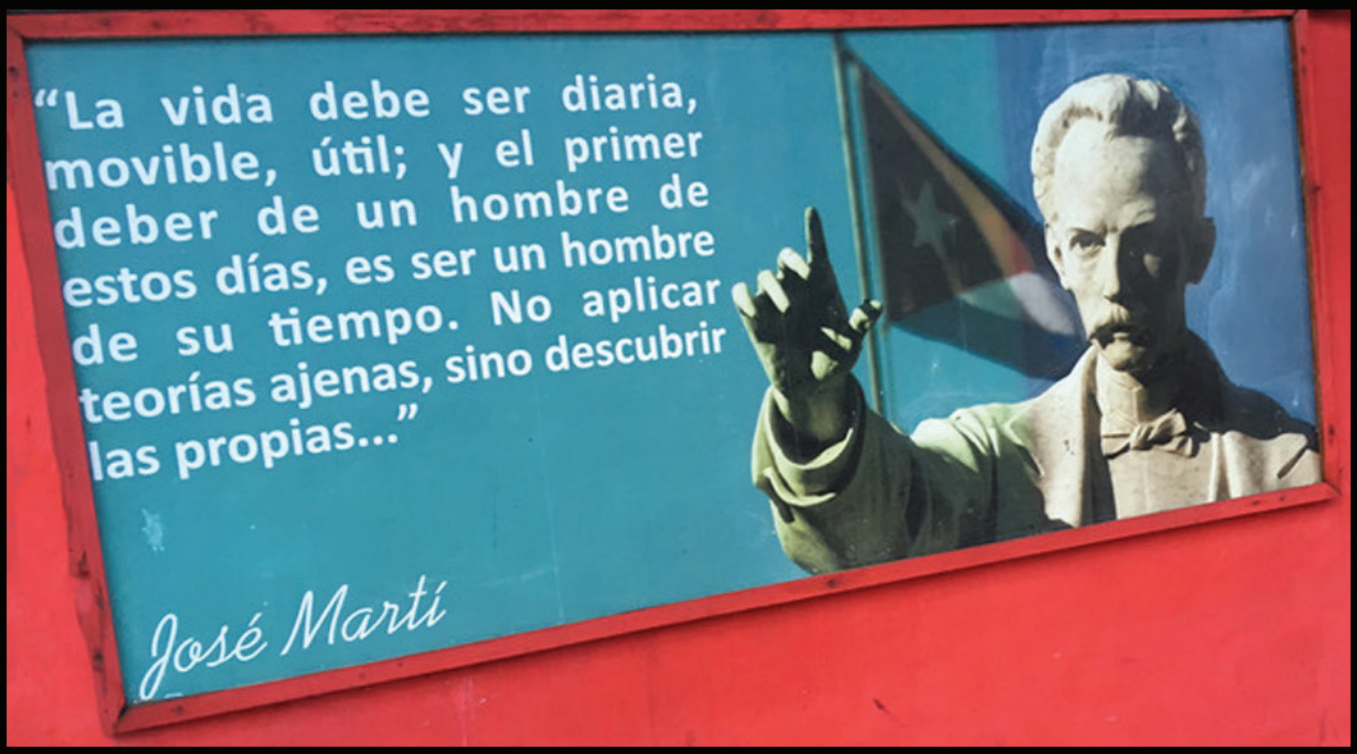
New Proposals

Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry



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Our Mandate

This journal represents an attempt to explore issues, ideas, and problems that lie at the intersection between the academic disciplines of social science and the body of thought and political practice that has constituted Marxism over the last 150 years. New Proposals is a journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry that is dedicated to the radical transformation of the contemporary world order. We see our role as providing a platform for research, commentary, and debate of the highest scholarly quality that contributes to the struggle to create a more just and humane world, in which the systematic and continuous exploitation, oppression, and fratricidal struggles that characterize the contemporary sociopolitical order no longer exist.

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NETWORKS, GLOBALIZATION, AND WORLD BANK EDUCATION STRATEGIES

James McKenzie Ferguson

ABSTRACT: Development strategies of International Financial Institutions (IFIs), such as education strategies of the World Bank, advance globalization in part by promoting networks as organizational forms in public services and wider society. Networks are inherently decentralizing and are becoming the dominant organizational form due to advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The work of Karl Marx (interpreted through David Harvey), Manuel Castells, and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari provide new insights into the use of ICT and networks as a social organizational form. Technology does not determine society, but reveals our relations to nature, production, and reproduction, our social relations, and our mental conceptions. These relations are dialectic in the Marxian sense that we cannot change the world around us without also changing ourselves. World Bank education strategies advance a networked type of education system, and impose a new form of discipline, to facilitate the emergence of a knowledge economy. However, the World Bank does not include our relation to nature in these strategies, and the strategies lack detail concerning modes of production and reproduction – essential to knowing why education is necessary. A more comprehensive understanding of the network form and ICT can contribute to critiques of development discourses in education reform and modes of being in the world.

KEYWORDS: development strategy, education policy, globalization, interdisciplinarity, networks, World Bank

Introduction

International financial institutions (IFIs) use a neoliberal reform agenda to systematically alter public policy on a global scale. Among the IFIs, the World Bank is the "major player" in setting global education policy and at the forefront of the shift to neoliberal thinking (Klees 2008).[1] This paper is a step towards developing a critique of these practices. However, it is difficult to discuss education reform abstracted from a discussion of globalization (World Bank 1999, 1). Using the decentralizing power of networks as a point of entry, this paper suggests how an analysis of networks could be used to critique World Bank education strategies as a step towards a wider analysis of globalization.

To do this, I am using Repko's (2012, 16) ten-step Interdisciplinary Research Process (IRP): "a process of answering a question, solving a problem, or addressing a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline." The biggest task here is to understand globalization, and no single discipline is sufficient in so doing. The concept "globalization" needs to be broken into constituent parts, and considered from multiple perspectives (Szostak 2011). I focus on one constituent part, education systems as networks, against which I compare equivalent conceptions: Marx's (1990) six moments; Castells' (2010) network society; and Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) assemblage (or rhizome). The work of Marx, Castells, and Deleuze and Guattari help to unpack the relations in the World Bank's networked conception of education systems: the ways in which the relations are arranged, the content of those relations, and the function of those relations.

1 See Klees (2008, 311-312), for an overview of the history and policy failures of the World Bank in the 1980s and 1990s. Bergeron (2008, 350) suggests this was a first phase of "'rolling back' the previous Keynesian and social welfare regimes" while recent efforts constitute a second phase "aimed at 'rolling out' and engineering a deeper set of neoliberal transformations." See Castells (2005, 18), for suggestions on what this "rolling out" might signal.

By establishing common ground between each of these concepts, I will arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of networks, and explore how networks facilitate globalization.

Defining the Problem and Justifying Interdisciplinarity

Step 1, according to Repko (2012), is to define the problem or state the research question. In this case, *globalization* defines the general terrain, while the specific topic is the role of networks in World Bank education policy reforms driven by neoliberal and globalizing discourses. Repko's Step 2 is to justify using an interdisciplinary approach, including considerations of the complexity of the question and the extent to which one or more disciplines have previously considered the problem or question. These steps are reflexive, which means being self-conscious of disciplinary or personal bias and how these may affect the work, evaluation, or end product.

Repko (2012, 71-75) describes the steps in the IRP in terms of "feedback loops" rather than as a unidirectional sequence, such as a ladder, because the researcher will need to continually return to and revise work completed at earlier steps in light of new considerations encountered at successive steps. I arrived at this paper's topic in just this way. This paper started as an exploration of the trend towards decentralization and privatization in education systems, following an earlier attempt to understand a personal experience at an education "consultation meeting" on migrants, ethnic minorities, and stateless children in Thailand and Myanmar (UNESCO 2014). During the meeting I suggested funding education through new tax levies on migrant labour-intensive industries. UNESCO interpreted this as *finding support in the private sector* – the sentiment is practically the same, but the language is markedly different. To understand this turn of phrase, I first looked back to the World Declaration on Education for All (the "EFA Declaration") (UNESCO 1990) – a key global education policy document, aimed at States, with the objective of maximizing the reach of education within a population. The Preamble of the EFA Declaration sets a dichotomy between "industrialized" and "developing" countries, thereby establishing that progress means developing towards industrialization. This is where the IFIs become important. Article 2 calls for "[surpassing] present resources levels, institutional structures, curricula, and conventional delivery system" (Article 2.1). In other words, this calls for moving away from the traditional disciplinary power towards a new system of education delivery – one supporting a new neoliberal order. The desire to "find support in the private sector" is a nod to privatization, which is accomplished in part through decentralization.

A succession of World Bank education strategies and policy documents, driven in part by globalization, encourage the adoption of networked education systems. In terms of the general terrain shaped by globalization, the complexity is quite evident. Theorists from disciplines as diverse as economics (Stiglitz 2006; Chang 2011), sociology (Castells 2005), development studies (Guttal 2010), and education (Collins 2005; Holst 2006; Brydon 2011; Szostack 2011) are unable to agree on a single understanding of globalization. Shorthand definitions of globalization tend to refer to compressed space and time, or growing interconnectedness and borderlessness, focus on the *effects* of globalization rather than the *causes* (Holst 2006, 42). To be sure, Brydon (2011) conceives of globalization as "the spread, growth, and speed of transplanetary social connections, which are leading to changes in transworld interconnectivity that cannot be limited to neo-liberalism alone" (102). Holst (2006, 42) argues that a more accurate understanding of globalization is "that it describes the nature and trajectory of contemporary capitalism." Interconnectedness, borderlessness, speed, neoliberalism, and contemporary capitalism: these can all be understood as discourses that gives rise to globalization.

In Foucauldian terms, a discourse is something that produces something else, rather than something that exists in and of itself and which can be analyzed in isolation (Foucault 1972, 49). No single discourse will provide a complete understanding but these multiple discourses will contribute to a more complete picture of the general terrain of globalization. Additionally, Szostak (2011, 182) argues that concepts like globalization that "refer to some vague combination of phenomena, theoretical arguments, and/or methods … need to be broken into component parts." In other words, multiple perspectives should be incorporated

into research and these perspectives should be directed towards parts as well as the whole. As such, the need for interdisciplinarity is apparent: a compelling critique of globalization is one that describes its constituent parts (in this case: networks), elaborates on those parts from multiple perspectives, and arrives at a more comprehensive whole.

Identifying Disciplines And Developing Adequacy

Steps 3, 4, and 5 are to do with identifying relevant disciplines, conducting a literature search, developing adequacy in each relevant discipline. A potentially relevant discipline is one that considers at least one phenomenon involved in the question or problem (Repko 2012, 144). However, Repko emphasizes the difference between "potentially relevant" and "most relevant," meaning a discipline that, in addition to perspective and theories, has "produced a body of research ... on the problem of such significance that it cannot be ignored" (Repko 2012, 159-160) In this instance, I am beginning with the narrow focus on the World Bank's role in education policy reform as an element within the wider topic of globalization. Rather than focusing on a discipline, I am focusing on a concept, in this case the World Bank's revised understanding of the education system – a decentralizing, networked system.

The World Bank's Education System

The World Bank has released a number of strategies that, over the years, have engineered significant reforms to government functions, such as privatizing government services, flexible labour markets and lowered worker protections, and decentralized management and decision-making (Klees 2008, 311-312). In education policy, two of the more recent strategies are the *Education Sector Strategy* (1999), and the more recent *Learning For All* (2011), which will serve as the World Bank strategy for education until 2020. Apart from these, the World Bank also released a notable policy document in 2003 describing the current era in terms of a "knowledge economy" – one which, the World Bank (2003, 17) claims, requires: working in multidisciplinary and distributed teams; using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for knowledge management, sharing, and creation; and updating and changing skills through lifelong learning. Earlier, the World Bank (1999, 1) stated "tomorrow's workers will need to be able to engage in lifelong learning," but following the introduction of the "knowledge economy" to the discourse, *lifelong learning* becomes the central goal (World Bank 2011).[2] From a learning perspective, this evidently involves moving away from teacher and textbook as sources of knowledge towards the teacher as a guide for finding and interpreting real-world information. Expressing a contrarian perspective, Angus (2012, 25) views as problematic "the technological changes leading toward a network society" as this has reduced university-generated thought and research to "practical application in techno-science." From either perspective, ICT, inherently decentralizing by design, play a critical role.

In terms of the evolution of World Bank strategy, a key discursive shift takes places between 1999 and 2011 in what the World Bank refers to as the *drivers of change*. Initially, the World Bank (1999, 1-2) stated these were: (1) *democratization* – which "has often been accompanied by decentralization of decision-making;" (2) *market economies*; (3) *globalization* – under which "global capital … is constantly seeking more favorable opportunities, including well-trained, productive, and attractively priced labor forces in market-friendly and politically stable business environments;" (4) *technological innovation* – for "in the hyper-competitive global market economy, knowledge is rapidly replacing raw materials and labor as the input most critical for survival and success;" and (5) *public/private roles*. By comparison, the World Bank (2011, 1) argued some 12 years later that "the driver of development will … ultimately be what individuals *learn*, both in and out of school, from preschool through the labor market." The drivers include *changing demographics*, *increasing urbanization*, the "stunning rise of new middle-income countries," and "incredible advances in information and communications technologies changing job profiles and skills demanded by labor markets" (World Bank 2011, 2). This is necessary to accommodate the structure of the new economy, as Castells (2005, 18)

2 See Castells (2005,4) for the acknowledgment that knowledge and information have always been central to all historically known societies. Elsewhere, he argues "a society in which information is an essential source of wealth and power, I doubt there is any society in history that escapes this characterization" (Castells 2004, 221).

notes: "education based on the model of learning to learn along the life cycle, and geared towards stimulating creativity and innovation in the ways and goals of applying this learning capacity in all domains of ... life." While *democratization*, *globalization*, *market economies*, and *public/private roles* are no longer explicit, their importance is still implicitly recognized throughout the strategy.

The World Bank (1999, 14) also previously emphasized that *decentralization* highlights "weaknesses not only in central governments, but in sub-national layers of government and in schools themselves" and raising "questions about the distribution of functions between central and local administrations, the implications for quality and equity, and how to strengthen administrative and planning capacities at all levels of the system." By comparison, the World Bank (2011, 2) later positioned itself as active *within* the decentralized system: "the Bank has not stood still. … It has moved closer to client countries by decentralizing its operations with 40 percent of staff now in country offices." In this regard, the updated strategy provides an expanded definition of what is meant by *education system*, which includes three elements: the "full range of formal and non-formal learning opportunities [whether inside or outside formal education institutions]" ; all "beneficiaries and stakeholders [including students and trainees, their families and communities, and employers "whose taxes, collective choices, and 'voice' can be potential forces for improving how the system works"]" ; and "several core policy domains that correspond to the various system functions and together keep it running" (World Bank 2011, 31).

This integration of the World Bank within education systems follows discursive shifts in the use of the term *client* in the two documents: in the 1999 document, the word *client* appears 130 times, while in the 2011 document it appears seven times. Additionally, the World Bank (1999, 27) initially referred to the term *relationship* only three times: the "Banker-borrower relationship;" the "relationship between client and The Bank" (World Bank 1999, 35); and the "complex relationships between education and other sectors" (World Bank 1999, 43). However, World Bank (2011, 30) later positioned itself within education systems, in "relationships of accountability" with other stakeholders.[3] It is in these terms that the World Bank conceives of education systems as *networks*.

Still, the World Bank's strategies lack detailed accounts of the nature and operation of networks. The World Bank's *education system* is conceived of as a network, while Karl Marx (interpreted by David Harvey), Manuel Castells, and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari provide analytical frameworks for equivalent systems: Castells' (2010) *network society* is composed of networks (Castells 2005 5); Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) *assemblage* (or *rhizome*) is described in terms of networks (Bonta and Protevi 2004, 54); and Marx's *six moments* are likened to an assemblage (Harvey 2010, 196). These theorists are from disciplines as varied as philosophy, psychoanalysis, sociology, and political economy, though all can be traced back to Marx. While the literature search yielded numerous relevant concepts for comparison, these three seemed to be the *most* relevant as well as having the greatest potential for generating new insights.

Karl Marx's *Six Moments*

World Bank conceptions of organization are evolving in a particular direction, one I am arguing is shaped by neoliberalism and globalization. However, organizational forms are not random, but rather embedded in a particular complex of ideas and social relations. To understand this, Karl Marx provides a good starting point. Marx provides a description of how technology mediates all of our relations, highlighting in particular our relation with nature. In a footnote to *Capital*, Chapter 15, Marx writes:

> Technology *reveals* the active relation of man to nature, the direct process of the production of his life, and thereby it also lays bare the process of the production of the social relations of his life and of the mental conceptions that flow from those relations. [Marx 1990, 493fn4, emphasis added]

In one sentence, Marx links six elements or moments: technology; the relation to nature; the actual process of production; the production and reproduction of daily life; socials relations; and mental

3 See World Bank (2011, 30) for a visual networked representation of these relations.

conceptions (Harvey 2010, 192). Crucially, rather than being thought of as nodes within a relational network, these describe the content of the relations of that network. In other words, we have six lenses or dimensions through which to consider the relational dynamics of networks.

Harvey (2010, 193) argues that Marx is saying that "technologies and organizational forms *internalize* a certain relation to nature as well as to mental conceptions and social relations, daily life and the labor process." However, no one moment prevails over the others, their relations are dialectical, and each is internally dynamic. Both technologies and organizational forms are included here, the latter falling within the moment of social relations. We can study their evolution from the perspective of one of the moments, or we can examine interactions among them (such as transformations in technologies and organizational forms in relationship to social relations and mental conceptions), but we must recognize that all these moments co-evolve and are subject to perpetual renewal and transformation as dynamic moments within the totality (Harvey 2010, 192-195).

Manuel Castells' *Network Society*

Further important insights come from Manuel Castells, insights which together comprise a commentary on the knowledge economy. Castells (2005, 7) defines the *network society* as "a social structure based on networks operated by [ICT] based in microelectronics and digital computer networks that generate, process, and distribute information on the basis of the knowledge accumulated in the nodes of the network." This description mentions two important components: the network and nodes. A *network* "is a system of interconnected nodes" while *nodes* are "the points where the curve intersects itself" (Castells 2005, 7). Networks structures are open and evolve by adding or removing nodes. This is done according to the changing requirements of programs, decided socially from outside the network, assigning performance goals to the networks (Castells 2005, 7). Networks are flexible and adaptive due "to their capacity to decentralize performance along a network of autonomous components, while still being able to coordinate all this decentralized activity on a shared purpose of decision-making" (Castells 2005, 4).

According to Castells (2005, 4), the network is an old form of social organization and "the most adaptable and flexible organizational forms." Castells also notes that the network society "already configures the nucleus of our societies ... [as] studies show the commonality of this nucleus across cultures, as well as the cultural and institutional differences of the network society in various contexts" (Castells 2005, 6). However, networks historically had thresholds of size, complexity and velocity. Digital networking technologies allow networks to overcome these limits, meaning that networks, as modes of social organization, are more effective, particularly in facilitating global capital movement – a primary driver of education reform (World Bank 1999).

Deleuze and Guattari's *(Rhizomatic) Assemblage*

Finally, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) develop new categories – or modes of activity – that serve as maps of new territories, that make new connections, and which draw new lines of development. They are often taken from other fields (the 'territories' in which they were defined) and are rethought to outline heterogeneous territories (in Deleuzoguattarian terms, a process of *deterritorialization* and *reterritorialization*). However, a key to understanding Deleuze and Guattari can be found through thinking through the distinction between trees (arborescence) and rhizomes (rhizomatic).

The tree is one of the most prevalent images in the world and is used in social forms, directly or indirectly, to trace hierarchies: bureaucracies, democracies, genealogies, etc. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 15-18). A rhizome, on the other hand, is a decentered multiplicity or network with six characteristics: *connection* (all points are immediately connectable); *heterogeneity* (rhizomes mingle signs and bodies); *multiplicity* (the rhizome is 'flat' and immanent); *asignifying rupture* (the line of flight enables heterogeneity-preserving emergence or consistency); *cartography* (maps are necessary to follow rhizomes); and *decalcomania* (not a model like a tree, but an 'immanent process') (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 7-14). The essential quality of the rhizome is its "flatness:" its constitutive bodies can move in novel ways from point to point without going through hierarchical steps or imposed barriers. A rhizome cannot be eradicated completely because it has no

centralized organization: it has multiple "lines of flight," so escaping forces can always re-establish themselves elsewhere to form new rhizomes (Bonta and Protevi 2004, 136-137). For example, the Internet is a rhizome that allows non-hierarchical worldwide actions whose instantaneous communication allows flat connectivity, bypassing movement through a command structure, in a completely decentralized community of users. While trees are opposed to rhizomes, any actual system is always subject to intensive forces moving in the opposite direction (Bonta and Protevi 2004, 52-53). In other words, the roots of trees (hierarchies) are always beset by rhizomatic growths, while rhizomes (consistencies) are always prone to take root and develop centralizing hierarchies.

There are many new categories in Deleuze and Guattari (1987) that make use of this distinction between rhizomes and trees. For the sake of brevity I am focusing on assemblages and territories.[4] An *assemblage* is an intensive network or rhizome while a *territory* can be understood as a system of habits or the conditions for repeatable patterns of behaviour. A *territorial assemblage* links bodies (material systems that are themselves assemblages of organs at a lower level of analysis) and signs (triggers of change in those systems) as content and expression to form territories. It results from reterritorializations that accompany deterritorializations. Deterritorialization describes the complex process by which bodies leave a territorial assemblage following the lines of flight that are constitutive of that assemblage and 'reterritorialize,' that is, form new assemblages. The line of flight is the threshold between assemblages or the path of deterritorializations. Reterritorialization is the process of forming a new territory, or new assemblage, following (and always together with) deterritorialization. Deterritorialization is the process of leaving home, of altering your habits, of learning new tricks. Deterritorialization and reterritorialization represent the conditions under which certain sections of human populations develop new fundamental behaviour patterns (Bonta and Protevi 2004, 54, 106-107 and 136).

4 See Deleuze and Guattari (1987), especially pages 141-142, 333, and 457, for descriptions of the mediating roles that machines and abstract machines play between assemblages and territories.

Evaluating Insights

Step 6 involves evaluating insights. First, the dialectical mode of thinking is central to understanding Marx. Allman (1999, 52) explains a dialectic "as a unity of opposites," which "involves conceptualizing it as composed of two parts that are necessary to each other because they could not exist as they currently do without each other." Dialectical thinking has an historical dimension that focuses on understanding the internal nature of the relations between entities, or the unity of opposites: the way in which relations regulate the development, shaping, and reshaping related entitles (Allman 1999, 63-64). Dialectical relations may be external (inter-relations), such as the interaction between different categories, or internal (inner-relations), such as relations within categories. Since the work of Castells and Deleuze and Guattari is deeply engaged with Marx (Castells 2005, 7; Bonta and Protevi 2004, 197 note 22), their concepts must also be understood *dialectically*.

Second, Marx, Castells, and Deleuze and Guattari are all aligned against technological determinism. Castells repeatedly emphasizes that technology does not determine society (Castells 2004, 221; Castells 2005, 3; Catells 2010, 5). While society shapes technology according to the needs, values, and interests of its people, technology is a necessary *though not sufficient* condition for the emergence of a new form of social organization. Harvey (2010, 192) similarly argues that technological determinism is inconsistent with Marx's dialectical method. The six moments are "like an ecological totality … of moments coevolving in an open, dialectic manner" (Harvey 2010, 196). They arise out of our social relations and concretely arise in response to the practical needs of daily life or of labour processes but a danger is to see one of the elements as determinant of all the others. Major transformations (such as the movement from the national state to the network state) occur through a dialectic of transformations across all the moments (Harvey 2010, 195-196). Acknowledging that technology does not *determine* society, "we also know that without specific technologies some social structures could not develop" and "only under conditions of the recent wave of [ICT] could networks … address their fundamental shortcoming: their inability to manage coordination functions beyond a

certain threshold" (Castells 2004, 221). The network society, and the knowledge economy, or what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as an assemblage (or rhizome), is an expression of the interaction between the new technological paradigm and the most adaptable form of social organization. Crucially, however, a *determinist* understanding would hold that new technology *causes* new forms of social organizations; a *dialectic* understanding holds that technology and social organization exist in relation to each other and, in concert with the other moments, change occurs simultaneously within and between humans, technologies, and the surrounding environment.

While these concepts from Marx (though Harvey), Castells, and Deleuze and Guattari do not specifically concern education systems, we may take the concept of "discipline" as an example of the Deleuzoguattarian *abstract machine*, which lays out what an assemblage can be made out of and what it can do (Deleuze and Guatrari 1987, 141-142). In Deleuzoguattarian terms, discipline "takes as its unformed matter 'any human multiplicity' linked to the nonformal function: 'impose any conduct'" (Bonta and Protevi 2004, 48). Using Castells' terminology, discipline is the program – decided outside the network – that sets the logical parameters of the network. In Foucauldian terms, discipline is one of "two poles of development linked together by a whole intermediary cluster of relations" (Foucault 1990, 139). The two poles include the disciplinary power, centering on the individual, and a second pole Foucault refers to as biopower, focused on regulating the population. Each of these two poles are important to understanding the wider implications of the use of networks, but the disciplinary pole tells us more about the interaction of the network and its stakeholders (students, parents, governments, etc.).[5] Networks essentially refer to invisible forces that can be stronger or weaker but most importantly rearranged – understanding networks in terms of discipline is absolutely essential to understanding the significance of adopting a networked education system. This has to do with the way in which society is organized – or is *becoming* organized.

5 See Foucault (2007, 27 and 67-69) for a longer discussion of discipline's function of bringing about individualization among human multiplicities.

The World Bank strategy to *network* education follows the adoption of networks in other social, political, and industrial structures. While education is not inherently disciplining, discipline has historically been a function of schools, among other institutional settings (e.g., prisons, hospitals, military barracks). However, maintaining institutionalized, state-centered learning only remains useful to the extent that it remains useful to the movement of capital. Discipline was reinforced, on the one hand, by industry through a demand for specialists and, on the other hand, by the recruitment of students by universities into *disciplines* (Repko 2012, 46-48). If we can say that the disciplines emerged at the outset and in the service of capitalism, the increased specialization of the disciplines can be seen parallel with, and perhaps as a consequence of, the division of labour in the capitalist movement. In a knowledge economy, the World Bank has an interest in advancing a new form of discipline "by actively producing the social situations the model assumes: normalization of behavior by making people behave in individual self-interest (due to lack of social interaction / social security)" (Bonta and Protevi 2004, 199 note 37). Educational policy, based on the model of lifelong learning, is central to "the entire process of social change" (Castells 2005, 18). This is how the education system will produce the type of human beings needed by the knowledge economy. In other words, the education network overlays the knowledge economy, and the students/workers are conditioned to have greater flexibility and mobility to move within the education network/knowledge economy.

The World Bank is advocating a move away from government-directed, institutionalized learning, towards a student-centred model making use of self-learning tools that can be facilitated by anyone, at any time, in any setting. To be sure, the World Bank (1999, 17) notes "governments have become dominant in education only in the last century or two, after eons when humanity educated its young without formal schooling." Elsewhere the World Bank argues "there is no *a priori* reason for all education to be publicly provided, funded and managed" (World Bank 1999, 34). We see this same sentiment when we consider a recent statement by UNESCO encouraging "partnerships between the world of education and that of business and indus-

try … in view of promoting a variety of arrangements that allow education and training to interact with the world of work" (Tawil and Cougoureaux 2013, 2). The World Bank acknowledges that the State's *recent* role in education has extended basic literacy and numeracy skills to huge sections of populations that might not have otherwise benefited. Nevertheless, the World Bank is making a case for moving towards a decentred model, with policy and curriculum decisions taking place away from, and with a reduced influence of, the State.

Identifying Conflicts and Finding Common Ground

Step 7 compels us to identify conflicts between insights and their sources. One constructs a more comprehensive understanding or theory from a set of modified concepts or theories, which is dependent on the creation of common ground completed in Step 8. Repko (2012, 382) suggests "a more comprehensive understanding is the integration of insights to produce a new and more nuanced whole." Finding common ground between concepts, theories, or assumptions is essential for interdisciplinary research because it is a prerequisite to producing an integrative outcome in Step 9. Crucially, interdisciplinarity does not claim to achieve holism but rather strives towards it. Interdisciplinarity does not necessarily result in the right or a perfect understanding, the recognition of multiple partial perspectives contributes to an improved understanding.

Here we can do no more than create a preliminary sketch. Table 1 shows the result, in schematic form, aligning each of the concepts – and relating them to the World Bank's education system – using Marx's six moments as a guide.

The goal with this table is to illustrate an integrated understanding of the World Bank's *education system* and in the context of a more comprehensive understanding of globalization. In this instance, I am starting from the position that Marx's account (through Harvey) is the *most* complete representation of the system, understanding that Marx's six moments describe the content of network relations – a cross-section of a single relation-bundle, or the multiple relations between nodes. The table describes how these six moments are expressed by the other network conceptions. Notably, modes of *re*production (of the species) are not explicitly

Table 1: Concepts Relevant to the Decentralizing (Networking) Property of Globalization

Six Moments (Marx/Harvey)	**Network Society** (Castells)	**Machine/Assemblage** (Deleuze & Guattari)	**Education System** (World Bank)
Mental Conceptions of the World	Network States, Economies, etc.	Signifying regimes	Washington Consensus / Globalized Market Economy
Technology	Information & Communication Technology	(*Non-specific*)	Information & Communication Technology
Social Relations	Networked	Rhizomatic (Networked)	Networked
Modes of production	Flexible Workers	Deterritorialization and Reterritorialization	The production of new (flexible) human beings
Relation to nature	(*Non-specific*)	Assemblages (Rhizomes)	(*Non-specific*)
Dialectic (inter/inner-relations)	Dialectic (inter/inner-relations)	Dialectic (inter/inner-relations)	Causalities (external relations of accountability)

covered in any of the descriptions in this paper but mobility/flexibility is assumed to be implicit to families/reproduction in the knowledge economy. This might include spouses/partners living far from each other, and persons (particularly women) delaying or foregoing marriage/pregnancy in favour of work.

There are a variety of ways in which "common ground" can be found between disciplines, such as by directly modifying concepts or theories, or indirectly via their underlying assumptions (Repko 2012, 321). In this case, common ground can be organized around the concept of the *network* with which each of the concepts I consider is concerned. Castells (2004, 222) claims, the *network society* is the structural foundation for what is described as globalization. Castells' account also serves as a mirror to the policy prescriptions of the World Bank. In other words, the *network society* is a commentary on the *knowledge economy*. Thus, by extending Castells' theory of the network via Marx and Deleuze and Guattari, it will be *as if we are extending the World Bank's account of the education system*: to more fully describe, and therefore critique, Castells' *network*; and to see in what respects this account may be incomplete.

If Table 1 is accurate, there are two obvious shortcomings to Castells' account. The first is that it does not consider the network's relation to the natural world – or how the natural world and the other *moments* of the education system give rise to and transform each other (if understood dialectically). The second is that, while it accounts for modes of production and the reproduction of life, these are partial accounts, as they do not provide details on the inner workings of either. Fully recognizing the World Bank's mental conception of an emergent knowledge economy, we can come to a more comprehensive understanding of the workings of the education system as a *network* if we take Castells' description of the network, combine with it the recognition of *rhizomatic combinations* with the natural world, the processes of *deterritorialization* and *reterritorialization* within the accounts of modes of production and the reproduction of life, and recognize the dialectic relations between each moment of the assemblage. In other words, the World Bank envisions an education system that prepares workers for a knowledge economy, but it does not provide an adequate account of how the knowledge economy, how organizational forms, how mental conceptions, how technologies, or how the natural world will change in step with the education of workers. An account of the relations within and between each of these moments will sketch a more comprehensive map of where we are, what our patterns of behaviour look like now and how they are changing (at home, while learning, in production, and in reproduction), and where we might be headed.

Conclusion

Step 10 requires that we produce an interdisciplinary understanding and test it. Repko (2012, 410) identifies "two broad purposes" served by this reflection: to guide researchers to add material to conclusions; and to inventory what is learned from the IRP that can be applied in future projects or other complex problems of life. For example, this framework could be applied to discourses about education reform in developing countries. For example, in Myanmar, Dr. Thein Lwin, in his capacity as a spokesperson for the National Network for Education Reform, has been vocal, saying that "the only hurdle is centralization. Only when that hurdle is cleared, an education system that satisfies the aspirations of the people can be implemented" (Zar 2014). However, this is also just one example of a possibility for critiquing globalization through the lens of education reform. More generally, what has been outlined is a beginning point, a potential framework for understanding the use of networks and their decentralizing function as one component of globalization. What this paper provides is an expanded sense of the capabilities of networks.

What this paper *does not* consider is the unequal power between and within the nodes of the network. The way in which the World Bank portrays the networked education system is such that governments, parent-teacher associations, civil society organizations, corporations, and other stakeholders will be equal. However, while the government of a "developed" country like the United States may not have difficulties curtailing aggressive education changes introduced by corporations in a decentred system, a "developing" country like Myanmar may cede practically all control over policy and curriculum. An understanding of the relative power imbalance should challenge any mis-

conceptions of equality. There is a growing body of empirical and experiential literature that can confirm this.[6]

Moreover, the ways in which modes of *re*production are changing *in relation to* the networking of systems of education and work are important considerations. According to the six-moment configuration, there will be significant corollary changes *in relation to* production, technology, and between individuals, as well as how we mentally conceive of the world and our places in it. As the relations are dialectic the changes will also reinforce new direction in the employment and work network configurations that may be as yet unconsidered.

This paper began as an examination of the trend towards decentralization and privatization in education, but the approach taken also provides new insights for understanding globalization more widely. The use of networks and ICT, in particular, needs to be understood within the context of globalization. This approach may prove useful for understanding the consequences of new technologies and organizational forms in other areas of human existence. But this is just an entry point – a first step towards understanding how globalization and neoliberal reforms are contributing to radical transformations in social relations. A more comprehensive appreciation will only be possibly by taking this and other components of globalization and combining these partial perspectives to create a more coherent whole.

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6 See, e.g., Bjork (2006) and Daun (2007) for discussions on experiences from the Global South with decentralization in education.

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Charity State: Neoliberalism, Political Islam, and Class Relations in Turkey

Gönenç Uysal
Osmaniye Korkut Ata University

ABSTRACT: Beginning with the suppression of the Gezi Park protests in 2013, the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (Justice and Development Party – AKP) aimed to counteract and oppress social and political opposition. The proponents of a hegemonic liberal-conservative approach considered this process as the AKP's authoritarian turn, and explained it with reference to the tutelary regime borrowed from either the Republican state or neoliberalism on a global scale. Nevertheless, the liberal-conservative approach could not adequately identify the AKP's attempt at transition to the exceptional form of state already beginning in 2010. This article borrows its theoretical and conceptual framework from Marxism. It argues that the AKP's attempt was a result of and a response to the hegemonic crisis of the charity state as a particular sociohistorical form of an authoritarian neoliberal state in Turkey. The AKP's aim to transform and reconsolidate the charity state remained in conformity with its goal to maintain bourgeois class domination under the tutelage of religion.

KEYWORDS: class; neoliberalism; political Islam; state; Turkey

Introduction

In June 2013, the *Gezi Park* protests broke out with the participation of hundreds of thousands of people, spread to other major cities, and continued until mid-September 2013. The protests were suppressed with the use of widespread and systematic abusive force by the police, which resulted in the deaths of eleven people and thousands of injured. Beginning in 2013, the deterioration of the relationship between *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (Justice and Development Party – AKP) government and its *de facto* ruling coalition partner the Gülen congregation, the branch of *Nurcu* congregation named after its founder Fethullah Gülen, resulted in a power struggle that took place at and aimed to capture the state apparatus. The last curtain of this power struggle brought about a failed coup attempt followed by a purge and the detention of thousands of people. In the meantime, following the election in November 2015, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan eliminated the Assembly and began to rule the country. The question of system of government was resolved with the constitutional referendum in April 2017, through which presidentialism gained its *de jure* characteristic. Crowned with the prolonged state of emergency declared in July 2016, executive power under the President's control was able to broaden and deepen its competences to its limits. The majority of proponents of the liberal-conservative approach, who praised the AKP as the pioneer of democratisation in the 2000s (İnsel 2003; Özbudun 2006; Yavuz 2005), argued that the AKP turned to authoritarian politics beginning in 2013 (İnsel 2016; Özbudun 2015). It should be noted that a significant minority remained silent in the face of the AKP's apparent authoritarianism (Heper 2013; Yavuz and Koç 2016).

The liberal-conservative approach can be regarded as the convergence of proponents of a liberal under-

standing of the state as a product of a social contract, and the conservative understanding of morality as useful and necessary for individuals and society. The liberal-conservative approach explained the process of Republican modernisation with Mardin's (1973) conceptualisation of centre-periphery dichotomy and state tradition (Heper 1985; Karpat 2004). The state tradition can be defined as the centre (the modern ruling elite)'s absolute control over the periphery (civil society). The liberal-conservative approach considered moderate political Islam/Islamism as an alternative interpretation of modernity that could reconcile with democracy (Göle 1997). In this sense, the moderate Islamist movements referred to those that did not challenge and even cooperate with particularly the European Union (EU) and the United States of America (USA) (Amin 2009, 75–78), the perceived representatives of liberal democracy and economic growth.

In this sense, the liberal-conservative approach often portrayed the AKP as a "conservative party with strong Islamist credentials" (Kalaycıoğlu 2010), and a "centre-right party where top leadership comes from Islamic roots" (Özbudun 2014), which could foster democratisation through a dialogue with the EU and the USA (Kuru 2007; Turan 2007). In the face of the deteriorated relationship between the AKP and the West as well as the AKP's increasing resort to coercion, Öniş (2015) described the AKP's 'authoritarian turn' as a new mode of illiberal democracy where the AKP captured the centre in order to reinforce tutelary regime under its authority. Grigoriadis (2018) confined himself to describing the AKP's rule as populist majoritarian. Esen and Gümüşçü (2016), and Özbudun (2015) went a step further and considered it as competitive authoritarian, which can be characterized by the abuse of formal democratic institutions in a civilian regime.

The liberal-conservative approach could not adequately understand the internal and dynamic (dialectical) relationship between the form of state and regime, and domestic and international class relations. In this sense, it could not adequately examine the sociohistorical context of the AKP's *authoritarian turn* since it could neither understand neoliberalism as a particular phase of capitalism nor the dialectical relationship between the capitalist state and various social classes. On the contrary, the liberal-conservative approach rather understood authoritarianism as an internal characteristic of the state, which was conceptualized in ahistorical and transcendental terms. Indeed, the state was conceptualized as a political entity that was external to society and above class-interests, and that could aspire after certain goals and interests on its own merits. The liberal-conservative approach eventually portrayed the AKP's authoritarianism as an imprint of the Republican state tradition. Therefore, it remained inadequate to analyze the relationship between the AKP's consolidation of hegemony and its crisis, and its apparent *authoritarian turn*. It should be noted that a significant minority of proponents of the liberal-conservative approach accepted the rise of authoritarianism in the neoliberal era. Indeed, Somer (2016) broadened Öniş's analysis by exploring new characteristics of the AKP's authoritarianism *vis-à-vis* neoliberalism, and Akkoyunlu and Öktem (2016, 470) actually signalled the possibility that the AKP's authoritarianism could backslide into 'the state of exception' where the distinction between legislative, executive and judicial powers became obsolete following the declaration of state of emergency in July 2016. Nevertheless, the notion of state of exception could not adequately reveal the place and role of the capitalist state *vis-à-vis* relations between the dominant and subordinate classes and among the fractions of dominant classes.

This article aims to offer a consistent and coherent perspective that is critical of the liberal-conservative approach, and that examines the dialectical relationship among the state, neoliberalism, political Islam, and authoritarianism in its sociohistorical context. Therefore, it borrows its theoretical and conceptual framework from the Marxist approach in order to examine the consolidation and crisis of the authoritarian form of the state under the AKP government in the neoliberal era. It acknowledges the diversity of Marxist approaches to Turkey. Certain proponents of Marxism borrowed from the modernist approach, particularly the positivist emphasis on reason. The modernist-left understood the rise of political Islam in a society, whose majority remained Muslim, as a threat to freedom of conscience, the very basic principle of liberal democracy. Therefore, it considered the AKP's conservativism as an inherently authoritarian element to be implemented, often in alliance with religious brotherhoods and the

Islamist bourgeoisie (Kongar 2012). Certain other proponents of Marxism borrowed from Liberalism and its conceptualisation of the duality between civil society and state. The liberal-left stream considered the free market economy as a means to moderate political Islam. In other words, it regarded the process of neoliberalism, particularly through the AKP's relations with the USA and the EU, as a progressive transition to domesticate the AKP's Islamism (Tuğal 2009).

Despite their opposing arguments, both streams could not adequately examine the dialectical relationship between capitalist social relations of exploitation and domination, and political Islam as an ideology. In this sense, both could not adequately understand the neoliberal form of state and its Islamist political regime, and its relations with the dominant and subordinate classes. In precise terms, both explained the AKP's authoritarian turn with contradictory tendencies inherent in political Islam rather than capitalism. Both gave tacit consent to if not supported the alliance between the AKP and *secular* pro-EU fractions of the bourgeoisie since both attributed to the bourgeoisie an ontologically progressive and democratising role. Therefore, both streams reproduced the understanding of state as an entity external to society. Consequently, both could not adequately understand the authoritarian transformation of state apparatus in accordance with the process of capital accumulation in the neoliberal era, and the merger between the neoliberal transition and Islamisation to the detriment of the subordinate classes. Even worse, both streams could not adequately comprehend the rise of fascist tendencies beginning with the declaration of state of emergency in July 2016.

On the contrary, this article accepts a dialectical relationship between capitalist social and economic relations, and political and ideological forms. In this sense, it aims to explore authoritarian and exceptional forms of state and political regime under the AKP government in accordance with class relations. This article accepts Marx's (1973) emphasis on diverse sociohistorical forms in various societies in different epochs of development of capitalist relations. It borrows from approaches to uneven and combined development (Allinson and Anievas 2009; Trotsky 1957, 2008), in order to discuss how the interaction of unequal spatiotemporal diffusion of capital result in a particular sociohistorical formation, including the form of state, and its political and ideological forms, in Turkey. This article acknowledges the diversity of Marxist approaches to the capitalist state (see Clarke 1991). Nevertheless, it argues that Poulantzas' (1969, 1978, 1979, 2000) conceptualisation of the capitalist state as the concentration of class struggle, and his distinction between normal and exceptional forms of states and political regimes offer a comprehensive analysis on various forms of authoritarianism in different sociohistorical formations.

Consequently, this article locates the authoritarian form of state in Turkey in the nexus of the merge between neoliberalism and Islamism. In this sense, it approaches to the authoritarian state under the AKP government as a particular sociohistorical form pertaining to the neoliberal era (Akça 2014; Bedirhanoğlu 2013; Ercan and Oğuz 2015), whose socio-economic formation was conditioned with Turkey's late-arrival at capitalism (Ercan 2002; Oğuz 2008; Savran 2001). It further explores the dialectical relationship between the transition from authoritarian state to exceptional state and class relations (Oğuz 2016). In this way, this article aims to significantly contribute to the literature by revealing the concrete characteristics of neoliberal-Islamist state apparatus represented by the AKP, and the role of the state *vis-à-vis* the struggle between the dominant and subordinate classes as well as among the fractions of dominant classes. In this way, this article aims to contribute to the literature by exploring the moments and practices as well as vulnerabilities of transition to the fascist regime in Turkey so that it could trigger an academic debate regarding the organisation of social opposition to challenge the exceptional state and the AKP's attempt at capturing it.

This article is divided into three sections. In the first section, the article explores the consolidation of an authoritarian form of state with respect to the merge between neoliberalism and Islamism under the AKP beginning in 2010. In the second section, it examines the beginning of the transition to an exceptional state, particularly fascist state, as a response to the crisis of the neoliberal-Islamism beginning in 2015. In the third section, it concludes that the future crisis of exceptional state has already been developing in the womb of the AKP's very present attempt at institutionalisation of the exceptional state.

Consolidation of the Neoliberal Transition Under the Tutelage of Religion

The capitalist state can be regarded as a "specific material condensation of a relationship of forces among classes and class fractions" (Poulantzas 2000, 129). The form of state, which can be regarded as the manifestation of different relations between the dominant and subordinate classes, and among the fractions of dominant classes in diverse spatiotemporal contexts, can be utilized to explore the relationships among different phases of capitalism, class relations, and the capitalist state (Poulantzas 1969). The form of state can be examined "concretely only in [its] combination with forms of [political] regime" (Poulantzas 1978, 317), which refers to the nature of legitimate political authority, and its rules and norms. The normal form of state can be further distinguished from the exceptional form of state (Poulantzas 1978, 290–295). The former corresponds to particular sociohistorical conjunctures where the bourgeois hegemony remains relatively stable (Jessop 2008, 129–130). Hegemony can be regarded as the organisation of different social classes under the political, intellectual and moral leadership of a particular class. Since hegemony requires coercion and consent, it articulates various ideological and political practices, and economic (re)distributive mechanisms (Jessop 1983). The authoritarian form of state, which remains a type of a normal state, encompasses institutionalized mechanisms for national-popular representation within the bourgeois democratic framework (Poulantzas 1978, 294–295). Neoliberalism emerged as a result of and response to the crisis of capital accumulation in the late-1970s, which was based on a social compromise between capital and workers. Neoliberalism aimed to resolve the crisis with worldwide expansionism through an increase in marketization, deregulation, and precarisation of the labour force in order to restore the rule of capital to the detriment of subordinate classes. In this sense, neoliberalism can be regarded as the latest phase of capitalism which foresaw the control over and suppression of any potential opposing social force to maintain the undisturbed mobility of capital (Harvey 2007). Therefore, the neoliberal state can be considered as an authoritarian form of state (Boukalas 2014, 124–125), which consists of the declined democratic institutions, the curtailment of formal liberties, and the intensified state control over socio-economic life through the strengthening of executive power (Poulantzas 2000, 203–204).

The world capitalist system is characterized with uneven and combined development, the principle which underlines the contradictory tendencies inherent in the process of capital accumulation. Such contradictions "develop some parts of world economy while hampering and throwing back the development of others" (Trotsky 1957, 20). This uneven development occurs between countries and regions as well as within them. The confrontation and later harmonisation of domestic and international class relations could enable countries that arrived late at capitalism to leap forward. Nevertheless, such a leap could suffer from the destabilising impact of spatiotemporal pressure, and the same class relations could paradoxically encourage the persistence of traditions. The combined development "draw[s] together … the different stages of the journey" resulting in "an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms" (Trotsky 2008, 5). The development of capitalist relations in late-arriving countries is in accordance with the opportunities and "contradictions of capitalism in general and of late capitalist development in particular," and "the historical specificities of … social formation" (Oğuz 2008, 1). Therefore, it represents a complex and contradictory combination of "backwardness" and "leaps forward in development" (Linden 2007, 145–146).

Religion can be considered as a pristine form of structuration of social relations and social consciousness that negotiates with capitalism (Marx 1975, 297). This article focuses on the ideological use of religion. In this sense, religion mediates the reality of capitalist relations of exploitation, domination, and competition, and turns it 'upside-down' (Marx and Engels 1998, 41). On the one hand, religion aims to curtail the ability of subordinate classes to control material relations (Ollman 1996, 223). Indeed, the Islamic doctrine offers an imagined path for spiritual salvation by teaching submission to Allah and obedience through fatalism (Kıray 2006, 242–244). In this way, it rejects the rights and freedoms of the subordinate classes to create their own present and future (Amin 2009, 71–86). On the other hand, by offering "a set of *reasons* for such material conditions" (Eagleton 2007,

209), it represents and reproduces material interests of both dominant and subordinate classes. In other words, it acts as "the heart of a heartless world" (Marx 1992, 244), and mobilizes the subordinate classes under the hegemony of dominant classes. Nevertheless, religion veils capitalist relations, and hampers the formation of class-consciousness and radicalisation of subordinate classes through estrangement in the realm of consciousness (Siegel 2005, 44). This article particularly examines the instrumentalisation of Islam by the dominant classes and their representative political parties to maintain and consolidate the capitalist social order. In this sense, Islamism – political Islam – can be defined as a religio-political framework that "provide[s] political responses to today's social challenges by imagining a future, the foundations for which rest on reappropriated, reinvented concepts borrowed from the Islamic tradition" (Denoeux 2002, 61).[1]

This article considers Turkey as a country that arrived late at capitalism. Therefore, it can be characterized with a complex and contradictory combination of archaic/religious and modern/contemporary relations and forms in social structure and state apparatus under the domination of capitalist social organisation (Laclau 1971, 33). Turkey's hierarchical integration with the world capitalist system was in accordance with the confrontation and harmonisation of interests of domestic and foreign capital, where foreign productive capital remained significant to determine the domestic pattern of capital accumulation to a great extent (Ercan 2002, 24). In this sense, domestic capital developed organic but dependent relations with foreign capital, and such relations bastardized domestic capital in the form of subordinate/subcontractor of foreign capital (Öztürk 2011). The hegemony of Western and Gulf capital over domestic capital moderated and promoted the rise of political Islam in Turkey, since Islam was considered as a bulwark against socialist movements that challenged the capitalist system as well as radical Islamist movements that challenged Western hegemony. Indeed, beginning in the 1970s, in accordance with the USA's 'green belt' project that aimed to contain the socialist/left-wing movements with a buffer zone of Islamic countries (Uzgel 2009, 36–37), Turkey developed close relations with Islamic Arab countries. Beginning with the neoliberal transition in the 1980s, Islamic symbols and references were increasingly articulated in the state's ideology. The fusion of interests of domestic and Western and Gulf capital further contributed to the rise of the Islamist bourgeoisie (Doğan 2013, 291). The Islamist bourgeoisie refers to certain fractions of bourgeoisie that use Islam as a system of norms and values to regulate relations between labour and capital, and intra-capital relations (Hoşgör 2015). It should be noted that both the Islamist and Westernist bourgeoisie, which developed organic and dependent relations with Western capital and paid lip service to the constitutional principle of secularism (Öztürk 2011, 109), supported the Islamisation of state ideology.

The international unevenness was spatially reproduced in urban and rural areas, and within urban areas. In urban areas, workers were significantly suppressed with deindustrialisation, decrease in incomes, and curtailment of labour rights despite their organized resistance against the neoliberal restructuring to a certain extent (Atılgan 2012, 351–360). Furthermore, the Islamist trade unions, which were inclined to negotiate with the bourgeoisie rather than undertaking radical practices, were strengthened (Buğra 2002). In rural areas, while smallholders were turned into agricultural workers in their own lands through contract farming, large masses of peasants were expelled from their lands as a result of privatisation of agricultural state-owned enterprises, purge of agricultural cooperatives, and seizing of lands. The majority of peasants and smallholders were forced to migrate to urban areas and become a precarious labour force, often subcontracted by especially the Islamist bourgeoisie (Gürel 2015, 337–340). Such migration further resulted in an increase in unproductive labour in urban areas, which maintained relations with rural areas in the form of seasonal agricultural worker (Boratav 2014, 72). This unproductive labour was often mobilized with Islamism due to the lack of class-consciousness and organisation (White 2002, 233–234). It should be noted that the international unevenness was already represented with the domestic socioeconomic formation regarding the continued social significance of Islam to a certain extent, particularly in rural areas. Most significantly, while the right-wing and centrist

1 This paper focuses on Islamism/political Islam based on the Sunni sect/interpretation.

political parties established clientelist relations with various religious brotherhoods, certain sheikhs and disciples of religious brotherhoods already emerged as the Islamist bourgeoisie (Savran 2015, 54–58), and thus, reinforced their economic domination over the subordinate classes through an ideological control. The neoliberal restructuring of class relations to the detriment of subordinate classes in urban and rural areas already required the strengthening of political Islam to veil class antagonisms and suppress the subordinate classes. Therefore, the subordinate classes in rural and urban areas remained increasingly vulnerable to the influence of political Islam.

In accordance with the complex and contradictory combination of backward and contemporary elements in socioeconomic formation, the authoritarian neoliberal state took the form of a charity state in Turkey (Çelik 2010; Hoşgör and Çoban 2009; Köse and Bahçe 2013; Özden, Bekmen and Akça 2018). Neoliberalism portrayed a dichotomy between the market and the state, and presumed efficiency of the former and inefficiency of the latter (Saad-Filho 2003, 7). Therefore, it outlawed any state intervention in the economy in favour of the subordinate classes. Consequently, the charity state was equipped with populist redistribution mechanisms in the face of the withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provisions, the curtailment of social security and labour rights, and the rise of unemployment and poverty. Populism, in the classical sense, regarded society as one coherent – classless – unity comprising of diverse but unified groups. In the neoliberal era, populism further constituted charity as the basis of dominant classes to restore their hierarchical relationship *vis-à-vis* the subordinate classes (Yıldırım 2013). Moreover, charity aimed to exclude the subordinate classes from democratic mechanisms by depoliticising the masses and isolating state benefits from civil rights. In other words, charity aimed to transform the subordinate classes into consumer masses who lacked class-consciousness and would submit to the neoliberal economic programmes without any opposition. In addition, charity aimed to reproduce Turkey's hierarchical integration with the world capitalist system and its dependence on significantly Western and Gulf capital by denying unequal diffusion of capital in the international sphere. In short, the charity state aimed to regulate relations among fractions of capital, particularly Westernist and Islamist fractions, and suppress the subordinate classes. With this aim, it drew its legitimacy from religion, particularly Islam, as opposed to law-based social compromise (Hoşgör and Çoban 2009, 3). Therefore, the neoliberal transition was merged with Islamisation of political regime.

In the 2000s, the AKP managed to reorganise relations among bourgeois fractions, including the Islamist and Westernist fractions, under the hegemony of productive capital by utilising rentier mechanisms and coercing the subordinate classes through privatisation, subcontracting, and de-unionisation (Çelik 2015). Most significantly, while favouring and maintaining control over the small- and medium-size Islamist bourgeoisie through bidding at the local government levels, the AKP favoured the big-scale Westernist and Islamist bourgeoisie through privatisation and bidding at the state level (Angın and Bedirhanoğlu 2012). In the meantime, the organic but dependent relations with foreign capital contributed to the strengthening of the big-scale Westernist and Islamist bourgeoisie to absorb most of the potential of inward-oriented capital accumulation, and sought to increase profit through internationalisation. By the 2010s, the Islamist capital already penetrated the Middle East and Central Asia with references to common Islamic norms and values (Cengiz 2016).

Since the accumulation of productive capital increased the mass of surplus product in the national economy, the AKP nevertheless obtained consent of the subordinate classes by benefiting from economic expansion and utilising populist and coercive redistribution mechanisms. It particularly utilized the Social Aid and Solidarity Promotion Fund (*Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Teşvik Fonu*) as a means to provide coercive charity (Çelik 2010, 69). In this way, the AKP maintained its hegemony that merged neoliberalism, Islamism, and populism (Akça 2014, 14). The AKP claimed to represent a mixture of religious conservatism and conservative modernity. On the contrary, this article argues that the AKP understood conservatism in relation to piety to reinterpret the relationship between modernity and its systematized critique based on reason, and religion in favour of the latter. The AKP's discourse on piety aimed to religionise the political regime in

order to replace the modern understanding of sovereign nation with the model of community of believers (*ümmet*) that would submit to the executive power, the representative of capital. Indeed, the AKP understood democracy as a legitimate political system as long as it remained compatible with Islam regarding its recognition of different religious identities and depoliticized masses turning up at the ballot box (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi, 15 March 2003).

The AKP consolidated the charity state in order to foster Islamisation of the state apparatus and social structure. This process aimed to maintain bourgeois class domination and decisively defeat the subordinate classes under the cloak of sanctity. The AKP articulated and diffused piety through state institutions. Most significantly, the Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*), which already developed objective capitalist interests through *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı* (Turkey Diyanet Foundation) beginning in the 1970s, was economically, politically, and socially favoured to enhance its mission to diffuse piety (Peköz 2009, 228–239). In addition, the education system was Islamized in order to bring up 'pious youth' (Altınkurt and Aysel 2016). In the meantime, the AKP presented religious brotherhoods as civil-society organisations to respond to social needs in the face of the neoliberal state's withdrawal from relations of distribution. Religious brotherhoods, which accumulated wealth through charitable foundations (*vakıf*) supported by the Islamist bourgeoisie, the state agencies, and the municipalities, articulated piety as a code of morality, as a 'way of life' (Criss 2010, 45), in order to religionise social reproduction. They undertook charity practices, such as cash and in-kind donations in the urban and rural areas (Çelik 2010, 74–79). Significantly in the field of education, the religious brotherhoods opened private schools, preparatory schools, dormitories, and provided funds to low-income families (Peköz 2009, 99–100). Religious brotherhoods aimed to curb the formation of class-consciousness and radicalisation of the working class. This aim became significant during the child abuse scandal that took place at dormitories run by *Ensar Vakfı* (Ensar Foundation), which maintained its close relations with the AKP. Indeed, while the Minister of Family and Social Policies supported the reputation of the foundation against allegations (Sarfati 2017, 404), the Ministry of Education enhanced its relations with the Foundation (Toker 2017).

Transition to Fascism as a Response to the Crisis of Neoliberalism

It is already argued that the capitalist system is characterized with contradictions inherent in the process of capital accumulation. Hegemonic crisis refers to an organic crisis of capital accumulation that poses a threat to capitalist relations. If hegemonic crisis cannot be resolved through normal democratic channels where class struggle takes place, the crisis can be resolved through the institutionalisation of exceptional means. The exceptional state can be indeed regarded as a response to a hegemonic crisis in which the electoral principle – but not plebiscites/referenda – and the plural party system are suspended, the rule of law is suspended to amend the constitution and administration, and the ideological state apparatuses are subordinated to the repressive state apparatuses and the dominant classes (Jessop 2008, 129–130). Since the exceptional state further increases its relative autonomy from the bourgeois fractions (Oğuz 2016, 90), the hierarchies among, and fundamental functions of, the state apparatuses are transformed to enhance the relative autonomy of the repressive state apparatuses. In this sense, fascism can be regarded as an exceptional form of state and of regime "at the extreme 'limit' of the capitalist state" (Poulantzas 1979, 57), which is determined by a particular conjuncture of class struggle. In the fascist state, the fascist political party relatively dominates as the ideological apparatus, and the political police relatively dominates as the repressive state apparatus. The ideological role of religious institutions also becomes significant. The fascist state can be characterized by the continuous mobilisation of masses and the support for paramilitary forces by the state. It can further be characterized with the articulation of a particular ideology that is anti-intellectual, obscurantist, and racist, and that addresses power-fetishism of the petty-bourgeoisie, constructs cult of personality, glorifies violence, and grants special functions for family and education (Poulantzas 1979, 253–256).

Beginning in the 2010s, Turkey's Sunni sectarian position during the Arab Spring and its aftermath followed with the rise in oil prices signalled the possibility

of a decline in exports (Cengiz 2016, 396–397). The belated impact of the economic crisis of 2008 already hit Turkey with a decline in exports and economic growth rate, and an increase in unemployment (Yeldan and Ünüvar 2016, 14, 18). In response, the AKP began to lean on and favour Gulf capital and certain fractions of the Islamist bourgeoisie, which developed organic and dependent relations with mainly Gulf capital particularly in the fields of real estate, construction, and finance as well as through the subterranean economy (Aykut and Yıldırım 2016, 150–151). It should be noted that Western capital and the Westernist bourgeoisie retained their dominant role in the national economy. Therefore, the AKP continued to favour the Westernist bourgeoisie and Western capital as a part of bargaining for social and political leverage through privatisations, precarisation of labour force, and various incentives ranging from tax cuts and deregulation to the broadening of credits (Güngen and Akçay 2016, 33–35). The AKP's failure to unify various fractions of bourgeoisie under the hegemony of one corresponded with its failure to obtain consent of the subordinate classes due to the peak of unequal distribution of wealth and an incremental increase in the rates of unemployment (Timur 2014, 47). The AKP's hegemonic crisis became more clearly visible with the Gezi Park protests against the deepening of neoliberalism and its corresponding authoritarianism (Ercan and Oğuz 2015, 114–116).

This article argues that the AKP undertook the process of transition to the exceptional form of state beginning in 2010 as a result of, and a response to, its hegemonic crisis. Indeed, in 2010, the constitutional amendment, which restructured fundamental rights and freedoms, judicial power, and the national economy, passed in the Assembly. However, the constitutional amendment contributed to the dismantling of the rule of law, curtailing of labour rights, and empowering of executive power to the detriment of judicial power in an attempt to simultaneously favour domestic and foreign capital, and maintain political stability and security of the AKP government. Most significantly, it narrowed the power of the judiciary to annul decisions of privatisation on the basis of public good (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi, 6 May 2010). The enactment of 2010 constitutional amendments following a referendum further marked the beginning of the plebiscitary era where the AKP discredited the social and political opposition by portraying their proponents as coup-plotters (Ciddi 2011). Beginning with the general election in June 2015, the AKP in effect suspended the functioning of the Parliament owing to its majority. In July 2016, the power struggle between the AKP and its *de facto* ruling coalition partner *Gülen* congregation resulted in a failed coup attempt in July 2016 undertaken by the latter (Azeri 2016). During the interim regime, which began with the AKP's declaration of state of emergency followed with its ruling by decrees (İnsan Hakları Ortak Platformu, 2017), the system of presidentialism was enacted in April 2017 again following a referendum (Esen and Gümüşçü 2016). Following the failed coup attempt, the AKP articulated a myth of revival merged with populism, where Erdoğan's cult of personality played the most crucial role to maintain the continuous mobilisation of masses and address power-fetishism of artisans and shopkeepers.

In the meantime, the AKP increased its relative autonomy *vis-à-vis* the fractions of capital through the Wealth Fund (*Varlık Fonu*), where treasury shares in Turkish Airlines and state-owned enterprises ranging from major banks and postal service to petroleum and mining companies were transferred with the aim of creating a discretionary fund for the use of executive power (Akçay 2017). In this way, the AKP was enabled to utilise the Fund as a trump card to obtain consent of and coerce various fractions of foreign and domestic capital. Furthermore, the radicalisation of subordinate classes remained limited to certain fields of industry following the crushing of TEKEL (a tobacco, salt and alcoholic beverages company) strike in 2010. The visibility of social opposition in the public sphere also remained limited with the suppressing of the Gezi Park protests by police, and with the bomb attacks particularly in Ankara and Istanbul in 2015. The political opposition further constrained the social opposition by supporting the AKP's myth of revival articulated following the failed coup attempt despite the AKP's attempt at discrediting the political opposition (Meclis Araştırma Komisyonu, 2017).

Beginning in 2015, in the face of limited social and political opposition, the AKP fostered the insti-

tutionalisation of a fascist form of state within the framework of neoliberal-Islamism. In other words, the AKP aimed to transform and reconsolidate the charity state as a particular form of fascist state. Indeed, the AKP defined this fascist state as 'new Turkey' (AKP 2012). Police and intelligence, and religious institutions emerged as the most important repressive and ideological state apparatuses respectively. Police were granted extraordinary competences ranging from arbitrary search and questioning to the broadened use of arms. While competences of intelligence were similarly broadened, the supervisory role of President over intelligence was enhanced (Decree no. 694, 2017). Police were further granted an ideological role with the introduction of night watchmen, which rather functioned as moral police (Şahin 2017). In the meantime, the AKP supported paramilitary forces, most significantly *Osmanlı Ocakları* (Ottoman Hearths), *Esedullah Timi* (Esedullah task force), and SADAT (International Defence Consulting) (Oğuz 2016, 111–112). These paramilitary forces were constituted with Islamist fractions, and they undertook various acts of violence by giving references to Islam (Scott 2016). At the time of writing, the AKP introduced immunity to civilians alongside officials on duty regarding their activities to "thwart the failed coup attempt of July 2016 and its subsequent insurrections" (Decree no. 696, 2017). In this way, the AKP paved the way for the legitimisation of suppression of any social opposition by the paramilitary forces.

The Islamisation of family and school was prioritized in conformity with neoliberalism and populism through an enhanced set of institutions and practices (Parlak 2016, 549). The Directorate of Religious Affairs, whose budget exceeded the budget of Ministry of Education in 2017 (Bütçe ve Mali Kontrol Genel Müdürlüğü, 2017), played one of the most crucial roles by enhancing the number, scope, and content of fatwas to the detriment of subordinate classes. Most significantly, in 2011, when workers resisted against the dismissal of union members, the Düzce office of mufti gave a sermon that portrayed any attempt to decrease profit as sinful. Similarly, in 2014, the Istanbul office of mufti claimed that occupational health and safety measures would discredit God (Gürcanlı 2016). Moreover, the Directorate institutionalized pious practices in the public sphere as Islamist alternatives to secular and Republican practices. Particularly, the Directorate institutionalized nationwide celebrations of the Prophet Mohammad's birth that coincided with celebrations of the establishment of Turkish Grand National Assembly (Karatepe 2012). In the meantime, the Directorate was granted immunity under the cloak of sanctity. Significantly, the Directorate did not assume any legal responsibility regarding the killing of schoolchildren in a fire at a boarding course on the Quran in Diyarbakır in 2017 (Gürcanlı 2016). Similarly, such a cloak of sanctity enabled the AKP to avoid any political responsibility. Most significantly, the AKP often excused the increasing number of work accidents, which arguably turned into corporate manslaughter with the death of almost two thousand workers in 2016 (İşçi Sağlığı ve İş Güvenliği Meclisi, 2017), with references to dispositional characteristics and God's will while employing an increasing number of imams to appease any social upheaval in accident scenes (Türkiye Mühendis ve Mimar Odaları Birliği, 2014).

Moreover, the Islamisation of education was entrenched with commodification and marketization of education with populist elements (Yücesan-Özdemir and Özdemir 2012). The Islamisation of education was reinforced with the mushrooming of the *imam-hatip* (prayer leader and preacher) schools through either the opening of new ones or the transformation of increasing number of state schools into the *imam-hatip* schools. It was further reinforced with the broadening of religious instruction with the inclusion of religious courses, namely *Reading the Quran* and *The Life of the Prophet Muhammad*, which remained elective on paper but mandatory in reality in the state schools (Hürriyet, 2015). In the meantime, religious brotherhoods, most significantly the *Süleymancı* order, *Menzil* order, *İsmailağa* congregation, Ensar Foundation and *İlim Yayma Cemiyeti* (Society to Disseminate Science) that maintained organic relations with the *Nakşibendi* order, and *Türkiye Gençlik ve Eğitime Hizmet Vakfı* (Service for Youth and Education Foundation of Turkey – TÜRGEV) that maintained organic relations with Erdoğan's family, were supported through either official cooperation with the Ministry of Education or staffing of the Ministry with their disciples (Bildircin

2017). In particular, the cooperation between religious brotherhoods and their organic Islamist bourgeoisie, and the Ministry regarding an extensive set of issues ranging from cultural courses and sporting events to social projects, contributed to the accumulation of capital while such cooperation often targeted working-class families in urban and rural areas. Similar to the Directorate of Religious Affairs, religious brotherhoods were granted immunity under the cloak of sanctity. Most significantly, in Adana in 2016, a fire killed schoolgirls in a dormitory which belonged to the *Süleymancı* order. While the dormitory management explained the fire with reference to God's discretion, the Ministry of Education continued close relations with the *Süleymancı* order (Bildircin 2017).

Conclusion: Against the Reconsolidation of the Charity State

This article has argued that the year of 2010 paradoxically indicated the consolidation and crisis of the charity state, which stood on the pillars of neoliberalism, Islamism, and populism under the AKP. Therefore, beginning in 2010, the AKP facilitated the transition from the authoritarian neoliberal state to the exceptional form of state by transforming and reinforcing the charity state. Beginning in 2015, the AKP facilitated the transition to a fascist form of state. In this ongoing process, the Islamisation of state apparatus and social structure aimed to preserve the bourgeois class domination while providing a cloak of sanctity to the AKP, repressive and ideological state apparatuses, and the paramilitary forces as well as various bourgeois fractions. However, the exceptional state cannot secure flexible regulation of class relations and organic circulation of hegemony, since the transition to the exceptional state involves a series of political crises and ruptures, and the exceptional state heavily resorts to coercion rather than consent (Jessop 2008, 130–131). In this sense, the exceptional state remains significantly vulnerable to the radicalisation of subordinate classes and social opposition. In other words, if the subordinate classes and social opposition is organized to exploit moments of political crises, reactionary elements of the exceptional state could be eliminated to enhance a future transition to the normal form of democratic state. Furthermore, political Islam has already been collapsing in the Middle East as it has revealed its reactionary characteristic significantly by taking an anti-revolutionary position during and following the Arab Spring and committing dreadful crimes in Syria (Azeri 2017, 594). In Turkey, despite the suspension of the right to strike under a state of emergency, the industrial action undertaken by the metal workers' unions representing more than one hundred and thirty thousand workers demonstrated one of the most significant recent attempts to challenge the reconstitution of neoliberal-Islamism. Therefore, this article has aimed to contribute to the literature by exploring the moments and practices as well as vulnerabilities of transition to the fascist regime in Turkey so that it could further foster an academic debate regarding the organisation of social opposition to challenge the AKP's attempt at capturing and reinforcing the charity state.

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The Transformation Problem of Values into Prices: From the Law of Value to Economic Planning

Tiago Camarinha Lopes
Universidade Federal de Goiás

ABSTRACT: The controversy about the transformation problem of values into production prices can be understood as a long debate in the history of economic thought that departs from the law of value and arrives at socialist planning. In order to defend this view, the paper distinguishes and describes three phases of the debate: the Engels Challenge from 1885 to 1906, the Traditional Transformation Problem from 1906 to 1971 and the Critique of Redundancy from 1971 onwards. It shows how the topic formally began and explains how each phase developed into the next. A table summarizing the main aspects of each phase is presented for illustration. Opposing the common idea that the controversy on the transformation problem does not advance, this paper argues that the debate originated from the challenge of the conciliation of the law of value with an equal average rate of profit, shows evolution in the long run because it forces Marxist and non-Marxist economic schools to confront the quality side of value in theory and to develop abstract models of planned economy in practice.

KEYWORDS: value and price, transformation problem, labour theory of value, plan and market

Introduction[1]

In the beginning of the 21st century there is still no general accepted solution for the transformation problem of values into production prices. Having started officially at the end of the 19th century, it is one of the most controversial debates in theoretical Political Economy. It is common to hear that the discussion suffers from circularity, since it seems to deliver no satisfactory results. In opposition to this view, this paper presents the debate in its historical context and argues that the discussion achieves scientific progress when one considers its development in the long run.

The main aim of the article is to argue that the transformation problem obliges economists to deal with the relationship of two entities: the law of value and economic planning. In order to achieve this, the paper distinguishes the traditional transformation problem from the broader problematic in which it is inserted. So, the advance of the discussion is shown by the confirmation that the traditional approach to the problem is only a specific episode within the broader controversy. Three concepts will be analyzed: the definition of the transformation problem, the character of the critique on Marxist economics and the subject under study. If these concepts have suffered positive changes in the last 125 years, the gradual advance of the debate will become evident and it will be shown that economists dealing with the topic must relate the law of value with planning.

For an adequate analysis of the historical phases of the debate, it is necessary to depart from an abstract presentation. The transformation problem describes the relation between value and price. While the word value is a theoretical category in economic science, which lies at a relatively high level of abstraction, the

1 This article originally appeared as "As fases históricas do debate sobre a transformação dos valores em preços de produção" in *Revista de Economia Politica*, 2012. See Lopes 2012. Translation by the author.

expression price is closer to reality. Both terms refer to the exchange relation of commodities – value, *theoretically* and price, *empirically*.[2] From this perspective, the development from the abstract to the concrete along the three volumes of *Das Kapital* is a parallel to the transformation of values into prices, and in the ideal tendency, into production prices. The starting point of the discussion is the following question: How does an equal average profit rate come about based on the law of value? There are two main methods of answering this challenge posed by Engels (1963) in the preface to *Capital* book 2.

The first method is based on the thesis of the contradiction between *Capital* book 1 and *Capital* book 3, represented by Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk (2007). It contains a negative critique of the economics of Karl Marx because it completely rejects *Capital* as a scientific theory capable of explaining the capitalist mode of production. The solution to the problem, according to this line, is impossible.

The second method of treating the subject goes back to the works of Ladislaus von Bortkiewicz (2007). In opposition to the fundamental denial, this path tries to follow the structure of Capital through the formalization and specification of the presentation. Therefore, it allows a more detailed study of the work and represents the continuation of the discussion about the mystery of the equal average profit rate. During the 20th century, different publications on the matter followed this line.

In the flow of the revival of Marxist analysis in the late 60s, the resurrection of the theme was due to the work of Piero Sraffa. Despite the fact that *Production of Commodities by Means of Commodities* was written to criticize the marginalist approach of the neoclassical school, it was rapidly discovered that the rehabilitation of Classical Political Economy (Meek 1961) compelled modern economic science to confront Marx. But the use of Sraffa's model to solve the transformation problem had a contradictory result: the question itself lost its meaning. At that moment, the thesis of the redundancy of the labour theory of value, already anticipated by Engels in the preface of *Capital* 3, was confirmed and broadly accepted. Therefore there were efforts to end the debate. Surprisingly, the matter continued in a new form: now, the search for the economic meaning of the transformation became the central question.

Given that the discussion is long and does not have a clear solution, it is necessary to organize it historically. This necessity is pointed out by Schefold (1979) when he stresses the general incomprehension about the relation between Marx and Sraffa and the difficulty to explain it. By analyzing the publications on the problem it is possible to recognize three historical phases which help to conceive a totalizing presentation for the debate on the transformation of values into production prices. On the basis of this organization it is possible to understand that the conversion of values into prices resembles the concrete efforts of controlling the resources of the economy. In that sense, the economic planning in general and the socialist planning in particular are necessary results of the advancements of the debate on the transformation problem.

The article describes the historical formation of the debate by presenting three development sections, one for each historical phase. A summary table with the main characteristics of each period is shown and a short conclusion recalling the three concepts under investigation closes the paper.

Engels Challenge

At first sight the beginning of the history of the debate about the conversion from values into production prices is the correction made by von Bortkiewizc of an eventual mistake of Marx (2004). Actually, the debate starts earlier, with the publication of *Capital* 2.

In the preface, Engels poses the contradiction of Classical Political Economy as a challenge to theoreticians. It consists of the demonstration that an equal average rate of profit can and must come about, not only without a violation of the law of value, but on the very basis of it (Engels 1963). Engels believed that Marx had already solved the problem. However Marx (2004) was not able to clarify the issue entirely as the forthcoming alternative solutions showed.

One of these solutions was proposed by Lexis (1895). It is interesting to note that his answer to the challenge anticipates the critique of redundancy of the labour theory of value by more than half a century. According to him, the solution to the enigma of the

2 This conception seems to be the starting point for Marx according to Rojas (1989).

equalized profit rates could only be achieved if, for the individual commodity, the measure of value as labour time was abandoned. He argued that, from this isolated perspective, there seems to be no comprehensible connection between price and the labour time required to produce the commodity. Yet Lexis (1895) is very careful with his conclusions: he does not state that prices cannot be measured and explained by labour time. He admits that real prices can be thought of as the point of arrival of the unities of labour time, in a process of transition. This observation calls attention because it points to the implicit function of the labour theory of value in the quantitative determination of exchange relations in the market. He concedes that prices can be understood as a form of appearance of labour-values, *but he also stresses that no one is obliged to use this point of view*. For that reason, Engels (2004) describes Lexis as a Marxist disguised as a vulgar economist.

Engels asserts that the theory of Karl Marx and vulgar economics explain exactly the same real phenomena, but with different arguments. As a reaction to the thesis of redundancy unconsciously defended by Lexis, Engels simply compares the concurrent propositions to explain the origin of profit. Since one of the aims of *Capital* 3 was to make Marx's theory comparable to other economic explanations, this aim seems to have been achieved. Therefore, we can suspect that the argument that the analysis of value made in *Capital* book 1 is unnecessary is the expected conclusion made by vulgar economists when studying Marx's *magnum opus*.

Apart from Lexis, other participants tried to contribute to the debate. The way of facing the problem around the end of the 19th century was to describe the operation of the law of value together with the process of competition. The debate centered on the comprehension of the fact that the law dominates the price movements and each participant tried to link the concept of the labour theory of value with the average rate of profit. The labour theory of value, being widely accepted, did not need to be firstly justified. The discussion aimed at understanding the theory of value of Marx from the standpoint of David Ricardo.

The continuity between Classical Political Economy and its Critique are involved in the transformation problem since its original formulation. From then on, the difficulties grew in complexity towards various directions. Engels (2003) wanted to demonstrate the existence of the law of value with his controversial historical interpretation of *Capital* in order to clarify the reigning confusion. Although for him the solution of Marx was the correct one, there was a great pressure for an explanation of the issue after the publication of book 3. The real economic process behind the equalization of the profit rate based on the labour theory of value had to be better explained. Therefore, *Capital* book 3 did not clearly solve the paradox.

Those who were against the solution of Marx became both disappointed and satisfied with this situation according to Engels (2003). For this reason, the difference to David Ricardo regarding the determination of the quantity of value needed to be explicitly shown. This specific difference would be the technical improvement of the Ricardian labour theory of value, not being part of the Critique of Political Economy in its qualitative sense. This shows that there is an important continuity between classical economics and Marx's contribution, as many have pointed out after the publication of Sraffa (1960).

According to Engels (2003), when economists speak of value, they mean value really established in exchange. Marx, differently, when speaking of value, frequently means individual value, a quantity which is not defined only in the circulation process, but already in the production sphere. In the context of the transformation, the relation between the spheres of production and circulation originates lots of incomprehension. As Antonio de Paula (2000) rightly asserts, only the dialectical thinking about both sides can clarify how the size of the real exchange value is determined. The connection of individual value and social value occurs exactly in parallel to the linking of production with circulation. Then, the Marxist theory of value has its roots in the formulations of Ricardo and is, in the strictly quantitative sense, a technical improvement. The object under study is quantity of value. As in Classical Political Economy value can only be an expression of labour time the question on the equal average profit rate based on the law of value is solidly put forward by Marx. The quantitative side of the transformation is seen as solved after Sraffa (1960). Therefore, the third phase of de debate has a very different form than the first one: it is asked about the content of this quantity.

It is known that the quality question was exposed and solved by Marx in the beginning of *Das Kapital*. This question represents the singularity of the Critique of Political Economy: why is the measure of value an expression of labour time? One may note that it is very similar to the problem emerging from the quantitative solution after the Sraffa-shock: labour cannot have a differentiated function when we treat the economy only in its use-value structure. This is exactly the reason why the debate on the transformation problem also moves towards the pivot on which a clear comprehension of political economy turns (Marx, 1985).[3]

In sum, the opposing position to the Marxist school defended the position that there was an insoluble contradiction between the value system characteristic of *Capital* book 1 and the system of prices presented in *Capital* book 3. The critique of redundancy (unable to establish itself at that moment, but already recognized by Engels (2004) as a potential headache) was postponed. At this stage no conclusion was formulated. The debate went on and changed after the intervention of von Bortkiewicz (2007). A second phase emerged, the transformation problem as it became internationally known.

The Traditional Transformation Problem

Marx departed from Ricardo in order to overcome the contradiction of Political Economy: why does the quantity of labour time to produce a certain item not necessarily coincide with the price by which this very item is bought and sold? Answer: the law of value dominates the movement of real prices. This means that although prices are not directly proportional to individual values there is a mechanism that explains that deviation. However, when trying to present a mathematical formalization for this description, Marx could not arrive at a complete formal procedure. As Heinrich (1999) argues, since then, the problem is no longer seen as a failure of Classical Political Economy, but as an error of Marx himself.

Marx's quantitative solution in *Capital* book 3 counts the cost prices in terms of value. This condition guarantees that capitalists can buy the commodities composing the constant and variable capital to their individual values. Even though it is a possible case (if, for example, the organic composition of the respective sectors producing the inputs at question were exactly equal to the average organic composition of the economy), in general, the prices of the commodities composing the constant and variable capital will be different from their individual values. Marx (2004) recognizes the limitations of his exposition and warns the reader that an ideal formalization should take that into account.[4]

The quantitative method had to be modified so that all possible cases of organic composition could be included in the model. Ladislaus von Bortkiewicz (2007), following Tugan-Baranowsky and probably influenced by Wolfgang Mühlpfordt, presents a solution of enormous repercussion in this direction.[5]

The research over the publications on the theme reveals that von Bortkiewicz's procedure establishes a starting point for the search for an algorithm of converting values into production prices. Accordingly, the quantitative side of the matter is the main area of study of the rest of the article. In this phase, the debate is clearly less ideological and polarized. However, it is not possible to recognize within it a clear path of progress or continuity. This is the reason why the transformation problem seemed to be circular. Indeed, only one aspect united the participants: the problem existed.[6]

It did not matter if the problem had been artificially created by the modification of Bortkiewicz, if it emerged from the limitations of Marx's solution, or if it was a product of the Ricardian theory of value. The fact is that the question was disseminated in this specific context, which contributed to spread the idea that the transformation problem was only about the formal quantitative conversion of one system into the other.

3 This movement is best expressed in the qualitative development approach, which is presented in the section of the third phase of the debate.

4 Fine and Saad-Filho (2010) also correctly advert that the limitation of Marx's procedure is real and that he was aware of it.

5 The reference to Bortkiewicz (2007) as the initiator of the traditional transformation problem must be maintained because almost all authors of that time entered in the discussion because of his contribution. According to Quaas (1992), Mühlpfordt (1893) had found a formal solution to the mystery of the average equal profit rate even before the publication of *Capital* 3. Apart from Tugan-Baranowsky and Mühlpfordt, V. K. Dmitriev and the mathematician Georg von Charassof participated in the first formalizations of the labour theory of value. On the origin of the traditional transformation problem, see Howard and King (1992), Quaas (1992) and Schefold (2004). Sraffa frontally criticized the method employed by Bortkiewicz in notes not intended for publication. For further information on this, see Gehrke and Kurz (2006).

6 Except for those who always considered it to be a spurious problem, like Samuelson.

The phase of the traditional transformation problem is specific in one sense: it has a largely accepted conclusion. This was possible because of the arguments developed on the basis of Sraffa (1960). The result can be summarized like this: the system of values is different from the system of production prices. This difference is due to the criterion of surplus-value distribution. In the system of values, the criterion is the size of the variable capital (the surplus is distributed in proportion to the quantity of living labour in each sector), while in the system of production prices the surplus the sum of the variable with the constant capital acts as the parameter of surplus distribution.

The so-called transformation of values into production prices is the passage from one system to the other. It is formally described through the multiplication of the system of values with a specific matrix, which reorganizes the distribution of surplus value so that the production prices emerge together with the profit proportional to the size of each capital, regardless of how it is constituted of variable and constant capital. By the way, the inverse of such a matrix allows the inverse transformation. The pure mathematical conversion of production prices into values is therefore also possible. This means that there is a mutual quantitative determination between the systems. Now, this result is no longer a source of controversies. However, the debates on the significance or interpretation of such a transformation did not end.[7]

After Samuelson (1971) presented his eraser-algorithm, a new controversy arose. Since then, the conflict between Marxists and Sraffians grew. Curiously, Samuelson started being attacked by the Marxist side, faithful to the labour theory of value, as well as by anti-Marxists.

Lerner (1972), for example, criticized Samuelson because he was making illegal concessions to the labour theory of value. The theory would be reusable if it was described merely as redundant. Lerner's panic due to Samuelson's concessions reveal how the critique from Böhm-Bawerk failed and the labour theory of value became acceptable many years after the complete dissolution of Classical Economics. In the past, the Marxist theory of value had been rejected because it was supposedly wrong. But now, it became logically acceptable. The change from the accusation of contradiction to that of redundancy reveals that Marxist economics gained strength along the development of the debate.

Another reaction to Samuelson (1971) was Southworth (1972). He searches the motives for the increasing interest in Marx among economists and the reasons for their difficulties in comprehending his theory. Part of the confusion would be due to Marx's own texts, but another part would be the result of different methodologies of investigation. Southworth (1972) asks then if such a maneuver made by Samuelson is not a conscious strategy. This would be similar to that idea raised by Engels, that Lexis was a Marxist disguised as vulgar economist. Southworth (1972) argues that, in order to oppose the increasing credibility of Marxist economic theory, some papers have the political aim of offsetting the return of Marxist analysis within economic science. Samuelson's *Voila!* would be an example of such actions, as well as his qualification of Marx, the economist, as a minor Post-Ricardian.

Indeed, Samuelson (1971) showed clearly that values could be converted into production prices with the help of the already presented method. This enabled the construction of arguments departing from both extremes: from values and from prices. On one side, the analysis of values was said to be an unnecessary detour. On the other side, it was argued that prices were entities without meaning if not linked to values. The polarization of the debate became very clear after the dissolution of the traditional transformation problem.

So the algorithm had been found, and the problem had been solved (or extinguished). Still, papers on the matter continued to appear. Why? Because as time passed and the debate grew on formality, the origin of the challenge was lost. By the time a solution was found, the problem was no longer comprehended in its totality.

Naturally, the debate should turn back to the origins of the problem. And this was exactly what happened. Baumol's (1974) article represents a new form of facing the issue. He argues that the authors since Bortkiewicz gave too much attention to a theme which was marginal for Marx. What Marx really meant was that the distribution of surplus in different forms of income of capital through competition could be

7 For a formal summary of the result allowed by Sraffa (1960) see Pasinetti (1979).

illustrated by a mathematical model. Since 1907, the search for such a model demanded all efforts from participants. But what really mattered was to know how the surplus value was distributed in reality. Besides, Baumol (1974) emphasizes that Marx knew that production prices could be quantitatively determined without any mention to values. Therefore, the crucial movement would be the transformation of the surplus value into the different categories of remuneration of capital property, like profit and interest. This conception of the problem differs substantially from the traditional approach.

Up from the point when a mathematical operation of conversion was broadly accepted, new forms of treating the issue began to appear. Since then, many studies look for a meaning of the transformation. In 1977, Ian Steedman published *Marx after Sraffa*. He urges economists to show the necessity and usefulness of the labour theory of value for a materialist analysis of the economy. This officially initiated a new phase for Marxists economists.

This means that the traditional transformation problem was only a specific episode inside a broader question involving the continuity and rupture of Political Economy. The practical result of the traditional problem is the definitive refutation of the critique of contradiction between *Capital* book 1 and *Capital* book 3. It is therefore secure to state that the critique of Böhm-Bawerk (2007) was completely debunked. The critique of contradiction was thus substituted by the critique of redundancy in this particular context.

The Critique of Redundancy

Different alternatives came as an answer to the Sraffa shock in order to address the redundancy of the analysis of values. There is disagreement on how to confront this situation. For that reason, the third phase of the debate is fundamentally a dispute between theoreticians of the labour theory of value. This is the reason why the communication with non-Marxists schools became limited in recent years. Among the alternatives of the new scenario are the new solution, the temporal single system, the qualitative development and the probabilistic approximation.[8]

The New Solution

The New Solution or New Interpretation was the first alternative approach with strong influence. Duménil (1983-1984), Foley (1982), and Lipietz (1982) were those who put this interpretation forward.

Duménil (1983-1984) argues that the relevance of the labour theory of value is at stake. According to him, the concept of value is a theoretical necessity, because of the aggregation of different use values. So the labour theory of value would have a specific clarifying function: to explain the social division of labour in a historical context, while the theory of price could only describe this division in societies that produce commodities. Furthermore, for Duménil, the New Solution has to be defended with citations from Marx, so it cannot be freely developed without base from the original text. On the other hand, he recognizes that the interpretation of redundancy can also be demonstrated from Marx's writings. This would indicate ambivalences in the text that should be carefully analyzed.

Although the New Solution seems to be organized, it is not possible to recognize a counter critique to the argument of redundancy at this stage. For some time it was the most popular alternative among labour value theoreticians,[9] but it is being criticized in the last years. Some simply reject it,[10] while others show themselves sympathetic to its objective of defying the dominance of the redundancy solution to the transformation problem.[11] So we may say that the New Solution was a pioneer in the political unifying sense, but its fragile theoretical proposition could not be maintained.

The Temporal Single System Interpretation

Another reaction stream is called Temporal Single System Interpretation (TSSI).[12] According to Howard

8 This is a representative selection of reactions which aims to illustrate the diversity of interpretations developed from the Sraffa-shock.

9 Glick and Ehbar (1987) and Campbell (1997) are examples of acceptance of the New Solution.

10 For example Sinha (1997).

11 For example Moseley (2000), Fine, Lapavitsas and Saad-Filho (2004) and Gontijo (2006).

12 For presentations of the TSSI by its proposers, see Kliman and McGlone (1999), Freeman, Kliman and Wells (2004) and Kliman (2007). On my part, I do not think the TSSI is a wrong interpretation, though I

and King (1992), it started being developed in the 1980s, but it gained popularity only later. It recognizes itself as an alternative to all methods that link values to prices in a simultaneous form. So for proponents of the TSSI, all discussion based on models of simultaneous transformation (including Dmitriev, Bortkiewicz, Sweezy, Seton, Okishio, Morishima, Shaikh, Steedman, and Laibman) cannot explain the meaning of the conversion of values in prices.

In the simultaneous interpretation (the traditional), the transformation does not occur in steps: the value system and the price system are determined at the same time. There are consequently two sets of exchange relations. One known conclusion from this interpretation is the possibility to choose for one of the systems, so that there is no theoretical connection between them. According to Freeman, Kliman and Wells (2004), this led to the separation of the systems and turned the issue into a spurious problem. The redundancy of the value system and the abandonment of Marxian economics were practical results from this perspective.

In the TSSI, on the contrary, the transformation takes place in a chronological order. Firstly, there is the value system, which is determined by the technical conditions of the economy and secondly, the price system is derived from this origin. Then, a temporal connection between both systems emerges, similar to Marx's formulation. Furthermore, the assumption of the equal average profit rate is studied and it is said that it can only be thought of as a tendency.[13] So the TSSI has the objective to put Marx's own solution in debate in order to clarify the meaning of the transformation. The TSSI actually refutes the correction of von Bortkiewicz with the statement that since then, this erroneous interpretation has dominated the debate.

Authors who criticize the TSSI see in it a further frustrated attempt to save Marx. Indeed, it is not clear why the TSSI denies the result of the redundancy of the value analysis. For this reason, Gary Mongiovi (2002) affirms that what the TSSI really lacks is a lucid explanation of why we, after all, need the labour theory of value after Sraffa.[14]

More precisely, the TSSI seems to confuse the critique of contradiction with the critique of redundancy. Because of this, it seems to fall again into the trap of trying to justify the labour theory of value. In one word: all efforts of the TSSI are directed to sustain that Marx's theory of value is consistent. But this is not in dispute anymore! Opponents of Marxian economics argue now, differently from Böhm-Bawerk, that the theory is redundant, precisely because it was shown that it is internally consistent.

The Qualitative Development

The approximation qualitative development was strongly influenced by the pioneer works of Isaak Rubin (1978). The authors of this tradition emphasize the qualitative analysis of value in order to solve the dilemma. Here, the concept of abstract labour is studied with great caution. So the qualitative side of the value analysis becomes the focus of attention. The concept of Critique of Political Economy becomes central and the difference between Marx and the classical economists are made clear. As a result, the determinations of the quantity of value are neglected. The link between value and price would rather be a development of categories, a connection between expressions on different levels of abstraction, and not a logical-mathematical procedure. The quantitative conversion of values into production prices would be an incorrect method of dealing with the problem, according to this approach.

Why did Marx point out to the mathematical direction then? Heinrich (1999) argues that, although Marx initiated a new area of investigation, some elements of Classical Political Economy unwillingly continue to exist in his own writing. This means that Marx still uses classic concepts which would not be compatible with the new system of Political Economy.

This argument is similar to that of Paul Mattick (1974), who believes that the empirical research on the exchange relations has low practical relevance. Connecting prices to individual values is not so important in his view. It is more relevant to observe the total

believe it employs a wrong strategy for solving the controversy. The task is to recover the Cambridge-Cambridge Critique and to unite the Marxian and the Sraffian Schools against mainstream neoclassics. This is my guess on how to reverse the disintegration of the Marxian school as described by Kliman (2010).

13 This conclusion is very close to the main argument of Farjoun and Machover (1983). Both methods are temporal, opposing the traditional simultaneous method. On the relationship of the TSSI and Farjoun and Machover, see Wells (2007).

14 For recent critiques of the TSSI see also Mohun (2003) and Park (2009) and the replies by Freeman and Kliman (2006) and Kliman (2009).

fall or rise of the sum of production prices, because that would bring knowledge about the development of the productive forces of society.

Another approach from the perspective of quality is developed by Fine and Saad-Filho (2010). They deal with the implications of the quantitative solution by arguing that more significant than the algebraic solution of the transformation problem is the observation that Marx's theory of value is not fully grasped by some specific algebraic solution separated from the totality of Marx's contribution to science (Fine and Saad-Filho (2010, 112)).The crucial point, they argue, is that value exists as a consequence of the social relations. Thus, instead of having to choose between either the value or the price system, Fine and Saad-Filho (2010) claim that the relationship between them must be theoretically recognized and analytically explored.[15]

Many other authors can be classified in the qualitative development category, such as Coutinho (1974) and Belluzzo (1998), who pioneered the debate in Brazil for example. However, it is improbable that this kind of interpretation will be able to end the discussion if the quantitative developments made along the years do not find their rationale. It is important to remember here that the quantitative aspect of the theory of value has strong support from Marx, who was particularly interested in explaining the quantitative relation between value and price. More importantly, dialectics as a method of investigation disallows the focus only on the quantitative or the qualitative aspect of value theory.

The Probabilistic Approach

From all these alternatives, the probabilistic method deserves attention because it answered to Steedman (1977) most directly. Farjoun and Machover (1983) developed a statistical approach to verify postulates of Political Economy with the purpose to solve the dilemma on the transformation problem. For them, a fundamental assumption of the problem is at the same time a misleading one: the assumption of the equal average profit rate.

They criticize the determinism that emerges from this and present a non-determinist model, where the profit rate can only be given probabilistically. The traditional methods consider that the profits of all sectors are equal because profit rate equalization through competition is a true experience which appears as a reality for the theoretician. Actually, the profit rates are all different, as the empirical results show and the market analysts know.

Despite Marx being aware of this, he treats the profit rates as if they had equalized. The problem of observing the equal average profit rate as something real lies in the inversion of the transformation. Values can then be derived from prices. Marx warned that the assumption of the equal average profit rate could lead to this erroneous conclusion. For that reason he stressed that, even when the assumption is made, there is only one possible direction of transforming, which is from values towards prices. The probabilistic approach can be summarized as follows.

The exchange relations on the market are adjusted to the production prices through the process of free market. The price of a commodity can be freely negotiated between buyer and seller, but the variability of prices are limited by unknown parameters. Prices of production are not the object of study in this approach, in opposition to Sraffa: there is only the value system (individual values in production) and the market prices (observable exchange relations formed on the market). Marx writes that the concrete exchange relations are governed by economic laws, specially the law of value. This means that, even though the market prices are open (they appear to be negotiated without any bounds), the law of value dominates and regulates them. The connection between value and price can be modelled with probabilistic calculations where there is no absolute tendency for equilibrium, as shown in Figure 1.

Considering this summary of Farjoun and Machover's approach, it is possible to comprehend

15 So they do not reject the quantitative analysis, but call attention to the fact that it must be integrated to some meaning regarding both value and price system. This relationship should clearly determine the differences between the value and organic composition of capital, as Fine (1983) has initially outlined. On the value, organic and technical composition of capital, see Fine (1990). On the consequences of this categorical development of the capital composition for the transformation problem, see Saad-Filho (1997). On the attempt of Ben Fine and Alfredo Saad-Filho to present the dialectics of the quantity and quality in value theory, see Fine and Saad-Filho (2009).

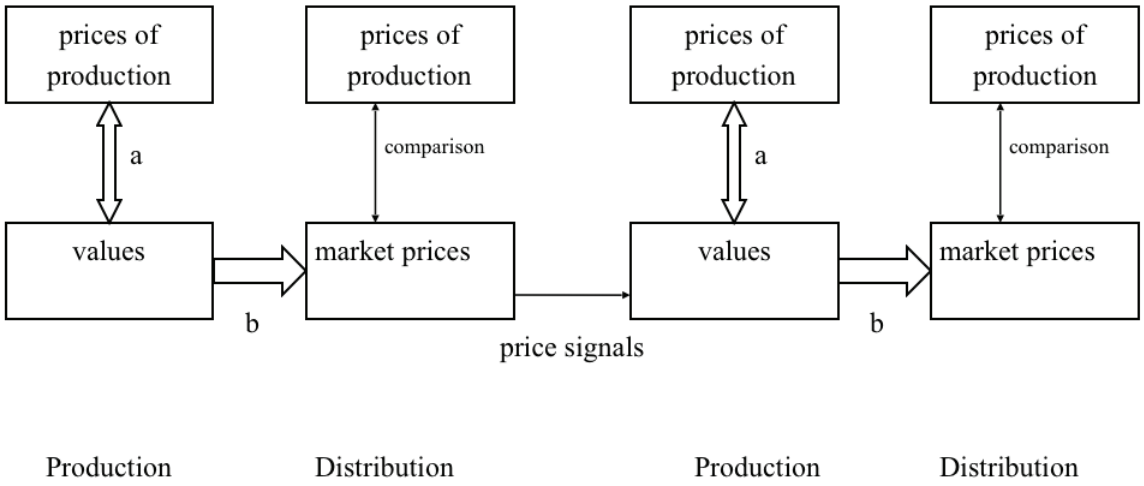

Figure 1: Values, prices of production and market prices

the meaning of the traditional algorithm. The starting point of this presentation is the value system (box labelled values).[16] These are the individual values of commodities. In other words, they are the individual labour time used to produce each individual product. This system represents the technical reality and it is inaccessible information in societies which socialize individual labour through the market. It is determined by the own technical structure given by the productive forces of society. This combination of values does not allow in reality an equal profit rate for capitals with the same size but with different organic compositions.

The traditional solution is represented by the double arrow "a": it is an algorithm that enables a new distribution of the surplus value according to the equal average profit rate. Accordingly, the profit rate in Sraffa's model and the production prices are determined by the use-value structure of production. This solution must be carefully interpreted: as there is reciprocity between both systems, it is said that values are not the starting point towards production prices.[17] But, as circulation is not yet in the picture, it is clear that on this stage, one is not dealing with concrete exchange relations.

Alternative "b" represents the probabilistic method. The adjustment of values to production prices takes place only through a trial-and-error process typical of the market. Therefore, production prices and the average profit rate can only be an abstract creation, an objective around which the production finds orientation. The transformation "b" goes from the value system towards the market prices system without a deterministic calculation. Moreover, market prices are the only way to get access to the technical reality of the private productive unity. In other words: technical conditions of production, under capitalist relations, show themselves only through the market process. Production data (input quantity, including labour) are private property in the capitalist mode of production and are socialized only afterwards on the market. Although these data exist, we do not see them prior to circulation. These data would be visible beforehand only through nationalization and/or planning.[18] Therefore, market prices act as empirical information about the technical conditions of production in capitalism.

In this sense, value and price correspond to those two levels of observing exchange relations. Accordingly, values are not only theoretically but also temporally

16 Each box represents a system. So values represents the value system, prices of production represents the production prices system and market prices are the empirical exchange relations which really took place.

17 This is the starting point for the formalization of the critique of redundancy developed by Samuelson (1971).

18 This is the reason why economic schools in general are led to build planned economy models when dealing with the transformation problem. For a Marxist position see, for example, Cockshot and Cotrell (1989), who currently develop Farjoun and Machover's approach further and link the results with the economic calculation debate. For a presentation of methods of analyzing the variable profit rate in accordance to this approach, see Wells (2007).

	Phase 1: Engels' challenge (1885-1906)	**Phase 2: The traditional transformation problem (1906-1971)**	**Phase 3: The critique of redundancy (1971 – today)**
Main theme	Law of value and the equal average profit rate	Mathematical formulae	Labour theory of value
Critique	Contradiction between value system and price system	Marx's quantitative solution	Redundancy of the value system
Function of transformation	Equalization of profit rates based on the law of value	Conversion of values into production prices	Distribution of surplus value / market simulation
Starting point	Engel's challenge	Marx's formalization wrong/ incomplete	Relation between transformation and planning
Sraffa's effect	Difference between Marx and Classical Political Economy raises	end	Confirmation of the quantitative redundancy of the labour theory of value
Conclusion	–	Contradiction between value system and production price system explained (quantitative problem solved)	–
Next researches	Relation between Marx and Sraffa/Sraffian school	–	Origin/utility of the labour theory of value
Formal question	How does an equal average profit rate is formed based on the law of value?	How is it possible to model the conversion of values into production prices?	–

Figure 2: A summary table showing the historical phases of the debate on the transformation of values into prices. The three historical phases of the discussion are displayed side by side, so that a simple comparison can be made. The organization of the table does not imply that the themes are strictly separated. It means that each period had specific characteristics.

prior to prices, as Marx argued. Bettelheim (1969) remembers that the differences between the price theories and the Marxian framework are not visible on the practical level of economic calculation. This supports the idea that economic schools away from Marx, when dealing with the transformation problem, may indirectly produce technical material for the praxis of planning.

The relation between "a" and "b" becomes clear with the passage from the production price system to the sphere of circulation. Alternative "a" would be the theoretical transformation, representing the algorithm of conversion which expresses the result of competition. This was the focus of the traditional transformation problem. Alternative "b" on the other hand, would be the transformation on a more concrete level.

Prices of production represent the objective of the movement and the assumption of the equal average profit rate: after the market prices are formed on the circulation sphere, this system is compared with the system of production prices. If they are different, an equal average profit rate was not achieved. This is the reason for a new allocation of factors in the next period. The system of values will transform itself in the new system (values). The importance of this constant comparison and reallocation is expressed in the relevance

of the price signs or in the relation between supply and demand.

This should partially indicate how the economic calculation debate and the operation of the law of value in the planned economy can be put in connection to the traditional transformation problem.

The Progress of the Debate

According to the present study, the traditional transformation problem lies within a greater problematic involving the questions of continuity and rupture in Classical Political Economy. With respect to those three concepts under analysis, three results can be here summarized.

First, it is necessary to broaden the definition of transformation of values into production prices, since the debate deals with a vast field of analysis in theoretical political economy. Therefore, a strict definition of the theme makes only sense when one wants to observe a specific phase of the debate. The classical conception of the transformation is related exclusively to the phase of the traditional transformation problem, which encompasses only the problem of quantitative conversion.

Second, as time passes the emphasis on certain aspects of the issue is different. Mainly, the form of the critique on Marxist economics suffered a significant change. From the perspective of theory the progress is expressed in the failure of the Böhm-Bawerk-type of attack. Here we have an important result. Because the argument opposing Marxist economic theory has moved from an accusation of contradiction to one of redundancy, it becomes very visible that any rejection of the economic theory presented in Capital is a matter of political choice, not of technique. The debate was strongly polarized after Samuelson (1971) precisely because of this.

Third, the analysis of the value form became the central subject under study after the implications of the model of Sraffa (1960). At this moment, the economic meaning of the transformation started to gain attention. Now, old quantitative solutions are opening space for the formulation of a new questioning of qualitative nature. As the content expressed in the relations of quantitative exchange became empty after Sraffa, the discussion was directed to the qualitative analysis of value. Moreover, the relationship between Marx and Sraffa became one of the main questions which does not have a full accepted answer in the literature (Bellofiore 2008).

This last point demands perhaps a more detailed explanation, since it may be the most fragile of these three results. As Schefold (1974) had warned, the Critique of Political Economy encounters tough resistance every time the theoreticians are compelled to deal with the qualitative side of the theory of value. The traditional economic theory systematically hinders the study about the quality of value by concentrating all efforts on the quantitative side. Because of this, even though the contemporary phase of the debate on the transformation problem calls for the qualitative analysis of value theory, economists distant from the Marxist tradition will abandon the debate by (correctly) arguing that it is useless for the quantitative measure of wealth. This is the context in which the critique of redundancy of the labour theory of value should be understood. In the turn to the 21st century, there can be no discussion similar to phase 1 because today, the law of value in all of its complexity is not generally accepted as a subject of study in economics. In the end of the 19th century there were no doubts that values needed to be somehow linked to prices since the labour theory of value was broadly accepted before the dissolution of the Ricardian school. Moreover, if the challenge posed by Engels is accepted, one cannot affirm that the redundancy-argument is a solution to the problem, since it is not based on the law of value. In this sense, it would be merely an answer to the traditional quantitative problem.

On the other hand, even though non-marxist schools do not consider the labour theory of value, they develop abstract models of planned economy when they conciliate both the value and price systems. By doing that, they unconsciously contribute to a better understanding about the capitalist economy and to the development of the theory of mixed economies. One of these results was the development of approximations that, in combination to input-output models, may offer new tools for the practice of planning.

So, as the quantitative problem is solved, the problematic must necessarily be directed to the Critique of Political Economy as a way to understand the

concept of value for Marx. And since value for him is very closely related to abstract labour, the debate on transformation problem needs to comprehend how this category was historically formed. But this must not neglect the aspect of the quantitatively concrete determination of prices, since it has practical validation in the field of planning. Only then economists will fulfill their scientific objective of treating the theory of value dialectically. Socialist planning is therefore a necessary outcome from the full development of the original problem of explaining how the law of value must be related to the real quantitative relations of exchange between use values observed in the reality.

Finally, it is shown that, due to the changes in the definition of the problem, in the character of the critique and in the subject under study, there is scientific progress in the debate. In this context, it is possible to comprehend that, even on an unorganized framework, the debate on the transformation problem is moving to the analysis of the value form and to the theory of economic planning.

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The Failure Of The State And The Rise Of Anarchism In Contemporary Anti-Systemic Praxis

Morgan Rodgers Gibson
University of Queensland

Abstract: The centrality of anarchism to the praxis of contemporary anti-systemic social movements has been well documented. From the alter-globalisation movement to Occupy, many contemporary anti-systemic movements are defined by their commitment to some of the central tenets of anarchism, including the pursuit of decentralized, directly democratic and egalitarian organisational forms that are independent from and reject the state as an agent of social change. This stands in contrast to traditional anti-systemic forces which, as Immanuel Wallerstein identifies, have typically seen the state as the principle agent of social change. However, within the scholarly literature, only limited attempts have been made to develop an understanding as to *why* many anti-systemic movements now reject the state as an agent of change. This paper seeks to provide a theoretical and historical account of this. By tracing the historical failure of 'state-centric' anti-systemic movements (principally state communist, social-democratic and nationalist forces) this paper argues that an *anarchistic praxis* – though not a doctrinaire ideological programme – has become a primary point of reference for contemporary anti-systemic movements. It argues further that this can be seen, in many ways, as a response to the failure of ideologically motivated, state-centric anti-systemic forces to bring about substantial, transformative social change once assuming power. This argument will be substantiated and illustrated through two qualitative cases: the Zapatistas and the South African shack dweller's movement, Abahlali baseMjondolo.

Keywords: Abahlali baseMjondolo, anarchism, anti-systemic, praxis, Zapatistas

Introduction

Anarchism has long been dismissed as incompatible with the complexities of contemporary society; either a recipe for violence and chaos, or, more often, a 'pre-modern' utopian fantasy. Indeed, these are axioms often uncritically taught to budding students (see Heywood 2007). To such observers, it must thus be perplexing to find anarchism now of substantial influence within what Wallerstein (2002) labels 'anti-systemic' social movements.

Much scholarly discussion identifies what I refer to as an *anarchistic praxis* as being at the centre of these movements. For instance, Curran (2006, 2), Graeber (2002) and Wallerstein (2002) each identify the centrality of anarchism in contemporary opposition to neoliberal globalisation. Elsewhere, anarchism – or, at least, anarchist principles – has been identified as an animating ideological force behind Occupy (Gibson 2013), WikiLeaks (Curran and Gibson 2013) and the alter-globalisation movement in the West (Dixon 2012), and the Landless Peasant's Movement (Stedile 2002), the Zapatistas (EZLN) (Curran 2006; Graeber 2002) and Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM) (Gibson 2008; Pithouse 2006) in the 'global South.' It is thus evident that much contemporary anti-systemic praxis is defined by a commitment to some of anarchism's central praxiological tenets, principles and analyses, including opposition to hierarchy, decentralisaition and the pursuit of directly democratic social forms (see Epstein 2001; Gordon 2007; Graeber 2002). Most significant is that anti-systemic movements increasingly reject the state as an agent of change. It is this final point that forms the core of this article. The originality of this piece lies in the fact that, whilst, as explored, many identify the centrality of anarchism within

contemporary anti-systemic praxis, few attempts have been made to develop an understanding as to *why* many anti-systemic movements now reject the state as an agent of change. In light of this lacuna, I seek to provide a theoretical-historical account of the way anti-systemic movements have developed and changed. To do this, my paper will develop an understanding of *why* an anarchistic praxis has become central within contemporary anti-systemic movements.

I argue that an *anarchistic praxis* – though not a doctrinaire ideological programme – has become a primary point of reference for contemporary anti-systemic social movements and that this can be seen, in many ways, as a response to the failure of state-centric versions to bring about transformative social change once assuming power. Admittedly, one cannot explain the actions of *every* anti-systemic actor. Hence, I am not alleging that state-centric anti-systemic movements no longer exist or that their ideological underpinnings do not inspire participants, but merely that the influence of state-centric anti-systemic movements is on the wane and that, as a result of their failure, an anarchistic praxis is increasingly significant in the constitution of contemporary anti-systemic forces. Furthermore, I am not arguing that this state-centric praxis is the *only* reason these forces have failed. However, it is the most significant shared feature of their praxis and is the feature this paper focuses on.

Necessitated by the misconceptions surrounding it, this article begins by explicating what constitutes an anarchistic praxis. Sympathising with socialist critiques of capitalism, an anarchistic praxis is differentiated from the numerous varieties of state socialism by virtue of its pursuit of decentralised, directly democratic social forms independent of the state and capital that, as far as possible, *prefigure* anarchism's utopian social vision. The second section explores – through the work of Immanuel Wallerstein – the historical dominance of a 'state-centric' praxis within anti-systemic movements – animated by the notion that the state is the major agent of social change, and that, subsequently, taking state power is a necessary initial part of enacting social change – before outlining the considerable success state-centric anti-systemic movements have had in obtaining state power. However, despite this success, these movements subsequently failed to deliver on the second part of their promise: the radical transformation of society. In many cases, they instead became functionaries of state power. In important ways, the state has thus 'failed' as an agent of revolutionary change, substantiating the anarchist contention that it is destined to reproduce domination. This failure also helps to explain the widespread adoption, within contemporary anti-systemic movements, of an anti-state, anarchistic praxis.

The final section empirically illustrates this argument through two cases: the Zapatistas of Chiapas, Mexico and the South African shack dweller's movement, Abahlali baseMjondolo. These movements illuminate that contemporary anti-systemic actors increasingly recognise both the failure of state-centric anti-systemic movements and, more broadly, the failure (and, perhaps, inability) of the state, to transform social order. Besides illustrating my argument, there are significant methodological reasons I chose the EZLN and AbM over other possible case-study candidates. First, they are amongst the largest and most influential contemporary anti-systemic movements. Second, these cases (both of the 'global south') represent voices distinct and separate from 'Western' manifestations of an anarchistic praxis – like Occupy – that have received comparatively ample academic focus. For instance, while the EZLN, and their impact on the alter-globalisation movement, have been extensively analysed, there has been limited analysis of the movements' specific rejection of the state as an agent of change. Third, limited attention has been paid to the specific movements that utilize an anarchistic praxis in the global south. Hence, utilising cases from the global 'South' will broaden quantitative and qualitative understanding of 'anarchical' movements, lending further applicability and generalisability to my argument. Finally, both movements represent a 'living politics' in which anarchist principles serve as the source of social life and political enlightenment, acting to substantiate the claim (see Curran 2006) that anarchism constitutes the core of contemporary pursuits of a post-capitalist world.

Anarchism and an 'Anarchistic Praxis'

Hierarchy, Capitalism and the State

Etymologically, anarchism means (something like) the absence of authority. Along these lines, Peter Kropotkin

(1910) claims anarchist 'tendencies' run throughout the history of social and political thought. This claim is substantiated by Rudolf Rocker (2001, 17), who asserts that "anarchist ideas are to be found in almost every period of known history": evident not only in the writings of its canonical figures, but also as far back as the Taoist Sage, Laozi, the Hedonists, Cynics and Stoics in Ancient Greece, the practices of Christian sects of the Middle Ages and the medieval guilds of Europe, and also in the works of 'utopian' socialists like Fourier. Nonetheless, throughout much of human history the word 'anarchism' has been pejoratively synonymous with disorder and even terror, associations maintained to this day.

The notion of 'anarchism' as a coherent political ideology, named as such, took shape via the writings of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. For Proudhon, it is not anarchy, but hierarchy, that produces chaos and disorder. For anarchists, the legitimacy of social institutions and practices are directly tied to the extent that they promote individual freedom. From this conviction springs anarchism's opposition to the state, which anarchists consider the exemplar of externally imposed hierarchy. It is not only the principle source of social antagonism, but, as Kropotkin (1946, 1) contends, also "the greatest hindrance to the birth of a society based on equality and liberty, as well as the historic means designed to prevent this blossoming." Government operationalizes state power. As a consequence, anarchism stands in opposition to both the state and government (concepts sometimes used interchangeably within the tradition). As Proudhon (2004, 294) famously declares:

> To be governed is to be… spied upon, directed, law-driven, numbered, regulated, enrolled, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, checked, estimated, valued, censured, commanded, by creates who have neither the right not the wisdom nor the virtue to do so. To be governed is to be… repressed, fined, vilified, harassed, hunted down, abused, clubbed, disarmed, bound, chocked, imprisoned, judged, condemned, shot, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed… That is government, that is its justice, that is its morality.

However, the anarchist opposition to hierarchy goes beyond anti-statism, demanding the repudiation of hierarchy in various forms. Anarchists share with Marxists and other state socialists a rejection of capitalism, arguing it is fundamentally exploitative and alienating. Indeed, anarchism, in its denunciation of hierarchy, is consistent with Marx's conception of capitalism as alienation insofar as both are ultimately pursuant of a social order in which social bonds are the product of free association.

In recent intellectual history 'anarcho'-capitalists and right-wing libertarians have posited the inviolability of private property rights, contending infringements constitute a fundamental breach of individual liberty. They go on to argue that the market can actualise freedom as a non-coercive realm of exchange between utility maximising agents, with violation on the part of the state qualifying as a hierarchical imposition that quashes intrinsic moral rights and freedoms (see, for instance Nozick 1974). However anarchism, particularly in its 'classical' social forms, has typically condemned capitalism for its exploitative and alienating effects. Anarchist's – foremost amongst them, Kropotkin (1904) – claim that capitalism, by engendering egoism, greed and selfishness, threatens the altruistic and mutualistic bonds that underlie human speciation, and thus threatens social atomisation and fragmentation. The capitalist economy and private property, rather than actualising human freedom, constitute instead forms of arbitrary domination. They produce economic monopolies that operate for and under the interests of the few against the many. The masses not only live dreary lives as alienated cogs in a broader economic machine, but a life of compulsion, forced as they are to sell their labour power in order to survive. Furthermore, by forcing much of the population into the realm of competitive market relations in order to survive, capitalism actively impedes the development of alternative lifestyles and social arrangements, promoting homogeneity and conformity.

For anarchists, the state is not external to this process, but complicit in it. The state, amongst other things, enforces laws, maintains systemic stability, panders to the interests of capital and fills functionalist gaps in the market in times of crisis. It also plays a directly violent role in crushing socially oppositional elements. Capitalism, in short, is propped-up and reinforced by the violence of the state. This is confirmed by Hayek (1994, 45) who, nominally a champion of unregulated

capitalism, nonetheless admits a necessary role for the state in maintaining the capitalist order, stating: "in no [market] system that could be rationally defended would the state just do nothing."

Hence, anarchism traditionally stands in opposition to both the state and capitalism. In this sense, it is "the confluence of the two great currents which… since the French Revolution have found such characteristic expression in the intellectual life of Europe: socialism and liberalism" (Rocker 2001, 16). The great liberal thinkers, in order to maximize individual liberty, sought to limit governmental and statist functions. Anarchists extend this critique of the state further, and seek to eliminate political power itself from social life. But they also appreciate the socialist critique of liberalism. Personal and social freedom can only be actualized in the context of equitable, non-dominatory economic conditions. Anarchism thus shares with socialism the demand to abolish capitalism in favour of common ownership of the means of production, free for the use of all without distinction.

However, the anarchists depart from the various state socialists on the question of *how* a post-capitalist society ought to be realized. As explored below, the social democrats seek to gain control of the bourgeois state through parliamentary processes, building a socialist society through reformist means. On the other hand, the state communists – including Marx and his followers[1] – preserve the state and political power in the form of a proletarian dictatorship that, as discussed in the paper's second section, after driving the transition towards a classless society, they hope will dissolve itself, producing, from hierarchical means, the ends of a non-hierarchical communist society.

Anarchists thus struggle against not only class, but hierarchy itself, a distinction which constitutes the major point of departure for anarchists from statist forms of socialism. In pursuit of a non-hierarchical society, anarchists contend that the struggle against capitalism must also carry through as a struggle against hierarchy itself, including, especially, hierarchical political power and the state. Thus, as David Apter (1970, 397-398) claims, anarchism "employs a socialist critique of capitalism with a liberal critique of socialism"; thus constituting the libertarian wing of socialism. Against the centralisation of political and economic forces advocated by socialism, anarchists argue the social appropriation of capital must be carried out directly by the masses themselves.

An Anarchistic Praxis: Prefiguration, Direct Democracy and Decentralisation

Hence, for anarchists, social forms ought to *prefigure*, as far as possible, the post-capitalist society sought. In short, a liberated society can only be achieved through similarly libertarian means of getting there (Franks 2006, 99). The reason for this, anarchists posit, is that, whatever the intentions, the means of praxis tend to inherently transform into and become its ends. Bookchin (2004, 11), for instance, argues that the historical failure of the revolutionary left can be found in the way in which anti-systemic forces have typically utilised profoundly oppressive and hierarchical means (such as the dictatorship of the proletariat, or the capitalist state) in an attempt to realise an emancipated, post capitalist future (the ends). While anarchists and socialists find commonalities, particularly in their critiques of capitalism, this conflation of means and ends is the basis upon which anarchists reject both Marxian notions of the dictatorship of the proletariat and social democratic reformism. Along these lines Bakunin (1972, 329) prophetically cautioned that statist forms of socialism would, despite perhaps noble aims, spawn a tyrannical and oppressive 'red bureaucracy.' This critique of state socialism's emphasis on the state as an agent of change is driven by anarchism's "conviction that an instrument of domination… cannot be used to achieve liberation; that ends cannot be separated from means" (Gibson 2013, 341).

Anarchist social structures and organisational forms aim to stifle human tendencies towards violence and egoism and instead encourage spontaneity and the impulse towards mutual aid. Peter Kropotkin (1904), against Social Darwinists, Hobbesians and Malthusians, sought to explicate that, alongside mutual struggle, exists another, equally necessary, tendency towards mutual aid that enables human beings and other animals to maintain themselves against a some-

1 For discussion on Marx and Lenin and the dictatorship of the proletariat, vanguardism and the state, see section two of this article.

times hostile nature. For anarchists, capitalism and the state undermine these sociable instincts. Processes of rationalisation and the domination of money and the commodity form produce highly fragmented, atomised social forms, undermining community bonds.

Anarchists, in contrast to the highly centralised and undemocratic social forms that characterise state capitalism and socialism alike, advocate decentralisation and confederalism to suppress the emergence of hierarchy (see Bookchin 1991). For anarchists, an emancipated society can only be realised through the direct participation of social agents in collective decision-making processes. Decentralisation aims at fostering this participation, vitiating the need for centralised decision-making bodies. Anarchists, in conflating means and ends, aim instead towards the development of decentralised counterpower institutions that build "the structure of the new society in the shell of the old" (Industrial Workers of the World, n.d). Hence, while anarchists rarely explicate what libertarian structures would look like (if they are to be truly the product of participatory practices, how could one?), what is clear is that non-hierarchical, directly democratic structures must emerge as part of the revolutionary process, constituting simultaneously its means and ends.

The State And The Promise Of Liberation

'State-Centric' Anti-Systemic Movements

Utilising 1848 as a symbolic starting point, Wallerstein (2002) identifies and analytically splits anti-systemic forces into two broad forms: 'national' and 'social' movements. Social movements are principally envisaged as socialist political parties, movements and trade unions struggling against bourgeois domination and state managers. The major source of oppression, these movements contend, is the capitalist economy and the class relations that spring from this (Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 1989, 30). Conversely, 'national' movements seek the creation of a nation-state, or to at least secede from colonial empires (Goodman 2002, 17). Wallerstein (2002) argues that, although these movements accorded priority to their own social or national objectives – often specifically opposed to the other – and the two rarely cooperated, the history of these movements reveals a set of shared features.

First, they presented themselves as revolutionaries. However, the two types generally had a 'reformist' wing that advocated social transformation from *within* the system. Nevertheless, these movements, even reformist versions, were seen as threats to the status-quo. Furthermore, it was often difficult to tell the two apart. Sometimes 'revolutionaries' would compromise to gain or retain power, whereas 'reformists' often realised state power was more limited than hoped (Wallerstein 1996).

Second, these movements went through a parallel series of debates over strategy that varied from 'state-centric' perspectives to those that viewed the state as an intrinsic enemy and pursued instead civil and individual transformation. Within the social movements, this materialised in the debate between state socialists and anarchists; within the national movements between 'political' and 'cultural' nationalists (Wallerstein 1996). Though, for a time, statist and anti-state alternatives held a broadly similar influence within anti-systemic forces, the state-centric perspectives eventually triumphed, arguing the immediate source of power and influence is located in the state apparatus (Tilly 1996, 10). Resultantly, anti-state alternatives came to be dismissed as 'utopian' in that they supposedly ignored political 'realities.'[2] Moreover, attempts to ignore the centrality of the state were destined to fail as anti-state variants would, ultimately, be suppressed by the state.

The 'Two Step' Strategy and the State Apparatus

Contrary to more libertarian alternatives, state-centric movements, broadly speaking, articulated an instrumentalist 'two step strategy' in that they would first seek to gain power over the state and follow this by initiating the second step: transforming the world (Wallerstein 2002, 30). Controlling the state apparatus thus became the principal short-term aim of these movements. Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein (1989) identify two basic ways that state-centric anti-systemic forces sought to obtain state power: (1) through reform and (2) through revolution.

Social Democracy and State Communism

In the social movement, these debates culminated in conflict between social democrats (reformists) and state communists (revolutionaries). This was so despite the

2 See, for example, Lenin's *The State and Revolution* (1992).

two movements sharing the same broad objective of overthrowing capitalism and a similar anti-systemic heritage. Though social democracy's reformist tactics would immediately appear to violate its very status as an 'anti-systemic' force (actors, after all, actively seek to participate in the system), social democracy retains its anti-systemic character by maintaining the achievement of socialism is only possible with the abolition of capitalism. Rather than smashing the state or promoting revolution, however, social democrats seek the gradual overthrow of capitalism through bourgeois-parliamentary means (Steger 1997, 140). Upon being elected, social democrats propose eventually utilising state power to collectivise the means of production and eliminate wage labour, thus eliminating the domination of capital. An example of this is the 'Socialist Objective' of the Australian Labor Party, which proposes that, once sufficiently establishing political power, the Party will seek "the socialisation of industry, production, distribution and exchange" (McKinlay 1981, 52-53).

Conversely, 'revolutionary' communists accuse social democrats of legitimising capitalism through their passive acceptation and affirmation of bourgeois institutions and processes. In contrast to social democrats, communists argue the *capitalist* state – which constitutes, as Marx and Engels (2002, 221) famously put it, a mere "committee of the bourgeoisie," dedicated to perpetuating capitalism – cannot be utilised towards socialist ends. The state constitutes part of the 'superstructure,' an outgrowth of the economic relationships emergent from the capitalist mode of production. Such an instrument cannot be reformed for emancipatory ends. Because the economic 'base' (essentially) determines the character of the superstructure,[3] the only possible way the working class is able to realise its emancipatory telos is through the appropriation of political power by a 'dictatorship' of the proletariat that transforms base relations. As its initial task, this dictatorship seeks political power in order to destroy class relations inherent in capitalist society, thus abolishing the prior (and most significant) source of domination (Marx and Engels 2004, 54). As Marx (2001, 26) puts it, the political movement of the proletariat must have, as its immediate goal

> *the conquest of political power…* this requires a previous organisation of the working class developed up to a certain point and arising precisely from its economic struggles… with the object of enforcing its interests in a general form, in a form possessing general, *socially coercive force.* [emphasis added]

Hence, state communists advocate a working class revolution to smash the capitalist state and replace it with a revolutionary 'proletarian state' – which, Lenin (1987) would later assert, out of practical necessity, must be composed of a vanguard of the working class – that would subsequently transform society.

As sketched out most famously by Marx and Engels (2002, 243-244) in *The Communist Manifesto*, this transitionary period would involve "the confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels," the "abolition of property in land" and the centralisation of all factories and instruments of production, credit and the banking system and communication and transport in the hands of the state. After dissolving class antagonisms, the proletarian dictatorship would centralise production and eliminate wage labour and the dehumanising aspects of the division of labour (Marx and Engels 2002, 244). Marx (2008, 27) vaguely posits that, at this point, the statist dictatorship would eventually lose its political character and 'wither away,' leaving a communistic society, built on free and voluntary social bonds, that transformed distribution from "each according to [their] ability, to each according to [their] needs."

The Global Rise to (State) Power of Anti-Systemic Movements

Despite substantial differences, it appeared as though state-centric forces would achieve their transformative promises on a transnational scale. By the mid-twentieth century, they had, in many cases, achieved 'step one' of the two step strategy and gained state power throughout the world. Social democrats had generally established influence within Western political systems

3 See "Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy" (Marx 1994, 211) and also the preface to *The German Ideology* (Marx and Engels 2004), for Marx's explication of the base-superstructure relationship.

(see Lavelle 2008, 7).[4] Though on an alternating basis in competition with other parties, they still achieved power over the state apparatus and were thus in a position to initiate the second step of the strategy: social transformation. Similarly, national liberation movements assumed power or partially realised their aims of decolonisation through Asia and Africa[5], state-communist parties ruled over approximately a third of the world[6] and populist movements ascended in Latin America. As Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein (1989, 33) identify, "from the vantage point of 1848, the success of the anti-systemic movements has been very impressive indeed."

The 'Failure' of State-Centric Movements

Yet when these anti-systemic movements gained state power, they failed to live up to their promise of transforming the world. The longer these formerly anti-systemic parties or movements stayed in office, the more it appeared they were attempting to postpone or even suppress the realisation of their transformative promises:

> The cadres of a militant mobilizing movement became the functionaries of a party in power… a privileged caste of higher officials, with more power and more real wealth than the rest of the population emerged. At the same time, the ordinary workers enjoined to toil even harder and sacrifice ever more in the name of national development. *The militant… tactics that had been daily the bread of the social movement became 'counter-revolutionary', highly discouraged and usually repressed once [the movement] was in office.* [Wallerstein 2002, 32-33. Emphasis added]

Even in states where reforms or 'revolutions' have been achieved, there is increasing disillusionment with the capacity of such movements to deliver substantive change. Many of the problems the anti-systemic movements objected to – from alienating wage labour, to the level of democratic participation within society, or the role of the state in the international system – remain in place. Simply put, though anti-systemic movements achieved some victories – particularly in winning welfare concessions and alleviating extreme poverty – not enough has changed. The implications of this for the anti-systemic movements were huge. The masses drew from this, at best, negative conclusions about their performance; at worst, they called for revolutionary change (for instance, the Soviet Union or China). These populations ceased to believe that state-centric movements would realise the more egalitarian future promised; disillusionment reflected in, for instance, rebellions against statist versions of communism[7] and its repudiation throughout much of the world.

Throughout the interwar period, the terrors of the Soviet experience shook the wider legitimacy of state communism.[8] Though the struggle against Nazism temporarily legitimated the Bolshevik regime, the perpetuation of systematic tyranny by communist regimes, like the USSR and China, in the post-war world continued largely unabated. The centralisation of production, distribution and exchange extolled in works like *The Communist Manifesto* produced systematic oppression of the masses they championed and a 'new' bureaucratic ruling class. The dictatorship of the proletariat failed to disappear. Instead, around the globe, the aspirations of communist parties for political power prevented the socialistic reconstruction of the economy. As Rudolf Rocker argues:

> The 'dictatorship of the proletariat,' in which naïve souls wish to see merely a passing, but inevitable, transition stage to real Socialism, has today grown into a frightful despotism and a new imperialism, which lags behind the tyranny of the Fascist states in nothing. The assertion that the state must continue to exist until class conflicts, and classes with them, disappear, sounds, in the light of historical experience, almost like a bad joke. [Rocker 2004, 12-13]

Affirming persistent anarchist critiques, communist parties the world over tended to become functionaries of state power. The ultimate general results of the revolution envisioned by Marx never realised. Once gaining

4 Examples include the Australian Labor Party (ALP), the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland*s and the Swedish *Socialdemokratiska Arbetarpartiet*.

5 Including in Vietnam, Mozambique and Nicaragua.

6 Most prominently, the USSR and the People's Republic of China.

7 For instance: in the USSR, rebellion began almost immediately, with the Makhnovists, Mensheviks and the Kronstadt Rebellion providing early examples of resistance, by various left forces, to Bolshevik rule; see Guerin (2003, 98-108).

8 The purpose here is not to debate the extent regimes like the USSR or the People's Republic of China were/are 'true' reflections of Marxism-Leninism – they may also rightly be called 'state capitalist.' Rather, I am merely exploring the failure of 'state communist' regimes to produce liberating change.

political power, communist parties quickly came to repress the militant tactics that had once been their primary means of political struggle. Actually existing state communist regimes were not agents participating in liberating social transformation in a worldwide struggle against capitalist oppression. Instead, these regimes came to be characterised by oppressive statist hierarchies.

Similarly, social democrats have long abandoned their anti-systemic ambition: the dissolution of capitalism through the evolutionary establishment of socialism. Social democrats are now typically satisfied with "curbing the excesses of capitalism and redistributing [some] power and resources to the disadvantaged and the forgotten" (Seyd and Whiteley 2002, 185). In adopting this goal and rejecting the more ambitious aim of (eventually) overthrowing capitalism, they have sacrificed their anti-systemic telos. This is potently illustrated by the widespread adoption of neoliberalism and the emergent dominance of catch-all party models within capitalist democracies (see Lavelle 2008, 39-40).

Finally, since taking state power, 'national' anti-systemic movements have been responsible for the perpetuation of systematic oppression. In the pursuit of homogenous nation-states, many contemporary national movements[9] have committed unspeakable violence and tyranny, in the form of things like ethnic cleansing, genocide, and other forms of state-sanctioned violence (prominently in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda throughout the 1990s). Indeed, nationalism and national liberation movements, far from acting as beacons of social progress, or a buttress against imperialism, are more readily associated with: (1) regressive, xenophobic parties and movements that vehemently oppose multiculturalism and/or immigration and (2) aggressive, violent ethnic-nationalisms that, in attempting to cultivate homogenous nation-states, perpetuate unmitigated violence in ostensible pursuit of this end.

National liberation theorists contend that 'national' liberation struggles must eventually give way to a wider 'humanistic' struggle that seeks, as opposed to parochial 'national' emancipation, 'human' emancipation (see Fanon 2001, 119-166). However, a similar problem to that of Marxism-Leninism applies: like the 'dictatorship of the proletariat,' at what point does the nationalist ruling class 'know' that 'national' liberation has been achieved? Furthermore, can an *inclusive,* humanistic society be cultivated from one that has struggled to be *exclusive* and nationalistic? Given the parochial impulse of 'national liberation' struggles produced by the 'us/them' dichotomy nationalism cultivates, and the hitherto typically chauvinistic character of national liberation movements, one must question whether the cosmopolitan transformation (of explicitly nationalist movements) is possible, or whether new movements must instead emerge on the failed edifice of nationalist struggles and overcome their limitations (for instance, see Bookchin's (1995, 68-72) criticism of national liberation movements).

Having lost confidence in these movements, most also withdrew their faith in the state as the locus of transformative change. Whilst populations did not necessarily stop supporting state-centric forces,[10] this support often became a 'defensive' measure; a vote for the 'lesser evil,' rather than a verification of ideology or expectations (Offe 1994, 116). The fall and transformation of various communist regimes and the unprecedented dominance of neoliberalism both within states and the international system vindicates such a conclusion. Additionally, the emergence of neoliberalism exacerbates the failure of state-centric anti-systemic forces, threatening, along with policies of austerity, the few concessions anti-systemic struggles gained from the capitalist ruling strata. This has made the failure of the state even more striking, as the few 'victories' won are now threatened, or in the process of being reversed.[11]

The failure of the state affirms that mechanisms of state control are ultimately incapable of serving the end of liberating social transforming. As Michels (1911) argues in the seminal *Political Parties*, though vanguardist and representative leftist political organisations might be conceived in the pursuit of social change – as the means to an end – these groups tend to ossify into hierarchical, centralised bodies. Hierarchs become increasingly differentiated from the masses and ordi-

9 Through the likes of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, Idi Amin in Uganda and Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia.

10 Though, often, it also means this. See Lavelle (2008, 39-40).

11 A prominent example is the wave of austerity currently sweeping the globe. Moreover, state spending has not decreased under neoliberalism, but has instead been redirected away from social spending towards things like the military, police and the subsidisation of monopoly capital. See Harvey (2007, 70-81).

nary members find themselves progressively removed from decision-making processes. As rules, procedures and activity become further detached from the mass body, 'the people' increasingly reject it and refrain from participating within it. This bestows upon leaders greater decision-making capacity, while also ensuring that hierarchs become increasingly convinced by their own propaganda and adulation, eventually concluding they know what is best. Furthermore, the means of hierarchy and centralisation ('the party' and the state) quickly come to supplant the ends of a liberated society free from oppression and exploitation ('the revolution'). While state-centric forces achieved some significant concessions from the ruling strata, the telos of social transformation and the liberation of daily life remain unachievable through the mechanisms of state control, coming to be eventually supplanted by a desire to maintain power and perpetuate privilege.

Such an outcome acts vindicates the anarchist critique of the state and its incapacity to produce liberating change. As the anarchist historian, Voline (1974, 538), states, any revolution inspired by and adoptive of statist forms, even 'provisionally', is lost as "all political power inevitably creates a privileged position for those who exercise it." This is because, "those in power are obliged to create the bureaucratic and repressive apparatus which is indispensable for any authority that wants to maintain itself, to command, to give orders… to govern."

Resultantly, anti-systemic movements are now generally "deeply suspicious of the state and of state-oriented action." They are also more inclusive and non-hierarchical in that the "basis of participation is a common objective… and a common respect for each [individual]'s immediate priorities" (Wallerstein 2002, 35-37). It is thus not surprising that anti-systemic political actors have turned to anarchism which, instead of advocating a "fixed, self-enclosed social system," strives "for the free, unhindered unfolding of all the individual and social forces in life" (Rocker 2004, 31). Amongst the great nineteenth-century political philosophies, anarchism stands alone in opposition to the state. Liberals, social democrats, nationalists and Marxists alike, though divided ideologically, were driven to capture the state and wield state power in the interests of their constituent groups against others. Anarchists, singularly in opposition, warned presciently against this. This perhaps explains why anti-systemic movements, in their contemporaneous rejection of the state and a state-centric praxis, act in accord with anarchistic analyses, principles and praxis.

Enough Is Enough! Towards an Anarchistic Praxis

Vignette: A 'Post Ideological' Anarchism

Though never anointing themselves as anarchists, one can see in the practice of the Zapatistas and Abahlali baseMjondolo a powerful expression of and commitment to anarchist principles. The praxis of both corresponds with what Curran (2006, 2) describes as 'post ideological anarchism.' Though inspired by and drawing from anarchism in constructing autonomous politics, post-ideological anarchists reject "doctrinaire positions and sectarian politics," preferring instead to conflate anarchism with an eclectic assortment of other political ideas. These movements thus illustrate my principal argument: that anarchism informs the "impulse, culture and organisation" of anti-systemic movements; that its "ideas and principles are generating new radical dreams and visions" that impact significantly upon the methodology, practice and philosophy of modern anti-systemic forces.

It should be restated: I am not claiming that anti-systemic actors who utilise these principles are, or explicitly refer to themselves as, 'anarchists.' Nonetheless, everywhere one finds the same anarchist *principles* informing praxis. In line with this, both the Zapatistas and Abahlali baseMjondolo have adopted a praxis constructed around anti-statism, anti-capitalism, decentralisation and direct democracy that looks to, as far as possible, prefigure emancipated social and organisational forms. Furthermore, the emergence of both movements, and the anarchistic praxis central to their expression, is tied to the perpetual oppression experienced by both at the hands of the state and global capital. As such, they illustrate the tendency of contemporary anti-systemic forces to reject the state as an agent of transformative social change.

The Zapatistas

The Zapatista uprising followed centuries of brutal oppression of the indigenous Maya of Chiapas, Mexico, first under Spanish imperial rule, and then the domina-

tion of the Mexican state and its hierarch, global capital. It is no coincidence that the EZLN uprising began on January 1, 1994: the day NAFTA was signed into law. As the Zapatistas declared, through Subcomandante Marcos:

> We are a product of five hundred years of struggle … we have nothing, absolutely nothing, not even a roof over our heads, no land, no work, no health care, no food or education … today we say: ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! [Marcos 1993]

Historically, the Mexican state "has treated Chiapas as an internal colony, sucking out its wealth while leaving its people – particularly the overwhelming majority who live off the land – more impoverished than ever" (Burbach 2001, 118). Chiapas thus serves as a vivid expression of the contradictions of neoliberal globalisation, laying bare capitalism's simultaneous generation of wealth and poverty. For the Zapatistas, the Mexican state and international capital "feed on the blood of the people"; taking "the wealth out of Chiapas and in exchange" leave behind nothing but "their mortal and pestilent mark" (Marcos 1994).

Though responding to a particularly brutal and oppressive mobilisation of state power, the Zapatistas have resisted the formation of a nationalistic praxis, instead pursuing the formation of transnational opposition to neoliberal globalisation. This is encapsulated vividly in the declaration 'Against Neoliberalism and for Humanity,' issued from La Realidad in 1996. In it the Zapatistas note how money disregards borders and grants

> no importance… to races or colours… money humiliates dignities, insults honesties and assassinates hopes. The historic crime in the concentration of privileges, wealth and impunities is renamed 'neo-liberalism.' It democratizes misery and hopelessness. [Marcos 1996]

The Zapatistas thus constitute a particular expression of an international anti-capitalist mobilisation that "beyond borders, races and colours, shares the song of life, the struggle against death, the flower of hope and the breath of dignity" (Marcos 1996).

Closely connected with an understanding of the state developed through struggle and in line with anarchist views of political power, the Zapatistas do not seek to capture state power, but circumvent it. Yet this stands at odds with the foundational ambitions of the Zapatistas. Initially, the EZLN developed as a "completely vertical" military organisation "established to take power through armed force." However, this rigid conception quickly came to clash with the reality of life in indigenous communities. The original vanguard's "conception of the world and revolution was badly dented in the confrontation with the indigenous realities of Chiapas" (Marcos 1995). It was only when the EZLN subordinated itself to participatory structures that the project exploded into a popular mobilisation.

The Zapatistas have, consequently, come to oppose the Marxist-Leninist idea of a vanguard, however it may be conceived. Despite beginning as a hierarchical politico-military group, the Zapatistas have shown a commitment to participatory practices in, for instance, declining the formation of a practical political alliance with the subversive Mexican political movement, the Popular Revolutionary Front (EPR). As the EZLN confirmed in a communiqué to the EPR, "what we want… [is] not to seize power but to exercize it" (cited in De Angelis 2000, 32). Instead, the Zapatistas see the construction of *autonomous* democratic structures within civil society as an end in itself. Along these lines, by 1987, the Zapatistas had set up a complex confederal network in which settlements took direct charge of praxis and decision-making. What had formerly been a vanguard submitted and integrated itself into the "social, cultural [and] political… fabric of the communities." Every initiative taken had to be "authorized by the regional command after deliberations in assemblies"; the communities "made the EZLN cede to them" (Lorenzano 1998, 143).

This ties in with the way in which power ought to be exercised within anarchist social structures: at an individual level. Rather than bargaining for a limited version of territorially based autonomy within a centralised model of governance demanding adherence to the state, the Zapatistas insist on the right of each community under its influence to develop its own network of political relations (Stahler-Sholk 2007, 49). Though quickly encircled by the Mexican Army after the 1994 Declaration, the Zapatistas quickly announced their presence in thirty-eight municipalities outside of the army barricade. Following this, the Zapatistas boycotted official elections and rejected the assertion of

authority proclaimed by the Mexican state. Instead, they effectively created parallel structures of governance by adopting traditional indigenous practices that produce direct, participatory procedures in open community assemblies (Stahler-Sholk 2007, 54-56).

These confederalist, decentralized social structures are an attempt to build institutions that seek to render existing hierarchies irrelevant. The Zapatistas contend that it is only through changing "the forms of organisation and the tasks of politics" that social transformation is possible. In saying "'no' to leaders, we are also saying 'no' to ourselves" (Marcos 2001a, 73). In this, the EZLN is challenging not only the hierarchy on which the movement was originally constructed, but hierarchy itself: saying 'no' to the right of anyone to decide on behalf of, or impose themselves on, another. Accordingly, the Zapatistas are an "armed movement which does not want to take power, as in the old revolutionary schemes" (Marcos cited in Lorenzano 1998, 141). Rather, they are "subordinate to [civil society], to the point of disappearing as an alternative" (Marcos 2001b, 58). Thus, the Zapatistas are fundamentally indifferent to the state; they seek to bypass and live autonomously from what they see as its deceitful, destructive influence.

The operational methods of cultivating and propagating these democratic structures converge with the anarchist ideas explored above. Through the utilisation of two central principles, the Zapatistas have shown a sophisticated commitment to and understanding of both the anarchist congruence of means and ends and pursuit of a prefigurative politics. Through the first operational principle of 'command-obeying,' the Zapatistas have sought to subvert hierarchy by juxtaposing the relationship between the leaders and the led. In practice, this has led to the rotation of leadership in community councils in order to avoid a situation of permanent leadership and a form of 'consensus' decision-making within communities in which all important decisions must necessarily be decided upon by participants. Furthermore, decisions that fall outside of the scope of a single community are decided upon within village assemblies that draw parallels with classical anarchist ideas of confederalism. This preoccupation with participatory decision-making is an attempt to avoid the pitfalls of externally imposed hierarchy and hence, administrative political power (Jeffries 2001, 132).

The second operational concept of 'asking we walk' places the burden of responsibility for activity on individuals, rather than certain figures or 'vanguardist' social groups driving political praxis (Curran 2006, 154-155). This means that, rather than *telling* others how it is that social change is to be carried out (as one in the role of a 'vanguard' would), one is constantly engaged in emancipatory praxis by consistently *asking* how it is that social change is to be carried out and by participants doing tasks themselves. As such, liberation depends not on providing the correct answers, but asking the right questions and taking collective, democratic responsibility for revolutionary action.

Abahlali Basemjondolo

Similar to the Zapatistas, AbM emerged from post-Apartheid South Africa as a response to the continued marginalisation of the poor and dispossessed. In the wake of the oppression and degradation of the racially violent and oppressive Apartheid regime, Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) promised to liberate the impoverished and oppressed by establishing a socialistic society through parliamentary means. However, the socioeconomic inequalities of Apartheid South Africa remain largely intact. This is justified by the ANC with reference to the rise of an African bourgeoisie, in which a host of new millionaires have been created (Gibson 2008, 695).

It is in this context of stark inequality and continuing state repression that AbM emerges. Though beginning as a single issue movement demanding better economic services, housing and sanitation, AbM has since drawn connections between their own subjective experiences of injustice, and the systemic inequities that plague post-Apartheid South Africa. As the movement's spokesperson, S'bu Zikode, explains, AbM felt betrayed: "this is the government that we fought for, worked for and voted for and which now beats and arrests us" (cited in Pithouse 2005). In ignoring the poor, AbM participant, Hlongwa (2007), claims politicians have shown "they are not the answer" to the suffering of the poor, who are treated as "the ladders of the politicians" who, like a "hibernating animal," come "out in election season to make empty promises" only

to soon disappear. Another resident similarly claims that the government has "promised us lots of things, but they never did even one... Still no toilet, still no electricity, still no house" (cited in Xin Wei 2006). The movement thus sees the post-Apartheid state as a parasitical entity that steals from and oppresses the poor and the politicians that compose it and claim to represent the people as the:

> New bosses, not the servants of the poor. They deceive us and make fools of us. They ask us for our vote and then disappear with our votes to their big houses and conferences where they plan with the rich how to make the rich richer. [Hlongwa, 2007]

After lengthy deliberation, the movement decided to refrain from electoral politics in order to preserve its integrity as a radical political project. Espousing the slogan 'No Land, No House, No Vote,' AbM instead seeks the establishment of confederalist, decentralised municipal structures parallel to and independent from the 'corrupt influence' of the post-Apartheid state and the logic of global capital, "which… represent the poor because they are for and by the poor" (Hlongwa 2007).

What AbM has sought to construct is a radically democratic political culture. First and foremost, the shack dwellers are committed to a participatory and decentralised praxis. All new issues are discussed at open-forum meetings conducted on a formal, weekly basis. When issues are raised, participants seek consensus building through lengthy measures at which point, if consensus is unable to be reached, the issue is put to a majoritarian vote. When municipal delegates are sent out as functionaries to other communities, they are mandated to make decisions on issues already democratically decided upon and not to make decisions on behalf of the movement or particular communities within it. This decentralisation means that each community that joins the movement engages in decision-making autonomously and collectively. What develops from this is a political practice in which participants actively decide what is important and in which elected 'leaders' are, on a daily basis, accountable and accessible to those that elect them.[12] Embodied in such practices is a desire, like the Zapatistas, to create an autonomous space where the 'forgotten' are respected, dignity is reclaimed and politics is a composite of collective existence. The praxis of *Abahlali* is thus centred around a self-conscious pursuit of direct democracy and collective self-management:

> Let us keep our votes. Let us speak for ourselves where we live and work. Let us keep our power for ourselves. The poor are many. We have shown that together we can be very strong. Abahlali has now won many victories… Let us vote for ourselves every day. [Hlongwa 2007]

The notion of 'voting for ourselves' appears as an explicit rejection of hierarchy and representation. It suggests that little can be achieved when decision-making is removed from the personal level of more direct, participatory forms of democracy. Central to this has been a concrete recognition, essential to an anarchical praxis, that one's praxis must, as far as possible, prefigure one's vision of an emancipated society. In line with this, AbM (2008a) has always

> asked people to speak to us, not for us… to work with us, not for us. We have asked people to think with us, not for us. We have asked people to understand that our movement will always belong to its members and never to any NGO or political party.

Within this is recognition that when power is externally imposed it risks developing into oligarchic structures antithetical to participatory democracy. Thus, *Abahlali* has consistently opposed representation by hierarchies, even those who claim to work in their interests, be they governments, NGOs, or interest groups.

Instead, politics must be a composite of collective existence, a 'living solidarity' that is experienced daily. Though the shack dwellers speak of a struggle for houses and services, they also acknowledge, in a Kantian vein, that "freedom is more than all of this. Freedom is a way of living, not a list of demands to be met." Though delivering houses will "do away with the lack of houses," this in itself will not realise freedom. Rather, "freedom is a way of living, where everyone is important and where everyone's experience and intelligence counts" (AbM, 2008b). Accordingly, AbM acknowledges liberty cannot be realised through the 'temporary' tyranny of statist hierarchies, cannot be achieved through the leadership of a self-appointed vanguard and is not something to be bestowed in a

12 See ethnographic treatment of this in Nimmagudda (2008).

distant era once 'revolution' has been achieved. Rather, it is something to be realized collectively in the way people live; through a self-liberation that reaches social dimensions:

> We are for a living communism. We are for a communism that emerges from the struggles of ordinary people and which is shaped and owned by ordinary people. We are for a communism built from the ground up. We are for a communism in which land and wealth are shared and managed democratically. Any party or groupuscule or NGO that declares from above that it is the vanguard of the people's struggles and that the people must therefore accept their authority is the enemy of the people's struggles. Leadership is earned and is never permanent. It can never be declared from above. It only lasts for as long as communities of struggle decide to invest their hope in particular structures. [AbM 2010]

As such, the movement has developed a notion of a 'politics of the poor.' That is, a "homemade politics that everyone can understand and find a home in," a participatory praxis that utilizes a dialogic formulae discernible to the people (Zikode cited in Pithouse 2006). As Zikode (cited in AbM 2006) declares: "our struggle is thought in action and it is thought from the ground… We define ourselves and our struggle." Rejecting hierarchy and imposed leadership, this constitutes a "genuinely radical politics… in which the poor are powerful and not those in which they are silenced as they are named and directed from without" (Pithouse 2008, 89).

Conclusion

Anarchism constitutes the core of contemporary anti-systemic praxis. This is a point substantiated by anarchism's influence in and on recent movements as diverse as Occupy, the alter-globalisation movement and WikiLeaks, to name but a few examples. Yet even in explicating this insight, scholars have largely failed to properly engage with the question as to *why* anarchism appears now at the core of anti-systemic radicalism. This paper developed an understanding of this. I argued that an anarchistic praxis – though not a doctrinaire ideological programme – has become a primary point of reference for contemporary anti-systemic social movements and that this can be seen, in many ways, as a response to the failure of state-centric versions to bring about substantial, transformative social change once assuming power.

In order to substantiate this claim, this paper was divided into three main sections. The first, by virtue of the misconceptions surrounding anarchism, explicated what is entailed in an anarchistic praxis. Sympathising with the socialist critique of capitalism, anarchism nonetheless differentiates itself as the 'libertarian' wing of socialism through its critique of hierarchy and pursuit of directly democratic, decentralised organisational forms, independent from capital and the state, that prefigure its emancipated social vision. The second section began by exploring the historical dominance of a state-centric praxis within anti-systemic movements and, the subsequent success state-centric movements had in acquiring state power. Despite success, however, these movements failed to deliver on the second 'step' of their strategy and deliver transformative social change, instead becoming, in numerous ways, functionaries of state power. In important ways, the state has thus 'failed' as an agent of revolutionary change, substantiating the anarchist contention that it is destined to reproduce domination. The article's final section turned to illustrating this argument through an exploration of two cases: the Zapatistas and Abahlali baseMjondolo. These movements illustrate that contemporary anti-systemic movements appear to be increasingly recognising the failure of traditional state-centric movements to deliver transformative change and, moreover, the anarchist insight that the state is incapable of delivering such change.

Significantly, these anarchic anti-systemic movements offer much more. They implore us to consider revolution as something to be intersubjectively constructed among participants, rather than imposed from without through the state or other hierarchical forms. This principle represents a long-marginalised way of anti-systemic politics; a rejection of hierarchical power and the failed state-centric forces of the past, along with the dominant liberal 'democratic' modality of the present. The propagation of an anarchistic praxis represents an attempt to reclaim democracy, along face-to-face, direct lines; a reconstruction of the *polis* in which people are able to construct another world from below, free from the hierarchies that have so long betrayed the possibility of a more just, equal and free world.

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Review Essay

What Might a Materialist Approach to Art Look Like?

Color, Facture, Art, and Design: Artistic Technique and the Precision of Human Perception.
By Iona Singh. Zero Books, 2012.

This is an always interesting, sometime vexatious, and possibly quite important book with an unfortunate title. Unfortunate, because the unwieldy moniker is likely to confuse many readers who might otherwise have been attracted to the subject matter in this book. In my opinion, a much better title might have been: *A Materialist Approach to Understanding Art*, or perhaps even *Knowing Art Through a Materialist Lens*. The goal of the author, Iona Singh, is nothing less than to take an uncompromisingly materialist approach to art in order to create the tools necessary for a radical critique of standard forms of art criticism. In order to inform her position, the author draws extensively on the work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Walter Benjamin, Louis Althusser, Frederick Jameson, Pierre Bourdieu, and Gary Tedman. Her quest is personal as well as professional. She begins the book by asking, a little plaintively, what a person is to do if she loves art (having been an artist herself) but is concerned that this affection might place her on the wrong side of the class struggle (p. 1). Eventually, she tells us, she arrives at the conclusion that: "Yes I think these paintings are worth something, are beautiful and rare" (p. 1). In this, she suggests that specific works of art provide the opportunity for human beings to experience something meaningful through them and with them. That is, all contemporary art in the period of capitalism is not necessarily doomed to be labeled 'bourgeois' and dismissed by serious leftists, despite the propensity that most art galleries and museums have for erasing all signs of labour when they present art products. The book seems to be, in a way, the intellectual journey Singh took to eventually arrive at this conclusion.

Since 'facture' is featured so prominently in the title and is likely unfamiliar to many readers, it might be useful to begin with this idea. As stated by Singh: "The combination of materials used generatively to convey color and the affect they have on the canvas is known by the term 'facture'"(p. 46). This sentence almost makes it seem as though the material arranges itself on the canvas, but of course facture includes how the artist handles the paint or other materials involved in the production of art works and it also includes this process as more generally applied to other kinds of work. One of Singh's key concerns in this book is what she sees as the historical alienation of artists from the means of production. She notes, for example, "Under the contemporary conditions of artistic production, however, the process of the transformation of art materials from nature has become prohibited to the artist. This process has largely been removed from the artist and is carried out by large industries" (p. 106). This book often shows its real strength when the author explores some of the ramifications of this aspect of political economy. In Chapter Two, for example, she travels through the historical process by which the industrial production of art materials, especially colour dyes, was taken from the hands of artists and others and placed firmly in the hands of industrial corporations. Drawing on Marx's notion of 'sensuous human activity,' Singh suggests that humanity's 'intimate' connection with the materiality of colour has become greatly less-

ened due to this historical transformation. "Ultimately, this is political and a major factor in the control and restriction of subjectivity at the level of the senses as it underpins dominant ideology" (p. 42). Earlier artists, such as Vermeer, El Greco, Rubens, Turner, and Uccello (to name a very few) had extensive training as part of their art education in the production of art material itself. Guild training required them to spend many years mastering the physicality of art, which in turn enabled each to 'construct unique combinations of materials' (p. 43).

In a different chapter she closely examines the work and times of the Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675), detailing, for example, how Vermeer would have ground the necessary materials, including the very expensive lapis lazuli, in order to produce the ultramarine pigment that has helped to give his work a signature style. Vermeer engaged in this expensive and time-consuming process, despite the relatively limited financial success he achieved in his own lifetime, because of what we can assume was a commitment to artistic communication over material gain. There are other examples of similarly dedicated artists given in the book, such as Jan Van Eyck. Her basic point is that these artists were not separated from the means of production and, as such, were in a much better position than most contemporary artists to produce truly unique colour arrangements and therefore to affect their audiences in original ways. In chapter two, however, Singh documents how since at least the late nineteenth century in northern Europe, the mass manufacturing of synthetic colours has increasingly replaced unique production processes and therefore come to limit both our built environments and our art. This, she believes, impoverishes us as human beings. She bases this portion of her argument firstly on Marx's notion of 'species-being' and the benefit of retaining our 'necessary' connections to nature *and* secondly on the idea that we have as a species been equipped through evolution with a remarkable 'visual syntax' that acts parallel to the way Noam Chomsky suggests the 'deep structure' of language operates (pgs. 69-71). The latter suggestion implies that humans are imbued with a visual structure that encodes meaning through a multidimensional (rather than in a linear) fashion and that this form of encoding is something that is tied directly to the nature of our being. Anything that impoverishes this visual structure impoverishes our very selves. Some artists, Singh suggests, have long known about our visual natures and have taken advantage of this knowledge. Paolo Uccello, for example, is said by her to have paired red-green binary colours within the painting *Niccolo Mauruzi da Tolentino at the Battle of San Romano* with almost mathematical precision in order to heighten and intensify specific colours through the effects binary pairings have on after-images (p. 78).

Specifics aside, the important thing here is that Singh is basically arguing that certain artists have made extensive use of their knowledge about the optical sciences of their time periods and coupled it with the ability to produce very specific colouration in their works to particular effect. They have therefore offered viewers, through their art productions, experiences that allowed them to gain/re-main in touch with their species-being and/or to see themselves through art as un-alienated humans using the full extent of their contemporary visual structures (as allocated to us through evolutionary processes).

This laudable relationship between art and affect, Singh tells us, became much less viable under capitalism and the industrially controlled production of synthetic colours for both art and everyday design. Contemporary dyes are produced extensively through coal-tar extraction. The few corporations that dominate this production process also, in a sense, dominate our human abilities to have 'genuine' experiences that directly link us to the natural world – alienation becomes an artifact of the industrial production of the very colours that artists and others use to try and express our contemporary human condition: "The low cost, limited facture, limited color, limited processing and competition between large monopolies in the instance of coal-tar dyes are the prime force that produce color with the same indifference for the consumerist senses and in the designed and built environment as the capitalist process has for the productive senses of the worker" (p. 63). In short, we are robbed of our 'sensual cognitive capacities,' seriously undercutting artists and others' abilities to produce un-alienated affect through their works.

Not all contemporary artists remain stuck in this trap. Singh writes about Yves Klein, for example, who

"used the industrial process of production in his own art practice and therefore removed it from the immediate manufacturers' necessity for profit. The environment [of his work production] could therefore be much nearer to this very type of [un-alienated] art labor" (p. 118). Klein, unlike most contemporary artists, began learning art from the ground up. For example, he started as a picture framer in London, and then worked with a chemist in experimenting with coal-tar processes to eventually produce the synthetic ultramarine pigment used to create a blue with a specific chroma that he eventually registered as *International Klein Blue* (p. 58). This specific shade of blue became the defining characteristic of his art works. Singh also tells us about the struggles of different art and design figures, such as the French architect Jean Prouve and his desire to use pre-fabrication techniques to provide high quality affordable housing in parts of Africa and elsewhere (pgs. 123-125). The industrial production of limited colour choices is, she notes, paralleled by other similar processes at work in our world that help limit the ability of artists and designers to reach toward a less alienated form of human relations.

This brings us to consider some of the limitations of Singh's own work. Reading this book, I stopped numerous times to note 'well, I don't agree with that.' Disagreeing with someone's work is often extremely productive – it forcefully requires the reader to come to terms with his or her own not always overt position about a key issue. I will largely ignore the more commonplace disagreements I had with parts of Singh's text (acknowledging that they largely stand as differences of perspective and training) and limit my focus here to what I think of as important factual or interpretive differences.

As I read this book I noticed that whenever Singh ventured away from art, design, and human biology and branched onto a more 'social' ground she often ventured toward much less firm territory. For example, when attempting to write about the effects of capitalism in comparison to non-capitalist human relations, she states: "In the days of larger communal cooperation workers functioned together as one whole communal entity to feed and shelter all the other members of the group. This was the responsibility of all for all" (Singh 2012:83). She goes on to refer to these otherwise unidentified times, places, and peoples as involving the "relations of communal families of ancient times"(p. 84). It seems that Singh has relied far too extensively on the limited (and very dated) understanding of Friedrich Engels here and failed to inform herself adequately about people's lives in actual non-capitalist social formations in real historical contexts. Factions, conflicts, warfare, hierarchies, slavery and near slavery, gender inequalities, and so on can all be found in a multitude of kin-based social formations. Specific non-capitalist formations have differed greatly in relation to who, exactly, received what kind of material supports within the overall social configuration. To lump all of these differing formations into one large entity and then not consider any actual non-capitalist forms of domination is highly problematic. And if the goal is to illuminate capitalist relations of production by contrasting them with non-capitalist relations, then we need to be sure to compare specific social formations and real people with specific situations of capitalism rather than comparing capitalism (problematic enough as a singularity) against a mythical period of egalitarian, conflict-free, unalienated human labour. The quotations I used above comes from a chapter entitled "Women, Culture, Class, Labor" that seems to me to be misplaced in this book, as it mentions issues directly related to art or design merely in passing. There are other examples in the same chapter that involve comparing real social relations to ideal or theoretical social relations, but the words above should be sufficient to suggest that the chapter will likely prove to be problematic for anthropologists, historians, and others of a similar background.

More germane to the heart of this book is an implication that Singh seems to be making in relation to the role that narrative plays in art. Part of Singh's goal for her book is to wrestle art criticism away from the hands of those who insist on viewing art in terms of 'transcendence,' as if art were not a series of products created through human labour but rather something that lives only in the rarefied atmosphere of a desensualized bourgeois ideology. She wants to make it clear that "the occlusion of the sensual element and the role of technique in art history is instrumental in enabling a transcendent theory of art to persist" (p. 21). This perspective, she argues, is dominant in the writings of both non-Marxist *and* Marxist art critics. In this process, Singh seems to suggest that narrative

often serves as a kind of red herring for the critic to deconstruct, effectively enabling him or her to ignore the painting as a physical object and as a product of work production (p. 36). Narrative alone can therefore never be used to properly explain a work of art. As an example, she uses the work of Yves Klein to suggest that critics who attempt to read narrative into his work do so in order to try to destroy its real meaning:

> The work of Yves Klein is, as a result, harnessed as an ideological referent for color in art as transcendentally detached from its physical component. Klein is often represented as the painter of 'the void,' who attempted to represent color in its metaphysical or non-physical state. [p. 60]

For Singh, this completely misses the point, which is precisely the physical, sensual, visceral quality of Klein's use of colour. This point is further emphasized in the last chapter of the book, which focuses upon the work of J. M. W. Turner. Singh's enthusiasm for Turner's work seems to proceed apace with the increasing disappearance of a 'subject' or standard narrative and his complex use of diffused colours in his later work. She points out, quite rightly, that his art became less and less popular (both among the masses and among connoisseurs) not because of changes in his narratives per se, but because of the way he began to paint them. I think that Singh is making very important points here. I worry, however, that she may have associated narrative too closely with a negative and ideological form of art criticism or art history, almost suggesting that its primary purpose in art history is to obfuscate or otherwise interfere with the principal goal that art should be involved in – making it possible for artists and other creators to directly transform natural materials into sensual works that will impact the lives of those who view or otherwise partake of them.

I would argue, however, that some works depend exactly upon their narrative forms in order to express the critical social meaning that the author or painter intends for them to have. This seems to me to be as true of painting as it would be of, say, literature. Pablo Picasso's great anti-war work *Guernica*, for example, basically uses the limited colours of grey, black, and white to express a very complicated anti-war narrative. I would argue that it is primarily this narrative, and not another form of physical expression (such as palette or spatial arrangements in themselves), that gives this work its main power as a political statement (though the other related materials may well add to this power). The narrative is at once both very simple and extremely complex. I doubt that anyone, regardless of background, could stand in front of this work of art and not understand it to be saying something about suffering and pain. Critics differ greatly in their interpretations of the more complex elements in *Guernica*, such as the meaning of the bull and horse, the light bulb that appears to approximate an eye, and so forth. I would suggest that it is precisely the complexity of the narrative and the strongly held and often conflicting opinions of critics and other commentators (including everyday tourists standing in front of the work) that fuels the anti-war messaging in the painting (and we might note that Picasso himself generally refused to shed more light on the narrative symbolism of the painting). Conflict of opinion mirrors the horrible conflict being played out in the painting (albeit in a lesser fashion) and practically forces us to confront our own unruly passions – making us reach for middle grounds if we are going to metaphorically avoid smashing each other to the ground over what is, after all, 'just a painting.' I have been witness to very strong disagreements over the 'meaning' of *Guernica*, as I have over other paintings or works of art. There is nothing mystical or transcendent in this kind of an interpretation, as it directly proceeds from the work itself and moves toward a socially embedded interpretation that depends upon an understanding of visceral human reactions. Yet it remains primarily based upon the notion of the importance of narrative in art.

One of my favorite painters is Edward Hopper. Interestingly enough, the poet Mark Strand makes an argument in his book *Hopper* against the power of narrative in Hopper's paintings about the earlier part of the 20th century in the United States, as well as the 'social messages' they might contain, and in favour of a more materialist interpretation *in order to* make a case for rather than against the transcendent power of his paintings. "It is my contention that Hopper's paintings transcend the appearance of actuality and locate the viewer in a virtual space where the influence and availability of feeling predominate" (Strand

2011:ix). He argues that *Nighthawks*, for example, gains its emotional power for the viewer not because of the four lonely looking people being depicted in the cafe or its moody use of colour, but due to the formal arrangements of its parts. Strand argues that it is the geometric shape of the large cafe window, in particular its formation of an isosceles trapezoid, that establishes the emotional pull of the painting as it leads us toward "a vanishing point that cannot be witnessed, but must be imagined" (Strand 2011:6). This is what gives the painting its sense of loss and what ultimately transforms it into the viewer's sense of loss as well. Strand is suggesting here that it is the formal geometric arrangements in this and other Hopper paintings that give them their emotional edge and which create meaning for the viewer rather than the power of any narrative the works might be thought to contain. This would seem to agree with Singh, though it draws upon a different form of materialist argument and, ironically enough, leads back to the argument of transcendence that Singh most particularly opposes.

Having stood in front of the very powerful *Nighthawks* at the Art Institute of Chicago only a few years ago I can state that I do not agree with either Strand or Singh in relation to this particular work of art. As I remember my experience, it was precisely the moody lighting within the painting that suggested either a very late or a very early hour and, most particularly, the sympathetic depiction of the four figures in the work that hit me in the gut. I spent a lot of time at the painting, returning to it several times after having wandered away to look at other works, and making sure to view it from both near and far and from a number of different perspectives or angles. Strand's notion that the geometric shape of the window ensures that the viewer always remains firmly outside of the frame looking in did not ring true for me. A male and female couple sit 'across' from and face the viewer, on the far side of the single bar/stool setup that dominates the interior. The woman may be saying something to the cafe worker, who seems to be turning toward her as he leans upward out of a crouch (though we can still see most of his face). Toward the far left of the painting (virtually out of the light that almost fully bathes the other three figures), a man sits on the very corner stool that faces the other three figures. He seems hunched forward, a hat obscuring his head; only a very small part of the right cheek of his face is really visible to us. Is he staring at the couple? Perhaps feeling hostile toward them, or else reminded of his loneliness in their company? Or is this an alienated stare into the darkened night that shows up just outside of the opposite window (and behind the couple)? I think that it is very easy for the viewer to slip into this single figure (as I did) and view the narrative from his point of view – to ruminate about loneliness, or is it anger, or even a wistful longing? I would argue that, for most of us, narrative counts in a fundamental way in art. Facture and other pure forms of materiality is not enough for a fuller understanding of how human being actually experience art.

Since this book takes a materialist approach to understanding aesthetics, it seems fair to consider the book itself as a form of production from a materialist framework. All comments here refer to the paperback edition. There is no index provided in the volume (a lack that seems to have become common in too many contemporary books). This, I think, is a mistake, as it certainly diminishes its utility to a scholar who has already read the work and wants to re-read specific sections dealing with particular issues (e.g. sections on the notion of facture, for example, or attempts to trace the specific use of Marx in her arguments or the use of a particular source such as Walter Benjamin).

As a book that relies on the importance of colour, and utilizes a number of very specific arguments in relation to the colour of particular paintings, it is a shame that key examples of these paintings are rendered only as very poor black and white reproductions. (It is important to note that the author herself likely had very little control over this decision.) It is difficult to see how the reader could be expected to follow her intricate arguments about the subtle effects of colour in relation to these particular art works – it might almost be said that these very limited reproductions are something of a red herring, giving the illusion of an illustration that has little, if any, actual use-value (e.g. Vermeer is robbed of all of his rich use of colours, while later works of Turner come across as vague shadings rather than the subtle gradations of his originals). This is more than a little ironic, given the overall argument of the author and her critique of the mystification of standard art criticism.

Book-binding seems more than adequate to the task (falling open nicely in the hand) and the type is adequate, though it would have been significantly improved if it had been a shade darker. Overall then, as a material production, this book is fully adequate to its written task, but woefully inadequate to its visual responsibilities.

This is a book worth arguing with and an author who demands the attention of those who are interested in the possibilities of a materialist approach to understanding art as well as design or other built forms. Singh managed to provoke me about issues I did not even realize I had passionate feelings about and, in so doing, caused me to begin to refine and even re-define my own thoughts in relation to my love of art and *its* relationship to class and other social issues. It strikes me that this is exactly what she meant to do.

Wayne Fife
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Reference

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