

Workers' competition, class relations, and space

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Abstract. In this paper the nature of workers' support for economic competition between areas is explored. The connection between class relations and competition in space is theorised through a distinction between 'structure' and 'system' and through a specifically Marxist conception of competition. It is argued that workers' interests in spatial competition are contradictory and thus take diverse forms. These interests are analysed through a development of the capital-labour relation at successive levels of abstraction and in relation to different systems of competition. The role of economic differences between workers in exacerbating competition between them is explored. The class relations of growth coalitions are examined.

1 Contemporary context and the need for theorisation

Competition for jobs between workers in different nations and localities is a striking and politically central feature of the present period. A period of economic crisis is always one of intensified competition, and the present 'long wave of stagnation' beginning in the late 1960s is no exception. The low average rate of profit results in intensified competition between firms. But competition between workers as sellers of labour power also increases: the rise in unemployment shifts the balance against workers in the market for labour power, threatens devalorisation of particular skills, and intensifies competition for available jobs. Since the mid-1970s, the majority of governments in the advanced capitalist countries have adopted policies which tend to intensify and 'freeze' both competition between firms and competition between workers. The competition between workers has made collaboration within particular workplaces and across them much more difficult and has weakened the trade-union movement both organisationally and politically.

A major form taken by competition between workers for jobs has been the collaboration of workers in particular enterprises with their management to increase the profitability of the enterprise; the logic is that if return on capital is sufficient then accumulation at the site will continue and at least some jobs will be safeguarded. The same logic has caused workers to collaborate in increasing the competitiveness of *areas*. Trade unions have collaborated in policies for increased national competitiveness. Since the mid-1970s in the advanced capitalist countries local economic initiatives have burgeoned which seek to increase the competitiveness of the local economy vis-à-vis other localities; again, trade unions have generally supported these initiatives and in some cases have initiated them (Eisenschitz and Gough, 1992).

This competition is of central importance in the construction of class relations in and across areas. Most obviously, it has involved workers making concessions to their employers on wages, hours, intensity of work, tasks, and so on in the expectation that these will increase the competitiveness of the workplace or area; these concessions tend to weaken collective organisation and increase the individualisation

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of workers. A project of increasing competitiveness is also necessarily directed against other workplaces and other firms, and therefore tends to construct conflict between workers in different workplaces and areas. Competition thus concerns relations both between and within the classes, and the operation of these relations both within and between areas.

Despite this political importance, the *theoretical* construction of the class relations associated with competition has received little attention; my aim in this paper is to contribute to this task. The collaboration of workers with employers, in a variety of modes and at a variety of spatial scales, has been an issue of sharp contention within the labour movement since its inception. Yet, remarkably, workers' competition has received no systematic theoretical treatment by Marxists. Nor, as I shall argue, has work in a geographical tradition adequately addressed this subject. In this paper, I shall distinguish between different modes through which workers compete with each other. I shall argue that the most important of these is through workers aligning themselves with the competition of capital; it is, I believe, the undertheorisation within Marxism of the competition of *capital* (Bryan, 1985) which has resulted in the undertheorisation of workers' competition. I shall argue that space is essential to the understanding of workers' competition; it is not coincidental that such competition so often takes the form of competition between *areas*. The failure of Marxism adequately to theorise workers' competition may be related to its lack of attention to space until comparatively recently. Accordingly, I shall base my theorisation of workers' competition on earlier work on the competition of capital in space (Gough, 1991).

I shall argue that there is a substantial basis for workers' competition. But, precisely in pursuing this competition, conflicting interests arise between labour and capital in the workplace and area, and common interests emerge between workers in different workplaces and areas. I shall therefore want to bring out the *contradictory* nature of workers' interests in competition and the way in which they are therefore subject to political contestation and change.

For conciseness, I shall concentrate on the case of competition between workers in different *localities* (subnational areas), which I shall call 'localism'. But most of the argument is applicable to competition at other spatial scales, in particular to international competition.

I first examine the existing geographical literature and argue that there is a neglect of the logical connections between localistic competition and class relations (section 2). A theoretical basis for establishing these connections is then outlined, and the arrangement of the rest of the paper presented (section 3).

2 Existing views of localism

In the voluminous public-relations material produced by local economic agencies, whether of right or left, the class relations of localistic competition are regarded as unproblematic: collaboration between capital and labour in a locality in pursuit of competitiveness is regarded as being of obvious benefit to labour, and indeed as being the only rational strategy open to it. The academic literature about the issue of the class content of localistic competition at various points, but without directly addressing it. I shall look briefly at four relevant themes within the literature: the relation of competition to job creation; the notion of the 'growth coalition'; industrial location theory; and locality studies.

Agencies concerned with local economic development commonly claim that they are involved in 'creating', 'saving', or, more modestly, 'supporting' jobs. Radical commentators, starting in the USA in the 1970s (Goodman, 1979; Molotch, 1976) and in Britain in the 1980s (Gough, 1986b; RTP1, 1985), have argued that local

initiatives do not have the levers which could affect the number of jobs at a national (or international) level, and that these initiatives therefore involve a zero-sum game, *redistributing* jobs spatially but not creating them. The attempt of local agencies to compete for jobs is consequently criticised partly for its parochialism and partly for its self-defeating dynamic because of the pressure on local agencies continually to increase the subsidies given to firms in order to compete with other localities. These commentators have thus highlighted the competitive nature of local economic initiatives. But the class relations of this competition are at best sketchily treated: the extent to which, and the reasons why, workers support localistic competition are not explored, nor are the relations between labour and capital construed as part of this competition examined. A partial exception to this lacuna is the discussion of the zero-sum nature of competition given by Sayer and Morgan (1985) who use a 'rational choice Marxism' approach. They are concerned with the ways in which capital and labour, in political discourse, recognise or choose not to recognise the zero-sum nature of the competition in which they are involved. However, one needs to consider how this political argument and consciousness are embedded in social-economic interests. I shall argue that the extent to which, and ways in which, workers involve themselves in 'zero-sum' competition is not fundamentally a question of their recognition of, and rational choice between, contrary arguments, but rather of the particular ways in which their social-economic situation and its associated contradictory interests are developed, and how political projects develop from these.

The notion of the 'growth coalition', first put forward by Molotch (1976) and now enjoying a revival (Cooke, 1988; Lloyd and Newlands, 1988), is claimed to theorise the class relation of competition between localities. Molotch argued that local 'growth' is promoted by a coalition of business interests, particularly firms whose markets are in the locality and local property capital. Workers and trade unionists are sometimes drawn into the growth coalition by being swayed by the business interests which use their control of the media and local ideological production. This conception of localistic competition is inadequate and misleading (see also Cox and Mair, 1989b). First, the supposed aim of the coalition is very vaguely specified, as growth in (some combination of) output, employment, sales, 'financial activity', and population. But capital's overriding aim in competition is none of these, but rather profitability and opportunities for profitable investment; these can, and often do, involve *contraction* of output and employment. Connectedly, it is not only capital with local markets which is involved in localistic competition. Second, Molotch, following his Keynesian framework, does not consider the processes within the workplace through which capital pursues its competitive interests. Consequently, he does not consider the possibility of these processes producing conflict between capital and labour: the only conflicts (as opposed to differences) of interest which he considers are those between capital and citizens. Third, and connectedly, the only mechanisms for competition between localities considered is the activities of the local and national state; the nature of the competitive behaviour inherent in capital itself is not discussed. Fourth, the lack of attention to economic analysis means that Molotch does not understand why workers might have a real interest in local competitiveness, and might support a 'growth coalition' in the absence of propaganda from business (but see footnote 3); as we have seen, he shares this lacuna with much of the critical literature on the zero-sum game. In contrast, Cooke (1988), in his use of the concept of growth coalition, assumes that workers have an interest in supporting, and indeed leading, local and regional coalitions to promote growth of output. His use of the concept, however, suffers

from the same central problem as does Molotch's—that it does not examine the capital-labour relations involved in this competition.

The 'theory of industrial location' is of relevance here as a theory of competition of localities for mobile investment. In the radical literature on this topic location decisions are related to class relations (Clark et al, 1986; Walker and Storper, 1981). However, the focus on mobile investment tends to produce a rather simplified account of class relations. There is concern with the role in new investment decisions of characteristics of labour such as strength of trade-union organisation, 'flexibility' in employment contracts, and wages. But I shall argue that the class relations of competition concern the process of production itself, and that labour is implicated in competition, not merely through its given characteristics but as an active participant.

In contrast, in the broad field known as 'locality studies', class relations have been studied in many linked dimensions (the labour process, employment contracts, divisions of the work force, labour organisation, etc). But in the study of particular localities, class relations are seldom related systematically to the competition of the capital in its qualitative, quantitative, and spatial aspects. With the exception of the account given by Harvey (1985) (see section 12), the abstract logic of competition in relation to local class relations has not been theorised. This neglect arises, I suspect, from the concern of locality studies with local *specificity*. But, as has been argued elsewhere (Cox and Mair, 1989a; Gough, 1991), a concrete account of locality should not be counterposed to consideration either of nonlocal systems of competition or of abstract structures.

One can summarise this survey of the literature, then, by saying that whereas the radical literature on localistic competition and on mobile investment does not adequately develop the connection to class relations, the literature on local class relations neglects the connection to competition. In this paper, I shall try to fill this gap.

3 Theoretical starting point and outline of the argument

Our task, then, is to relate class relations within localities to the competition between them and to locate the interests of workers within these relations. My argument will be based on a theoretical approach to analysing the space economy which I have given elsewhere (Gough, 1991); from the account of capitalist competition given in my previous paper, I draw out the implications for workers' competition. The starting point is two key elements in this approach (other elements are introduced in sections 8, 9, and 12).

1 *A distinction between 'structure' and 'system'*. Logical, necessary relations and processes are embodied in 'structures'. Structures may be specified at different levels of abstraction. Some structures are ubiquitous at certain levels of abstraction, but as they are developed to more concrete forms they become spatially specific. In the relations which constitute a structure, space may play a necessary (intrinsic) role; I refer to these as 'spatial structures' (see also Cox and Mair, 1989a). Structures may be contradictory in that they logically imply two contrary processes. Connections between social entities which are socially independent, and thus contingent, are organised within 'systems'. As one is not interested in the abstract logic of their construction, systems are always concrete, made up of determinate social entities. In particular, they are spatially and temporally concrete. One therefore has three forms of spatiality: the spatial specificity of structures; 'spatial structures'; and the spatial location of systems. All three of these types of spatiality will be relevant to my argument that 'space matters' to workers' competition.

The key elements of our problem can be placed within this distinction between structure and system. *The capital-labour relation is a structure.* It may be specified at a high level of abstraction, as the set of processes and powers which constitute capital and labour as such; these are ubiquitous within the capitalist world. Because it is necessary to any capitalist economy, the capital-labour relation in its abstract form is internal to each locality. But this kernel may be developed into more concrete forms, such as specific labour processes, specific forms of the employment relation, and so on; the capital-labour relation thus takes specific forms in each locality. In contrast, *the competition undertaken by enterprises in a locality involves systems* (though, as we shall shortly see, not *only* systems). Each firm is faced with competition from other firms, whose actions, by virtue of each being under its own private control, are independent of the firm. The relations between the competing firms are thus, in the first place, external ones, and they make up what I have termed a 'competitive system'. Moreover, the demand for which the firms compete is independent of each of the competing firms. Competition within a given market at any one time involves a determinate set of firms with a concrete geographical extent. Thus for each firm, and for the set of enterprises in a locality, we have a contrast between the necessary, albeit specific, capital-labour relations which constitute them and the contingent, external competition which they face.

2 *Competition of capital as a dialectic of structure and system* (Gough, 1991, section 6). The account of competition just given is static and formal in that

nothing is said about the social *processes* through which competition is pursued. These are the internal structures of each enterprise; abstractly, the capital-labour relation, developed into the concrete forms of direct and indirect labour processes, industrial relations, employment practices, etc: it is through changing these internal structures that firms attempt to obtain competitive advantage. Moreover, it is through the structural compulsion to accumulate that the aggregate capacity of the industry is determined; together with the externally given demand, this determines prices, average profits, and the intensity of competition. Competition therefore concerns not merely the *external* market relations between firms but the pattern of flow of capital, based on the *internal* logic of the capital-labour relation and dialectic of system and structural relations, provides the theoretical kernel of this paper, as it links the capital-labour relation with the market aspect of competition, the class relations within the locality with the competition in which the locality is involved.

My account of workers' involvement in localistic competition will be based on an analysis of workers' *interests* as they arise from the relations of capitalist production. *Interests*, as understood here, must correspond to feasible, though not necessarily immediately realisable, projects of social action. But I do not consider here the forms this action can take or the organisation through which it is pursued; in particular I do not discuss trade-union organisation or the state. Another limitation of this paper is that I focus exclusively on the construction of workers' interests within value-creating work; as we shall see, this requires some consideration of the reproduction of labour power, but otherwise I do not discuss nonwaged work.

My account will be built up in steps by considering the capital-labour relation (a) at successive levels of abstraction, and (b) in relation to capitalist competition within different systems. The construction of an account of a concrete phenomenon through a systematic development of structures from abstract to concrete forms (Ollman, 1971, pages 65-67) is a currently unfashionable procedure, but I hope here to exemplify its power. I will show that the dynamics of a particular structure (here the capital-labour relation) at different levels of abstraction can be mutually conflicting.

Different systems enter into these dynamics at different levels of abstraction and lead particular forms to the structural dynamics. This procedure thus enables a complex and 'layered' account to be given. It enables the role of space to be introduced at different levels of abstraction and in relation both to structures and to systems (Gough, 1991).

A contradictory dynamic within the capital-labour relation will be found, towards both collaboration and conflict between capital and labour. The development of the capital-labour relation from abstract to concrete also produces *differentiations* within it, and thus in the nature and interests of particular capitals and particular groups of workers, differences which can take a spatial form. Workers' response to their contradictory interests depends on these differences. The method of development of structures at successive levels of abstraction, and a focus on their contradictions, thus enables us to theorise two types of diversity which are crucial to the class relations of competition: the differences in economic situation and interests between *different groups of workers*, and the different, contrary interests held by *each individual worker*.⁽¹⁾

The argument I shall give can be summarised as follows.

- (a) At the highest level of abstraction, the capital-labour relation gives workers certain common interests against those of capital, tending to produce conflict between capital and labour and collaboration between workers (section 4).
- (b) At the same level of abstraction as in point (a), the capital-labour relation also involves a dependence of labour on capital accumulation. Moreover, when we move from capital in general to many capitals, capitalist competition produces an interest of workers in collaboration with particular capitals (section 5) and in competition with other workers (section 6); that is, interests contrary to those specified in point (a). This competition is organised by the flow of capital within numerous 'systems' of determinate geographical extent. I discuss competition within two types of system, the sector and the multisite firm (sections 8 and 9, respectively). However, because competition *proceeds through* the capital-labour relation, the potential antagonisms given in point (a) break through and are developed in particular ways by competition in particular systems, leading to conflicts between capital and labour over both the quality and the quantity of employment (sections 8 and 9).

(d) Competition involves differentiation in the structural characteristics of workers; these do not create antagonistic economic interests, except through political mediations, but they do create barriers to collaboration within and between localities (section 10).

The circulation of capital and capitalist competition thus give workers a real interest in localistic competition, though this is strongly differentiated by the forms of competition used by capital, the pace of accumulation, and the characteristics of workers. On the other hand, they also produce tendencies to class conflict and collaboration between workers within and between localities. Localism is inherently contradictory (sections 12 and 13).

In this paper, I develop this analysis at the highest level of *historical* abstraction, for the capitalist mode of production as such. This is a necessary, though of course not sufficient, basis for discussing spatial competition in the present period.

⁽¹⁾ It is currently fashionable in radical academic writing to suppose that an approach based on the logic of structures is incapable of grasping the diversity of social subjects and the decentring of the subject' (Lacian and Mouffe, 1985). I would argue that, on the contrary, the latter can only be described, and not theorised, until one analyses the *construction* of diversity by structures, which, however, must be understood as *contradictory*.

5 The moment of dependence of labour on capital: capital and labour in general

If the elementary form of the capital-labour relation produces antagonism between the classes and working-class unity, it also produces collaboration between the classes and competition within the working class. Initially, let us remain at the level of abstraction of the last section, at the level of 'capital in general'. The capitalist mode of production is unique among class societies in that the reproduction of the dominated class occurs through the same labour, at the same time as, the production

4 The moment of conflict between labour and capital

The capital-labour relation, at the highest level of abstraction, creates antagonistic interests between capital and labour. The core of this antagonism is the process of exploitation: capital has to extract surplus labour, realised as surplus value, through its domination of the labour process. As Burawoy (1985, pages 32-40) argues, the capitalist mode of production is unique among class societies in that a finite positive surplus is only established a posteriori; capital, unlike previous ruling classes, is therefore *compelled* to exert control over the labour process, actively to extract surplus labour. This form of exploitation violates workers' needs in ways that are not technically inevitable; feasible projects for satisfying these needs therefore constitute interests of workers in opposition to capital. The relation of exploitation thus constitutes the core form of the antagonism between capital and labour. A key weakness of Keynesian and Ricardian treatments of the capital-labour relation is the neglect of this process of extraction of surplus labour. In geographical work (for example, Clark et al, 1986, chapter 2) this leads to a focus on conflict within the production process (compare the remarks on Molotch in section 2; see, further, section 5 below).

This core antagonism is deepened through the 'development' of the capital-labour relation beyond its elementary form. The tendency of capital constantly to increase productivity, partly through increasing the subordination of labour in the work process, continuously expels workers from the production process. The same process produces a tendency towards overaccumulation of capital with respect to demand within the world economy, consequent devalorisation, and expulsion of labour power from production. At this high level of abstraction, then, the capital-labour relation involves conflict both over the way in which labour power is used within the labour process and over the purchase or failure to purchase workers' labour power, that is, a conflict over both the quality and the quantity of jobs. Notice that this conflict is a feature of capital in general, prior to competition between capitals. These conflicts are, in the first place, an antagonism between capital and each worker separately and serially. But they also produce an antagonism between capital and workers *collectively*. First, the *similarity* of interests between workers makes collaboration between them against capital rational, on the basis of aggregating forces. Second, workers have a *common, inherently collective*, interest, precisely because the interests involved are structural; that is, they are entailed by chronically reproduced social practices and relations which are ubiquitous in the society; they are therefore most effectively addressed on a society-wide basis. The space of the collectivity of workers implied at this level of abstraction is the capitalist world. Urry (1985) argues that, to the extent that workers act self-interestedly, the fact that fruits of workers' struggles are collectively encourages 'free riding', where workers do not collaborate with others because they will benefit anyway. But this observation is one-sided: workers know that they will not benefit at all if the collective action does not take place or is weak, so self-interest does produce a tendency to collective action.

of surplus, in contrast, for example, to feudal society, where the reproduction of labourers and the production of surplus took place as distinct activities (Burawoy, 1985, pages 29-32). This produces a direct dependency of workers on the reproduction of capital and constructs an interest of workers in collaboration with capital.

This dependency shows itself first in the productivity of labour, as this is the productivity both of the 'part' of the working day in which the value of labour power is produced and of the 'part' in which surplus value is produced (the point being precisely that these two 'parts' are not distinct). Productivity thus clearly sets *outside limits* on the wage; and it enters into its *determination* through processes which I shall not discuss here (Harvey, 1982, pages 55-57). Though productivity is centrally determined by the investment and organisation carried out by capital, it is also *dependent on the initiative of workers within the labour process*, and thus on their collaboration with management, though to a degree which varies strongly with the particular labour process. Workers therefore have an interest in collaboration with their employer to the extent that this increases productivity and to the extent that increased productivity results in increased real wages.

The dependency of workers on capital also has a quantitative aspect: workers' action can affect the quantity of employment. To consider this, we need to move from capital in general to capital and labour in aggregate; in the terms of section 3, whereas the former is a 'structure', the latter is a world 'system' of firms and labour power of determinate quantity. The rate of profit, and the expected rate of profit, are central determinants of capital's willingness to invest and thus of the overall rate of accumulation; this in turn determines the quantity of jobs offered and unemployment in the (world) economy. Now, the rate of profit tends to be raised by increases in productivity, particularly those involving intensification and those in the department producing consumer goods and services (Marx, 1974b, pages 232-235, 247-250). Increases in productivity thus have a contradictory impact on employment, cutting employment to the extent that demand is constant, but also tending to increase profitability, accumulation, and employment. Limitation of wages also has a contradictory impact on employment, through increasing profitability but limiting consumer demand. The outcome of these contradictions depends on the phase of accumulation; but in some situations workers' collaboration in increasing productivity, and their willingness to accept limitations or cuts in wages, can tend to increase the quantity of employment available.

At the levels of capital in general and capital in aggregate, then, workers can have an interest in collaboration with capital both in the consumption of labour power by capital within the labour process and in the sale of labour power to capital; the aim of such collaboration for workers is to improve both the wage and the availability of work. The space of this collaboration is again the capitalist world.⁽²⁾

This interest contradicts the antagonistic class interests discussed in the last section. Crucial aspects of this contradiction are missed by non-Marxist approaches. In the neoclassical paradigm, conflict or collaboration between employers and workers takes place only around the employment contract, particularly the wage per hour, and then only to the extent that the market in 'labour' is distorted by 'imperfections' such as trade unions. The relation between employer and worker *within the labour process* are not considered. Yet we have seen that this relation is both the core of the *antagonism* between capital and labour (section 4), and a crucial site within which labour's *collaboration* with capital can make a difference. Although they give

(2) We see here that 'world' or 'international' phenomena can be so in two quite distinct senses: they can be ubiquitous, or *systems of world extent*.

a more sophisticated account of the market in 'labour' than neoclassical economics, Keynesian, Kaleckian, and Ricardian approaches suffer from essentially the same problem. For example, in the account given by Clark et al (1986) of regional class relations, workers and trade unions can affect profitability and output through the wage (which is 'sticky' with respect to demand) and particularly through the form of employment contracts (flexibility in hiring and firing, trade-offs between security and wages, etc.). The crucial aspect of class relations which affects spatial competition is therefore negotiation over wages and, particularly, the conditions of contracts. But again, collaboration (and conflict) within the labour process is missed.

6 The moment of dependence of labour on capital, and competition between workers: individual capitals, individual workers

From capital and labour in general we move to individual capitals and individual workers (Marx, 1974a, page 433; 1974b, page 25; Rosdolsky, 1980, pages 41-50). This shift develops further the forms of dependency of workers on capital and articulates them with competition between capitals and between workers. It begins to introduce spatial unevenness and spatial competition. As with capital in general, the productivity and profitability achieved by a *particular* firm will affect the *particular* wages, conditions, and stability of employment which the firm offers its workers; this produces an interest of the firm's workers in collaborating with its management, in the senses discussed above (section 5). But now this interest is mediated by three processes: the competition between individual capitals, the competition between workers, and spatially uneven accumulation. First, the relation between a firm's profitability and the jobs it offers is mediated by the competitive pressures which the firm experiences; this is explored below in sections 8 and 9.

Second, the relation between the interests of an individual worker and the fate of particular firms is mediated by the market in labour power. The freedom of the worker freely to sell her or his labour power, a specific defining feature of the capitalist mode of production, implies that labour power is sold by individual workers according to particular contracts; the possibility of competition between workers is inscribed in this structure. The freedom of sale of labour power implies that the worker is not *fundamentally* dependent on any particular capital. However, the conditions of reproduction of labour power, and the life of the worker outside production, do tend to the workers to particular sets of workplaces. Migration is strongly inhibited by family and social relationships, though to an extent varying sharply with, inter alia, position in the family and age. Given a fixed residence, the possible commuting distance, which varies with income and with position in the division of labour in domestic work, defines a set of possible employers. This geography of dependence is mediated by skill. A worker with particular skills is dependent on the subset of workplaces which use those skills; if the skill is not to be devalued, this often enforces migration beyond the locality and tends to produce a lower commitment to the local economy (though not to the existing employer). Reproduction and skill, then, define a relevant 'local economy' for the individual worker, a set of capitals with which she or he has an interest, of varying intensity, in collaboration.

Third, however, this dependence is mediated by spatially uneven accumulation. We saw in section 5 how the collaboration of workers with capital is constructed through the overall rate of capital accumulation. To the extent that a worker is tied to a local labour market, the rate of overall accumulation in *that* local economy constructs the degree of pressure towards collaboration. If the worker is already employed, she or he will have an interest in collaboration with that particular

employer to the extent that other opportunities are not available in this local economy, a function of the local scarcity of the particular type of labour power possessed by the worker. With these developments, then, workers' dependence on capital's rate of accumulation takes a locally specific form.⁽³⁾ For example, in tight labour markets workers can achieve a certain disloyalty to their current employer, both in intensity of work and by changing jobs, forms of resistance which are not dependent on collective action.

Thus the space of reproduction of labour power (its spatial immobility), the quality of that labour power (the time and money taken to change it), and their interdependence tend to tie the interests of workers to those of particular employers and encourage collaboration with them. The strongest tie is typically to the worker's existing employer, and to the employers in the worker's travel-to-work area. The construction of this dependence shows, however, that it is highly differentiated by the type of labour power possessed by the workers, by their position in the division of labour in domestic work, by their income, by their social life, and by the local rate of accumulation.

Note how space is essential to the development of workers' dependence on *particular* employers. This spatiality is constructed by a 'spatial structure' (spatial ties in the reproduction of labour power), and differentiated by spatially uneven structures (the use of skills, the rate of accumulation) (Gough, 1991, sections 2-4).

7 Three forms of workers' competition

Other than collaboration with employers, there are two other modes in which workers compete for jobs. First, workers can make their labour power more valuable through training and education, that is, through its production. However, in modern capitalism this is predominantly not under the control of workers, either individually or collectively, being supplied and organised by capital and the state. Second, sections of workers may be able to modulate the market in labour power to their particular benefit. Examples are formal or informal agreements with employers in a particular industry restricting entry to particular types of workers, support by labour for immigration controls, and agreements with employers regulating promotion and preference in layoffs. These are essentially *politically imposed* restrictions on the market in labour power. I return to this form of competition in section 10.

Note that these three broad types of competition between workers take place in different phases of the production and consumption of labour power: training concerns the *production* of labour power; political restrictions are applied to its *sale and purchase*; whereas competition through collaboration with employers involves the *purchase* of labour power and, particularly, its *consumption* within production. It is the third form of workers' competition which is the most closely connected with capital accumulation and the process of production; and it is for this reason that this is the most *powerful* and *ubiquitous* form of workers' competition. In the remainder of the paper, therefore, I continue to focus on this form of competition and the competition of capitals to which it is tied.

⁽³⁾ Molotch denies this proposition, on the basis that migration renders workers more or less immune from local labour-market conditions (1976, pages 320-325). His empirical analysis of this question, in which he uses US data, is invalidated by the fact that he measures the strength of accumulation in a locality not by profitability, nor even by output, but by population. Moreover, even if migration were to equalise rates of unemployment in localities (which even in the mobile USA it does not), the forced nature of this migration itself indicates a pressure on workers to find employment locally.

I now focus more closely on the competition between capitals and its effect on workers' competition. The competition of capital proceeds not only between firms producing a given product, but also across products, between productive, money and commodity forms of capital, and within firms (Byan, 1985); it is therefore organised by diverse 'systems' (Gough, 1991). I will here examine just two such systems, a product industry of single-plant firms (section 8), and a multi-site firm (section 9). These will serve to illustrate the way in which class relations and their geography depend on the systems within which the competition of capital is organised.

8 Competition and collaboration between workers in a product industry

I have conceptualised competition as flow of capital; workers' attempts to collaborate with their employer to increase competitiveness within an industry producing a given product ('product industry') therefore consists in attempting to prevent investment capital from shifting from their workplace (or potential workplace) to others within the industry. We have seen that competition consists of an articulation of system and structure. The unifying of the industry by the market (the systems relation) leads to tendencies both to an equalisation *and* to a differentiation of structure; the unevenness of structure typically takes a geographical form (Gough, 1991, sections 3, 6; Smith, 1984, pages 119-130). The different structures of the industry, including the forms of the capital-labour relation, are not merely static forms of organisation but *strategies* which impinge directly or indirectly on all the industry's workers. The geography of workers' competition therefore has two aspects: the *spatial extent of the competitor system* defines the location of the competitor workers, and the *spatially varied structures* define the content of competition, the management strategies with which workers have to cooperate.

The forms of differentiation and imitation in which workers participate in order to compete are very complex. For example, workers can be 'undetermined by' either lower-paid or worse-organised workers (through strategies of pure intensification or wage cutting), or by better-paid or better-organised workers (through mechanisms or skill-based strategies). This example shows that successful competition by workers at the expense of others does not constitute a power relation *between them*, but rather an expression of capital's power over labour as a whole. Nevertheless, competition between workers *implies them* in capital's strategies; and as such strategies are based on uneven structures, this collaboration tends to reproduce divisive ideologies. Regimes imposed on workers in a particular workplace can appear to them to originate in a prior 'acceptance' of these structures by workers in other workplaces. Where these workplaces are in a different locality or country, or the workers are of different gender or ethnicity, this appearance can result in chauvinistic or racist conclusions. These ideologies in turn reinforce the competition between workers.

The very processes by which competition proceeds, however, tend to break up the collaboration between capital and labour. This is because competition proceeds through the capital-labour relation, so that the inherent antagonisms of that relation (section 4) are necessarily involved. Competition in a product industry develops these abstract, potential antagonisms in particular ways. The two types of conflictual issue noted in section 4, qualitative and quantitative aspects of employment, are both involved.

8.1 *Conflict over the quality of the labour process*
 Marx (1974a, pages 296-299) argued that the method of competition specific to industrial capitalism is an increase in mechanisation, raising productivity and tendentially surplus value extracted ('relative surplus value'). *For a given product,*

which I am assuming here, this is the dominant line of competition. Increased mechanisation may seem relatively benign from the point of view of labour. However, the process of mechanisation often involves deskilling and thus the devaluation of workers' labour power. If the increased mechanisation raises capital intensity, capital usually seeks to intensify the pace of work and to extend the hours for which the plant is used in order to realise the value of the fixed capital as rapidly as possible. Mechanisation and intensification are thus not simply alternatives but typically accompany each other (Marx, 1974a, pages 476-479; Paliotx, 1976). Alternatively, particularly during a period of stagnation when capital is unwilling to commit itself to fixed investments, capital attempts strategies of extraction of pure absolute surplus value: intensification without mechanisation, and cuts in real wages. However, as Marx argued, extraction of pure absolute surplus value is inherently more limited than extraction of relative surplus value: pure intensification is limited by human capacities; and wage cuts are limited by the need for reproduction of labour power, and sometimes by the competition for labour power (Gough, 1991, section 10).

This is not to say that competition never proceeds through labour-process changes which are neutral or beneficial for labour. Productivity may be increased by upskilling. Mechanisation may enable more pleasant work processes, and sometimes involves upskilling. The use of these methods by capital tends to reinforce the impulse of labour towards collaboration within their employers. (For an example of a national and local industrial strategy built on this type of class relation, see Hirst and Zeitlin, 1988.)

Capital therefore uses competitive strategies which, in a qualitative sense, can either improve or worsen conditions of work, respectively corresponding to what Mezaros (1970) calls the 'partial' and 'universal' face of capital. These methods are extremely uneven in their application. Within a given product industry, the differentiation of structures between firms often takes the form of very different degrees and types of attack on the respective work forces. The resistance of workers can affect management's choice between universal and partial strategies. These differences in experience tend to weaken the possibility for collaboration between workers across the industry.

However, it is important to examine the origin of these differences in order to assess their potential for division. To do so, we need to return to the dialectic of structure and system in the industry. The differences in capital's strategies are not simply a result of differences in the externally related parts of the product-industry system, such as geographical differences in wage rates; differences in strategies also arise from contradictions within the structures and strategies of the industry, that is, from single contradictions which span the differently treated workers (Gough, 1991, section 3). This common root of difference provides a potential basis for recognition of similarity in spite of varied experiences.

The contradictions of labour processes not only create differences between groups of workers at one time but also create differences for the same group of workers at different times. The contradictions in any particular management strategy, with or without changes in the competitive system, can produce internally generated changes. When capital has used benign methods of increasing competitiveness for a period, capital's 'partial' face may reappear. Collaborative regimes, and the privileges of sections of workers within an industry, are inherently unstable (Eisen-schitz and Gough, 1992, chapters 8 and 10).

8.2 Conflict over the quantity of employment

Abstracting from demand conditions, we can see that competition within an industry does not produce increases in aggregate output or employment.⁽⁴⁾ But it is not merely that aggregate employment is fixed: capital accumulation and competition tend to shed labour from the industry in aggregate, and particularly rapidly from some firms.

First, contrary to neoclassical theory, the capacity existing in an industry does not tend to rest in equilibrium with demand. Even without structural change, each capital seeks to accumulate through expansion of capacity, and this produces a chronic tendency to overcapacity. There is, therefore, constant devalorisation of capacity, and consequent redundancies in particular workplaces (though possibly increases in jobs elsewhere). But, second, nearly all the forms of competition just considered raise the productivity of labour (the exception being pure cuts in wages). If aggregate demand is fixed, then this implies cuts in the aggregate employment (hours worked) in the industry. Competition within a product industry is therefore a *negative-sum* game and creates conflict over the quantity of employment. The cuts in employment typically occur unevenly between workplaces, depending on the competitiveness of the workplace but also the rate of profit acceptable to the particular firm. But the larger the aggregate decreases in employment the more widespread the cuts in employment tend to be.

It is therefore not merely that workers have nothing to gain from a competitive zero-sum game; the processes of competition cut employment, and do so unevenly between workplaces. This contradiction of workers' competition arises not simply from a systems relation (the total demand and output of the industry is limited) but from a structural process (each firm attempting to accumulate, to increase its capacity and output, and to increase its productivity) (Gough, 1991, section 9). The political importance of this is that the contradiction involves not only the aspects of the economy external to the workplace (demand) but also the capital-labour relation within each workplace.

To summarise: competition within a product industry encourages collaboration between workers and their employer and competition with workers elsewhere; but the very processes by which competition proceeds can turn these relations on their head. This contradiction is a development of the contradiction inherent in the capital-labour relation at the highest level of abstraction, between class antagonism on the one hand and the dependence of workers on capital on the other (sections 4 and 5). The abstract relation is not obliterated by this development, nor is it merely added to with an accretion of contingent circumstances, but is metamorphosed, given a particular form. Space is important in this development: it involves spatially varied structures (of production and strategy) and the spatial extent of systems (of competitors).

9 Competition between workers within a firm

The ability of multisite firms to play off workers at different locations against one another is notorious. Indeed, this is often regarded as the most intense form of workers' competition; because the competition between sites is consciously planned by management rather than 'invisibly' guided by the market, it appears as 'ruthless', as the direct power of capital over labour. I shall briefly consider the case of the multisite firm by considering sites in a firm making the same product; this shows

⁽⁴⁾ Increases in productivity lead to cuts in prices; if the elasticity of demand is high this can result in increases in demand, output, and employment; here I shall abstract from these demand conditions, however.

most simply the difference that common ownership of sites makes. I shall argue that the specificity of the multisite firm is more contradictory than is often thought. First note that, in the Marxist conception of competition and at the level of abstraction that we have so far used, the sites of the firm *compete* no less and no more than if they were in separate ownership (Bryan, 1985). As in fragmented ownership, their competitiveness and profitability are formed through internal structural change; and capital flows into and out of them according to their profitability. At this level, the power of capital over labour is the same in the two cases.

At a more concrete level, competition between the sites is typically more intense with multisite firms. This is, however, not because of the multisite nature of the firm as such, but rather because of the typically larger size of its capital. The larger size increases the sectoral and geographical options open to the firm and thus renders its capital more spatially mobile (Gough, 1991, section 8). These greater options tend to raise the minimum rate of return acceptable to the firm, which can cause accelerated rundown of less profitable sites. The intenser competition between workers in the multisite firm is therefore not because of its *system* of competing sites, nor because of their joint planning by central management, but because of the *spatial structure* of capital mobility within the firm.

In fact, the central planning of the sites as such tends to *reduce* the intensity of competition of workers, for three reasons. First, the fact that the flows of capital are consciously chosen by a single subject (the firm's management) rather than being 'decided by the market' tends to politicise the process: workers have a definite agent whom they can seek to influence. The decision appears for what it fundamentally is, a decision concerning *investment*, rather than as a 'failure in the market'. Second, whereas in competition in fragmented ownership the spatial patterns of shifts in output are usually unknown to workers (and even to management), in the multisite firm the sites involved are known; the space of the system of competition is more transparent. Third, in the case of the multisite firm the decisions concerning investing investment at the different sites are made on the basis of the same criterion for the minimum acceptable rate of profit, whereas in the case of fragmented ownership the various firms will in general bring varied profit-rate criteria to bear (Mandel, 1975, pages 75-77). The multisite-firm case is therefore again more transparent. (Partly in consequence, there are more likely to be direct organisational links between workers at the different sites in a multisite firm, again facilitating cooperation.)

Thus, although the *larger capital* of the firm produces greater spatial mobility of capital and intensified competition between sites, the *common ownership* of these sites tends to make workers' cooperation easier and the spatial system of competition more transparent. As always, greater socialisation of production, in this case embodied in the more concentrated form of ownership, tends to produce greater politicisation. This latter aspect is typically neglected in economic geography and popular political discourse because competition is seen as something which occurs between and not within firms, as a market relation rather than a flow of capital; the movement of capital within multisite sites is thus seen as arbitrary administrative power, distinct from 'natural' competition via the market; but the competition within the multisite firm is in fact a simplified ('perfected') form of that between independently owned sites.

In these last two sections, I have indicated that the system of competition of capital can make important differences to the spatial competition between workers, but that these differences need careful examination.

10 Barriers to collaboration: workers' concerns, resources, and identity

I have so far been concerned with the construction of conflict and cooperation between workers by their *interests* within production. But this can only be part of the story: workers' preparedness to cooperate with others against capital is also a function of, amongst other things, their *resources*, their self-defined *identity*, and their day-to-day *concerns*. These are partly constructed outside production, consideration of which goes beyond the scope of this paper; but they are also constructed through the worker's role in production. Structurally uneven development within industries and within the economy as a whole, both in labour processes and in conditions of employment, produce differentiation in the workers' economic resources, in their identity as workers, and in the day-to-day experience and concerns of work. I shall refer to these attributes collectively as 'work-identity'; note that this is not a category of consciousness alone. As my discussion of interests has centrally involved uneven development, it is problematic to abstract from differences in work-identity which are a part of that uneven development. I shall therefore briefly consider the role of work-identity vis-à-vis interests in the construction of workers' cooperation and competition.

Differences in work-identity present barriers to collectivity. Differential capital accumulation and varied labour processes give workers different degrees of power to struggle against capital, often embodied chronically in strength of trade-union organisation, resulting in differences in willingness to undertake conflict with capital. Differences in the day-to-day problems and concerns of work create difficulties of recognition. These differences in resources and experience are internalised chronically as specific identities; especially where they coincide with gender, ethnicity, or race, these differences can construct relations of status between workers (status here being a category of ideology). Differences in work-identity, then, create barriers to cooperation between workers. They can powerfully affect the way in which workers respond to the contradictory interests which I have analysed, and help to determine whether it is the moment of cooperation or the moment of competition which is developed in action.

Differences in work-identity often correspond to geographical difference, producing barriers to cooperation between areas. Even within a given industry, cooperation is often inhibited by spatial differences in bargaining power (for example, between London and non-London printing workers), in the issues of industrial conflict (for example Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire miners) or in status (for instance, in the clothing industry between black workers in the cities and white workers in smaller towns). These differences can lead to workers blaming capital's strategies on workers elsewhere (section 8). In aggregate the differences within industry work-identities can construct composite 'area work-identities', usually construed in different modes by workers in the area and those in other areas. Both the industry-area differences, and the more strongly ideological area-wide ones, make cross-area cooperation more difficult.

It is argued or assumed in much recent radical theory that differences in identity directly constitute differences in interest (for example, see Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). Do differences in work-identity, then, create not only barriers to cooperation but also conflicts of interest? I have already noted (section 7) that groups of workers may compete for jobs by forming agreements with employers or the state to give themselves privileged access to recruitment or priority in layoffs. These groups are usually constructed around work-identities, as the winning of such agreements is more open to workers with greater economic power, and often gender or ethnicity are used as exclusionary principals. Alternatively, the privileged group may define itself spatially, as in immigration controls or contemporary policies for preferentially

employing local workers. These agreements clearly do create conflicts of interest between workers. But these conflicts are of a quite different type from those on which I have so far focused in this paper. As I mentioned in section 7, they are interventions into the market in labour power rather than interventions into production. The arrangements have force only by virtue of political organisation (in its broadest sense); unlike the forms of workers' competition considered above, they are not aligned with, and do not use, capitalist competition. On the contrary: during periods of heightened competition capital tends to abrogate such agreements in order to allow itself greater freedom in the purchase of differentiated labour power. The conflicts between workers involved in such agreements are therefore less powerful than those which are tied to capitalist competition.

Apart from in the politically mediated form just discussed, differences in work-identity do not create conflicting interests between workers within production. This is essentially because work-identities, though hierarchically differentiated, do not form systems of exploitation, nor do they give workers access to work or income other than in relation to capital and thus in subordination to capitalist competition.⁽⁵⁾ Competition between workers is fundamentally tied to capitalist competition; divisions arising from different work-identities exacerbate this competition by creating barriers to cooperation, but they are not its origin.

II Summary and consideration of the argument so far

The support of workers and workers' organisations for spatially competitive policies, whether at the level of the workplace or the locality, involves a fundamental contradiction. The capital-labour relation contains within it both antagonisms between the classes and dependency of workers on capital. In a developed form this contradiction on the one hand produces an interest for workers to collaborate with their employer or potential employer and to compete with capital and workers elsewhere, and on the other hand produces conflict between capital and labour both within the labour process and over the supply of jobs. Although competition between workers proceeds also through other means, it is in this form that competition is most powerful, as here workers are dragged behind the competition—that is, the circulation—of capital. But although the pressure on workers towards mutual competition is strong, it has a powerful negation in the very processes that capital must use to pursue it.

These contrary pressures develop important differentiations. The pressure for collaboration varies with the type and scarcity of the workers' skills, their ability to migrate (itself a function of the workers' domestic and other nonwork relations), and the local rate of unemployment. The process of competition is qualitatively differentiated by 'partial' and 'universal' strategies which have different class dynamics. The form taken by the contradiction in workers' interests is further developed and differentiated by the system of competition involved. If competition is conceived as circulation of capital in search of higher profits, then workers' competition extends far beyond the product industry: it is enmeshed in the flow of capital within multiplicant and diversified firms, between productive, commercial, and money investments, and across the world capitalist economy as a whole. The two examples examined above (sections 8 and 9) suggest that the tensions between workers' competition and collaboration take significantly different forms within these different systems of competition.

⁽⁵⁾ Differences in work-identity are of course often a base for relations of power and conflicts of interest *outside* production; for example, gender differences within wage work give men of interest power over women outside of it. But these relations of power are precisely a function of their operation outside of the direct operation of capital.

Within each system the process of competition is both a product and a cause of uneven development of structures, in particular of the capital-labour relation, and this unevenness typically takes a geographical form. This has a number of consequences. The varied structures within the system function as strategies for capital to which workers have to respond. Thus qualitative change imposed on workers in the name of competition is often associated with structures found elsewhere. As these strategies are developed in relation to labour power and labourers of particular characteristics (work-identities), they may be seen by workers as originating in these characteristics, which can generate hostility. More generally, differences in work-identity create barriers to collaboration, though they do not directly create conflicts of interest.

Two comments may be made at this point. First, we can see the usefulness of adopting an approach in which *different levels of abstraction* are used. I have proceeded from a contradiction in the capital-labour relation in its most abstract form, involving capital and labour in general; I have moved to the level of many capitals and individual workers, where workers' spatial competition appears; and then I have developed this contradiction in varied ways with respect to different types and production of labour power, different systems of competition of capitals, and their specific spatialities. This procedure exposes the common elements underlying what are apparently quite different situations. It also allows us to theorise the significant ways in which differentiation occurs, to *construct* difference, rather than treat it descriptively or regard it as sui generis (see footnote 1).

Second, the approach developed in this paper questions the central role accorded to the form of capital in much academic and political discourse on localistic competition. I argued in section 9 that competition involving single and multipiant firms has more in common than is often thought. In the context of these common elements, the distinction between the two cases appears different from (in fact the opposite of) that commonly proposed: collaboration between workers is *easier* in the multipiant than in the single-plant case. Similarly, a sharp distinction is often drawn between local competition involving (overly) 'spatially mobile investment' and that involving 'indigenous' firms, the latter regarded as 'less competitive', or indeed as not competitive at all (GIC, 1983; Lloyd and Newlands, 1988; RTP1, 1985). But the way in which I have theorised competition shows how much these two forms have in common. Both involve competitive strategies centred in the labour process and the employment relation, and thus involving forms of class collaboration and conflict; in both cases the dominant strategies and the pressures of profitability are constructed by the product-industry system and by systems of other sectors into which the competing capitals can flow; and capital flows in and out of workplaces and product industries via 'indigenous' firms as it does via spatially mobile investment. Moreover, the competitive pressures on individual workers are a function of their place in the division of labour, of their social life, and of the local markets in labour power, irrespective of whether these are controlled by locally or externally controlled capital. This does not mean that location of ownership has no significance to workers' competition; but, as with the case of multisite firms, this significance has to be constructed *in relation to the* common, underlying structures. We can see, then, that distinctions with respect to forms of capital which are often made in discussions of localistic competition can have their meaning radically changed by a proper theorisation of competition, thus underlining the need to develop this theory.

localistic consciousness corresponds to real social-economic processes and the processes of development displace and mystify the logic of these fundamental relations (Geras, 1972). Workers' support for localism is a real but displaced form of their dependence on capital.

I suggested in section 2 that in locality studies the construction of class relations by competition have been neglected. The argument in this paper indicates that the nature and strength of local class alliances for competitiveness will vary enormously between different localities and over time within the same locality. I have discussed some of the axes of differentiation: the forms of capitalist competition, particularly within the labour process; the qualities of labour power; and rates of profit, pace of accumulation, and rates of unemployment. The spatialities of competition summarised above differ between localities. To *theorise* local class alliances one must therefore attend to these processes and their local specificity.

13 Spatial competition, contradictory interests, and politics

My account has been centred on developing a contradiction between workers' interests in collaboration and in conflict with capital. Much of the writing on localistic competition is one-sided in abstracting from one or the other side of this contradiction; such abstraction is illegitimate because the two aspects are developments of single structures, namely the capital-labour relation and capital mobility. Thus, writers who deplore the 'irrationality' of the 'zero-sum game' (section 2) usually ignore the real interest that workers have in such competition. Conversely, writers who support workers' involvement in localistic competition typically ignore the class antagonisms which are inherent in the processes of that competition (Cooke, 1988), or argue that these antagonisms can (and should) be suppressed through institutional means (Hirst and Zeitlin, 1988). Cooke, for example, argues that where a workers' party, the British Labour Party, has played a leading role in 'growth coalitions' this has meant that the effect of the coalition has been to promote social justice rather than merely to increase profits; on this basis he urges a greater commitment by the left to such coalitions. But the fact that these coalitions are led by workers' organisations does not in itself make them progressive. Localistic competition is a negative-sum game within product industries, and at present probably in the economy as a whole (Gough, 1986a). It often proceeds through a worsening of the conditions of work or employment. To put the matter more abstractly, workers' support for localistic competition is a development of their dependency on capital, precisely the opposite of social justice.⁽⁷⁾ Those giving accounts of the politics of localistic competition need to keep in mind this contradiction.

Last, what does this analysis suggest about a politics which opposes localistic competition between workers? During a long period of stagnation the pressures towards such competition are particularly strong, and the economic differences which create barriers to collaboration between workers tend to increase; however,

⁽⁷⁾ These contradictions can be seen in some of the examples of supposedly progressive growth coalitions given by Cooke (1988). The coalition for 'regional growth in the North of England in the 1960s, and that in Newcastle led by T Dan Smith, involved a subordination of labour to the labour processes, forms of production organisation, and physical development desired by firms, which not surprisingly led to corrupt relations between Labour politicians and business interests; and they involved a political passivity of the working class which was associated with extremely undemocratic practices within the Labour Party (Hudson, 1989). The corruption of the North East regional Labour Party, in this double sense, speaks eloquently of the nature of such growth coalitions.

we have seen that an opposition to localism does not have to rely on moral injunctions, but can be based in workers' interests. The resolution of contradictory interests by a particular social agent lies not in pure consciousness, but in the more-or-less conscious pursuit of *projects* through which these interests can be realised (section 3). The conflicting interests, in this case in collaboration with capital or with other workers, typically differ in their *practicability*, in how easy they are to pursue within a given time scale. This takes us on to institutional and political questions beyond the scope of this paper. But my discussion does indicate what aspects of the economy an antilocalist politics would have to address. One is the pressures of local and national markets. As we have seen (section 6), the pressure on workers towards localism is partly constructed by local labour-market conditions: high rates of unemployment reinforce the tendency towards local collaboration. For this reason Molotch (1976) argues that *the key* to combating workers' involvement in localistic competition lies in the implementation of (national) politics for full employment and guaranteed minimum income. Such politics would certainly help. But the problem cannot be resolved simply within the labour market: it involves relations within production (something which Molotch misses because of his Keynesian approach: see section 5). Labour-market conditions are themselves an expression of accumulation and of the capital-labour relation within production. Moreover, even where a local or national capitalist economy achieves full employment, labour still remains dependent on capital for the quality of work, the terms of employment, and wages; that is, the subordination of labour to capital concerns the quality as well as the quantity of employment (section 5). A break by workers from localism thus involves confronting the subordination of labour to capital in all its aspects.

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