Class, Agency and Resistance in the Old Industrial City

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Abstract: Recent left academic work on the consequences of economic restructuring and local labour market change in old industrial cities has been important in emphasising the role of local context and contingency in the shaping of labour market outcomes. However, in such accounts agency is often limited to capital and state actors, albeit working across scales from the local upwards. There is little sense of agency for individuals and communities in the midst of economic restructuring. Instead, they are usually treated as passive victims of deeper underlying processes. In this paper, our purpose is to highlight the autonomy and agency of workers, people and communities in old industrial cities. Rather than starting from the perspective of capital, our starting point is to emphasise how those experiencing economic change forge strategies and practices for "getting by". This leads us to call for a re-theorisation of labour agency, drawing upon the Autonomous Marxist tradition and the more recent work of Cindi Katz, in order to offer fresh insight into the agency of labour and the prospect for recovering a class politics based upon lived experience over reified abstractions.

Keywords: class struggle, Autonomous Marxism, resistance, urban restructuring, old industrial cities

The truth is that council housing is a living tomb. You dare not give the house up because you might never get another, but staying is to be trapped in a ghetto of both place and mind. Everyone can accept the apple pie and motherhood solution. Council estates need to be better designed, have better schools, be better managed and be better equipped with clubs, shops and play areas. The people in them need to have better training and more incentives to work. And council estates need to be less cut off from the rest of the economy and society (Hutton 2007).

The subtext of this piece, and much that is said about estates and the poor, seems to be that estates are places that people should be striving to get out of, to put their foot on the housing ladder and start the path to joining the middle class. As long as this attitude prevails, progress will not be made, since our economic system just doesn't allow for mass socioeconomic mobility. The middle-class jobs are full with middle-class people, and the estate-dwellers know it (as should Will Hutton). Their children pick it up from an early age, and are already inclined not to care when they arrive at the schools that are too underfunded, overcrowded and badly run to put any spark of interest in intellectual or emotional development into them. The government and media urging them to buck themselves up and join in the bourgeois fun while offering no way out of the poverty just causes disillusionment and alienation (*Monkeyface* 2007).

Introduction

Will Hutton's article in *The Observer* newspaper typifies a dominant narrative in both media and academic circles that has emerged since the late 1980s in relation to what has been labelled—both by conservatives and liberals—as an urban "underclass". For progressive commentators such as Hutton, the policy imperative is about reconnecting individuals, families and whole communities with the formal economy following the ravages of deindustrialisation and the shift to a service based economy. Changes in housing and labour markets are viewed as further contributing towards social polarisation with sharp divisions between those with the right education and skills to obtain the higher status jobs and associated rewards in an emerging knowledge-based economy, and those left behind in contingent jobs and insecure livelihoods. The "underclass" is therefore framed in terms of a socially excluded rump cast adrift of mainstream society (Byrne 2002; Smith 2005).

There are clearly elements of Hutton's proposals with which most Leftists would concur such as the need for new investment and facilities in poorer housing estates and neighbourhoods, and the provision of decent training opportunities and jobs. Yet, as many of the highly articulate responses to Hutton's piece on *The Observer* blog demonstrate,[1] his perspective is typical of many in liberal elite circles in displaying a failure, or perhaps an unwillingness, to engage with the more fundamental realities of class politics at work in the reshaping of Britain's cities. In particular, a discourse of social mobility masks the failure to provide decent economic opportunities and livelihoods for many traditional working class communities in the contemporary economy. A second, and related theme, also picked up in the blog response, is the attitude of condescension, wittingly or not, to what we prefer to term here the "urban poor" (as opposed to an "underclass"). The

latter are regarded as disempowered and "trapped" individuals lacking social agency and the capacity to shape their own lives. If the poor are given agency at all, it is increasingly as a dangerous and deviant group decoupled from social norms and badly in need of socialisation for the realities of life in the new knowledge economy (Johnstone and Mooney 2007).

More surprisingly, this lack of a sense of both individual and collective agency characterises much of the academic left's analysis of contemporary economic and social changes and their effects on the urban poor. Urban geographers have made significant contributions to recent debates in emphasising the importance of local context and contingency in the shaping of labour market outcomes. Yet, in such accounts, agency is ultimately bound up with capital and state actors, working across scales from the local to the global (eg Jonas 1996; Peck 2001, 2002).[2] In these debates, which largely originate from, or are heavily informed by, regulation theory, working class groups are frequently treated as passive victims of deeper underlying processes or are, at best, always responding to changes imposed upon them by more powerful actors. Such accounts provide powerful insights, but remain partial, and politically problematic, because they neglect the potential that rests within poorer working class communities to challenge dominant agendas and effect social change, most obviously evident in the rising grassroots opposition to neoliberal globalisation (Routledge and Cumbers 2009). In particular they have little sense of the ongoing tensions, conflicts and resistance that are at work in local economies, with which ruling elites have to contend in their attempts to sustain accumulation processes (Cleaver 2000).

In this paper, our purpose is to critique the top-down narratives that characterise much of the urban political economy tradition in geography, emphasising the autonomy and agency of workers, people and communities in old industrial cities. It is in such places that economic restructuring (in the global North) has been most intense over the past three decades and the decline of working class agency seemingly most complete. Our intervention in these debates argues for a perspective that perceives the urban working class (however defined) as something more than a "victimized cog in the machinery of capital" (Cleaver 2000:58). In doing so, we draw inspiration from two strands of Marxist thought largely neglected in current economic and urban geography: the History-from-below school of Marxist historians such as E.P. Thompson and the self valorisation class struggle perspective of Autonomous Marxism (AM). These two related bodies of work also share a perspective that integrates processes of capitalist production and social reproduction as a social totality, emphasising how labour agency and resistance necessarily take place both within and outside the workplace. Through a reconceptualisation of labour and class agency,

struggles over community, culture and their various individual and socialised forms, often neglected in debates about local labour market restructuring, come to the fore.

Rather than starting from the viewpoint of capital and state elites and narratives of discipline and control in the "new economy" of services, we look at how those who have experienced the vicissitudes of economic and political restructuring over the last 30 years develop strategies and practices in opposition to capital.[3] To illustrate and take further the notion of class as a process of ongoing struggle, we then draw upon the work of Cindi Katz (2004) to develop a more nuanced sense of how agency and resistance develop in particular places in formulating a radical perspective that might engender a more progressive politics to the problems facing old industrial cities. We integrate Katz's threefold classification of labour agency and resistance within an AM perspective and illustrate its usefulness through selected vignettes from one particular old industrial city, Glasgow in the UK, which is the setting for some of our own ongoing empirical work and political interventions.

Economic Restructuring, Old Industrial Cities and the Urban Poor from the Perspective of Capital

The resurgence of an urban poor is the starkest manifestation of the growing economic polarisation evident in advanced industrial societies (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Dorling and Thomas 2004; *The Guardian* 2004). For example, in the UK since 1978 there has not only been a growth in the number of households living in relative poverty, but also a growing divide in absolute levels of income between upper and lower quartile of earners (Hocking 2003; Nickell 2004). The greatest gaps in wealth are to be found in the major cities, particularly in the disjuncture between the relative few with the right professional qualifications who have benefited from the small number of knowledge economy jobs available (Thompson 2004) and a working class which has seen its livelihoods and economic identity disappear as the result of a shift from manufacturing to service-based work (Helms and Cumbers 2006).

It is in those old industrial cities and regions that experienced the most dramatic economic decline and subsequent restructuring that these concerns are most urgent. Dorling and Thomas's (2004) study found that, outside London, the city with the highest proportion of households living in poverty, with over 40%, was Glasgow. In as far as the absence of paid work is responsible for poverty levels, the decline of traditional industries such as heavy engineering and shipbuilding has severely affected old industrial cities such as Glasgow. Although unemployment levels are relatively low (in comparison to say 25 years ago), economic activity rates remain well below the national average. Recent evidence

Table 1: Economic activity rates in selected UK old industrial cities compared to national average, 2006

Local authority area	Economically active as proportion of working age population
Glasgow	70.1
Liverpool	69.9
Newcastle	71.4
Sheffield	74.2
UK average	78.6

Source: UK Office of National Statistics *Annual Population Survey*

available from the UK Office of National Statistics suggests that almost a third of the working population in the UK's major old industrial cities continues to be "economically inactive", not in paid formal employment nor classified as unemployed according to the ILO (International Labour Organisation)[4] (Table 1).

Both mainstream policy initiatives and more radical accounts of a new urban poor ultimately represent top-down narratives, placing agency firmly in the hands of "the market", or the state and capital. Dominant discourses speak of "social exclusion" and "market failure"[5] where persistent unemployment and wealth gaps can be eliminated by interventions to make improve local labour market functioning; placing those out of work into jobs through training and skills initiatives. This essentially supply-side approach pays little regard to broader issues of welfare and social justice, for example showing little concern with the quality and wage levels of work available.

Radical political economy perspectives display more sophistication and insight in their analysis, recognising contemporary processes of social polarisation in cities in terms of the changing dynamics of advanced capitalism, played out differently over space, and ultimately being mediated through place (eg Brenner and Theodore 2002). It is through this "scale of everyday life" (Castree et al 2003:64) that work and employment processes operate on a day-to-day basis. A relative autonomy of social actors at the local scale thus implies that the management of social regulation becomes critical and any conflicts over the (re-)production of capital/labour need to be addressed (if not resolved). This has been recognised in the development of the concept of local labour control regime (LCR) (Jonas 1996; Kelly 2002), in which the interests of capital in securing a labour supply to secure the conditions for successful accumulation are confronted. Control here recognises capital's need to do more than just exercise coercive power over labour in production, but also to attend to the conditions under which labour is reproduced (through housing, training and education, welfare provision, etc). The concept of local labour control regime

therefore draws attention to the inter-relationship between capital, labour and the state at the local level; highlighting both the variations that exist across space in the way that local regimes function and in pointing to the tensions, contradictions and struggles that will take place in practice.

Although an improvement on earlier top-down narratives of the local economy, agency in the LCR perspective, as with much other urban political economy that emanates from a regulationist perspective, remains primarily about the interaction between capital and state actors in providing forms of social regulation that ensure continued accumulation (eg Brenner 1998; MacLeod and Goodwin 1999). What we might call a "political economy of urban restructuring for capital" can be summarised as follows (see Byrne 2002 for a thorough and more detailed critique). Industrialisation and the growth of cities in the twentieth century lead to the emergence of an urban working class with forms of resistance to capital and its development of a Fordist system of mass production.[6] After 1945, a class compromise is reached—to secure the conditions for successful accumulation—that delivers a welfare state in the sphere of social reproduction and a wage productivity bargain in the sphere of production (Aglietta 1979; Lipietz 1987). By the late 1960s this regime of intensive accumulation is coming under pressure due in part to growing labour unrest but primarily due to contradictions within capital (especially the long-term tendency for the rate of profit to fall and the technical limits of Fordism). Restructuring follows, involving the slimming down of workforces, growing flexibilisation and casualisation, and the flight of capital to lower cost locations in southern Europe, the southern USA and the global South.

Deindustrialisation of cities and regions ensues with particularly pronounced regional crises during the late 1970s and early 1980s (Bluestone and Harrison 1982; Massey 1984). At both national and urban levels, the state, under pressure from capital begins to unpick the welfare state and social gains made in the 1945–1973 period. The organised industrial working class is obliterated, or, at best disempowered, at all scales, particularly in terms of making effective interventions at the city (eg through mass strikes) and national levels (eg through influence on political parties) and previous gains are dismantled or eroded. Key set-piece battles between organised labour and capital (the air traffic controllers' dispute in the USA and the miners' strike in the UK) are resolved in favour of capital—though notably the discourse here is framed largely in terms of the USA–UK experience and the Reagan–Thatcher governments. The result is the shattering of existing working class forms of organisation, culture and collective identity. The new class landscape is one of increasing social division, but framed in terms of three categories: a capitalist elite of executives, directors, managers and high-paid professionals; a middle tier of relatively affluent but also insecure wage workers through employment flexibilisation; and

an "underclass" that is largely excluded from the labour market (Byrne 2002).

During the 1990s, the assault on the urban working class was ratcheted up another notch through rising housing costs in old industrial centres. As regions de-industrialised and city centres declined in the 1970s and 1980s, conditions became ripe for capital to return to inner cities. Attracted by low rents, a new round of capital investment in the 1990s fosters the deepening of gentrification processes. For the urban poor, this process is devastating. Due to rising rent prices and increasing costs of living, many have been forced out of urban centres in search of affordable housing. No longer living close to their places of work, many among the urban poor now face long commutes on public transportation for abysmal wages, in some cases to serve café lattes to the very gentrifiers who displaced them.

Neil Smith (1996) has referred to this process as "revanchism": a ruthless, right-wing reaction against the supposed theft of the city by, among others, the working class, the unemployed, immigrants and minorities. While the sense of ongoing and often vicious class struggle is evident in the analysis of Smith, many other urban political economy perspectives (eg Brenner 1998, 1999; Deas and Ward 2000; MacLeod and Goodwin 1999) display what Jamie Gough refers to as a "'capital logic' tinge" (2004:189). Agency is present in these accounts but primarily in terms of a "class war from above". With a particular time and space contingent form of working class organisation shattered, the implication is that labour (in the broadest sense) has lost the ability to act in its own interests. As David Byrne notes in his critique of regulationist approaches, this leads to a: "distinctly sad song with little potential for stirring up social action . . . regulation theory underpins the continuing wailing of 'globalisation is inevitable and capitalism has won' which is the fundamental political economy of the 'new centre politics of flexibility'" (2002:46). Labour, where it is considered, is often seen in a defensive, if not passive, role, restricted to a form of rearguard action: protesting plant closure, undertaking last ditch strike action against restructuring plans, etc. In this sense, labour agency is reduced to capital's terms, deploying Gramsci's distinction between coercion and consent into a logic *for* capital (Cleaver 2000), rather than *for* labour. As with much critical Marxist work on the economy, labour is not considered as an autonomous actor, but is ultimately brought in as a problem to be solved for capital.

Our argument here is that labour must be viewed as an ever-present obstacle to processes of commodification and it is labour's ability to continually threaten accumulation processes that leads to offensive capitalist strategies (eg neoliberalism, deindustrialisation, new spatial fixes, etc). It was precisely the upsurge in workers' struggles, growing trade union power in the workplace, alongside broader movements for

women's and ethnic rights in the spheres of social reproduction and distributive politics (Cleaver 2000:24–26) that precipitated the crisis of post-war Keynesian in advanced industrial cities and regions and provoked a new strategy of neoliberalism (Harvey 2005). The counter offensive by capital and state actors, including the emasculation of progressive local and city governments and assault on trade union power (especially in the USA and UK), allied to the flight of capital away from the industrial cities of the north to low wage locations elsewhere, represented a response to an upsurge in class politics. Neoliberalism then represents a new round of attempts to control labour in and beyond the workplace, fusing with aspects of social conservatism to attack the gains made by women, gay and minority ethnic groups in the 1960s and 1970s (Harvey 2005).

Ultimately, therefore, dominant geographical perspectives in urban political economy—in contrast to work by labour geographers—give little sense of the dynamic and ongoing processes of class struggle being played out at both the local scale and in the relations between scales in capital's continued attempt to subordinate labour to commodification processes (Eisenschitz and Gough 1998; Gough 2004). Working class segments in the labour market are restructured in the interests of capital and deployed at the whim of political and business elites according to the changing needs of capital accumulation (eg the shift from an industrial to service economy). We would argue here that not only is such a perspective partial and neglectful of spatial and temporal realities,[7] but also that it is politically disempowering for developing a more radical urban politics. It also perceives of the state in an over-determined and functionalist sense for capital, rather than seeing it itself as the site of contested social relations (see Mathers and Taylor 2005). While recognising the destructive strategies of capital, wrought on urban working class communities by the past 30 years of economic restructuring, we need to be more attentive to the autonomous agency of working class groups themselves (Herod 2001).

Bringing Labour Agency Back into Economic Restructuring

In contrast to the capital-centric body of work identified above, there are a number of more recent studies that have attempted to give agency back to working class groups by exploring the practices and strategies adopted in negotiated processes of economic restructuring (eg Gibson-Graham 2006). These tend to locate agency within a discourse of exclusion from the changing labour market with a particular emphasis upon masculinity and the erosion of traditional forms of manual labour (eg McDowell 2002; Nayak 2003). Other work focuses at the community level and includes Bauder's (2002) research in Texas and Stenning's (2005)

exploration of changing social identities in the face of deindustrialisation in post-communist Poland. Although displaying a more nuanced sense of agency than some more critical accounts, and more holistic in the sense of bringing the realms of production and social reproduction together (see also Jarvis 2005), we would argue that, through their focus upon individual life stories and choices, they are in danger of replicating Hutton's narrative of individualised failure.

In comparison our approach is to bridge the separation of production and reproduction critiqued above by locating individuals within both their local labour market contexts and the broader webs of social relations through which they negotiate everyday life in the city. We propose a deeper sense of agency through "unpacking" resistance in the context of class struggle. The anthropological work of James Scott in identifying the covert forms of resistance at the heart of class struggles in peasant communities in Malaysia is particularly instructive here. Scott talks of the

> . . . everyday forms of peasant resistance—the prosaic but constant struggle between the peasantry and those who seek to extract labor, food, taxes, rents and interest from them. Most forms of this struggle stop well short of outright collective defiance . . . I have in mind the ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups: foot dragging, dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, Brechtian forms of class struggle have certain features in common. They require little or no coordination or planning; they make use of implicit understandings and informal networks; they often represent a form of individual self-help: they typically avoid any direct, symbolic confrontation with authority (1985:xvi)

Similar "informal" self-help networks in the contemporary city are critical for labour in seeking to create its own spaces in opposition to attempts by capital to exert control and subordination. The emphasis upon working class agency evokes the "history from below" school of Marxist studies exemplified by the work of E.P. Thompson (1963) and Raymond Williams (1961, 1975) in which a focus is put on the mechanisms through which people "get by", and in the process accumulate their own collective experiences which are formative in developing a class identity and subject formation (see also, Lüdtke 1995). In particular Williams's (1961) study on the longer-term changes in working class experience and cultural formations offers a guiding thread into the ways that everyday experiences shape and produce collective understandings, values and popular cultures. As "structures of feelings" many of these remain unarticulated—in the process of being made (or indeed unmade). Not presupposing one singular culture, experience or indeed solidarity, such observations focus on lives lived daily within webs of social relations through which urban

restructuring and labour market changes are experienced and partaken. Such a position enables a foregrounding (dialectical in the sense that it happens in relation to its constraints, limits and possibilities) of agency. Crucially, we are interested not just in the overt forms of resistance that emerge at the level of individuals and groups, but also on the daily struggles of workers and their families to ensure their own social reproduction.

Thompson (1978) famously castigated the Althusserians, from which much regulation theory-inspired urban geography ultimately springs, in his famous polemic *The Poverty of Theory*. His key criticism was that a Marxist perspective on class struggle should not be formed in the abstract but rather located within ongoing and dynamic social relations within contingent conditions in time and space. In a key passage, he notes that:

> Experience arises spontaneously within social being, but it does not arise without thought; it arises because men and women are rational, and they think about what is happening to them and their world . . . What we mean is that changes taking place within social being, would give rise to changed experience; and this experience is determining, in the sense that it exerts pressure upon social consciousness, proposes new questions, and affords much of the material which the more elaborate intellectual exercises are about (Thompson 1978:200).

In other words, working class people become active subjects in their own right. Moreover, class-based agency emerges from material and cultural experiences and is always contingent upon particular circumstances and processes in time and space. This means that class itself (and by implication class struggle) does not take on a fixed, ahistorical form but should be understood in more dynamic and fluid terms, reflecting the historical context of capitalism. Although we would concur with Simon Clarke's (1979) critique of Thompson in not going far enough in developing a political-economic analysis of class struggle, the important point for us here is Thompson's reminder of a perspective from below that seeks to understand capital accumulation as an unfolding and open dynamic of class struggle, not a "script" being played out according to some abstract laws of capital. The task is thus not to eclipse, or minimise (and similarly not to romanticise), the agency of those who experience in their own lives daily the dangers, worries and problems thrown up by globalisation, economic restructuring or urban regeneration. Emphasising the webs of social relations within which people are located, and therefore understanding class as a dynamic social relation, means neither regarding people as victims or pawns, nor assuming the pity and moralistic superiority of good intentions.

Restructuring for Labour: the Contribution of Autonomous Marxism

One of the most important contributions in reasserting labour agency into analyses of capitalism is the perspective of AM (eg Birkner and Foltin 2006; Cleaver 2000; Frombeloff 1993; Holloway 2005; Negri 1991; Tronti 1966). Initially associated with the Italian school known as "autonomia"—which emerged in the 1960s out of the experience of the "rank-and-file" strike movement especially during the "hot autumn" of industrial unrest in 1968—the AM school wanted to put class struggle and labour autonomy back into Marxist analysis.

> We too have worked with a concept that puts capitalist development first, and workers second. This is a mistake. And now we have to turn the problem on its head, reverse the polarity and start again from the beginning: and the beginning is the class struggle (Tronti 1979:1).

The interest in resuscitating labour's agency was as much political as theoretical. A key text in this respect was Harry Cleaver's *Reading Capital Politically* (2000), which first appeared in 1979. Cleaver maintains that Marx's approach in understanding the dynamics of capital accumulation is first and foremost as an arena of class struggle (Cleaver 2000). From this standpoint, Marx's initial focus in Volume 1 of *Capital* (Marx 1965) on the commodity form has to be understood from the perspective of labour, exchange value and alienation. It is only by revealing the specific way in which social relations underpin commodity production—ie the forced incorporation of labour into production, the exploitation of labour in production and the alienation of labour from its own social being—that we can understand the true nature of class struggle in capitalist society (Cleaver 2000; Holloway 2005).[8]

Autonomist ideas have become very influential in recent years, particularly in relation to understandings of the "global" movements against neoliberal capitalism (Cleaver 1999; Hardt and Negri 2004; Holloway 2005). Our use of the term here draws upon a particular strand, sometimes referred to as "Open Marxism" (Bonefeld 2003), which, in opposition to the post-structuralist perspective of Hardt and Negri (2004),[9] continues to emphasise the dialectic of class struggle and the importance of the law of value. As such, capital and labour are not ontologically separate but exist as a totality. Capital in particular cannot exist without labour, while labour tries to free itself from capital: "Capital is dependent on labour in a way in which labour is not dependent upon capital. Capital without labour, ceases to exist: labour, without capital, becomes practical creativity, creative practice, humanity" (Holloway 2005:182).

Like Thompson and the "history from below" school, AM set themselves up in opposition to mainstream Marxism and the Althusserians who were more concerned with theoretical abstraction

and analysing the workings of capital, than engaging with the changing nature of contemporary class struggle in the 1960s. For Cleaver, this meant that many Marxists were too dismissive of the new social movements of the 1960s (eg black power, feminist, anti-colonial, gay rights) as being outwith the class struggle, rather than recognising the changing terrain of the struggle.[10]

Critical to this interpretation of Marx is the dialectic of social forces that runs through all forms and entities under capitalism (eg commodities, money, labour power, the state, and even the individual) so that all things are infused with the tension and contradictions between capital and labour. Capital, however much it may try, cannot escape labour, and, in particular, labour's continuing ability to resist and frustrate the process of creating surplus value. The imperative to restructure—the reorganisation of production, processes of technological change, capital flight from organised labour—reflects the continuing and ultimately unresolved problem of labour control (Holloway 2005). Capital is always in flight from labour. Labour too is always in flight from capital. Whatever the surface appearance, labour is always struggling (at some level) against incorporation into the process of accumulation. This takes myriad forms: the avoidance of low wages, the fight to reduce working time, battles against work intensification in the labour process, struggles to preserve non-capitalist forms of organisation (eg co-ops, mutual funds), struggles against primitive accumulation (eg preserving "the commons" against attempts to impose regimes of private property), or against the privatisation of public services (Harvey 2003). Holloway puts it well when he says:

> Struggle arises not from the fact that we are working class but from the fact that we-are-and-are-not working class; that they try to order and command us but we do not want to be ordered and commanded, that they try to separate us from our product and our producing and our humanity and our selves and we do not want to be separated from all that . . . working class identity should be seen as a non-identity; the communion of struggle to be not working class (Holloway 2005:144).

The battle between capital and labour takes different forms in time and space and is an open-ended[11] struggle rather than pre-determined. Labour will seek to organise itself autonomously from capital, while capital seeks to fragment and divide the working class as part of its incorporation into the labour process. Cleaver talks of "cycles of struggle" where different sides are in the ascendant. Clearly, in North America and Western Europe (though not in much of the rest of the world!) the period from 1945 through to the end of the 1960s saw organised labour in the ascendant, with gains both at the workplace and outside it through massive programmes of social welfare. Subsequently,

these gains have been eroded with capital regaining the ascendancy in the period since the late 1970s. But, though currently holding the upper hand, capital's hegemony is always contested as part of continuing class struggle.[12]

A key dimension of the "cycle of struggle" is capital's attempt to "decompose" working class unity through various strategies, while labour struggles for the "recomposition" of a united class. The cycle of struggle can be thought of along similar lines to Gramsci's concepts of hegemony, war of position and war of movement in understanding the cultural and discursive aspects of class struggle (Gramsci 1971:108–110, 228–239 especially). The division of labour under capitalism is as much a political one as a social or technical one. Divisions in the working class allow some elements of labour to be incorporated into capital's project at the expense of others. This works well for capital when it plays on existing divisions and social fault-lines:

> Because the divisions [within the working class] are hierarchical ones, there are always dominant and dominated sides. The divisions are not imaginary or simply ideological ones that can be overcome with "class consciousness". Men do benefit from women's work; whites do benefit from blacks' lower status; local workers do benefit from immigrant workers taking the worst jobs. Therefore the struggle to destroy the divisions generally finds its initiative in the dominated group, since the other side cannot be expected to destroy its privileges (Cleaver 2000:117).

Hence the struggles in the 1960s were not led by the industrial proletariat—much beloved of mainstream Marxist analysis—but by women, blacks, peasants and students. But capital also faces a contradiction whereby its need to accumulate surplus value ultimately leads it to "homogenise" labour, attacking the privileges created for certain groups because it needs to make labour more malleable and flexible. This will in turn present an opportunity for labour to unite and see its common interests, though its ability to do so ("political composition") will depend on the extent to which it can overcome its own divisions. This type of perspective avoids both the reductionism of capital-centric Marxism or the tendency among other Marxists to reduce labour agency to the working class as a unity.

Cleaver has subsequently developed his arguments about labour autonomy and resistance through the concept of self-valorisation (eg Cleaver 1992, 1993; Negri 1991), highlighting the ways in which working class groups construct alternative spaces of cooperation and mutual aid against the competitive individualism of capitalist social relations. Critical aspects of these alternative ways of being are that they exist in the past and present, not in some future utopia; that they are multiple and diverse, reflecting the diverse forms of resistance to

capitalism; and crucially that they always originate from working class self-activity. In other words, they operate independently of "official" class organisations such as parties or trade unions from the grassroots upwards, rather than top-down.

Unpacking Agency and Resistance in Cities: from "Mundane" Resistance to an "Oppositional Consciousness"

AM work is suggestive of a way forward in understanding working class action and resistance and its potential for effecting progressive social change. The emphasis upon self-valorisation (Cleaver 2002) in highlighting how working class groups attempt to construct forms of social relations that both resist capitalist forms of work and attempt to produce social relations outside of processes of commodification and alienation is particularly critical. Subsequently, these themes have been grounded by AM writers in empirical work exploring self-valorisation projects in a diverse range of contemporary contexts, from the Zapatista uprising in the 1990s to the Argentinian crisis of the early 2000s, to the growth of global networks of struggle through internet-based communication (Cleaver 1999; Dinerstein 2008; Holloway and Palaez 1998).

One problem with AM accounts is that they are open to charges of romanticising all resistance as autonomous agency (though see Dinerstein's 2008 response to this in her work). In this respect, we feel that there is a need to develop a more fine-grained sense of labour agency in concrete empirical settings, differentiating between agency that takes place within existing capitalist social relations and resistance that is suggestive of creating new forms of social relations. One obvious point to make here is that some of the more mundane forms of resistance—for example absenteeism from the workplace or minor criminality (eg theft and burglary) to bolster individual or family incomes—while being in part micro-revolts against the system and creating autonomous space for individuals from commodification processes (Cleaver 2000) are not necessarily progressive in the broader sense, let alone transformatory, particularly if at the expense of other working people (Lüdtke 1995; Thompson 1963). Individuals drawn into criminal activities (and other forms of coercive social relations) to supplement household incomes clearly constitute a risk to both their communities and themselves. However, mass land occupations by disposed rural dwellers or the illegal reconnection of electricity supplies in South African shanty towns following privatisation clearly are significant self-valorisation actions on behalf of oppressed groups. In this sense, there is a complex ethics and morality to class resistance, with a need to be able to differentiate resistance—in the sense of

"getting by" within capitalist social relations—and the kinds of self-valorisation projects that allow people to create independent spaces free of commodification and subordination to capitalist social relations (Cleaver 2002:xx; Holloway 2005). Simon Clarke long ago made a similar point in his sympathetic critique of the "socialist-humanism" of EP Thompson and others, when and how does individual and small group resistance develop into "a practical unity as workers begin to organise on a progressively wider basis" (1979:152)?

The work of Cindi Katz (2004) is particularly instructive here as one of the few geographers working within a Marxist tradition who has grappled with these issues. Katz couches her discussions of resistance within the context of theorising how neoliberalism in different ways actually "deskills" children from obtaining important life skills. Getting to the heart of the issue, and in part critical of the post-structural dead end of finding resistance in every schema of domination, she expresses considerable dismay at the way "almost anything can be constructed as an 'oppositional practice'". Moreover, "in what ways do such practices respond effectively to the massive disruptions in productions of space, nature, and social life that pierce people's everyday lives in the course of capitalist development . . . Autonomous, even 'counter-hegemonic' agency is just the beginning. Yet it is so often presented as the end" (2004:242).

Katz's concern in her book *Growing up Global* is with the "creative strategies that people [use] to stay afloat and reformulate the conditions and possibilities of their everyday lives" (2004:x). Her schema for exploring this is the threefold, but crucially overlapping, division of resistance practices into "resilience", "reworking" and "resistance". While these could be seen as underplaying labour agency as always in response to capital's strategies,[13] we think they are important in highlighting the continuing nature of class struggle even following periods of defeat, but at the same time exposing the contradictions which run through human agency. Some forms of resistance do little to challenge capital's hegemony in social reproduction, and may even reinforce it, even though they may provide spaces of relief from its oppressive force. In this way *resilience* describes those "small acts" (2004:244) of getting by, finding new ways and creative ways of surviving, bringing resources into a household when traditional or existing ways of "making a living" have evaporated. But this form of resistance does not fundamentally challenge existing social relations. *Reworking* differs from resilience by reflecting people's attempts to create spaces that can improve their conditions of existence. In this sense, it involves a greater level of consciousness of the underlying conditions of oppression, although like resilience does not necessarily lead to action that challenges hegemonic power. Instead it is about the "attempt to recalibrate power relations and redistribute resources" (Katz

2004:247). It can be seen as a transitional category that may begin to open up spaces for more systematic self-valorisation projects.

While resilience and reworking are relatively common in oppressed groups, outright *resistance* is less evident as this involves direct challenges to capitalist social relations, attempts to regain control of labour time and its use in the spheres of social production and reproduction. It is rare because it needs the "the invocation of an oppositional consciousness" (Katz 2004:251) that often proves illusive when confronting with the entrenched power of hegemonic actors. Nevertheless, it always exists as a possibility and occurs at those moments when the working class is successful in moving from a class *in itself* to a class *for itself*, as Katz notes. Returning to the insights from AM and the work of Cleaver in particular, it is useful to think in terms of processes of class composition and cycles of struggle here. While resilience and reworking as forms of labour agency are ever-present within class struggle, even during and following periods of class defeat—most pertinently in the UK and North America during the 1980s following the onslaught by state and employers on organised labour—self-valorisation projects where labour begins to re-constitute itself as a class for itself in a more threatening fashion for capital have been thinner on the ground (Clarke 1979).

Resilience, Reworking and Resistance in the Old Industrial City[14]

As we have already argued, dominant images of the old industrial city are ones of social devastation and decay, of an eroded and shattered working class, disenfranchised by the decline of traditional forms of work in manufacturing, facilitating a loss of identity, particularly among young men. The options open to those left behind by the shift to a post-industrial knowledge economy, and without the education or training qualifications to compete, seem to be either a future out of work on diminishing welfare, taking cheap low-paid jobs, or accepting a place on a training scheme often with limited prospects for advancement at the end. Any sense of collective agency has disappeared with the collapse of trade union membership, the failure of attempts to prevent plant closure and in some cases, decisive moments of defeat for the working class. In the case of the UK, Thatcher's defeat of the 1984–1985 miners strike or the failed attempts by British city governments to develop municipal socialism in the 1980s in the face of the neoliberal onslaught at the national level. In the USA, the bankruptcy of New York City (Harvey 2005) and the subsequent collapse of a progressive urban politics of redistribution alongside the job losses, plant relocation and emasculation of the autoworkers are similar symbolic moments.[15]

We think such accounts do a disservice both to the continued agency and resilience of individuals and communities within old industrial cities, and to the politico-economic realities of a continuing class struggle as opposed to an over-determined hegemony for capital and state actors in processes of economic restructuring. Linking Katz's idea of three components of struggle to Cleaver's notion of "cycles of struggle", we would highlight a range of different ways in which the urban poor seek to combat the tendencies towards deepening commodification that capital and its representatives seek to impose. This reconceptualisation highlights the possibility for an alternative and more progressive politics of restructuring that can be built from the bottom upwards, from what already exists, rather than imposed from the top down.

Reconceptualised in terms of resilience, we would draw attention to the numerous and creative practices that individuals, households and communities have deployed in attempts to get by in the face of deindustrialisation. An important starting point here is to understand that with the disappearance of traditional manufacturing forms of work during the 1980s—particularly manual work for men—the social relations between households and the labour market have been reconfigured. This is more usually thought of in terms of the end of the male breadwinner and the break up of family units, and the emergence of single (largely female-headed) parent households. But in terms of our discussion here, the disconnection from the labour market and "regular decently paid work" has resulted in a decline in social agency around the workplace and a greater emphasis upon the household. For instance in Glasgow, training officers on government funded youth employment projects report that the first time they see many young people is shortly after their 16th birthday, when their child benefit ceases. Especially in the case of young men, it is common for mothers to accompany them to the first interview with the organisation. The imperative to find another source of income for the household is clear and indeed most of any income earned will go towards household expenses (authors' interviews).

Resilience as a household strategy manifests itself in different ways. Katz in her work on East Harlem talks of the "webs of care" (2004:246) that exist between neighbours; providing the mundane services such as child care but also producing key individuals (often older women) who provide guidance and advice. These individuals, when necessary, also act on behalf of others to deal with more empowered actors such as landlords and the city authorities. As Katz notes, despite the ravages of deindustrialisation, these networks were a continuation of the relations of care and concern admired by Jane Jacobs in her late 1950s research on the city. Extending beyond these traditional forms of social agency, our own research has uncovered creative strategies to sustain and enhance

household income in Glasgow, at both the level of individual households and on a more collective level at the scale of tenements blocks and the neighbourhood.

Resilience takes diverse forms. Poor work conditions can inspire high levels of turnover and absenteeism evident in many low-paid service sector activities, particularly pronounced in Glasgow's booming call centre industry (Helms and Cumbers 2006). It can also take more socially destructive forms such as the high levels of school dropout rates in Britain's deindustrialised cities or working in drug-related and other forms of criminal activity. Although important not to glorify such activities, particularly given that the incidence of violent (especially knife-related) crime is almost entirely felt in poorer urban neighbourhoods and predominantly on young working class men, it is important to understand the rationalities at work. For young people who are either uninterested or unable to afford to stay on at school beyond 16 and go to university, the employment options in the service-based economy are restricted. Under the UK's largely unregulated training regime, where traditional craft apprenticeships have all but disappeared, many young people are offered training places on what are still termed "apprenticeships" that in some cases pay as little as £60 per week[16] and do not result in any qualification at the end of two years that improves their "employability". At the same time, the government's regressive minimum wage legislation where the rate for young people (£3.30 as at October 2008) below the age of 18 is less than that for adults (£5.35) does little to inculcate a work ethic. From this perspective, taking a menial job in a retail chain stacking shelves paying £5 per hour[17] is a more preferable option for providing hard-pressed families with income and young people with some valuable spending money to participate in consumer culture. More rewarding again of course—despite the drawbacks—is working illegally, either cash-in-hand for routine off-the-books work or more perniciously in the drug trade. Working in the latter, an 18-year-old on a Glasgow housing scheme (estate) can earn up to £500 per week (authors' interviews).

In contrast to resilience, reworking can be thought of less ambiguously as providing autonomous spaces for improving everyday lives in old industrial cities. Katz in her study cites examples of residents taking over derelict spaces to develop community gardens, but there are other ways that involve more direct reworkings of hegemonic agendas. One common way through which working class communities in old industrial cities can achieve this is through interventions in state-driven redevelopment programmes. An example from Glasgow concerns the way some local groups were able to develop their own agendas in subverting the city council's gentrifying European City of Culture initiative in the 1990s (Boyle 1997). In two examples—the Gorbal's Unemployed Workers' Centre and the Woodlands Trust—local

communities drew on the institutional and financial capacity provided through ECOC to articulate and promote their own agendas to "provide recreational facilities for the unemployed in the Gorbals" (1997:1993) in one instance and to be "better able to articulate, and to make Glaswegians aware of [the local Asian community's] concerns and experiences" (1997:1993) in the case of the latter.[18]

While Boyle provides examples of local groups and initiatives which acquire some degree of formal organisation and continuity, it is also important to highlight the more informal ways in which reworking can take place. One example from our own empirical material concerns the ways in which different households within a communal tenement close would organise various means of informal (and indeed illegal) economic activities. "Bumping the catalogue" was recalled by members of a focus group as a common practice with which households would order clothes or electrical goods and find ways of not paying. This would involve using neighbours' addresses while the latter were on holidays, using false names or simply returning worn clothes as unwanted:

> R1: Oh I think it works in like different ways . . . It depends who you, the basic principle is to rip off really, the way is just that in some way.
> R2: . . . sent to another address like say a neighbour's address.
> R1: Or putting a false name. I think you can especially do things like that if you live in a close[19] and flats, so you can do that quite easily cause something could get delivered to a door and then it can be taken away . . . it used to be quite informal you know people would just leave parcels behind, like a close door or something like that, like the communal entries you could do it you know . . .
> I know someone who did it with their neighbours, well sometimes when they knew like a neighbour was on holiday . . . And the other, I think the other thing is with the catalogues, I don't know why particularly with catalogues, but if you were going to some kind of event, you could get something from the catalogue, wear it and return it and that was really common to get things and return them (group discussion 2, 2 November 2006).

Such reworking strategies are less ambiguous than those of resilience in providing autonomy for individuals, but they do little to fundamentally challenge capitalist social relations. However, an AM account does provide us with a slightly different perspective here from the point of view of capital, which cannot allow labour to escape its control, either through reworking strategies or through resistance to incorporation into wage labour. In this respect the continuing worklessness in many old industrial cities represented by labour market participation rates and the successful avoidance by many working in low-paid menial work or signing up for bogus training schemes represents a continuing crisis for

capital, which workfare policies by the state have, of course, tried to address (Kennedy 2005).

Incidences of more fundamental and transformatory resistance, thought of in terms of Cleaver's self-valorisation, have been less visible. One point to recognise here is the weakening of alternative discourses in the wake of the defeats and setbacks of the 1980s, paving the way for many in the labour movement to surrender to or at best mediate the effects of neoliberalism. From Cleaver's perspective of self-valorisation, labour remains weak and relatively disorganised compared to the last peak of organisation in the 1970s. Nevertheless projects of self-valorisation that challenge neoliberalism at the city level are still evident at particular moments. We would also point to signs of a revival of more class conscious collective action and struggle over the past decade. Two examples are the living wage movement in both the USA and increasingly the UK, and the campaign to defend public housing in the UK.

Robert Kuttner—the US columnist—has described the Living Wage movement as the "most interesting grassroots enterprise to emerge since the civil rights movement" (reported in MacKinnon and Cumbers 2007:223) Critically, the campaign emerged first in the industrial heartland of the northeast. The first living wage campaign was fought in Baltimore in 1994 in the context of deindustrialisation, waves of plant closures in the steel industry and attempts to redevelop the waterfront through gentrification (Walsh 2000). Growing social deprivation and poverty in the city brought together a diversity of social groups (including blacks, whites and Latinos), trade unions and churches, to pressurise the city government to pass a "living wage" ordinance to its low-paid workforce of cleaners, security guards etc. Subsequently, such ordinances have been passed in over 122 cities, spreading from the urban heartland even to more conservative states. Framed in Katz's terms of resistance, the political potential of these campaigns is inherent in their alternative vision of a "progressive localism" (Castree et al 2003:179–180) against the race-to-the-bottom logic of urban competition under globalisation.

The living wage campaign has spread to the UK and been particularly successful in London with the activities of the social movement London Citizens (Jamoul and Wills 2008); a campaign that has successfully drawn a disparate range of social and ethnic groups together around class concerns over decent work and basic economic and social rights. There is also a fledgling campaign around a living wage in Glasgow linked to public procurement in the forthcoming Commonwealth Games, a grassroots alliance of trade unions, churches and ant-poverty groups that has secured some government support (from the minority Scottish National Party government) in the devolved Scottish Parliament.

Another significant development in the UK—in terms of working class self-valorisation—has been the growing national campaign against the stock transfer of council (public) housing. The stock transfer programme is the Labour government's proposal for transferring all council housing to forms of privately run, but not-for-profit housing organisations. The significant "carrot" of writing off the past housing debts of local authorities has been used as a sweetener for council tenants to vote yes. Despite this, and notwithstanding the support of the Labour establishment and most other mainstream political parties, there has been a growing campaign of opposition, springing largely from the communities themselves, although with the support of the public sector union, UNISON, and individual Labour MPs. To date, in over 80 local authorities, including some of the most deprived and rundown estates in old industrial cities, there have been substantial votes against the policy. Even in Glasgow, where the campaign for a "yes" vote was victorious, the "no" vote (in the face of opposition from the Labour establishment at all levels from city government, through the Scottish Government to the UK government) recorded over 40% support. Critically, this campaign has "scaled up" from a series of local struggles to a more nationally organised campaign, involving a House of Commons motion recently signed by over 200 MPs. What has marked the campaign out as a key moment of resistance is its development of an alternative vision and politics of public housing (Glynn 2007) that confronts the dominant view of social housing in government discourse. In particular, the vision of decent and affordable public housing for all who want it, articulated by the national campaign—runs counter to the market-centred discourse of mobility and aspiration in which social housing is effectively ghettoised as a last resort for those who are unable to participate in the private housing market. As a vision it also taps into and revives the hitherto latent, but still deeply embedded, socialist traditions of public ownership that inspired earlier generations of Labour activists and even government ministers such as Nye Bevan in the 1940s and 1950s.

Three things are striking and common to these different campaigns either side of the Atlantic, which mark them out as important projects of self-valorisation (Cleaver 1992). First the extent to which they link the spheres of production and social reproduction, connecting the pressures for decent wages and conditions with issues of welfare and public service provision. Second is the extent to which they have been largely grassroots mobilisations, outwith formal party or institutional politics that challenge the rationale of neoliberalism and market indvidualism and appeal to an alternative ethos of dignity, cooperative relations and mutual respect—whether in the workplace through the concept of living wages (in distinction to what the market "will allow") or in the sphere of social reproduction in the right to decent socialised housing. Finally, the extent to which they bring together different

social groups and identities (eg public sector professionals, manual workers and consumers of public services) around class projects and alternative visions that challenge capitalist exploitation and alienation in the different spheres of social life.

Conclusion

Our aim in this paper has been to challenge mainstream and more critical radical discourses on economic restructuring in which the urban poor, particularly those undergoing processes of deindustrialisation, are relegated to the role of victims rather than considered as conscious agents. Where agency is considered, it is often perceived at the individual level in terms of a growing lawlessness and social deviance, in the UK typified by the new ASBO[20] regime, or in terms of household coping strategies. The latter are important but underplay the continuing realities of class struggle that underpin dominant urban regeneration projects.

Our alternative approach is to return to the centrality of class and struggle in order to provide better insights into the continued agency and resistance of the most disadvantaged groups in old industrial cities. This is achieved by evoking the "history from below" tradition in Marxist studies (Thompson 1978) and drawing upon AM (Cleaver 2000) in opposition to more structuralist political economy accounts in geography. Viewing Marxist insights in terms of ongoing and changing processes of class struggle rather than in reified abstractions also allows us to more effectively problematise the agency of working class groups. In particular, we are interested in examining afresh our understanding of agency and resistance amidst the changing economic landscape of capitalism. A critical element in this approach is to perceive the agency of capital and labour as bound up in a dialectical totality rather than perceiving capital as the dominating actor over a passive or responsive labour (Cleaver 1992, 2006; Holloway 2005).

In developing a greater sense of agency for working class groups we have attempted to integrate Katz's threefold discussion of resistance into AM concepts of cycles of struggle and self-valorisation to help interpret the changing class politics of deindustrialisation. As Harvey (2003, 2005) and others have noted, the assault by capital in the 1980s and 1990s undoubtedly achieved considerable gains at the expense of the organised working class. In terms of dealing with its own accumulation crisis in the 1970s, the two-pronged attack on the organised industrial working class and on the welfare state has been important in securing the conditions for continued accumulation. But, despite these setbacks and the hardships suffered through deindustrialisation and the flight of capital, both geographically and sectorally, our approach here seeks to highlight the continued dynamics of class struggle in old industrial

cities. Critically, restructuring processes have succeeded to some extent in fragmenting the working class and resulted in growing social divisions and the emergence of a new urban poor. However, agency and resistance of the more everyday sort continue even in the most coercive and regressive economic environments. At the same time living wage and public housing campaigns indicate the continuing ways in which the working class initiates self-valorisation projects that also begin to recompose class unity. While it is too soon to predict an upsurge of more transformatory processes of class struggle onto a broader canvas, such self-valorisation draws attention to the ongoing resistance and agency of those disadvantaged by restructuring processes.

An important theme in old industrial cities is the way that past processes of activism and class consciousness remain as latent reserves that can be drawn upon for present and future collective struggles. Whether such reserves can lead ultimately to more progressive outcomes remains an "open" question and not one that can be determined in advance; it will be shaped by "live" and complex processes of class struggle. We might also add that left academic involvement in these struggles is for us a critical discursive weapon (see Cumbers and Whittam 2007). Critical geographical analyses that play down the politics of class (eg Amin and Thrift 2005) neglect the continuing realities of uneven development in advanced capitalist societies and do a disservice to those under attack from capital in processes of economic restructuring.

Acknowledgements

Endnotes

[1] We provide just one example here from hundreds of responses.
[2] Although we would exclude the growing body of labour geography from this criticism (eg Herod 2001), we would note that its focus is primarily on trade unions and the productive sphere rather than the agency of labour in the broader sense (Castree 2007; Cumbers, Nativel and Routledge 2008).
[3] In so doing, we are at the same time anxious to avoid a reconstitution of the agency/structure debates of the 1980s. The limitations of such analytical separating out of agency and/or structure are widely and rightfully discussed. In the light of these debates, we see our insistence on agency very much as a heuristic tool—a tool which originates strategically from debates where structure (through a focus on capital and state) dominates. In contrast, our attempt to bring back in the relationality of class/capital is one where the internal social relations provide the frame for a process that does not divide into either/or (Ollman 1993).

[4] The ILO definition of unemployment stipulates that people must: (a) want a job; (b) have sought work in the past four weeks; and (c) be able to start work within 2 weeks.

[5] See Byrne (2002), Arestis and Sawyer (2001) and Smith (2005) for useful critiques of these concepts.

[6] This periodisation and narrative of stable regimes has been criticised elsewhere for its neglect of ongoing class struggle and labour agency (Clarke 1988).

[7] It is worth pointing out that neoliberal policies have faced considerable resistance and have been implemented unevenly across space as the substantial varieties of capitalism literature demonstrates. The considerable variations in commodification across the advanced industrial world (outlined by Esping Anderson 1990, for example) arguably reflect the contingent effects of class struggle in different places. Time-wise too, there is a tendency for accounts to read off a victory for capital in a post-Fordist phase of accumulation with the consequence that the upsurge in global resistance at the end of the 1990s comes as something of a surprise. See endnote 8. The point here is that there has always been resistance to neoliberalism, but that this resistance has grown as its contradictions and appalling social consequences have become more apparent and has begun to develop common cause through the global anti-capitalist movement in recent years, though this is still a fledgling movement riven with social and spatial divisions and tensions (Routledge and Cumbers 2009).

[8] Marx's critique of mainstream economics was that it reified commodities (commodity fetishism) and abstracted them from their social and political form. While much of mainstream Marxist thought takes as given that social relations underpin capital accumulation, the AM critique (Cleaver 2000, chapter one provides an excellent summary) is that for most of the twentieth century Marxist thought neglected the "political" implications of this—ie ongoing class struggle—assuming the hegemony of capital over labour. The prospects for revolution were therefore rooted in capitalist crisis rather than labour action.

[9] There is not the space to develop a full critique of the Hardt and Negri position. See instead Bonefeld (2003), Cleaver (2008) and Holloway (2005). An important point politically is that in attempting to move beyond a dialectical concept of class, particularly with their notion of "Multitude", Hardt and Negri and others open themselves up to an "identity politics blind to, and thus vulnerable to, the threat of a common enemy" (Cleaver 2007).

[10] Swyngedouw (2000) surveys human geography's traditions of a particular (structuralist) Marxism being universalised.

[11] For this reason, the term 'Open Marxism' has also been used (Bonefeld et al 1995).

[12] This emphasis upon the cycle of struggle and labour autonomy is an important break with much of the recent discourse about neoliberalism and globalisation. For while authors such as Harvey correctly perceive neoliberalism as an attack by political and economic elites on the working class gains of the post-war era (Harvey 2003, 2005), the agency of the working class is little considered in the subsequent period. Hence, the resistance that has emerged to global capitalism and neoliberalism in recent years is described thus: "The effect of all these movements has been to shift the terrain of political organization away from traditional political parties and labour organizing into a less focused political dynamic of social action across the whole spectrum of civil society . . . It drew its strength from embeddedness in the nitty-gritty of daily life and struggle, but in so doing often found it hard to extract itself from the local and the particular to understand the macro-politics of what neoliberal accumulation by dispossession was and is all about. The variety of struggles was and is simply stunning. It is hard to even imagine connections between them (Harvey 2006:156). Conceptualised in Harvey's terms, the upsurge of resistance from the late 1990s onwards comes as a pleasant but unexpected surprise for many on the Left. The analytical concern with capital and the state has

left many without the conceptual tools to make sense of what is happening—other than to celebrate spontaneous class rebellions in a rather under-theorised way—beyond the recognition that resistance is not restricted to a traditional industrial working class—but involves a plurality and diversity of movements such as peasants in the global South, NGOs, environmentalist movements and so on. A conventional Marxist analysis such as that of Harvey or Callinicos is correct in ascribing these resistance movements as resistance to capitalism, but at the same time sees them as disparate and unconnected in social and political terms (eg Harvey 2006; Callinicos 2003).

[13] As one of our reviewers suggests.

[14] In this section, we draw upon ongoing research into the Glasgow labour market, financed by the Urban Studies Foundation. To date (as of January 2009), at what is still an early stage in the fieldwork, this research has focused upon interviewing 12 key informants involved in labour market and poverty reduction programmes, two informal group discussions (with three young women and three young men respectively), and four informal interviews with low-income youth in Glasgow.

[15] It is worth noting the Anglo-American bias of much of this discourse reflecting the context of severe working class defeats at the hands of strong capitalist forces working both within and outside the state. Part of the same point however is also to reflect upon very different outcomes elsewhere—particularly in the Nordic countries where economic restructuring and its effects have played out very differently with capital being less empowered and working class resistance to neoliberal driven restructuring being more effective.

[16] Interview, Director of Scottish Low Pay Unit, August 2007. In the UK, apprentices under the age of 19 do not qualify for the minimum wage and neither do those over 19 in their first 12 months of a training scheme (see: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/nmw/, last accessed 24 September 2007).

[17] A 17-year-old working in Asda-Walmart can earn the minimum wage of £5.35 per hour (www.gmb.org.uk, last accessed 24 September 2007).

[18] Interestingly, Boyle sets these examples explicitly in relation to some of the more capital-centric readings of urban restructuring (notably, Cox and Mair 1989). Here, his theoretical advances resonate with our own.

[19] In Glasgow a "close" refers to a tenement building with a shared hallway.

[20] Anti-Social Behaviour Orders are restrictions placed upon young people (typically night curfews) by the Labour Government. ASBOs have subsequently applied to whole families and communities. See the selection of papers in Flint (2006) for a critical review of the policy.

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