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Are Latin American Peasant Movements Still a Force for Change? Some New Paradigms Revisited

JAMES PETRAS and HENRY VELTMAYER

This article is a critique of structuralist and postmodern approaches to the study of agrarian reform and the viability, nature and significance of peasant and landless movements in Latin America. Contrary to the dominant structuralist view, we argue that peasant and landless workers' movements in Latin America are not anachronistic but dynamic modern classes, which in many contexts play a major role in opposing the dominant neoliberal agenda. Against postmodern interpretations of such grassroots agrarian movements, we also argue that in terms of action and programme, peasant and landless workers' movements have raised fundamental class issues, in some instances combining them with ethnic demands. Deploying a reconstituted class analysis, we examine four cases of peasant/landless workers movements currently challenging state power: the Rural Landless Workers Movement in Brazil, the Revolutionary Armed Forces in Colombia, the National Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities in Ecuador, and the Zapatista Army of National Liberation in Mexico. Our conclusion is that in the current context, peasant and landless workers' movements in Latin America are engaged in a modern form of struggle, combining traditional forms of solidarity not only with the acceptance/adaptation of modern goals and techniques, but also with a strategic understanding of the levers of power in the national and international system.

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INTRODUCTION

For many rural sociologists both in Latin America the main object of analysis is the dynamics of social change and development in the rural sector. As for the social and economic conditions of these dynamics they are not at issue. They have been fairly well described, at least in the Latin American context. What are at issue, however, are the social forces and processes and the change agents involved. Here rural sociologists seem to be of two minds. On the one hand, many sociologists continue to view the dynamics of change and development in structural terms – the outcome of an identifiable and comparable complex of institutionalized practices or underlying ‘structures’. At this level, analysis generally takes the form of, first, describing the conditions of development in objective terms and documenting the relevant experiences; and, secondly, providing an explanation of subsequent developments on the basis of specified underlying structures and processes, with reference to a theory constructed for the purpose. This is the scientific method used by most analysts of agrarian change and rural development, both those within the Marxist tradition and those whose analysis departs from one theory or another of modernization. On the other hand, this form of analysis has come under serious question, leading a number of sociologists to rethink the issues involved and seek an alternative non-structural form of analysis and theorizing. In the context of what appeared to some as a paradigmatic crisis or theoretical impasse and to others as the emergence of a postmodernist sensibility, this rethinking has resulted in the abandonment by a number of scholars of all forms of social scientific or structural analysis, particularly as guided by Marxist theory.

The purpose of this article is to explore the ramifications of this divide in social analysis as relates to the debate concerning the viability, nature and significance of contemporary peasant and landless workers movements in Latin America. In this connection we argue against two prevailing lines of analysis in favour of a return to a Marxist approach. To this end, the article is organized as follows. In section I, the traditional and as yet dominant form of structural analysis is reviewed briefly. In section II an emerging postmodernist perspective on the dynamics of social change and development is outlined. Specific reference here is made to the writings of Florencia Mallon, an historian noted for her attempts to introduce a postmodernist sensibility among Latin American historians. The identical subject-object of her analysis is the postcolonial peasantry of Mexico and Peru. In section III these dynamics as they relate to the peasantry are placed within a Marxist perspective. Here both the dominant form of structural analysis and a postmodernist anti-structuralist form and line of analysis

exemplified by Mallon are criticized. The object of criticism in the first case is a dismissive attitude towards the peasantry as a significant social and political force. In the second case, the object of criticism is a tendency to reduce peasant-based or led struggles and movements to their cultural identities, attributes and demands. It is argued that a reconstituted class analysis, with a focus on both structural factors and forms of political struggle, still provides the most useful approach to an understanding of the dynamics of social change and development in the rural sector of Latin American society. This argument is supported by a brief discussion in section IV of four cases of peasant-based social movements.

I. MODERNIZATION THEORY AND STRUCTURALISM

The dynamics of change and development over the years have been analysed with reference to principles of a social scientific approach, which consist of the following propositions. First, that observable social and economic conditions of change and development are the manifestations of an underlying structure, visible only in its effects. Second, that these material conditions can be understood without reference to the subjective beliefs or perceptions of the individuals involved. Third, these conditions can, and must be understood and explained, in structural terms, and that the process involved can thus be analysed in terms of objective tendencies or 'laws', that is, conditions beyond the immediate control and will of the subjects concerned. And fourth, the process involved is based on modernization, or the formation of a modern form of society. The latter has in turn three major dimensions: *economic* (progress or prosperity – growth in the productive forces of society, with a consequent improvement in the level of income generation); *political* (increased freedom for individuals, embodied in the institution of democracy); and *social* (equality, justice or, in its most recent formulation, equity).¹

Analysis of these processes has taken a number of theoretical forms, particularly in studies of post-1945 international development. In the 1960s and 1970s, economists, sociologists and political scientists advanced a theory of economic growth and modernization that dominated the study of development. In this tradition it was – and is – assumed that development requires the institutionality of a capitalist system, particularly private property in the means of production, wage labour, the market and the state, as well as an institutional reorientation towards modern values such as universalism and individual achievement. Within this system the process of modernization is multidimensional but takes the form essentially of capitalist development, rural outmigration and urbanization, and agrarian reform, with the transformation of the grossly unequal and inequitable property relations

in land and access to other means of social production. The improvements and changes involved in this process are progressive in the sense of spreading benefits equitably and gradual increases in the levels of social inclusion. In the 1970s, however, this form of analysis was confronted by an alternative form of structural theory: the latter derived from a paradigm which did not presuppose the institutionality of capitalism, and assumed instead the need for radical change, in the form of systemic transformation and social revolution. In what became a highly contested terrain of social theory, this radical framework took a number of different forms: Marxism, and also Neo-Marxist Political Economy (dependency theory, etc.).

At this same conjuncture (the mid-1970s) there also emerged the search for an alternative, non-structural form of analysis. The latter took on diverse forms, but shared a common concern: namely, to establish Another Development (AD). This entailed a form of grassroots development that was neither state or market-led; it was to be smallscale, community-based, participatory (and empowering), and a dynamic generated from below and the inside rather than from the outside and above. Moreover, it was to be equitable and sustainable, both in environmental and socio-economic terms.² One of the earliest manifestations of this approach took the form of what, after Kitching [1982], could be termed 'economic populism': that is, a concern with small-scale enterprise and human scale development.³ With regard to the peasantry, the search for *another development* involved both ends of the political spectrum: on the Left, therefore, it entailed a concern to protect the peasantry from the modernizing forces of capitalist development (urbanization, industrialization, proletarianization, etc.); on the Right, by contrast, it entailed a *culturalist* concern to protect the traditions of peasant societies from the same modernizing forces, as well as a populist advocacy of small-scale forms of development which, its exponents argued, would correct the urban bias and the fetish of development thinkers and practitioners with capital intensive large-scale heavy industry (= industrialization). Some theorists, such as de Janvry [1981], adopted a somewhat ambiguous position: they were modernist in that they believed that history was against the peasant, but they were also romantic in the sense that the forces of capitalist modernization were not seen as destroying the peasantry. A decade later, in a specifically postmodernist twist to this element of ambiguity, Gustavo Esteva and other exponents of Post-Development Theory, have fought (at the level of thought) to dismantle the entire development and modernization project in so far as it concerns the peasantry and other subalterns (indigenous peoples, etc.).⁴ The problem with this position, and one that is rarely posed (let alone tackled), is that the forces of capitalist modernization continue to resist these efforts to dissolve them in thought.

Throughout the 1990s this search for AD proliferated, spawning a variety of experiments in development practice and shifts in thought all across the globe. One recent formulation is 'sustainable rural livelihoods' (SRL), an approach advocated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), that brings together sociologists and a range of scholars in other disciplines and development practitioners, all of whom share a concern for building sustainable communities [Barkin, 1998]. Unlike most forms of AD, in which the agency for change is located within the communities that make up civil society, the SRL approach acknowledges that localized collective actions have a structural context which must be brought into analytic focus and accommodated if not actually changed. The objective, however, of SRL and other forms of AD, such as grassroots postmodernism or post-development [Esteve and Prakash, 1998]⁵ is not to bring about fundamental change or challenge the broader system – that is, social transformation – but democratization, to enlarge the space for local, community-based and people-led development.

During the final decade of the twentieth century, both the modernist and anti-modernist approaches were reformulated and given a new form, a process involving one kind or other of modernization theory, neostructuralism *à la* ECLA or some other line of structural analysis, or the search for Another Development. One notable exponent of this structuralist and modernist discourse as regards rural development is Cristóbal Kay, who in a number of studies documents and analyses in some detail the economic and political processes involved in the decomposition and destruction of the peasantry as a dynamic force for change. Kay might not define himself as a modernist, at least in terms of the exclusionary capitalist form that modernization has taken in Latin America, but he is certainly a structuralist. In this context, the centre of reference for his studies into the social conditions of agrarian change and development is the long multi-faceted process of change and development associated with the modernist search for economic prosperity, justice and freedom – and the inclusion of the peasantry in a project that postmodernists among others have given up on [Kay, 1999: 273–303]. Excluded from the forces of change and modernization, the peasantry is converted into what Kay in structuralist or class analytic terms describes as a 'permanent semiproletariat' caught up in a stalled historical process ('the lost promise of land reform', etc).⁶

Kay here addresses an issue of critical importance. From a conservative perspective, the peasantry is viewed as a major obstacle to change, a drag on the development and modernization process.⁷ But from Kay's more salient liberal perspective the peasantry is viewed rather as a victim, buffeted by the economic and political forces acting on it. The peasantry is swept away by the tides of history, condemned at best to a life of

marginality, at worst a decimated political force, fated to disappear. Kay himself does not come to or spell out this conclusion, but historians like Eric Hobsbawn, concerned with the broad sweep of changes and developments across the century, do. This conclusion is also implicit in most of the structural analysis and modernist theorizing that continues to dominate the study of Latin American society, if not peasant studies.⁸ Essentially the peasantry is viewed as a pre-modern social category or class that has been unable to adapt to the forces of change, and has consequently lost the struggle with modernity: that is, for inclusion into a development process that has brought about prosperity, justice and freedom for an increasingly large part of the world's population. In this process, the peasantry is seen as unable to secure its own place in the modern world, a result of being acted upon by historical forces (urbanization, etc.,) it cannot control or avert. Thus Hobsbawn, and modernists in general, see the peasantry as a relatively insignificant political factor in the wider process of change and development, a numerically reduced and politically impotent and spent social force, fated to disappear into the slums, squatter settlements and informal economies of the region's burgeoning centres.⁹

We elaborate and critique this approach below.

II. THE CULTURAL TURN AND THE END OF CLASS

Social, economic and political analysis in what Hobsbawn has termed 'the short 20th century' has been dominated intellectually by a model of science that can be traced back to the eighteenth century enlightenment. Analytical approaches informed by this tradition take a scientific or structural form predicated on the following two assumptions, each of which constitute epistemological and methodological principles: (1) the human mind is capable of constructing in thought and theoretically representing reality as given; and (2) facts have an objective reality, and thus exist in a relation of truth to their corresponding scientific concepts.

Not all social science analysis has conformed to this model, but it nevertheless provided an ideal, a necessary point of reference for research conducted by most economists, sociologists, and political scientists – and some historians. During the 1960s, however, a number of voices were raised in criticism of this analytical approach, voices which by the 1980s had reached a crescendo, provoking much talk – and writing – about the existence of a theoretical impasse, an epistemological crisis that in the view of the critics required a major rethinking [Booth, 1985; Moore and Schmitz, 1994; Munck and O'Hearn, 1999; Schuurman, 1993].

This was not the first challenge of this sort. There has been a long history of idealist attacks on a structural and materialist form of scientific analysis,

including one led by exponents of the Frankfurt, or New, School for Social Research ('critical theory') in the 1930s, 1940 and 1970s. But this latest attack on the possibility of a social science was led by proponents of a Post-Structuralist/Marxist/Modernist analysis.¹⁰ All the major epistemological and methodological assumptions of a scientifically-based social analysis were challenged. As the Gulbenkian Commission [1996: 61] set up to investigate this theoretical crisis concluded, this attack on the theory and method used in both the 'hard' (natural) and 'soft' (social) sciences shifted the focus of analysis and theory from 'the linear to the non-linear, simplification to complexity, neutral objectivity to the impossibility of removing the observer from the process of interpretation, and the superiority of qualitative modes of interpretation over the precision of quantitative analysis'.

Opposing even the possibility of a scientific search for objective truth, the proponents of a fundamental change in the form of analysis were sceptical or dismissive of the entire enterprise, and scoffed at its scientific pretensions. Searching for the meaning rather than the cause of observed or studied phenomena, poststructuralists and postmodernists in social and development theory, like phenomenologists and the ethnomethodologists in sociology, viewed facts as *social constructions*, mental constructs with no empirical referents and with meanings that are internal to the discourse that gave rise to them.¹¹ As Norris [1997: 21] has observed, reality can be seen as 'purely a discursive phenomenon, a product of the different codes, conventions, language games or signing systems which provide the only means of interpreting experience'. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, another writer in this tradition, and a member of the Subaltern (Historical) Studies Group, criticizes Marxists in similar terms, and accused them generally of reducing all phenomena to matters of class and modes of production. In reality, she notes, the concept of 'class' has no 'empirical referents'.¹² It is, she adds, 'the purest form of signifier', implying that class is but a linguistic symbol, the product of discursive practice with no concrete referent in the material world. In this poststructuralist discourse, the idea of class as a structure is just that: an idea without a material basis in the immediacy of lived or experienced reality.

By the end of the 1980s, postmodernist analysis – as embodied in an exclusively grassroots analysis of social issues such as gender, race and ethnicity, political identity, hegemony and power – had penetrated a wide range of academic disciplines, from literary criticism, where it began, to sociology, the study of economic development and social movements, and history 'from below'. Indicative of this transformation was the widespread adoption of the ubiquitous subaltern as the unit of analysis: subalterns appeared in every academic discipline, where they were now seen as

'conscious actors rather than simply as those acted upon' [Mallon, 1995: 10]).

The effects of this penetration have been wide-ranging and controversial. One outcome is an analytical reorientation, from the study of objectively given and structurally determined conditions of collective action towards a study of discourse, defined as 'the combination of intellectual and political practices that makes sense of events, objects and relationships' [Mallon, 1995: 5]. An analytical second feature of this Post-Structuralist/Marxist/Modernist tradition, rooted as it is in a long history of an idealist attack on the possibility of social science, is a focus on the subjectivity of experience, on reality as constituted exclusively by the subjects of social action, the subalterns of popular culture and discourse.¹³ A third characteristic of this tradition is a research agenda defined in terms of culture and locality, a consequence of which is the lack of a comparative framework,¹⁴ and the corresponding absence of any directive social theory and quantitative analysis, or for that matter, empirical verification [Haber, 1997].¹⁵ Mallon defends herself and others in this tradition from criticism by privileging the essential subjectivity of experience and lived reality, and thus the need for 'historical imagination' to uncover history from below: the latter consist of meanings that are embedded in the generally hidden and fragmentary popular discourse, which is usually suppressed by the dominant discourse, a medium for the exercise of hegemonic power [Mallon, 1995: 6, 19].¹⁶ In this regard, the 'new cultural history' (and the Subaltern Studies project) that spurns the quantitative methods preferred by the earlier 'new economic history' is inspired by both a poststructuralist form of discourse analysis and by the qualitative methods of hermeneutic interpretation.

Like other poststructuralists, Mallon chews the methods of social science, opting instead for a deconstruction of hegemonic and subaltern discourses, uncovering and reconstructing hegemonic and counter-hegemonic struggles and power-relations embedded in them. Instead of relying on one form or another of structural analysis, Mallon – like other poststructuralists, post-Marxists and micro-sociologists – seeks to foreground subjectivity, and turns towards the social construction – and reconstruction¹⁷ – of reality via a 'decentred vision of the historical process' and the use of multivocal analytic categories, such as gender, ethnicity and nationalism, as well as hegemony, for capturing the fluid, ever-changing, contested and constructed nature of reality, so as to provide 'a fine-grained consideration of the actual processes through which power and meaning are negotiated' [Mallon, 1999: 339].

Oddly enough, despite the recent spate of postmodernist theorizing, interdisciplinary conversations and research over the past decade (see, for

example, the extensive notes to Mallon's writings), there has been precious little research into the actual subjective beliefs and perceptions of the co-participants in this research, the social actors in question (in her case, the indigenous peasants of Peru and Mexico). Although Mallon spends considerable time on her 'theoretical conversations' with the identical subject-objects of her analysis, and attempts to involve her subjects in the projection of her historical imagination, we discover very little about the actual beliefs and perceptions of pos-colonial indigenous peasants concerning what for them is real. Nor do we learn much about the dynamics of their day-to-day struggle to survive, let alone their long-term struggles to change the structures that bind them, structures that are not entirely the product of their own past activity, notwithstanding her theoretical discursus on this point.

III. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THE NEW PEASANTRY: A RECONSTITUTED CLASS ANALYSIS

The peasantry, which in a number of contexts (Bolivia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru) has a decidedly ethnic or indigenous character, is not only an important part of the rural social structure in many Latin American societies, but in our view also exercises an equally important agency for social change and development. Simultaneously the object and subject of diverse social forces operating in rural society, peasants, and especially the dynamics of their struggles, have been focus of the most diverse and conflicting interpretations. On the one hand, therefore, they are widely viewed as a pre-modern social category, fighting a losing battle with the forces of change and development that have marginalized them. As we have noted, this is the position taken by Hobsbawm [1994: 289], who writes of 'the death of the peasantry' as the 'most dramatic and far-reaching social change of the second half of this (the twentieth) century'. On the other hand, within the optics of a post or anti-structuralist analysis the peasantry appears as a post-modern category, an advance representation of a new era of localized day-to-day struggles for ethnic and social identity, a social actor seeking to reclaim its popular culture and affirm its collective identity. In this postmodern framework the focus of analysis is on the ethnic rather than the class character of the 'subaltern' social movements involved, or on the peasantry in terms of its collective identity.

Then there are those like the authors of this article who see the peasantry in class terms: that is, actors the agency of whom is affected as much by the economic and political structures which constrain them, as by the forms of their own consciousness (= how they view themselves). Both these processes are regarded by us as inseparable, as a dialectical unity: how

peasants view themselves at any given conjuncture is, of course, in part due precisely to the nature of the economic and political structures which constrain them at that point. In these terms, the peasantry are viewed as neither pre- nor postmodern but as a highly modern social class, a catalyst for anti-systemic change and a dynamic force in an ongoing modernization process. In short, they are perceived as engaged in a struggle to create a more just and better form of society, in which they are freed from oppression and in control of an economy that secures for all members of the society a livelihood and a decent standard of living. A respect for their dignity and cultural values is an important aspect of the enhanced position occupied by peasants in this socio-economic framework.

The Paradox Confronting Structuralist Theorists

Over the last decade, peasants and rural landless workers have been at the forefront of some of the most significant confrontations with national governments and international agencies. For many structuralist theorists, like Roger Bartra [1976, 1993] or an historian like Hobsbawn [1994], this presents a serious reality test of their ideas. Arguing from the position that structural changes based on a globalized economy have diminished the rural sector, both in terms of size and as a percentage of the gross national product, they assert that the peasantry and rural workers are no longer the significant transformative force that they once were.¹⁸ Yet Latin American reality speaks to large-scale peasant based guerrilla movements in Colombia, the most potent peasant-based insurgency in its history; a national rural landless workers movement in Brazil that exceeds in scope and effectiveness the peasant leagues of the 1950s and early 1960s; sustained peasant-Indian movements in Ecuador which seized Congress and shared power for a few hours in January 2000. And then there is the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, which, like the 1990 'Inti Raymi' uprising of peasant and indigenous peoples in Ecuador, has challenged the existing power structure with an alternative conception of politics as well as anti-systemic action.¹⁹ These are striking cases that raise serious empirical doubts about the broad generalizations by structuralist theorists concerning the disappearance or bypassing of the peasantry/rural labour force. It would seem to constitute a paradox: the fewer the peasants/rural workers, the more decisive a force they have become in national politics.

The facile dismissal by some structuralists of current agrarian movements as the last gasp of a dying, anachronistic, class cannot be taken seriously, given the systematic organizational structures of these movements, their long-term activity and their increasing effectiveness over time. The depth and scope of these movements suggest that, rather than trying to force current movements into preconceived and deductive

pigeonholes based on spurious analogies with European and North American experiences, it would be better to reconceptualize them and introduce a new theoretical approach in the analysis of their dynamics.

Flawed Demographic Deductionism

One structuralist argument for relegating rural movements to the dustbin of history is based on a double extrapolation: one from Europe and the US, the other from Latin America. The argument is that Third World countries are following the historical demographic pattern of Europe and America, where rural to urban migrations eventually led to the demise of rural popular movements.²⁰ The second extrapolation is based on a comparison of past and present demographic data showing rapid urbanization and a sharp decline of the rural population. From these demographic comparisons, structuralists argue that a shrinking minority of peasants and rural workers can only engage in rearguard actions, which only delay their eventual and inevitable demise.²¹

However, the correlation between percentages of the labour force and political efficacy is hardly convincing, especially if we look at the role of bankers, generals and the bourgeoisie in shaping or making political agendas. By this quantitative criterion we could dismiss all social classes, including industrial workers in large plants and public employees. The only class which might be considered majoritarian is that composed of low paid service workers in the so-called informal economy, and few scholars have identified this group as the spearhead of any process of change.

Deductions from aggregate demographic trends tell us very little about the crucial determinants of socio-political actions and motivations. To begin with, they fail to explain the persistence of the peasantry, its refusal to leave the countryside, and why those living/working in urban sectors are engaged in return migration to the countryside when conditions in the rural areas offer better opportunities than the city. Where successful agrarian reforms have occurred in a context of urban stagnation and economic crisis, the demographics were reversed. Secondly, organized and cohesive minorities of peasants can form majorities when considered in terms of the best-organized sectors of a society, in which role they have exerted – and can still exercise – great leverage against unpopular regimes. In other words, a strong capacity for mobilization among the peasantry and landless rural workers can provide a more effective political movement than an immobilized urban middle or working class.

Some structuralists focus on specific country cases to argue the thesis of the ‘decline of the peasantry’ or the ‘lost promise of agrarian reform’. For example, by focusing on Chile and Peru and comparing actions carried out in the 1960s and early 1970s with those in the 1990s, Kay [1981, 1982,

1999] among others generalizes the effect of modernization in reducing the size and weight of rural labour and its political role. However, the decline of rural labour in Chile had as much to do with the harsh repression under the Pinochet regime and the retrograde rural labour legislation under the post-dictatorial regime. Secondly, in both countries the major peasant confederations were fragmented by left-wing sects, and were either dependent on and manipulated by electoral parties (in Peru) or subordinated to the governing regime (in Chile), thus undermining any possibility of independent political action. Thirdly, the reversal of agrarian reforms in both countries – a kind of political counter-reform policy – seriously eroded and undermined the morale and cohesion of the peasantry and rural labour. While few would argue that Chile or Peru have advanced rural movements today, therefore, this situation is not directly attributable to a general process of modernization. Rather, it is the outcome of the specific political circumstances under which the economic transformation toward free markets took place, as well as an endogenous dynamic originating in the actions of better-off peasants. On this point, studies on peasant dynamics by Brass [2000: 65ff.] in Peru, Zamosc [1986] in Columbia and de Vylder [1976] in Pinochet's Chile are instructive. The issue, identified most clearly by Brass, is that the loss of dynamism in the struggle for social change in rural Latin America and the unravelling of the land reform movement is not just a question of neoliberal capitalist development. It relates in part to efforts of rich peasants, acting as or seeking to transform themselves into rural capitalists, to which end they use land reform as a means of penetrating and dominating the production cooperatives of peasant smallholders and, in the process, erode them from within. Needless to say, this dynamic is not entirely absent from the countryside today, and needs to be factored into any analysis of rural political dynamics.

Modernization, Agrarian Reform and Peasant Movements

Structuralists, of both the Marxist and liberal kind, frequently invoke a version of the modernization argument in order to argue that global changes, the new economy, the demands of the market, and international competitiveness, have eroded any possibility of a successful peasant-based agrarian reform. Some, like Kay [1999], go as far as to argue that modernization has made the whole concept of radical agrarian reform irrelevant or anachronistic.

This position poses a number of problems. First, the term 'modernization' is problematic. Unless one resorts to a circular argument that identifies modernization with what passes for current free market economies, or political and economic measures leading to the former, one must recognize there are many paths to modernization. If the latter means

raising living standards, increasing marketable surpluses, improving productivity and combining credit, technical knowhow and skilled labour to expanding the reproductive capacity of investments, then historically (and today) there are a variety of market and non-market roads to modernization.

The equation of modernization simply with a free market or neoliberal doctrine is the outcome of a particular configuration of class-based and elite-led power. In structural terms modernization under elite hegemony means the exclusion and displacement of peasants and rural workers, to benefit large-scale exporters, big landowners and multinational agribusiness. In these circumstances, modernization is equated with export surpluses, a high return to big investors, and high capital/labour ratios. Viewed from the perspective of rural workers and peasants, the free market version of modernization has resulted in a regressive de-modernization. Millions of peasants have been displaced from *their* markets, and forced into subsistence production. Many have become rural refugees, swelling the low productive, low-income sectors of the economy. Free market modernization has also undermined the access of landless workers and small peasant producers to means of production – land, technology and credit. Thus the struggle in the countryside involves not so much a conflict between modernity and tradition as a confrontation between two alternative forms of modernization, one that is elitist and exclusionary and another based on landless workers and peasants. The persistence of this conflict is not based on traditional rural sectors tenaciously holding onto their land and resisting modernity but on a struggle over the means of production and state aid.

Discussions about the nature of rural movements, and the viability of agrarian reform, revolve around the notion of modernization. Neo- or social-liberal structuralists, such as Randall [1996], Seligson [1995], and the scholars associated with the UN Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL), the International Development Bank (IDB), and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), all define the process essentially in techno-economic terms, with reference to technologies linked to large-scale, capital intensive, export units.²² The imperatives of accumulation and investment are linked to big investors who have access to financial markets and export networks. The fundamental problem with this version of modernization is that it overlooks the class relations that define land tenure, access to credit, technical assistance and choice of markets. Notwithstanding their professed belief in the multiplicity of development paths, neoliberal structuralists tend to assume that modernization can only be achieved by a single socio-economic configuration. They make an a priori identification between modernization on the one hand, and export markets and corporate farming in large-scale private units on the other. By

definition, therefore, other forms of farming and different social classes are thereby relegated to a marginal role. Having designated modernization as a supra-historical category that transcends class and state relations, it is apparent why neoliberal structuralists do not consider agrarian reform and struggles by peasants and landless workers as an alternative route to modernization. By associating modernization with one particular configuration of power and economic strategy, they overlook alternative configurations, routes, agencies and property forms within which modernization could also occur.

In terms of results, the record of neoliberal capitalist development and modernization are mixed. Some productivity gains measured by output per worker are counterbalanced by declining output as measured by output per acre of land.²³ The concentration of ownership, justified as modernization, has been as much for speculative as productive purposes, leaving large land tracts sparsely cultivated. Secondly, much of the economic progress measured in terms of increases in exports is the result of heavy government subsidies and cheap credits, not the imputed market efficiency of large-scale production. Rather than describing socio-economic realities, therefore, the neoliberal structuralist conception of modernization serves as an ideological subterfuge to justify the ascendancy of a particular power configuration as well as to deny the importance of peasant struggles and the relevance of agrarian reform as a legitimate strategy for modernization. In this context, neoliberal structuralists argue that the marginalization and elimination of peasants and rural workers from the productive process is merely a technological outcome, divorced from human will and as such will only be resisted by neoluddites.²⁴ They turn the struggle for resources and markets into a technological imperative rather than a form of from above class struggle that invites as a response a from below class struggle over the content and direction of modernization. Briefly put, neoliberal structuralists deny the importance of human agency. They impute irreversibility to the process of centralization and concentration of agricultural capitalism. They deny the possibility of reversibility based on a different political resolution of the class conflict inherent in the accumulation process. Structuralists in this regard, be they orthodox Marxists or liberals, tend to engage in a one-dimensional line of reasoning rather than a dialectical approach, which combines analysis from two converging directions: on the one hand the objective process of concentration and centralization of capital, trade and government aid, and on the other the subjective organization against this process, in the form of the internal cohesion and mobilization of peasants and rural labourers.

The intensification of rural conflicts between landowners and peasants/rural workers and their radicalization can best be understood by

placing contemporary rural capitalism in the context of the larger urban-industrial economy. The assumption of neoliberal structuralists is that the displaced rural population will be incorporated into the industrial-urban economy. And, in fact, as of at least the 1960s the urban centres and cities of Latin America have experienced explosive pressures of large-scale rural outmigration which, in the not atypical case of Brazil, over the last five years alone involved five to eight million migrants and, it is estimated, will bring another eight million into the cities over the next five years. But the structuralist argument in this area is untenable. As of the early 1980s, Latin American economies have tended to stagnate, drastically reducing the absorptive capacity of the urban sector in the process. In this situation, the decision by the rural poor to take the route of urban migration is less clear-cut, and the decision to stay and fight for change in the rural areas becomes more plausible. Structural constraints in the cities, and increased opportunities to engage in successful social movements in the countryside, have increased recruits for the rural mobilization. The apparent willingness of these new contingents to engage in direct action may in part account for the observed radicalization of these movements. A new type of leadership, with solid roots in the peasantry, can also be seen as a factor in their observed dynamism and growing radicalization.²⁵

The conflict between processes of capital concentration and the counter-tendency of social mobilization may account for several new developments: the return migration of urban poor/unemployed toward the countryside, and the attempts to make claims on new agricultural land via land occupations, as well as the spread of rural resistance to hitherto quiescent regions. The demonstration effect of successful movements in winning land, building successful cooperatives, and achieving housing, schools, adequate nutrition and an access to health has created a new momentum in attracting new activist households. Even where concrete achievements have been minimal, the movements have attracted new followers, because they promise a vision of a better future, solidarity in resisting further evictions, and strength in negotiating with established powers.²⁶

Neoliberal Structuralism: Urban-Centric Perspectives

Neoliberal structuralists tend to assume a one way flow of influence and pressure: from the cities to the countryside, and from the globalized economy to its parts. Their concept of power is based exclusively on an institutional or market conception of power, in which the top institutional position and the flows of capital are the only source of influence. Granted that institutions and markets are important foci of power, but they are not its only source. Organized masses of people also exercise power. Most importantly, power is a class relation, in which the dominant class has

resources like money (and what this can buy) plus the bureaucratic, the armed and the judicial components of the state apparatus, while peasants and rural workers have large numbers, a new form of (potential) organization, and mass grassroots support.²⁷

In several important instances, an urban-centric conception of power is not tenable: powerful rural movements have in the past had a major impact on urban politics, converting the peasantry and indigenous peoples into an active force for social and political change. The MST (Rural Landless Workers Movement) in Brazil, the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces) in Colombia, and CONAIE (National Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities) in Ecuador have all shaped national policies, and have become major challengers of state power. The MST has built coalitions with urban trade unions, urban shantytown organizations, and church and human rights groups. It has made agrarian reform a major political issue on the national agenda. The FARC is a rural-based guerrilla group with 15,000 armed supporters, overwhelmingly peasant or landless rural workers. It controls, or has influence in, half the municipalities of the country, and is in negotiations with the government on a possible peace accord, in which agrarian reform is one of the centrepieces. CONAIE, the major Indian-peasant confederation in Ecuador, has paralyzed the country via general strikes and highway blockages, occupied Parliament in January 2000, and in May 2000 swept the highland state and local elections.

The theoretical point here is that power is a two-way street, in which rural movements can counteract or reverse urban and external flows of influence, and exercise hegemony on a national basis, making agrarian reform once again a national issue.

Implicit in most neoliberal structuralist arguments is a virtuous view of the city. Urban economies are seen as dynamic, creative and the pattern of the future. A corollary to the dynamic city is the image of a static, stagnant countryside. This is a serious misconception. City life today is divided, literally, between guarded enclaves of high money turnover and seas of crime, corruption and underemployment. The dynamic view from the stock market does not correspond to the real economy, either of the 1990s or of the new millennium: stagnant urban economies are unable any longer to provide employment or habitation. On the other hand, there are two faces in the countryside: one is the static/negative image of the neoliberal structuralists, the other is the promising dynamic growth of social movements, and the successful production co-operatives that have emerged as a consequence of grassroots agrarian reforms, based on land occupations. In their negative view of the countryside, neoliberal structuralists fail to examine the class context of agricultural activity. Where rural movements have been successful in expropriating productive lands, and securing credit

plus technical assistance, they have produced virtuous outcomes, demonstrating that there are many roads to agrarian modernization.

By examining the class context of modernization, therefore, we can understand its role in the ideological world-view of elite classes, and the effect of the latter in excluding popular incorporation. Equally understandable is the fact that the resistance of peasants and landless workers is not to modernization *per se*, but to a particular form of it. The issue of realizing modernization goals is less a problem of the 'peasant embrace of traditional values' or rural resistance to 'structural adjustment' and 'short term pain', but the lack of access to available alternative employment, housing and security in the urban setting. Staying in the countryside, and attempting to improve rural livelihoods, is a modern, rational decision based on cost/benefit analysis: it is, in short, the recognition by those at the grassroots of the real possibility of change, based on perceptions of or information about successful grassroots activity in other regions or adjoining territories. The diffusion factor is also operative: positive activities in one region have a multiplier affect. Successful occupations have a demonstration effect. The latter is only successful, however, if peasants or landless labourers already have a predisposition, both to act and to remain in the countryside and farm if the opportunity presented itself. Illustrating what we could call 'modernization from below' is evidenced by the demands of peasants and rural workers for technical assistance and credit, infrastructural and marketing facilities. These are all associated with raising production and acquiring market share, and thus obviously and positively associated with modernization itself, albeit in capitalist form.

Currently the issue of agrarian reform is not a simple replay of traditional demands of 'land for the tiller', counterposed to capitalist 'modernization' associated with large-scale export farming undertaken and organized by multinational corporations. It is an alternative modernization strategy, built around modern social classes. Peasants and farm workers, or at least their cadres/leaders, view land distribution as only the first step in an agrarian reform programme/process. Thus the conception of 'the peasant' or 'landless workers' today is vastly different from past images of atomized subsistence farmers, relying solely on traditional farming methods, and barely aware of markets, alternative cropping patterns, non-traditional marketable crops, and resistant to technological innovation.

It is precisely the emergence of a different peasantry and rural workforce, with modern and positive attitudes toward the possibility of significant, even transformative, change, that accounts for resistance to the process of displacement or 'proletarianization' (in effect, joining the urban reserve army of unemployed).

And it is this 'new peasantry', with its new subjectivity in the current structural context, that not only provides a challenge to Kay's notion of 'post-agrarian reform', but also and in part explains the re-emergence of dynamic peasant movements, the prognostications of the demographic reductionists of their irrelevance and/or their anachronistic demands notwithstanding. Accordingly, we argue that the modernity both of rural producers (peasants/rural workers) and of their struggles can best be understood within an approach that emphasises their political-economic demands (agrarian reform, credits, adequate prices, etc.) combined, in many cases, with a defence of politico-cultural rights (mistakenly described by postmodernists as classless 'identity politics') and, in some cases, socialist demands for a new system of production relations.

The pursuit of politico-cultural rights is itself a part of the larger class struggle between elite members of exploited indigenous or black communities and militant poorer sectors. The internal class differences, and the playing out of those differences in class conflicts within ethnic groups, undermines attempts by postmodern writers to impose an a priori uniformity over politically heterogeneous and class divided social groups. Specific cases of Ecuador, Bolivia, Mexico and Brazil (see below) empirically illustrate this point. If conceptions of the peasantry and rural workers, and thus also of the nature of their struggles, held by modernist and postmodernist alike are flawed, the same can be said of a kind of unreflective Marxism with regard to the process of proletarianization. While the *disappearing peasantry* thesis argues for the decreasing relevance of rural social movements, the *proletarianization* thesis assumes that the transformation or conversion of former peasants into wage labourers will swell the ranks of the urban-industrial labour force and provide a new infusion of troops for working-class struggles.²⁸

There are several problems with this thesis. First, most of the displaced rural population, peasants and workers, never make it into the industrial labour force, even in the best of times, let alone during extended periods of economic stagnation. Secondly, those that enter the labour force are usually recruited through clientelistic family networks, most often in construction, which inhibits any expression of militancy and of steady employment. Thirdly, most find work in the underpaid, low productivity 'informal sector' with few of the social compensations associated with urban industrial employment. And fourthly, 'proletarianization' – as well as the more dominant 'semi-proletarianization' that Kay [1999] writes of – takes place in the rural sector under very diverse social circumstances.

The formation of a rural landless working class is derived from several processes. Large families of small farmers, for example, create a labour surplus composed of sons and daughters who do not have access to land; in

other cases, sharecroppers, renters and tenant farmers are displaced by larger farmers engaged in converting to new crops, introducing mechanization, or cultivating capital intensive crops. In many cases, the government's neoliberal trade policies result in the importation of cheap foodstuffs that bankrupt small farmers, while cutbacks in agricultural credits and loans, together with high interest rates, have also resulted in an enforced and massive exodus of small family farmers, driving many to migrate to cities or to become a rural proletariat. The theoretical point is that, while the segments of the rural labour force which remain in the countryside are formally 'propertyless rural workers', their ties to the land are recent and relatively strong, their 'lineage' and extended family networks are 'rural' and their 'class consciousness' is still bound up with an access to land, particularly cultivatable land in regions familiar to them.

The failure of government 'resettlement' or colonization schemes, and the success of movement-based land occupations by landless labourers, is closely related to this class consciousness – that success is based on productive land, market access via roads and proximity to regional markets and transport systems. Thus proletarianization in the rural areas heightens land-class-consciousness among landless workers in a particularly market oriented manner. The contrast between people without land and lands (undercultivated estates or plantations) without people is one incentive to solve the landless problem in a manner quite different from that espoused by neoclassical ideologues: by creating an alternative social market productive unit that combines radical collective social action with access to privately-held property based on production for consumer markets.

The concept of 'proletarianization' as the simple deflection of smallholders into wage labour, and the consequent attribution to them of behaviour associated with the formation of an eighteenth and nineteenth century working class consciousness, does not apply today. Capitalist transformation and wage labour formation under current 'free market' conditions in many parts of Latin America does not offer as attractive an option as staying in the countryside and fighting to create an alternative, modern rural-based settlement, an objective to be realized through class struggle and agrarian reform.

Two related conceptual fallacies accompany the postmodernist and modernist views of peasant/rural workers' struggles. One relates to the exaggerated and unfounded belief that electoral politics could serve as a vehicle for social change. The second is that rural classes, and peasant and rural workers' movements, are organically or organizationally incapable of leading national struggles, either because their position in the national economy is strategically insignificant, because they are geographically removed from the levers of power, or because they are firmly under the

control of rural bosses and easily repressed by the military, police, local gunmen, or because of a combination of all three reasons. This 'organic' limitations argument revolves around the parochial and unfounded view that – in contrast to the illuminated minions of urban industrial intellectual life – 'rural idiocy' pervades the countryside. A slightly more sympathetic view is that rural workers and peasants cannot see or understand anything beyond their turnip patch, chicken coop and their neighbours' encroaching cow. In any case, whatever the dubious validity of this view in the past, today many of the leading cadres, militants and activists in the rural workers/peasant movements are educated, have a definite understanding of national politics, and have been exposed to and engaged in national and international debates about rural alternatives.²⁹ They are, in short, cosmopolitan and capable of leading movements that articulate a desire for a broad range of objectives, covering issues such as credit, markets, trade and land use.

Secondly, the question of the relationship between 'rural' and urban movements cannot be deduced from the supposedly centrality of the urban economy. After all, everybody needs to eat. Nor do demographic changes alone account for the relative importance of classes in sociopolitical action. Other variables, such as superior cohesion, organization, leadership and mobilizing capacity, have a major role to play in measuring the relative effectiveness of sociopolitical movements in rural and urban areas. A deductive a priori position on this question is untenable. In fact, there are data accumulated from a variety of country studies which suggest that the major social forces confronting the neoliberal regimes are organized from within the countryside, among peasants and rural workers.

IV. MODERN RURAL DISCOURSE AND PRACTICE

A post-structuralist discourse analysis is predicated on the notion that the meanings expressed therein do not constitute theoretical representations of the real world. It is also inferred that these categories of analysis are mere social constructions, rather than representations of social facts. A structuralist discourse analysis, on the other hand, assumes a relation of correspondence or truth between the categories of analysis and the real world.³⁰ Concepts such as 'class' are deemed to have empirical referents, and the structures to which they refer theoretically are taken as real, the basis of causally operating forces. In this theoretical context, the actual struggles and actions of the peasantry, our object of analysis, are viewed not merely as discursive but as real, and as such active responses to objectively given conditions. At the same time, the discourse of the actual subject, in our case the Latin American peasantry, is taken as a representation of the degree or form of theoretical awareness or social consciousness.

Accordingly, this discourse is viewed as a resource but not a reflection of reality. In fact, as Marx asserted in an earlier and different context, as a matter of principle one should not take a historical subject's social consciousness as a measure or accurate representation of reality, notwithstanding the fact that people will necessarily act on their subjective beliefs and seek to bring about their own reality.

In these 'structural' or social scientific terms, an analysis of peasant discourse is revealing. In all cases it makes sense of and explains the actions to which the discourse refers. The practice of the peasantry in Latin America is both informed by and consistent with their discourse. In many cases it also shows a high level of class consciousness: that is, a theoretical awareness by the peasants and their intellectuals of the conditions acting on them, as well as the structural sources of these conditions. In some cases, as in Mexico and Ecuador, peasant discourse also reflects a high level of ethnic consciousness – a wish to assert or recover a cultural and political identity. A structuralist discourse analysis further shows that our interpretation of the dynamics of peasant-led or based social movements in the region as modernist in character at the very least accords with the interpretation and understanding of the peasantry itself. We profile, briefly, four very different examples of this process.

The Rural Landless Workers Movement (MST) in Brazil

There are several reasons for considering the Brazilian Rural Landless Workers Movement (MST) as a modernizing social movement. In the first instance, their program is directed toward modernizing agriculture, converting fallow estates into productive units incorporating credits, technical assistance and innovative marketing strategies [Caldart, 2000]. The slogan of the MST is 'occupy, resist and produce'. Over 200,000 families have been settled in co-operatives between the founding of the MST in 1984 and the present [Petras, 1998]. The great majority have increased the cultivation of land, increased living standards (improved health, education and housing) and produced a marketable surplus, including significant coffee exports to overseas markets. The national and regional leadership of the MST has passed through advanced training programs, many sponsored by the organization, where invited lecturers, including University professors and technical experts, teach courses on modern agricultural farming, co-operative management and contemporary political economy [Caldart, 1997].

The organization of the MST activities and its tactics and strategies have evolved into a highly sophisticated if mixed structure. Between 1 and 7 May 2000, over 400 land occupations were organized throughout the country, relaying information via the Internet to supporters throughout Brazil. The

strategy of land occupations is based on an elaborate structure of self-governance, dealing with food, security, negotiations with the state, etc.

During the 1999–2000 period, the MST has engaged in direct action protests, demanding greater credits and financing to stem the outflow of bankrupt smallholders and impoverished landless rural workers fleeing to the cities in pursuit of low paid, unproductive urban employment.

The MST has been a leading force in organizing urban alliances to counteract the neoliberal agenda of privatization and budget cuts, in the process mobilizing trade unions, political parties, university and religious groups through a campaign called '*Consulta Popular*'. In the late 1990s the MST led a march of over 100,000 urban and rural workers to Brasilia, drawing urban support along the parade route across the country. The organization, leadership, productive units and activities of the MST are directed toward modernizing agriculture on the one hand and against unproductive landlords and land speculators on the other; and neither tend to invest in increasing productivity and producing a marketable surplus [Stedile and Frei, 1993]. The MST has also counterposed its modernization strategy against large agribusiness enterprises that have expelled smallholders and farm workers. In this context the MST pursues a 'modernization from below with equity' strategy, in opposition to the elite modernization strategy favoured by the Cardoso regime and its World Bank sponsors.

One of the key differences between the two approaches is the social and ecological foundations from which the contrasting modernization strategies are organized. The elite modernization strategy is based on a small group of elite capitalist farmers, tied to a chemical-based intensive agriculture and almost exclusively linked to overseas foreign export firms. The modernization-from-below strategy of the MST is built on the inclusion of a large contingent of former landless labourers in agricultural cooperatives, and the pursuit of a sustainable agricultural strategy, which involves not only the production of food for local markets but also a social agenda aimed at achieving gender and racial equality. In this context the conflict is not between a 'modernizing' agribusiness elite versus a pre-modern peasantry, but a struggle between two distinct modernizing strategies, each with different socio-economic bases, objectives, strategies, markets and social values. In part, particularly in dealing with land speculators and traditional landlords, the conflict is between the modernizing strategy of the MST directed toward employment and production, and the 'rentier' mentality that still pervades many regions of the country.

Within the institutionality of the dominant capitalist system, the MST has widened its agenda from agrarian reform to include issues such as banking and credit reform, a moratorium on foreign debt, the conservation

of the Amazon, and the protection of domestic producers. It has called for greater social spending on public health and education as part of a national project toward greater national autonomy within the international economy. It has been an active participant in many of the most important national and international conferences dealing with globalization, environmental issues, gender and minority rights [Stedile, 2000].

The effectiveness and prominence of the MST in national and Third World politics is based precisely on its 'modern' character, and its capacity to build a modern program and adapt it to the primary demands of the landless rural workers and impoverished small landholder.

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) – Colombia

The FARC was founded in 1964 as an overwhelmingly peasant-based movement, consisting largely of subsistence farmers in the relatively underdeveloped region of Marquetalia [FARC-EP, 2000]. The guerrilla movement was linked to peasant land settlements that had developed a degree of autonomy from the national government, and therefore were perceived by the state as a threat to its control. The attempt by the Colombian armed forces to exterminate the peasant communities led to the formation of the FARC: the latter has evolved from an armed formation dedicated to defending peasantry from the depredations of the national government and landlords into a national political-military force of some 15–20,000 active fighters, and exercises an influence in half the municipalities of the country. The issue of Agrarian Reform has remained the centre-piece of the FARC programme [Matta Aldana and Alberto, 1999], although as it has grown into a national political force it has extended its program to cover a whole ensemble of political and economic issues: these include the reform of state institutions, the expansion of the welfare state, and an increase in national control over domestic markets, energy and communications.

The FARC is a complex organization the main constituency of which includes subsistence farmers, displaced peasants, landless rural workers and a sector of urban workers and employees. According to the FARC about 65 per cent of the organization is peasant and 35 per cent is 'urban' – including rural towns (private communication from FARC to author). While some of the leaders of the FARC, including its legendary leader Manuel Marulanda, are formally members of the Communist Party of Colombia, the FARC remains distinct in terms of leadership, program, strategy, tactics and social base. From the outset, the FARC has developed a modern programme of agrarian reform premised on land distribution and government financing, credits and technical assistance. Its political programme called for breakup of the political monopoly exercised by the century-old traditional two party

system (Liberals and Conservatives) rooted in the urban and rural oligarchies. The introduction of a modern multiparty system was the basis of peace negotiations with the then President Betancourt in the mid-1980s. The FARC-supported Patriotic Union Party was soon decimated – over 4,000 activists and sympathizers were killed as well as three presidential candidates [*FARC-EP*, 2000]. The renewal and intensification of the civil war led to the massive displacement of millions of peasants, largely the result of the scorched earth policies pursued by the Armed Forces and their paramilitary allies.

The FARC has two faces: one is the rural social base of smallholders, displaced subsistence farmers, and landless labourers seeking to carve a niche in local markets with little technical knowledge; the second consists of the national and regional leadership, plus the rural cadres of the movement, who have embraced modern values and organizational principles through the leadership training programmes run by the FARC. Although the FARC has protected – and continues to defend – underdeveloped rural producers tied to small-scale production, its leaders and programme is nevertheless directed toward introducing modern agricultural techniques and marketing strategies [*FARC-Website*]. During the peace talks being held over the period 1999–2000, the FARC has organized a country-wide forum on a whole series of national policies, ranging from projects for alternative development, to illicit crops, unemployment, privatization versus nationalization, free trade versus protection, etc., issuing position papers that reflect a sophisticated understanding of contemporary debates [*Dialogos*; *FT* 7/1; 2000, p.4]. The fora held in the ‘liberated zones’ are attended by a wide range of social organizations, from trade unions to employer associations, Wall Street investment bankers, government officials, etc. The point is that the FARC has been transformed from an almost exclusively rural movement based among small producers into a national political movement rooted in the agrarian struggle but with modernist aspirations.

The guerrilla army is closely linked to communities of peasants and rural workers throughout Colombia, drawing on them for support of its agrarian reform programme. Its military organization is highly structured, strategically sophisticated and equipped with modern arms. It is a modern guerrilla army, linked to a mass peasant base with a ‘modernist’ leadership who envision the modernization of the economy and society through a mixed economy, a strong state welfare and a regulatory regime. The point is that what began as a rural defensive movement based on pre-capitalist rural producers has been transformed into a modern guerrilla army advocating a modernization-through-equity vision of political transformation. While the setting for much of the FARC’s activities takes place in the most

underdeveloped and impoverished regions, its organization, leadership and programme is oriented toward opening Colombia's political system, eliminating extra-judicial state formation and creating a more dynamic domestic market via a redistributive political economy. The juxtaposition of democratic political values with a vertical military organization, the elaboration of a modernist development agenda to a largely subsistence rural base, the promotion of the home market in the context of deepening international economic integration are some of the more formidable contradictory elements confronting the FARC in the future.

National Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities (CONAIE) – Ecuador

In 1990, a significant sector of Ecuador's indigenous peasants launched an uprising against the state and its neoliberal policies. Over the subsequent decade the conditions that had led to this uprising generated an anti-systemic social movement of significant proportions, with a series of concerted actions that included the storming in 2000 of Congress and a brief take-over of the presidency. At issue in these actions are a seriously deteriorating economic situation and a series of drastic economic reforms and policies of adjustment that include a serious proposal to adopt the US dollar as the country's currency. Other issues include concessions to transnational corporations of permits to construct oil pipelines and engage in economic development projects to the detriment of the country's indigenous peoples, their communities, the environment and their local economy. Behind these concerted actions can be found an impressive organization of indigenous communities from across the Andean highlands that are politically represented by CONAIE. By the turn of the new millennium this peasant-based indigenous movement had clearly taken the lead of a nation-wide social movement advocating social transformation and opposed to the government's IMF-mandated policies, a movement aimed at changing not only the relationship between the country's indigenous peasants, the state and economy, but also at the overthrow of the whole system [Macas, 2000]. To this end the peasant communities organizing the movement joined with other social forces in a concerted programme of direct action, while itself remaining the most dynamic social force for systemic social change in the country. On this point there is wide agreement among scholars and observers, notwithstanding the existence of a parallel indigenous discourse on identity politics and the plurinational character of the state which bears comparison with similar developments in Bolivia and Mexico.

The beliefs and ideas used to mobilize collective action by Ecuador's peasant and indigenous peoples are clearly articulated in a series of programmatic statements made by the movement's leaders and

spokespeople, as well as in other forms of discourse. There is no room for misinterpretation here. Although the discourse is indigenist in nature, and couched in the language of identity politics, such as a 'return to the good times' (*Pachakutik*), the 'reaffirmation of our historical roots', and the 'plurinational character of our society and the state', on the basis of their own accounts the series of uprisings and the overall movement of the country's indigenous peoples and peasants are based on a clearly modernist development project. The critical dimensions of this are clearly reflected in the discourse associated with both the *Inti Raymi* uprising and the creation of MUPP-NP (United Plurinational *Pachakutik* Movement – New Country). Both are oriented ideologically and politically towards three issues. The first is *development*, as embodied in the aim to bring about a 'profound social transformation (in) the lives of the people'. The second is the 'construction of *democracy*', in order 'to profoundly and radically change the structures of the Ecuadorian state and existing forms of class domination'. And the third is *social justice*, as projected in the intention 'to determine in a manner that is ... participatory, just ... the destiny of each people' [Macas, 2000]. In terms of this modernist political project, the associated discourse addresses issues of national economic development and the need for a new politics centred on community-based relations and forms of power. In other words, what is sought is Another Development that is constructed from below, participatory, people-led and centred, inclusive, equitable and just – and empowering.

The meanings embedded in the discourse are clear enough and do not arise from within the discourse itself, as postmodernists would have it. The discourse makes clear empirical reference to a process of capitalist modernization that needs to be combated at all levels with the combined resources and collective action of the country's indigenous peoples. To this end, CONAIE has committed itself to a process of non-capitalist modernization, an alternative form of development rooted both in the indigenous peasant economy and in an equitable participation in the country's resources and national development process. Accordingly, CONAIE sees itself as a means of converting the country's indigenous peoples from a 'passive subject of change' into 'an active social and political subject' and, in the process, to bring about a state of development, democracy and justice.

Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) – Mexico

In Mexico it is estimated that the indigenous peoples comprise some 14 million, the vast majority of them peasants, landless workers or *jornaleros*, a subproletariat of seasonal or permanent migrants, refugees from what Marcos termed '*bolsillos de olvido*' (the 'forgotten areas'), and which in

official language are defined as 'marginal zones' of subsistence production, exclusion and poverty.

There is nothing 'purely discursive' about these categories – marginality, exclusion, poverty, etc. They reflect conditions that are structural in source and objective in their effects. In terms of the directives and communiqués of the movement, the armed rebellion and uprising of indigenous peasants in Chiapas was directed against the Mexican State and the capitalist system supported by it. In the poetic language of Comandante Marcos, the official spokesperson of the movement, the cause of the uprising was 'the wild beast' (imperialism) whose 'bloody jaws' and teeth have sunk deeply into the throat of south-eastern Mexico, drawing out large pools of blood (tribute in the form of 'petroleum, electrical energy, cattle, money, coffee, banana, honey, corn') through '[as] many veins – oil and gas pipes, electrical lines, train-cars, bank accounts, trucks and vans, clandestine paths, gaps and forest trails'.³¹ As far as Marcos and the EZLN are concerned, the enemy is imperialism and the Mexican State that sustains its globalizing neoliberal project. This was made clear by Marcos himself as early as 1992, a year and a half before the 1994 uprising and soon after the Zapatistas' first skirmish with the government's armed forces. And the point is made, not as eloquently but as clearly, both at the moment of the EZLN's unexpected irruption and subsequently in the convocation of a series of national and tricontinental encounters and fora, that the Zapatistas have organized against neoliberalism and for humanity.

With reference to the imperialist and class nature of the oppressive state and rapacious capitalist system, the Zapatista uprising coincided with the inception of NAFTA, viewed as 'the deathknell of the peasant economy'. And in similar terms, the Zapatistas' discourse, in the form of a series of communiqués and reflections and calls for solidarity, speaks consistently of the need to combat (structural and political) relations of oppression and exploitation; and to establish new relations of power with the state and the economy, based on 'independence, democracy and justice' – a modernist project if there ever was one.³²

At the outset, the Zapatistas spoke or wrote clearly in class terms. Over time, however, this language transmuted into terms that have given rise to misinterpretation by an international array of postmodernist intellectuals tuned into cyberspace and anxious to establish the presence of the 'first postmodernist' movement in history. Accordingly, historians like Florencia Mallon speak of the postmodern condition of the postcolonial peasantry and the political (discursive) struggle for ethnic or national identity, and political analysts like Burbach write of the 'first postmodernist movement in history'. In this poststructuralist reading of EZLN discourse, objectively real or existent relations of cause/effect involving imperialism/capitalism/

the state on the one hand and Zapatista actions on the other are reduced to a meaning derived from their discourse: namely, relations of power and hegemony arising from and consisting of discursive activity. The object thus becomes not to act on and change reality, as Marx had it in the XIIIth thesis on Feuerbach, but simply to reinterpret it.

In the process of forming itself into a national force, the Zapatistas have been concerned to establish a new form of power and politics that is reminiscent of the theoretical discourse initiated by Foucault, and reproduced by Mallon and other members of the subaltern group of historians. However, it takes a perversely poststructuralist reading of this discourse to convert its categories into purely discursive phenomena with merely constructed meaning. As for the Zapatistas themselves, there is no question about the meaning attached to their words. They reflect class-based conditions that are grounded in a modernist project – to bring about changes and improvements in the lives of the country's indigenous peasants. Our own interviews with Zapatista activists and peasant leaders make clear that the conditions to which the discourse refers are taken as real and objective in their effects, requiring militant collective action. Mallon's postmodernist reconstructions on this point, based as they are on 'theoretical conversations', 'multivocal (merely constructed) categories' and 'historical imagination', do not reflect well the subjective beliefs of Mexico's indigenous peasants in this regard. Rather, they reflect on the poststructuralist sensibility of Mallon herself, and her concern to reinterpret but not change reality.

CONCLUSIONS

We have reviewed and criticized various approaches which have defined the Latin American peasantry as either a pre-modern or a postmodern category. In the former, the peasants emerge as a social force fated to disappear, the victim of historical forces and circumstances they cannot understand or control, and ones that leave them with little organizational and political capacity. In the latter, the peasantry appears not as a social force but merely as a discursive category, and the dynamics of its struggle are reduced to 'discursive activity'. In this paper, both forms of analysis, pre- and postmodern, are rejected, and counterposed to an analysis pioneered by Marx.

We departed from the assumption, and draw the conclusion from our analysis, that the concept and tools of class analysis, inspired if not directed by Marxist theory, still provides the best understanding of the fundamental dynamics of rural development in Latin America. In this connection, a number of peasant-led socio-political movements have constituted

themselves as the most dynamic forces pursuing systemic social change. In the current context, peasant and landless workers movements in Latin America are engaged in a modernist struggle to secure socio-economic improvements within a modern economy dominated by capital. In fact, we argue that the enduring presence and increasing importance of peasant and rural workers movements' is based precisely on their modernity. Rooted in, or articulated with, the productive sectors of the capitalist economy, they tend to resist the pressures and demands of financial and commercial capital the free market policies and external (world market) orientation of which threaten to undermine the livelihood of small local producers, rural workers, and their communities.

The resurgence of peasant and rural movements in Latin America is built around the combination of on the one hand traditional forms of cohesion, based on kinship, community and in many cases class and ethnic identity, and on the other the adaptation of modern goals and techniques, coupled with a strategic understanding of the levers of power in the national and international system, all of which are allied to the quest for an alternative form of development: family smallholding or community-based collectivism in some cases, socialist or pro-socialist (co-operative) in others.

In some countries this resurgence reflects a search for ethnic or racial identity, but it would be a serious mistake to view these movements in purely cultural terms, as a discursive phenomenon. As attested to by the spokespeople of these movements, or relevant discourses, peasants across the region in diverse local circumstances are consciously engaged in a struggle not only for survival and development but for systemic change: that is, for an alternative to the prevailing capitalist system as manifested in its worldwide operations. In some cases (most clearly the MST, FARC) the struggle for anti-systemic change is directed towards socialism in some form. In other cases (CONAIE) the struggle has not acquired an explicitly socialist character but has more limited objectives. In any case, all of these and other peasant-based social movements, particularly at the level of leadership, have exhibited a consistent orientation towards egalitarian and comunitarian or socialist values as well as a capacity to transcend the traditionally narrow (almost parochial) focus of past agrarian mobilizations in Latin America. The struggle for land and greater access to productive resources, and the simultaneous struggle over human rights – for freedom, autonomous development, and social justice – are generally placed in a broader context of systemic change. In other words, a struggle which entails opposition to the privatization of the means of production, the liberalization of market forces, the deregulation of private capitalist enterprise, and the dominance of big capital in the marketplace. Every peasant-based

sociopolitical movement is uncompromisingly opposed to capitalism in its current neoliberal form, including land entitlement schemes and other mechanisms for opening up and expanding the market in land. In the name of greater heterogeneity and efficiency, these schemes only benefit agrarian capitalists and capitalism.

In general, Latin American peasants tend to see themselves as combatants in a class war unleashed by the capitalist class and its state apparatus. The discourse of peasant intellectuals and the mobilization of peasant-based socio-political movements leave no doubt on this score. In their response to this situation, these movements have staked out diverse ideological and political positions, depending on the circumstances. In every case, the state is taken and confronted as 'the enemy', a repository of the most reactionary social and political forces as well the agent of anti-peasant neoliberal reforms. These movements continue to exhibit considerable dynamism in terms of the actual forms of struggle. Accordingly, they display a willingness to enter into cross-class civic alliances, to construct or participate in a broad alliance of oppositional forces while simultaneously maintaining an essential autonomy *vis-à-vis* political parties and non-governmental organizations on the Left. The experience of the MST in Brazil is particularly instructive in this regard. However, the political dynamics of this class struggle are by no means settled as to their form and outcome. Despite a long history of studies about these dynamics, they nevertheless require much closer inspection and reconceptualization, to which end this article constitutes a modest beginning.

NOTES

1. Together with their legitimating/mobilizing beliefs and ideologies, the universal values associated with this multidimensional project or process can be traced back to the eighteenth Century Enlightenment conviction in the necessity for, and possibility of, changing the form of society. This project was itself opposed from the very beginning of the nineteenth century in a conservative reaction, both to the fundamental ideas of the Enlightenment (human reason, freedom and equality) and to the emancipatory project for liberal or radical change based on them. Throughout the twentieth century the Enlightenment project, in both its liberal and Marxist forms, were attacked by conservatives at the levels of social analysis, theory and epistemology. However, in the late 1950s opposition to this project (to bring about a new and better modern form of society on the basis of scientific analysis) took a new turn. In 1959, C.W. Mills was one of the first sociologists to suggest that 'we are entering a new postmodern era in which the legitimating beliefs and explanations [of the enlightenment] no longer serve'. Daniel Bell in the *End of Ideology* argued along similar lines, initiating a search for a new form of postmodern, post-capitalist, post-Marxist analysis. By the 1980s the notion of a post-capitalist, post-industrial and postmodern society had gained a footing in the social sciences, and was now defined largely by a new and different (non-scientific) post-structural and postmodern mode of analysis and theorizing. It was closely associated with a new generation of French sociologists and philosophers, who in turn ensured both its dissemination and the consequent perception within development studies of a theoretical crisis [Booth, 1985; Schuurman, 1993].

2. On this search for Another Development, see Chapter 2 of Veltmeyer and Petras [2000] and Chapter 1 of Veltmeyer and O'Malley [2001].
3. As Kitching constructs it, economic populism embraces approaches that range from the *Narodniks* in their polemic with Lenin, the ideas of economists like Schumacher and Lipton, the policies of countries like Nyrere's Tanzania, and the models advanced in the 1970s by the ILO. What these approaches share is a concern for small size, co-operativism, and egalitarianism, as well as a balanced rural development.
4. Prior to his embrace of Post-Development, Esteva [1978, 1983] actively participated in the Mexican debate on the dynamics of peasant development as – to use the classification set out by Kearney [1996] – a 'peasantist', that is, a left-wing romantic. In this position, Esteva was clearly at odds with 'proletarianists' like Roger Bartra, but curiously aligned with those who adopted more of a right-wing romantic or populist position – Redfield [1956], in an earlier intellectual context, and Scott [1990] in a more recent one.
5. Admittedly, this view of grassroots postmodernism as a form of Another Development can be disputed. Some scholars, including Brass [2000], link grassroots postmodernism with agrarian populism on the basis of a shared concern with culture, decentred small-scale enterprise, and opposition to largescale development. Others, including most of the proponents of grassroots postmodernism, take a counter or post-development position; that is, rather than searching for another form of development, development as such is rejected as a misbegotten enterprise both in theory and in practice. On this see, *inter alia*, Escobar [1995]; Rahnama and Bawtree [1997]; and Sachs [1999].
6. Kay's view of the 'semi-proletariat' has a greater resemblance to de Janvry's notion of 'functional dualism' [1981: 39–40] than to Marx's conception. On the latter, see Veltmeyer [1983].
7. A caveat should be noted, in that exceptions exist to this point. In some historical contexts, therefore, conservatives have supported the continued existence of a peasantry because they regarded small proprietors as a bulwark against the spread in rural areas of socialist ideas and influence.
8. A very important line of this analysis (neostructuralism) is conducted by the economists and sociologists associated with the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA). As far as these scholars are concerned, the dynamic forces of economic development are encapsulated in the process of capitalist industrialization. Thus in the diverse and extensive research programmes initiated by ECLA, and in their publication series such as *CEPAL Review*, one can find only the most oblique references to the peasantry, namely the process of agricultural modernization and the social conditions of exclusion and marginality.
9. There is both a *Left* (radical) and a *Right wing* (liberal) stream of this modernist tradition, each of which is rooted in the eighteenth century Enlightenment (ideas of science, progress, etc.). The former can be traced back to Marx; the latter is exemplified in a succession of modernization theories advanced as of the 1960s with numerous permutations: cultural diffusion and institutional reorientation (Parsons, Moore, Harrison); the stages of growth (Rostow); the *Green Revolution*; *achievement orientation* (McClelland) and rational choice (Schultz, Bates); Basic Needs (Meier, Streeten, World Bank); and neoliberal capitalist development – the New Economic Model (on which see, *inter alia*, Bulmer-Thomas [1996] and Veltmeyer and Petras [1997]). On the Left and on the Right of this divide, both in the past and today, there can also be found what could be termed a 'romantic reaction' to the modernization project. With regards to the peasantry Kearney [1996: 49–109] classifies these two forms of romanticism respectively as 'peasantism' (R. Bartra, Esteva and Post-Development Theory) and 'populism' (Redfield, Scott and Resistance Theory).
10. The postmodernist challenge to a scientific form of analysis and any associated meta-theories (modernization, emancipation of the working class, etc.) was mounted in the 1980s by exponents of 'post-Marxism', 'post-structuralism', 'discourse theory', or the oxymoronic 'postmodern Marxism'. What the writers in this tradition share is an antipathy towards any and all forms of what we term 'structuralism' – analysis predicated on the objectivity of material and social conditions. Post-structuralism in this context (*discourse analysis*) has some affinity with structural linguistics, or what we might term linguistic structuralism. However, it should not be confused with any structural form of social or economic analysis

- associated with various forms of modernization theory or Marxism. On this point see, *inter alia*, Veltmeyer [2000b].
11. Major reference points for this postmodernist approach to social analysis include the writings of the French poststructuralist philosophers and sociologists such as Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard and Baudrillard. The interpretative and expository literature associated with this school of thought is voluminous. As for Post-Marxism, a variant of this approach directed specifically at the Marxist form of structural analysis, of particular relevance is a book put together by the French philosopher Mouffe and the Argentinean sociologist Ernesto Laclau [*Laclau and Mouffe*, 1985].
 12. At a seminar at the Pembroke Center for Teaching and research on Women, at Brown University in March 1988 (cited by Nugent [1995: 124–5]).
 13. The post-structuralist/Marxist/modernist critique of universalism, structuralism, essentialism and positivism, associated with the French school of post-structuralism (Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, Boudrillard, etc.) or the post Marxist project of Laclau and Mouffe [1985] has a long history within sociology. It follows similar attacks made by Dilthey and the German Historical School in the late nineteenth century, the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School, phenomenologists in the tradition of Husserl and a number of ‘Western Marxisms’ such as existentialism. As formulated by, among others, Mallon, a supporter of the Subaltern (Historical) Group and its extension into Latin America, *this form of analysis of the ‘never-ending chain of human agency and structure’ and the inclusion of herself within this chain [Mallon, 1995: 20] bears comparison with the diverse efforts by sociologists, such as Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdeau in the 1980s and 1990s to construct a social theory that incorporates or takes into account the subjectivity of experience and the subaltern point of view. What characterizes all of these efforts is the following combination: on the one hand a decided idealism, and on the other a rejection of structuralism, materialism and the objectivity of experience/principles that make social science possible.*
 14. As it happens, the historian Florencia Mallon, in her encounter with and adoption of a post-structuralist position, has set up a comparative framework for her analysis (Peru, Mexico), but in this she is somewhat idiosyncratic, seeking to overcome the ‘distressingly ahistorical’ nature of postmodernist writings [1995: xvii]. A striking feature of the analysis of social movements in Latin America through the optics of postmodernism is the lack of any attempts at comparative analysis.
 15. Haber, among others, criticizes Mallon for the lack of empirical verification: that is, not only involving herself in the object of her historical interpretation, but also her defense of such interpretation [discourse analysis] without the need for direct access to what peasants, women, etc., thought and did [*Haber*, 1997: 341, 367–8].
 16. As Mallon [1996: 333] herself notes, her discourse analysis derives not so much from a general post-structuralist emphasis on and concern with language, but from Laclau and Mouffe’s Post-Marxist reformulation of Gramsci’s concept of hegemony. Her use of this concept, and other similarly constructed ‘multi-vocal’ categories such as ‘gender’ and ‘nation’, suffers from the same problem that bedevils the constructions of Laclau and Mouffe. By her own admission, these categories have no ontological existence as ‘social facts’ but are ‘only interpretations’. On this, and other problems with Laclau and Mouffe’s post-Marxist discourse analysis – problems that apply equally to Mallon – see Veltmeyer [2000b].
 17. It is Mallon’s method for reconstructing a suppressed and non-existent popular discourse that has aroused the most criticism. True to the postmodernist framework which guides her historical investigation, she herself actively participates in the process of getting the subjects of her research, the indigenous peasants of Mexico and Peru, to recover their historical memories and interpretations of reality.
 18. In the 1970s this position, taken by many structuralists, Marxist and modernist thinkers at the time, led to a heated and as-yet unsettled debate (especially in Mexico) between peasantists (*campesinistas*) and proletarianists (*proletarianistas*). Studies by Cancian in 1987 and 1992, and a 1993 study by Roger Bartra, a key figure in this debate, suggest that the structuralist or proletarianist line of analysis represented most clearly by Bartra himself in his 1976 study, is by no means passé.

19. On the efforts of the indigenous movements in Ecuador and Mexico to redefine relations between themselves and the rest of society and the state, see, *inter alia*, Revista *Koeyu Latinoamericano* – koeyu@cantv.net and Veltmeyer [2000a]. As for the ideological orientation of these socio-political movements, there is some ambiguity or lack of clarity and direction. The actions and mobilizations launched by CONAIE and the EZLN are clearly anti-systemic and oriented towards ‘social transformation’ rather than adjustment to a reformed neoliberal capitalism. However, the specific form of social relations of production advocated by these movements is unclear. FARC in Columbia, and the MST in Brazil, are clearer in this regard. Although in practice the form of preferred economic organization ranges from the family-owned production unit to production co-operatives, the leadership shares a commitment to socialism. A survey of MST leaders, conducted by the authors in May 2000, testifies to this. All but one expressed their general orientation and commitment to socialism in one form or other, most generally a Brazilian form yet to be constructed.
20. The current recrudescence of rural movements in France and the UK, led by farmers opposed to a combination of lower crop prices, higher taxes and/or fuel price rises, suggests that agrarian mobilization in Europe is not confined to the past.
21. In this connection, Roseberry [1989: 73] argues that a major reason for the failure of rural guerrilla movements across Latin America was that ‘the movement [was] romanticized and attempted to organize the peasantry ... when it was disappearing’.
22. The economists and sociologists associated with CEPAL or its line of analysis, including Henrique Fernando Cardoso, define themselves in terms of ‘neoliberalism’ [Sunkele, 1991], the theoretical basis for a policy package that might be labelled ‘social liberalism’, but they all take for granted the need for a neoliberal institutional and policy framework (a personal communication by Sunkele to this effect). This is the basis for the theoretical convergence sought and achieved by the Cepalistas between the World Bank and its neoliberalism on the one hand, and the Latin American structuralists on the other. As far as we are concerned, they are neoliberal structuralists.
23. This point, and those that immediately follow, relate to findings of CEPAL’s Research Division of Production, Productivity and Management.
24. Generally speaking, CEPAL economists do not directly address the question of the disappearance of the peasantry; rather, they focus more on the marginality and exclusion of peasants from the on-going development process. In this regard, the Cepalistas view their model based on productive transformation with equity as an alternative to the neoliberal model, in that the latter is exclusionary – designed to benefit only those enterprises which are able to adjust to the requirements of the new world economic order (some 15 per cent) or that are deemed to have ‘productive capacity’ (another 35 per cent or so). The peasants, in this model, are left to twist in the winds of change. The CEPAL model in theory is designed to broaden the social base of production, to incorporate the peasant economy via the process of productive transformation. In practice, however, peasants are only thought about and tolerated to the degree that they are willing to adapt to change, to enter the modern economy, or to cease to be peasants.
25. This is a conclusion drawn by the authors from a series of interviews with the leadership and activists of peasant movements in Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Mexico [Petras, 1997].
26. A recent survey conducted by the authors of 32 peasant leaders and MST militants from across Brazil lends considerable support to this conclusion.
27. The indigenous movements in Ecuador and Chiapas provide important examples of this new conception of power – in the discourse of both the *Inti Rami* and Zapatista uprisings (see Revista *Koeyu Latinoamericano* – koeyu@cantv.net – and Comandante Marcos) – ‘a construction from below, from the bases, from the roots, of power’.
28. Roman and Velasco Arregui [1997] are representative of this line of thinking, as are Roger Bartra and Frank Cancian [1987, 1992].
29. In a recent survey (May 2000) of 32 MST leaders from across Brazil the authors found that a surprisingly large percentage (37 per cent) had at least some university education; another 31 per cent either finished a collegiate or technical secondary education program; and only 12 per cent had not finished at least primary education.
30. On the form taken by a structuralist reading of a text or discourse, see Althusser [1970].

31. See Marcos's analysis of the 'capitalist imprint' on Chiapas and the ravages of imperialism in his 'Tourist Guide to Chiapas' [1994] written a year and a half before the January insurrection so as to 'awaken the consciousness of various brothers who have joined our struggle'.
32. The structural-class line of analysis behind Marcos's discourse, and the modernist project behind Zapatista practice, are reviewed in Veltmeyer [2000a].

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