A CONTINUITIES SYMPOSIUM

Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process Under Monopoly Capitalism

by **Michael Burawoy**
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From *Manufacturing Consent* to *Global Ethnography*: A Retrospective Examination

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This symposium revisits *Manufacturing Consent,* published at a politically charged moment when college campuses were still reeling from the aftermath of the Vietnam War. Burawoy's bold intentions were immediately signaled from the book jacket portraying the paradigmatic working class subject of Marxism in a grainy black and white photograph of a male machine operator whose outstretched arm fades into an emblematic red star set against a royal blue background. Twenty years later, the book remains a groundbreaking analysis of the capitalist factory. The text has offered scholars a veritable tool kit for understanding and studying the development of capitalism over time and across countries, and informed subsequent studies of the labor process using a theory sensitive to historical change. Both the prescribed length and the designated assignment limit the essays included here to a retrospective examination of a single text; Burawoy's larger corpus appears in reference (and in deference) to *Manufacturing Consent.* These essays evoke personal connections as well as critical engagements. Most of the contributors trace their intellectual biographies to Michael Burawoy as his former students at the University of California, Berkeley, and at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Our contributions make visible this lineage to illustrate the direct and indirect, intended and unintended, paths taken from the same original source. As a fitting conclusion, Michael pays an overdue debt to Donald Roy who first appeared in the preface of *Manufacturing Consent.* This finely painted portrait of engaged sociological practice may likewise inspire future generations to expand the boundaries and repertoires of fieldwork.

My introductory essay discusses the impact of *Manufacturing Consent* on sociological theory and methodology. The essay briefly references labor process debates in the United States—others in this volume address theoretical developments more thoroughly, before considering how *Manufacturing Consent* has influenced intellectual currents in Europe. Yet Burawoy's legacy does not rest solely on his theoretical contributions. Combining in-depth case study of everyday life from the Chicago School with the materialist tradition of western Marxism, *Manufacturing Consent* anticipated and helped to pioneer the ethnographic turn in Marxism. The second half of the essay reviews *Global Ethnography,* in which Burawoy and his collaborators historically ground the artful practice of ethnography in a postmodern world.

The author thanks Ulrich Jurgens, Hans-Georg Brose, and Paul Thompson whose personal reflections on Manufacturing Consent helped me to situate the book in discursive formations outside the United States.

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Labor Process Theory: From Braverman to Burawoy

Sparked by Braverman, Burawoy's labor process theory gained a wide audience of scholars, both in the United States and in Europe. In the United Kingdom, Paul Thompson's (1983 [Editors' note: References for all symposium essays begin on page 456.]) comprehensive book, *The Nature of Work*, introduced *Manufacturing Consent* to the many scholars who had taken up the study of the labor process. *Manufacturing Consent* informed a proliferation of case studies centering on the issues of control and subjectivity. Many, however, criticized Burawoy for neglecting the significance of resistance and marginalizing the influence of external factors such as culture, race, gender, and social institutions (school, media, and family) in conditioning the organization of the labor process (Sturdy, Knights, and Willmott 1997). From the mid-1980s onward, the debate on the labor process split in two main directions. One group of scholars, most notably Knights and Willmott, both independently and collaboratively, turned inward to examine the work of identity and identity work. The other group looked outward to broader social structures and processes, connecting the labor process to national and global levels (Smith and Thompson 1999). Among the most important sources, Piore and Sabel (1984) argued contra Braverman that flexible specialization fostered recombination of conception and execution, undermining the assumption of deskilling as a master trend.

German scholars, especially a group at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin, "started with Braverman as a kind of theoretical guru but then discovered Burawoy [whose] writings were quite central for the conceptualization of *arbeitspolitk* as well as *kontrolle*" (see Jurgens 1984). Jurgens, Malsch, and Dohse (1993), in *Breaking from Taylorism,* argued that there was no single way of organizing the labor process, and identified clashes among national methods, industrial relations traditions, and social settlements (Smith and Thompson 1999). Burawoy's labor process theory influenced German industrial sociological discourse more generally. By the mid-1980s, however, the mainstream of industrial sociology centered around new production concepts fashioned by Kern and Schumann in *Das Ende der Arbeitsteilung*. They identified the emergence of new professionals who combined a variety of different skills (Smith and Thompson 1999). Industrial sociological discourse ended up in a process of segmentation and differentiation of subdisciplines: gender studies of work science; and information (see Brose 1998 for a discussion of German debates).

French approaches examined labor process issues through two main theoretical lenses. Maurice, Sellier, and Silvestre (1986) integrated industrial relations and labor process into a societal effects school. They argued that social institutions mold capitalist social relations in distinctly national ways. The French Regulation approach situated the labor process in a dominant but shifting Fordist accumulation regime and mode of social regulation (Boyer 1988). The varieties of capitalism approach followed suit by theorizing embedded conceptions of capitalism (Crouch and Streeck 1997).

Manufacturing Consent continues to inspire studies of the labor process. In an article playfully entitled "Manufacturing Dissent? Burawoy in a Franco-Japanese Workshop," Jean-Pierre Durand and Paul Stewart (1998:158) refocus Burawoy's leitmotif of game playing to encompass conflict: "[W]e have sought to recapture the distinctiveness of the workplace as a site for the manufacture of relations which are concerned with more than employee consensus." Laurie Graham and I (1993) have developed this theme in a study of a Japanese transplant in the United States, where we found male and female workers separated by job classifications playing what we called sex-games, privileging gender-specific social interactions as drawn from and based on already defined gender relations. Feminist sociologists have utilized Burawoy's micropolitical perspective as a fruitful source for studying emotional labor (Pierce 1995) and masculinities and femininities reproduced in the factory (Milkman 1987; Kwan Lee 1998; Smith 1998), the office, and the service encounter (Leidner 1993). The significance of the book goes beyond theory per se. The extended case method has influenced many scholars who do not necessarily share Burawoy's theoretical project or specific set of substantive claims.

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The ethnographic turn in sociology

Manufacturing Consent, published two years after *Learning to Labor* by Paul Willis (1977), helped to usher in the ethnographic turn in sociology (see Vallas in this issue). Burawoy's study demonstrates, by example, how sociologists profit from an ethnographic approach using the extended case method. The extended case method promotes reconstruction of existing theory as points of departure. Microcontexts are regarded as settings in which a particular macroprinciple, such as commodification, rationalization, and male domination, reveals itself. Each case is viewed as an expression of the totality (Burawoy 1991). This differentiates the approach from other methods employed by microtheorists; most notably by Glaser and Strauss, who advocate theorizing emergent from the ground up. More than a decade elapsed before Burawoy, in collaboration with his students, would elaborate on the extended case method.

The most recent methodological foray, *Global Ethnography,* rethinks the meaning of the "field" to more fully unbound ethnography from a single time and place. The introductory essay poses a seeming paradox of how ethnography can be global when the methodology is intended for study of the local. Burawoy then takes readers on a dizzying tour of current theorists, ranging from Jameson, Castells, Harvey, and Giddens, in a search for an adequate theory of globalization. In this archeology of knowledge, he excavates shared themes instantiating globalization in terms of the recomposition of time and space through displacement, compression, distanciation, and dissolution. From these thematic shards Burawoy pieces together a theory of global ethnography. By grounding ethnography in local histories he seeks to explicate the global.

The introduction to *Global Ethnography* becomes a more intimate, as well as critical, engagement once Burawoy leaves the terrain of abstract social theory for the sites of concrete social practices from which global ethnography and Burawoy himself trace their historical roots. This genealogy treads old ground to uncover new insights on the sociology of the Chicago School and the less familiar social anthropology of the Manchester School. He plumbs the global sensibilities and limitations in this tour de force rendering of the dusty classics. Incisively etched local histories bring to life the arcane world of academic production from the 1920s through the present, transporting readers to Chicago, across the Atlantic to Manchester, and back to Chicago. After significant personnel changes, especially the retirement of Robert Park, we eavesdrop on an important confrontation between two major figures taking the Chicago School in opposite directions during the 1960s. Burawoy portrays Alvin Gouldner heroically rescuing and wresting sociology from Howard Becker's more narrow preoccupation with social control and labeling theory. Even Gouldner, however, cannot imagine sociological theory beyond the nation-state. Like any family drama, this one continues to play out in rival theories and approaches to microsociology today.

While most of the Chicago School "turned inward, retreating from local ethnography to even more confined institutional ethnography, anthropology is awakening to the challenges of decolonization . . . colonial anthropologies could not ignore the wider contexts of their fieldwork" (Burawoy 2000:15). At this historical conjuncture, Burawoy crosses the Atlantic to document the rise and significance of the Manchester School of Social Anthropology. This local history adds a valuable account of ethnographic developments spanning two continents bound by British colonialism. Most prominently, Max Gluckman lays the foundation of the extended case method, which his students diffuse as they fan out across Africa to conduct their fieldwork. One student who straddles both worlds, Bernard Magubane, raises a lone critical voice challenging Western assumptions of the Manchester School. Burawoy appreciates Magubane's importance to the development of the field, but fails to incorporate fully sensitivities to conceptualizing racialized identities in his study of Allied Corporation (see Seidman and Vallas in this issue).

In excavating the rarified world of the academy, Burawoy misses the gender and racial orders (regimes) influencing knowledge production (see Leidner, Pierce, and Salzinger in this issue). For example, a brief mention of Jane Addams' work on the south side of Chicago in the shadow of the prestigious university might have been an exploration of the feminist lineage in pragmatist thought and how the all-male elite club of university life skewed their vision. Another missed oppor-

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tunity is Burawoy's decision merely to mention Pierre Bourdieu as a "distant cousin of the Manchester School," without engaging with one of the more influential theorists of our time (for a comparison between Bourdieu and Burawoy, see Gottfried 1998).

These local histories set the stage for Burawoy's arrival in Chicago following his departure from the Copperbelt in Zambia. A serendipitous discovery of Donald Roy's dissertation launches Burawoy's comparative research into the politics of production (see Burawoy's essay in this issue). Whereas Roy's manuscript explicitly drives the comparison, *The Color of Class in the Copper Mines* (1972) implicitly informs the contrast to Allied (see Seidman). The story comes full circle when Burawoy joins the faculty at University of California, Berkeley where he finds fertile ground to develop his extended case method. Through the accretion of details from the field, we not only get a glimpse behind the ivory tower, but also we view a method in the making. Both *Ethnography Unbound* and *Global Ethnography* represent the next link in the genealogical chain originating in Chicago.

In *Global Ethnography,* Burawoy and his coauthors problematize the extra local and define a common context of the global. The case studies are arranged in terms of three major linked categories of global forces, connections, and imaginations. A useful summary introduces major themes in each section. Subsequent chapters begin with a novel methodological preface in which the ethnographer takes front stage in a kind of Brechtian gesture, but then retreats into the background assuming a more distant ethnographic voice. Joseph Blum appears most present in the text as he positions himself as a member of the group of workers in the San Francisco shipyards. His insider/outsider double vision allows him to shift perspectives and to lay bare the ethnographic process (see Carty 1996). The contributors might have practiced a more reflexive ethnography by purposefully revealing methodological mistakes and missteps, taking us down blind alleys and dead ends, and acknowledging gaps and ruptures that constitute life in the field. From this reflexive posture, the ethnographers might have asked themselves: How much of their *own* theorizing is the projection of insulated journeys, unspoken genealogies, self-referential worlds? Finally, the conditions of postmodernity, such as displacement, could have been applied to the ethnographer who confronts more fluid boundaries of the field.

The final chapter on grounding globalization is more a sketch than a fully drawn theory based on Stuart Hall's Gramscian-inspired theory of the Global Postmodern that calls forth diversity and scattered hegemonies. Burawoy's appropriation of the postmodern differs from the position taken by postmodern ethnographers who argue that difference can never be fully consumed, conquered, or experienced, and who posit the postmodern object of study as mobile and multiplely situated, making all ethnography comparative (Marcus 1994; also see Stacey 1996). Another fruitful direction not taken follows from social geographers unpacking of the global through its localization in terms of place (see Lee and Willis 1997). One exemplary study from this perspective is *Capital Culture* by Linda McDowell (1997) who strategically selects the City of London to explore gender embodiment and the globalizing labor process in financial services.

The case studies cover a lot of ground, ranging from welfare offices in Hungary (Lynn Haney), to homeless men on the streets of San Francisco (Teresa Gowan), to software developers in Ireland (Sean O'Riain), and transplanted nurses from Kerala, India to Central City, USA (Sheba George). The factory no longer occupies a paradigmatic site in these studies of the postmodern world, and class is not privileged over other categories of analysis. Subjectivity remains central, but now gender and race are viewed as mutually constitutive rather than external. The extended method unifies the case studies by Burawoy's students who otherwise pursue different lines of sociological inquiry.

Global Ethnography traverses new sites and examines new subjects of study. We have traveled a long way from Chicago where Michael Burawoy, the intrepid machine operator at the engine division of Allied Corporation, did not linger on methodological issues in either his presentation of self or his representation of field experiences (see Leidner). *Manufacturing Consent* along with *Global Ethnography* provide a historically sensitive rendering of changing methodological fashions and shifting social realities. Like a vintage wine, *Manufacturing Consent* has aged well and can be savored for many more years.

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Manufacturing Consent Reexamined

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I first read *Manufacturing Consent* early in my graduate school career, at a time when, as a novice sociologist (and one who'd been raised as a girl), I still had to psyche myself up to offer even tentative sociological claims in class or on paper. So to me one of the most stunning things about the book was the author's presentation of self. *Manufacturing Consent* has a lot of attitude and for the most part that attitude is cocksure. I remember being somewhat awed by the scope of its ambition, especially since the book is based on a dissertation, and by the confident, sometimes breezily dismissive air with which its young author swept aside whole subfields of sociology, recast the conclusions of others, and reoriented large swaths of Marxist scholarship. Burawoy's command of that scholarship was sure footed and his commitment to the Marxist framework proudly, even defiantly asserted. "[T]his is not an exercise in neo-Marxism, Marxist revisionism, or any other label social scientists may apply to the Marxism they may wish to take seriously," he wrote. "Rather, it is a Marxist study" (p. xii). Rereading the book recently, I still marveled at that damn-the-torpedoes attitude. True, it might have come more easily in those days before postmodern suspicion of "totalizing theory" and "master narratives" had cast doubt on the project of perfecting an explanatory scheme that could make sense of all history and contemporary social life and point the way forward. But the self-assured daring with which Burawoy carried off this analysis was remarkable even then, and remains so.

His presentation of self is rounded out a bit by the inclusion of some stories from the field. He chose not to include much ethnographic detail in the book (sadly, from my perspective) in order to focus on theoretical development (p. xiv), so we get relatively few glimpses of Burawoy in the roles of fieldworker and metal worker, but the few we do get can be quite comic in juxtaposition with the intrepid authorial voice. Burawoy is charmingly frank about his aptitude as a machine operator. He writes, for example, "No one was particularly surprised at my ineptitude, since I had never demonstrated any mechanical skill or understanding" (p. 70), and he notes that a fellow worker "consistently looked on me with contempt . . . because of my incompetence (I was terrified of this machine, since I nearly killed myself twice when I did not remove a gear quickly enough . . .)" (p. 143). This self-deprecation stands in amusing contrast to his assurance as a political actor while in the field. He begins a sentence, "When I confronted one of the leading officials of the union local with its timidity and cooperative spirit . . ." (p. 115). Elsewhere he writes, "I would talk [with a co-worker] about socialism, how capitalism was doomed, and how a depression was looming up" (p. 144). Burawoy addresses questions about the appropriate stance of the investigator head-on in later work. Here we can only assume that if he felt any methodological qualms about his own effect on the setting, they were trumped by his commitment to class struggle.

I certainly don't mean to imply that *Manufacturing Consent's* reputation rests on charm or bravado. What got people talking were Burawoy's very useful recasting of some crucial questions, his deft linking of different levels of analysis, and the originality and rigor of his arguments. The impact of *Manufacturing Consent* was greatly magnified by its relation to the writings of two other analysts of work, Donald Roy and Harry Braverman, and of course the arguments of the book are shaped by their findings and ideas. In a wonderful bit of serendipity, Burawoy found that he was working in the same plant Roy had documented in his own dissertation thirty years earlier. It's hard to imagine now what shape this study would have taken without the comparative focus and the challenge to account for changes over time that the coincidence provided. Contrasting shop floor life for workers at Geer Company and Allied Corporation pushed Burawoy to theorize the effects of the shift from competitive capitalism to monopoly capitalism on the labor process and on class struggle, and allowed him to see that the game of making out could have somewhat different consequences in different contexts. Moreover, the studies of Roy and

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others in the tradition of industrial sociology provided a foil for Burawoy as he turned around the question that had guided that group of researchers: Instead of asking why workers don't work harder, he took up the question posed by the Lynds, "Why do workers work as hard as they do?" The shift in question marked his departure from the assumptions of industrial sociology; his answer to the question set this book apart from other Marxist analyses, most particularly from Braverman's.

Braverman's *Labor and Monopoly Capital* was tremendously influential in refocusing attention on the labor process and especially on the means by which capitalists wrested control over the labor process from workers, expanding surplus value and undercutting workers' capacity to resist exploitation. His deskilling thesis provided an overarching framework for analyzing changes in work in many sectors and for understanding shifts in the class structure as a whole. Having been swept up by Bravermania myself as an undergraduate, I was no doubt less critical than many other readers, but that only intensified for me the impact of *Manufacturing Consent* as a response to some of the main weaknesses of *Labor and Monopoly Capital.* Braverman had intentionally limited his analysis to objective features of work under capitalism, leaving the impression that the lived experience of work was one of increasing misery as workers lost control over the labor process, but not theorizing subjectivity. In addition, he presented management as so successful in expropriating knowledge and power that, whatever workers' consciousness, class struggle played little role in shaping workplace outcomes.

In *Manufacturing Consent,* Burawoy made workers' subjectivity central to the analysis of how surplus value is both obscured and secured. And unlike other Marxist analyses of ideology, which focused on institutions beyond the workplace, his insisted that hegemonic control operated on the shop floor itself. Other researchers, especially labor historians, marshaled evidence of workers' will to resist managerial encroachments on their autonomy and intensification of their labor, but Burawoy showed how workers could come to consent to their own exploitation. In his analysis, working class unity was undermined and workers were habituated to capitalist relations of production through several mechanisms that operate at the point of production: an internal labor market, an institutionalized union, and, most famously, the game of making out. In all of these arenas, workers' capacity to exercise choice within narrow bounds generates consent to the overarching pattern of capitalist relations. Burawoy's reading of contemporary capitalism was no more optimistic than Braverman's about the prospects for successful class struggle among American workers, but at least his account of their thinking and behavior was more satisfying.

Braverman's magnum opus was published near the end of his life and stands as a summation of his years of craft labor and intellectual work. Although *Manufacturing Consent,* in contrast, came early in Burawoy's career, one of the most striking things about it is how thoroughly it displays the approach and addresses the concerns that have continued to occupy him as a theorist, researcher, and teacher. Many of the hallmarks of his sociology are here—the commitment to developing Marxist theory through studies of workers' lived experiences; the determination to link ethnographic studies of particular settings to the broadest social forces and historical developments; the focus on the balance of coercion and consent that limits struggle toward the kind of social change he continues to believe is possible and essential. This remarkable feature of the book—that it laid the groundwork for much future work—makes it a bit tricky to reexamine *Manufacturing Consent.* Burawoy beat us to it. He has himself spent much of his subsequent career reexamining many of the book's themes and questions and drawing on its case material for further comparative work, so he has already elaborated, amended, and extended the ideas he laid out. Following the development of his thinking over the years would take me well beyond the scope of this essay, yet pointing to limitations of the original formulations might seem a bit redundant, if not downright churlish. In the spirit of my assignment, though, I will try to respond to *Manufacturing Consent* on its own terms, as written.

A key question, as Burawoy recognized, is how much the analysis of work in the engine division at Allied Corporation tells us about "the capitalist labor process" writ large, and how well it applies to other workplaces. "No

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doubt," Burawoy wrote in the preface, "some will raise their eyebrows at the sweeping conclusions I draw from a single case study" (p. xiv). To preempt skeptics "steeped in the methodology of statistics, that is, of generalizing from a sample to a population," he raised the possibilities that "each part [of a totality] contains within it the essential principles of the whole" and that the analysis of one part of a totality "composed of mutually dependent parts" allows "generalization by extension from the part to the whole" (p. xv). But as one reads the book, it is often difficult to discern which parts of the analysis are intended as general statements about work under capitalism (or advanced capitalism or monopoly capitalism) and which apply to a more restricted range of workplaces (and which ones).

A central example is the game of making out, which is crucial to the argument about how consent is generated at the point of production in ways that undermine solidarity and hence the basis for class struggle. There are several points where Burawoy stated plainly that, of course, making out isn't a feature of all workplaces—obviously piecework isn't universal under capitalism—and that under other circumstances the divergence of workers' and managerial interests might well be more obvious, producing greater workplace conflict. Nonetheless, given how frequently the construction of consent on the shop floor appears as a crucial feature of the analysis, it seems odd to me that there is no discussion of how consent is generated under some other types of labor processes, or of the circumstances under which the balance of consent and coercion might vary, or of how that variation might explain different levels of class conflict. Given the absence of specification of when and where many of the arguments apply, it is easy to slide into the assumption that they are intended to apply quite generally to work under capitalism. Also, the frequent translation of concrete descriptions into the more abstract categories of Marxist analysis, and the subsequent statement of causal relations in terms of those abstract categories, makes that slide even harder to resist.

This lack of specificity contributes to the impression that one aspect of Marxism-without-a-prefix that Burawoy was hanging on to was unselfconsciousness about treating factory work as the paradigmatic site of capitalist labor. Although non-blue-collar work is virtually undiscussed in this book, it wasn't until the next book that the scope of analysis was clearly delimited to "factory regimes." The lack of either clarity about the bounds of the analysis or attention to a wider range of work is somewhat surprising given Braverman's extension of his framework to clerical and service work. Opening up the analysis of workers' subjectivity in fact allows us to see important divergences among types of work. For example, Jennifer Pierce's work and mine both show that subjectivity can't be so easily distinguished from labor power in all kinds of work as it is here. The restriction of attention to industrial work without comment is to me one of the two aspects of *Manufacturing Consent* that seems most dated now. The other one is the treatment of race and gender, which were cast as "external roles"—external, that is, to the workplace. Obviously analysis in these areas has since moved beyond role theory. Furthermore, while it would be foolish to argue that race and gender are constructed entirely "on the shop floor," discussions of the workplace as a site where race and gender are reproduced do call into question whether race and gender consciousness are simply imported into the workplace. Burawoy acknowledged that these "external factors" might affect which jobs one gets, but didn't comment further on that point (p. 146), not considering that the design of jobs and hence the relations in production might be affected by considerations of race or gender. While intent on demonstrating that consent is generated at the point of production, Burawoy didn't treat this workplace as a point of production of masculinity, despite the paucity of women, or as a point of production of white privilege, despite the evidence of racially discriminatory practices in the union. This part of the book seems old-fashioned and a bit strained, protesting too much that factors that don't fit so easily within the Marxist framework are of limited relevance.

In another way, though, *Manufacturing Consent* is a useful counterweight to some more recent scholarship on race, gender, and class struggles. If *Labor and Monopoly Capital* was frequently faulted for making it seem that capitalists always get their way, minimizing workers' capacity for resistance, analysis has since tipped rather far in the other direction—not in making it seem that exploited

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people always win, but in defining resistance more and more generously. We've had researchers search out and celebrate every possible indication of a spirit of resistance, whether or not that spirit even prompts action, let alone affects outcomes. *Manufacturing Consent* provides a bracing reminder of the importance of assessing outcomes, since resistance to exploitation is essential to progressive social change, but it hardly guarantees it. In this book, workers' pursuit of their own interests in resistance to managerial authority always seems to end up strengthening capital's hand, as struggles over the details of the piece-rates system or contract violations, for example, generate consent to the overall relations of production. In light of this analysis, Burawoy's stated belief in the possibility of an emancipated society where "there are no unintended consequences" (p. 94) seems quite a remarkable act of faith.

Manufacturing Consent didn't achieve all of its goals—for example, organizational theory hasn't retired gracefully from the field (see p. 7)—but it achieved a great deal. The application of Gramsci's work on hegemony to the workplace was a brilliant stroke; the analysis of workplace mechanisms that "constitut[e] workers as individuals rather than members of a class, coordinat[e] the interests of labor and capital, and . . . redistribut[e] conflict and competition" (p. 30) stands up very well indeed; and this study provided a basis for much further work by Burawoy himself, by some of his students, and by many others in the field who have built on, followed up, or indignantly challenged his ideas.

In one modestly stated part of the preface, Burawoy wrote, "If the conclusions I draw provoke readers to deny their validity, I shall be more than satisfied that my efforts have not been in vain" (p. xv). No doubt he was satisfied on that score, but of course he has many more reasons to be much more than satisfied. That we find *Manufacturing Consent* well worth revisiting more than twenty years later is evidence enough that his efforts were hardly in vain.

Burawoy's Legacy

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The 1979 publication of *Manufacturing Consent* was an important sociological event. Quite simply, the book reshaped the way sociologists study work. It drew on a diverse and rich set of theoretical traditions, accomplishing a synthesis that was remarkable for both its creativity and its audacity. Reading the book now, two decades after its first appearance, one is struck not only by its continuing vitality, but also by its deeply conflicted nature. This is a work that sought to break with reigning orthodoxies, yet was ultimately undone by its rigid adherence to classic Marxist doctrine. It is a deeply flawed masterpiece, as intriguing for its failure as for its success.

The book's appearance in many respects signaled a broader coming of age of Marxist thinking in the United States. Prior to the book's appearance, Marxist analysis of class, labor, and production remained tightly bound within narrow theoretical and methodological coordinates. Challenging the myth of American exceptionalism first propounded by the Wisconsin School of labor history, advocates of the "new labor history" and students of the labor process underscored the coercive foundations of capitalist production, while pointing toward the latent pools of radicalism that such coercion produced. The problem, Burawoy insisted, was that the Marxism on which these scholars relied was historically obsolete in that it remained umbilically tied to nineteenth-century conditions of production. With the advent of monopoly capitalism, Burawoy insisted, the capitalist enterprise had outgrown many of its earlier traits. No longer resting simply on "coercion" (for Burawoy, "market despotism"), contemporary capitalism drew its strength from its capacity to elicit workers' "consent" to the wage labor exchange. Drawing on the work of Gramsci, the human relations theorists, as well as French structuralists such as Althusser, Burawoy sought to reorient and to deepen the Marxist understandings that were dominant at that time. His argument, put simply, was that

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scholarship on the labor process should study more than the relations *of* production (the dominant concern of so much literature). Rather, it must also concern itself with social relations *in* production—the informal ensemble of action and obligation that workers establish on the shop floor.

This deceptively simple thesis had both substantive and methodological implications. In substantive terms, it opened up the terrain of workplace culture for politically nuanced analysis. Rather than taking for granted management's ability to control labor, as the human relations school had done, Burawoy inverted this approach, viewing managerial control as a problematic phenomenon that itself needed to be explained. The methodological impact of Burawoy's study was perhaps even more considerable, in that it showed how ethnographic research could be linked to macrostructurally oriented research on class dynamics. Along with Paul Willis' *Learning to Labour* (1977), Burawoy's book redirected a generation of Marxist scholars, inviting them to take the ethnographic turn. The surge of interest in critical ethnography may indeed be the book's greatest legacy (see Burawoy 1998).

One of the book's most provocative and original themes lay in its analysis of the game of "making out," around which the entirety of shop floor life revolved. This game was a cultural means whereby workers sought to cope with harsh and unforgiving conditions at work, in effect imbuing them with the elements of a game. In this way, workers were able to infuse meaning into jobs that had been emptied of any significance. Playing the game of making out was seductive: only by participating could a worker hope to gain acceptance and respect from his peers. Yet ironically, playing the game diverted workers from recognizing the sources of their malaise. By seeming to master their immediate circumstances, workers who succeeded in making out enjoyed an imaginary realm of freedom on the shop floor. In this way, workers' cultural productions invited them to acquiesce in their own exploitation. It was the "hegemonic organization of work," Burawoy concluded, that reproduced the coordinates of managerial control under monopoly capitalism.

This argument deftly synthesized theoretical influences that spanned different continents, stretching from Marx's own analysis of commodity fetishism to Gramsci's theory of hegemony and Althusser's "interpellation of the subject," all of which were brought into dialogue with American industrial sociology, from Mayo to Roy. The effect of this synthesis was to highlight the political and ideological significance of phenomena such as workplace games and rituals, while making it possible for scholars to address the role of human agency and the ongoing negotiation of managerial authority at work. It was here, however, that theoretical problems began to arise.

Manufacturing Consent suffered from two major limitations. The first was its tendency to reify the consensual aspects of workplace culture, as if managerial hegemony were inevitably and effortlessly reproduced. To be sure, there are moments in the book when the author viewed managerial control as a precarious and fragile state. He sometimes allowed that industrial games can subvert the "rules" on which managerial authority depends. Yet these arguments run counter to the book's essential thrust, which viewed relations in production as only ever precipitating an ideology of citizenship and individuality. This, it seems safe to suggest, was a sweeping generalization that portrayed factory life in far too one-dimensional a view. Industrial games, we now know, sometimes school workers in the value of defiance rather than consent (Halle 1984; Fantasia 1988; Vallas 1993). Indeed, in some workplaces, workers earn status in direct proportion to their ability to defy managerial control (Dudley 1994; cf. Morrill and Fine 1997). To say this is not to idealize worker resistance. Quite the contrary, as Paul Willis (1977) has shown, such resistance can have tragic consequences. The point is that cultural tendencies at work are complex and often contradictory constructs that resist depiction along a single, consensual dimension.

The second limitation of *Manufacturing Consent* lay in its tendency to privilege class over other, putatively exogenous sources of allegiance, such as gender or race. This habit has roots that reach far back into much of Marxist theory, which has traditionally insisted upon the primacy of production as a determinant of social and cultural life. This inclination was bolstered by the structuralist tendency to approach class in terms of "emp-

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ty places" whose effects are independent of the particular agents involved. Approaching the labor process in this way led Burawoy to assign little or no significance to what he derisively termed "imported consciousness"—a stance that not only banished gender from the analysis, but all but trivialized the role of racial distinctions at work. This is an odd position indeed for a man whose first work dealt with the reproduction of racialized work structures in Zambia.

The primacy of production thesis (and with it, the role of race) is a complex matter that cannot be addressed in the present context. Here it must suffice to say that Burawoy's work epitomized a tendency found in much if not all of the labor process literature: the habit of neglecting how racial distinctions condition (overdetermine) class relations. (Canvass the labor process literature and you find little or no attention to racial and ethnic boundaries at work.) Perhaps it is time to suggest, as Herbert Hill said of the new labor history, that the sociology of work has suffered from a "race problem" that can no longer go ignored (Hill 1988).

Precision is important here: Burawoy did not ignore racial matters. Rather, he saw their importance as mainly rhetorical, or as idiomatic variations on deeper, class themes. From this perspective, racial identities and affiliations, viewed as imported from outside the realm of production, appeared to have little purchase on workers' behaviors in relation to management.

This is a bold assertion that exemplifies the audacity found in much of Burawoy's work. Evaluating its validity is all the more difficult, given the paucity of work on racial distinctions amongst manual workers today. What scholarship does exist suggests, however, that the racial patterning of work behaviors is rather more pronounced than Burawoy allowed, and that the racialization of work persists in many industrial settings, differentially positioning white and black workers in relation to their employers, their unions, and the legal apparatus as well (Keating 2000; Vallas 2001). In cases I have studied in the South, white supervisors are often wary of disciplining African American workers, fearing accusations of discrimination. Whites respond with resentment toward blacks and implicitly exclude them from their informal groups and even formal local union networks. When blacks understandably look to legal or EEO mechanisms for self-defense, the tangle of racial distinctions is reproduced. These dynamics recall what E. C. Hughes (1946) called "the knitting of racial groups in industry" half a century ago. They cannot be dismissed as mere "imported consciousness."

The promise of Burawoy's book lay in its bold effort to rejuvenate the categories of Marxist analysis and to synthesize structure and agency as well. In the end, however, Burawoy's analysis undermined its own prospects for success. By reifying worker consent, the book banished resistance (and with it, hope for a refashioning of labor) from its theoretical horizon. Fastening single mindedly on class dynamics to the exclusion of race or the wider culture, the book ignored the embeddedness of class within social affiliations that transcend the world of production as such. Struggling to infuse a spirit of creativity into Marxist theory, Burawoy nonetheless failed to break with the latter's traditional theoretical coordinates, offering sweeping macrostructural generalizations in lieu of nuanced ethnographic interpretation. Perhaps that was necessary for the book's success. Had Burawoy tempered his analysis with a more measured analysis of workers' contradictory consciousness (to use Gramsci's concept), or acknowledged the limits of a purely class lens, his work might have lost at least much of its audience. But it would have been closer to the truth.

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Manufacturing Consent in the "New" Global Economy

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Since *Manufacturing Consent* was first published, one of the greatest changes in the United States is the impact of globalization on social and economic activities across the world. Global processes such as the structuring of labor markets, migration patterns, flows of capital and technology, and the interdependence of state systems have intensified in recent years, shaping the economy, demography, and culture of the United States and other countries. These processes reveal, in turn, the role capitalism as a world system and Western state systems play in shaping global and local markets, states, and economies.[1] As American Studies scholar George Lipsitz observes, these global processes "affect everything from the national origin of babies available for adoption to the ethnic identity of clerks in local convenience stores, from ownership of downtown skyscrapers to the price of drugs in the inner city . . . [Today] public policies respond to the preferences of the international bond market rather than popular desires, and international treaties and financial agreements impose fatal constraints on national efforts at antitrust regulation, environmental protection and fair labor practices" (Hartmann, Pierce, and Swartz forthcoming:6).

In light of these global processes, how might one examine the labor process and its workers today? First, and most obviously, the conditions of labor have changed. Unionized factory jobs have become less and less common: Private sector unionization has dropped from 40 percent of the labor force in the 1950s to 11 percent in the 1990s (Freeman 1994.) Factories have been downsized, have moved overseas, and in some industries, shut down altogether (Harrison and Bluestone 1988). Moreover, these jobs have not been replaced with similar kinds of employment. Instead, we have an expanding service sector with low wage and nonunionized jobs (Herzenberg, Alic, and Wial 1998). Temporary and contingent work arrangements without healthcare benefits have become a large source of employment for workers in the United States and across the world (Smith and Gottfried 1998; Tilly 1996). Today's new proletariat is more likely to be found in low-wage "white" collar jobs in restaurants or hotels such as waiters, receptionists, clerks, maids, or janitors. Consequently, job instability, low wages, and no benefits have become the new norm for America's working class.

Second, the influx of post-1965 immigrants has changed the composition of the working class in America today. Immigration from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America has increased the nation's nonwhite population significantly: 30 million Latinos and 10 million Asian Americans now live in this country and nearly one and a half million African Americans are recent immigrants from the Carribean (Del Pinal and Singer 1997; Martin and Midgely 1999). In cities such as Los Angeles, Miami, and San Antonio, more than one half the population includes American Indians, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos. And, in states such as California, Texas, and New Mexico demographers predict that racial and ethnic minorities will be the majority by 2025 (Pollard and O'Hare 1999). The predominantly white and male workers in Burawoy's factory have been economically restructured out of factories and, if they are among the fortunate few, into other jobs such as running their own small business (Milkman 1997). In contrast to the working class of 25 or 30 years ago, America's new proletariat is more likely to be a recent immigrant, working in a job at low wages with no union benefits, and is increasingly a woman of color with a family to support.

In addition to these changes, the "new" global economy has intensified the divisions between rich and poor. "The richest fifth of the world's population controls 85 percent of the globe's wealth, leaving little more than one percent for the poorest fifth" (Lipsitz

[1] There is tremendous debate about what constitutes "globalization" and whether it is, in fact, a "new" phenomenon. Hence, my use of quotes around the word new. My understanding of the term is influenced by Appadurai (1996) who argues that the effects of globalization have intensified in recent years. For one discussion of these debates, see Hirst and Thompson (1996).

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forthcoming:10). In the United States, the richest one percent of Americans alone own or control almost 40 percent of the nation's wealth, while the poorest 20 percent of Americans are estimated to "own" negative four percent of wealth (Hartmann, Pierce, and Swartz forthcoming). For working class Americans, such changes give renewed meaning to the phrase "working hard and making do" (Nelson and Smith 1999).

Burawoy is certainly not unaware of these vast and sweeping social and economic changes, and in his most recent and intriguing book *Global Ethnography,* he along with his graduate students examine the ways global forces have transformed national and transnational landscapes and imaginings of the state, labor, social movements, and subjectivities. In this way, he and his students have continued to construct and reconstruct theories that are sensitive to historical change. However, what is still missing in his most recent work, as it was in *Manufacturing Consent,* is an analysis of changing gender relations. Although many of his former students have productively utilized the extended case method to look at the changing and gendered face of immigration patterns (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994), the gendered regimes of factory work along the Mexican border (Salzinger 2000), "gender at work" in factories during World War II (Milkman 1987), and feminist social movements (Blum 1991; Klawiter 2000), Burawoy himself continues to avoid making such theoretical and empirical moves.

How might *Manufacturing Consent* look different if a feminist lens were applied to this work? The processes of global capitalism and the post-1965 immigration patterns in the United States compel us to rethink the ways the labor process has changed for the majority of working class Americans. Service jobs where many recent immigrants work would be more obvious sites for the studying the conditions of working class labor than factories in heavy industry. Furthermore, as recent feminist scholars and postcolonial theorists have observed, the conditions of labor are not only formed by class as Burawoy has argued, but by gender, race, and nation as well.

Using 1990s questions to interrogate a 1970s Marxist work reveals a number of questions for future study. First, as I argued in my own research, we must think about the ways the labor process is gendered (Pierce 1995). In other words, how does the feminization of particular jobs structure the labor process, and what meanings and identities are created in and through hegemonic understandings of masculinity? In addition, the racialization of recent immigrants as they enter this country calls for an analysis of racial formations in the labor process. What difference does it make, for example, that many recent immigrants are not "white?" In addition, immigrant status requires a rethinking of questions about work and possibilities for unionization with respect to citizenship. For instance, what rights do immigrants have if they are not American citizens? And finally, how do all these questions complicate the notion of consent? Burawoy's work has provided us with important theoretical tools and an important method, but it remains for the next generation of scholars, and perhaps Burawoy himself, to extend and reconstruct his theory of the labor process in light of these recent historical transformations.

Consent and Rational Choice

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Manufacturing Consent's deserved reputation as a classic centers on its insistence that workers willingly participate in their own exploitation and that this voluntarism is generated on the shop floor. Burawoy's insistence that consent is produced at the site of production and cannot be reduced to simple coercion nor to an oversocialized enactment of beliefs imported from the outside world provided a welcome corrective to prevailing views when the book was published. Yet unrecognized by many readers even today is that there are two com-

Thanks to Mark Gould, John Meyer, Suava Salameh, and Heidi Gottfried for extensive comments. Special thanks to Michael Burawoy, who taught me that to take an argument seriously entails challenging it and attempting to make it better—hopefully while having some fun in the process.

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peting images of consent contained within the book. Burawoy's avowed aim is to explain why workers work hard even when it is not in their interest to do so. He seeks to understand how the game of making out becomes "an end in itself"—a set of activities that goes beyond the pursuit of self-interest. Yet the image of consent that dominates the book is one in which workers work hard because it *is* in their interest to do so. Anticipating developments in microeconomics and game theory, Burawoy depicts a world in which consent emerges out of self-interested action in the context of a repeated game. Subjectivity here consists of nothing more than an attitude of rational calculation; the claim that the game of making out is an end in itself withers away. From today's vantage point it is clear that Burawoy does not transcend economic theory so much as he beats it to the punch. I will argue that the image of consent as strategically rational action is poorly suited to explaining the stable reproduction of order on the factory floor. To finish the project begun by Burawoy, we must understand the ways in which nonrational commitments are shaped and mediated by the relations in production.

Burawoy explicitly rejects an image of despotic capitalism in which workers' actions are motivated by narrow economic interest. He argues that hard work is created by participation in the shopfloor game of making out, which causes workers to "bust their asses" even when it is not in their immediate economic interest to do so. This image of consent parallels rational choice views of cooperation that emerged following *Manufacturing Consent*'s publication (Axelrod 1984; Coleman 1990).[1] In these accounts, cooperation emerges out of repeated interaction between employers and workers over a prolonged period. Such interaction is achieved through the creation of internal labor markets that bind workers to the firm by raising the cost of exit while promoting internal mobility (Williamson 1975). Once bound to the firm, workers' interests are transformed: Because their long term pay, promotion, and status are tied to performance within a specific firm, it is in their interest to work hard as a means of achieving these goals. There are two crucial points to note. First, consent is a form of rational action; the "real basis" for hard work derives from the fact that "it is strategically rational for workers to exert effort" (Burawoy and Wright 1990:257). Second, what initially appeared to be economically irrational activity on the shop floor is now understood as the rational pursuit of status, an endogenously produced preference. If workers do not prefer the highest paying jobs in the factory, it is because they prefer status over pay; if Burawoy and Donald Roy are sucked in to the game of making out despite their disdain for its rewards, it is because this is the only way to gain status on the shop floor. Making out becomes a rational vehicle for acquiring status—a preference that is produced endogenously by social relations.

That Burawoy anticipates these developments is no small feat. He produces a sophisticated argument explaining how, within limits, modern capitalism aligns the interests of capital and labor. Despite these achievements, his notion of consent remains problematic. He does not deliver on his stated intention of explaining how the game of making out becomes an end in itself. Instead, by endogenesizing preferences he shows that rational action goes beyond the narrow economic interest of increasing pay. More important, Burawoy remains unable to explain why workers accept the "rules of the game" in the first place.[2] He argues that playing the game automatically generates "consent to its rules and relations, presenting them as natural and inevitable" and casting alternatives as utopian (p. 93). Continuing acceptance rests on the extent to which these rules create conditions that allow workers to "make out." Even acceptance of the game's rules is rooted in rational self-interest, for if those rules undermine the conditions for realizing self-interest, they will be rejected. This characterization confuses acceptance of the rules of making out with acceptance of the broader rules regulating the relations of production. It is clear from Burawoy's account that acceptance of the rules governing the relations of production is dependent on a broader normative context. Workers accept disciplinary action, dismissal, and managerial authority only when they are exercised "fairly" by management (pp. 71, 131, 224). Fairness, in turn,

[1] This becomes particularly clear in Burawoy and Wright (1990), which extends the key arguments found in *Manufacturing Consent*.

[2] The remainder of this paragraph draws on comments provided by Mark Gould.

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derives from "equality of treatment" and the "impersonal rule of law" (pp. 114, 116), not simply from an assessment of whether management allows workers to realize their interests. The "taken-for-grantedness" of shopfloor relations thus rests in large part on a normative commitment to rules governing the relations of production. Moreover, as I will argue, even the specific rules governing making out rest on normative commitments. They are neither automatic nor can they be conceptualized in terms of self-interest.

To reconceptualize the game as an end in itself and to understand why workers consent to its rules, we must understand the ways in which nonrational commitments are mediated by the relations in production. Burawoy turns to a rational choice image of consent partly because he wishes to show that rationality is shaped and given substance by the material relations in production. In doing so, he seeks to reject an oversocialized conception of action in which workers enact nonrational values and beliefs imported into the workplace from the outside world. Yet he fails to consider the idea that nonrational commitments, though created outside the workplace, are mediated and given substance at the site of production, just as rationality is. Nonrational commitments are not simply an oversocialized enactment of existing values. Rather, like rationality itself, they are molded at the site of production, and there is room for struggle and spontaneity in their deployment. There are hints in *Manufacturing Consent* that point the way toward such an analysis. One can be found in Burawoy's insight—remarkably undeveloped to this day—that organization theory's emphasis on the reduction of uncertainty is misplaced (Weber 1946; March and Simon 1958). Arguing against the contention that uncertainty reduction leads to predictability and stability of outcomes, Burawoy (p. 87) contends that it is desirable to retain uncertainty in the labor process. To eliminate uncertainty altogether is counterproductive—it creates boredom and rebellion, and the game of making out loses its ability to absorb attention. It is discretion in choosing that generates consent, and workers' attitude toward their work must therefore be characterized by a zone of interest rather than indifference (*cf.* Barnard 1975).

Burawoy contends that this need for discretion is rooted in human nature: It derives from an "*instinctive* compulsion of workers to collectively control the labor process" (p. 237; emphasis mine). This is nonsense. The need for discretion is a deeply social and normative commitment—one that is given specific substance by the relations in production. Meyer (1987) and his colleagues show that there is a whole complex of commitments centered around a diffuse belief that individuals have a right to such a zone of freedom.[3] Burawoy's work suggests that such commitment takes on specific forms largely through the capitalist labor process. Discretion in choosing generates consent precisely because it gives substance to a normative commitment to individualism. A zone of interest allows workers to define themselves as individuals who are free to consent to their own exploitation. It is thus a normative commitment underlying Althusser's claim that, "[t]he individual is interpellated as a free subject in order that he shall freely accept his subjection, i.e., in order that he shall make the gestures and actions of his subjection 'all by himself.'" Without this nonrational commitment, the game of making out would never be born, much less grip workers' attention. This belief is imported to the workplace from the outside world, but only in a diffuse form that, without further specification, has little impact. It is through the spontaneous activities and struggles on the shop floor that nonrational commitments are given substance and achieve their binding power, thereby leading the game of making out to become an end in itself.

The comments outlined above suggest that *Manufacturing Consent* still has a great deal to teach us. The arguments Burawoy puts forth are still central to important debates in both organization theory and Marxism. To extend the analysis begun by Burawoy in *Manufacturing Consent,* we must specify the ways in which nonrational commitments and workers' identities are shaped and given substance by the material relations in production.

[3] Meyer argues that such beliefs are often "decoupled" from actual practice. I would argue that when and insofar as this is the case, workers possess an ideological weapon: by pointing out that capital does not honor their individual rights, they can threaten to delegitimize the capitalist system. Through such struggles, they can often carve out a zone of discretion.

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The Other Michael Burawoy

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Manufacturing Consent is routinely described as Michael Burawoy's first book, a claim that regularly confuses me. There are, apparently, two completely different sociologists with exactly the same name: One whose early work examined racialized, coercive capitalism in postcolonial Africa, and another whose first book explains why American workers happily exploit themselves. This confusion can have disastrous consequences, and I speak from personal experience: I went to Berkeley in the early 1980s expecting to meet the Burawoy who wrote about colonial despotism, about racist colonial states, vicious mining magnates, and exploited African miners; instead, I confronted the Burawoy whose goal was to explain the absence of conflict on Chicago's factory floors. No wonder I had such a hard time in graduate school! Obviously, this was not the Michael Burawoy who worked in Zambia in the early 1970s; the Berkeley Burawoy must be that other Michael's evil twin, studying the labor process in an effort to explain capitalism's persistence, rather than its demise.

I think it is important to set *Manufacturing Consent* against the backdrop of Burawoy's earlier work, which is far less well known among American sociologists; doing so gives greater depth to the insights he gleaned in Chicago and underscores his vision of capitalism's global dynamics. Michael's research in Africa came about almost by serendipity: After he graduated in mathematics from Cambridge, he found himself working in the personnel office of a South African mining company in northern Zambia, a few years after Zambian independence. Knowing Michael now, I find it hard to imagine how he managed to "pass" in the racially stratified mining communities of postcolonial Zambia; I'm sure he found it easier to fit into the assembly line in Chicago's Allied factory, despite the British accent. (Of course, Michael compensated for the strain he must have felt in the copper mines by causing havoc back at the University of Zambia, where he registered for a master's in sociology and participated energetically in campus politics.)

Burawoy's work on the dynamics of colonial capitalism, based on his years in southern Africa, is really quite remarkable; his book and articles remain important interventions in debates far from the world of *Manufacturing Consent. The Color of Class* describes a pattern of racialized, coercive capitalism, where mining companies actively reorganized production to appear to promote blacks while avoiding any situation where a black supervisor might give orders to a white miner. In his articles on southern Africa's migrant labor system—pieces that are still classic texts in discussions of migration and work—Burawoy examines the collaboration between colonial states and the mining companies through the colonial era, where mining's demands for expendable labor coincided with state efforts to avoid a permanent black urban proletariat. The fiction that migrants were temporary sojourners allowed companies to pay lower wages, since rural families could support themselves through subsistence agriculture; meanwhile, by insisting that black miners return to rural areas when they finished their contracts, colonial states in southern Africa could avoid paying for the schooling, healthcare, and pensions that might have been required if African workers' families moved to town. And in several essays on how colonial states and companies prevented cooperation between white unionists and black workers, Burawoy forcefully demonstrates states' key roles in shaping racial dynamics at the workplace, in creating authoritarian labor processes, and in reinforcing rigid racial segregation.

Obviously, it is a long way from that world of brutal colonial capitalism to the shop floor at Allied: This backdrop may explain the slightly surprised tone of *Manufacturing Consent,* when Burawoy found himself and his coworkers happily "making out," and internal labor markets offered promotion as an alternative to challenging management prerogatives. While the comparison with Roy's study of the same factory thirty years earlier drives the text, I believe (and Michael himself suggests in his appendix) that *Manufacturing Consent* embodies a different, more global

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comparison, between the savage character of racial postcolonial capitalism and the more consensual capitalism he encountered in Chicago. Expecting to experience coercion and exploitation, Burawoy discovered the factory equivalent of social democracy, where labor processes were regulated, organized, and controlled. Instead of workers fighting an undemocratic state and struggling against a despotic management, workers competed with each other to produce more; instead of racial dynamics shaping workplace relations, workplace alliances formed across racial divides—a claim that may be the least persuasive part of *Manufacturing Consent,* but which makes sense when placed in contrast to southern Africa's strict racial hierarchies.

Based on this contrast, Burawoy argues that capitalism's persistence stems from the "organization of consent"—not only in society at large but within the workplace itself, through institutions that constitute an "internal state" that organizes the labor process and relations around it. Until *Manufacturing Consent,* western Marxism had focused on theories of the state to understand capitalism's surprising longevity; in his focus on the labor process, Burawoy added a new dimension. In direct contrast to the "company state" of the Zambian copper mines—where mining companies were granted despotic control over miners' lives by a colonial state too weak to control the mining companies and too afraid of the African peasantry to allow unfettered workers' organizations—the internal factory state at Allied "imposed constraints on managerial discretion, institutionalized the granting of concessions, and . . . concretely coordinated the interests of management and worker, capitalist and laborer; constituted workers as industrial citizens with rights and obligations; and fostered competition, individualism, and mobility"; all the while, "preventing struggles from reaching beyond the enterprise [or] coalescing in struggles aimed at the global state" (p. 198).

For many of us, *Manufacturing Consent* raised a new series of questions about the construction of politics at work or, as Michael would probably put it, about the politics of production. In my own work, I looked at how South African and Brazilian state policies actively disorganized consent, creating the basis for oppositional labor movements on shop floors and in working class communities. Both labor movements cooperated brilliantly, becoming increasingly militant and, happily, surviving long enough to propel democratic governments into power. The title of my first book, *Manufacturing Militance,* was meant to underscore a contrast between the authoritarian character of semiperipheral capitalism and the more organized, regulated workplace relations described in Burawoy's *Manufacturing Consent.*

But, in the last five years, a few things have changed. Not only has Burawoy turned to study Eastern European socialism and its aftermath, but South Africa and Brazil have both moved into a very different phase. Elected governments have replaced authoritarian regimes, and both economies have been hammered by the multiple processes often lumped together as globalization. In both countries, the social-democratic project championed by labor movements has shattered on the international reality of the 1990s: Democratically elected states have systematically enshrined private investment and free trade as the engine of economic growth. In both cases, democracy coincided with privatization, restructuring, and the opening up of national economies—undermining, quite literally in the case of South Africa's mining unions, the main stronghold of organized labor.

Today, labor movements face new challenges, and this is where *Manufacturing Consent* comes back to haunt sociologists who work in the postcolonial world. Ironically, democracy outside the factory has undermined key bases of solidarity inside the factory. South African state policies no longer enforce racial hierarchy on the shop floor, and the Brazilian government no longer controls wages; today, skilled and semiskilled workers may not identify so clearly with the unemployed, the poor, or their less-skilled neighbors as they did when they all faced an authoritarian, labor-repressive state. Unionists face new and difficult dilemmas. Should unions represent the interests of employed workers while abandoning the concerns of the unemployed—even when the unemployed are themselves former union members who have lost jobs through economic restructuring? Or should unionists restrain strikes over factory-based issues—wages, working conditions, new labor legislation—in order to attract more foreign investment, to create new

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jobs and, hopefully, more sustainable economic growth?

The character of postcolonial labor processes may be shifting, incorporating a core of skilled, relatively privileged workers in a far more consensual factory regime, while further marginalizing workers who are more rural, less educated, or older—workers who may have been union stalwarts only ten years before. In both Brazil and South Africa, unionists, government officials, and forward-looking industrialists are beginning to move toward *Manufacturing Consent*, creating internal labor markets, factory-based training programs, and wage differentials based on productivity. Racial divisions persist, but discrimination is less overt and illegal. Lacking any alternative vision, unionists may find themselves narrowing their gaze to individual workers, preparing them to compete better for jobs in a savage labor market, rather than trying to build a broader working class identity.

Once, the argument contained in *Manufacturing Consent* seemed to underscore the difference between the authoritarian, racialized labor processes of postcolonial society, and the more regulated relationships that Burawoy described at Allied. Today, however, that argument may well offer a new way to understand how shop floor relations may be redesigned in the context of neoliberal democratization, not only in South Africa and Brazil, but perhaps also in places like South Korea, India, Mexico, or the Philippines. Perhaps we are watching in process—a process interrupted by tension and conflict, a process whose outcome remains indeterminate—the emergence of the internal factory state that Burawoy described in Chicago twenty years ago. As postcolonial capitalism shifts into a new phase, reorganizing capitalist relations on the factory floor may well lead sociologists around the world to rediscover *Manufacturing Consent*—and to realize, as I have been forced to do, that there is really only one Michael Burawoy, after all.

Manufacturing the Ungendered Subject

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Manufacturing Consent is a remarkable narrative, pulling the reader along through successive layers of puzzle and response. The final product produces the satisfying feeling of inevitability that one gets in the classic modern novels. Burawoy is fundamentally interested in the way in which a particular structure of production evokes an equally particular subjectivity, in how, for instance, workers are constituted as "industrial citizens" in the mundane practices of a single arena of production (p. 119). Following the logic of this basic view of the relationship of structure to subjectivity, he argues that monopoly capitalism is based on the production of "consent" on the shop floor and delineates the local processes through which workers become complicit in their own subordination. By book's end, he lays bare the chain of structures through which capitalism impinges and depends on shop floor experience.

The self-evident quality of these connections between capitalism and emergent shop floor subjectivities is something of a sleight of hand however. A single set of assumptions underlies his understanding of both elements, thus accounting for their perfect fit. Burawoy's categories provide him few tools with which to recognize power structures or subjectivities, other than those related to class, operating on the shop floor. Identity categories such as gender, race, or nationality are absent from both sides of the equation.[1] As a consequence, he offers an impoverished view of shop floor subjectivity and only a partial explanation of the production of shop floor consent under capitalism.

[1] In the book's appendix on Zambia, Burawoy provides a far more compelling narrative of racialized shop floor domination than he does in the body of the manuscript, precisely because here he understands race to be part of productive structure, rather than a mere addition to it.

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The strength of Burawoy's interpretation lies in the link he makes between subjective experience and social relations. In this analysis, subjectivity is understood, not as a fixed "imported consciousness" (p. 156), but as emergent within the practices of the immediate structure of production. Gender could be accommodated within such an analytic framework if it were understood as an integral part of the social relations of production.[2] However, in Burawoy's complete, theoretically impelled identification of social relations with class, gender becomes extraneous.[3] It is not only Burawoy's notion of structure that excludes gender. Despite the causal logic of the argument, in which social relations evoke subjectivity and not vice versa, the argument is based on a deeper set of assumptions about human subjectivity as well. Located squarely within a Marxist framework, subjectivity is understood as the distinctively human desire to creatively transform nature.[4] Race (and implicitly gender) affect consciousness, but they are not at the root of what motivates human behavior. Given this definition, Burawoy takes for granted that subjectivity in operation on the shop floor is that of the would-be creator, the worker. And this in turn has repercussions for his notion of social relations, as effective labor control can only operate by definition when workers' "true subjectivities" are addressed. Hence, insofar as these practices are effective, they must refer to class identities. Within this framework, in which social relations and subjectivities are so closely bound, the impermeability of each of the pair reinforces that of the other.

This internally reinforcing cycle is further sustained by Burawoy's explicit focus on practices rather than the meanings subjects make of them.[5] As an ethnographer, Burawoy insists that we must investigate actions not words, and that insofar as workers produce profits, the meanings they make of the process are not fundamentally of analytic interest. This is evident in his primary focus on "consent," which he takes care to distinguish from "legitimacy." Consent deals with "the organization of activities," he argues, whereas legitimacy refers to merely "a subjective state of mind" (p. 27). Insofar as workers operate within the "rules of the game" as established by capitalists, they are interpellated and come to local subjectivity within their bosses' terms. Nothing they say, no extraneous meanings, can change this fact.

This focus on shop floor practices has clear payoffs. It enables him to separate bravado from resistance. It enables him to distinguish trickery for survival's sake from working to change a larger system. Making these two distinctions enables Burawoy to explicate industrial workers' deep implication in their own shop floor subjugation from the perspective of the shop floor and from within the context of advanced capitalism. However, by focusing on actions, rather than on what workers make of them, he once again reads the ethnographic data through a theoretical lens that would make countervailing evidence hard to catch.

Despite Burawoy's protestations, the meanings embedded in labor control practices are crucial to his analysis. He takes as a theoretical given that workers are interpellated primarily as "creators" and not as "men" (see Knights and Willmott 1989). Thus, although he ostensibly focuses on practices alone and ignores meanings, he actually focuses on both. The difference is that practices are investigated, whereas meanings are established by theoretical fiat. This analytical structure removes any tools he might use to distinguish which meanings and subjectivities are at play—or not—in the structure he investigates. Thus, his refusal to explicitly investigate meanings makes it difficult to respond to challenges to his interpretation of meanings, or even to assess their accuracy. Like his con-

[2] See my *Gender under Production: Making Subjects in Mexico's Global Factories* (forthcoming) for an example of an analysis that brings gender centrally into the story, not by breaking the link between local structure and emergent subjectivity, but by understanding gendered meanings and subjectivities as a fundamental aspect of shop floor structure.

[3] Burawoy does smuggle gender in under the rubric of "family" in his discussion of early cotton industries in *Politics of Production* (1985), but he never theorizes the gendering of production itself except as mediated through the family.

[4] David Knights and Hugh Willmott (1989) made this insightful point in their critique of Burawoy.

[5] See for instance, "The idiom in which workers couch and rationalize their behavior is no necessary guide to the patterns of their actual behavior" (Burawoy 1979:138).

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cepts of structure and subjectivity, his focus on practices to the exclusion of the meanings within which they occur makes invisible the role of gendered meanings and subjectivities in production.

The power of Burawoy's analysis lies in his unusual commitment to actually tracing the processes through which subjectivity emerges within the context of local social relations. However, his opening assumptions make this strength a weakness as well, as it leads him to take for granted that, because production is not a gendered or racialized process, the subjectivities that emerge within it are also ungendered or unracialized. Thus, *Manufacturing Consent*'s most fundamental contribution to the study of work, that of bringing worker subjectivity to the fore, is also its greatest failing, as Burawoy's overall theoretical framework keeps him from recognizing the many elements that actually constitute shop floor subjectivity.

Do these problems ultimately negate the book's arguments? I think not. Every account of social reality is partial. Burawoy himself would not claim to have told the whole story, simply to have included all elements relevant to the argument at hand. However, precisely because of the compelling nature of the narrative, *Manufacturing Consent* has a totalizing quality. Thus, the very elegance of formulation, both the specific elements of subjectivity attended to and the parsimony of explanation, can be misleading, obscuring important elements of social process, experience, and political possibility and mystifying the role of gender and race in constituting capitalist domination.

The book's fundamental insight, that subjectivity matters in production and varies with shifts in its structure, continues to illuminate processes that too often are opaque to those who live them. Anyone who has taught this book to students with experience in the workplace can attest to the "aha!" moment it engenders. Nonetheless, today, two decades after its emergence, we must continue to read and teach *Manufacturing Consent*, but do so with care, lest, in sidelining categories of domination beyond class, it further undermines the liberatory project that inspired it.

Donald Roy—Sociologist and Working Stiff

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Howard Becker (2000) recently lamented the burial of our ethnographic treasures. He urged us to dig up the gems and polish them until they sparkle. I agree that we should resuscitate our ancestors but to exalt them, to put them on a pedestal, is to freeze them in time and to miss what makes them significant for the present. I'm delighted that none of the foregoing reflections on *Manufacturing Consent* indulge in such uncritical adulation but instead build on its errors, transcend its limitations, problematize its assumptions, question its logic, break through its blinkers, and situate its weakness in the myopia of its time. That is how we move forward, reconstructing ancient works to better fit the contemporary world and in so doing connecting the past to the present.

I follow the lead of these retrospective essays in reflecting on the work of my own predecessor, the famous industrial sociologist, Donald Roy whose Chicago Ph.D. dissertation analyzed the same piecework machine shop which, 30 years later, became the basis of *Manufacturing Consent*. In these comments, I consider the career of this industrial plant between 1944–45 and 1974–75, but also the career of its original ethnographer. After he left Chicago in 1950, Roy wrestled with the strictures of his inherited Chicago-style, bounded ethnography as he sought to locate microprocesses in their broader historical, political, and economic context. Alone and ahead of his time, he explored issues that preoccupy us today—homelessness, gender and sexuality at work, despotic management,

Thanks to Huw Beynon for twenty years of intermittent conversation about Donald Roy, to Erik Wright for twenty years of uninterrupted criticism, and to Heidi Gottfried for inviting me to write this.

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obstacles to the growth of unionism, global capitalism, and new forms of action research.

I first grappled with Roy's research in 1974 when I began work as a machine operator at Allied. I was struck by déja vu—a remarkable resemblance to Roy's classic accounts of output restriction. I partook in the same shop floor game of "making out" that was the subject of his famous articles on "gold bricking" and "quota restriction," "efficiency and the fix" (Roy 1952a, 1953, 1955). After curiosity took me to his voluminous dissertation (Roy 1952b), it became apparent that I was not simply studying the same type of industrial workplace but the very same plant. My first instinct was to do what others have done when they returned, usually deliberately, to famous anthropological sites—Oscar Lewis' return to Robert Redfield's Tepoztlán, Derek Freeman's return to Margaret Mead's Samoa, Marianne Boelen's return to William Foote Whyte's Cornerville, or even Patrick Tierney's return to Napoleon Chagnon's Yanomami. In each case the successor tries to debunk the original ethnography as misguided, naïve, distorted, or even fraudulent.

Any hopes for debunking, however, quickly dissipated as it became obvious that Roy was every bit the master ethnographer, next to whom I was the novice. Everett Hughes considered Roy's dissertation one of the best he had supervised. I was in awe of his recounting of life on the shop floor, its rhythms, its nuances, and its tensions. I knew I could never emulate his graphic portraits. This was not a study to discredit but a model to emulate. Roy was no slumming graduate student looking for a field site, but rather he was an experienced blue-collar worker—the genuine thing rather than the Marxist pretender. Through his career, he was employed in 24 different "bottom rung" jobs in some 20 industries! He began in 1934 with a study of the makeshift underworld of unemployed men, a Seattle Hooverville—"the hobo 'jungle' . . . scrap heap of cast-off men, junk-yard for human junk, an interesting variation of the grimaces of laissez faire" (Roy 1939/40:45). Then he began his own itinerary from farm to mine, from forest to oilfield, from factory to factory across the United States. Just before he died in 1980, he drew on his experiences in a review of *Manufacturing Consent*, regaling the reader with, as he put it, the multiple ways to "skin a worker" (Roy 1980b).

Once I had overcome my panic at having landed in Roy's plant, I saw how I could exploit the strengths of his ethnography. I decided to use his study as a base line from which to evaluate my own, to use it to understand the transformation of work from 1944–45 to 1974–75. But in so doing I turned Roy's question inside out. Where he had been interested in why workers did not work harder, I wondered why they worked as hard as they did. Roy was arguing with the Western Electric researchers and their successors who held the "non-rational" culture of workers responsible for their failure to meet managerial expectations. Roy showed the contrary: Workers were quite rational in their games of making out while management was guilty of "irrationality" in obstructing workers from making their quotas. If only management would clean up their act, Roy concluded, there could be much more management-labor collaboration.

Manufacturing Consent, on the other hand, was embedded in Marxist debates, and presumed a fundamental conflict between labor and capital. I was amazed not by output restriction, which seemed an obvious response to exploitation, but by how hard workers worked, to what lengths they (and I) would go to make our rates, even when the economic incentive was absent. Where so much of Marxist theory of the time focused on the superstructures—state, education, family, or political parties—as incorporating the working class, stifling its revolutionary impulse, organizing its consent, I saw these same political and ideological processes operating *within* the factory. I reconstituted Roy's descriptions and experiences through this lens, showing that over the 30 years that separated us, factory politics had shifted along the continuum from "despotism" to "hegemony," a shift from a production regime based in coercion to one based in consent. Because technology was essentially the same, I could attribute these changes to the absorption of Roy's Geer Company into the multinational Allied and to the broader changes in industrial relations organized by the state. Historical analysis led directly to an account of the wider forces impelling social change.

As we see from the essays in this symposium, as well as from my revisiting Roy's work, theoretical frameworks change no less than the economy. How had Roy's own the-

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oretical lens changed in those 30 years? After leaving Chicago in 1950, Roy became an assistant professor at Duke University where he remained until he retired in 1979. Throughout he was very much the outsider within the academy, never removing his workman's cap, always keeping one foot in the lower echelons of the industrial workplace, a man of two careers—"working stiff" and sociologist. It was then that he penned his famous "Banana Time" (Roy 1959–60), an account of how workers manage to find meaning in monotonous work through game playing and ritualized social interaction. To this day sociologists continue to overlook the import of Roy's contributions—the social and psychological compensations and seductions of alienating work. Later he published his fascinating account of "Sex in the Factory" (Roy 1974), showing how sexual alliances affect production. Extramarital liaisons, which he describes in lurid detail, initially led to surges of output but then, as the news leaked, fellow workers became resentful, work teams dissolved, and output plummeted. The analysis was mainly through the eyes of male workers to be sure, but it was before feminist ethnographers had begun to study work as a gendered process.

This was still ahistorical plant sociology that went no further than the factory walls. Roy only broke with his Chicago schooling when he stumbled into the unfolding struggle for unionization in the Southern textile industry. Risking ostracism from his Duke colleagues, he trained his sociological eye on the labor organizers and asked why their campaigns nearly always failed; why unionism never took root in the South. He began to do ethnography in a new way. It was ethnography that looked beyond the textile mill to its historical and geographical context. He considered labor legislation and race relations as contexts for the historic transformation of the textile enterprise. As owners moved up and out, so the paternalist regime that had embraced plant and mill village gave way to a pseudopaternalism which, under pressure from labor organizers, turned into an ugly, despotic order. Stretch out, work rationalization, and even ideological warfare predisposed workers to join the union, but a reign of terror swung the balance decisively in favor of management (Roy 1964, 1968).

Roy's Chicago studies saw management from afar, as "irrational" but benign. In treating workers as "yardbirds" and not giving them a genuine voice in the factory order, managers simply did not comprehend their own best interest. Now that he put managerial "rationality" under the microscope, however, he saw things differently. In "Fear Stuff, Sweet Stuff, Evil Stuff," Roy (1980a) described the battery of weapons deployed against the union and its certification. Fear stuff included interrogation, intimidation, spying, harassment on the job of those suspected of union sympathies, selective firing, and threat of plant closure. Sweet stuff included the temporary resurrection of paternalism (picnics, "love letters" from management, replacement of hated managers, etc.) or promises of transfers, promotions, and wage increases for suspected union leaders. Evil stuff was the defamation of the union as Anti-Christ, partner of Satan, communist conspiracy, led by carpetbaggers from the North, by "Nigger lovers" and sponsors of racial mixing. If these three strategies didn't work and the union was certified, there was always "fatal stuff"—bargaining the union to death, prolonging the signing of the contract. It all has a contemporary ring. As union strength continues to fall (today some 13.5% of the labor force), as the AFL-CIO focuses on expanding membership, as employers mount aggressive and successful campaigns against unions, as the Bush administration becomes more antiunion, as "hegemonic" regimes return to despotic ways, in short, as the South becomes the model for the whole of the United States, Roy's pioneering analysis of the textile industry in the 1950s and 1970s, unappreciated at the time, anticipates today's resurgent sociology of the labor movement.

The Chicago School not only failed Roy in theoretical terms, giving him no leverage on class struggle or its broader context, but it also failed him in methodological terms. As participant observer he was caught in a vise between irreconcilable, warring interests. How could he maintain his stance as an outsider observer when everyone wanted to place him on one side or the other? When he tried to interview workers about their allegiance, he could only make any headway at all if he had the sponsorship of the union, and even then workers would tremble in their boots. When he was on the picket line with the union supporters how could he maintain neutrality? When picketing workers started to

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hurl rocks at the cars of scabs, he had no alternative but to join in, and he did so with gusto but in "a balletic imitation of a man throwing rocks" (Roy 1970:242). How could he be sensitive to the microdynamics of the union campaign and still pay attention to the broader forces at play? This question became more acute as he became increasingly aware, toward the end of his life, of the global dimension of capitalism and the havoc it wrecked on Southern labor. As he sketched the outline of a book that would deal with the labor struggles in the South, he turned back to the writings of Dewey and Cassirer—a participant observer in search of a new science of ethnography, what he called action research. He began as a sociologist of industrial work but ended up bringing his insights home, exploring new approaches to the work of the sociologist.

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