

Labour Relations



- The (re)production of social inequalities in;
 - The formal and informal economy
 - Realms of production and reproduction
 - Labour relations reflect/constitute broader social hierarchies
 - How inequalities and boundaries are made, maintained and obscured
 - Means of production, spatial practices, kinship & money
- Interplay between productive and reproductive labour
 - Consequences of the feminisation of the productive realm
 - Consequences of migration and movement

Marx; Labour Relations under Capitalism

- ❑ Between those that own the **means of production** and those that do not
 - ❑ And sell their labour to those that do.
- ❑ Means of production defined as land, factories and raw materials
- ❑ Class defined in economic terms
 - ❑ Labour and property
- ❑ In relation to the means of production



Alienation

- ❑ Workers are alienated from the products they make
 - ❑ Because they do not benefit from them
- ❑ Factory system alienates and depersonalises workers
- ❑ No control over working conditions and gain little satisfaction
- ❑ Division of labour
- ❑ No awareness of exploitation



Capitalism Enslaves....

- Creates consumer desire to acquire goods
- So, we have to work for money to acquire these commodities
- The goods workers produce eventually enslave them



Labour Power

- ❑ We don't see labour relations when we buy an object
- ❑ Under capitalism, we sell our labour
- ❑ Labour becomes a commodity in its own right
- ❑ It is given a price
- ❑ We **alienate** our labour



Commodity and Money Fetishism

- ❑ Money and goods become desired in their own right
- ❑ The illusion that money and objects have powerful properties of their own
- ❑ Deceives workers
 - ❑ See their goal as money
- ❑ See a part, not the whole



Surplus Value

- ❑ By hiring a worker, the worker's **labour power** belongs to the capitalist
- ❑ Difference between;
 - ❑ The value of the wage the worker gets
 - ❑ The value they create
- ❑ The difference is surplus value
- ❑ Surplus value = profit
- ❑ A worker works a day for £10
- ❑ But in that day the worker makes a good that sells for £15
- ❑ The £5 is surplus value
- ❑ Which goes to the capitalist.....

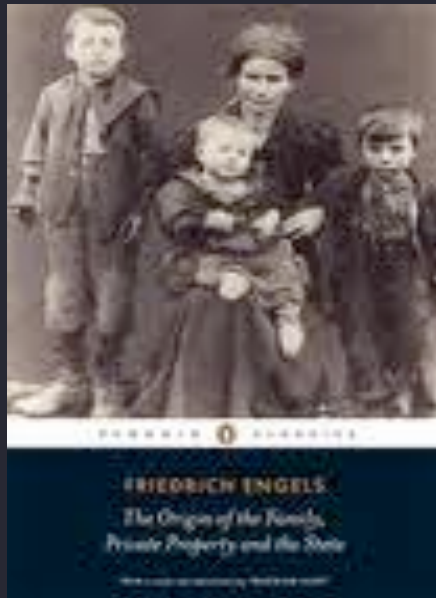
Carrier (1992)

- ❑ Traces the history of increasing alienation
 - ❑ In the UK and USA
- ❑ Production increasingly removed from workers
- ❑ Production takes place in a context of decreasing social relations
- ❑ Separation of the social and the economic



Friedrich Engels

■ The Origin of the Family, Private Property & The State (1884)



The Reproduction of Capitalism

- ▣ Property and labour relations in the nuclear family
- ▣ Reproduces the structures of capitalism
- ▣ Women were a source of unpaid labour, and produced new labour
- ▣ Women's subordinate position reproduces key aspects of capitalism
 - ▣ Exploitation of labour, private property and class
 - ▣ The home as a microcosm of capitalist society

Production



Working Definitions

- ❑ Domestic / Reproductive Labour: that which occurs within the private realm of the household
- ❑ Productive Labour: waged work that occurs within the public domain
- ❑ These definitions are problematic,
 - ❑ Household (esp. in terms of migration, stretches the boundaries of the household)
 - ❑ Distinction between public and private

Meillassoux, Maidens, Meal and Money

- ❑ Structural Marxism (see also Godelier, Dalton, Seddon)
- ❑ Unequal labour relations reproduced in small-scale peasant production
 - ❑ Labour relations within the household
- ❑ Older men – the bourgeoisie
- ❑ Younger men and women – proletariat
- ❑ But ... younger men become become older men

Family Reproduces the Inequalities of Capitalism

- ❑ Blurs the boundary between formal and informal labour
- ❑ Exploitation and alienation does not just occur in the industrial context
- ❑ Ideas of kinship (love, care obligation etc) potentially mask exploitation of workers.
- ❑ The 'family' becomes an ideological space for capitalist interests

Formal and Informal Economy



Formal

- Public domain of production
- That which is visible to the state
 - Taxed / on-the-books
 - Reported in stats



Informal

- Other economic activities
 - Reproductive
 - Productive
- Black market, stolen goods, prostitution, cash-in-hand



Discussion Points

- ▣ How is labour alienated?
 - ▣ Through what mechanism and relations?
- ▣ In what ways is it not?
- ▣ Is labour in the informal economy less exploited, than that in the formal?

**'ALIENATION'
THE FOLLOWING
SECTION UNPACKS
CARRIER'S (1992) PAPER
LINKED ON THE
MOODLE PAGE**

PRODUCTION OF RELATIONS

- production of relations
- production in Maussian terms:
 - degree of alienation: from processes, relations, and objects of production
 - production increasingly removed from direct control of the producing worker
 - decreasingly production is taking place in the context of enduring relations

SEPARATION

- Growing separation between economic and social relations
- Marcel Mauss - The Gift
 - Anthropologists generally focused on ways people transact objects in small scale non industrial societies
 - Carrier: applies Mauss's insights to the ways people produce objects in industrial societies

CARRIER (1992)

- In such societies production important in its own right
- Realm of production is an important aspect of people's experiences of objects and social interactions
- useful to think about social relations, identities and objects in industrial societies

CARRIER (1992)

- Core of the Maussian model (see Gregory 1980; 1982)
Parry (1986) analysis of the gift
- 1st form of social life: people are bound to each other and the things that surround them by durable links that provide a personal identity for the individual and that define people's obligation towards one another
- Links so strong people and things cannot be said to exist independently of each other

CARRIER (1992)

- 2nd form: people are not so linked to each other or the things around them. People and things exist as entities with their own independent source of being and with no enduring obligations
- For Mauss and those have followed his ideas these two different forms of social life describe pre-capitalist and capitalist societies

CARRIER (1992)

- notes this simplified rendering suggests a degree of overlap with Marxian analyses of modern capitalist society
- Marxian approaches work to analyse the nature and consequences of social organisation of production in capitalist societies
 - formation of classes and appropriation of surplus value

CARRIER (1992)

- Maussian model used to analyse the nature and consequences of the cultural understanding of circulation in pre-capitalist societies especially relations among people and between people and objects
- Parry (1980) argues Mauss was concerned with how the development in the West has meant that economy becomes progressively dis-embedded from society and economic relations become increasingly differentiated from the other types of social relations

CARRIER (1992)

- Carrier explores the growth of alienation in production that accompanied the rise of industrial capitalism.
- Carrier uses alienation as a sense of separation
- a thing is alienated from a person when it is seen as separate from that person
- a person is alienated when seen as separate from surrounding people or things

CARRIER (1992)

- alienation refers to how people perceive and understand themselves and their environs
- people who have little control over the a thing or activity are likely to be more alienated from it than are people with more control
- people obliged to co-operate with strangers are likely to be more alienated from their activities that are people who interact with family and friends

CARRIER (1992)

- uses alienation to explore commercial production relations
- particularly the Western industrial capitalist societies
- cottage industry - production by households as independent economic units
- putting out - production by household under contract with a merchant capitalist who provides raw materials and purchases the finished object

CARRIER (1992)

- early factory production - production in a central place but with much more labour recruited and organised using family relationships
- modern factory production - production in a central place with all labour recruited and organised by the capitalist treating labour as a commodity
- These are constructions that simplify and essentialise a more complex and fluid history

CARRIER (1992)

- Anthropologists are broadening the scope of their approaches to include Western societies
- Maussian approach suggests that growing alienation in production is part of the broader differentiation of life into more 'purely' economic and more 'purely' social aspects
- As a result, people start conceiving of themselves and their environs in two distinct ways

CARRIER (1992)

- In one: objects and other persons are separated from the self and are conceptualised in terms of abstract and impersonal frameworks and forces
 - utility, unit cost, the market
- In the other conception objects and others are not so separated and are conceptualised in terms of their relationships to the self and to personal forces such as kinship, affection, obligation

CARRIER (1992)

- this differentiation is manifest as an increasing distinction in the ways that people experience and think about their lives at work as producers and their lives at home as
- work and its associated objects are alienated from the individual
- home is not

CARRIER (1992)

- this differentiation is in tension with research that suggests people want to colonise the alienated realm with more durable less alienated relationships
- modern factory production: workers speak of the instrument of labour as their own, identify themselves with the objects, love for the machine

CARRIER (1992)

- co-workers form social relationships that reduce alienation
- workers respond actively to the growing alienation that has characterised industrial capitalist production

CARRIER (1992)

- cottage industry production in the household of things to sell
- using household labour and social relations
- own tools and equipment
- own raw materials
- undertaken by household members

CARRIER (1992)

- controlled the means of production
- controlled the time and pace of the work
- this was a durable practice
- the obligation to labour and the discipline used to coordinate and regulate production were based on the durable relations between people in the household / affective and utilitarian

CARRIER (1992)

- putting out - merchant might supply a weaver with raw materials
- merchant would collect, inspect the work and pay the weaver
- technical operations similar to cottage industry but social relations were different
- merchant's influence reduced the workers

CARRIER (1992)

- less an embodiment of the producers more the cottage industry
- however, the relationships the product embodied were still tied to the web of household relationships
- 'putting out' system still in place: e.g Harris Tweed cloth

CARRIER (1992)

- Early factory production
- allowed capitalist more control over pace and product
- greater supervision
- production moved to a separate place controlled by the capitalist

CARRIER (1992)

- rise of modern factories
- fragmentation of the production process
- changes in mechanisation and organisation
- factory came a purpose built tool that embodied the interests of its owners and designers
- assembly lines (e.g. early Ford Motor Company)
- breaking down of every step and the subordination of the worker to the production process.

CARRIER (1992)

- increasingly, the worker seen only in terms of their labour power that can be bought or sold like any other commodity
- this created a new understanding of people and their work

CARRIER (1992)

- argues can apply anthropological models developed in the study of non-Western societies to understand Western societies
- greater differentiation of life into personal and impersonal spheres
- and the task of negotiating these two realms

Mollona (2005)

- ❑ Ethnography of 'Endcliffe', Sheffield
- ❑ 'Deprived' region
- ❑ Decline in manufacturing and steel works
- ❑ Informal and formal labour
- ❑ Reproduction of capitalist relations
- ❑ Worker subjectivity and agency



Factory without Walls

- ❑ The formal and the informal are entangled
- ❑ Sub-contracting and black market activities during work time
- ❑ The importance of social networks
- ❑ Negotiation of bonuses and distribution of the profits
- ❑ Hierarchies between hot and cold workers

The blurring of formal and informal

- ❑ Extended families
 - ❑ Shaped by the state
- ❑ People survive between a mix of formal and informal activities
 - ❑ Extended families pool resources
 - ❑ Obligations – work for the family
- ❑ Older men reproduce capitalist relations,
 - ❑ In the factory and at home (e.g. Teddy's family)

The role of the pub

- ❑ Job Centre
- ❑ Black market trade
- ❑ Homeless shelter and refuge
- ❑ Advice and support
- ❑ Community Centre
- ❑ Gift and exchange relations



Burawoy, Manufacturing Consent

- ❑ Manufacturing in the United States
- ❑ Shop-floor culture
- ❑ 'Hegemonic' capitalism – co-opts workers
- ❑ Increased control over their work
 - ❑ Play the bonus system
- ❑ Reproduce capitalist values and increase profits
- ❑ Autonomy is an illusion

‘Why do workers work as hard as they do?’

- ❑ Piece-rate pay system as a game
- ❑ Workers compete to ‘make out’ and beat production quotas
- ❑ Those more adept at ‘working the angles’ gained more prestige
- ❑ Increased productivity and profit for a minimal increase in wages
- ❑ Constructing it as a game generated consent for the rules

The illusion of choice and agency

- Job Mobility
 - Enabled management to minimise conflict
 - Separation of workers
- Collective Bargaining
 - Between Unions and Management
 - Another 'game'
 - Gave labour the illusion of participation
- Capitalism succeeds by co-opting workers.

How is reproductive labour different from productive labour?



Goody (1976)

- ❑ The ideology is that domestic labour should be freely given;
 - ❑ it is social
 - ❑ based on affective relations
- ❑ Whereas, money (and markets) are theoretically disembedded from the social sphere.
- ❑ **Waged domestic** labour therefore appears problematic
 - ❑ The 'impersonal' is introduced into the 'personal'
- ❑ Has anthropology privileged/fetishised money in their analysis of waged reproductive labour?

The Production of Social Hierarchies within the Home

■ Division of Labour

- Gill's (1994) account of domestic service in La Paz, Bolivia
- Mistresses control the intellectual work and 'servants' perform manual tasks.
- The aspiration of middle-class employers to be "refined women"

■ Kinship

- Meillassoux (1981); gender and generation
- Young (1987); the myth of being 'like a daughter'
 - Inspires loyalty and respect
 - But servants are not allowed to mature into women

Reflecting Structural Inequalities

- That intersect with gender, age, class/caste and ethnicity



Avoiding the Double-Day?

- The relation between production and reproduction
- Women are responsible for the exploitation of other women
 - Reiterate class and ethnic boundaries



New Economies.....

- Racial division of labour as facilitated by the globalisation of market economies
 - Feminisation of the labour force in the North
 - Impact of trade agreements and flexible capital on rural economies in the South
- Emergence of new economies and forms of labour relations
- Service based economies favour 'immigrant' women

Parreñas (2001, 2005)

- Filipina domestic workers in LA and Rome
- Global care chains are driven by need
 - “three-tier transfer of care among women in poor and rich nations” (2005: 23)
 - Women from the South alleviate the care burden of those in the North, leaving, in turn, the care of their own children to women of lesser privilege (2005: 29)
- ‘The Gender Paradox’
 - Migration has the possibility to reconfigure gender relations, but results in the entrenchment of the gendered division of labour

Abbots (2012)

- Impact of male migration and remittance income on care relations and household hierarchies
 - 3 way relationship as household relations are shaped by male waged labour
- Social aspiration over function; fluidity over structure
 - Employers are employing workers from their own class
 - The employment of domestic workers acts as a marker of distinction between successful and less-successful migrant households
 - Temporal fragility and irony
 - Dominant discourse that migration will be economically successful

Does Migration Result in Reconfigured Relations?

- ❑ Employers find it difficult to assert authority directly
- ❑ Some workers – esp. those drawn from within existing household networks – shift their social position within the household
- ❑ The burden of care labour falls heavily on the women of unsuccessful migrants (but also enables them to participate in a consumption-centric society)
- ❑ However, while some women are relieved of onerous manual tasks, all women remain entrenched in the reproductive sphere
- ❑ Little evidence to suggest that gender relations, in the context, are being reconfigured.