COMENTARIO

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We are in a crisis of belonging, a population crisis, of who, what, when, and where. More and more people feel as though they *do not* belong; more and more people are *applying* to belong; and more and more people are not *counted* as belonging. Economic welfare is increasingly disowned as a responsibility of the sovereign-state and pushed onto individuals and communities, onto civil society. Traditional means of direct state control have been added to by doctrines of self-management, through a project of neoliberal government that seeks to manage subjectivity, and often does so through culture—ironically, the very thing supposedly imperiled by threats to belonging. Models of national unity have been displaced or supplemented by sectarian allegiances below and across the level of the sovereign-state, while managerialist and neoclassical discourses of scarcity have deregulated the social, recasting the population as consumers and believers in a way that differentiates between social groups via a fine, culturally precise grain. This crisis began in the 1960s and has continued since, because of:

- changes in the global division of labor, as manufacturing left the First World and subsistence agriculture was eroded in the Third.
- demographic growth, through unprecedented public-health initiatives.
- increasing numbers of refugees, following numerous conflicts amongst satellite states of the US and the USSR.
- transformations of these struggles into intra- and trans-national violence, after one half of the imperial couplet unraveled.
- the decline of state socialism and the triumph of finance capital.
- augmented levels of human trafficking.
- the elevation of consumption as a site of social action and public policy.
- renegotiation of the 1940s–70s compact across the West between capital, labor, and government, reversing that period's redistribution of wealth downwards.
- deregulation of key sectors of the economy, especially the media; and
- the development of civil-rights and social-movement discourses and institutions that changed the division between public and private life, extending ideas of cultural difference from tolerating the aberrant to querying the normal, and commodifying the result.

Of the approximately 200 sovereign-states in the world, over 160 are culturally heterogeneous, and they are comprised of 5000 ethnic groups. Between 10 and 20% of the world's population currently belongs to a racial/linguistic minority in their country of residence. Nine hundred million people affiliate with groups that suffer systematic discrimination. Perhaps three-quarters of the world system sees politically active minorities, and there are more than 200 movements for self-determination, spread across nearly 100 states (Thio 2002; Abu-Laban 2000, 510; Brown and Ganguly 2003, 1, n. 1; Falk 2004, 11). Even the "British-Irish archipelago," once famed "as the veritable forge of the nation state, a template of modernity," has been subdivided by cultural difference, as a consequence of both peaceful and violent action, and a revisionist historiography that notes the millennial migration of Celts from the steppes; Roman colonization; invading Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Frisians, and Normans; attacking Scandinavians; trading Indians, Chinese, Irish, Lombards, and Hansa; refugee Europeans and Africans; and the 25,000 black folks in London in the 18th century (Nairn 2003, 8; Alibhai-Brown 2005).

There are now five key zones of immigration—North America, Europe, the Western Pacific, the Southern Cone, and the Persian Gulf—and five key types of migration: international refugees, internally displaced people, voluntary migrants, the enslaved, and the smuggled. The number of refugees and asylum-seekers at the beginning of the 21st century was 21.5 million—three times the figure twenty years earlier (United Na-

tions Development Programme 2004, 6 and 2; Massey 2003, 146; Cohen 1997).[1] The International Organization for Migration estimates that global migration increased from 75 million to 150 million people between 1965 and 2000, and the UN says 2% of all people spent 2001 outside their country of birth, more than at any other moment in history. Migration has doubled since the 1970s, and the European Union has seen arrivals from beyond its borders grow by 75% in the last quarter century. Many such people come and go serially—one and a half billion airline tickets were sold in 2000 (Castles and Miller 2003, 4; Annan 2003; United Nations Development Programme 2004, 30).

This mobility, whether voluntary or imposed, temporary or permanent, is accelerating. Along with new forms of communication, it enables unprecedented levels of cultural displacement, renewal, and creation between and across origins and destinations. Most of these exchanges are structured in dominance: the majority of international investment and trade takes place within the First World, while the majority of immigration is from the Third World to the First (Pollard 2003, 70; Sutcliffe 2003, 42, 44). In response to new migration, there are simultaneous tendencies towards open and closed borders. None of the major recipients of migrants raced to ratify the UN's 2003 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (Annan 2003), even as they benefit economically and culturally from these arrivals.

Opinion polling suggests sizeable

majorities across the globe believe their national ways of life are threatened by global flows of people and things, and so they oppose immigration. In other words, their cultures are under threat. At the same time, they also feel unable to control their individual destinies. In other words, their subjectivities are under threat (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press 2003, 2004). This has led to outbursts of regressive nationalism, whether via the belligerence of the United States, the anti-immigrant stance of Western Europe, or the crackdown on minorities in Eastern Europe, Asia, and the Arab world (Halliday 2004). The populist outcome is often violent—race riots in 30 British cities in the 1980s; pogroms against Roma and migrant workers in Germany in the 1990s and Spain in 2000; the *intifadas*; migrant-worker struggles in France in 1990—on it goes. Virtually any arrival can be racialized, though particular feeling is often reserved for expatriates from former colonies (Downing and Husband 2005, xi, 7). If one takes the two most important sites of migration from the Third World to the First—Turkey and Mexico—one sees state and vigilante violence alongside corporate embrace in host countries, and donor nations increasingly recognizing the legitimacy of a hybrid approach to citizenship (Bauböck 2005, 9).

The dilemmas that derive from these changes underpin John Gray's critique of "the West's ruling myth . . . that modernity is a single condition, everywhere the same and always benign," a veritable embrace of Enlightenment values. Modernity is just as much to do with global financial deregulation, organized crime, and religious violence as democracy, uplift, and opportunity; just as much to do with fundamentalist neoliberalism, religion, and authoritarianism as freedom, belief, and justice. At the same time, identity has become the fastest-growing, albeit often illegal, component of advanced economies, via recreational drugs, industrialized sex, and cyberfraud, as well as television, music, and sport (Gray 2003, 1–2, 46).

In addition to this international lumping and splitting, the specifically heterogeneous hybridity of urban experience is on the increase. Across the globe, cities have undergone "macrocephalic" growth (Scott 1998, 49), to the point where they burst at the seams—not so much with opportunity and differentiation, but desperation and sameness. UN HABITAT estimates that a billion people reside in slum conditions, a figure expected to double in the next three decades. In 1950, only London and New York were big enough cities to qualify as megalopolises. By 1970, there were 11 such places, with 33 projected for 2015. The fifteen biggest cities in 1950 accounted for 82.5 million people; in 1970 the aggregate was 140.2 million; and in 1990, 189.6 million. Four hundred cities today have more than a million occupants, and 37 have between 8 and 26 million (García Canclini 1999, 74; Scott 1998, 49; Dogan 2004, 347). Almost 50% of the world's population lived in cities in 2000, up from 30% in 1960. In fact more people are urban dwellers today than were alive in 1960; and for the first time in world history, more people now live in cities than rural areas. Most of the remainder are desperately poor peasants

(Davis 2004, 5; Observatoire de la Finance and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research 2003, 19; Amin 2003). Across Latin America, for instance, 70% of people moved from the country to the city in the four decades from the mid-20th century, with Mexico City growing from 1.6 million residents in 1940 to 19–29 million today, depending on which figures you consult (Martín-Barbero 2003, 40; García Canclini 2001, 13). The emergence of capitalism in China is another key instance. It had 293 cities in 1978. Today it has 640. These changes are reactions to economic, military, and social polices, such as neoliberal economics' insistence on agricultural trade over subsistence, military planning, and corporate domination over local concerns. In India, as many as 55 million people may have been displaced from agricultural life because of dams constructed in the name of development: the Green Revolution dispatched surplus workers away from rural disappointment and towards urban hope (Castles and Miller 2003, 3; Roy 2004; Davis 2004, 10, 7).

In the post-1989 epoch, crises of cognitive mapping—where am I and how do I get to where I want to be?—have been added to by crises of ideological mapping—who are we and what do we stand for? (UN HABITAT 2003; Martín-Barbero 2000, 336). No wonder Mexico City's people live with the heavily ironic motto "La Ciudad de Esperanza"—the city of hope. They go there for a better material existence. In doing so, they lose the familiarity and security of the everyday in a world that sometimes appears to be "rushing backwards to the age of Dickens" (Davis 2004, 11).

At this time of crisis, art and custom have become resources for markets and nations—reactions to the crisis of belonging and to economic necessity. As a consequence, culture is more than textual signs or everyday practices. It also provides the legitimizing ground on which particular groups (e.g., African Americans, gays and lesbians, the hearing-impaired, or evangelical Protestants) claim resources and seek inclusion in national narratives (Yúdice 2002, 40 and 1990; Martín-Barbero 2003, 40).

This intermingling has implications for both aesthetic and social hierarchies. Culture comes to "regulate and structure . . . individual and collective lives" (Parekh 2000, 143) in competitive ways that harness art and collective meaning for governmental and commercial purposes. So the Spanish Minister for Culture can address Sao Paolo's 2004 World Cultural Forum with a message of cultural maintenance that is both about economic development and the preservation of aesthetic and customary identity. Culture is understood as a means to growth via "cultural citizenship," through a paradox—that universal (and marketable) value is placed on the specificity of different cultural backgrounds. Similarly, Taiwan's Premier can broker an administrative reorganization of government as a mix of economic efficiency and "cultural citizenship" (qtd. in Foro Cultural 2004 and Yu 2004). This simultaneously instrumental and moral tendency is especially important in the US, albeit in a rather different way. For the United States is virtually alone amongst wealthy countries, both in the widespread view of its citizens that their cul-

ture is superior to others, and the successful sale of that culture around the world (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press 2003). The US has blended preeminence in two cultural registers, exporting both popular prescriptions for entertainment and economic prescriptions for labor. These have become signs and sources of the global crisis of belonging, even as their sender displays a willful ignorance of why the rest of the world may not always and everywhere wish to follow its example, despite buying its popular culture (Carreño 2001, 22).

My working assumption is that cultures are constitutively blended. Reactionary and progressive ideas about cultural essences are equally flawed, given the multiplicity of other affinities that even those who share a particular culture may have (Benhabib 2002, 4). Rather than operating from the idea of culture as superordinate, I assume that it is subject to the shifts and shocks of material politics that characterize other social norms, and must be understood via a blend of political economy, textual analysis, and ethnography. I argue that the right has been as important in the creation of cultural politics as the left, through forms of neoliberal governance that turn identities into market and religious niches that are linked to self-formation and social control through consumption. If this is correct, then for a progressive politics to thrive, new forms of social obligation must be levied in return for the fetishization of deregulated, commodified, and superstitious difference. This can be done by appealing to collective responsibility as a *quid pro quo*

for commercial and faith-based targeting—a way of connecting what in the Hispanic Americas is called *la cultura politica* with *la política cultural*—linking civic culture to cultural policy.

The global crisis I have briefly described, and its associated cultural ramifications, are, it seems to me, the backdrop to the papers collected here. Barbro Klein asks, "[i]n what way is the ascendancy of cultural heritage as term and phenomenon linked to the ascendancy of intense multicultural co-existence? How is the heritage of various ethnic Others to be understood in relationship to that which is regarded Our Own?" In addressing these questions, Klein refers to the Swedish case. Its fetishization of the peasantry in the 19th century resonates for me with the Mexican situation, where art forms akin to socialist-realist indigenous heroization of the worker can be found outside Marxism, but inside every *zocalo* (town-square), as part of utilizing inclusive heritage as a means of mobilizing the popular classes. Some of Klein's analysis details moments when Sweden was an export culture, via its great migration to the upper mid-west of the United States, and I wondered about how that exodus factored into domestic debates about the nation, and contemporary policies of refugee migration and Swedish culture abroad. Cris Shore asks: "is the European Union (or, to use its earlier incarnation, the European *Community*), one people or many? And what is, or should be, the relationship between peoplehood and culture in the EU's emerging system of supranational governance?" Shore ponders why culture emerged as a key precept in the Union

during the 1980s. Again, there are some political-economic explanations, to do with manufacturing and agricultural deindustrialization and cultural reindustrialization, as we can discern from the "*euro-pudding*" co-production of film and television drama. For her part, Dorothy Noyes worries that "the reification of tradition as community-managed heritage tends to undermine one of the most important uses of local tradition, the collective negotiation of intracommunity conflict—such that our global Solomons are likely to be called upon to judge more and more local disputes." She examines intellectual property, a focus of global labor-based analysis (Miller et al. 2005). The implication I draw from these papers is that cultural labor should be a new center of work in cultural policy studies.

Apart somewhat from these original empirical contributions by a diverse array of authors and perspectives, Tony Bennett dichotomizes recent work in cultural policy theoretically, separating it into a grand binary of public-sphere romantic textualism versus tough-reality governmentality pragmatism. On this reading, Habermas and disciples are misguided, whereas Foucault and followers are correct line. The model of the general critical intellectual as per the free-floating critic is flawed, because it relies on an endlessly deferred, almost irresponsible dialectical method. Conversely, the specific intellectual, as per the Weberian bureaucrat, offers a good model, because culture is about technical specifications rather than consciousness.

It seems to me that this distinction relies on very large generalizations about bureaucracy—that assume it does what it says, and that economic self-interest, specifically class interest, is separate from how policy is formed. Even if bureaucrats resemble the figures outlined here, they are often the pleasure-things of politicians and corporations, as any account of neoliberalism clarifies. None of the authors cited from the post-governmentality tradition has undertaken ethnographic or political-economic evaluations of contemporary cultural administration across the world (or displayed great awareness of that large literature), so what is the basis for their claims about equivalent self-reflexivity among direct servants of the state and capital to that of critical intellectuals? It is true that the claim for the general intellectual as an independent scion of truth who cuts through special interests is problematic—anyone actually watching public intellectuals at work, as per media mavens or other universal experts, can see that. But it is also true that distance from the specific interests that drive policy, along with the protections of liberal education and other arms-length private and public infrastructures, propels a certain autonomy in contrast with culturecrats.

These are stimulating, provocative papers. Each one touches on issues I have long pondered, and each one taught me many new things about them. I think they could have benefited from a political-economic analysis that foregrounded the sorts of issues with which I began this *comentario*. The questions of who gains,

who labors, who flees, and who inter-
prets are at the core of culture and its
policies. In theoretical terms, the situa-
tion seems to call for a blend of ethnog-
raphy and political economy to compre-
hend the labor of cultural policy.

Notes

[1] Four million people travel as slaves each
year, generating revenues of up to US$7 billion
annually through forced labor, especially in the
sex industries (Maryniak 2003).

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