
Exploring the extent of noncapitalist economy in the 21st century

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Résumé

Postcapitalists such as Gibson-Graham (1996, 2008) argue that the first step in making capitalism *contingent* (i.e. an option amongst many instead of an inevitable force) is to make visible and palpable the many alternative modes practiced beside it. Such theoretical attempts at "produc[ing] a discourse of economic difference", however, have tended to lead to a loose grouping of non-capitalist practices within a pluralist experiential 'universe' (Gibson-Graham have termed this 'diverse economies'). What remains unclear is how a fragmented assembly of sectorial and place-based movements representing a 'universe' of identities, concerns and theories can converge to evict entrenched, globalized capitalist structures.

The search for commonalities between diverse noncapitalist practices hinges on a re-conceptualization of class itself, incorporating, among others, Bourdieu's broader notion of capital(s) (1986) and recent research into unorganized and 'everyday forms of resistance' (Scott, 2008; Ye et al 2016). I argue that all forms of noncapitalist labor and consumption rest on, or tend towards, a common class position and principle: autonomy. Wherever the capital relation is absent or limited (be it in peasant agriculture, household self-sufficiency, small-business districts, cooperative endeavors, or university-based research), we find individuals self-directing their energies, safeguarded by collectively-maintained rights, institutions and commons. Rather than flag-bearers of an elusive economic pluralism, they constitute a third class-in-itself alongside capital and proletariat – the *artisanat*.

The paper integrates theories and concepts used to understand noncapitalist/artisan labor in a variety of sectors. Different forms of *accumulation* established in PE (primitive, extra-economic, simple, expanded) are juxtaposed with their corresponding forms of *equilibration*. Examples of cross-sectorial organization and struggle along artisan class lines are discussed (e.g. Via Campesina's or StreetNet). The paper ends with an exploration of the factors that prevent alliance formation on a broader scale, taking as point of reference the cross-sectorial convergence of diverse proletarian movements between 1870 and 1930.

Mots-Clés: autonomy, peasantry, artisanat, self, direction, alternative economies, nested markets

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