

# CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY AND MODERN SOCIAL PROBLEMS: MARX'S CONCEPT OF THE CAMERA OBSCURA AND THE FALLACY OF INDIVIDUALISTIC REDUCTIONISM

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## *Abstract*

Marx viewed ideological and classed based understandings of the social world as analogous to images in a "camera obscura", where the outcome is backwards or distorted. Commonplace discourse "gets it backward" in the same way: causes and effects are often conflated. Current understandings of the relationship between poverty, crime and policing are examined. Rather than a conventional, individual-reductionist analysis, sociologists are encouraged to engage in historical and structural investigation. Marx's camera obscura analogy is developed as a tool used to both shed light on power relations as presently conceived and to understand them in an alternative fashion.

## *Introduction*

Just what kind of mechanisms are at work in producing dominant forms of discursive knowledge in modern society? Many of our most esteemed sociologists have historically made a habit of making observations about the material life-world common in modern society, the qualities of mind most often accompanying this materiality, and the varieties of assumptions about human behavior thus made possible (Berger, Berger, and Kellner, 1974; Marx, 1844; Mills, 1956, 1959; Simmel, 1950, 1971; Weber, 1946, 1958; Smith, 1990). Surely knowledge of how and in what way material life has shaped human perception is just as important as the sociological commonplace that it has. In terms of broad questions of philosophy of science relevant to sociological inquiry, Marx's work warns of at least two common though problematic approaches to explanations of human behavior in modern cultural and scientific discourse: the reversal of causal mechanisms and their effects, and the fallacy of individualistic reductionism. These two issues are discussed and developed below in reference to popular and sociological approaches to poverty and crime. First examined separately in the abstract, investigation then proceeds to examine the conjunction of poverty and crime in terms of both genocide in East Timor abroad and

the so-called “war on drugs” at home. Historical and structural analysis bookend all three inquiries. Finally, examination of the problematic conceptual, logical, and discursive mechanisms producing such approaches to knowledge formation and their implications for sociologists round out the discussion.

### *The Camera Obscura*

Marx’s writing is sprinkled with pithy, but nonetheless insightful, comments. Some, like, “All that’s solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind”, make for dramatic reading, nice analogies, prophetic literature, or poignant appeals to action, but prove difficult to engage in subsequent sociological analysis (Marx, 1848: 469–500).<sup>1</sup> Others, like, “If in all ideology men and their relations appear upside-down as in a camera obscura, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process”, are more useful to the extent they point toward a conceptual approach to theoretical and empirical analysis arguing that the causes of human behavior, and the determining factors of our social relations, appear to us in an inverse relationship compared to their real historical development (Marx and Engels, 1846: 36).

What is a camera obscura? Living when photographic technology was very embryonic and keeping up with contemporary developments in science and technology, Marx became familiar with this rudimentary photographic device sometimes displayed at fairs and expositions. It was a large box-like contraption in which a person would often sit. A pin hole let light in one side which was reflected off a mirror angled to project an image onto a wall away from the occupant. Plates of varying degrees of opaqueness could be created to display pictures on the wall for the desired perception or distortion, though the image displayed was the inverse of the image on the plate, much like the way the retina reverses the image the eye receives.

In an actual camera obscura, all participants seemingly should know the image is distorted and are not fooled by the reversal of this portrayal of reality. In the social camera obscura of commodity fetishism—e.g. bourgeois common sense—subjects receive an image and explanation of the social world that presents a vision of it that is the inverse of its real historical development. This is often not clearly apparent from an inspection that remains on the surface appearance of data only. On an

analytical level Marx's analogy stands as a warning to expect common, dominant, official discourse to frame explanations of social phenomena and behavior, to a certain degree, backwards.

### *Individualistic Reductionism*

Another dominant element in cultural common sense is the anthropomorphism of society—treating social formations as if they had the traits of individual human beings in the abstract. In this view, large scale social phenomena, like poverty, war, or crime, are understood as simply reflecting the individualistic human traits of sinfulness, greed and violence. This is a confusion between the level of historical generality data falls on and the extent to which we can logically extend sets of abstractions, knowledge and conclusions from one level of human historical generality to others (Ollman, 1971, 1993). For example, Marx forwarded such a methodological warning: “And since sales and purchases are negotiated solely between individuals, it is not admissible to seek here for relations between whole social classes” (Marx, 1867: 550).

George Orwell's work is a cursory example from popular culture, as readers have for decades found him highly interpretable and useful. His major works, *1984* and *Animal Farm*, clearly have human frailty and error at the root of social problems, oppression, calamity, etc. (Orwell, 1946, 1949). From the commonsensical vantage point, individualistic weaknesses, errors, or sins collect and make up for large scale social phenomena. This type of individualistic reductionism is indicative of bourgeois reasoning but in fact is an error in logic and is found in many popular liberal cultural critiques. It should be, however, systematically precluded from sociological analysis.

In scientific and secular forms, both discursive tropes—the discursive reversal of the camera obscura-effect and the error of individualistic reductionism—pervade our common sense ethos—e.g. deeply entrenched beliefs in meritocracy and the idolization of sports heroes in pop culture. Certainly our most esteemed knowledge is not immune either—e.g. rational choice theories in economics, sociology, and criminal law; the dominance of psychology in human sciences and the powerful presence of business schools in the university generally; the monism of western medicine. In such inverted and individualistic discourse social phenomena go awry because of malfeasance, mistakes, greed, bad genes, evil or sin, or some other non-sociological variables. Great things occur because of genius, initiative, or luck. A sound methodological approach would argue that this is not an appropriately logical comparison of

levels of generality—i.e. the units of analysis are incommensurate. This too Marx warned against, for example, as in *Capital (volume I)* where he wrote, “It is apt to be forgotten that the magnitudes of different things can be compared quantitatively, only when those magnitudes are expressed in terms of the same unit. It is only as expressions of such a unit that they are of the same denomination, and therefore commensurable” (Marx, 1867: 56).

Understood as such, individualistic reductionism and the discursive reversal of causal mechanisms via the camera obscura effect are companion concerns—one leads to the other. Opposed to the illogical reduction of social phenomena to a reflex of human individual traits (the level of appearances) Marx asked us to suspend the question of the extent to which human imperfection, or otherwise error, produces social malaise, poverty, war. Marx’s was not, at base, a moral critique. Instead, he encouraged analysts to consider the extent to which social phenomena are structurally and historically produced. Produced socially, yes, but behind the backs of individuals, as he was later to reiterate—“men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past” (Marx, 1852: 595).

And, this is how Marx’s outlook is at its core sociological. It gives sociologists real, observable tools to use and data to examine: productive activity and the matter already existent at hand in a particular case, rather hypothesized mental states, attitudes, an ethos, or otherwise non-observable phenomena. In order to overcome the twin, interrelated problems of the camera obscura-effect and individualistic reductionism, Marx sets us the task of explaining human behavior, social relations, and knowledge of them by recourse to the regular material practices occurring both over historical development and within systems in their everyday reproduction. Marx’s methodological anecdote to bourgeois ideology was historical and structural analysis of material relationships of class power. Towards that end, the issues of poverty and criminalization sit at the apex of the political-economic institutional apparatus of power in capitalist society and will serve as effective points of departure.

*Poverty and Culture in the Camera Obscura: Conservatism & Liberalism*

Often within official discourse the link between poverty and culture is understood as existing between one of two basic, archetypical explanations. The conservative frame assumes the market is the inevitable

result of the naturally—often implicitly genetic—determined human propensity to truck, barter and trade (Smith, 1776). For conservatism, there are natural limits to what humans can do with themselves—limited, conditioned, and mediated by the invisible hand of the market. While Adam Smith was not blind to, and did not approve of, the social effects of unchecked greed in the wealthy classes—all for themselves, nothing for anyone else—modern conservatism sees poverty, likewise the existence and all results of the market, as a phenomena reducible to individual level explanations—e.g. utilitarian, calculatively rational, competitive market behavior. Either by choice, by accomplishment, or by the possible range of individualistic traits such as supposed categories of race, asserted biological determinants such as genes and/or sex, plus vaguely defined culturally favored constructs such as intelligence in combination with (misconstrued) notions of effort, the conservative understanding is that people are justly rewarded for both the merit and the functional importance of the work they do (Davis and Moore, 1945).

As such, conservative discourse generally forwards three themes: First, society at large, and by extension government and business, reflect the nature of humans considered in their abstract, individualist state. Social inequality is thus understood as the result of individual inequality, though viewed en masse. A second theme of conservatism is that social inequality is an inevitable outcome of our natural traits and thus has, to a certain extent, a bio-genetic component and therefore limits are set as to what can be done about it. Thus, a third theme: Activist efforts outside of “natural” market mechanisms are unnecessary violations and intrusions into our normal state of inequality, even if this means real racial divisions. Governmental intervention can only hurt and unjustly penalize the meritorious (Herrnstein and Murray, 1994).

The liberal frame holds that individuals tend to be victims of poverty, born into social contexts with limited access to class-based/widely accepted/hegemonic language, mathematical, and academic skills (*human or social capital*), and where access to drugs, sex, and other supposedly morally-dysfunctional enticements is considerable (Jencks, 1992; Katz, 1989). The result is a culture of poverty and a general inability to compete (Lewis, 1961; MacLeod, 1987). At times, racism and/or segregation and/or class dynamics are emphasized when supposed racial components of those in poverty—“the black urban underclass”—are appraised (Massey and Denton, 1993; Wilson, 1987).

For liberalism individuals cannot be held totally responsible for their situation, and since liberalism often admits that the market cannot rid itself of poverty some sort of activist state intervention is advocated

(Myrdal, 1944; Harrington, 1962; Wilson, 1987; Jencks, 1992). With few exceptions liberal discourse shares with its conservative cousin the assumption that competition for resources is a normal state of human affairs. The ultimate cause of poverty, for both, is some sort of deficiency of the individual, a failing for which they are held either totally or only partially responsible. Conservatism and liberalism differ only to the extent that either the asserted laws of supply and demand or the capitalist-state, or some combination thereof, are entrusted to assure the metaphorical-political requirement of "the highest level of good to the largest number of people."

However, both liberalism and conservatism are examples of the fallacy of individualistic reductionism, which is the mirror image of the well-known ecological fallacy or "the danger . . . of making assertions about individuals as the unit of analysis based on the examination of groups or other aggregations" (Babbie, 1992: 97). Society and people are units of analyses of completely different orders, and the factors causing effects on individuals have widely contingent bearing on explaining wide scale social phenomena. This is the very type of reasoning both Durkheim and Marx struggled against (Durkheim, 1951, 1982; Marx, 1867), though it seems to still be the orbit in which mainstream sociology and its quantitative and qualitative adherents remain. This reasoning suggests that cultural common sense is in fact, and not just in metaphor, illogical and the inverse of real social relations.

From the vantage point of essential and central bourgeois institutions, we should expect that our intellectual organizations, for example the mass media, and social scientific discourses, such as sociology, to the extent they are determined by relations of power/knowledge, will present students explanations of poverty that are bounded by these two common sense sets of assumptions. We should also expect that these will become internalized by a fairly widespread set of people (Berger, 1976; Berger and Pullberg, 1966; Chomsky, 1997; Foucault, 1980b).

Abstracting the same data historically and structurally, rather than individualistically and reductionistically, however, suggests there are other, supra-individual processes at work with greater explanatory power. First are the roots of poverty as produced within capitalism as a historically developing system. This requires two types of analysis. The first focuses on historical development and change over time. The second examines the institutional structure of capitalism as a specific phenomena without regard to a specified time and place.

*Historical Analysis: Global Commodity Chains and State Violence—East Timor*

Capitalism does not spring forth fully developed, but must be put in place, most often by force. Capitalist classes have required a great deal of death, violence, and expropriation of feudal peasants, ordinary urban plebs, and modern indigenous peoples from their lands and/or means of production (Marx, 1867—chapters XXVI–XXXIII; Moore, 1966; Barsamian and Briere, 1992; Zinn, 1980; Udin, 1996; Jardine, 1995; Chomsky, 1985). This is one basic requirement to get the system up and running. Analysis here is historical as genocide and enslavement of indigenous peoples through US/European colonial policy makes for telling examples from the past. The present case of East Timor also demonstrates in stark relief the systemic logic of commodity chains and the historical use of violence to keep the world-economy expanding in the present. (Hopkins and Wallerstein, 1994).<sup>2</sup>

In the mid-1960's the world capitalist-system was facing a downturn in global profit rates within core regions (see: Mosely, 1992) and predictably at hand was another round of increasing commodification of reality and the geographic expansion of commodity chains as a whole into new zones of the periphery, the two most successful and common ways the system has reversed falling profit rates (Wallerstein, 1982; Gereffi and Korzeniewicz, 1994). Policy and lending institutions are part of the same state apparatus that controls military organizations and war making and thus both work in tandem towards these ends. This is clearly evident with the genocide taking place in East Timor. In this case, fearing Timorese independence would "destabilize" the region, military leaders of Indonesia, with massive assistance from the United States (as well as Australia, Japan, France, Britain, Canada, and other core societies) invaded this tiny island nation, killing upwards of one-third of the population between 1975 and 1998. The invasion and mass killing were undertaken in order to secure regional balance of power, to monopolize oil reserves for multinationals, and to control deep sea lanes for the military.

After WWII, under Sukarno, Indonesia was reluctant to handover its resources to multinational corporate interests and slow to implement the policy objectives of international lending institutions (IMF and World Bank). The CIA worked to destabilize his government, succeeding in a 1965 military coup, replacing Sukarno with Suharto, and resulting in between half to one million deaths, and 750,000 imprisoned within an eight month period. Chomsky cites planning documents explaining that the State Department's position in 1949 was that Southeast Asia was

to “fulfill its major function as a source of raw materials and a market for Japan and Western Europe.” Given this policy objective, the killings and imprisonments in Indonesia were geared toward expropriation of the original producers from their land. The CIA provided hit lists, which included nuns, priests, students, teachers, union leaders, and activists. Commentators have remarked: “one of the worst massacres this century” (Amnesty International); “one of worst mass murders of the 20th century” (CIA). The US press declared the killings to be a “gleam of light in Asia”, “the West’s best news for years in Asia”, and “Hope . . . where once there was none” (see: Chomsky, 1985: 303–305).

By 1967, Indonesia experienced an oil boom after Phillips Petroleum, Mobil Corp. (among others) signed production contracts with Pertamina, Suharto’s own state-owned, military-controlled oil company, citing the “stability” military regimes bring. The “Intergovernmental Group on Indonesia” (IGGI) was eventually formed by Japan, US, Canada, France and more than 10 other western countries, providing the military regime about \$5 billion a year in aid and trade, with no human rights and environmental criteria attached.

In April 1974, Portugal withdrew from East Timor. Indonesia, in a letter to the Timorese, acknowledged that it did not have a historical claim to the island. However, Indonesian leaders privately feared the possibility of a left-wing populist government forming, wanted possession of its huge off shore oil reserves, and worried that a successful small nation gaining independence might inspire other island populations. Also, core military leaders desired the use of deep sea lanes for exercises, etc. Indonesian leaders were encouraged by the United States and Australia to sack the island. The CIA suggested de-stabilization—e.g. creating a civil war, which would provide “an excuse to invade.” The island was infiltrated and cover operations broke up the Timorese popular national political coalition (FRETILIN and ADT). Approaching invasion, secret diplomatic cables from Britain argued that it was in Britain’s interest that Indonesia invade; from Australia cables acknowledged Indonesia had denied an invasion was taking place and that Australia would do best not to expose it; and the US cable expressed the opinion that they hoped Indonesia would be quick, effective, and not use US equipment (90% of the weaponry was US made and provided). East Timor was made into a free fire zone, women were raped, and children killed. During the ensuing Indonesian onslaught seven journalists from Britain and Australia were killed (five of the seven were castrated, their genitals stuffed in their mouths, hung upside down by their feet, and stuck with short, sharp blades, and bled to death) and

an estimated 60,000–100,000 Timorese were killed within six weeks (up to 1/10–1/6 of the population).

There was predictable complicity and cover-up as this crime was acknowledged by US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to his staff. He worried public exposure would necessarily lead to his arrest given his guilt and level of involvement in mass murder. He argued that calling the Timorese communists would provide political cover if needed. Arms sales were not stopped, though the US attempted to make it appear they had been. The United Nations General Assembly attempted to get Indonesia to withdraw immediately but was thwarted by US UN representative Daniel Patrick Moynihan:

The United States wished things to turned out as they did and worked to bring this about. The Department of State desired that the United Nations prove utterly ineffective in whatever measures it undertook. This task was given to me, and I carried it forward with no inconsiderable success (Moynihan in his memoirs, cited in Chomsky, 1985: 308).

Ignoring the UN, Indonesia annexed East Timor, calling it its 27th province. Carter, Reagan, Bush, and Clinton all continued massive weapon sales to Indonesia. Between 1977 and 1978, when it looked like Indonesia might run out of weapons, Carter's "human rights" administration sold Indonesia \$112 million in weaponry, up from \$5.8 million the previous year. Bombings of villages began with US planes, something that would recur later with British sold bombers. Mass starvation set it. Since the invasion, over 2,600 Indonesian military officers have received formal military training in the United States at such places as The School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia, where torture and repression of indigenous peoples are taught to "students." The East Timorese must endure house to house searches, disappearances, death squads, concentration camps. About 1/3 of the population has been killed since 1974—over 200,000 of about 600,000 at the time of the invasion. General Try Sutrisno, Commander and Chief of the Armed Forces in Jakarta, declared all dissenters would be shot. Indigenous languages and religions have been banned, as have local customs in dress, education, and farming.

In 1976 Phillips Petroleum signed contract terms, expecting a start at 40,000 barrels of oil a day. A joint production venture between Caltex (Texaco and Chevron) and Pertamina increased oil production and US imports rose 30% between 1975 and 1976. Pertamina expected oil production to rise to 50,000 barrels a day by 1978. Exxon, Phillips, Indiana Standard signed oil accords committing them to over \$100 million in

explorations. Between 1982–1984, under Reagan, US arms sales to Indonesia increased to \$1 billion. Overall US trade in the Asia-Pacific region in 1993 was \$374 billion (63% higher than its transatlantic trade).<sup>3</sup> Also in the same year, the Clinton Administration provided \$180 million in economic assistance, \$30 million government-to-government arms sales, with additional \$57 million planned the next year, and a decade-long deal worth approximately \$40 billion. Multinationals such as Freeport McMoRan (mining), AT&T (communications), Royal-Dutch Shell (oil), have extensive holdings in the area. The US Commerce Department reports show that out of 15 nations the US has more oil and gas companies in Indonesia than any other. These 23 companies account for about 80% of Indonesia's crude oil and 50% of its natural gas production, and get about \$1 billion a year in subsidies from the US Government. All US presidents since Ford, Britain Prime Ministers Thatcher and Major, Prince Charles and the Queen of England, Australian heads of state, as well those of France, and Canada, have all considered Suharto an ally and/or have appeared in public with him. The Timor Gap Treaty, signed by Indonesia and Australia, consigns East Timor's oil to western multinational interests (Udin, 1996; Jardine, 1995, 1995/1999; Barsamian and Briere, 1992; Chomsky, 1985; BBC, 1994 documentary—"Death of a Nation").

On November 12, 1991 the Dili Massacre took place. Indonesian soldiers fired upon a funeral procession that had transformed into a protest march, killing hundreds. Western journalists covered the story—except in United States, even though two US journalists were injured by the Indonesian military. In 1996 Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes and Jose Ramos Horta won the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of their attempts at helping Timor win back its autonomy. In 1999, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan sponsored an election where the vast majority voted for formal independence from Indonesia. In response, Indonesia military leaders unleashed another wave of killing across the country. As they left the country, Indonesian forces looted the entire island. Many Timorese were killed in the aftermath. Hundreds of thousands fled into the mountains and almost as many fled to Indonesian controlled West Timor.

World-systems approaches would stress that these events coincide with: a) the onset of the global recession in the late 1960's and the oil-shocks of the early 1970's, b) the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system financial system where the dollar backed international currencies, c) increase in structural adjustment and other development programs in Indonesia, and, d) after years of coup and de-stabilization attempts

towards a previous regime which had tried to keep international capital from absorbing an exorbitant amount of natural resources off the archipelago back towards the core societies. This case expresses capitalism's historic pre-conditional requirements: the use of private and/or state organized terrorism in order to get the initial capitalist production system up and going and then needing to appeal to it again and again in order to expand the system as a whole during systemic recessionary periods.

While debates continue in sociological circles over the extent to which the state is "relatively autonomous" and a site of struggle, the current analysis is concerned with the extent to which the state is a weapon of class rule. Such cases as colonial America or contemporary East Timor express capitalism's functional use of state-organized violence in capitalist development. Arguments that the market-form is the outcome humans' natural propensities founder upon two problematic counter-factuals.

First, the "free market" has only dominated for about 400 or so years, which is historically recent. In previous social formations the economy has always been embedded in other social institutions and relations, such as religion, family, community ritual, etc. (Polanyi, 1944; Wallerstein, 1974).

Second, if the free market reflects human nature, then logically we must consider all pre- and non-capitalist societies forms of error, mistakes, and are thus left with the problem of explaining their survival for such a long time, and the fact they comprise most of human history. This is a telling inversion of a Marxism which views capitalism as the highest form of alienation in comparison to a conservatism which sees capitalism as finally overcoming the alienation that comprises over 99% of humanity's history. Sociologically, conservatism is left to explain why an ideal reflection of human nature requires such violence as a pre-condition and why such a system did not emerge at an earlier time. Perhaps this explains why conservatism and liberalism are so inherently racist. If capitalism is the end of history, and if an evolutionary model of society is accepted (the bourgeois apologists have always been much more so the linear evolutionists they criticize Marx for supposedly being), then the goal of human society is its full fruition, which must be our hegemonic capitalist-imperialist present.<sup>4</sup> If the capitalist mode of production is either or both the inherent outcome of history and/or genes, then the socio-cultural grouping getting to it first must represent the highest form of human social evolution. And, since the capitalist market is thought to be the expression of our in-born propensity to barter,

truck and trade, then the European arrival at capitalism must mean they possess the biologically progressive, thus superior, genetic stocks. This is the foundation of the modern form of xenophobia we call racism and it is endemic to the system (Fields, 1990; Fredrickson, 1981; Shipman, 1994; Gould, 1981).

### *Structural Analysis*

A structural examination of a social phenomena must explain how the essential elements of the social system produce the regular results that are empirically observable. In terms of poverty, this requires an accounting of the production and distribution of wealth (Marx, 1867—V, VI, and VII; Wallerstein, 1974, 1979). In the capitalist mode of production the name of the game is the production by one class, and the appropriation by another, of surplus-value through the wage system, combined with a restricted access to the means of production backed by rationalized law. This is forced into place by a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence by the state (Marx, 1867; Weber, 1946; Tilly, 1975a, 1985, 1990).

Capitalism as a system requires the historical extraction of people from their land. Afterward, they, or their offspring, become a pool of free laborers, free to hire themselves out to others, others who came through the dissolution of feudalism with enough wealth to buy up the production process—land, machinery, raw materials, labor. The commodity production process is set in motion whereby owners pay people less in wages as employees than the total social value they produce as workers. Owners then sell commodities to those same people as consumers, consumers who send additional value back to the owning class through these purchases. Given the wage system, and the costs of goods, services, rent and utilities, workers continuously and systematically send the vast majority of social wealth back to the owning classes. Profit taking over business cycles leads to concentration of wealth and an overproduction of goods which leads to recession, which leads to geographical expansion in search of cheaper labor and resources. The historical expropriation of another round of indigenous people from their traditional land takes place, and the cycle begins anew. With each cycle a new urban proletariat is created and older ones tend to be most subject to the harsh crack of the whip of hunger, starvation, etc.

*History and Structure in the Abstract and the Concrete*

Much work has been done on the relation between the rise of states and class dynamics (Hobsbawm, 1982, 1996; Jessop, 1982, 1980, 1977; Miliband, 1969, 1973, 1983; Poulantzas, 1969, 1974, 1978; Skocpol, 1979, 1980, 1992; Tilly, 1975a–c, 1981a–b, 1984, 1990, Moore, 1966). Marxists have generally agreed that the state is created to manage large civic populations within the context of class domination, with the primary function of securing the conditions of constant accumulation of capital within the capitalist class as a whole, regulating both rogue capitalists and the working class as a whole:

the state 'is nothing more than the reciprocal insurance of the bourgeois against both its own members and the exploited class, an insurance which must become increasingly independent as against bourgeois society, because the subjection of the exploited class becomes increasingly difficult' (Hobsbawm, 1982a: 229, 230–231; citing Marx—*Rezensionen aus der Neuen Rheinischen Zeitung: Politisch-ökonomische Revue: Le socialisme et l'impôt, par Emile de Girardin, in Werke*, vol. 7:288).

The state, then, has both repressive and regulatory functions. It must prevent class-revolutionary upheaval, but also social disintegration as well. One way is maintaining a balance between questions of legitimacy within the public sphere, implied coercion, and direct violent repression (Habermas, 1975; Wolfe, 1973). Besides these stand "mystification, or ostensible consent, which is implicit in the state's appearance of standing above society" (Hobsbawm, 1982: 231).

Both Marxist theory and the behavior of corporate/state managers suggest, and history can be argued to have demonstrated, that full employment leads to a stronger working class bargaining position, which leads to more power in the working class. If this coalition is successful, then the total amount of social value available for distribution shrinks in relative size to the capitalist class, but grows in relative size to the working class. Here working class claims on value are bid upward in terms of wages generally, with workers and middle-classes in core societies also demanding pensions, medical plans and vacation, overtime, hours, sick-leave, more secure and beneficial welfare provisions, etc. The result is lower profit remittance, which is dysfunctional for the investing classes, middle and upper alike. Eventually, capital compels labor to revolt through demanding increasingly unattainable shares of value, shares that shrink the socially defined standard of living of workers to levels they no longer tolerate. When labor tries to refuse shares or even take some back (striking; seizing the means of production), the state

often unleashes its force on labor. Police, national guards, private militaries, Pinkertons, and government mercenaries have all been unleashed on workers regularly across the geographical zones of the global capitalist system (Boyer and Morais, 1955; Brecher, 1974; Chomsky, 1973; Zinn, 1980).

However, common-sensical explanations often get it backwards when these are often discursively framed as riots or irresponsible worker actions, or worker violence, or otherwise violent chaos caused by out of control workers. From another vantage point, labor compels capital to revolt, using states and selective market policies to crush attempts at democratic organization and social improvement—e.g. unions, day care, environmental protections, work safety laws, and working class political organizations such as third parties.

In terms of both social structure and historical development, it has not been workers' behavior that primarily accounts for who works and who does not, that explains why poverty is a historically constant and structurally general feature of capitalism, or what causes variable but constantly inadequate amounts of value to be available to the global population. The editors of *Monthly Review* remark:

What happens in a spiraling inflation is not prices trailing wages, but the other way around: wages struggling to keep up with prices . . . We are living in a period of monopoly capital, and . . . the practices of giant corporations are major factors when it comes to prices, profits, and capacity expansion . . . Why is this system so obviously failing to provide such a huge proportion of the world's population with an opportunity to earn a livelihood? . . . [The] first and foremost important thing to keep in mind is that capitalism is not, and never has been, a jobs-oriented economic system. The creation of jobs is a by-product of capital accumulation, the driving force of the entire system. Some historical situations are relatively favorable to the creation of jobs, others are not (Editors, *Monthly Review*, 1994: 1, 6, 7).

This demonstrates the essence of the camera obscura-effect. Modern, industrial poverty is the product of successful capitalist competition, not the traits of individuals, however collectively conceived.

The foregoing analysis suggests something more than the avoidance of victim blaming; it attempts to demonstrate that empirical analysis is fundamentally misplaced to the extent it ignores the dynamics of the class structure and those state policies geared toward assisting capital accumulation. Historically, regions of productive activity expend the accumulated and reproduced labor-power in their areas, a labor-power

whose expenditure produces both *value*—e.g. use and exchange value for the petite bourgeoisie and proletariat—and *surplus value*, or profits—which is the only use-value the capitalist class is interested in, in the long run. Abstracted as a relationship, the more power and resources either capital or labor has, the more claims on value either can make. If capital loses the upper hand too long there is no capitalism. So, structurally speaking, as long as capitalism as a system remains in place, the long term constant is capital's social domination.

Considered abstractly, capitalist success, or the extent to which the power of capital grows, then so does proletarianization and polarization of the classes. Structurally, value must be divided, and sociologically, this means established power generally has the advantage. Historically, workers, women, non-whites, and immigrants at times have been able to organize and demand the state to use its power to direct a greater remittance of socially produced value in their direction (Piven and Cloward, 1979). However, the historical trend and structural tendency is in favor of capital.

Today this has been translated into two dominant trends in a new transnational corporate agenda. The first is geared toward "cheapening the costs of production in order to stop and reverse falling profit rates and meet the claims on value of global production" (Ranney, 1993: 3). The 1984 International Monetary Fund Chair, Jacques de Larosiere, expressed the outlook of capital in the period:

Over the past four years (1980–83) . . . a clear pattern (has emerged) of substantial and progressive long term decline in rates of return to capital. There may be many reasons for this. But there is no doubt that an important contributing factor is to be found in the significant increase over the past 20 years or so in the share of income being absorbed by employees . . . This points to the need for a gradual reduction in the rate of increase in the real wages over the medium term if we are to restore adequate investment incentives (Ranney, 1994: 3; see citations therein).

Various policy initiatives were considered and subsequently enacted toward the goal of accruing to the capitalist class larger shares of value away from the working class—e.g. the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Asian/Pacific Economic Conference, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the World Trade Organization. As a result of this theft social standards of living for working classes have been gradually reduced in the last two decades, while the shares of value of the capitalist class have continued to grow (Pascale, 1995; Sklar, 1996, 1997, 1999; Collins, Leondar-Wright, and Sklar, 1999; Commentary—

*The Nation*, 2000; Brisco, 2000; Hahnel, 1998; *Africa News Service*, March 17, 2000).

The second trend in this agenda, made manifest by the North American Free Trade Agreement enacted in the early 1990's, is geared toward capital mobility. Increased capital mobility allows for easier capital transfers to areas of the globe with low costs of social reproduction, often the peripheral areas. This is equivalent to a good exchange rate for a tourist. If a corporation has the option of moving assets built up in core areas, like the upper middle-western United States, to peripheral areas where laborers will work for less and thus the cost of reproducing them as a working class is less, then that corporation will be likely to move given competitive markets and similar behaviors across and within industries. As more industries get on board, production on the treadmill moves to these geographical areas and all other similarly situated actors are compelled to act similarly.

In the capitalist mode of production, the socio-structural constant is creation of value, and thus wealth, by the many and its appropriation to the few. The speed, intensity, and geography change with other essential variables—e.g. differing configurations of class alliances and power, economic cycles, regional shifts of power, discovery of new pockets of resources. Today, capital's dominance and geography have evoked the widely repeated term, "globalization" (Yaghmaian, 1998; Burbach and Robinson, 1999; Goldblatt et al., 1997). The claim is that the basic economic actor today is the multinational corporation whose target market is no longer constrained within the borders of nation-states. Today states are increasingly losing their ability, actually signing it over, to control and to regulate the most powerful economic actors in their borders. Regional ruling classes have increasingly become international and class conscious, while institutionally functional states have remained local, pulled by the ideology of racial/ethnic nationalism heavily endorsed by working and middle-classes. What remains the same is that under capitalism the relation of humans to their productive activity is turned into an antagonistic relationship in which, through systematic commodity exchange, wealth flows away from its direct producers and filters to the top, leaving less and less for more and more. The human toll is poverty, social and geographical isolation, under-funded education, stigma, stereotype, hopelessness, dangerous drugs, apathy, racism, violence from the state and each other, and cynicism. The very structure of the economic system ensures that its success hinges on a corresponding deprivation of resources from a losing group of actors. To view the losing group as responsible for their relative deprivation is to reverse the causal relationship.

*Criminalization of the Population and the Professionalization of Policing in the Camera Obscura: Hobbes and The Sword of Damocles*

Typically the link between poverty and crime is posited as such that crime is viewed as something those in poverty turn to and thus, in such an obscurantist view, most Americans tend to think of an organized, professional police force as the first and last line of defense from—an implicit Hobbesian—anarchy. “Without police, society could not survive . . .”, the conventional thinking goes. To what extent does a professionally organized and armed police force represent a necessary evil for the preservation of society and general human well-being?

Common-sensically, police prevent the war of all against all that bourgeois discourse warns always threatens humanity with its out break were it not for the risk of punishment. Intellectual commonplace also tells us that professionally organized policing is justified under the obvious auspice that they help insure life to not be nasty, brutish, and short (Hobbes, 1651). Critical analysis of policing thus typically evokes fears of total social breakdown. It is as if the Sword of Damocles hangs above our heads and only policing and coercive social control prevent its fall.

Often unconsidered is not only whether or not society is surviving with them but also whether police actually assist social breakdown by enforcing class rule and the capitalist law of value. Policing is not *the* stopgap against criminal activity, but, nevertheless, a historically regular professionalized police force is emblematic of endemic criminality. But, who are the criminals?

From the viewpoint of established power relations it is those who are incarcerated. One would thus conclude the vast majority of criminals are mainly middle and working class sex-law offenders, violators of property law, “vagabonds”, gang members, thieves, repeat offenders, a few rapists and murderers, and a high representation of “juvenile delinquents” and “drug offenders”. Certainly most of our sociology books and criminology courses agree with this outlook.<sup>5</sup>

In today’s parlance, criminality boils down to “individual responsibility.” The facts that rates over time and space, within families, within schools, within locales, within and over classes, and within and over genders vary widely, can be problematic counter-factuals for reductionistic explanations. To the extent humans across societies share genetic make up they should share a set of characteristics indicative of basic general qualities of individual behaviors. Such an equality of outcome does not seem to be the case for drugs, sex, or crime in cross-cultural and/or historical perspective (Weil and Rosen, 1983; McKenna, 1992; Greenspan, 1983; Carrier, 1980; Streicker, 1993; Currie, 1985).

Whither, then, the criminal class in capitalism? If crime is not a reflex of individual transgression, then from where does crime originate? Crime clearly does play a function in capitalist society and that function is to bring more and more of the population under some sort of bureaucratic control, surveillance, and discipline (Stone, 1977; Chambliss, 1975; Quinney, 1977a-c; Haring, 1983).<sup>6</sup>

*Crime Re-considered: Historical Analysis*

An irony in the sociology of the capitalist-state is that Marx was not the first to observe that the state is basically the executive committee of the ruling class. The founders of capitalist-liberal-democratic theory all agreed that the first purpose for creating a government is to protect the property of the haves against the claims of the have nots, especially in the absence of a strong monarchy and its armies (Parenti, 1995; see chapter four). John Locke was of the opinion that, "The great and chief end . . . of Men's uniting into Commonwealths, and putting themselves under Government, is the Preservation of their Property." Adam Smith agreed, writing that, "The necessity of civil government grows up with the acquisition of valuable property", and, "Till there be property there can be no government, the very end of which is to secure wealth, and to defend the rich from the poor." Expressing bourgeois viewpoints in general, Thomas Hobbes argued that the state is created so that men might "live peaceable amongst themselves, and be protected against other men" (see: Parenti, 1995; Wolfe, 1973: 12).

Such principles were also reflected in elite opinion at the US Constitutional Convention, as future Supreme Court Chief Justice John Jay intoned, "The people who own the country ought to govern it." Elbridge Gerry was of the opinion that democracy is "the worst of all political evils." One reason for this general view of the state as reflecting and protecting class privilege against popular masses and democratic sentiment was expressed by Gouverneur Morris with his belief that, "The ignorant and dependent can be as little [as children] trusted with the public interest." And Roger Sherman translated this belief into a political philosophy commonly being expressed by elites at the time: "The people should have as little to do as may be about the Government" (Parenti, 1995).

Waxing both philosophically, politically, and programmatically, Alexander Hamilton perhaps summed up the delegates' viewpoint and agenda the best:

All communities divide themselves into the few and the many. The first are the rich and well-born, the other the mass of the people. The voice of the people has been said to be the voice of God; and however generally this maxim has been quoted and believed, it is not true in fact. The people are turbulent and changing; they seldom judge or determine right. Give therefore to the first class a distinct permanent share in the government . . . Can a democratic assembly who annually revolve in the mass of the people be supposed steadily to pursue the public good? Nothing but a permanent body can check the imprudence of democracy . . . (Zinn, 1995: 95).

Such views were translated into political doctrines. James Madison, in *Federalist Paper #10*, wrote that social disputes come from, “the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society . . . [An] extensive republic [will make it] more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength, and to act in unison with each other . . . The influence of factious leaders may kindle a flame within their particular States, but will be unable to spread a general conflagration through the other states.” Madison and/or Hamilton (authorship not always clear), in *Federalist Paper #63* argued that any bottom-up momentum of popular masses must be blunted and a federal state should have built-in structures to ensure this:

[A] well-constructed Senate [is] sometimes necessary as a defence to the people against their own temporary errors and delusions [because] there are particular moments in public affairs when the people, stimulated by some irregular passion, or some illicit advantage, or misled by artful misrepresentations of interested men, may call for measures which they themselves will afterwards be the most ready to lament and condemn . . . In these critical moments, how salutary will be the interference of some temperate and respectable body of citizens in order to check the misguided career, and to suspend the blow mediated by the people against themselves, until reason, justice, and truth can regain their authority over the public mind (Zinn, 1980: 96–97).

These principles found consequence in the eventual legal and violent basis of the nation-state. For example, in *The Constitution of the United States*—Article I, section 8 states that Congress has the power “to provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel invasions”, while *Article IV, section 5* stipulates that “The United States shall guarantee to every State in the Union a republican form of government, and shall protect each of them against

invasion; and on the application of the legislature, or the executive (when the legislature cannot be convened) against domestic violence” (Wolfe, 1973: 10–11). That is, as Wolfe concludes, the modern democratic use of state power is a series of relations of domination encoded in rationalized agreements and regulations on the legal use of bureaucratic impediments and direct repression by the state of its own citizens on behalf of capitalist institutional arrangements and against upward democratic thrusts.

The most repressively effective tool democratic states have used is violence (Parenti, 1995; Zinn, 1980; Wolfe, 1973; Chomsky, 1993; Tilly, 1990; Mann, 1999). The main effect of both the governing institutions and policing bureaucracies is to fracture organized attempts by populations and subjects in the citizenry to impede the flow of capital and/or resist, lessen, or reverse the relations of class-state domination they find themselves individually or collectively under. This is the use of an institutional structure in combination with state violence encoded into law: structure the state in order to make popular will ineffective, and reserve to the state monopoly rights on the choice of violent tactics in the class struggle. These doctrines should bring to mind Marx’s and Engels’ assertions in *The Communist Manifesto*: “The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.” Or, as Engels was to later argue:

Only one thing was wanting: an institution which not only secured the newly acquired riches of individuals against the communistic traditions of the gentile order, which not only sanctified the private property formerly so little valued, and declared this sanctification to be the highest purpose of all human society; but an institution which set the seal of general social recognition on each new method of acquiring property and thus amassing wealth at continually increased speed; an institution which perpetuated, not only this growing cleavage of society into classes, but also the right of the possessing class to exploit the non-possessing, and the rule of the former over the latter . . . And this institution came. The state was invented (Engels, 1942: 97).

From the vantage point of the spokespersons for capital, states were increasingly needed to manage property and market relations, to protect the rich from the market itself and from proletarians as a whole, when either of the two got out of hand. The rising capitalist class, as this list of representative intellectuals points out, could not get some functions accomplished themselves and needed a state to collect taxes, wage war, protect property, undermine worker syndicates and other democratic organizations, and defeat rebellions. Weber was correct: the

essence of the state is its monopoly on the use of legitimate violence in the enforcement of class-rule (democratic and egalitarian movements like the Levellers and Diggers *were* defeated).

Class societies have been consistently accompanied by a general monopoly of arms on behalf of ruling groups, though military apparatuses may operate somewhat independently and typically do not dominate advanced, industrial societies (Lenski, 1966), but nevertheless they do have key, crucial functions to play. So perhaps it was with justification that Marx could write:

The different momenta of primitive accumulation distribute themselves now, more or less in chronological order, particularly over Spain, Portugal, Holland, France, and England. In England at the end of 17th century, they arrive at a systematical combination, embracing the colonies, the national debt, the modern mode of taxation, and the protectionist system. But they all employ the power of the State, the concentrated and organised force of society, to hasten, hot-house fashion, the process of transformation of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode, and to shorten the transition. Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power (1867: 703).

Marx is pointing less to a sociology of the state and more toward the idea that states emerge through the use of controlled measures of violence and repression in the name of capital. The state moves from the legitimation and regulation of property relations to military colonialism to the criminalization of population to the professionalization of police violence.

### *The Historical Pre-suppositions of Criminalization*

If we ask, What are modern classes of criminals as criminals pre-supposed by historically? we find historical periods, and societies, without ruling classes, without property law, with accepted and widespread drug use and sexual behaviors deemed perverse today, without wide spread thievery, and without fear of arbitrary murder. A result of this vantage point is that the criminogenic class becomes the one that 1) criminalized activity and practices already in existence for a long time that were accepted as normal and non-criminogenic for many; and/or, 2) the class who forced society into new material relations that spawned behavior the state would eventually define as criminal. That is, state making is a form of organized crime and involves the criminalization of civilian life by such organizing of crime (Tilly, 1985; Chambliss, 1975; Quinney, 1977a-c; Center for Research on Criminal Justice, 1975).

Examples of such class structured practices include: dissolution of communal property (e.g. the tragedy of the commons and early closure laws); the institutionalization of slavery; excessive debt and penalty (thus the need for early prisons); transforming bartering into black-marketeering and begging; inventing squatting, homelessness, and vagabondage as crimes; taxes; and, undermining older sources of value creation and exchange by printing money and coinage, and outlawing prostitution, traditional medicines and midwifery. Practices and relations of old were legislated away, creating the uprooted and the criminal: common land holdings were dissolved; bartering was made impractical; communal living arrangements and extended families were pushed off land and into cities; oral traditions and extended communities broke apart; multi-trade skills and craft-guilds vanished, and a somewhat horizontal division of labor was made more vertical; socially integrative religious traditions eroded, for better or for worse. Additionally, non-bourgeois behaviors and medicines and drugs of choice were usurped for officially accepted knowledge of mind and body.

As marxists point out, the police monitor, mediate, and regulate the resulting conflict set up between and within upper, middle, and lower classes. Policing and prisons are there to clean up the aftermath and to make sure that the working class does not threaten property or, more importantly, capitalist property relations. Thus, we should keep in mind that the “lower classes are labeled criminal and the bourgeoisie is not because [the latter’s] control the means of production gives them control of the state and law enforcement as well.” As “capitalist societies industrialize the division between the social classes will grow and penal laws will increasingly have to be passed and enforced to maintain temporary stability by curtailing violent confrontations between social classes” because “defining certain people as criminal permits greater control of the proletariat” (Chambliss, 1975). And, as Haring argued: “Quite simply, the expense of private guards was socialized, and working class taxes were used to help defray the cost.” Thus, “it is fundamentally incorrect to attribute the development of the police institution to an observable change in patterns of crime” (Haring, 1983: 225–226).

The criminogenic class is the ruling class. Understood as an outcome of class warfare, “government building is that racket which has managed to establish control over the most concentrated means of coercion in an area and to command the acquiescence of most of the population to its use of those means throughout that area” (Tilly, 1984: 58). European ruling classes were fearful of the growth of a masterless work-

ing class they perceived as threatening to overwhelm the asserted political and moral basis of society—slave patrols being the first instance of professionally armed representatives of the capitalist state in the United States (Center for Research on Criminal Justice, 1975). In the nineteenth century, state administrators shifted the task of states from reactive to active repression. This shift was marked by a move from violent suppression of rebellion and resistance as they happened to active surveillance of the population and vigorous attempts to forestall incipient revolutionary spirit. These activities and reasons of state supplanted local and regional authorities and put functionaries in their place. Such seizures of power were often then followed by the creation of laws focused on securing new property relations (Moore, 1966; Skocpol, 1979; Tilly, 1975a–b, 1984). The state took a direct concern over controlling of the behaviors of masses of people. A “population” as a central focus of state policy and action was thus brought into being at this very time (Foucault, 1979).

The ruling classes mobilized states, used war opportunistically, engaged in bribery, hiring mercenary armies for invasion, intimidation, and have counted on simple market forces as methods of gaining increasing control of productive resources and claims on value (Chomsky, 1993; Wallerstein, 1979). Police have played the role mercenaries, enforcers, and Pinkertons in the protection of this form of class property and its rights (Boyer and Morais, 1955; Brecher, 1974; Wolfe, 1973). This was the experience in the core areas of the world-economy.

Many peripheral areas of the world-economy followed a coercive-intensive path to statehood after World War II. As colonial powers withdrew, military establishments were left in place, leaving relatively well-equipped and trained forces in control of civilian populations and in combat against insurgents rather than involved in interstate warfare. After de-colonization, the military, the church, and large corporations were the dominant organizations left within these territories operating most effectively. Subsequently and globally, the structural characteristics of the emerging states have converged over the last century or so in ways determined by the limits set by international domination of the core hegemony, with the adoption of one or another western model remaining virtually prerequisite for recognition by the inter-state community (Tilly, 1990: 195–200).

Thus, both the methods of expropriating populations and the imposition of policing the uprooted were and are developed in the periphery in ways and means that have been congruent with the core, but

also have been different in identifiable ways. Both core and peripheral areas of the world-economy have converged towards concrete state apparatuses whose over-riding concerns and functions are regulating natural resources and labor markets, unleashing capital constraints when advantageous, and tempering them in times of crisis (Wallerstein, 1979, 1982). Across societies, this is the structural constraint that has a determining effect on what quality of state policy is regular given the balance of power amongst class relations.

Clearly then, while police do not directly cause individual people to rob, cheat and steal, the social relations that bring them into being, and which they violently represent, do. Since the industrial state has used police as a method for filtering the poor to prison while ignoring the more socially harmful behavior of the capitalist class, a reversal of social concern occurs in actual policing practice, away from white collar crime and towards street crimes of the poor.

If loss of life, health, and finance without individual consent is the basis of law, then street crime certainly garners a disproportionate share of concern compared to the social damage of crime in corporate suites (Vold and Bernard, 1986; Sutherland, 1949; Reiman, 1979; Sutherland and Cressey, 1978; Sherrill, 1997; Hagan, and Parker, 1985; Coleman, 1995; Simon and Eitzen, 1990; Parenti, 1995). To the extent that class-hatred, materialist-values and racist-xenophobia are integrated into public discourse by schools, churches, and the media as ahistorical, natural and innate species traits that cannot be fought, the camera obscura's effect and power are activated. This explains why racist tough-on-crime themes are the stalwart of political campaigns, with police presented as the only stopgap against chaos.

This concern is not simply the product of delusion and mirage. A capitalist society, unlike other types of societies, must be well regulated and have a professionally well-trained corps of enforcers and overseers, ranging from managers, to scientists, to police and a National Guard, if the population is to be kept docile, disciplined, and useful (Braverman, 1974; Foucault, 1977; Wolfe, 1973). Further, the groups that have become the target for law enforcement most often (African Americans, Latinos, and other non-whites and working classes) at one time were peripheral to the expanding European economy, experiencing much less crime, poverty, and inequality and much more leisure time, social stability, and harmony before, rather than after, invasion by Europe's ruling classes. Upon invasion, if they survived, they became the object of labor exploitation, "Oriental" objects of science, or, in one memorable

phrasing, “the wretched of the earth”—first victimized, then imprisoned and hated (Cox, 1964; Said, 1978; Fanon, 1965).

However variable the contents of the names across geography, a constant form of social control has been the creation of ethnicities based upon a division of labor in one world-economy (Wallerstein, 1974, 1979). The range of the uprooted and the exploited has been impressively wide: working classes and their descendants from England, Ireland, Spain and East Europe forced into indentured servantry after attempts at enslavement failed; indigenous herdsmen and common folk from West Africa made into slaves; and the original inhabitants of the Caribbean, the Americas, and the Philippines who absorbed attempts at genocide, slavery and other forms of labor exploitation. Forced debt, kidnapping and enslavement, or murder were common destinies of those in the way of expansion of the world-economy, whether they be in Ireland, West Africa, the Carribean, South Africa, or Central/South America.

All of this was compounded by making criminal efforts to resist or to seek refuge, expressed historically by the actions of the state. In the United States this took the form of Alien and Sedition Acts, poll taxes, debtors’ prisons, Shay’s Rebellion, the Dred Scott decision, the Fugitive Slave Act, assassinations of labor leaders, bugging and bombing, covert operations, subverting dissent and resistance movements at home (COIN-TELPRO) and abroad (the CIA generally) and foreign intervention and warfare against societies ranging from Mexico to Angola, from Vietnam to Panama, from Guatemala to Russia.

In each situation the common variable is that each represented, at the time of intervention, one of three impediments to capital in terms of: 1. growth of specific industries, 2. growth of the system as a whole, 3. an alternative route to economic production that did not align itself with the rules set by international capitalist hegemons.<sup>7</sup>

The precedents of xenophobia and racism increase the likelihood of on-going institutionalization of privileges and obstacles (Wilson, 1987). Absent a strong class-based binding force, such as unionism, a strong working class press, and worker self-education, working classes tend toward division and atomism. They begin preying on each other. This is referred to as “crime” in our law and academic text books (Conklin, 1992; Coleman and Cressey, 1993; Adler, Mueller, and Laufer, 1995). The actions of such ruling class apparatuses usually are not the arena where the connections between poverty and crime investigated, another outcome of a discursive knowledge that is backwards.

*Synthesizing Historical and Structural Analyses of Poverty and Crime:  
Racist Policy, the War on Drugs and Ruling Class  
Criminalization of Civilian Life*

From 1980 to the mid-1990's, one-third of black men, one-eighth of Latino, and one-fifth of white men in their 20's, were in jail, on probation, or on parole. Whites made up 75 percent of drug users, blacks 13 percent. However, blacks represented 35 percent of arrests for drug possession, 55 percent of all convictions, 74 percent of all prison sentences, and when combined with Latinos, 90 percent of all those sentenced to state and federal prison for drug possession. Federally, drug offenders accounted for 16 percent of prisoners in 1970 with researchers predicting the number to reach 72 percent by around 1997. In 1994, with approximately between 12–14 percent of the population, blacks made up 44 percent of state and federal prisoners (Sklar, 1995). Given the transnational corporate agenda discussed above, the 1990's has translated into more jails, less welfare, less jobs, and less education. One in 155 US citizens are in jail, tripling in the last 20 years. After the 1995 Crime Bill, 150 new prisons were built and 171 older facilities were expanded. A Justice Policy Institute release of 1997 reported that \$926 million was spent on prisons in the same period that university construction dropped by \$954 million. (Alexander, 1998). Nevertheless, the US Justice Department has been reporting that serious and violent crime has been dropping consistently from the 1980's to the middle-late 1990's.

*Class War, Drugs, and Subjugated Knowledge*

Foucault declared that one purpose of research was the excavation of non-official and often unacknowledged knowledge or what he called subjugated knowledge. "By subjugated knowledge [Foucault meant] two things: on the one hand . . . the historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence of formal systematization. [Second, subjugated knowledge is] a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity" (Foucault, 1980a: 81–82).

The history of drug use and drug prohibition is a knowledge subjugated even from those who enforce such laws (Whitebread, 1995). Under modern state policy, a wide range of disparate substances, plants, medicines, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals have been targeted by states for prohibition, elimination, and/or extinction, and their users targeted and

hunted down for prosecution, incarcerated as “criminals”, and/or hospitalized for “treatment.” This is relatively new, as drugs themselves “never merited attention until certain users were seen as problems” (Miller, 1991: 103, and chapter four generally).

Take the United States around 1900. The dominant groups making up drug addicts were middle-class women and returning northern soldiers addicted to morphine from conventional medical treatments. Together they composed about 2% of the population, a higher rate than today. When cocaine was an exotic chemical “blessing” used in drinks such as tea or cola for pep and when marijuana was grown by the original colonists, statesmen and their descendants, these plants were not seen as dangerous in US society. At different times, their cultivation was even encouraged—e.g. colonial and WWII US administrations encouraged farmers to grow hemp. It was neither a public outcry over hands-on experience with drugs’ dangers, nor grass roots doctors organizing to inform the legislature of a looming public health menace, that led to any of these becoming illegal. When each became illegal there was little to no public knowledge of such action, nor much Congressional debate. Bills were rapidly pushed through with little understanding of their reason and purpose. By extension, many people never suspected that opiates or marijuana had for a long time been ingredients in regularly consumed popular remedies for many illnesses. For example, after the Marijuana Tax Act many physicians continued to prescribe medicines with hash extracts in them without knowing that this was simply concentrated THC, the active chemical in marijuana. It also took law enforcement officials time to discover this as well (Whitebread, 1995; Carlson, 1999; Musto, 1970, 1991).

This history of prohibition has been criminogenic—“There was a time when there was little or no connection between crime and drugs. In the nineteenth century, drugs such as opium and morphine were commonly used throughout society, and addiction was viewed as a personal problem. Although pitied, addicts generally were not rejected by society. Late in the 1800’s opium smoking was associated with the Chinese, and attempts to control this group as well as their behavior were to provide the justification for the first legislative controls” (Tieman, 1981).

As a consequence, the story of drug prohibition is a story of state sponsored racism, labor exploitation, and civilian militarization in service of the expansion of commodity chains and the search for new markets. When the Mormons came back from missions to Mexico with an a new, racially tinged vice, when Chinese began to compete for jobs

on the US West Coast, when another tactic was needed to keep African-Americans in check in the early 1900's, when hemp threatened the emerging interests of the petro-chemical industry in the same period, when Hispanics, blacks, and young people in the late 1960's started to demand the US stop imperialist warfare and extend democratic participation, each group was then associated in public and official discourse through propaganda, innuendo, education etc. with a particular drug and its presumed/claimed evils. This gave the state a chance to broaden its exercise of techniques of maintaining class domination by increasing repression of these groups and by creating then expanding a "war on drugs" (Whitebread, 1995; Miller, 1991; Herer, 1991).

In the early 1900's blacks were said to be smoking marijuana and then raping white women; white teenage were said to become homicidal after encountering the drug. But in the 1960's, when the young, women, blacks, workers demanded less militarism, more democracy, more social freedoms, the ending of racism, sexism, etc., their drugs of choice were again brought forward as societal threats but this time the public was told that marijuana can make smokers stupid and apathetic, and could thus contribute to exacerbating the "communist threat."

The result of prohibition and the War on Drugs is that a historically common human activity, and one that has never really been shown to be in and of itself extremely dangerous when above ground, has been made into a dangerous, criminal, and villainous activity of such social stigma no one hardly ever claims publicly to be a user of these drugs. However, states are often involved in the production, trade, and sale of more lethal drugs, from heroin and cocaine, to tobacco, alcohol, and prescription drugs. Criminalization has made users of opiates a problematic layer of society, addicts dependent on the black-market (itself criminogenic) where drug purity is always problematic thus often dangerous. The opposite was true of the drugs found in old-time pharmacies selling grandparents' and children's medicines. These drugs were of known purity and established dosages and those addicted often simply maintained their habit with regular visits to the druggist for their medicine.

The Drug War has other functions. It provides a method for the state to test how far into constitutional protections, such as legal guarantees against search and seizure, rights to speedy trials and a jury of peers, it can interfere. It entails higher levels of the police-state, public surveillance, and the increasing incarceration of the black urban proletariat and small time, non-violent drug dealers and possessors. A direct result of the overt war on drugs is the driving underground of drug

production and distribution where these activities could become geographically monopolized through the use of violence made all the more easy with the availability of black market guns.

The corresponding high prices of US street drugs keeps the CIA's drug running profitable and thus facilitates covert wars abroad, allowing the US government to pursue methods of waging unpopular military policies in the peripheral societies, from opium trading during the wars in Southeast Asia in the 1950's and 1960's, and Afghanistan in the 1980's, to cocaine importation during its invasion of Central America in the 1980's and 1990's (Blum, 1999). Each of these were responses by a militarized, imperialist government operating in a formal democracy, responses that were attempting to solve the problem of war and statecraft without losing political legitimacy (McCoy and Barsamian, 1990; McCoy, 1996a–b). Drug importation in the US has only increased with the escalating drug war most likely because of the fact that the US Government, with training and assistance from organized crime syndicates, is directly and/or indirectly responsible for the presence of a major portion of the cocaine and heroin entering the United States (McCoy, 1991; Honey, 1998; Kwitny, 1987). Drug trafficking has been a part of unofficial US foreign policy from Indochina, Malaysia and Thailand, to Vietnam, to Afghanistan, to Central America (as it has been with other countries, such as Japan when it flooded heroin into China during their WWII clashes).<sup>8</sup>

That is, to look to the US Government for means of ridding US streets of black market heroin and cocaine is to misunderstand who is responsible for flooding the country with such drugs—it is to get it backwards. That governments are compelled to act covertly is a measure of the effectiveness of public dissent and/or the expectation of it.<sup>9</sup> Drug running is a perfect solution to the problem of funding unpopular mercenary invasions in peripheral societies outside of public and congressional oversight:

The problem with America's failed chance at essentially reducing if not eliminating drugs as a problem was a contradiction between the needs of domestic policy and the national security state. After WWII the US became a global power, most importantly the executive agency known as the US Central Intelligence Agency when it was ultimately formed in 1948. The CIA, in order to conduct its campaign against communism, which as seen as an overweening evil that had to be stopped, was willing to ally with anybody and everybody that could provide, during what was seen as a critical period, some strength, some support in the global struggle against communism . . . In Europe and Asia the CIA allied themselves with major

drug brokers and organized crime syndicates. In sum, what they did was to create a mainline flow of narcotics from the Middle East through Europe to the US which dominated America's drug markets until the 1960's. At the same time, the CIA was forging alliances and protecting the traffickers in Europe, for reasons of intelligence. They also formed similar alliances in Asia—alliances which were actually deeper and much more profound and lasting impact on the Asian drug trade . . . But, ultimately, when you look at the source of supply and the politics that provided drugs to America in the post-war era, you come down to this contradiction between the weak drug policy and same kind of vague commitment to doing something about drugs versus a very high profile, very important effort to contain communism globally . . . The CIA in this era was dealing with governments, intelligence chiefs, warlords, gangsters, traffickers of all sorts—good character was not considered for the moment . . . When the Americans moved into Indochina after the French departed in 1955, we picked up the same tribes, the Hmong, the same politics of narcotics, the politics of heroin, that the French had established. By the 1960's we were operating, particularly the CIA, in collusion with the major traffickers exporting from the mountains not only to meet the consumption needs of Southeast Asia itself, but in the first instance America's combat forces fighting in Vietnam and ultimately the world market. Southeast Asia today . . . is the number one source of American heroin. That's our major source. So it's those very mountains of Burma, those very fields that were cleared and put to the poppy as a result of [the] Nationalist Chinese—CIA counterinsurgency intervention policy—that army that the CIA maintained there—that's supplying America's addicts today with illicit heroin.<sup>10</sup>

Declaring that harsh laws, more in number, with more police possessing expanded powers to investigate/interrogate and harass, longer prison sentences, and more money as needed is one outcome of the obscuring effect of official discourse. Both the prohibition on drugs that created a black market and the US's own involvement (citizen, industry, and government alike) in producing and importing cocaine and heroin bare the preponderance of responsibility for the creation of the dangerous types of drugs we have today: unpredictable purity, poverty inducing expense at the onset of habituation, unclean usage procedures, the growth of international black marketeers, the combination of guns and hard to produce drugs, the overpowering influence of massive amounts of wealth being generated, etc.

Drugs were not a problem until the government made them one by scapegoating users in efforts to assist class war. This effort at social control had the latent effect of creating a black market, a criminal class, drove up the price of drugs, created a stigma on users of certain drugs because of illegality, throwing a new batch of people into criminogen-

esis, and so on. Thus, the capitalist police-state is currently channeling urban-black-poor males, and other non-violent drug offenders, into federal and state prison via the drug war. This can be considered traditional labor exploitation but in a new form: now prisoner labor is located on assembly lines and not chain gangs, something related to globalization process and the repeal of the welfare state.

*The Sociological Explanation of the Camera Obscura: Three Mechanisms:  
Mechanism One—Mis-specification of Historical Data*

Despite problems in interpretation over time, Marx's work is wide enough to glean a general outline of how the camera obscura-effect works, even though he provided little to no systematic exposition on what this term means specifically nor on his method more generally, save a few scattered comments in letters and various introductions to larger works (Marx, 1846, 1867, 1973). As such, Marx's admonitions about the camera obscura-effect provide an empirical starting point for observation and research—e.g. “this phenomena arises . . . from their historical life-process” (Marx and Engels, 1846:36). Thus, he criticized those analysts who assumed the forms of behavior made possible by their own (recent) historical mode of production were representative of human nature in general (Marx, 1963: 69–151). He castigated, for example, Adam Smith and Ricardo . . .

. . . in whose imaginations this eighteenth century individual—the product on one side of the dissolution of the feudal forms of society, on the other side of the new forces of production developed since the sixteenth century—appears as an ideal, whose existence they project into the past. Not as a historic result but as history's point of departure. As the Natural Individual appropriate to their notion of human nature, not arising historically, but posited by nature. This illusion has been common to each new epoch to this day (Marx, 1973: 83).

Adam Smith's rational actor, his *Homo Economicus*, was a rather new historically conditioned form of human behavior, but was mistaken by him as the average, normal, typical human being across all time and space. Thus, the historical forms made possible by that society were interpreted as natural, and were treated as ahistorical, a tacit apologia for the status quo. No real science, in Marx's view, could be built upon such faulty reasoning (Marx, 1946).

And, this is the foundation of the camera obscura-effect. In this view, first, either (A) forms of social behavior that are historically recent are taken as eternal; or, (B) if conditions themselves are not exactly recent,

structural causes are overlooked in favor of an interpretation of the conditions themselves as being eternal. Situation (A) is typified by our modern, para-militarily trained state police forces (Parenti, 1997). This professionalization of surveillance and arrest by a civilian army is relatively recent (Stuntz, 1995), though the historical facts of feudal armies are commonly interpreted as proof that police have always been necessary.

Case (B) is typified by discourses on poverty in the US: the structural conditions of the generation of systematic poverty are interpreted as “the poor”, members of a timeless group that have always been with us. This leads to peculiar periodizations of history and even stranger common-sensical tropes. It is not uncommon to hear students speak of “cave men” or “princes and paupers”. Within such discourse the conclusion stands, “There has always been ‘the poor’, so what can you do?” Out of view is the form of appropriation of surplus-value under the capitalist system through the wage-system, the monopolization of resources, and the entire history of violence used and previous relations overturned in order to put these practices into place. While lack of essential needs is not recent in history, the ways and means of capitalist exploitation are obscured and distorted by focusing on just the collection of individuals who lack access to basic human needs. What tends to be obscured is how poverty in general is generated by the nature of the social relations in question and not by the structure of human nature.

### *Mechanism Two—The Modernistic Fallacy*

The second mechanism extends the first, easily following from its premise. This second mechanism uses concepts meant to describe recently developed social phenomena in its interpretation of historical events occurring at earlier levels of historical abstraction. Unaware of how recent a phenomena and/or its attendant concept is, we are likely to interpret previous history, either in our same mode of production but at a different era of its development—e.g. entrepreneurial, industrial, monopoly, transnational capitalism—or in a entirely different mode of production—e.g. band, horticultural, feudal societies—through this same analytical framework.

For example, instances of labor exploitation in ancient Rome and the antebellum South are both understood as “slavery,” but the differences between them are often not noted and thus the qualitatively divergent aspects of them are obscured—e.g. slavery in Rome was not lifelong, humans never became the status of non-human chattel, nor was it a rationalized and commodified industry. Equating them minimizes the

harshness of the US slave industry by relativizing it to Rome's version of the spoils of war. Additionally, failure to get the causal mechanisms in the right order forces one to make illogical and empirically unsupported assumptions/conclusions. For example, students are constantly surprised to learn that racial-ideology came after rather than before the institutionalization of European and American slavery (Fredrickson, 1981; Gould, 1981).

We must carefully consider whether or not a concept applies elegantly and coherently to a specific historical phenomena. The concept "poverty" actually refers a social condition marked by deprivation amidst plenty and property, usually within a money system. The usefulness of describing nomadic band societies as experiencing poverty, or being poor, is highly questionable:

Yet poverty is also a myth, a construct and the invention of a particular civilization. There may be as many poor and as many perceptions of poverty as there are human beings. The fantastic variety of cases entitling a person to be called poor in different cultures and languages is such that, all in all, everything and everyone under the sun could be labeled as poor, in one way or another . . . Global poverty is an entirely new and modern construct. The basic materials which have gone into the construct are essentially the economization of life and the forceful integration of vernacular societies into the world economy (Rahnema, 1992: 158, 161).

Poverty is produced when people in non-capitalist societies are forced out of pre-capitalist relations and into market relations. Does poverty exist without private property? Are feudal mercenaries or the various knighthoods simply primitive forms of the universal need for police? If so, who are the police in ancient Rome and is their legitimacy sociologically important? What would distinguish them from thugs or Pinkertons? Why see them as early police rather than early Mafia? What makes today's policing agencies either analytically or morally distinct from these traditional efforts at violently enforcing a particular type of class relation? From this vantage point, who would a criminologist actually study, working class violators of ruling class law or the ruling class and its methods of dominating and policing those in its reach?

*Mechanism Three—Forward Imposition of Modernity on History*

Marx further developed his camera-obscura analogy in *Capital (vol. I)* in his famous section on the fetishism of commodities, and it is here we find the final mechanism:

Man's reflections on the forms of social life, and consequently, also, his scientific analysis of those forms, take a course directly opposite to that of their actual historical development. He begins, post festum, with the results of the process of development ready to hand before him. The characters that stamp products as commodities, and whose establishment is a necessary preliminary to the circulation of commodities, have already acquired the stability of natural, self-understood forms of social life, before man seeks to decipher, not their historical character, for in his eyes they are immutable, but their meaning . . . The categories of bourgeois economy consist of such like forms. They are forms of thought expressing with social validity the conditions and relations of a definite, historically determined mode of production, viz. the production of commodities (Marx, 1867: 80).

This mechanism finishes the reversal effect of the camera obscura by imposing current, usually official, and dominant frameworks in a forward reading of history. First, one has taken a current and/or historically specific social form as an eternal fact of human nature. Next, this fact was then used as a sieve to filter out of history cases of the same. Next, according to topic, one picks an arbitrary point in the linear past and begins doing a forward history of the phenomena: "The poor have been with us for so long it predates history books . . .", or, "The need for society to have a state and police seems to be one that we've never gotten along without . . ." etc. The entire analysis of social structure is missed by such constructions of subject matter. For example, Durkheim's analyses in *The Division of Labor* and *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* make this exact mistake.<sup>11</sup>

Additionally, we also tend to do this to many other categories of supposed humans species traits made possible by modern society. Foucault's considerations about the categories of "sexuality" and "homosexuality" easily can be understood as arguing that these constructs could have only existed in modern, industrial, scientific society (Foucault 1978; Lofstrom 1997). The same is true of "race."

### *Conclusions and Lessons Learned*

Linear telling of history suffers from inverting the real relations and the real development of social phenomena and often does so in ways that reify social relations marked by unequal relations of power. To reify is to treat socially occurring phenomena *as if* they were the result of natural phenomena (Lukacs, 1968: 46–222). Thus, in the camera obscura-effect, the poor deserve their fate and the social structure is obscured and acquitted, the police are seen as our last, stop-gap insur-

ance on social order and safety, and not as a professionalized trained army enforcing a particular kind of class relation. Marx's comments on the camera obscura help us to learn to invert commonsense and make handy reference points in deciphering the mixed messages of capitalist society.

*Social Science Discourse and Questions of Power*

Democratic theory assumes that publics get what they ask for in the policies of their states since legislative bodies approximate their will through voting and subsequently office holders register the will of their constituents. Thus, in the commonsense-ideological vantage point, the state is a reflection of the majority of the population, a fanciful notion which Adam Smith, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton were much more in-line with Marxists on than the leading intellectuals of bourgeois political sociology (Dahl, 1956; Parsons and Shils, 1951). To the extent US society is democratic and representative in actual substance versus the extent to which it is dominated by class power is the extent to which perception and knowledge of it is distorted and reversed by the camera obscura-effect. Sociologists should be encouraged to try to think of how common explanations of social phenomena turn out unreasonable when applied to real historical situations and might actually be in a inverse relationship than commonly supposed. The warnings against both the camera obscura-effect and individualistic reductionism provide a critique of existing knowledge, a method for providing clues for further investigation, and suggest what may or may not be worthy leads for sociologists to follow.

The preceding discussion hopefully demonstrates how many of Marx's concepts are sociologically indispensable. Beyond simply avoiding victim-blaming, Marxist approaches help uncover essential properties of the social system, the central relations that characterize them, and the processes that are fundamental to the system's overall operation. Such an intellectual function articulates one of our key responsibilities as sociologists—since there are definite relations of social power, and given that these relations are expressed in our central concepts, sociologists and their knowledge are connected squarely within the power relations they study. We should think about this. As one commentator has remarked,

Sociologists, when they go to work, enter into the conceptually organized society they are investigating. They observe, analyze, explain, and examine

that world as if there were no problem in how it becomes observable to them. They move among the doings of organizations, governmental processes, and bureaucracies as people who are at home in that medium. The nature of the world itself, how it is known to them, the conditions of its existence, and their relation to it are not called into question. Their methods of observation and inquiry extend into it as procedures that are essentially of the same order as those that bring about the phenomena they are concerned with. Their perspectives and interests may differ, but the substance is the same. They work with facts and information that have been worked up from actualities and appear in the form of documents that are themselves the product of organizational processes, whether their own or those of some other agency. They fit that information back into a framework of entities and organizational processes which they take for granted as known, without asking how it is that they know them or by what social processes the actual events—what people do or utter—are construed as the phenomena known (Smith, 1990: 16–17).

This is an explicit warning that the power relations of capitalist society are not given by a pre-ordained natural order and, though sociologists find themselves working somewhere within this discursive apparatus, they need not allow themselves to be trapped within the conceptual frameworks that reflect the interests and perspectives of the dominant and most powerful groups benefitting from, and violently attempting to maintain, the current political-economic system.

#### Notes

1. For a unique and insightful treatment of *the Manifesto*, but one that tends towards speculative philosophy over sociological research see Marshall Berman, *All That's Solid Melts Into Air*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.

2. "By commodity chain we mean 'a network of labor and production processes whose end result is a finished commodity' . . . By tracing networks of these commodity chains, one can track the ongoing division and integration of labor processes and thus monitor the constant development and transformation of the world-economy's production system . . . The major direction of interzonal movements along the commodity chain is from a peripheral product to a core product. This is reflected in the widespread (and simplified) assumption that peripheral zones produce the raw material and core zones the industrial products . . . [with cyclical shifts]" See Terrence Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein's "Commodity Chains in the Capitalist World-Economy Prior to 1800" in *Commodity Chains and Global Capitalism* (G. Gereffi and M. Korzeniewicz, editors. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1994, pp. 17).

3. Standard Oil of New Jersey (Exxon), Texaco, and Royal Dutch/Shell had investments in Nazi Germany that increased leading up to and after Kristallnacht in November 1938. That year they sold more than \$34 million to the Nazis, and by 1939 were doing more business there than anywhere else in Europe, the Middle East, or Asia (Udin, 1996).

4. This is precisely the argument put forth by Francis Fukuyama's, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992). This is a deeply flawed book though widely embraced in bourgeois intellectual culture with its clearly serviceable conclusion that modern-state-capitalism most nicely fits up with human nature. This is also the general drift of E.O. Wilson's incredibly ethnocentric theories in *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* (New York: Knopf, 1998).

5. Ask yourself about the dominant institutions of modernity. Now, if we were to take the first permanent human settlements in the Middle East about 12,000 years ago as the marker for the first non-band, non-nomadic societies, subtract that from 2 million, the number of years basically accepted as the rough age of humans as a species, and divide the remainder by 2 million, then approximately 99.4 percent of human history has been confined to nomadic, communal bands. This is a crude estimate and under the actual percentage since much of the world remained band and nomadic after this time. Taking a look backwards from modernity, European feudalism's transition into capitalism (the era of the professionalized armed policing forces backed by bureaucratic states and rationalized law) can be marked symbolically at around the industrial and US revolutions, around 1776 or so. That is, 225 years ago, or 1,999,775 years after the date of the first humans. Thus, humans have had "crime" and the police for less than .0001125% (percent) their existence. This is important to remember and dramatically demonstrates the extent to which our assumptions are the product of taking recent forms of social behavior as eternal, ahistorical, and/or natural.

6. "In a capitalist society, prisons have several crucial functions for maintaining the class structure. Among the most important of these functions is that prisons must discipline those members of the working class who are unwilling to work under the terms in the 'free labor system.' Prisons must isolate from society those workers who are dissatisfied, disruptive, or who would rather steal than submit to the social and legal controls created by the ruling class. And once in prison, according to [the then] deputy director of the Michigan Department of Corrections, "They must be taught how to calm down and get to work. Even if we don't teach them a skill, we try to teach them discipline." See Jack Stone's "Prison Industries: An Elementary Form of Capitalist Production", in *Socialist Revolution*, (32: March-April 1977, pp. 115-116).

7. A comparison of the data and constructs in the literature amply demonstrates this point. See: Noam Chomsky, *Year 501: The Conquest Continues* (Boston: South End, 1993), Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Capitalist World-Economy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), and Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980).

8. Among the disclosures covered in Martha Honey's piece, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell: The CIA's Complicity with Drug Traffickers was Official Policy", in *In These Times* (May 17, 1998, pp. 11, 12-13): In 1989 Sen. John Kerry's (D-Mass) Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics and International Operations uncovered massive evidence of cocaine smuggling and money laundering by contra and CIA associates. Item: "Drug traffickers used the contra war and their ties to the contras as a cover for their criminal enterprises in Honduras and Costa Rica. Assistance from drug lords was crucial to the contras, and the traffickers in turn promoted and protected their operations by associating with the contra movement." Item: "Drug traffickers provided support to the contras and used the supply network of the contras. Contras knowingly received both financial and material assistance from drug traffickers." Item: "Drug traffickers contributed cash, weapons, planes, pilots, air supply services and other materials to the contras." Item: "In each case, one or another US government agency had information regarding these matters either while they were occurring, or immediately thereafter." Item: the CIA's own 149-page report, "The California Story" so narrowly defined the term "employees" as so it included only "career officials" and "not agents, assets, or contractors". With this latter group included, the CIA's own report concluded: 1) An October 22, 1982 cable from

CIA's Director of Operations stated, "There are indications of links between (a US religious organization) and two Nicaraguan counter-revolutionary groups . . . These links involve an exchange in (the US) of narcotics for arms."

9. This little bit of wisdom/rule of thumb I adopt from Chomsky, though I am afraid I cannot recall the specific reference.

10. Alfred McCoy interviewed by David Barsamian, at University of Wisconsin—Madison, 2/17/1990.

11. "This form of division of labor, characteristic of all societies, is, if we follow Marx's terminology, called the social division of labor. It is a derivative of the specific character of human work: 'An animal forms things in accordance with the standard and the need of the species to which it belongs, whilst man knows how to produce in accordance with the standard of every species'. The spider weaves, the bear fishes, the beaver builds dams and houses, but the human is simultaneously the weaver, the fisherman, builder, and a thousand other things combined in a manner which, because this takes place in, and is possible only through, society, soon compels a social division according to craft. Each individual of the human species cannot alone 'produce in accordance with the standard of every species' and invent standards unknown to any animal, but the species as a whole finds it possible to do this, in part through the social division of labor. Thus the social division of labor is apparently inherent in the species character of human labor as soon as it becomes social labor, that is, labor carried on in and through society . . . As against this general or social division of labor, there stands the division of labor in detail, the manufacturing division of labor. This is the breakdown of the processes involved in the making of the product into manifold operations performed by different workers . . . The practice of regarding the social and the detailed divisions of labor as a single continuum, a single abstract technical principle, is by far the greatest source of confusion in discussions of this subject.\* [\*But, in spite of the numerous analogies and links connecting them', Marx warned, 'division of labor in the interior of society, and that in the interior of a workshop, differ not only in degree, but also in kind.'] The division of labor in society is characteristic of all known societies; the division of labor in the workshop is the special product of capitalist society. The social division of labor divides society among occupations, each adequate to a branch of production; the detailed division of labor destroys occupations considered in this sense, and renders the worker inadequate to carry through any complete production process. In capitalism, the social division of labor is enforced chaotically and anarchically by the market, while the workshop division of labor is imposed by planning and control. Again in capitalism, the products of the social division of labor are exchanged as commodities, while the results of the operation of the detailed worker are not exchanged within the factory as within a marketplace, but are all owned by the same capital. While the social division of labor subdivides society, the detailed division of labor subdivides humans, and while the subdivision of society may enhance the individual and the species, the subdivision of the individual, when carried on without regard to human capabilities and needs, is a crime against the person and against humanity . . . [With an approach that equates these two at] this level of abstraction, obviously, nothing can be learned about the division of labor, except the banal and apologetic conclusion that being 'universal' each of its manifestations is probably inevitable. Needless to say, this is precisely the conclusion that bourgeois society prefers . . . It is for this reason that the popularity of Emile Durkheim's work, *The Division of Labor in Society*, has grown as its applicability to the modern world has dwindled. Durkheim adopts just such a level of abstraction in his approach: 'The only way to succeed in objectively appreciating the division of labor is to study it first in itself, entirely speculatively, to look for its use, and upon what it depends, and finally, to form as adequate a notion as possible about it.' He proceeds in this fashion, determinedly avoiding the specific social conditions under which the division of labor develops in our epoch, celebrating throughout his proposition that 'the ideal of human fraternity can be realized only in proportion to the progress of the division of labor', until in the

last tenth of his work he discovers the division of labor in the factories and offices of modern capitalism, and dubs them 'abnormal forms.'" Harry Braverman. *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974, pp. 71–74.

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