

Chapter 5

Going Digging in the Shadow of Master Categories

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Growing up in three countries and in five languages must have had something to do with my choice of academic subjects, or so I am told. But it is not a self-evident proposition. It might be the case—and it might be interesting to study whether it is indeed so—that such beginnings lead necessarily to an interest in international or global subjects. Conceivably, it might lead on in the opposite direction: a search for clearly demarcated subjects, where closure is primary and the fuzziness of the international is evicted from the category. More interesting, perhaps, is whether or not knowing a single language perfectly inflects one's way of thinking. In my experience, imperfect knowledge of all the languages I work in is consequential. I keep running into conditions not well captured in any of these languages. The result is a proclivity to invent terms or to use existing words for unexpected or unusual applications. Language is seeing. Juxtaposing different languages is seeing differences in that seeing. When you throw into that mix the third component, imperfect knowledge of the languages in play, you get my experience: little gaps across these languages, gaps that point to interstitial spaces where there is work to be done. One possible move, and it was my move, is to compensate imperfect knowledge of language with

theory. It is this indirect connection, rather than the fact itself of growing up in more than one country, that captures the influence of my life on my scholarship, on my way of thinking. It has shaped my perhaps peculiar way of theorizing—theory gets constituted through the text itself rather than through a model that stands outside the specifics of the subject under consideration. And it has shaped my need to develop new categories for analysis, such as that of the global city, and, more recently, the denationalized state.

There was a second early framing that came to inflect my future work. Being out of place, slightly but permanently, led me to see conditions and to seize on actions that were not of the place. My own sharpest memory of this—though I am told there were many more and earlier such incidents—is of me at age eight sneaking out of the house with a huge suitcase full of clothes and food to bring to a flooded disaster area. It was an expedition. And it was extremely irregular for a child to do this alone, not to mention unbeknownst to her parents. There were more or less annual floods in Buenos Aires that hit the poor, who could only find a place to build a shack in the city's areas that no one else wanted. I readied my very own plan for when the season arrived: I started "collecting" (from my own home, of course) clothes and food a few weeks before the floods could be expected. Taking the bus was a major event—not just because of my age and the size of the suitcase, but also because of the bus itself. This was a very popular bus line, in all senses of the word. Crowded does not begin to give the feeling of it. It was also a very long bus ride. I had studied the precise location of where I was meant to go: a particular poor area where the church in the neighboring district was accepting donations—details I had identified from newscasts. I was a voracious newspaper reader as of a very young age, partly because my father every day bought the major five newspapers in the country. In retrospect, I think that two aspects of the event were consequential. One was that I allowed myself to fully experience the recognition of poverty and misery and my desire to help. I think these feelings are probably fairly common in children. But less so is the possibility of experiencing them fully, and acting on them runs into obstacles, notably one's parents (and society's) sense of what is appropriate for a child. The other was that planning and implementing my little expedition gave me a sense (albeit elementary) of "making", in the Greek meaning of *poesis*. A little person could act and intervene into what seemed a function of major forces.

These two framings hold the answer to a question I have often been asked: What led me to focus on cities, a sub-national scale, when I started my research on globalization? The more expected focus would have been on self-evidently global institutions. This question of the scaling analytics in my work has recurred. Today, the question is reframed in terms of the scaling that organizes my new book—the importance of focusing on the sub-national in the form of the executive branch of government and its growing alignment with globalization. I am hearing the same type of surprise: why focus on the executive branch of government to understand globalization? One way into this intellectual biography is to start by elaborating on these two questions, and then move back into what is the third major scaling issue in my research of the last twenty years—immigration as contained in and constitutive of specific global systems. This is also the subject where it all started—my choice of

dissertation subject, the rejection of that dissertation, and my move back to Europe to study philosophy.

Why Focus on Cities When Researching Globalization?

Focusing on cities has the effect of bringing the global down, down into the thick environments of cities, down into the multiple work cultures through which global corporate work gets done. And it inserts into the notion of the global a concrete space for politics, including the politics of the disadvantaged. In so doing it also makes legible the complexity of powerlessness—it is not simply a matter of not having power. It is precisely the coexistence of the sharpest concentrations of the powerful and the powerless that gives the global city also a strategic political character. If we consider that large cities harbor both the leading sectors of global capital and a growing share of disadvantaged populations—immigrants, many of them disadvantaged women, people of color generally, and, in the mega-cities of developing countries, masses of shanty dwellers—then we can see that cities have become a strategic terrain for a whole series of conflicts and contradictions.

We can then also think of cities as one of the sites for the contradictions of the globalization of capital. This brings us back to some of the earlier historical formations around questions of citizenship and struggles for entitlements, and the prominent role played by cities and civil society. The large city of today emerges as a strategic site for these new types of operations. It is one of the nexi where the formation of new claims materializes and assumes concrete forms. The partial loss of state power at the national level produces the possibility for new forms of power and politics at the sub-national level. The national as container of social process and power is partly cracked. This cracked casing opens up possibilities for a geography of politics that links sub-national spaces. Cities are foremost in this new geography. One question this engenders is how and whether we are seeing the formation of new types of politics that localize in these cities.

The global city allows, it enables, that amalgamated disadvantaged workforce to emerge as a social force. You can have a lot of immigrants working in some large corporate firm, but in such a setting they cannot emerge as a social force. Same thing with the suburban workplace. These are workplaces that reduce them to labor, that collapse everything that these immigrants might be into the laborer. The global city is a productive space, both in terms of the production of the specialized capabilities needed by global capital, and in terms of its political productivity: in making both global capital into a social force, and enabling that amalgamated disadvantaged workforce also to emerge as a social force.

Let me elaborate on this by using Henri Lefebvre and Max Weber to put it in historical context. There is a productivity of space, of the environment itself. Max Weber finds that the medieval towns enable burghers to emerge as a social force, as political actors. In the 1950s, Henry Lefebvre looks at the industrial cities of the time, and he argues that the bourgeoisie does not need the city anymore. These are not the cities of the burghers anymore, but the cities of the organized working class, where the working class can emerge as an actor, as a political subject, as a social

force—the city where workers can make claims for the apparatuses of collective consumption, from public transport to health and housing. Cities have not always played this role. At the height of industrial capitalism, crucial sites of struggle were the mines, the large factories; areas that were not cities—like northern France.

I look at global cities and find they are no longer the cities of the organized working class or of that older notion of a bourgeoisie that finds in the city the place for its self-representation and projection of its power (including its civilizing power). I see in global cities a space that enables two other types of strategic actors. Global cities are where that increasingly elusive, privatized, digitized category we call “global capital” hits the ground, and for one moment in its complex trajectory becomes men and women. These are men and women who want it all and get it all. Thereby they project their daily work and lifestyles onto the city. This takes a lot of space, so it invades other people’s residential areas (gentrification) and other firms’ areas (new glamorous office buildings replacing older urban economies). It is through this projection and invasion, the concreteness of daily life of high-income households and high-profit firms, that global capital reveals itself to be a social force. On these terms it can be engaged directly. The other social force emerges from the fact that the amalgamated workforce (and thus “disorganized” as opposed to, for instance, “organized labor”) is part of the city’s globalized economic sectors, and, no matter how contingent and transitory, it also projects its work and survival strategies on urban space—immigrant communities, the *banlieue* in Paris, low-cost commercial areas, cheap restaurants, street vendors, and so on. This, I would argue, is also one kind of structuration of the multitude. I use social force to capture both of these emergent actors, because they are not classes, or not yet. This is a far more disorganized, situated, concrete process than the more complex meaning Marx had for social class. There is also no common program. These are emergent social forces. But one effect is to make global capital concrete, not a spectral global category. And it gives the amalgamated disadvantaged workforce a political shape beyond the laboring subject. This in turn enables various types of political practice—from the theatricalization of the political as in immigrant parades, or the successful organization of cleaners through Justice for Janitors.

Whether they’re foreigners or nationals is almost secondary in the formation of this amalgamated workforce. Many third-generation immigrants and minoritized citizens are part of this emergent social force. Minoritized citizens, in this context, get the option of experiencing themselves as something akin to diasporic in that they can exit subjective membership from the collective entity of the national state. Here I do not only mean the economically disadvantaged: they can be middle-income minoritized citizens, or they can be anarchists, or gay, lesbian, and queers who feel alienated, or for that matter every kind of person or identity who does not feel part of the national “we”. What begins to happen here is the whole notion of diasporic as a tool, an instrumentality, a way of identifying a new kind of political subject. The global city connects all these subaltern struggles or identities, a mix of people who mostly do not transact with each other, who mostly don’t even talk to each other, but who emerge as an amalgamated social force. The same mix in a different kind of site—a university, a hotel, a hospital, a suburb—would not necessarily be enabled to emerge as a social force because their systemic position would not be there.

There are many globalizations. Each has a particularized geography and architecture. When it comes to corporate economic globalization I argue that its organizational side is quite different from the consumer side. Most attention has gone to consumer multinationals: McDonald's, Nike, and so on. The project for the consumer firms is that the more consumers worldwide who use it or eat it, the better. In contrast, the organizational side does not need to go everywhere and reach as many consumers as possible. The organizational side is strategic: it services the global operations of firms and markets, both those selling to consumers and to other firms. The organizational side makes itself visible only when it really has to. It does not advertise in consumer markets; it only advertises to other firms. The network of global cities is a strategic geography for the organizational side of global capital. Global cities have the mix of resources to produce specialized capabilities for global capital. I want to emphasize that global capital needs to be made, to be produced, serviced, it needs legal and accounting services, etc. The global city represents this one very legible moment where the capabilities that global firms and global markets need to be global, get produced, invented, made.

The key economic function of the global city is that it is a sort of Silicon Valley for inventing and producing specialized capabilities for global operations, operations which to a very large extent are electronic. I like this juxtaposition of global electronic networks and the massive concentrations of materialities (buildings, infrastructure, the fact that professionals and executives need houses, food ... the materiality of it all). More generally, we know that there have long been cross-border economic processes—flows of capital, labor, goods, raw materials, travelers. And over the centuries there have been enormous fluctuations in the degree of openness or closure of the organizational forms within which these flows took place. In the last hundred years, the inter-state system came to provide the dominant organizational form for cross-border flows, with national states as its key actors. It is this condition that has changed dramatically over the last decade as a result of privatization, deregulation, the opening up of national economies to foreign firms, and the growing participation of national economic actors in global markets.

In this context we see a re-scaling of what are the strategic territories that articulate the new system. With the partial unbundling or at least weakening of the national as a spatial unit come conditions for the ascendance of other spatial units and scales. Among these are the sub-national, notably cities and regions; cross-border regions encompassing two or more sub-national entities; and supra-national entities, i.e. global digitized markets and free-trade blocs. The dynamics and processes that get territorialized or are sited at these diverse scales can in principle be regional, national, and global. There is a proliferation of specialized global circuits for economic activities that both contribute to and constitute these new scales and are enhanced by their emergence.

The organizational architecture for cross-border flows that emerges from these re-scalings and articulations increasingly diverges from that of the inter-state system. The key articulators now include not only national states but also firms and markets whose global operations are facilitated by new policies and cross-border standards produced by willing or not-so willing states. Among the empirical referents for these non-state forms of articulation are the growing number of cross-border mergers and

acquisitions, the expanding networks of foreign affiliates, and the growing numbers of financial centers that are becoming incorporated into global financial markets. As a result of these and other processes, a growing number of cities today play an increasingly important role in directly linking their national economies with global circuits. As cross-border transactions of all kinds grow, so do the networks binding particular configurations of cities. This in turn contributes to the formation of new geographies of centrality that connect cities in a growing variety of cross-border networks. It is against this larger picture that I see cities as strategic sites today.

A focus on cities does force me to see that the global is not simply that which operates outside the national, and in that sense, to see also that the national and the global are not mutually exclusive domains. The global city is a thick environment that endogenizes the global and filters it through “national” institutional orders and imaginaries. It also helps render global internal (national) components of the economy and, especially, the imaginaries of various groups. Studying globalization in this manner means you can engage in thick descriptions and do empirical research in specific sites rather than having to position yourself as a global observer. Now that I have been at it for a while I can see that no matter what feature I am studying, over the last fifteen years or more I have gravitated towards these thick environments. It feels like a hundred years of digging.

Bringing the National Back In

My concern and engagement with the specifics of place also led me to contest the common notion that the national and the global are mutually exclusive, and that what one wins the other loses—in a sort of titanic zero-sum struggle. We are living through an epochal transformation. But the usual term used to describe this transformation, globalization, does not capture enough. I argue that because this transformation is indeed epochal, it needs to engage the most complex, and accomplished structures we have constructed. The national state is one of them. It is not the case that sovereignty is going away; it is becoming partly de-nationalized. Sovereignty today has to accommodate the human rights regime, and NGOs both at home and internationally. It has to recognize the scattered sovereignties of First Nations people and the historically nurtured claims of the subaltern. These and other dynamics evident today have the effect of disaggregating what we had come to think of and experience as a unitary category, the nation-state. Further, the national state is no longer the only formally recognized actor in the international domain. The state can no longer claim to exclusively represent all of its people in international forums.

Economic corporate globalization is a system of power that uses some of the old capabilities that come out of the national state, but redeploys them. In this redeployment, what may have been oriented towards national economies and national interests shifts to the narrower global interests of particular actors. There is not a total rupture with the national state, not at all. But it does signal the formation of a type of institutionalized space that deborders the inter-state system.

What is it we are trying to name with the term “globalization”? In my reading of the evidence it is actually two distinct sets of dynamics. One of these involves the formation of explicitly global institutions and processes, such as the World Trade Organization, global financial markets, the new cosmopolitanism, the War Crimes Tribunals. The practices and organizational forms through which these dynamics operate are constitutive of what is typically thought of as global scales.

But there is a second set of processes that does not necessarily scale at the global level as such, yet, I argue, is part of globalization. These processes take place deep inside territories and institutional domains that have largely been constructed in national terms in much, though by no means all, of the world. What makes these processes part of globalization even though localized in national, indeed sub-national settings, is that they involve transboundary networks and formations connecting or articulating multiple local or “national” processes and actors. Among these processes I include cross-border networks of activists engaged in specific localized struggles with an explicit or implicit global agenda, as is the case with many human rights and environmental organizations; particular aspects of the work of states, e.g., certain monetary and fiscal policies critical to the constitution of global markets that are hence being implemented in a growing number of countries; the use of international human rights instruments in national courts; non-cosmopolitan forms of global politics and imaginaries that remain deeply attached or focused on localized issues and struggles, yet are part of global lateral networks containing multiple other such localized efforts. A particular challenge in the work of identifying these types of processes and actors as part of globalization is the need to decode at least some of what continues to be experienced and represented as national.

In my work I have particularly wanted to focus on these types of practices and dynamics and have insisted in conceptualizing them as also constitutive of globalization even though we do not usually recognize them as such. When the social sciences focus on globalization—still rare enough deep in the academy—it is typically not on these types of practices and dynamics but rather on the self-evidently global scale. And although the social sciences have made important contributions to the study of this self-evident global scale by establishing the fact of multiple globalizations, only some of which correspond to neoliberal corporate economic globalization, there is much work left. At least some of this work entails distinguishing (a) the various scales that global processes constitute, ranging from supra-national and global to sub-national, and (b) the specific contents and institutional locations of this multi-scalar globalization. Geography more than any other of the social sciences today has contributed to a critical stance toward scale, recognizing the historicity of scales and resisting the reification of the national scale so present in most of social science.

This would suggest that globalization is not only an extension of certain forms to the globe but also a repositioning of what we have historically constructed and experienced as the local and the national. In addition, this happens in many different and specific ways and in a growing number of domains—economic, political, cultural, ideational. It does mean for me that we need new conceptual architectures. But it does not mean that we have to throw all existing research techniques and data sets out the window. I use the term conceptual architecture with care: an organizing

logic that can accommodate multiple diverse components operating at different scales (e.g., data about various localized dynamics and self-evidently global ones) without losing analytic closure, at least a modicum of such closure. Studying the global, then, entails not only a focus on that which is explicitly global in scale, but also a focus on locally scaled practices and conditions that are articulated with global dynamics, and a focus on the multiplication of cross-border connections among various localities. Further, it entails recognizing that many of the globally scaled dynamics, such as the global capital market, actually are partly embedded in sub-national sites and move between these differently scaled practices and organizational forms. For instance, the global capital market is constituted both through electronic markets with global span, and through locally embedded conditions, i.e., financial centers.

A focus on such sub-nationally based processes and dynamics of globalization requires methodologies and theorizations that engage not only global scalings but also sub-national scalings as components of global processes, thereby destabilizing older hierarchies of scale and conceptions of nested scalings. Studying global processes and conditions that get constituted sub-nationally has some advantages over studies of globally scaled dynamics; but it also poses specific challenges. It does make possible the use of long-standing research techniques, from quantitative to qualitative, in the study of globalization. It also gives us a bridge for using the wealth of national and sub-national data sets as well as specialized scholarships such as area studies. Both types of studies, however, need to be situated in conceptual architectures that are not quite those held by the researchers who generated these research techniques and data sets, as their efforts mostly had little to do with globalization.

One central task we face is to decode particular aspects of what is still represented or experienced as “national”, which may in fact have shifted away from what had historically been considered or constituted as national. This is in many ways a research and theorization logic that is present in global city studies. But there is a difference: today we have come around to recognize and code a variety of components in global cities as part of the global. There is a broader range of conditions and dynamics that are still coded and represented as local and national. They are to be distinguished from those now recognized global city components. In my current research project I focus on how this all works out in the realm of the political.

Most of the globalization literature has suffered deeply from what I would call the endogeneity problem in the social sciences. We are explaining x in terms of its own features: globalization is “explained” as growing interdependence. This is not explaining; it is describing. One of my obsessions became the constructing of an analytics that allows us to explain. It began with *The Global City* (Sassen 2001) and now with the book I have just finished, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Sassen 2006a). To avoid falling into the trap of two master categories—the nation-state and globalization—I take three transhistorical categories: territory, authority, and rights. They are transhistorical, even though they assume specific historical contents and forms, because they have been present in all our societal forms, including tribal societies. I look at how these three elements get assembled into the national, and then, the global, which to some extent entails a disassembling of what has been assembled as the national in the last century. I also examine the formation of new types of global digital assemblages of “territory”,

authority and rights. I use digital here to describe computer-centered interactive technology. I am interested in how new forms of socialite can be constituted in digital space, with their own particular notions of authority and rights and territoriality.

One of the issues I am looking at are contestatory activists. There are forms of global activism that enable localized and perhaps immobile people to experience themselves as part of a global network, or a public domain that is at another scale from the locality from which they work. As part of a larger network, human rights activists or environmental activists, who may be obsessed with the torturer in their local jail, or with the forest near their town, or the water supply in their region, can begin to experience themselves as part of a broader global effort without relinquishing their localness. It is this combination that is critical for my argument about cosmopolitanism, or rather against the widespread assumption that if it's global it is cosmopolitan. So I talk about non-cosmopolitan forms of globality. The new information technologies, designed to eliminate distance, to produce space-time compression, can actually also have the effect of revalorizing locality and local actors. I make that argument for a diversity of actors, for instance, financial markets as well as activists. I contest this collapsing of the global with the cosmopolitan. Financiers are non-cosmopolitan globalists, and I argue that most human-rights, or environmentalist, activists, who are actually on the ground, are that too. I want to get at the multivalence of both globalization and what it means to be a non-cosmopolitan globalist—re-inventing the local as alter-globalization. In a very different domain, I would say that there is going to be a real push towards re-localizing all kinds of markets, pulling them out of the supra-national market and making them local but inserted in horizontal global, or at least, cross-border, networks. We do not need the standardized production of multinationals that can sell you the same production no matter where you are.

The Academy and Politics

Throughout this way of thinking and representing the issues runs a substantive rationality centered, ultimately, in issues of social justice and the possibility that the powerless can also make history. It was in fact the protopolitics I evidently already had as a child that shaped my decision to become a sociologist. When I first heard of sociology at age thirteen, I understood it to refer to a passion for a more just world which I had discovered in myself years before. I then began to create a kind of fantasy around the term “sociology”, a utopian project for social justice (Sassen 2005a). And I kept the idea of sociology in my mind throughout the turbulence of my activism in the 1960s and on (for a detailed description of this political side, see Sassen 2005a). Mine was always a politics against the abuse of power—more so than against power per se. One struggle led to the next. These were political engagements that, while not intersecting directly with my life as an academic in the narrowest sense of the term, did shape me and inscribed my research interests.

I think being a foreigner and simultaneously at home must have allowed me to survive in a peculiarly non-traumatizing way some of the potentially traumatic rejections I had early on in my academic life: having my dissertation rejected, or

having my first book rejected by thirteen publishers. As my academic life proceeded, it somehow showed that even a multitude of rejections does not necessarily mean that you are out; you can still cross that border (Sassen 2005a). But through my years in the academy there were many who helped me along, supported me, made a critical difference to my survival. The first, and perhaps most decisive person was Bill D'Antonio, at the time the chair of sociology at the University of Notre Dame, where I arrived without legal papers and without a B.A. He trusted me and put me on probation to establish whether I could manage graduate school—having never done college. It was hard, but it worked.

Going to the University of Notre Dame was a somewhat devastating experience after having lived in Rome.¹ Yet it was there that I got the instruments for critical analysis in U.S. social science. Several seminars stand out as being exceptional experiences that opened up the academic world to me, the world of deep scholarship rather than intellectual debate I had become familiar with in Buenos Aires and Rome. Andrew Weigert's advanced seminar for undergrads, which I was required to take not having a college degree, introduced me to Berger and Luckman's perspective of the construction of society, to Thomas Kuhn's paradigm shifts, and several other classics. The experience was as dramatic as the one I had had as a young thirteen-year-old in Latin America reading my first essay in social analysis, Ortega y Gasset's "Rebellion of the Masses"—a somewhat peculiar text for me, since I had become a communist at the time and was studying Russian to live up to my ideals. I had the experience that the Greeks had in mind when they used the term *theoria*: seeing what cannot be apprehended by the senses and hence requires a distinct construction to enable the seeing. I will never forget that seminar, even now so many decades, meetings, and courses later. I can still remember what we read in that course and the experience of discovery I had.

A second very different type of experience was Arthur Rubel's anthropological course. In that course I revisited my earlier experience at the University of Buenos Aires: I was swimming aimlessly—I simply could not really get what this was all about. I understood the English, so to speak; but the words, not the concepts. Writing the paper for that course—my first long paper ever—took day and night. I took writing this term paper as seriously as if it were my dissertation: all the classic components of a dissertation came into play. I worked day and night and weekends. I never stopped. It became my first semester's dominant mode. (I had not had college; I had never ever written a paper, not even the shorter essays I was doing for other classes). Well, it turned out good enough that it gave me my ticket into the graduate program, pulled me out of probation and established me as a serious and able student. Despite all the other papers I wrote in my life, I remember that one most of all: I took Edmund Leach's theories and I worked on the Ashanti's. Both subjects and issues I never quite returned to at least in their named form—who knows how they worked themselves into the deeper structures of my academic thinking? I never forgot the experience of writing that paper.

1 This paragraph and material from some of the following ones are taken from Sassen 2005a. We thank the University of Chicago Press for allowing us to use these sections.

And then there was the person who would become a key mentor, Fabio DaSilva. I sat in his theory class and I really did not know what he was lecturing about, except for some glimpses into what was, for me, an otherwise hermetic discourse. I knew that there was something there. Some of us, all with a Latin American connection except one, began to gravitate around DaSilva: we were interested in theory, critical discourses, politics. DaSilva was a great cook and wine connoisseur, definitely a civilizing presence in South Bend, Indiana. At some point he invited the five of us to come to his house where, over good food and great wine, we had our theory discussions. We met every Friday for about two years.

This was a somewhat unusual group, and all of us Latin Americans had trouble getting our dissertations accepted. It was both bonding and illuminating to share this trouble. In each case there was a specific reason. But looked at from a certain distance, one cannot but sense something systemic, perhaps having to do with our foreignness and with a choice of dissertation subjects and driving theoretical concerns far too removed from the mainstream, even for sociology. For instance, one of the members was Jorge Bustamante, an already somewhat renowned lawyer in Mexico, who decided to work on Mexican immigrants in the U.S. As part of his dissertation fieldwork he entered the U.S. illegally, crossing the Rio Grande after leaving all his documents in Mexico. This was a harrowing but extremely illuminating experience about key migration issues. I remember him recounting it in full detail on one of our memorable Friday nights. This was not the type of experience the academy was comfortable with and Jorge, considered the most brilliant student in the department at the time, had to struggle to get his dissertation accepted. He went on to become one of the most distinguished immigration advisors to several Mexican presidents and founded the Colegio de la Frontera Norte, an institution specializing in border issues that is now recognized for its excellence and receives generous support from leading U.S. foundations. Another member of the group, Gilberto Cardenas, who had grown up in the LA barrio, also ran into trouble with his fellow Ph.D. students and wound up leaving the university without his doctorate and getting it elsewhere. As I will recount later, I also had my dissertation rejected and left without a degree (which often put me in the position of having to list a high-school diploma as my highest degree, since I never got a college degree and had gone basically from high school to graduate school).

Those were years of intense anti-war activity in the U.S. At Notre Dame, the antiwar struggle contained a high dose of spiritualism, both generic and particular. I remember the Catholic charismatic renewal movement organized a huge anti-war rally very much centered on Christian values. Buddhism was big. The less spiritual threw ourselves also into the McGovern campaign—even though I was a (by then legal) immigrant.

The other political struggle I joined was the Cesar Chavez farm workers organizing. The Midwest is home to several migration streams from Mexico, some going back to the 1930s. One of our efforts was setting up a child-care center for the children of migrant workers. I remember receiving a Ford Foundation Minority Fellowship and using most of the money to set up such a care center in South Bend. I felt very good about it and was certain that the Ford Foundation, always in search of bringing about more social justice, would have been delighted, however I did

not ask them. It seemed fair that writing a dissertation on blacks and Latinos in the U.S. political economy I should use the money not to make them work more by answering questionnaires for my dissertation, but that I should help them, so much the needier. In brief, I did have a rationale for this distinctive allocation of my doctoral fellowship.

My dissertation was an attempt at a political economy of the U.S. from the perspective of the condition of blacks and Latinos. It was neither sociology nor economics and evidently was a major irritant to just about every member of my dissertation committee. In individual discussions everything was fine. “Harvard civility” ruled. But when they met as a committee, the multiple detestations—between sociology and economics, between economics and my political economy stance—were too much. It got rejected. While shocking, it somehow was not devastating. When I think of a doctoral student today getting this type of rejection, I have the sense it would be far more traumatic. Well, one might say, my experience suggests it need not be.

The next stop was philosophy in France. Those were heady days: Deleuze-Guattari, Foucault, Althusser, Poulantzas all had exploded on the scene, all in France. Given the sharp dominance of the Althusserian reading of Marx—the “rupture epistemologique”—I was convinced there was time to delve into that reading. The Hegelian reading of Marx, on the other hand, was threatened, especially when it came to the classical interpretation by Jean Hypolitte, the great French translator of Hegel. I found out that Jacques D’Hondt, one of the leading Hegelian interpreters of Marx, and the last living student of Hypolitte, was teaching in Poitiers. He also the Centre sur la Recherche et Documentation sur Hegel et Marx. The Centre had been a destination for many of the Hegelian Marxists from Italy, such as Lucio Colletti. Further, having grown up in Latin America, very much in a Marxist intellectual milieu as a student, we all knew of Jean Garody who had spent many years in Latin America, especially Brazil, and who was also a professor at Poitiers. So Poitiers it was for me, not glamorous Paris. I was in search of what was at risk of loss rather than what had burst onto the scene with enormous vigor and glamour.

Shortly before my failed doctoral defense, urged on by my then-husband D.J. Koob, I had circulated one of my papers, part proposal, part essay, on the growing importance of cross-border migrations in the constructing of transnational relations. I vaguely remember, but am not certain, sending it to the Consortium for Peace and World Order—it had sounded like my kind of place. The end result was that I had been given a post-doctoral fellowship, no matter my lack of a doctorate. The letter found its way to Poitiers and off we were to Harvard’s Center for International Affairs. Several Harvard scholars—Ray Vernon, Joseph Nye, Robert Keohane, Samuel Huntington—had been working on identifying and measuring the existence of cross-border relations that did not involve national states as key actors: multinational corporations, tourism, religious organizations, etc. My proposal on international migrations as an instance of transnational relations was a perfect fit.

Working on immigration over the next decade was the beginning of a long scholarly trajectory that took me to global cities and denationalized states. Now, in my new book, I have revisited that trajectory, with new questions in mind. I would

like to end on one of these—the repositioning of the immigrant subject as one in a growing field of new types of subjects.

On the Immigrant and Other Subjects

We see the emergence of various types of subjects contesting various aspects of power, of the system—people working against the market as conceived of by the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund, against landmines, against the trafficking of people, against environmental destruction. These hundreds of contesting actors in different localities have wound up producing a kind of synthetic effect—they constitute the multitude. A critical question then is to understand the many informal political architectures through which the multitude actually is constituted. There is “making”, *poesis*, in these informal political architectures. There are many different kinds of making being built from the ground up, and there are different terrains in which new kinds of political subjects and struggles are emerging. A single city can have hundreds of terrains for political action. All of this begins to bring texture, structuration to the notion of the multitude. What I care about is the making of these specific, diverse, political architectures within the multitude. I want to capture this negotiation, the constituting of a global multitude of sorts but one that is deeply localized (and may have nothing to do with cosmopolitanism!). There is a kind of global politics in the making that has, as a critical component, multitudes that might be global even though they are not mobile.

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