identifying with the struggles and circumstances of workers in Brazil or South Africa, raises its own set of difficulties. Reconciling how this ought to be achieved and what meaning it could generate is first a problem of the imagination necessary to visualize social bonds beyond local proximity. The problem shows up in the data as both frustration at the slowness of the process, and silence concerning the specifics of how, in practice, solidarity might work.

I used to go to a lot of these meetings. We’d have guys from Brazil, Africa, Canada, all over. But I got tired of it. One time I said, “We come here and we

talk about the workers, and we talk all kinds of shit, but when are we gonna take action? I think we just have to stand up, take a stand, I don't know.

Alain follows the latter passage with several unfinished sentences, indicating that partly what is missing is a language of class that is not bound to place. He and other workers are without a way to move from the space wherein local bonds sustain “militant particularism” to the “level of abstraction” (Harvey, 1995, p. 85) necessary to grasp the complexities of developing and projecting such bonds against an international employer.

Conclusion

This short paper has, through examining the narratives of miners in Sudbury, Ontario, sought to deal with several theoretical issues of class interest and class formation. Following Callinicos (1987), I have argued that we limit class interest to an understanding of the structural capacity for action and pursue the articulation of wants and objectives at the level of class formation. The latter, I have treated as occurring through localized practices of storytelling, identity formation and institution building. I then suggested that, while spatialized practices of “militant particularism” are quite impactful at building worker solidarity locally, they present limitations when broader class alliances become necessary, in this case by the Vale takeover of Inco (see also King, 2017). As material conditions in the mining industry, in Sudbury and beyond, continue to be transformed by the reorganization of international capital and labour, having the proper tools to understand and intervene in the formation of classes will be crucial.

Endnotes

1. See Wood, E. (1989) for a broad critique of “rational choice Marxism.”

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Insecurity and Communities: How Precarious Work Shapes Participation Patterns

Grace Maich

Precarious work is becoming more commonplace in North America, including for high-income workers and workers in jobs that require earning a post-secondary degree (Lewchuk et al., 2014). Vosko (2006) characterizes precarious work as work that lacks security, regulatory protection, and/or control over the labour process, and/or that is low income. Many researchers believe precariousness should be measured on a continuum, rather than as workers being considered *either* entirely precarious *or* entirely secure (Vosko, 2006; Lewchuk et al., 2014). Social location — i.e., one's gender, race, citizenship status, and other “political and economic conditions” (Vosko, 2006, pp. 3-4) — can shape individual workers' experience of precarious work, as factors such as race, gender, citizenship status, and ability may heighten precariousness. Precariousness in the workplace has a variety of negative outcomes, including increased stress and other physical and mental health effects (Lewchuk, Clarke, and de Wolff, 2008; Quinlan and Bohle, 2009).

As precarious work increases, there are other ongoing social effects. Notably, participation in every type of civic engagement has declined since the 1970s (Putnam, 2000). As these events coincide, and as Standing (2011) argues that precarious workers are more likely to dedicate less time to activities outside the workplace, there is a need to understand the interconnections between precarious work and civic participation.

This project explores the following research questions: first, what is the relationship between precarious work and community engagement? Second, if such a relationship exists, which aspects of community engagement does precarious work impact most? Finally, what is the effect of social location on community engagement? As marginalized workers have a higher presence in precarious work, how does this impact the relationship between precarious work and community engagement? I begin by discussing the conceptualization of precarious work used during the research, as well as the background literature that inspired my project. I

then discuss the data and analytical tools I used, and conclude by presenting the results and discussion of my analysis, including cross-tabulations and linear regression.

Defining Precarious Work

The study of precarious work is on the rise in labour studies and sociology, especially in the past decade. Precarious work stems from the broader concept of 'precarity' that European scholars and social movements theorized (Arnold and Bongiovi, 2013). Precarity refers more generally to conditions of insecurity in all aspects of one's existence, including housing and personal relationships (Arnold and Bongiovi, 2013). For example, with respect to migrant workers, in conjunction with being excluded from the rights afforded by citizenship, precarity exists both within and outside the workplace in a variety of forms for these workers (Munck, 2012). Challenging precarity requires understanding how it takes place in different contexts.

This research primarily takes a political economy perspective to explore the above research questions. Political economy entails "study[ing] totalities of social relations as embedded in the economic, political, cultural, and ideological, all located in both time and space" (Clement, 2001, p. 406). In this context, I advance the argument that changes in workplace structures, such as the shift to precarious work, are tied to broader economic and political changes. It is important under this perspective to consider whether 'precariousness' represents a significant change in the workplace. Scholars such as Guy Standing (2011) argue that precarious workers constitute a distinct socioeconomic group, referring to them as the 'precariat', a play on 'proletariat'. Standing makes the argument based on heightened work-related negative emotions precarious workers experience, such as alienation and anxiety, and an absence in occupational identity formation (Standing, 2011). Some of these differences are important to precarious workers, of course, but are not sufficient to consider them a distinct social class in and of themselves.

Hardy (2017) argues defining precarious workers in this way is based on an assessment of their status to determine their class, rather than their relationship with production. Frase (2013) goes on to state that a separate class must "[occupy] a distinctive position in the economic system of production and distribution of goods and services, and reproduction of human beings and society as a whole" (p. 12), a definition which precarious workers do not fit. Furthermore, Palmer (2014) criticizes Standing, maintaining that (dis)possession of property defines class difference,

rather than job security. Precariousness is a feature developing in many occupations, not a group springing anew from changes in production. Marx refers to the threat caused by an unemployed reserve army of labour: essentially, when workers are highly productive they also face precariousness because production can increase without a proportional investment into jobs and workers (Jonna and Foster, 2016). Thus, in a sense all members of the working class face precarity, and precarious workers cannot qualify as their own class or the beginning of a new social class.

However, taking the concept of cultural hegemony into account highlights the importance of paying particular attention to precarious workers. Hegemony refers to the processes spreading the preferred political and moral values of the ruling class throughout society and especially the dominated groups (Woolcock, 1985). Hegemony most importantly acts as a method for the ruling class to obtain consent for their power (Cushen, 2013) and can operate by “[diffusing] throughout society a conception of the world which obscures the nature and character of class domination” (Woolcock, 1985, p. 205). In other words, hegemony makes class differences seem natural and normalizes workers’ marginalization. The concept is relevant to precarious workers as it can help to explain why precariousness is becoming so commonplace. Rather than combat poor working conditions, the neoliberal state encourages workers to adapt to these conditions and be self-reliant, which allows greater employer control over individual employment conditions (Thomas, 2009). According to Thomas (2009), “the neoliberal state has incorporated the principles of lean production into the conception of citizenship itself,” (p. 112), meaning in part that workers should expect and accept lower pay for harder work. More specifically, part of why precarious workers have a more negative emotional relationship with their work is because they are expected to be grateful for insecure, alienating work (Standing, 2011). This in turn contributes to the idea that workers should respond positively to any work an employer offers them. Eckelt and Schmidt (2014) provide an example of such a process: German students who are unable to find employment may blame their own individual failures, and often employers will imply workers are asking too much if they demand better conditions. Precarious work is threatening because it becomes normalized as it spreads and sets new and lower standards for employers.

For the purposes of this project, I define precarious work using the Employment Precarity Index developed by the Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario (PEPSO) project. The index measures precarious employment on

a continuous scale based on four categories: form of employment relationship, referring to whether work is permanent or temporary, full-time or part-time, and so on; income uncertainty, referring to variation in income or reduction of work hours; scheduling uncertainty, referring to variation in scheduling and amount of on-call work; and relationship uncertainty, which refers to whether an employer pays in cash or if workers feel comfortable raising a health and safety issue (Lewchuk et al., 2014).[1]

Contextualizing Precarious Work

The spread of precarious work in North America has been facilitated by ‘neoliberal individualism.’ Neoliberalism is a theory of market efficiency and set of practices relying on cuts to social programs, repression of labour, and intensive labour exploitation to grow profit (Harvey, 2007; McNally, 2011). Neoliberalism is a form of capitalism rather than a different economic system, and it is advantageous within this stage for employers to make use of precarious work strategies. While many scholars refer to neoliberalism as involving deregulation of markets, in reality it *re*-regulates labour and social policy in favour of capital; such re-regulation includes setting the stage for labour ‘flexibility’ (Fanelli and Thomas, 2011).

Part of the reason it is challenging to resist neoliberalism is widespread individualist values that are a part of neoliberal hegemony. In the neoliberal age, policy encourages financial literacy so that individuals will both be more independent and able to support a weak economy (Raddon, 2012). Precarious workers, who may have to rely on family finances regularly or during emergencies, feel ashamed of their dependence (Chan, 2013). People who make use of social assistance still feel the need to prove their independence in other ways, as Little (2001) discovered in her research on single mothers using welfare.

Financial stress and worrying about money leads people in general, and especially precarious workers, to withdraw from family and friends (Clarke, Lewchuk, de Wolff, and King, 2007; Putnam, 2000). As workers have fewer informal bonds, they also have less access to formal workers’ organizations. Precarious workers’ employers often foster a culture of fear of reprisals so their employees do not unionize (Coulter, 2014). Lewchuk and Dassinger (2016) note that precarious workers may have access to informal strategies such as work slowdowns and sabotage to resist in the workplace. However, these strategies are individual and create risk for workers taking part in them. Individualized workplace resistance, along

with Putnam's (2000) research on lowered civic engagement, show that workers have fewer ties to their communities, both geographically and in the workplace.

Precarious workers face many challenges in resisting further neoliberalization of the workplace. Levels of collective workplace engagement and community participation are constrained by the "deep neoliberal integration" that Coulter (2009) argues is part of formal politics in Ontario, which is characterized by anti-union ideology and which minimizes precarious workers' outlets for change. To better understand the implications of changing power relations at work, I address the following questions: what is the relationship between precarious work and community engagement? If a relationship exists, what parts of community life does precarious work affect most? Finally, how does a worker's social location change their levels of engagement?

Methods and Data Analysis

This study uses data from a 2014 telephone survey collected by the PEPSO project. The survey includes 4,193 ($N = 4,193$) workers between the age of 25 and 65 living in Toronto, the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Hamilton, and Burlington (see Lewchuk et al., 2015). I used the PEPSO data to generate cross-tabulations and create a linear regression model.

The Employment Precarity Index is the independent variable in the following operations. The primary dependent variable in the study is the Community Engagement Scale. I constructed this scale from 'yes' or 'no' responses to participation in ten different community activities. Respondents received a score of one point for each 'yes' response, for a total score of up to ten. I also used region, age, gender, ethnic identity, citizenship status, and educational level as control variables in the linear regression model to test the impact of social location on community engagement.

Results

Cross-tabulations and corresponding Pearson's chi-square calculations show precarious work has relationships of varying significance with community engagement variables. Precarious work has a significant relationship with enrolling children in sports clubs ($p < .001$), joining adult sports clubs ($p < .001$), school meeting attendance ($p < .001$), and voting in every election ($p < .001$). For these activities, precarious workers are less likely to participate than are workers in secure jobs.

Precarious work also has a significant relationship with political meeting attendance ($p=.031$), attendance at ethnic association events ($p=.024$), arts and culture group membership ($p=.003$), and support or self-help group membership ($p=.004$). However, for these activities, precarious workers attend more often than secure workers. Precarious work does not have a significant relationship with attendance at religious events or neighbourhood meetings.

The PEPSO survey collected information on a variety of demographic variables, which will serve as control variables in the regression model. In terms of region, 45.2 percent of participants ($n=1,894$) live in Toronto, with most of the rest residing in the GTA. Men and women were approximately equal in the study, and age groups (divided into 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, and >55 age groups) were about equal, with slightly fewer in the >55 age group. The overwhelming majority of participants (63.6% or $n=2,642$) identified as white, which Lewchuk et al. (2015) indicate is over-representative of white workers (p. 183). Most workers in the survey were either born in Canada or were Canadian citizens (94.8% or $n=3,965$) as well, so findings may not extend to racialized workers or non-citizens. Finally, most participants were highly educated, with over half holding a bachelor's degree.

I compiled responses to individual community engagement variables into the community engagement scale. The scale had a median score of three, meaning most participants take part in a small variety of community activities, and few respondents were at extreme ends of the scale. I then used linear regression to test the effect of precarious work and social location on community engagement. Table 1 below presents the results of the regression, including significant control variables. The reference worker is a 25-34-year-old white male who was born in Canada, lives in Toronto, and did not graduate from high school or obtain any further credentials.

Originally, I constructed a model including only precarious work as a dependent variable. In this model, precarious work had a significant impact on community engagement ($p<.001$). Once I introduced control variables, precarious work was no longer a significant predictor.

Table 1: Predictors of Community Engagement Scale Scores

	<i>B</i>	β	Sig.	VIF
Constant	2.029		$p < .001$	
Precarity Index	-0.035	-0.021	$p = .198$	1.087
Hamilton	-0.215	-0.037	$p = .026$	1.145
Age 35-44	0.520	0.125	$p < .001$	1.604
Age 45-54	0.645	0.151	$p < .001$	1.644
Age 55+	0.184	0.037	$p = .05$	1.551
Female	0.289	0.076	$p < .001$	1.027
Chinese/Japanese/Korean	-0.916	-0.109	$p < .001$	1.152
Latin American	-0.442	-0.033	$p = .035$	1.069
Arab/West Asian	-0.425	-0.037	$p = .021$	1.119
College Diploma	0.345	0.084	$p < .001$	1.156
Some University	0.465	0.085	$p < .001$	1.027
BA	0.760	0.199	$p < .001$	1.833
Graduate Degree	0.306	0.069	$p < .001$	1.441

n=3,805

Variables predicting a significant increase in community engagement levels were age, gender, and most types of education. All age groups had higher engagement levels than those aged 25-34. Women had slightly higher community engagement levels than men, with an increase of only about 0.3 points on the scale. Most forms of further education increased engagement, except for high school

diplomas and trade certificates, and obtaining a bachelor degree led to the highest increase in the model of about 0.76 points.

Ethnic identity had varying effects on engagement. Workers who identify as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Latin American, and or West Asian experienced high significant decreases in community engagement, with those identifying as Chinese, Japanese, or Korean scoring almost a full point less on the community engagement scale. People living in Hamilton also tended to be somewhat less involved in their communities, while other regions did not have an effect.

Surprisingly, citizenship status had no significant effect on community engagement. One might expect non-citizen workers to be either less involved in their community because of their precarious lifestyles, or more involved to resist increased precarity. With a larger sample size of non-citizens, there may have been different results. If the relationship between precarious work and citizenship were significant, temporary visa holders and refugees would experience the largest decrease in engagement, of 1.32 and 1.263 points respectively.

Discussion

The results I presented above provide several points for discussion. First, to address the research questions, precarious work does not appear to have a consistent overall effect on community engagement. By itself, precarious work seems to have an impact, so the apparent effect could be explained by the overrepresentation of marginalized groups in precarious work. One limitation to note is that the survey did not ask participants about participation in less state-driven activities such as protests or workplace organizing (the survey asked participants about union membership, but not their engagement in the union). To understand the full implications of precarious work for working class politics, further research is necessary to examine the effect on these types of activities. Furthermore, it may be that broader neoliberal individualism leads to a lack of community engagement rather than precarious work specifically, warranting more study on social predictors of community engagement levels.

Readers familiar with Lewchuk et al.'s (2015) research may note that these results differ from their study, which suggests entering secure work overall decreases community engagement (see p. 120). One major difference between their model and the one in this project is that Lewchuk's model includes volunteer hours. Their study also found insecure, low-income workers were less likely to volunteer for community or family-related reasons and more likely to volunteer for job-related reasons

(Lewchuk et al., 2015, p. 120). Since this study focuses specifically on community-related activities, it is important to account for precarious workers who are volunteering to benefit specific employers.

Precarious work also has various effects on individual community engagement activities. Contrary to expectations, precarious work increases engagement in as many activities as it decreases engagement in. Notable is that precarious workers participate less often in the only activities related to children's community and activities (enrolling children in sports and participating in school meetings). If precarious workers' children's needs are not prioritized within schools, they may struggle to meet the same educational achievements and thus face further insecurity in the future. Sports clubs are certainly not the only formal or informal activity available to children, but their reduced enrolment in sports clubs signals they may have fewer opportunities than other children, contributing to further isolation in the long term.

Social location has a complicated relationship with community engagement. Racialized workers generally take part in fewer community activities. While the effect could not be proved significant, landed immigrants, temporary visa holders, and refugees appeared to have much lower levels of engagement than Canadian citizens. Future studies on the subject should focus on or include higher numbers of non-citizens to understand how non-citizen workers take part in communities. Additionally, more educated workers are better connected to their communities than those without any educational qualifications. These numbers raise concerns about whether the precarious workers who can attend community events are likely to find solutions for precarity to assist the most vulnerable workers.

In contrast, women and older workers have higher levels of community engagement than do men and younger workers. While it is heartening to see women participating in their communities, the increase is not very high and raises concerns about women workers stretching themselves too thin. If women are responsible for a "second shift" of domestic work when they return from paid work (Wharton, 1994), additional community participation may be stressful. Activists and other community participants should be careful to avoid burnout. The effect of age is interesting: while older workers' increased participation could be attributed to their having less turbulent lives overall and being more settled into a lifestyle, many people consider activists to be younger. This raises questions about whether participants who scored highly on the community engagement index would consider themselves 'activists'.

The final point to consider is whether precarious work is an effective point of organization for the working class. It does not provide a blanket increase or decrease to community engagement. Since precarious work can occur in most if not all sectors, it is possible precarious workers do not have enough common interests to unite them politically or get them involved in non-workplace activities at the very least. Despite this issue, it should not go without notice that precarious workers are less likely to vote than workers in secure jobs, but they take part in more political meetings. Thus, precarious workers are potentially taking part in political meetings they consider more relevant to their interests more often than they are participating in parliamentary politics. Recent movements such as the Fight for \$15 campaign (Why we strike, n.d.) may point to a trend of increased activism for precarious workers who have identified their collective grievances.

Conclusion

It is unclear what solutions are necessary to increase community participation and political engagement for precarious workers. Enforcing policies that increase secure, standard employment could provide some temporary comfort. However, as discussed earlier, precarious work is a common characteristic of the working class. In many countries “precarious work” is the norm and does not represent a significant change (Jokela, 2017). It may be possible to slow or stop the perceived rise in insecure work, but this will not solve the working class’ root problem. Instead, there should be a focus on how to bring precarious workers into community and political activities even beyond those covered by this research. It is possible that workers will only be able to construct a narrative counter to neoliberal hegemony when they are self-organized, without influence from the neoliberal state.

Endnotes

1. For more detail on the index’s construction, see PEPSO’s report *The Precarity Penalty* (Lewchuk et al., 2015, pp. 170-171).
2. Dr. Wayne Lewchuk provided permission to use PEPSO data in this study.

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Section Two:
Contemporary Global Capitalism and Labour

Anthropogenic Climate Change, Displacement and Precarious Labour

Azin Emami

The movement of people in search of better climatic conditions has been a constant pattern in human history. However, this phenomenon has taken on a new dimension as climate change increasingly threatens landscapes and livelihoods of entire communities. The age of the Anthropocene is marked by major human impacts on the environment and has resulted in frequent and intense extreme weather events, such as floods, hurricanes and droughts, resulting in significant population displacement (Ionesco, Mokhnacheva and Gemenne 2017). This destruction has had a particularly negative impact on poor communities, producing an estimated 800 million displaced people worldwide (Sassen 2015, p. 150).

In many agrarian societies, shocks caused by anthropogenic climate change have pushed already marginalized populations further into poverty. These populations are often compelled to abandon their homelands on a semi-permanent or permanent basis with little hope of a foreseeable return. Initially, these populations become internally displaced and moved from rural to urban areas within their own home countries. However, in the absence of any international protection or recognition, these populations turn to precarious work. As such, capitalist systems trigger rural-urban movement through land displacements, the privatization of the commons, and the ultimate creation of property-less workers, who in turn to precarious labour markets. In the case of the Indian subcontinent, a region that is deeply impacted by extreme weather events, the Gulf region of the Middle East has drawn in many of these migrants as precarious labourers. This paper aims to examine the challenges that environmentally displaced people face, with a particular focus on migration from South Asia to Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The paper will demonstrate that environmentally displaced populations are dispossessed twice: first, when they are forced to leave their homes in order to escape environmental degradation; and then as migrant workers in the precarious labour economies of the GCC, which again deprives them of their most fundamental rights. The aim of the paper is thus twofold: to make a

theoretical contribution to the field of global labour studies by examining the ties between environmentally displaced populations and the formation of regional clusters of precarious labour, and to reveal the significance and dimensions of this phenomenon whereby environmentally displaced persons in one region become precarious labour migrants in another. More broadly, the paper aims to establish a link between the political economy of global capitalism, its relation to environmental displacement, and the ways in which the environment and capitalism are intertwined.

The Implications of Anthropogenic Climate Change for Marginalized Populations

A strong case can be made that environmental transformations currently underway are “larger in scale, riskier and more far reaching in their implications than ever before in human history” (Harvey 1998, p.3). While scholars of environmental justice mostly focus on contemporary (post-1982) examples of environmental injustice, colonized populations are quite familiar with the tendency of those in power to exert their power by manipulating resources and degrading the natural environment (Voyles 2015). Moreover, prevailing definitions of environmental issues contain a particular bias, with issues that affect the poor, marginalized and working classes being frequently overlooked. An examination of a few recent examples of environmental disasters demonstrates clearly that specific populations are often disproportionately exposed to environmentally-hazardous or degraded environments [1]. The small sample below reveals recurring patterns of environmental racism and “wastelanding” [2].

One of the clearest cases of environmental racism is Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, where 60.5 percent of the residents were African American at the time of the hurricane (Henkel, Dovidio & Gaertner 2006). The racial disparities in wealth that existed prior to Hurricane Katrina worsened its outcome for minority populations. The institutionalized racial segregation meant that minority members were more likely to live in areas that were more vulnerable to the devastating effects of the hurricane. Moreover, the evacuation plans relied on the use of cars and personal vehicles and overlooked the fact that “100,000 city residents had no cars and relied on public transit” (Hsu 2006). The city also failed to complete its mandatory evacuation, which resulted in more preventable deaths.

In Flint Michigan, one of the poorest cities in the US, with a 40 percent poverty rate and a majority African American population, the water contained enough lead to meet the Environmental Protection Agency’s definition of toxic waste (Craven & Tynes 2016). Complaints from Flint residents about the quality of the water were deliberately

ignored. Despite the government's awareness of tests revealing alarming levels of lead, officials told residents that there was no threat. The lead that has contaminated the river has led to numerous health conditions, the effects of which will not be known for years.

Similarly, in Canada, indigenous peoples have been denied clean water and many residents have been living under a "do not consume" water advisory (Klasing 2017). Neskantaga First Nation is surrounded by 281 square kilometers of water but has been under a 'boil water' advisory for 20 years. The community's water treatment plant stopped working in 1995 and the water has consistently tested positive for high levels of chlorine and other harmful chemicals including carcinogens (Vice 2015). When the Giant Gold mine opened across the Great Slave Lake in 1948, the locals were not warned that the mine was using a deadly form of arsenic that dissolved easily in water. Likewise, Shoal Lake 40 First Nation has not had clean drinking water in 17 years, with no significant improvements in recent years. While the government regulates water quality for the rest of Canada, there are no binding regulations for water on reserves (Human Rights Watch 2016).

Voyles's analysis of uranium mining on Navajo land also reveals that discoveries about the harmful effects of uranium mining processes did not lead to any changes in mining safety for workers or for the people living near uranium districts (Voyles 2015). Radiation-related diseases became endemic to many parts of Navajo Nation. More specifically, rates of cancer and respiratory diseases increased substantially within the Diné population, which was described in the 1950s as a population that had been immune to lung cancer (Voyles 2015, p.4). In this case as well, there was no concern for the populations that were affected by the destructive mining process. Instead, the landscapes and bodies affected by the destructive effects of the mining industry were rendered pollutable and insignificant.

These patterns of environmental racism are present at a global level as well. Alessandro Grassani's project: *Environmental Migration: The Last Illusion*, which is comprised of narratives of environment migrants reveals that 90 percent of the 200 million environmental migrants live in impoverished countries. Most of these migrants are populations that have benefited the least from industrial projects and yet they disproportionately face the economic and social burdens of their consequences. Moreover, most of these populations escape environmental destruction only to arrive in urban areas which are often already overcrowded and extremely poor. These areas then become targets for gentrification projects, adding yet another layer of complexity to the experiences of these populations.

It is important to consider the gendered implications of climate change. As Fanelli (2014) notes, the gendered implications of climate change vary in form and intensity. However, they must not be overlooked, particularly because women remain responsible for the majority of unpaid domestic labour and are expected to compensate for reductions in public services and programs as well as child and elder care, all of which are intensified with natural disasters, climate displacement, housing, food and water insecurity.

In all of the above examples, marginalized populations are the hardest hit by human-induced environmental devastation. They are deprived of the most essential components of life such as water, shelter, home, land and clean air. Despite being aware of the destructive effects of various industrial projects, the needs of residents in the above examples were systematically marginalized and rendered unimportant. The above examples are clear cases of environmental racism, which involves the deliberate segmentation of populations. These divisions have served to provide protection for some populations, while exposing others to a wide range of dangers.

Environmental Displacement in Bangladesh

Given the broader aim of this paper, there will be greater focus on Bangladesh in the remaining sections. The purpose is not to overlook the effects of anthropogenic climate change in other regions or on the planet as a whole. Rather, the focus on Bangladesh will serve to establish a link between environmental crises and labour migration patterns from Bangladesh to the Gulf region. This pattern could also become increasingly apparent in other regions that are disproportionately impacted by climate change.

Bangladesh contributes just 0.4 metric tonnes per capita to the carbon emissions which fuel climate change, by comparison to the US and UK, which produce 17.1 and 7.1 metric tonnes respectively (Rogers 2012). In fact, new research suggests that the climate crisis of the 21st century has been caused largely by just 90 companies, which are responsible for producing nearly two-thirds of the greenhouse gas emissions generated since the beginning of the industrial age. Yet, Bangladesh is often identified as being at heightened risk of suffering some of the worst consequences of climate change, due to its exposure to sea level rise, extreme events, dense populations and multidimensional poverty (ICCAD Briefing 2014).

Within the next three decades, the country is expected to be at least 2°C warmer and by 2080, the seas could be two feet higher. Bangladesh's climate change scientists and politicians concur that by 2050, rising sea levels will inundate approximately 17

percent of the land and displace approximately 18 million people (Harris 2014). According to the Global Humanitarian Forum (2009), climate change is already responsible for 300,000 deaths a year and has affected 300 million people. The report also suggests that approximately 98 percent of the people seriously affected, 99 percent of all deaths from weather-related diseases, and 90 percent of the total economic losses are now borne by developing countries. The populations most at risk are in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and the small states in the Pacific. The country's previously vast rice fields and agricultural land, which provided valuable sources of employment for rural communities, have been replaced by export-based shrimp farms. Many Bangladeshis have already begun to move away from the lowest lying villages near the Bay of Bengal (Harris 2014). These patterns support the idea that capitalist systems often drive urbanization processes [3].

According to the World Bank, at least 400,000 people move to Dhaka each year, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that 70 percent of Dhaka's slum dwellers moved there in order to escape some sort of environmental shock. Rahman (2012) has estimated that as many as 1.5 million people out of the 5 million inhabitants of Bangladesh's capital, Dhaka, moved from villages near the Bay of Bengal and surveys conducted by Rahman indicate that the residents of the delta do not wish to migrate and that moving to slums in already crowded cities is their least preferred option.

Whereas before, rural poverty was the key determinant of rural-urban migration in Bangladesh, climate change is increasingly accelerating the process of urban migration. This pattern corroborates the UNHCR's finding that it is becoming increasingly difficult to categorize displaced people because of the combined impacts of the environment, conflict and economic pressures (McAdam & Loughry 2009). Unfortunately, those who migrate to the capital city often end up in slums that are also built on low-lying land, rendering them almost as vulnerable to inundation as the land that they left behind (Harris 2014).

Climate Change and Migration

The available literature on climate change and migration patterns indicates that there are complex linkages between climate change and human mobility (UNHCR 2008). The UNHCR projects that over time, climate change will trigger larger and more complex movements of populations, both within and across borders, with the possibility of rendering entire populations stateless. Some sources suggest that the number of

people seeking refuge from environmental degradation is growing more rapidly than any other refuge-seeking group and that migration in response to environmental degradation is becoming the most pervasive form of forced migration in the 21st century (Aminzadeh 2006). Thus, as Baldwin (2014) suggests, while ‘non-deterministic and non-linear climatic’ variations can never be the sole cause of migration, if we are willing to accept the science of climate change, which predicts various forms of geophysical destruction, then such disruptions must somehow affect human movement. It is also important to examine how these movements in turn influence global labour patterns.

The rise in global temperatures and the accompanying ecological disasters have reduced the productivity of many lands and accelerated the urbanization process. Thus, it is foreseeable that the majority of movements motivated by climate change and environmental degradation will occur within countries. However, as demonstrated above, urban centres are often not hospitable to those seeking protection from ecological disasters. The additional scarcity of resources and public services in cities around the globe create further complications in rural-urban migration flows. In such instances, increased cross-border movement is also likely (Guterres 2008).

It must be noted that with the increased securitization of borders, there are additional legal barriers that make it increasingly difficult for displaced populations to move across international borders (Barnett & Weber 2009). In Bangladesh, for example, neighbouring India and Burma have been very reluctant to absorb the increasing number of migrants. India has been so concerned about environmentally displaced populations arriving from Bangladesh that it has built a 2,500-mile-long-wall, with plans to electrify portions of it (McKibben 2011).

The Question of Recognition

Existing migration policies are rooted in a binary understanding of migration, dating back to the post war period. The notion of a ‘well-founded fear of persecution’ lies at the heart of the existing international refugee regime. Thus, unless it is accepted by all signatory parties that climate change and natural disasters can act as persecutors, the term refugee, as subscribed by 1951 Convention, will not be applicable to these populations (Barnett & Weber 2009). The only exception in which populations fleeing natural disasters might be recognized as refugees would be in cases where refugee movements are provoked by armed conflict, but initially rooted in environmental factors. This has occurred in the Darfur region of Sudan, for example, where a decrease in vital resources triggered armed conflict and violence (Renaud et al 2007).

Chimni (2000) has argued that the condition of a ‘well-founded fear of persecution,’ has meant that most refugees from the Global South will continue to remain *de facto* excluded from the existing refugee protection regime, since their departure is often caused by natural disasters, war, or political and economic turmoil, rather than by persecution. Likewise, Bell’s (2004) analysis provides a critical examination of the existing mechanisms for addressing the plight of environmental refugees. Bell suggests that it is necessary to first reframe our understanding of climate change refugees, by considering the importance of place and home in people’s lives. This is particularly important because the populations most likely to be displaced by climate change often also have a closer attachment to the land and community that they share that home than with those who are less likely to face displacement (Bell 2004).

In instances where inhabitants of island nations may be forced to leave their country as a result of rising sea levels and flooding, further complications arise. The possibility of the complete displacement of a population is entirely unprecedented and presents an increased risk of statelessness (Park 2011). Although the UNHCR has a mandate specifically for the prevention of statelessness and the protection of stateless persons, specific arrangements would have to be made in order to prevent statelessness caused by natural disasters (UNHCR Working Paper 2008). Some scholars have proposed the resettlement of entire communities in order to reduce their exposure to climate change crises. However, resettled groups arguably face the greatest risks to their livelihoods and human rights (Barnett & Weber 2009). In the absence of some durable legal status, displaced populations could experience further restrictions on their freedom of movement, and/or face obstacles in finding employment, accessing property, or securing basic healthcare.

Precarious Labour

While environmentally-induced displacements lead to catastrophic circumstances in certain regions, adjacent or nearby countries with steady labour demands use this reservoir of displaced people as new recruits for their workforce, though often in heavily curtailed terms leading to bonded labour practices and precariousness. It must be stated at the outset that the *kafala* system in the GCC countries is by no means an exception. Similar migration schemes exist in Canada and throughout the world (see Balkisoon 2016; Lenard and Staehle 2017). Domestic and international migration schemes share the characteristic of recruiting foreign workers on a temporary basis, to work in precarious industries, with little protection or recognition from the sponsor or

state in question [4]. In the absence of citizenship rights, migrant workers often cannot circulate freely in the labour market. This in turn creates a further power imbalance between migrant workers and their employers and increases the migrant workers' vulnerability to exploitation.

The Gulf Cooperation Council's workforce is overwhelmingly non-national and the degree of dependence on non-national workers is greatest in some of the smaller Gulf states (Birks 1988). The first surge of migration flows to the region began with the 1973 oil boom and subsequent undertaking of a large number of development projects, which in turn resulted in a rapid rise in the demand for foreign labour in the Gulf region (Rahman 2012). With the onset of neoliberal reforms, there has been a general decline in wage levels for non-nationals throughout the region. Wages have fallen up to 45 percent since 1983 (Birks 1988). Simultaneously, there have been socioeconomic and environmental changes across the Indian subcontinent. This includes increases in the extent and severity of natural disasters, declining crop yields, availability of mountain products, reductions in the diversity of mountain agriculture and a decline in water flows from local sources resulting in growing food insecurity (Hoermann, Banerjee & Kollmair 2010).

In the absence of any alternative means of securing a livelihood, labour migration has become a livelihood strategy for affected populations throughout the Indian subcontinent. Most prospective migrants originate from villages. However, the rapid urbanization of South Asia has meant that cities have increasingly become overcrowded and inhospitable to these rural migrants. Thus, the neighbouring Gulf countries, with their heavy demands for foreign labour have become a seemingly better destination. In 1976, Bangladesh launched a government agency called the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) in order to seize the opportunity for temporary employment in GCC countries (Rahman 2012). According to BMET, around 5.3 million Bangladeshi migrants joined the GCC labour force between 1976 and 2010. (BMET, n.d.). The construction industry is one of the largest employment sectors in the GCC and workers predominantly come from India, Nepal, Bangladesh and the Philippines, all places that are deeply affected by environmental disasters. The approach of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar and related projects have required the recruitment of thousands of new migrants in a short time frame. The estimated number of additional workers needed to complete World Cup and related infrastructure projects range from 500,000 to one million (Human Rights Watch 2012). Ironically,

environmentally displaced people are recruited to partake in development projects with detrimental impacts on the environment.

Several institutions play a key role in recruiting transient labour from South Asia to the GCC. This includes employers who directly recruit prospective migrants, public employment services, and private and for-profit recruitment agencies (Martin 2005, 2006). Gradually, direct employers and public employment services have substantially declined, while migrant networks and private agents have increased worldwide (Martin 2005). Increasingly, actors involved in the migration industry are charging fees for prospective migrants, who require work visas, resulting in the commercialization of network-assisted recruitment (Rahman 2012). The additional problems that arise from indebtedness through recruitment fees have left both documented and undocumented migrants more vulnerable to exploitation. In a sense, these migrants become dispossessed a second time by trying to escape the destination that they thought would provide them with new opportunities, which instead leaves them trapped in jobs they never agreed to, receiving salaries far below what they expected, and lacking the practical means to return to their homes.

Nevertheless, some scholars have suggested that labour migration can be seen as a positive adaptation response to ecological disasters. For example, Savage and Harvey have suggested that remittances greatly reduce the vulnerability of communities recovering from natural disasters (Savage & Harvey 2007). In the Pacific Islands, a migration scheme known as the 'Pacific Access Category Resident Visa' was introduced in order to encourage migration from Kiribati, Tuvalu, Tanga and Fiji to New Zealand. Susin Park's report for the UNHCR Legal and Protection Policy Research Series suggests that these labour migration quotas could help expose Pacific islanders to different cultures and lifestyles and gather additional remittances to invest in local adaptation measures.

However, the above-mentioned scholars overlook the potential human rights violations that could occur under circumstances where labourers lack legal recognition and are dependent on the host country for recognition. Despite forming the majority of the workforce, there are very few rights for migrant workers in Gulf countries and they are often denied citizenship. The confiscation of passports and other identity documents, which serves to restrict workers' freedom of movement, remains a common practice in Gulf countries and has been identified by the ILO as an indicator of forced labour [5].

Migrant workers are often exploited and subjected to discrimination, denied basic rights and paid less than their local counterparts (Barnett & Weber 2009). Moreover, field studies in Nepal and India have concluded that increased workload in labour-sending countries has had a detrimental impact on women's health, leading to a rise in mental tension and physical stress, particularly for women heading nuclear families. Remittances often do not reach families who have remained in the export-sending countries or are not substantial (Hoermann, Banerjee & Kollmair 2010). Thus, if migration schemes are to be a part of adaptation measures, they will need to be accompanied by humanitarian protections and labour rights.

Conclusion

There is an intricate balance between the extremes of accepting apocalyptic discourses of an unavoidable crisis on the one hand and the complete denial of scientific facts that support anthropogenic climate change on the other. Nevertheless, a number of sources have demonstrated that there can no longer be speculation on the existence of climate change or its consequences [6]. Anthropogenic climate change has had a range of humanitarian consequences, which are often not given sufficient consideration in public policy. This includes a lack of recognition for affected parties and undermining the possibility of statelessness and the increased exposure to precarious labour markets.

As one government official in Kiribati observed, climate change often exacerbates preexisting pressures, such as overcrowding, unemployment, environmental factors and economic development, resulting in a tipping point, which would could not have been reached otherwise (McAdam & Loughry 2009, p.479). Thus, it is important to consider the ways in which climate change has aggravated existing social, economic or environmental pressures. In the absence of improved political and economic institutions to reduce poverty and marginality, environmental change will continue to be an important determining factor in migration decisions (Barnett & Weber 2009). Once we begin to conceive of natural resources as more than resources that can be perpetually renewed or substituted, as Bell (2004) suggests, we might become more reluctant to make decisions that uproot entire populations and leave people stateless and homeless.

Endnotes

1. Industrial modernity is a system with little regard for the natural environment, based on the industrial production of commodities, which operates as a set of class relations between those who own the means of production and those with only their labour to sell.
2. Volyes defines the wasteland as “a racial and spatial signifier that renders an environment and the bodies that inhabit it pollutable.” She argues that wastelanding takes two primary forms. First, there is an assumption that non-white lands are valueless or valuable only for what can be extracted from them. This assumption then allows for the devastation of these environments by polluting industries. Certain landscapes become sacrificial lands that allow industrial modernity to continue to grow and make profits. Moreover, Volyes demonstrates the ways in which racialized lands are deliberately construed as unimportant or uninhabitable and represented as worthless. This then allows for these lands to be systematically stripped of their material and ideological worth.
3. David Harvey (1989, 54) has argued that “it is through urbanization that the surpluses are mobilized, produced, absorbed, and appropriated and that it is through urban decay and social degradation that the surpluses are devalued and destroyed.”
4. Globally, economies are increasingly relying on temporary labour migration programs. Often, these programs are presented as a solution for domestic economies facing labour shortages and for their contribution to development assistance (Lenard and Staehle 2017, 283).
5. According to the ILO Convention on Forced Labour (No. 29), forced or compulsory labour “shall mean all work or services which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the same person has not offered himself voluntarily”.
6. A 2013 peer-reviewed study confirms that over 97 percent of scientific articles find that global warming is real and largely caused by humans. See Union of Concerned Scientists (n.d.).

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Neoliberalization, Municipal Governance, and Mining Resistance: Case Studies from Oaxaca, Mexico

John P. Hayes

Mexico's distinct process of political decentralization, beginning in the 1980s, has coincided with a new moment of neoliberalization and a massive influx of foreign direct investment that has greatly influenced the restructuring of mining industry-state relations. For several indigenous municipalities in rural Oaxaca, these changes have resulted in local development priorities coming face-to-face with the interests of domestic and international mining capital. This tension illuminates a central paradox in Mexico's political decentralization: while article 27 of the Constitution decrees that all territory is the property of the state, including clauses guaranteeing protection of common lands (ejidos and comunidades agrarias), several Constitutional amendments and alterations to Mexico's mining law have allowed the state to auction off swaths of common lands, in the form of long-term concessions, to private entities. This change was enacted, in part, to create favourable investment conditions and is one component of a wider strategy of neoliberalization of Mexico's once corporatist, state-led economy. However, along with economic change and the breakdown of centralized governance has been a unique opportunity for rural and indigenous municipalities to seize more autonomy over local governance. This article explores the possibility of whether autonomous municipalities are able to fulfil their public policy objectives while also confronting mineral extraction. With a comparative lens, this paper examines successes and setbacks among municipalities in Oaxaca and explores local particularities that have enhanced or impeded specific mining resistance strategies. While imperfect, I conclude that there are cases warranting further attention where indigenous municipalities in Oaxaca have embedded autonomous forms of governance within civic politics in a way that have strengthened modes of collective accumulation and bolstered opposition to mineral extraction projects.

Decentralization

Oaxaca is a strong case study from which to examine the debate surrounding decentralization as potentially opportunistic for anti-neoliberal governance at the subnational level. In the most basic sense, political decentralization is the process of transferring power from the national level to state and municipal governments (O'Toole, 2011). In the case of natural resource governance, it entails the passing of industrial licensing, environmental regulatory design, and planning concerning water and land use to local government (Bartley et al., 2008). The rearrangement of state interventions in the public policy sphere, from the national to the subnational level, is a topic of great debate in terms of new political opportunities for mobilizing popular sectors of society. For example, Thomas Perreault (2012) understands decentralization to provide the possibilities of "new forms of transcendent coalition politics." In the case of federal states in Latin America such as Mexico, it has also been argued that decentralization is linked to greater accountability at the municipal level, via increased participation of pre-existing organizations such as ejido committees, peasant union locals, and village councils (Faguet, 2012). Proponents consider decentralization to be a process that will ultimately encourage democratic participation, make public services more efficiently delivered to the citizenry, and "reduce the scale of policy implementation, which can also help tailor a closer fit between citizens' preferences and a government's actions" (Selee 2011, p. 7). This is a common line of argumentation in Mexican decentralization, as much of the process was contemporaneous to what has been generally framed as the democratization period.

Others have pointed out that decentralization has occurred under the logic of creating new regulatory regimes for the purposes of gradual neoliberal policy implementation. In this process, the state will maintain a key role in constraining subnational challenges to national policy frameworks and enforcing market-based mechanisms of capital accumulation. Sharzer (2011), for example, argues that: "Localism fails to understand how capitalism works as a system governed by tendencies to centralization and crisis...local development schemes are themselves embedded in and thus severely limited by the global economy" (p. 241). Understanding decentralization as a tool of neoliberal policy implementation by domestic elites is a key perspective in this debate, which Peck, Theodore, and Brenner (2010) theorize as a dynamic and adroit process, stating, "neoliberalization should be conceived as a hegemonic restructuring ethos, as a dominant pattern of (incomplete and contradictory) regulatory transformation" (p. 103-104).

Neoliberalization as an incomplete process is readily seen in the ways in which Mexico, historically a highly centralized state, has incorporated past governing structures that might appear antithetical to neoliberal policies, with key processes of privatization. Tetreault (2016) discusses this in regard to Mexico's mineral sector, specifically critiquing some anti-mining activists and critical empiricists that he argues have overstated the privatization of state-run Mexican mining companies. Tetreault points out that state-run mining enterprises and domestic monopolies, in fact, remain highly involved in mineral extraction and have selectively opened the market to foreign mining capital, which affirms the idea of neoliberalization as a gradual process that can mobilize and co-opt preexisting power structures.

Oaxacan Municipal Governance

Before examining specific case studies, I will begin by briefly summarizing the structural changes made to Mexican federalism that created the political opportunity in which autonomous municipalities could proliferate in rural Oaxaca. In 1995, the state government of Oaxaca administered a decree allowing all municipalities to vote on how to structure municipal governance. Municipalities could remain tied into the civic and national political party system, or, with full legal recognition, change to non-partisan, customary laws of the *usos y costumbres* (uses and customs) system of participatory democracy (Díaz-Cayeros, Magaloni, and Ruiz-Euler, 2013). Broadly stated, the *usos y costumbres* system is a highly variant communalist approach to indigenous governance among the Mixe, Zapotec, and other groups. While divergent in terms of structure, these non-partisan municipalities are typically reliant on citizen assemblies and public voting. Two social institutions embody the community service realm of *usos y costumbres*: *cargos*, which are community administrative positions--judicial, policing, and leadership; and *tequios*, which are unpaid community service-based work quotas--infrastructural improvements, conservation of resources, and shared agriculture (Díaz-Cayeros et al., 2013; Robson and Weist, 2014). Decentralization, combined with the state-led reform of 1995 allowed *usos y costumbres* to interweave with municipal governance in a way that harmonized the objectives of civil and community organizations and streamlined consultation processes in regard to public development (Díaz-Cayeros et al., 2014; Robson & Weist, 2014). If centralized political power represented the idea of scaling down economic and social development policy from the federal to the local level, then under decentralization, indigenous

municipalities were handed an opportunity to “scale up” participatory democracy, by placing collective identity within formalized civic municipal associations (Fox, 2007).

González Rivas (2014), examining the case of management of water access, argues that it is important to consider case-by-case particularities of local participation and shared capacity to improve projects of collective importance. For highland communities reliant on agriculture and ranching, a major concern is access to uncontaminated streams and rivers. Just like other public utilities and public infrastructure, water management has been handed down to state and municipal authorities. González (2014) finds that the rural community of San Bartolomé, within an *usos y costumbres* municipality, has had success in improving their water services. He argues that “the main distinguishing characteristic of the community is its history of collective action...the results suggest that the community’s progress in the decentralized process is due to this advantage” (p. 3). In another study, Díaz-Cayeros et al. (2013) find that communities under *usos y costumbres* are more successful at expanding electricity coverage in terms of absolute numbers of household access. Therefore, the ways in which communities organize themselves into public assemblies to discuss projects that are needed is an important dimension in understanding whether autonomous governance aids social development. Of the 73 percent of Oaxacan municipalities that voted to govern based on the *usos y costumbres* system, the use of *tequios* to carry out public infrastructure projects means that there is no competition for contracts and therefore less risk of local elites choking off access to contracts to fulfill public services (Fox, 2007). In the party municipalities, governing elites are more prone to provide this enumerated work to patronage networks (Díaz-Cayeros et al., 2013). In this way, the hybridization of *tequios* within municipal frameworks showcases a unique form of embeddedness wherein informal practices and formal political frameworks converge as a highly novel practice of fulfilling public infrastructure projects.

Municipalities now directly oversee where public spending is to be used. However, the transfer of revenues from property taxes, sales of patrimonial goods, subsidies, citizens donations, federal revenue allocation, and debt contracted from commercial and development banks remain under the administrative discretion of the federal government (Assetto, Hajba, and Mumme, 2011; González, 2014). In short, funds specifically designed for social development projects flow directly from federal development agencies to the municipality (Díaz-Cayeros et al., 2013). In this arrangement, an important paradox in Mexican politics is illuminated, whereby the

distribution of public revenues remains federally controlled, albeit in a context of decentralization, which assumes greater powers of the municipal and state governments. This means many non-partisan and autonomous municipalities remain beholden to the priorities of federal development initiatives (González, 2014). This paradox present in the regulatory framework of Mexican public spending elucidates what is understood to be the “incomplete and contradictory regulatory transformation” of neoliberalism (Peck et al., 2011). Rather than creating a full transformative, ideal, and utopian form of governance, neoliberalization reconstitutes pre-existing regimes of regulation and social life for the purposes of tightening control over land, labour, and resources. Those long-standing social asymmetries at the local scale then become mechanisms of social discipline. Such mechanisms might include long-embedded but informal patronage networks (Selee, 2011), technocratic enclaves in municipalities that are more developed than others (González, 2014), or party municipalities that are simply willing to fulfill the immediate policies of wider federal interests.

Certain cases show that social development programmes like Procampo (an income cash subsidy program for farmers) and Oportunidades (the federal cash payment program for families) are mobilized by federal development agencies to gain favour with local populations that are sympathetic to specific industrial projects (Díaz-Cayeros et al., 2013; Justice for San José del Progreso, 2013). As will be explored in the following section’s examination of mineral extraction, conflicts arise around economic activities that are prioritized by the Mexican federal government but opposed by municipalities. Transferring funds for social development and infrastructural upgrades might be a case where the state withholds or disseminates funds based on compliance with extractive industries (González Rivas, 2014). Procampo also shows that the federal government sends mixed policy messages by subsidizing certain farmers to make agriculture more tenable in a context of liberalized agricultural markets and low commodity prices, while also encroaching upon the same areas and depleting water sources for mining operations (Justice for San José del Progreso, 2013). Due to the given political opportunity of decentralization, many municipalities have reacted to the paradoxical nature of Mexico’s role by organizing within and across municipal assemblies and civil society groups to confront encroachments of extractive industries.

Mining

Mining is a catalyst in several conflicts between a number of Oaxacan municipalities and the federal government. Mexico attracts the most FDI in mineral exploration of any nation in Latin America and also maintains large domestic mining operations (Tetreault, 2015; 2016). Due to high global demands for minerals, investment rose 550 percent between 2004 and 2007 (Bebbington and Bury, 2013). The Mexican federal government owns all subsurface rights in the nation, which is enshrined under article 27 of the Mexican Constitution of 1917 (Estrada Ochoa 2006). Singh and Bourgooin (2013) point out that state ownership can lead to rent seeking: “the new discovery of minerals and petroleum in a developing country requires simultaneous state reforms to manage the sudden influx of revenues and to use resource rents strategically for economic growth” (p. 7). Bebbington and Bury (2013) recognize a similar trend in land management:

the dominance of the concession also reveals how deeply extractivism is embedded in these countries; constitutions claim the subsoil for the nation... to gain access to this subsoil, concession holders still have to negotiate with owners of subsurface rights...though in most instances concession holders have been supported by national authorities in this process, [knowing] they have privileged rights to convert any resource discoveries into a project for extraction (p. 246).

Under early neoliberalization of the 1980s, mining was a major sector targeted for privatization, and three of the most significant state mining companies were sold off at “fire sale prices” (Tetreault, 2015). To make this politically legitimate, legislative amendments were necessary. The Mining Law of 1992 introduced federal legislative changes to make Mexico more attractive to foreign investors and mining prospectors (Estrada Ochoa, 2006; MICLA; Sánchez Salazar, 2010). Section 4 from the secretary of the economy’s Investor Manual on the Mexican Mining Sector states the following: “institutions and the regulatory framework guarantee the property rights, protect the operation of the productive activities and ensure transparency on obligations and procedures” (Government of Mexico, 2016, p. 12). Further, the manual states:

article 27 of the national constitution establishes the Nation’s domain over each and every natural resource found within its territory, including minerals.

It also establishes that the exploitation of such resources from particular beings or societies constituted according to Mexican laws can be done through concessions granted by the Federal government, in accordance with the rules and conditions established by the law (Government of Mexico, 2016, p. 11).

Most pervasively, article 19 of the investor's guide rules a mining concession holder to expropriate or temporarily occupy lands if it fails to reach an agreement with landowners. Essentially, the mining law of 1992 ensures that land titles and concessions cannot be easily rescinded from mining operations, extends the duration of titles, and guarantees the rights of the mining sector over the rights of common agricultural lands, ejidos, and the land claims of rural municipalities.

The federal government is tasked with navigating environmental concerns and constraints placed on them via their participation in global trade networks. For example, chapter 11 of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Investor-State trade dispute mechanism allows companies to sue governments for potential loss of profits if the government rescinds exploratory permits (Caulfield, 2010; Estrada Ochoa, 2006). The state would rather allow encroachment onto common lands and send in the police when communities resist the arrival of mining operations (Paley, 2014; Treat, 2012), than be sued and settle in the hundreds of millions of dollars against foreign mining companies for a loss of profit (Caulfield, 2010). Thus, the Mexican state is most beholden to the interests of capital. In this way, state control over minerals is a huge liability to rural populations and represents a contradictory regulatory framework that is indicative of neoliberalization as a gradual transformative process (Peck et al., 2011). Further, it creates tensions in local level politics, especially in autonomous municipalities rich in mineral resources.

Due to the capital-intensive nature of mining, which uses skilled labour from beyond the reach of local communities, and the immediate depletion of water sources that mining operations cause, there is little popular will for mining operations in the highlands of Oaxaca (Cruz Martínez, 2007; Paley, 2014; Treat, 2012). Svampa (2015) points to the fact that large scale mining operations only generate between 0.5 and 2 jobs for every \$1 million invested (p. 66). The state is well aware of the damage that industrial mining creates and has taken care in recent years to expand public relations campaigns to maintain global investment in Mexican mineral deposits (Estrada Ochoa, 2006). According to the General Agency of Mining Development (DGDM [Spanish

acronym], under the Secretary of the Economy), stated goals of the mining sector aim to “create positive conditions to root populations intending to migrate [and] foster co-existence and agreements among the residents of the communities and populations to work jointly and/or to make them participants and the to benefit from the activity” (Government of Mexico, 2017). The DGDM makes use of four case studies in their public relations campaigns, two of which are in regions of Oaxaca that are actually ensnared in violent disputes over the presence of the mines: Ejutla de Crespo, where over 90 percent of ejido land has been given as concessions to mining exploration (Desinforménos, 2016) and Mina Tres Océtes.

Resistance

This final section approaches the question of whether decentralization has engendered collective resistance to mineral extraction in the Oaxacan highlands. Empirical investigations below show conflicting results (Díaz-Cayeros et al., 2013; Treat, 2012). On one hand, decentralization has passed along local planning to municipalities and provides the political space for culturally localized pre-extractive worldviews (Fox, 2007). On the other, control over public funds by the federal state creates a channel for continuations of patronage within both usos y costumbres and party municipalities (Díaz-Cayeros et al., 2013). The complex interconnections across scales of governance create contradictions and tensions within the case of Oaxaca that yields unclear results in terms of resistance.

There are cases where municipalities have joined together in regional coalitions to bargain with state and federal governments, as well as to employ direct action against the incursions of mining concession holders (Fox, 2007; NSS Oaxaca, 2017). The Coordinadora de los Pueblos Unidos del Valle de Ocotlán (COPUVO), and the solidarity between municipalities within the highland regions of Ejutla and Ocotlán are both examples of regionally specific cross-municipal organizations that have used both informal and formal nodes of community organizing to resist the encroachment of mining operations (NSS Oaxaca, 2017). There are two flagship mining conflicts that triggered the formation of COPUVO: the first is in San José Del Progreso at the Cuzcatlán mine, which is co-owned by Canadian firms Fortuna Silver Mines and Continuum Resources Ltd., and the second is in Calpulalpam de Méndez, also owned by Continuum (Cruz Martínez, 2007; Desinforménos, 2016; Treat, 2012). A key grievance in both cases is the depletion of water supplies. In the latter case, it took only seven years for 65 percent of water sources to dry up due to mineral extraction

(Cruz Martínez, 2007). Based on collective resistance by area farmers, Calpulalpam's usos y costumbres municipal council, and public mobilizations in Oaxaca's capital city (NSS Oaxaca, 2017), the federal government rescinded the mining licence on environmental grounds after making a retroactive environmental risk and impact assessment (Cruz Martínez, 2007). In the case of San José del Progreso, town residents are divided along pro-mining and anti-mining lines, and the mayor at the height of repression against opponents was a supporter of the mine (Treat, 2012). According to "Justice for San José del Progreso," (2013) a Civilian Observation Mission Report, there is documented evidence of clientelism in the form of capture of government programs and initiatives, namely Procampo and Oportunidades, for redistribution to families that support the mine. The municipal government seeks to discredit COPUVO and community members adversely affected by the mining operations, showing that in this case, local government has bent to the will of extractive companies. The two cases thus show divergences in how mining resistances can turn out based on the embeddedness of traditional governance within the municipal civic framework.

Conclusion

The emphasis on open council meetings and direct participation by citizens in policy decision making across usos y costumbres municipalities represent a unique political structure that can aid in the defense of common lands tenure and secure the embeddedness of indigenous governance in civic municipal politics. The endurance of direct participation in usos y costumbres is not generally mirrored in party municipalities, which now constitute a minority of rural municipalities and where political action at the municipal level remains instilled in closed-balloting and political party competition. While imperfect due to the enduring control of public funds by the federal government, decentralization has opened up political participation in ways that did not exist prior to 1995. More than three-quarters of municipalities in Oaxaca now govern based on the usos y costumbres model of participatory democracy and pool resources based on modes of accumulation rooted in communal land tenure. However, as was seen in the regional cases surrounding the defense of land and water systems as well as strategies of mining resistance, there is tremendous variation in the successes and pitfalls of applying the usos y costumbres model. Activism rooted in regional civil society groups such as COPUVO, combined with unified responses from both inter-municipal and intra-municipal assemblies have challenged mining operations

and compelled the government to rescind concessions in areas with particularly severe human and ecological degradation, such as Calpulalpam de Méndez. As evident in the case of San José del Progreso, there are a multitude of factors that converge to make community-led resistance against the federal state and the mining industry succeed or fail. The incursion of heavy industrial activities in Oaxaca will continue well into the 21st century. There has been mineral extraction taking place there since the Spanish conquest of the Americas and the granting of mining concessions does not show any indication of slowing down.

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The Unsupported Crowd: Exclusion of Indian Workers in Amazon Mechanical Turk Communities

Kristy Milland

Amazon Mechanical Turk ("mTurk") is an online platform where employers, called requesters, post piecework, and workers, many of whom call themselves "Turkers," complete that work for pay. Turkers collect in online communities, such as forums and Facebook groups, to share information about Turking—information that helps some of them earn a living wage (Martin, Hanrahan, O'Neill, & Gupta, 2014a). MTurk has been widely adopted and celebrated in academic research, both in computing (see Heer & Bostock, 2010; and Kittur, Chi, & Suh, 2008) and social science (Paolacci & Chandler, 2014; Paolacci, Chandler, & Ipeirotis, 2010). While early research focused on how to most effectively use mTurk as a resource, in the last few years greater attention has been given to ethical considerations involved in using the platform—how, for example, workers are being used as research subjects and whether their treatment is fair (e.g., Busarovs, 2013; Fort, Adda, & Cohen, 2011; Gupta, Martin, Hanrahan, & O'Neill, 2014; Kingsley, Gray, & Suri, 2014; Martin et al., 2014a;). The makeup of these communities—and how they include or exclude members based on characteristics such as gender, race, age, or nationality—has not been widely studied, despite a large body of research on inclusion and exclusion in voluntary online communities (e.g., Collier & Bear, 2012; Forte et al., 2012; Geiger & Ribes, 2010; Gelley, 2013; Lampe & Johnston, 2005).

This paper first looks at the academic literature produced on mTurk. This is followed by an explanation of the methods used, both quantitative and qualitative, to better understand the experience of Indian Turkers. Findings are then assessed to illustrate through numbers and narrative what working on mTurk and being part of mTurk communities is like for Indian Turkers. This data indicates that discrimination is common and potentially stands as a barrier to community involvement and increased earnings for workers in India. A case study of an Indian Turker who has been fully able to participate in the broader Turker community and become a leader in worker organizing is presented next, examining his viewpoints on what might be standing between Indian workers and greater inclusion. Lastly, a discussion on directions for

future work determines what concrete steps might be taken in order to enable Indian Turkers in finding a place in Turker communities and thus be able to access the tools they need to earn a decent income through their work.

Studies of mTurk

mTurk is a relatively new platform, having only been launched in October 2005 (Amazon Web Services, 2006); but the shortage of research on the lived experience of workers is remarkable—all the more so when one considers the vast, interdisciplinary, and sometimes troubling literature that aims to support *requesters* in their attempts to make data collection through mTurk faster, cheaper, and more efficient [1].

Morris, Dontcheva, and Gerber (2012), for example, discuss how ‘priming’ can be used to improve the quality of the results of Turk workers. Priming is a psychological technique used to force subjects into a specific mindset and alter their behaviours. Morris et al. focus on performance gains for the requester; they do not consider at all whether workers *want* to be manipulated in this fashion. Paolacci et al. (2010) investigate Turker demographics, showing that over one-third hail from India. The authors advise that requesters keep in mind that Turkers do not disappear at year's end as undergraduate students do, and that Turkers have indirect avenues for ‘retaliating’ against requesters who misrepresent their tasks. Citing prior work, they even write that "in principle requesters can offer workers wages that are disproportionately low [...] with little concern since data quality seems to be not affected by payments" (p. 417). The question of whether it is morally acceptable to do so, however, is not addressed.

Some studies focus on the ethical issues surrounding mTurk, such as low wages, lack of collective bargaining rights and recourse when wronged by an employer, and other serious vulnerabilities (Fort et al., 2011). Other studies argue that because workers themselves seldom claim to be exploited, they are not (e.g., Horton, 2011; Busarovs, 2013). In this category, Busarovs (2013) claims that the "small compensation [offered by] routine crowdsourcing [tasks] is adequate income" for people in "third world countries" (p. 13).

Bederson and Quinn (2011) document the fact that the platform itself does not adequately support the workers, driving them to create their own tools and forums in order to create the shared information resources necessary to make work on mTurk lucrative. As mTurk is a "market for lemons," where the requester cannot judge the quality of the product they will receive before pricing their Human Intelligence Tasks (HIT), this leads to lower pay up front and lower quality results in return. This not only

drives away 'good' workers, but also decreases the quality of the market itself. What they fail to question is who might be left working on the platform after this process, and how those people so desperate as to work in a market where they are undervalued might be further, and continually, exploited.

In general, existing mTurk-focused studies mainly focus on the platform from the lens of the requester. With a few exceptions (e.g., Martin et al., 2014a; Martin et al., 2014b; Gupta et al., 2014), when they do analyze Turkers it is largely to provide a description of their demographics.

Methods

This paper is informed by almost ten years of participation and observation as a professional mTurk worker and requester, and as the community manager of Turker Nation—the oldest mTurk worker community. I have spent the last two years as a researcher investigating who works on mTurk, how they work and why they work. The specific findings presented here were arrived at through focused, quantitative investigation of the presence of Indian workers in forums currently available to them. I compare this quantitative data with the number of Indian workers on mTurk. To build upon the numbers with data that represents the experience of Indian Turkers, I also conducted multiple interviews with Manish Bhatia, an exceptional worker from India. Manish provided explicit written consent to be named here, as he has engaged in a fair deal of media outreach and is proud of his leadership within the community. At the time of these interviews, Manish was the only Indian worker, out of the thousands still active on mTurk, who makes his identity known publicly on all of the worker communities that currently exist. Together, this data elucidates the experience of Indian workers and their exclusion from Turker communities.

Manish was recruited in the Turker Nation chat room and interviewed three times, through one main interview, a second follow-up interview a short time later, and a third six months later. These interviews investigated his experience with fellow Turkers regarding community culture, Turker relationships, resource availability and use, and what role communities play as a benefit or detriment to his work. The data was then paired with a document analysis of online forum posts, which further elucidate the experience of Indian Turkers in general, and studies on the demographics of Turker websites. Analyzing this data with a grounded theory approach, I examined both the overarching context of barriers in Turking communities and the example Manish offers as someone who was able to overcome those barriers.

Findings

Indian Turkers are often grouped and judged by negative stereotypes, by mTurk itself through usability barriers (Kang, Brown, Dabbish, & Kiesler, 2014), researchers (Ipeirotis, 2011; Schulze, Seedorf, Geiger, Kaufmann, & Schader, 2011) and Requesters (Kingsley et al., 2014), and other workers on the forums (Admin, 2013; denzacar, 2010; razorbacks0121, 2012; Tiger, 2010). Studies have been published deriding the quality of Indian Turkers' submissions, such as Schulze et al.'s (2011) paper which states bluntly,

Unfortunately, 102 workers answered at least one of the two “test questions” incorrectly and were excluded from the results. Seventy-nine of the invalid answers could be geo-located to respondents from India.

There is no mention of whether the poor results were mistakes or intentional, just the implication that Indian workers provide low quality results. El Maarry and Balke (2015) describe the difference between honest workers who may not submit correct answers all the time, potentially due to a lack of education or skills, and those who are intentionally cheating the Requester. The former are referred to as “rough diamonds,” workers who need and deserve employment, especially those from the “bottom of the income pyramid.” To ensure that they are fairly treated, it is important that “rough diamonds” are not simply lumped in with those who commit intentional fraud, and instead these workers are offered tasks that suit their other skills. The authors offer some techniques for weeding out the truly bad apples, which will retain the rough diamonds and allow requesters to leverage their low cost labour. They also do not name the countries from which the poorest quality results came, an indicator that it is not the worker’s nationality that is at fault.

Other researchers accuse Indian Turkers of falsifying submitted information, such as in Ipeirotis' (2011) blog post titled "Do Mechanical Turk workers lie about their location?" where he discussed a recent mapping HIT. “The biggest liar? A worker from Chennai, India who reported a zip code corresponding to Tampa in Florida. The IP was a cool 9500 miles away from the reported location!” Whether accurate or not, these papers do not discuss the context of their results, they just further the stereotype that Indian workers are out to cheat the system.

Posts on Turker forums and blogs perpetuate the stereotype of Indian Turker as cheater, liar, or sweatshop slave. An mTurk Forum user named razorbacks0121 (2012) asserts that international workers are scammers, spammers, and cheats, stating that,

...these Over-See's [sic.] people cannot quit scamming trying to make extra money instead of being honest. ... Watch who all the spamming (on the forums) comes from... you will notice they all come from over see's [1].

A Slashdot forum user named denzacar (2010) posts that,

[o]nly USA-ians and Indians (dots, not feathers) actually get paid. Everyone else gets amazon.com gift certificates. ... As a result from such paying practice most Indian workers on mTurk today are "employed" by sweatshops, churning out mostly worthless HITs. Many of them are probably just copy/paste or random-click scripts [2].

Tiger's (2010) post on mTurk Forum about why so many Requesters have HITs which are qualified for only American Turkers reads,

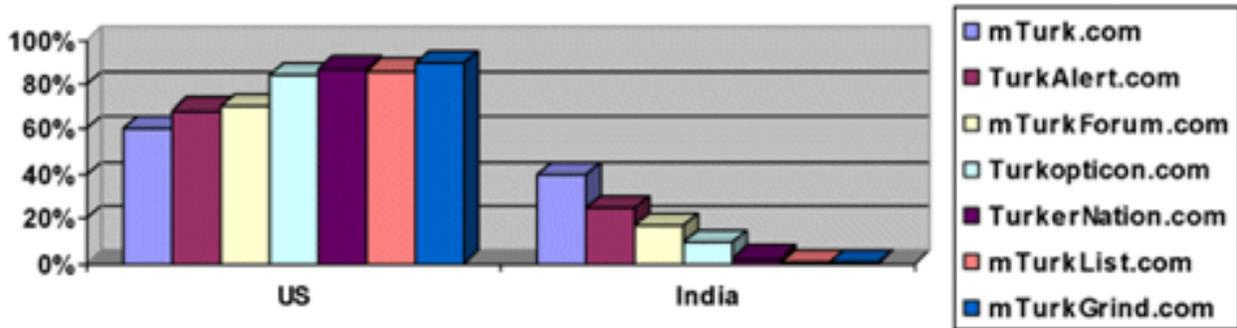
The truth is: US only because they want proper English. That's the main reason. Read some of the posts in this forum made by Indians and it becomes very clear ... it has nothing to do with discrimination. Stop self-pitying.

The suspension of new registrations by and crackdown against current international workers further solidified the stereotype that Indian Turkers engage in fraud, poor quality work, and cheating (Admin, 2012). Turkers assumed that mTurk was getting rid of these workers because they were not as good as the Americans (Project 2501, 2012). Based on the backlash against them, it is no wonder that Indian Turkers are uncomfortable in joining English-focused Turking communities.

To understand whether or not Indian Turkers are making use of Turking resources, I enumerate their presence on mTurk. Fort et al. (2011) estimate that there are between 15,059 and 42,912 active Turkers. In 2008, Indian Turkers made up only 5 percent of the total worker population (Ross, Irani, Silberman, Zaldivar, & Tomlinson, 2010), while that number grew through 2010 to 34 percent (Ipeirotis, 2010a) and 2011 to 50 percent (Fort et al, 2011; Schulze et al, 2011). Between the 2011 studies and 2012, no further demographic research was completed; but it is likely that the increase continued until July of 2012 when Amazon disabled the ability for international users to register a new account (Project 2501, 2012), and then began the unfettered suspension of Indian workers. These suspensions were not up for discussion, leading to a slow extinction of Indian Turkers, as evidenced by their decline in numbers to between 33-40

percent in 2014 (AppAppeal, 2014; Pavlick et al., 2014). As a result, Indian workers are forced to be more careful than ever about what they say publicly.

Figure 1 - The purple bar indicates US and Indian worker representation on mTurk for comparison. AppAppeal, 2014; S. Giminez, personal communication; Google Analytics, November 18, 2014; L. C. Irani, personal communication; K. Serge, personal communication]



Yet as Figure 1 shows, they are not using these tools. The two tools with the highest representation stand at less than 25 percent Indian membership each, while the average percentage for the rest is less than 1 percent [3]. This underrepresentation must be explored with causes identified and remedied.

Indian Turkers face many barriers, and they are not using the resources available as a result; therefore, it is imperative to speak to those who are able to leverage these resources in order to learn from their experience. Manish laid out three main obstacles he believes Indian Turkers face. The first is that non-Indian Turkers feel Indian workers accept HITs which are substandard in reward, leading to a reduction in pay across all work. He feels that the stereotype of Indian workers as inferior makes them feel unwelcome on the forums, which is the second obstacle. When they do post, they get replies “shunning” them. His remedy to the problem is that non-Indian Turkers need to allow Indian workers to post about any HIT they need help with, and any Requester they want to learn more about, without being derided for their choice of work. He worries that changing workers’ mindsets would be too hard, so he believes that community managers must be more welcoming so members have no choice but to follow in their footsteps. The third obstacle, the language and culture barriers experienced by Indian Turkers causes them to feel shy because they cannot overcome the “communication gap.” Thankfully, Manish has an easy solution: instead of creating sites in their

language, he feels that if Turkers stop pointing out that their language skills are not perfect (Tiger, 2010), they will become comfortable and more active.

Manish has been able to overcome all of these hurdles himself, and he feels that this has not only helped him to earn more, but also to build strong relationships. He believes that the benefits he receives from his forum memberships are knowledge about tools available, access to tips and tricks, being able to reach Requesters to gain access to work he would not have received on his own, and social support through the friendships he has made. He initially joined a forum because he wanted to become a more efficient Turker; but that led to building camaraderie so strong he sees his closest coworkers as equal to the friends he has offline. Most of all, he feels that he has influenced people's stereotypes about Indian Turkers in a positive way, although he does not think his example has convinced other Indian Turkers to participate more. In the end, he has a sense of pride in the place he has taken amongst his coworkers, and he states, "I think my identity in the communities is just as important to me as the actual Turking I do." He also asserts that community membership is "essential" to a Turker, and that the benefits he sees himself deriving from his community involvement back up that claim.

It is clear from Manish's experience that he deeply believes that his membership on forums is key to his success on mTurk. Despite having to deal with cheques lost in the mail, restrictions disallowing him from doing most HITs, the inability to earn the Masters Qualification until 2014, and all of the regular hurdles Turkers face, he has found a way to make mTurk a lucrative side job [4]. He has also leveraged the social support of his peers through sharing his experience and knowledge abundantly, and by being a friend to them when they need a shoulder to lean on. He is one of the most respected members of the Turker community, and he feels his nationality has never stood in his way. However, he admits that his fluency in English has likely assisted in his assimilation on English-based forums.

Manish has also worked towards change for all Indian Turkers, participating in the Dear Jeff Bezos letter writing campaign via WeAreDynamo.org (2015). In his letter, he wrote that he was thankful for having the mTurk platform available to work on, because it both gives him something to do when bored and introduced him to "some of the nicest and helpful people." He then detailed his biggest concerns, beginning with the fact that the cheques Amazon mails out rarely ever make it to the Indian workers they are intended for. The second major concern he voiced was that workers are losing their accounts without knowing why, and this lack of transparency must be addressed

through direct communication between platform staff and the workers. While the second issue has not yet been rectified, Manish and his fellow Indian workers have had their hopes for bank transfers realized, as Amazon announced that Indian workers may now transfer their earnings directly to their bank account. In addition, they received all of the money they were previously owed, a win for Manish and his coworkers (Amazon Mechanical Turk, 2015). Another outcome of Manish's participation in the letter writing campaign was that other Indian workers joined him, writing their own letters and even sharing them publicly on the website. While a preliminary step towards further joining the community publicly, their acceptance by those also in the campaign is a hopeful sign.

Conclusion and Future Work

Through an investigation of the demographics of mTurk and Turker websites, and interviews with Manish, I have investigated the barriers faced by Indian Turkers and how they can be overcome. We have seen that workers require membership in communities to access the tools and resources necessary to maximize their income on mTurk. It has also been shown that Indian workers are currently unable to leverage that membership and are underrepresented on all of the major Turker websites. Lastly, the ability to overcome this exclusion may be based in breaking down stereotypes and acceptance of all workers regardless of their proficiency in English or work choices on mTurk.

In the spirit of Turkopticon (Irani & Silberman, 2013), another option would be to create an Indian Turker Bill of Rights. A similar campaign was undertaken on Dynamo (2015), where Turkers collaborated on the Guidelines for Academic Requesters, creating a rulebook for those who use the system so that they know how to ethically interact with the workers. In a similar fashion, input from multiple Indian workers could be gathered via the Dynamo platform, laying out how they feel they should be treated. It could also touch on issues such as what they feel is acceptable pay, the fact they are capable of working on a variety of tasks, and what sort of resources they are seeking access to. The document could continuously be updated with new information, allowing for an evolving text representing the most current state of the workforce. Enforcement could be undertaken by the workers themselves, who might engage in social media shaming of those who do not abide by the conditions as well as traditional media outreach. A coordinated effort would represent to the world that Indian workers are ready to break from the reputation and stereotypes forced on them in the past. It would gather their needs in one place so that other workers, requesters, and Amazon itself

could learn directly from the source what needs to change. If we work together to create resources that are accessible to Turkers whose first language is not English, and forums that are welcoming to Turkers from around the world, we can change the experience of all mTurk users, workers and requesters alike, for the better.

Endnotes

1. For example, see Dow, Kulkarni, Klemmer, & Hartmann, 2012; Downs, Holbrook, Sheng, & Cranor, 2010; Grier, 2011; Ipeirotis, Provost, & Wang, 2010b; Jung & Lease, 2012; Kochhar, Mazzocchi, & Paritosh, 2010; Mao, Procaccia, & Chen, 2012; Oleson et al., 2011; Rao, Huang & Fu, 2013; Snow, O'Connor, Jurafsky, & Ng, 2008).
2. See <http://mturkforum.com>.
3. See <http://slashdot.org>.
4. See <http://turkalert.com> and <http://mturkforum.com>
5. The Masters Qualification is bestowed upon a group of Turkers, curated by Amazon, who are offered to requesters as the best workers on mTurk. The algorithm used to hand it out to workers is closely guarded, and Amazon has never revealed what milestones must be reached to achieve Masters status, nor when it will be handed out again, nor how the status can be maintained.

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Understanding Capitalism through Ayotzinapa: The Mexican Drug War as a 'Pyrrhic Loss'

Stuart Schussler

Ayotzinapa is exemplary of Mexico's current political and economic crisis. The 'Normal School,' or teachers' college, of Ayotzinapa was founded in the wake of the Mexican Revolution. Free, public education was enshrined in the revolutionary constitution of 1917, yet the rural communities that had fought with Zapata and Villa for land and liberty had few trained teachers. In response, Normal Schools were founded across Mexico, with the admission requirement that aspiring teachers come from the same poor communities they would serve. Fast-forward to the night of September 26, 2014, when Ayotzinapa students went to the city of Iguala, Guerrero to requisition commercial busses to take them to the annual march commemorating the massacre carried out by the Mexican government on October 2, 1968 in Mexico City's Tlatelolco Plaza. As the students left Iguala in five busses, they suffered a systematic attack by a combined force of municipal police officers, cartel members, and military soldiers in which six students were killed and 43 were disappeared.

The C-4 security system — which integrates local, state, and federal police intelligence with that of the army, marines, and national public security system — surveilled the students from the moment they arrived in Iguala. Yet, in the days after the mass disappearance and massacre, the government's investigation systematically mis-handled evidence, failed to follow potential leads, and tortured suspects. This is commonplace within the five percent of homicides that are actually investigated (Gibler, 2011). The federal investigation into the disappeared students, led by Mexico's Attorney General Jesús Murillo Karam, made every attempt not to include C-4 information in the investigation and to destroy evidence regarding the existence of a fifth bus intercepted at the Chipote bridge. Furthermore, the army's 27th Battalion stationed in Iguala was party to the C-4 monitoring and the direct participation of its soldiers in the night's events is documented. This is the same battalion that was responsible for most of the disappearances during Mexico's Dirty War of the 1970s. Battalion 27, along with Guerrero's other army barracks, are all located at the exit points from the state's

mountainous interior, which is the Western hemisphere's most important heroin production centre, the source of 42 percent of all Mexico's heroin, which is estimated to yield ten billion USD annually. The commander of this battalion was never questioned during the investigation, nor were any of his subordinates, save a very few foot soldiers. Instead, two months after the disappearance, the commander was promoted to control Guerrero's new Unified Command, integrating local, state, and federal police with the army and marines.

Despite the government's best efforts to hide it, all evidence points to a tragedy where a group of teenage students mistakenly requisitioned a bus loaded with heroin and were intercepted in the city of Iguala by a military action coordinated by the army and carried out by municipal police and cartel members (who are, in the end, the same). They were then murdered, mutilated, and disappeared in a message of terror. If the disappearance of the Ayotzinapa students is exemplary of Mexico's crisis, what sort of crisis are we talking about? Is "crisis" simply synonymous with terror and corruption, a way of describing things gone terribly wrong? For Marxists, the concept of crisis is understood dialectically, as the heightening of a contradiction, as two countervailing social and material forces that both oppose each other and depend on each other. There is a crisis between workers and capitalists when the wealthy abandon sagging profit-via-production in favour of profit-via-theft, only to increasingly destroy the social fabric of the workers who remain the foundation of the economy. There is a crisis between capitalism and the planet when the bloated economy must add yet another three percent year after year, lest it fall into recession and put us all out of work, and we are thereby forced to support the pillage of a planet in ecological decline. Capitalism is continually confronting such crises, and it makes use of articulating mechanisms such as the War on Drugs to fashion solutions. While the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is frequently cited as the end of the post-Revolution class compromise, I will show how the War on Drugs is also an important mechanism for its dismantling and for articulating a new structure of accumulation, one where elites can clear and re-order territory and hyper-exploit workers. Notably, this new structure of accumulation is articulated by continuously losing the War on Drugs, which I consider to be a "Pyrrhic loss" (Reiman, 2004).

Political Economy of War in Mexico

In the second half of the 20th century, following a half-century of depression, labour insurgency, and two world wars, a class compromise was reached that met some of

workers' demands, restored profitability, and thereby subdued capitalism's contradictions. Extending across large parts of the so-called 'First World', this period is characterized by elements of Fordist production and welfare state systems, while in nations of the so-called 'Third World', the era included strategies of import substitution industrialization. Italian autonomist Mario Tronti cast it in a more cynical light, arguing that during this period society had become a giant factory (1966), where cities, the ways people relate to each other, and their hopes and dreams had all been redirected to support a crooked compromise: that everyone should play their part in the production process and receive a minimum guarantee of social services in return for creating immense wealth for the few. In Mexico, this took the form of welfare measures in the major industrial centres, land redistribution, and a few subsidies and price controls for peasants. Against the compromise, Tronti's strategic proposal for workers was to refuse to compromise with capital, to stop accepting the gains institutionalized via the welfare state and to instead take over the factories. As exemplified by Mexico's student movement and the government's massacre in Tlatelolco Plaza, 1968 was the culmination of this refusal. However, by the 1980s when NAFTA was being negotiated and structural adjustment was imposed, this high point seemed ever more distant as the wealthy ended up being the ones to coordinate their own 'collective refusal' to collaborate with labour.

Capitalism's 'great refusal' is called neoliberalism and it has systematically undermined workers' stability in favour of hyper-exploitation (Graeber, 2012), so that people will take what little they can get without ever being confident they will have it for long. However, more and more of these workers are simply superfluous in the eyes of capital (Davis, 2006). With much of the world's population relegated to the status of an under- and unemployed reserve army of labour, capitalists are much more interested in the natural resources that support these 'superfluous' people. Given neoliberalism's wild success in instituting precarity and spreading sweatshop conditions around the world, capitalists can readily find cheap labour. Additionally, business progressively enlists government as its "means of dispossession" so that it can continue to displace people, steal natural resources, and then pay the displaced starvation wages once they have moved to the city (Galeano, 2015, p.289). Instead of a capital-labour compromise, there are relations of naked force.

How are relations of force made into social relations generally? How do they come to permeate society's class structure, spatial structure, and social fabric? Through a survey of Mexico's War on Drugs and its effects on the post-revolutionary class

compromise, the clearing and re-ordering of territory, and its facilitation of hyper-exploitation, I will explore these three aspects of violent social relations, arguing that continuously 'losing' the War on Drugs successfully spreads *capitalism as war*.

First, we look at how social conflict has influenced Mexico's class structure, at the ever-changing relationship between those who accumulate wealth and power and those whose sweat, cooperation, land, and (sometimes) consent create it. After poor and indigenous Mexicans rose up against intensifying accumulation by dispossession by seizing property on a massive scale, otherwise known as the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920, the Institutional Revolutionary Party was able to restore capitalism by the middle of the 20th century. As mentioned above, this brand of less-exploitative expanded reproduction was based on a class compromise brokered by the PRI party-state (Garrido, 1982). Party leaders sat atop the social pyramid, subsidizing industrialization and ensuring its stability and profitability by reigning in capitalists and administering various 'carrots' and 'sticks' to the trade unions. In the countryside, land reform pacified the peasants and ensured their support of the PRI. Agricultural subsidies also limited unrest, but were restricted enough to ensure a steady reserve army of labour in the industrial centres. Luis Astorga (2002) writes that the drug economy was also integrated into the PRI-managed class pyramid, under the direct control of party leaders. However, as the US government began pressuring Mexican authorities to fight a War on Drugs in the 1980s, their ability to manage this system of alliances was strained. Turning back to the broader class structure, Mexico's debt crisis and turn to vicious neoliberal structural adjustment was also destroying the compromise between the state, business, unions, and peasants the PRI had managed through a clientelistic system of 'carrots' and 'sticks' for so long. The final nail in the coffin was the amendment of Article 27 of the Constitution, which was the primary victory of the Mexican Revolution, and had allowed the largest land reform ever carried out in the Western Hemisphere. Gutting Article 27 in 1992 allowed Mexico to enter into NAFTA, and it ended state-sanctioned land reform once and for all. The era of class compromise was over.

While the most violent consequences of this transition can be seen in the War on Drugs, this is part and parcel of the state's transition from arbiter of expanded reproduction to the state as a means of accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2009) and structuring agent in allowing hyper-exploitation. In the NAFTA period, and especially after 2000 when the PRI was dislodged from the presidency for the first time in 71 years, the longstanding pyramidal set of alliances structuring the drug business was

upset (Astorga, 2002). Drug cartels became independent of PRI-dominated political structures and their unified, monopolized structures were shattered into factions that began fighting against each other for power. For example, whereas the drug trade in Guerrero had been run by the Sinaloa Cartel, which was able to keep out the Gulf Cartel, by the mid-2000s the Gulf Cartel's armed wing, the Zetas, had broken off and gone to war with their former bosses. In Guerrero, the Sinaloa Cartel had splintered into groups such as Guerreros Unidos (who participated in disappearing the 43 students), the Rojos, the Granados, the Ardillos, and many smaller groups (Grecko, 2016). While the pyramid continued to shatter, politicians ceased to manage from its peak and were instead mixed up in its disputes. Grecko (2016) documents how army soldiers in Guerrero were caught executing local elected politicians on the payroll of a rival cartel, and at the federal level, Gibler (2011) cites a National Public Radio report that the Sinaloa Cartel's members comprised just 12 percent of arrests during the first four years of President Felipe Calderón's War on Drugs, whereas they were responsible for 84 percent of drug-related murders. The federal police had long been a recruiting centre for mid-level trafficking operators, and the army and local police supplied on-the-ground enforcers (Gibler, 2011). As time went on, however, the streamlined chain of command that funnelled profits to politicians and minimized violence ceased to exist. The Zetas, members of an elite unit of the Mexican army who had received training at Fort Bragg in the US, are also emblematic of the complex fusion of narco, military, political, and business structures (Paley, 2014). This parallels the broader neoliberal trend of the corporate form, be it armed or unarmed, becoming the dominant way power is organized.

This volatile situation was further exacerbated in 2006, shortly after Felipe Calderón became president in a fraudulent election and began a full-scale, militarized War on Drugs to shore up his weak hold on power. In the years since, over 100,000 people have died, more than 30,000 are disappeared, and more than two million have been displaced. Mexico had the second-most conflict deaths of any country in the world in 2016 (IISS, 2017). While the mainstream analysis is that this violence is the result of Calderon beginning a war on drugs his military and police were not prepared for, the disappearance of the Ayotzinapa students shows that law enforcement and government have merged with illicit business, becoming one and the same. Instead of a single, politically managed class pyramid, there are now warring businesses, each with their own corporate pyramid including politicians, police, and licit and illicit business people. This trend has historical roots dating back generations (Aviña, 2014), and the

disappearance of the Ayotzinapa students best exemplifies just how far it has advanced. Other stories in the *Jornada* newspaper show the extent: drug cartels have three times more employees than Pemex, the world's largest oil producer (March 31, 2016), and they steal more than USD one billion of oil per year to sell on the black market (September 25, 2014). Canadian mining companies coordinate with the cartels, who also directly export minerals themselves (May 9, 2017). This money is invested in the world's largest banks such as HSBC, which was found to have received at least USD seven billion over two years (December 12, 2012). Gibler (2011) estimates that USD 25 billion in narco profits are invested in US banks each year. This all points to the fact that illicit business is not just limited to expanded reproduction (the cultivation, processing, distribution, and sale of narcotics commodities), but also extractive industries such as mining and petroleum engaging in accumulation by dispossession. Instead of the state (mostly) managing relations between social classes so as to achieve both profitability and stability, the state has become a tool for dispossession utilized by capitalists for whom the division between legal and illegal business is not a concern. A similar trend has also been documented in Colombia (Hristov, 2009).

Second, simple moral corruption does not explain this level of coordinated violence and profiteering. Instead, as we will see with its spatial and social impacts, losing the War on Drugs is good for business. This is the extensively-researched conclusion of Dawn Paley in her book *Drug War Capitalism* (2014), which echoes many of the arguments made by Subcomandante Galeano (2015) / Marcos (2011). Spatially, an endless war on drugs allows elites to brutally clear territory so they may extract its resources or re-order it to facilitate the circulation of capital (Marcos, 2011). This is accomplished through terror, either carried out directly by state actors, as with the Ayotzinapa students, or by "paramilitary" cartel groups that have displaced millions in Mexico. The mutilation and public display of cadavers is not just an act of revenge, but a message to residents that their town is no longer safe (Paley, 2014): it is now ruled with impunity. Parametria (2010) estimates there were already 1.5 million Mexicans internally displaced in 2010. Alternately, cartels also clear residents through the extortion of small businesses, and even churches (Paley, 2014). Be it through malign neglect, extortion, or violent displacement, clearing territory is profitable in itself through the sale of construction materials, arms, or rents. Reconstruction is also profitable, as it allows elites to structure space in favour of capital circulation. Cleared territory can be used for drug cultivation and the extraction of minerals, lumber, water, petroleum, and wind energy, or it can be the site of new highways, airports, seaports, and pipelines to bring

the fruits of dispossession to market. Thus, by destroying old value and providing profitable investments for new value, spatial reorganization is a solution to the tendency of over-accumulation (Harvey, 2006; Harvey, 2014). Unwanted as potential workers, residents are merely seen as “excess population,” an impediment to the extraction of resources and circulation of capital. They are thereby dispossessed by monopoly capital through a mix of state violence, predatory legal manoeuvres, and mercenary cartel violence. Fighting and continuously losing the War on Drugs ensures ready access to all these mechanisms.

Third, losing the War on Drugs not only allows for the clearance of territory, but also the destruction of the social fabric so that hyper-exploitation at the workplace is possible. This shows that *capitalism as war* does not only mean accumulation by dispossession, but also expanded reproduction that uses terror to hyper-exploit workers. This practice has been a constant during the entire history of capitalism, and its contemporary practice has been called “maquiladorization” (Hellman, 1994). To make the common wealth into private property, capitalists had to carry out a violent process of primitive accumulation, uprooting rural communities, destroying a social fabric of mutual aid, and thereby violently forging a working class with no choice but to submit to the living hell of life in a Victorian industrial city (Marx, 1992). Contemporary dispossession and war continue allowing hyper-exploitation, with Ciudad Juarez as an exemplary case. While many have speculated serial killers are responsible for the murders (Newton, 2006, pp.43-48), the reality is that Juarez is a city of economic refugees fleeing the effects of neoliberal structural adjustment and searching for the only work available, which is generally in the city’s sweatshops (Mexico Solidarity Network, 2004). Their hyper-exploitation at work is made possible by the same capitalist dispossession that has pushed them into sweatshops (and pushed many others north into the US), plus the most extreme forms of sexual violence, causing terror that impedes political organizing. Just like the drug war’s most shocking acts, femicides are the result of a system of profound, multifaceted structural violence. As *capitalism as war* has spread through Mexico, femicides have also ceased to be limited to Ciudad Juarez and are now a national emergency, with the total number of femicides reaching an estimated 40,000 (Jornada, April 29, 2017). With it, hyper-exploitation is also on the rise, as 377,000 Mexicans are estimated to be living in slavery (Jornada, June 1, 2016). Similar to an immigration regime that forces migrants to cross into the US in the most dangerous conditions, ensuring their fear of deportation will force them to accept extreme

exploitation at work (No More Deaths, 2011), the War on Drugs and femicide also keep women too terrorized to demand justice.

It is not a conspiracy that has allowed *capitalism as war* to reshape the class structure, territory, and social fabric of Mexico. Instead, the War on Drugs is a “Pyrrhic loss” (Reiman, 2004) that has coordinated the actions of the government, military, foreign governments, legal capitalism, illegal capitalism, and its millions of employees. Whereas a Pyrrhic victory is one whose costs are so great as to effectively make it a defeat, a Pyrrhic loss is a defeat whose benefits are great enough to make it a success. As such, powerful actors win the War on Drugs by continuing to ‘lose’ it for decades: presidents can concentrate power; the US government can sell arms and train the Mexican army; social services can be cut in favour of police and military expense; civil rights can be reduced to fast-track assumed criminals into prison; police and military abuses can be legitimated by the war, or said to have been committed by the cartels, or directly “subcontracted out” to them; and as long as the war is being lost the profits and bribes continue to flow. Paley (2014) concludes her book by arguing that the drug war expands capitalism by bankrupting small business, terrorizing migrants into accepting exploitation, para-militarizing security services for extractive industry, and facilitating the concentration of real estate (2014,). Gibler (2011) ends his reporting with a simple question: “What if illegal drug businesses are not a threat to the state and capitalism, but a covert and powerful lifeline?” (204). My response is that this is most certainly the case, both in Mexico and north of its border, and we should be bold enough to say it. In terms of our three areas of interest, losing the war allows the state to fuse with licit and illicit business and dispense with the old class compromise. It allows for the easy clearance of population, facilitating extractive and infrastructure projects. Finally, it forces people to accept poverty wages and grinding precarity. All of this is beneficial to capitalists who would prefer to profit from outright theft than from expanded reproduction. All of this facilitates *capitalism as war*.

Yet Mexican elites are not the only ones who want these benefits, nor is this the only country where the War on Drugs has been used to pursue it. North of Mexico’s border, Canadian and US elites have also sought to abandon the postwar class compromise, expand extractive industry, and institute precarity, and the War on Drugs has been a helpful tool there too. Arguments to this effect primarily focus on the US, from which between one-third and 70 percent of global arms transfers originate (depending on the year) (Hartung, 2016). Furthermore, the War on Drugs in the US was used to increase the prison population by 1,100 percent between 1980 and 2005

(Gibler, 2011). Since capitalists move their money around the entire planet in search of profits, the contradictions propelling the developments outlined above are global. While recognizing its specificity, we can nonetheless look to Mexico to better understand these global dynamics.

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