Towards a Marxist political economy of adult education and globalization: Understanding the dictatorship of capital today[1]

John D. Holst
The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania, USA

Abstract

This special issue calls us to examine the dictatorship of capital. The rule of capital in the labor/capital relation has always been a form of dictatorship. Therefore, we need to consider the particularities of this relation as they manifest today. In recent decades, the nature of the labor/capital relation, or capitalism, has generally been describe via the term globalization. As adult educators, we need theory to help explain the nature of and paths forward from the devastating social, political, and cultural impacts of globalization or the contemporary form of the dictatorship of capital. Moreover, when we consider the field beyond academia and include social movement-based adult educators, it is important to understand that not only do we need theory, but some of the best theory we need is developed by social movement-based adult educators. This cross-disciplinary theoretical inquiry presents a political economic framework for understanding adult education and globalization that draws on academic and social movement-based theory. It then contrasts this theory with the dominant learning for earning paradigm within adult education in order to consider alternative paths for the future of adult education.

Keywords: *Globalization, political economy, precarity, labor theory of value, falling rate of profit*

This special issue of *JCEPS* corresponds with a number of important and urgent calls by prominent adult educators. Carpenter and Mojab (2017) speak to the fact that with every piece of writing they do, they begin with the idea that the world is "messy and chaotic" and ever more so as witnessed by the human and ecological suffering they evidence as proof of the state of the planet. In a recent issue of *Adult Learning* Thomas Sork (2019) captures the zeitgeist of our times when he characterizes the "troubled state of the world" as a set of "wicked problems". In 2019, the US-based flagship journal of our field, *Adult Education Quarterly* (AEQ), went through one of its periodic changes in its editorial team. In a reflective article, the outgoing team of Leona English, et al. (2019) raised the issue of why our field is not more engaged with social issues and cited globalization as one of the main issues we face today. Patricia Gouthro (2019) has recently challenged us to consider the importance of theory for understanding the "social, political, and cultural contexts within which we work" (p. 65) as adult educators. Inspired by all of these recent calls, the purpose of this article is to provide a theoretical framework for understanding the socio-political economic realities that are part and parcel of globalization: the moniker through which we refer to what this special issue is calling the dictatorship of capital.

The phrase dictatorship of capital is a term familiar to those within the Marxist tradition, but most likely not one familiar to most adult educators. I think most adult educators will find the term off-putting and potentially overly dogmatic hyperbole—particularly when contrasted to its opposite the dictatorship of the proletariat—to be relevant for the practice of most of us in the field. Nevertheless, I want to confront head-on this term and its relevance for us as adult educators here at the beginning, also in the theoretical body of this article, and then return to its relevance more in the concluding section. The term capital has a number of interrelated meanings in the Marxist tradition. It can refer to

money that circulates in order to increase its value through capitalist production and distribution (Marx, 1967); this will be a central element in the theoretical exposition below. It also can refer to a social class, as in capital(ists), and a social relation within which this class is immersed and from which it emerges and is reproduced over time, as in the unequal social relationship between capitalists and workers. In this directly relational reference, capital is often counterposed to labor in the sense of the capital/labor relation. In more recent parlance, we can think of the roughly equivalent relation of the 1%/99% popularized by the Occupy Wall Street Movement.

In adult education, rather than capital/labor, we are more familiar with the use of the terms employers and employees. Dictatorship in this phrase is a strong reference to the idea that in the capital/labor relationship, it is capital, capitalists, or employers who dictate terms of employment, and workplace education, for employees. Our commonsensical notions generally align with this in the sense that we know that only the ultrarich, capital(ists), are able to engage in space or deep-sea tourism; that everyday people generally do not have the ear of politicians unless they make a mass ruckus in the streets or in their workplaces; but, when billionaires talk, the politicians and mainstream media listen. Nevertheless, we rarely consider these facts as the result of ongoing social and political economic relations foundational to capitalism. Nor do we generally stop to think about how much capital dictates what we do as adult educators. Here the phrase dictatorship of capital is an invitation for us to ask ourselves the tough questions: For whom and for what are we educating? Who are we really working for and to what and whose ends? Our classrooms and settings in which we engage in our educational work are often populated by everyday poor and working-class people, but is our work as adult educators in

their interests? Who is actually *dictating* what, where, how, and why we do what we do as adult educators?

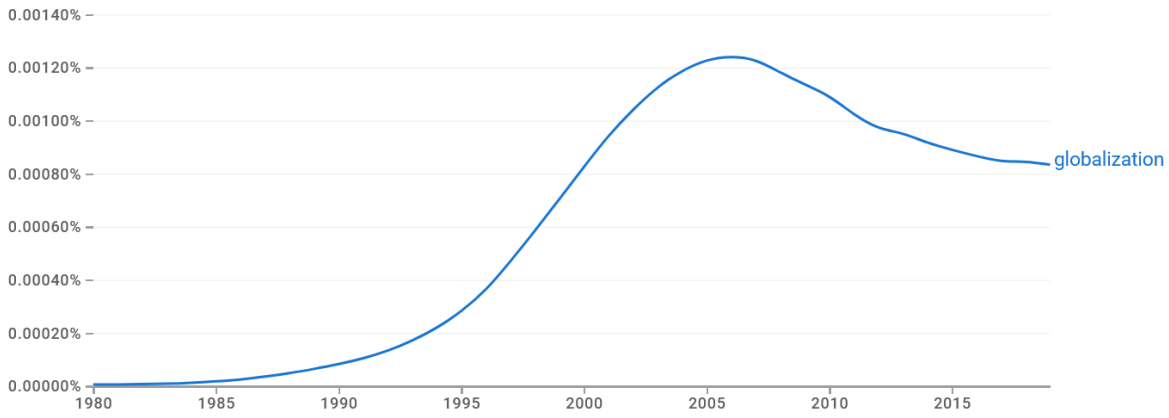
These questions are at the heart of this article, and I will return to them in the conclusion. They are also questions for which we need theory to help answer them. As we consider our work and who is dictating the terms of it, we need to step back and consider our work in broader terms, we need to think about the relation between our work and the broader forces of globalization.

Review of Literature

Since studies with a focus on globalization have actually waned in the years since the heyday of globalization scholarship and anti-globalization protests in the late 1990s and early 2000s, it is interesting that the former *AEQ* editors cite globalization as one of the main trends shaping our field now and in the future. In Figure 1, for example, I provide a Google NGram for the term "globalization" from 1980-2019 which clearly shows a decline in the usage of the term after 2007-2008.

Figure 1

Google NGram of the term globalization



The US and its allies' so-called "Global War on Terror" launched in 2001 was a blow to the then internationally expanding anti-globalization or global justice movement from which it never recovered. The switch from global justice activism to anti-war activism, proved to be a momentum breaker for the global justice movement. The World Social Forum's "Another World is Possible" rallying cry for this alter-globalization movement has taken its place alongside such iconic slogans like "The Whole World is Watching" or "Create One, Two, Three Vietnams" as emblematic of prior struggle of prior times. The global economic crisis of 2007-2008 shifted what seemed to be an endless stream of sociological, economic, and political science studies of globalization in favor of theories of economic crisis that would help explain what the architectures of the then collapsing neoliberal economic order, such as the US Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, admittedly could not (see Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, 2010). And finally, the hopes by mainstream western economists and policy makers that the People's Republic of China's (PRC) entrance into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 as a part of its "Opening Up" economic reforms would usher in a period of domination of the PRC by western capital were dealt a fatal blow under the leadership of Xi Jinping and the PRC's Belt and Road Initiative (Hammond, 2023). Both international mainstream policymakers' goals of what they claimed could be a just globalization in which all boats would rise, and the oppositional movements to the actual reality of growing economic and social inequalities and polarization waned in the first decade of the 21st century.

Why then, given a shifting away from anti-globalization protest and theory building on globalization, should we take up the *AEQ* editors' call for studies on globalization? First, it is important to realize that social and political economic theories of globalization from the Global North and South have appeared in our scholarship from at least the 1990s and 2000s (e.g., Jarvis, 2007; Kell, Shore, &

Singh; Mayo, 2005; Merriam, Courtenay, & Cervero, 2006; Walters, 1997; Wangoola & Youngman, 1996; Youngman, 2000), and the term globalization is granted its own entry in the *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education* (English, 2005). Nevertheless, we as a field have never really created a robust research agenda to address Frank Youngman's (2000) insight that there has been little effort to develop theoretical approaches to adult education and (economic) development. Hence, Gouthro's (2019) call and that of the *AEQ* Editors remain relatively unanswered, yet highly relevant.

Second, and this is central to this article, what activists were fighting against through anti-globalization protests and what scholars were trying to describe with globalization theory were really the nature and impact of capitalist relations in particular times and spaces. Or, put in terms of the theme of this special issue, globalization is really a euphemism for the current state of capitalism or the dictatorship of capital today. This became even more apparent to me through research interviews with movement-based radical adult educators in the US (Holst, 2004) and Chile (Holst, 2021). Globalization, a term so important that Waters (2001) described it as "the concept, the key idea by which we understand the transition of human society into the third millennium" (p. 1) was really about the ever-changing social totality of capitalism in which capital exercises a dictatorial rule over labor; that is why the movement-based educators I interviewed on globalization quickly turned our interviews toward their understandings of contemporary capitalism. It was neoliberal capitalism or imperialism that was of most interest to them.

Unfortunately, however, if you read the four-page definition of globalization in the *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education* written by Matthias Finger (2005), you may notice that the word capitalism is never used, despite discussion of "economic globalization" and the mentioning of the "free flow of

capital" (p. 270). Theories that consider globalization as the contemporary nature of the social totality of capitalism have been much less prominent in our scholarship (for exceptions see, Allman, 2001; Carpenter & Mojab, 2017; Youngman, 2000). The editors of a recent issue of the *European Journal on the Education and Learning of Adults* make this evident in their introductory essay of a special issue on capitalism and the future of adult education (Milana, Kopecký, & Finnegan, 2021). This is despite the fact that as early as 1999 Foley argued that adult educators needed to take up precisely this kind of political economic analysis. In this article, I pick up Foley's call and attempt to provide the kind of analysis of globalization today that English, et. al (2019) and Milana, Kopecký, and Finnegan (2021) see as lacking, but essential to our field.

My analysis, as I will detail below, is based in political economy. To understand the nature of globalization as I am defining it, we need political economy. Unfortunately, just like the dearth of globalization analysis in adult education, there is also a general lack of political economic analysis as well. Given how much our work is shaped by and shaped toward (dare I say dictated by?) notions such as the knowledge economy, skills gaps, upgrading of skills, career pathways, etc., you would think we would have more economic analysis of our work. Sadly, this is simply not the case. When we look at political economic analyses of adult education, beyond the Marxist-informed work of Allman (2001), Livingstone (2023), Foley (1999), Youngman (2000) and Wangoola and Youngman (1996), we have very little innovation in this area since the beginning of the 21st century except for the work of Carpenter & Mojab (2017).

What little new work in adult education under the banner of political economy is mainly focused on international comparative policy analysis and is steeped in 1990s civil societarian frameworks (see Livingston 2023, for an exception to this trend). In Desjardin's (2017) book, for example, it is never really clear how

he is defining political economy, or his own political economic approach, beyond stating that the political economy of learning is an approach to address "the extent and effectiveness of organized learning opportunities, how they are organized and governed, by whom and for what purpose" (p. 1). These are good questions, but a specific political economic framework is not presented to answer these questions. Embedded in the analysis, one can venture that there is a state, civil society, market tripartite framework similar to the frameworks of Rubenson and Walker (2006) and Regmi (2021, 2023). Desjardin's rather vague approach here is also evident in his Handbook chapter of 2018 in which he defines the political economy of education as a "focus…on economic-related thinking involving (adult) education but emphasis is placed on social theory, institutional aspects, norms and socio-political positions as well as the critical approach to research" (p. 216). No real analysis of the contemporary nature of capitalism is presented.

The tripartite civil societarian approach popularized more in political science by Cohen and Arato (1992) and taken up in adult education most famously by Michael Welton (1993, 1995, 1997) in social movement learning (SML) studies is the most prevalent political economic approach to adult education in our literature today. In this approach, that at times misappropriates (e. g., Regmi, 2023) Gramsci's definition of civil society[2] we are presented with a framework for the social totality consisting of relatively independent realms of the market, the state, and civil society. These relatively autonomous social realms each act on their own interests. The general conclusion drawn from this approach is that the people-based, and more locally- and grassroots-oriented realm of civil society needs to be organized in order to fend off intrusions from the state and the market. This is all well and good for a social democratic strategy, but it has been critiqued by Marxist approaches in adult education (e.g., Carpenter, 2015; Holst, 2002) and falls into the category of acritical reproductive practice

outlined by Allman (2001). Gains may be made within the labor/capital relation for either side, but the capitalist relation is never really critiqued or considered for transformation.

Given the ongoing lack of a specific political economic analysis in adult education, my hope is that the theoretical analysis I develop or outline in this article will help us understand the broad-picture political economic context in which we do our work. This broad picture, whether we call it globalization, the dictatorship of capital, our current context, or the world we live and work in, shapes and is shaped by the answers we give to the questions I pose above about the nature of our work as adult educators. These questions, when posed in terms of the theme of this special issue, do revolve around the central question of who or what is dictating the terms of what we do as adult educators.

Method of Inquiry

In presenting this political economic analysis, I draw on three bodies of literature. First, I draw on the political economy developed by Karl Marx in the three volumes of his magnus opus *Capital*. Second, I draw on recent political economic theory and empirical studies by political economists demonstrating the permanent crisis endemic to global capitalism around the world (e.g., Carchedi & Roberts, 2018, 2023; Kliman, 2012; Roberts, 2016; Robinson, 2022, & Smith, 2010). Third, and perhaps most importantly, I draw on working-class organic intellectuals[3] and scholar-activist popular educators who have been theorizing the growing crisis of capitalism for at least the last three decades (Baptist, 2010; Baptist & Rehman, 2011; Heagerty & Peery, 2000; Katz-Fishman, Scott, & Gomes, 2014; Peery, 1993, 2002); they have actually been considerably ahead of academics in understanding the nature of the crisis we are all coming to realize as wicked problems (Sork, 2019) today.

The method of inquiry is political economy and follows the approach introduced in adult education scholarship by Frank Youngman (2000). Youngman summarizes eight major propositions of a Marxist political economic approach to adult education.[4] I follow these propositions and build on them by introducing new political economic theory and perspectives from organic intellectuals in order to present a theoretical model of globalization relevant for the challenges facing adult educators today. I do this cognizant of the fact that capitalism, while having a general trajectory across the planet, develops unevenly geographically, and therefore, can take on specific characteristics in different parts of the world.

This article is not the first time in the *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* that I have written on globalization and adult education (see Holst, 2007). In my 2007 article on these topics, I drew on Tabb's (1997) typology of strong and long theories of globalization. I still find this typology helpful in that it corresponds well to how globalization was and has been taken up in adult education literature on social movement learning. Briefly summarizing a much more detailed analysis (Holst, 2002), in general, those advocating for the special learning attributes of new social movements (feminism, environmentalism, identity, etc.) also argued for a strong globalization position aligned with a civil societarian political project. Strong globalization meant that globalization marked a fundamental change in global politics and economics in which old social movements were obsolete and a new approach to politics was necessary for the new era of globalization. The old dream of socialism needed to be tempered by a politics which advocated for the learning- and identity-focused new social movements that would protect civil society from intrusions from the state and market. In contrast to this position, those advocating for the continued relevance of old social movements did so because a long perspective on

globalization was based on the idea that capitalism was always global so nothing in terms of a so-called era of globalization was new. Therefore, the dream of socialism was still alive and the movements best suited to fight and educate for it were the old social movements of the labor movement and working-class political parties.

In this current article, however, which in many ways is an update of my 2007 article, I have added analysis of capitalism from working-class organic intellectuals and particularly those that focus on the disruptive and revolutionary role that qualitatively new technologies are playing in fundamentally transforming capitalism. In addition, I show how contemporary Marxist political economists are demonstrating this impact of new technologies with empirical evidence. Combining the political economy of new technologies and globalization with the insights from organic intellectuals also pushes the analysis beyond the old versus new social movements debate in terms of political strategy. It is interesting to see how just as Tabb's typology characterized well the two general camps of globalization theorists that mapped well on to SML literature, Dyer-Witheford, Kjøsen, and Steinhoff's (2019) typology of maximalist and minimalist approaches to AI and new technology also captures well the approaches that social justice-oriented literature takes on the prospects for social change that are or are not opened up by new technology. I will have more to say on this typology and political strategy in the conclusion.

A Theory of Globalization from Three Sources

There are three main elements to the theory of globalization I am presenting that correspond to the three bodies of literature I bring together. First, I outline the major features of capitalism drawing on select elements of Marx's analysis in Vols. I-III of *Capital*. Second, I outline an analysis of the nature of capitalist

crisis today that highlights qualitative changes in the nature of capitalism today due to the growing presence of robotic, microchip-based technologies that disrupt the economic and labor terrains within which many adult educators work. Lastly, I draw on the work of US-based organic intellectuals who have witnessed the profound transformations of the US working-class majority[5] among whom most U.S. adult educators work. I conclude with a summary of the implications this analysis of globalization has for the future of adult education.

Key Elements of Marx's Analysis of Capitalism as a Global and Globalizing Social Totality

Reading Marx's *Capital* is very challenging. There are many companion texts for readers (e.g., Brewer, 1984; Engels, 1974; Harvey, 2018), yet I would agree with Vijay Prashad (2020) that the best way to approach *Capital* is to read it on its own and preferably with others. I will, then, begin where Marx does on page one of Volume I with an analysis of what most immediately appears to be the nature of capitalism and that is the immense number of commodities that surround us.

We can think of the commodity as the cell of capitalism. As a biological analysis of a cell reveals a lot about the nature of life in its more complex manifestations, a political economic analysis of a commodity reveals a lot about the nature of the capitalist social totality. Marx (1967) argues that a commodity, something produced for the realization of profit in a capitalist society, has a dual nature. It has use-value and exchange value. Use-value, not unique to capitalism, just refers to the fact that the item produced is useful in some way to someone. Exchange value refers to the fact that, in a capitalist society, a commodity can be related to other commodities in terms of a quantity and this quantitative relation usually takes the form of the mediator of money.

The major take-away from this part of *Capital* is how Marx (1967) advances, here, and through the text, on the then already existing notion of a labor theory of value to understand the nature of human social relations through the exchange of commodities. The basic point of the labor theory of value is that the value of a commodity is determined by the socially necessary (average productivity of labor in a given place and time) labor time needed to produce it. This labor time is, in a sense, congealed in the commodity and realized through the exchange of commodities. Just think about a sweater you knit to sell at a craft fair. If you are a really bad knitter and it takes you three times more to knit a basic sweater than the average craft fair seller, no one who knows anything about knitting will pay three times as much for your sweater. In the back of every buyer's mind at the fair is how time consuming the knitting gone into any given sweater for sale is versus the price. The more complex and time consuming the knitting, the more willing people are to pay a higher price; the labor theory of value can be empirically proven and is a part of any shopper's basic common sense.

There is one point, among others, that Marx (1967) makes about commodities that is worth highlighting. Our labor that produces things is social, it involves us with others. This social character of our labor, however, in a commodity producing capitalist society takes the form, not of the relation between people, but the relation between things; we buy things, unlike at the simple craft fair, in stores without the presence of the producers. The social character of production is hidden: the fact that we are all dependent on each other, and increasingly so, as societies become more complex. We experience this dependence as an alienated individualism, and as a dependence not on one another, but as a dependence on things.

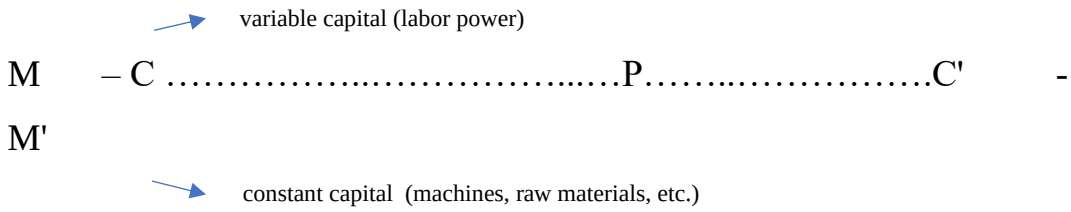
Money, the universal equivalent that allows for the exchange of commodities with uneven amounts of labor embodied in them, existed long before capitalism. Moreover, the sale or trade of the products of people's labor also existed before capitalism. For Marx (1967), what distinguishes capitalism from other social totalities is the production of commodities not for their use, but for the realization of their value; this is a fundamental transformation of societies that has happened all over the world. Money that circulates for its increased valorization is capital; once this form of production and circulation takes hold in a society, it is ever expanding. Hence, capitalism expands globally from its very beginning. Therefore, a study of globalization is really the study of the socio-political economic reality of capitalism.

Marx (1967) introduces some basic formulas to explain the distinction between the production of communities for use and the production of commodities for profit.

I can grow tomatoes in my garden and sell them for money. Then I take that money and buy what I need. For Marx the sale of my tomatoes is: C-M and my purchase of what I need is M-C. Simple commodity production then is C-M-C with the ultimate aim being the use value of the commodity purchased at the end. A general formula for capitalism, however, is M-C-M'. Here the end goal is money prime ('), profit, or more money than at the beginning.

One of the great questions of political economists like Adam Smith, who preceded Marx, was to understand the massive amount of wealth produced in capitalist societies. Armed with the labor theory of value, and seeing this process from the perspective of labor, Marx provided a new answer to this question based on a fundamentally new way to look at it. In Volume II of *Capital*, Marx (1978) provides a more complex formula for capitalism:

Financial Capital Productive Capital Commercial Capital



In other words, a capitalist starts with money (M), often financial capital borrowed from a bank, and buys two major forms of commodities (C). The first commodity is what Marx calls variable capital or hired workers' labor-power; it is variable because the capitalist can make us work longer or faster. The second commodity is what Marx calls constant capital or means of production such as tools, buildings, machines, raw materials, etc. Capitalists put the labor-power to work to produce commodities for sale or commodities prime (C') that has more value than the capital they put in. To realize this surplus value, they must sell the product (commercial capital) on the market to get money (M').

Where does the prime (') on the C and the M come from? Who produces this surplus value that can be realized as profit? Based on the labor theory of value, labor-power is the only commodity that creates value; remember, the value of a commodity is based on the amount of labor that went into its production. Machines merely transfer the value they contain—the amount of labor used to produce them—slowly over their lifetime to the products they produce. When living labor (the worker) is made to work beyond the point it creates an equivalent of its cost, it adds value to what it produces.

The production process becomes the merging of dead and living labor; the domination of living labor by dead labor (congealed in machinery), or the

incorporation of living labor in the process of the valorization of things. To elaborate on the source of surplus value or profit, Marx takes us into what he calls the noisy sphere of production to show us, from the standpoint of those doing the work, that there are two ways in which surplus value is created in a workday.

Marx (1967) looks at a workday as starting at point A and ending at point C. Point B is the time in the workday when a worker has produced enough so that, when it is sold, it will cover the costs of the worker, e.g., salary and benefits (if any). One can make a similar calculation for piecework or salaried workers.

A→→→→→→→B→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→C

Marx calls the work done between A and B necessary labor. He calls the work done between B and C unnecessary or surplus labor or labor that produces surplus value. If you think about the workday, from the standpoint of capital or the employer, the goal is to expand the distance between B and C; to expand the amount of unnecessary labor that produces surplus value that can be realized as profit. There are two ways to do that, and Marx labeled these as two different forms of surplus value.

Making people work well beyond point B in the workday creates absolute surplus value; here, wages are kept the same, or minimally increased, and the workday is lengthened. As workers revolt against this blatant exploitation, the capitalist can increase the distance between B and C by pushing B closer to A. Marx called this intensification of labor productivity via an increasing division of labor, or via the introduction of labor-saving technologies, relative surplus value. Historically, as struggles for shorter working hours grew, there was a

general shift toward strategies aimed at creating relative surplus value, although there is always a mix of both strategies continuously in play.

The Crux of the Crisis of Capitalism Today

In Volume III of *Capital*, Marx (1981) begins to put all of this together to analyze the historic trajectory of capitalism and to explain the crisis prone nature of capitalism. If labor is the only commodity that creates value, and if the historic tendency is to favor relative surplus value over absolute surplus value, that means there is a growing tendency for a reduction of the overall presence of labor in the process of production in favor of a growing presence of constant capital or machinery and technology. Marx used the term organic composition of capital and the ratio c/v to refer to this relationship between variable capital (v) and constant capital (c) in the production process.

Marx argued that the evermore top-heavy c/v ratio meant that there was a historical tendency for there to be a fall in the rate of profit in capitalist production, as the value creating commodity of labor was slowly overtime pushed out of the production process. Since it is only labor or variable capital that produces surplus value, the more constant capital involved, the less profit can be made in production. This process is inevitable, and its magnitude increases.

Political Economists and Empirical Evidence

Among political economists, there is ongoing debate about the importance Marx placed on this tendency of the rate of profit to fall over time. While the debate goes on, there is a growing group of political economists (e.g., Carchedi & Roberts, 2018, 2023; Kliman, 2012; Smith, 2010) who have empirically shown how the ever-increasing reliance on technology, at the expense of labor, to generate relative surplus value has over the past several decades steadily

lowered the rate of profit and created not a crisis in capitalism, but rather a crisis of capitalism itself. The most comprehensive work in this area of research is the global collection of studies compiled by Carchedi and Roberts (2018) in which they present data to show a fall in the rate of profit globally and in Japan, the UK, Spain, Greece, Brazil, China, and the US during the 20th and into the 21st centuries.

Related to this empirical work is the debate over the impact of robotics and new technologies on the current and future status of work (e.g., Antunes, 2013; Bastani, 2019; Benanav, 2020; Berger, 2017; Davis, Hirschl, & Stack, 1997; Jones, 2021; Moody, 2018; Sotelo Valencia, 2012, 2019; Srnicek & Williams, 2015; Robinson, 2022) and for which the maximalist/minimalist typology of Dyer-Witheford, Kjøsen, and Steinhoff (2019) mentioned above is helpful. The maximalist position posits the idea that robotic technology is displacing labor at an alarming and growing rate. We see this in the left-wing academic literature such as in the work of Bastani (2019) and Srnicek and Williams (2015) and in more business-oriented literature such as Brynjolfsson and McAfee's (2011) book *Race against the machine*. We have all also seen this argument in consistent mainstream media reports around the theme of the "rise of the robots". On the other hand, the minimalist position such as that of Kim Moody[6] (2018) argues that the notion of robotics replacing millions of workers is hyperbole on par with the notion that that ATMs would closedown all bank branches when introduced on a large scale in the 1980s.

Nevertheless, just like with the globalization debate of the 1990s, that in adult education had corresponding arguments over learning and education in old and new social movements, there is a general problem in this debate over technology with taking stands on the here-and-now while failing to consider the general trajectory. For Marxists, this is a particularly important point. The role

of the organic intellectual or the revolutionary is not only to understand the past in order to understand the present, but to also understand the trajectory of where socio-political economic processes and relations are heading. This is what Marx and Engels (1948) in the *Communist Manifesto* referred to as having "the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march" (p. 22). In other words, the point is not just to debate whether new technologies have or not already replaced significant numbers of jobs, but to also understand the future of work. Posed in this way, the question is about both the technological replacement of workers and the extent to which new technologies are also making still existing jobs more precarious or fragmented. It is on this point that we can take the argument out of academia and look to organic intellectuals in US social movements, who have long-term, on-the-ground experience, with the impact of technology on the working-class majority.

Organic Intellectuals and the Lived Reality of the Crisis

How have U.S. social movement-based organic intellectuals seen the role of technology in their workplaces and communities, and how have they drawn on insights from the theory and practice of the Marxist tradition? They have witnessed, firsthand, the transformation of the production process through the introduction of *labor-saving* technology throughout the 20th century up to the introduction of *labor replacing* technology beginning in the late 20th century and accelerating in the 21st century. This transformation has meant a growing precarity of work, a fragmentation of work, lowered standards of living, and most significantly, the emergence of a growing sector of society that no longer has stable participation in the basic relationship of capitalism: you get a job, to earn a wage or salary, to pay for the things you need to survive.

From revolutionary organic intellectuals (e.g., Baptist, 2010; Heagerty & Peery, 2000; Peery, 1993, 2002) and scholar activists (e.g., Baptist & Rehmann, 2011;

Katz-Fishman, Scott, & Gomes, 2014), we get a vivid picture of what this crisis looks like for the working-class majority. They tell us of the growing precarity, fragmentation, polarization, and inequality plaguing societies around the world. They also explain how there is a growing class within societies around the world no longer attached to the basic labor/capital relation: those pushed out of capitalist forms of production by labor replacing technologies. As movement-based intellectuals, and particularly those most based in this growing sector, they also demonstrate how this sector has basic demands for survival that cannot be met within the prevailing relations of capitalism. In other words, there is a growing objectively revolutionary class. It is objectively revolutionary because its lived reality, upon which democratic pedagogies can and must be built, demands a reorganization of society outside of the basic dynamics of capitalism. Production with less and less labor and distribution of goods based on the ability to pay, means a growing sector of humanity cannot survive. Distribution of goods based on need, or socialism, is the only practical solution. You could say that the lived reality of this growingly precarious sector of society is dictating the need for new productive and distributive relations.

Conclusion: Adult Education and the Growing Precarity of Work and Life

Working class-based organic intellectuals have identified a fundamental transformation of the working-class majority of US society. Among those they directly work and live with, they find a growing precariousness with which increasing numbers of people find themselves attached to the prevailing form of production and distribution of basic goods: you get a job, to get a wage, to buy what you need. Empirical research also bears this out. According to the 2015 study by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), if using a broad definition of contingent work to include part-time workers, self-employed workers, and more typically precarious workers such as temp, on-demand, and day laborers, precariously employed workers made up “35.3 percent of

employed workers in 2006 and 40.4 percent in 2010" (p. 4). Stricter definitions of contingent and alternative employed workers used by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018) found nearly 17 percent of workers were precarious. What these statistics as such, and particularly the GAO (2015) that uses a much stricter definition of contingent work to argue only about seven percent of workers are precariously employed, fail to indicate is the trajectory of precarity in the same time period they are studying. As Hyman (2018) reports, more longitudinal studies show that from 1995-2015, 94% of net new jobs were outside traditional employment, in other words, they were precarious jobs.

As I have identified elsewhere (Holst, 2023), scholars and scholar activists have for nearly two decades used various terminology to refer to the growing sector of humanity finding itself in precarious work and living situations. Mike Davis (2007) talks in terms of a planet of slums; Bieler, Lindberg, and Pillay (2008, p. 266) of a "precarious and pauperized working class"; Lane (2010) of an informal proletariat, Zibechi (2005) of "those without", and Munck (2011), like Standing (2011) and Braga (2018), of a global precariat. It is the work of Standing (2011), however, for better or worse, that has received the most attention with the concept of the precariat.

While Standing (2011) is very good at describing key features of the precariat in the European context and also highlights migrants as a key sector of the precariat, his analysis of how the precariat has emerged is wanting. For Standing, the precariat is the "child" of globalization and more specifically the result of neoliberal economic and labor policies in the era of globalization. Policies that create the conditions and even mandates for more flexible labor contracts certainly play a role in creating precarity and particularly in European countries with a tradition of social democracy. Nevertheless, the analyses of political economists and working-class organic intellectuals I outlined above

provide a more robust political economic analyses of the causes of precarity that focus on more fundamental transformations in the basic relations within capitalist societies. As Standing would have it, at a certain point in the 1970s, pro-business policy makers suddenly realized that they could generate more profits for business owners by legislating and mandating weaker labor regulations as if these policy makers did not always know this and have not always tried to do this.

More convincingly, Martins (2019) argues that it was precisely in the 1970s and 1980s that the widespread introduction of microelectronic technology laid the "material foundation for globalization" (p. 100). In other words, the ideas and policies that Standing (2011) highlights were facilitated by qualitatively new technologies. Here we see at play the interrelatedness of a basic contradiction of capitalism, namely the one between the forces (technology) and relations (labor conditions regulated by policy) of production. Seen in dialectical relation, it is changes in the forces of production that facilitate changes in the relations of production. These changing relations of production also facilitate changes in the forces of production. Stated more plainly, employers want to make profits. As I detailed above, introducing new technologies (forces of production) that change the nature of work (relations of production) can create more profit. As new technologies are introduced, the changing relations create the conditions for the introduction of more technology. One side of the dialectical relation advances the other and vice versa.

Nevertheless, as I also detailed above, increasing reliance on more and more technology on a national and global scale leads to an overall fall in the rate of profit over time and creates the conditions for precarity. If we look globally, the International Labour Office (2023) of the ILO tells us that two billion people are informally employed. In other words, the trajectory is as working-class

organic intellectuals describe: work is becoming more-and-more precarious. Standing (2011) is right in highlighting the fact that displaced people forced to migrate make up a significant portion of the informally employed or precariat. The connection that more-and-more people have to the basic relation of capitalism is becoming increasingly precarious. It is important, however, to highlight, as Global South scholars such as Braga (2018), Martins (2019), and Sotelo Valencia (2020) do, that precariousness has always been prevalent in the Global South. For this reason, Braga refers to the growing precarity in the Global North as a form of Brazilianization of advanced capitalist countries. Martins, Sotelo Valencia, and Katz (2022) see continuity utility in Dependency Theory as a way to explain how this growing precarity continues the super exploitation of Global South countries in this era of an overall fall in the rate of profit on a global scale. Moreover, within the Global North and globally, women and historically oppressed populations disproportionately make up the growing precarious sector of societies.

If I have provided the outlines of a theoretical framework to understand the current state of capitalism today, and if I have made the case for a socio-political economic context characterized by growing precarity and loosening attachments by an ever-growing sector of society from the basic relation of capitalist production and distribution of basic goods, how are we as a field of adult education responding? What or who is dictating what we do as educators? Let me begin with some anecdotal evidence.

The US-based Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE), of which I am a member, is one of the major professional associations for adult basic educators in the US. In August of 2023, COABE, offered four, free webinars for adult basic educators. Let's take a brief look at three of these four webinars. In the promotional material for the Virginia Tech and Economic Empowerment

Project webinar we are told: “The innovation and Gig Economy is here to stay, so it is important to prepare adult learners with an entrepreneurial mindset and innovation-based workforce-readiness skills to productively participate in it as employees and/or entrepreneurs”. We are informed that the webinar is generously sponsored by English Discoveries, a subsidiary of the Educational Testing Service, the world’s largest not-for-profit educational testing company. In the Jumpstarting Growth Sector English Language Pre-Apprenticeships webinar, adult educators can “explore and develop models for accelerated English language pre-apprenticeships that provide ELL/AEL populations with on-ramps to growth-sector, work-based learning programs”. This webinar is sponsored by EnGen, a for-profit, public benefit corporation dedicated to workforce-oriented English language instruction. The Using a Career Readiness App to Teach Finance, Digital, and Work Skills webinar entices participation by asking “Are you ready to transform your ESL and ABE classes with a cutting-edge Career Readiness App?” This webinar is sponsored by Learning Upgrade®, the limited liability company that specializes in learning Apps.

Another major US-based adult education professional association is the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). CAEL’s (n.d.) official mission is to engage “with educators, employers, and community leaders to align learning and work so that adults achieve continuous, long-term career success”. If we move beyond the US and beyond professional organizations into international academic outlets, a recent issue of our field’s most important international research journal, *International Journal of Lifelong Education* (*IJLE*), is also quite revealing in terms of the state of the research and policy analysis wings of our field. The editorial by Brandi, Hodge, Hoggan-Kloubert, Knight, and Milana “welcomes” the European Union’s March 2023 declaration of 2023 as the “European Year of Skills” and particularly its “focus on skills and skills development” (p. 225). The European Commission (n.d.) states that the year of

skills will promote "more effective and *inclusive investment in training and upskilling*". It will make "sure *skills are relevant* for labour market needs" by "*matching people's aspiration and skill sets with opportunities* on the job market" and by "*attracting skills and talent from third countries*". The authors of the editorial do raise research-based concerns of equity in educational access and hope that the concept of skills can be expanded to consider "the whole person" and "societal inequality and disadvantage" (p. 225). The general tone, however, of this editorial gives the impression that the authors already know that their hopes for an expanded vision of skills are already dashed on the cold reality of an even deeper entrenched "learning for earning" paradigm that Phyllis Cunningham (1993) warned us about over 30 years ago.

If you think this is only a US- and EU-based-phenomenon, you merely need to scroll down the table of contents in the same issue of the *IJLE* to read the article by Mayombe (2023) on entrepreneurship training in South Africa. It is almost cruel irony that the issue ends with Clarke's (2023) review of the book *Birkbeck: 200 Years of Radical Learning for Working People*. Moreover, evidence of the entrenchment of a learning for earning paradigm goes beyond the anecdotal. Cooper (2020) details the crossroads of workers' education in South Africa and globally in which the dominant paradigm for adult education and training, of which entrepreneurship training is a part, reproduces social inequalities (p. 3), while radical approaches to adult education continue to seek an education that is dictated by workers because it is worker controlled and driven. In the US, the research of Cherewka (2023) demonstrates how federal adult education policy has shifted to an ever-greater emphasis on skills for employment. This is exemplified by the fact that federal funding is allocated via the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and was moved from the Department of Education to the Department of Labor. The COABE and

CAEL trainings and mission statements above are merely following the dictates of federal adult education funding.

If we consider the current status and trajectory of adult education today and we return to the question of what and who is dictating what we do as adult educators, is it really a stretch to say that in the labor/capital relation it is capital that is dictating the terms of our work? Given the dominant themes of workforce development, skills training, career pathways, and entrepreneurship, in which the goals and purposes of our work as adult educators are skewed toward the interests of capital or employers, is it hyperbole to say that we work within a dictatorship of capital? Moreover, given the political economic framework I have outlined above and the conclusions we and working-class organic intellectuals can draw from this in terms of the trajectory of work, where are the jobs and what kind of jobs we are supposed to be educating people for? A partial answer to this question is provided by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (n.d.) in their *Most New Jobs* outlook for the period 2021 to 2031. Among the top 20 jobs with the most new positions, they project Home Health and Personal Care Aides at number 1, Cooks at number 3, Fast Food Counter workers at 4, Waiters and Waitresses at 6, Stocker and Order Fillers at 9, First-line Supervisors of Food Preparation at 11, and Maids and Housekeeping cleaners at 15. Three of the top five fastest growing jobs have yearly incomes under $30,000. In the U.S. and internationally, the fastest growing jobs are low pay and, if we recall from above, are also contingent or precarious. What then are we educating for? And in whose interests?

If we look to our past and we look around today, we will find alternatives to the growingly superfluous efforts of education and training for employment. The radical tradition of adult education has nearly endless examples from all around the world of education by and for the working-class majority. The historical and

contemporary case study work, for example, of Boughton (1997, 2010, 2018) on Australia and Timor Leste, Cooper (2020) on South Africa, and Rueda (2021) on Chile, as well as the work of US-based organic intellectuals (e.g., Baptist & Rehmann, 2011; Peery, 2002; Williams, 2023) show us adult education in which it is the poor and working class dictating for themselves the nature and goals of their own education. To continue this tradition, to make it relevant and in rhythm with the socio-political economic realities we face, we need ongoing theoretical work of a political economic nature that I have merely outlined in this article.

One thing, however, that I believe is clear from this outline and from the work of working-class organic intellectuals, is that today, revolution is not a fiery idea confined to 19th century manifestos or 1960s speeches, but the practical resolution of the lived realities of a growing sector of humanity that cannot survive under the current conditions of the capital/labor relation. Our field has a theory and practice of democratic, practical, needs-based pedagogy. What organic intellectuals tell us is that there is a burning need for a way to help people understand what they already know. There is no need to teach people their lives are precarious, that it is getting harder and harder to just get by. Precarious economic conditions on their own, however, do not create progressive social change. They create what they are— objective conditions of precarity. To address these objective conditions, we need pedagogy that helps people understand the causes of their lived reality and to workout collectively solutions to overcome these conditions. Ironically, what is needed most today are the kinds of pedagogies we already have. If we look to the radical tradition, we will find examples of pedagogies that help people to understand why their circumstances are as such; how their lived realities contain both the problem and the solution to the crisis of capitalism we face today. Our existing democratic pedagogies, however, need the kind of theory I have presented that

help us collectively understand the qualitative new nature of capitalism today and the specific ways in which this plays out differently across nations and the planet. Will we as a field put our skills to the service of those who most need it? Will we allow their lived realities, rather than capital, dictate what we do? Will we be relevant for this growing sector of humanity?

Notes

[1] This is a revised and expanded version of the paper "Towards a Political Economy of Adult Education and Globalization: Theoretical Insights for Confronting Wicked Problems in Global Times" presented at the 2021 Adult Education in Global Times (AEGT) Conference sponsored by the University of British Colombia.

[2] See Holst (2002) for an extended discussion of Gramsci's definition of civil society and distortions of it in adult education civil societarian approaches to social movement learning.

[3] See Holst and Brookfield (2017) for a discussion of the nature of organic intellectuals and their educational role within social movements.

[4] Youngman's propositions, in truncated form, are the following: 1) "Adult education activities take place within a structural context shaped by the mode of production and its class relations"; 2) "The manner and extent to which the mode of production and class relations have influenced…adult education constitute an area of investigation"; 3) "The dominance of the capitalist mode of production at the world level means that socioeconomic development in peripheral capitalist countries of the South must be located within the context of the global political economy"' 4) Different classes have different interests, and conflicts arise as they pursue these interests"; 5) Besides the relations of class, there are other important social inequalities, especially those based on gender, ethnicity and race"; 6) The conflicts within society that arise from class differences and other social inequalities are reflected in the state"; 7) Intellectual and cultural life is shaped by the capitalist mode of production"; 8) "It is assumed that the activities of political parties and of organizations in civil society…have an adult education dimension". (pp. 46-48)

[5] By working-class majority, I mean to say that it is the working class who makes up the majority of people in the United States of America. This has been shown to be the case empirically in studies by Zweig (2012, 2023), Jonna and Bellamy Foster (2014), and Livingstone (2023).

[6] It is interesting to note that Kim Moody (1997) was also a skeptic of strong globalization theories during the boom in globalization theorizing in the 1990s.

References

Allman, P. (2001). *Critical education against global capitalism: Karl Marx and revolutionary critical education*. Bergin & Garvey.

Antunes, R. (2013). *The meanings of work: Essays on the affirmation and negation of work*. Haymarket Books.

Baptist, W. (2010). A new and unsettling force: The strategic relevance of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Poor People's Campaign. *Interface, 2*(1), 262-270. Retrieved from:

http://www.interfacejournal.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Interface-2-1-pp262-270-Baptist.pdf

Baptist, W., & Rehmann, J. (2011). *Pedagogy of the poor: Building the movement to end poverty*. Teachers College Press.

Bastani, A. (2019). *Fully automated luxury communism: A manifesto*. Verso.

Benanav, A. (2020). *Automation and the future of work*. Verso.

Berger, E. (2018). *Uncertain futures: An assessment of the conditions of the present*. Zero Books.

Bieler, A., Lindberg, I., & Pillay, D. (2008). What future for the global working class? The need for a new historical subject. In A. Bieler, I. Lindberg, & D. Pillay (Eds.), *Labour and the challenges of globalization*. Pluto.

Boughton, B. (1997). *Educating the educators: The Communist Party of Australia and its influence on Australian adult education*. [Doctoral dissertation, La Trobe University].

Boughton, B. (2010). Back to the future? Timor-Leste, Cuba, and the return of the mass literacy campaign. *Literacy and Numeracy Studies, 18*(2), 23-40.

Boughton, B. (2017). Timor-Leste: Adult literacy, popular education and post-conflict peacebuilding. In M. Milana, S. Webb, J. Holford, R. Waller, & P Jarvis (Eds.) *The Palgrave international handbook on adult and lifelong education and learning* (pp. 629-647. Palgrave. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-55783-4_32

Braga, R. (2018). *The Politics of the precariat* (S. Purdy, Trans.). Haymarket Books.

Brandi, U., Hodge, S., Hoggan-Kloubert, T., Knight, E., & Milana, M. (2023). The Europeanr of skills 2023: Skills for now and the future? *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 42*(3), 225-230. https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2023.2212424

Brewer, A. (1984). *A guide to Marx's* Capital. Cambridge University Press.

Brynjolfsson, E., & McAfee, A. (2011). *Race against the machine*. Digital Frontier Press.

Carchedi, G., & Roberts, M. (Eds.). (2018). *World in crisis: A global analysis of Marx's law of profitability*. Haymarket Books.

Carchedi, G., & Roberts, M. (2023). *Capitalism in the 21st century: Through the prism of value*. Pluto Press.

Carpenter, S. (2015). The 'local' fetish as reproductive praxis in democratic learning. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 36*(1), 133-143.

Carpenter, S., & Mojab, S. (2017). *Revolutionary learning: Marxism, feminism, and knowledge*. Pluto Press.

Cherewka, A. (2023). *Testing to keep the lights on: A comparative case study of accountability in adult English language education policy* [Doctoral dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University]. https://etda.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/19998atc5068

Clarke, R. (2023). Birkbeck: 200 years of radical learning for working people [Book Review]. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 42*(3), 328-334. https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2023.2211741

Cohen, J. L. & Arato, A. (1992). *Civil society and political theory*. MIT Press.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. (2020). The financial crisis and the role of federal regulators. U.S. Government Printing Office. Available online at: https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-110hhrg55764/html/CHRG-110hhrg55764.htm

Cooper, L. (2020). *Workers' education in the Global South: Radical adult education at the crossroads*. Brill.

Council for Adult and Experiential Learning. (n.d.). History, mission, and vision. Available online at: https://www.cael.org/about-us/history-mission-vision

Cunningham, P. M. (1993). Let's get real: A critical look at the practice of adult education. *Journal of Adult Education, 22*(1), 3-15.

Davis, M. (2007). *Planet of slums*. Verso.

Davis, J., Hirschl, T., & Stack, M. (1997). *Cutting edge: Technology, information, capitalism and social revolution*. Verso.

Desjardins, R. (2017). *Political economy of adult learning systems: Comparative studies of strategies and constraints*. Bloomsbury.

Desjardins, R. (2018). Economics and the political economy of adult education. In M. Milana, S. Webb, J. Holford, R. Waller, & P. Jarvis (Eds.) *The Palgrave international handbook on adult and lifelong education and learning* (pp. 211-226). Palgrave Macmillan.

Dyer-Witheford, N., Kjøsen, A. M., & Steinhoff, J. (2019). *Inhuman power: Artificial intelligence and the future of capitalism*. Pluto Press.

Engels, F. (1974). *Engels on* Capital. International Publishers.

English, L. M. (2005). *International encyclopedia of adult education*. Palgrave Macmillan.

English, L. M., Gleiman, A., Hansman, C. A., Sun, Q., & Zacharakis, J. (2019). Editing *Adult Education Quarterly*: Reflections on the editorial role. *Adult Education Quarterly, 69*(4), 338-347. doi: 10.1177/0741713619870998

European Commission. (n.d.). *European year of skills 2023*. Available online at: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/european-year-skills-2023_en

Foley, G. (1999). *Learning in social action: A contribution to understanding informal education*. Zed.

Finger, M. (2005). Globalization. In L. M. English (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of adult education* (pp. 269-273). Palgrave Macmillan.

Gouthro, P. A. (2019). Taking time to learn: The importance of theory for adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly, 69*(1), 60-76. doi: 10.1177/0741713618815656

Hammond, K. (2023). *China's revolution and the quest for a socialist future*. 1804 Books.

Harvey, D. (2018). *A companion to Marx's* Capital. Verso.

Heagerty, B., & Peery, N. (2000). *Moving onward: From racial division to class unity*. People's Tribune/Tribuno del Pueblo.

Holst, J. D. (2002). *Social movements, civil society, and radical adult education*. Bergin & Garvey.

Holst, J. D. (2004). Globalization and education within two revolutionary organizations in the United States of America: A Gramscian analysis. *Adult Education Quarterly, 55*(1), 23-40. https://doi.org/10.1177/0741713604268895

Holst, J. D. (2007). The Politics and economics of globalization and social change in radical adult education: A critical review of recent literature. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies, 5*(1). Available online at: http://www.jceps.com/index.php?pageID=article&articleID=91

Holst, J. D. (2021). Challenging Neoliberalism through radical adult education in a Chilean Trade Union School. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 71(1), 20–36. https://doi.org/10.1177/0741713620923743

Holst, J. D. (2023). Marxism and adult education. In R. Hall, I. Accioly, & K. Szadkowski (Eds.), *Palgrave Macmillan International Handbook of Marxism and Education* (pp. 147-162). Palgrave Macmillan.

Holst, J. D., & Brookfield, S. D. (2017). Catharsis: Antonio Gramsci, pedagogy, and the political independence of the working class. In N. Pizzolato and J. D. Holst (Eds.), *Gramsci: A pedagogy to change the world* (pp. 197-220). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-40449-3_11

Hyman, L. (2018). *Temp: The real story of what happened to your salary, benefits, and job security*. Penguin Books.

International Labour Office. (2023). World employment and social outlook: Trends 2023. International Labour Office.

Jarvis, P. (2007). *Globalisation, lifelong learning and the learning society: Sociological perspectives*. Routledge.

Jones, P. (2021). *Work without the worker: Labor in the age of capitalism*. Verso.

Jonna, R. J., & Bellamy Foster, J. (2014). Beyond the degradation of labor: Braverman and the structure of the U.S. working class. *Monthly Review, 66*(5), 1-23.

Katz, C. (2022). *Dependency theory after fifty years: The continuing relevance of Latin American critical thought* (S. Malinowitz, Trans.). Haymarket Books.

Katz-Fishman, W., Scott, J., & Gomes, R. (2014). Race, class, and transformation: Confronting our history to move forward. In K. Haltinner (Ed.), *Teaching race and anti-racism in contemporary America* (pp. 265-273). Springer.

Kell, P., Shore, S., & Singh, M. (Eds.). (2004). *Adult education @ 21st century*. Peter Lang.

Kliman, A. (2012). *The failure of capitalist production: Underlying causes of the great recession*. Pluto.

Lane, M. (2010). Indonesia and the fall of Suharto: Proletarian politics in the "Planet of Slums" era. *WorkingUSA, 13*(2), 185–200. https://doi.org/10.1111/ j.1743-4580.2010.00282.x

Livingstone, D. W. (2023). *Tipping point for advanced capitalism: Class, class consciousness, and activism in the "knowledge economy"*. Fernwood Publishing.

Martins, C. E. (2019). *Dependency, neoliberalism, and globalization in Latin America* (J. Lagnado, Trans.). Haymarket Books.

Marx, K. (1967). *Capital*, Vol. 1 (S. Moore & E. Aveling, Trans.). International Publishers.

Marx, K. (1978). *Capital*, Vol. 2 (D. Fernbach, Trans.). Penguin.

Marx, K. (1981). *Capital*, Vol. 3 (D. Fernbach, Trans.). Penguin.

Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1948). *The communist manifesto*. International Publishers.

Mayo, M. (2005). *Global citizens: Social movements and the challenge of globalization*. Zed.

Mayombe, C. (2023). Applying social marketing strategies in entrepreneurship training to turn unemployed adults into entrepreneurs in South Africa. *International Journal of Lifelong education, 42*(3), 298-312. https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2023.2200206

Merriam, S. B., Courtenay, B. C., & Cervero, R. M. (2006). *Global issues and adult education: Perspectives from Latin America, southern Africa, and the United States*. Jossey-Bass.

Milana, M., Kopecký, M., & Finnegan, F. (2021). Editorial: Capitalism(s) and the future of adult education. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 12*(1), 7-13. http://doi.org/10.3384/rela.2000-7426.relae22

Moody, K. (1997). *Workers in a lean world: Unions in the international economy*. Verso.

Moody, K. (2018). High tech, low growth: Robots and the future of work. *Historical Materialism, 26*(4), 3-34.

Munck, R. (2011). Beyond North and South: Migration, informalization, and trade union revitalization. *Workingusa, 14*(1), 5–18. https://doi.org/10.1111/ j.1743-4580.2010.00317.x

Peery, N. (1993). *Entering an epoch of social revolution*. Workers Press.

Peery, N. (2002). *The future is up to us: A revolutionary talking politics with the American people*. Speakers for a New America.

Prashad, V. (2020). Video interview with Vijay Prashad on reading Marx's *Capital*. Invent the Future. https://www.invent-the-future.org/2020/12/video-interview-with-vijay-prashad-on-reading-marxs-capital/

Regimi, K. D. (2021). The international political economy of adult education: Perspectives from Canada. In S. M. Brigham, R. McGray, & K. Jubas (Eds.) *Adult education and lifelong learning in Canada: Advancing a critical legacy* (pp. 231-242). Thompson Publishing.

Regmi, K. D. (2023). Political economy model of program planning: Adult education for marginalized adults, civil society and democracy. *Studies in Continuing Education*. Early access article. httpx://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2023.2211523

Roberts, M. (2016). *The long depression: How it happened, why it happened, and what happens next*. Haymarket.

Robinson, W. I. (2022). *Global civil war: Capitalism post-pandemic.* Kairos/PM Press.

Rubenson, K., & Walker, J. (2006). The political economy of adult learning in Canada. In T. Fenwick, T. Nesbit, & B. Spencer (Eds.) *Contexts of adult education: Canadian perspectives* (pp. 173-186). Thompson Educational Publishing.

Rueda, M. A. (2021).*The educational philosophy of Luis Emilio Recabarren: Pioneering working-class education in Latin America*. Routledge.

Smith, M. E. G. (2010). *Global capitalism in crisis: Karl Marx and the decay of the profit system*. Fernwood.

Sork, T. (2019). Adult education in an era of "wicked problems". *Adult Learning, 30*(4), 143-146. doi: 10.1177/1045159519872457

Sotelo Valencia, A. (2012). *Los rumbos del trabajo: Superexplotación y precariedad social en el siglo XXI*. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

Sotelo Valencia, A. (2019). *United States in a world in crisis: The geopolitics of precarious work and super-exploitation*. Haymarket Books.

Srnicek, N., & Williams, A. (2015). *Inventing the future: Postcapitalism and a world without work*. Verso.

Standing, G. (2011). *The precariat: The new dangerous class*. Bloomsbury.

Tabb, W. (1997). Globalization is an issue, the power of capital is the issue. *Monthly Review, 49*(2), 20-30.

U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2015). *Contingent workforce: Size, characteristics, earnings, and benefits*. Available online at: https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-15-168r.pdf

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (n.d.). *Most new jobs*. Available online at: https://www.bls.gov/ooh/most-new-jobs.htm

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2018). *Contingent and alternative employment arrangements news release*. Available online at: https://www.bls.gov/news.release/conemp.htm

Walters, S. (Ed.). (1997). *Globalization, adult education, and training: Impacts and issues*. Zed.

Wangoola, P., & Youngman, F. (1996). *Towards a transformative political economy of adult education: Theoretical and practical challenges.* LEPS Press.

Waters, M. (2001). *Globalization* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Welton, M. (1993). Social revolutionary learning: The new social movements as learning sites. *Adult Education Quarterly, 43*(3), 152-164.

Welton, M. (1995). *In defense of the lifeworld: Critical perspectives on adult learning* State University of New York Press.

Welton, M. (1997). In defense of civil society: Canadian adult education in neo-conservative times. In S. Walters (Ed.), *Globalization, adult education, and training: Impacts and issues* (pp. 27-38). Zed Books.

Williams, J. (2023). *Pedagogical integrations of the Bible in organizing: A qualitative case study from the movement to end poverty*. Paper presented at the annual Adult Education

Research Conference. Available online at: https://newprairiepress.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4297&context=aerc

Youngman, F. (2000). *The political economy of adult education and development*. Zed.

Zibechi, R. (2005). Subterranean echoes: Resistance and politics "desde el sótano". *Socialism and Democracy, 19*(3), 13–39. https://doi.org/10.1080/ 08854300500257922

Zweig, M. (2012). *The working-class majority: America's best kept secret* (2nd ed.). Cornell University Press.

Zweig, M. (2023). *Class, race, and gender: Challenging the injuries and divisions of capitalism*. PM Press.

Author and Correspondence Details

John D. Holst is an Associate Professor of Lifelong Learning and Adult Education at The Pennsylvania State University in University Park, PA, USA. He is the author of *Social Movements, Civil Society, and Radical Adult Education*, co-author with Stephen Brookfield of *Radicalizing Learning: Adult Education for a Just World*, and co-editor with Nico Pizzolato of *Antonio Gramsci: A Pedagogy to Change the World.* Contact: jdh91@psu.edu