

ENTREVISTA

Concedida pelo Professor Dr. Andrew Herod (Departamento de Geografia da Universidade da Geórgia, Estados Unidos)

Ao Professor Dr. Juscelino Eudâmidas Bezerra (Departamento de Geografia da UNB e Professor Colaborador do Programa de Pós-graduação em Geografia da Universidade Estadual Ceará-UECE)



Foto do arquivo do Prof. Herod

O Professor Andrew Herod do Departamento de Geografia da Universidade da Geórgia é uma das principais referências no mundo quando o assunto é Geografia do Trabalho. Desde o seu doutorado em 1992 o entrevistado tem se dedicado ao estudo das modificações engendradas pela dinâmica do capitalismo no período da globalização e seus rebatimentos na organização da classe trabalhadora.

O Professor Andrew Herod adota como linha de estudo, o que ele tem chamado de *Labor Geography*, o qual considera um *emergent field*, ou seja, um campo emergente de estudos que busca situar os trabalhadores não apenas como agentes históricos, mas também como agentes geográficos. Para Herod (2003), os trabalhadores são responsáveis por moldar as estruturas espaciais, embora sejam eles constantemente impelidos pela ação do capital.

Segundo Herod (2001), é extremamente necessário pontuar a distinção estabelecida entre a chamada *Geography of Labour* e do que ele considera *Labour Geography*. Uma vez que, a primeira analisa o trabalho pela perspectiva do capital, alinhada aos parâmetros da geografia econômica neoclássica. Desse

modo, a leitura geográfica quando aborda os trabalhadores, esses são vistos apenas como fatores de produção e como um aspecto de influência nas teorias locacionais.

Na abordagem neoclássica, segundo Herod, não existem pessoas na produção econômica da paisagem, o espaço é caracterizado como um *container* de vida social e o trabalho, meramente, reduzido a categorias de salário, níveis de qualificação, localização, gênero, grau de sindicalização etc. Nesse tipo de abordagem, o trabalho se caracteriza pela inércia, compreendido como um fator de produção a ser catalogado de forma não muito diferente do que acontece na classificação dos diversos tipos de solo ou condições climáticas encontradas em distintas regiões.

Já a *Labour Geography* se preocupa em entender a prática espacial da classe trabalhadora e como os trabalhadores, como seres sociais, ajudam a transformar a geografia do capitalismo. A Geografia do trabalho de uma perspectiva crítica coloca a classe trabalhadora no centro de suas preocupações (BEZERRA, 2015).

A entrevista foi concedida quando da sua primeira visita ao Brasil durante a participação no Seminário Internacional do Centro de Estudos do Trabalho, Ambiente e Saúde (Coletivo CETAS) realizado na Universidade Estadual Paulista, Campus de Presidente Prudente. Além do Prof. Herod, agradeço também ao Prof. Antonio Thomaz Júnior coordenador do Centro de Estudos de Geografia do Trabalho (CEGET) pelo convite para participar do evento.

Prof. Dr. Juscelino Eudâmidas Bezerra
Brasília, Junho de 2015.

Professor Juscelino E. Bezerra: First of all, thank you very much for accepting our invitation. For us it is a pleasure to have you here. In this interview we will try to understand more about the development of “labor geography” in the Anglophonic world. But first of all, can you tell us something about your education, your history as a student before you started university, and why did you decide to study geography?

Professor Andrew Herod: First of all, thank you for inviting me here. It is a pleasure and it's very interesting for me to be here and meet all the people associated with the Centro de Estudos de Geografia do Trabalho. In terms of my interest in geography, when I was in secondary school I found both geography and history fascinating. History is very important because it helps you to understand how places got to be the way they are. But geography for me was the more interesting subject because it not only incorporates the historical dimensions of things but also spatial dimensions that allow you to understand how places are connected together today. So that was one aspect of it. The other aspect was that I was particularly interested in landscapes and understanding how they are produced. I grew up just outside London and, as a young child, I would walk in the areas surrounding where I grew up. There were a lot of farmers' fields and so when I was growing up I was always interested in thinking about all the different people over all of the years who had worked on these particular fields and whose work made them look the way that they do today. I would think of the mediaeval peasants in the 1300s and 1400s who worked that land and agricultural farm laborers in the 18th and 19th centuries who worked that land and then think of the mechanization of agriculture in the 20th century and how that changed the way in which the work of producing those landscapes was done. So, I think those two things, an interest in connections between places and an interest in landscapes and how they are made, were what drew me to study geography as a discipline.

Professor Juscelino E. Bezerra: *In your opinion, what was the role of the school in your decision to choose to study geography at university? Was the school important for you?*

Professor Andrew Herod: I'm not so sure that there was a particular emphasis from my secondary school. It was just a subject that I enjoyed studying. I don't know that there was a particular teacher in school who really inspired me to study geography. I had some very good geography teachers in secondary school but also good history teachers, so I don't think it was so much that there was a specific teacher that led me to want to study geography at university as it was my interest in the field and how thinking geographically is important as it allowed me, as I was growing up, to develop a world view and to think about how what happens in one place can have effects in places that are far away because of how they are interconnected. So, as I was trying to find my way in the world I thought geography was an interesting way to do that.

Professor Juscelino E. Bezerra: *When and why did your interest in studying labor geography specifically emerge?*

Professor Andrew Herod: I think it was two things. The first one was a family history within the British labor movement and the other was engaging with a

particular set of intellectual ideas. In terms of the family history, my grandfather had been the president of the national steelworkers' union in Britain in the 1960s and he was very involved in labor politics – in addition to being a union president he was also the national Treasurer of the British Labour Party. I can remember as a child listening to him talking about his life as an ordinary steelworker and then, later on, as an official with the trade union and talking about the way in which unions negotiated contracts and how that process of negotiating contracts had very real implications for the way in which work was organized in the industry. That also gave me an interest in the everyday life of working people. So part of my interest came from my family history. But then, when I was at university, I took a course on Marxism in human geography taught by a professor named Keith Bassett. I hadn't read Marx by this stage but this course really allowed me to have some theoretical framework to think about why the world looks the way it does. I particularly enjoyed that class and that got me interested in Marxist theories and using some of these frameworks to think through the production of landscapes. I also read a lot of the work from people like David Harvey, Richard Peet, Neil Smith and others and so all that exposure in Bassett's class, together with reading more deeply, got me thinking about the power of Marxism as a way to understand why the world is the way it is and how geographical landscapes get to be made in particular ways.¹ It seemed to me, then, that Marxist theories provided a very important means for trying to understand how landscapes are made by capital but, having grown up listening to my grandfather's stories about how workers have an impact upon how economic geographies are produced through their activities, I knew that there was also something missing in explanations. What was missing was the story of workers and how workers, through their actions, can shape the way in which the geography of capitalism is made.

Professor Juscelino E. Bezerra: *We know that nowadays labor geography is an important subfield in geography, at least in the context of the United States, but we know that creating this subfield in geography was not easy. In your opinion, what was the main difficulty in establishing this geography subfield?*

Professor Andrew Herod: I would say that at the time that myself and a number of others were beginning to write about labor geography, people like Jamie Peck, Jane Wills in London, Don Mitchell and others, we were all influenced by Marxist theories and when we were starting to write pieces of what would become labor geography, one of the issues was that economics and Marxist theories were falling

¹ See, for example: Harvey, D. (1973) *Social Justice and the City* (Edward Arnold: London); Harvey, D. (1982) *The Limits to Capital* (Blackwell: Oxford); Peet, R. (1977), (ed.) *Radical Geography: Alternative Viewpoints on Contemporary Social Issues* (Methuen: London); Peet, R. (1985) "The social origins of environmental determinism", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* vol. 75.3, 309-333; Smith, N. (1984) *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space* (Blackwell: Oxford).

out of favor a little bit in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when post-modernism was particularly dominant in North America and in British or Anglo-Saxon geography.² The study of workers and economic processes was not considered to be a very sexy topic anymore, and so I think in some ways those of us who were engaged in writing about workers and their spatial practices in the early days felt that we were like fish swimming upstream against the water because the new trend in geography seemed to be moving away from the Marxism that dominated geographical thinking in the 70s that had been influenced by people like Harvey, Smith, Peet and Kevin Cox, among others.³ So that was one of the issues, this feeling of swimming upstream when the discipline was moving in another direction and rejecting a lot of the Marxist theorizing and focusing instead on post-modernism and other ideas. I think another issue was to just be taken seriously at the beginning because I think that, initially, when new ideas come along, a lot of people often don't see what is the point that you are trying to argue, why they should care about it, and why it is important. I think in any field when someone tries to do something different there is some degree of resistance, not knowing what these new younger people are trying to do. However, I think I was lucky in that in my own department my colleagues were very supportive. When I was a junior faculty member I had a number of senior colleagues who were supportive, in particular James Wheeler, who was an urban geographer in terms of his intellectual tradition, someone who had done a lot of quantitative analysis in the 60s and 70s, something very different from what I was doing. He was very supportive of me. But my other senior colleagues too were supportive. As long as I was productive I was free to work on my project, so I felt lucky to be in the department that I was in, and I still am. I know it's different in some other

² For some examples of work on labor at this time, see: Peck, J. (1996) *Work-Place: The Social Regulation of Labor Markets* (Guilford: New York); Wills, J. (1996) "Geographies of trade unionism: Translating traditions across space and time", *Antipode* vol. 28.4, 352-378; Wills, J. (1996) "Uneven reserves: Geographies of banking trade unionism", *Regional Studies* vol. 30, 359-372; Mitchell, D. (1996) *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis). For more on the influence of post-modernism on Anglophonic human geography, see Dear, M. (1988) "The postmodern challenge: Reconstructing human geography", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series*, vol. 13.3, 262-274. For a critical account linking interest in post-modernism with changes in how capitalism is operating, see Harvey, D. (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Blackwell: Oxford).

³ See, for example: Harvey, D. (1972) "Revolutionary and counter revolutionary theory in geography and the problem of ghetto formation", *Antipode* vol. 4, 1-13; Harvey, D. (1976) "Labor, capital, and class struggle around the built environment in advanced capitalist societies", *Politics and Society* vol. 6.3, 265-295; Harvey, D. (1978) "The urban process under capitalism: A framework for analysis", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* vol. 2, 101-131; Smith, N. (1979) "Geography, science and post-positivist modes of explanation", *Progress in Human Geography* vol. 3, 356-383; Smith, N. (1981) "Degeneracy in theory and practice: Spatial interactionism and radical eclecticism", *Progress in Human Geography* vol. 5, 111-118; Peet, R. (1983) "Relations of production and the relocation of United States manufacturing industry since 1960", *Economic Geography* vol. 59, 112-143; Cox, K. (1981) "Capitalism and conflict around the communal living space", in M. Dear and A. Scott (eds.), *Urbanization and Urban Planning in Capitalist Society* (pp. 431-456) (Maaroufa Press: Chicago).

departments where the senior faculty are more controlling of what the junior faculty studies. There were also some people like Jamie Peck and Jane Wills who were working on the same issues more or less at the same time and that gave us a community where we could share ideas. What made things easier in that regard was that it was the beginning of widespread access to email. I remember that before I went to work at the University of Georgia in 1992, I had never heard of email. I had never heard of the internet, so in those first early few years the internet provided a good way to build a community for scholars all over the world. So, in sum, there were several things that came together at the right moment that allowed labor geography to begin to flourish.

Professor Juscelino E. Bezerra: *You mention the context of post-modernity's dominance and in this context we had some things that were not good because they understood that labor and the centrality of labor is not a topic that helps us understand the nature of post-modernity. But, on the other hand, with post-modernity we have many topics that classical Marxist analysis never really faced, such as the question of identity. So, what's your opinion on labor geography and the appearance of questions about the emergence of new kinds of identities?*

Professor Andrew Herod: I think that, with regards to the issue of post-modernity, in many ways it has been quite refreshing for labor geography, in the sense that it has caused Marxists to question a lot of the categories that we were not questioning in the past. For example, if you are interested in looking at the economic geography of capitalism, post-modernism has forced us to question what exactly we mean by the category of "the economy".⁴ I think post-modernism, then, has been very helpful in getting us to question some fundamental categories. Having said that, at the end of the day I am a materialist. For me there is a material world out there that involves very real processes and very real relationships and we live in a capitalist society and so a fundamental aspect of capitalism is that a group of people gets to exploit the labor of another group of people. That is the essence of capitalism. That's a very real process and you cannot simply change the terms of the debate to make the reality of that process go away. So, although I think that post-modernism has been very important in forcing us to question our categories, I think that at some point it has lost touch with the materiality of the world.

⁴ For more on how the economy has been theorized, see: Cameron, J., and Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2003) "Feminising the economy: Metaphors, strategies, politics", *Gender, Place and Culture* vol. 10.2, 145-157; Mitchell, T. (1998) "Fixing the economy", *Cultural Studies* vol. 12.1, 82-101; Radice, H. (1984) "The national economy – a Keynesian myth?", *Capital and Class* vol. 22, 111-140; and Thrift, N. (2000) "Pandora's box? Cultural geographies of economies", in G. Clark, M., Feldmann, and M. Gertler (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Economic Geography* (pp. 689-702) (Oxford University Press: Oxford).

As for your question on identity, I think that one of the issues that post-modernism brought to life is indeed the question of identity and this is very important because I think one of the things that Marxism has not done very well is to really think about how workers think about themselves. If you go back and read Marx, he talks about the working class in terms of it being a “class for itself” and a “class in itself”. By a “class in itself” he meant a group of people who can be objectively identified as having their labor exploited by somebody else. “A class for themselves” is what happens when workers get to see themselves collectively as workers. Somebody might objectively be a worker exploited by somebody else but may not have a sense of self-identity as a worker. That was the distinction that Marx was trying to make. So Marx was indeed talking about the issues of identity, but perhaps not in a particularly sophisticated way because he saw workers who didn’t think of themselves as being a class for themselves as simply having “false consciousness.” So, I think in terms of post-modernism, the focus on identity is very significant because we, as labor geographers or geographers in general, we might be able to say that a group of individuals objectively works for somebody else and these individuals have their surplus labor extracted. But we should be careful not to assume that they see themselves in the same way that we see them because they may have a completely different understanding of their identity. In this regard, then, I think that labor geographers have some things to learn from post-modernism’s theorizing of questions of identity and how these shape material practices.

So I think that this question of identity is very important and in terms of the labor geography perspective, one of the interesting questions is to consider how the geographical context shapes the way in which identities are developed. Take the workplace, for example. There are certain types of jobs where the workers who perform that work have certain images of themselves that then shape their behavior. In industries such as coal mining or steel making or other types of heavy industries, the men working there often have a sense of themselves in which their masculinity is very much tied to the fact that they are doing hard, dirty and dangerous work. Their sense of their own identity, then, is partly created by the spatial context of their work and the workplace in which they do their work. At the same time, though, how they see themselves shapes how they behave in the world. Consequently, the question of understanding worker identity is important and for me it is important to think about the geographical context in which workers shape their identities and then to understand how this sense of identity shapes how workers envision their relationships with other people who might be living in the same community or on the other side of the planet.

Professor Juscelino E. Bezerra: *You have made an important contribution with regards to the debate on the issue of geographical scale and how we can understand geographical scale, considering the new international*

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division of labor and the issues you mention in your books about the global solidarity of workers and how workers shape the local scale and affect the global scale. Can you talk a little about this?

Professor Andrew Herod: With regards to the issue of scale, I view it as a way of thinking about the different spatial levels at which organizations such as unions are constituted. So in terms of thinking about the globalization of the labor movement, what we are talking about is the way in which workers in one part of the globe construct real material relationships with workers in other parts of the globe, relationships that might involve growing interactions between trade unionists in one country and those in another. This is a model that the Services Employees' International Union (SEIU), which represents janitors in the United States, has been developing. For instance, they have sent research teams to work with trade unions in other countries. When I was in Australia, in Sydney, there was somebody from the Service Employees' International Union from the US working with local people in Australia. This is because many of the companies that work in the janitorial sectors are now global; they have operations in Europe, North America, South America, Australia and other parts of the world. So the SEIU has sent organizers overseas to work with local unions and these are very material concrete practices that are involved in creating new global scales of worker organization.⁵

But I think it is also important to understand that how we think about scales can dramatically shape political practice. For example, again, if we think about globalization, I think one of the key things in the debate on globalization is the way in which the concept of "the global" has been deployed to get us to think about things in certain ways. For example, in English there's a difference between talking about globalization and talking about internationalization. When we talk about internationalization we take as a reference frame the nation-state. "Inter", from the Latin, means "between". When we talk about "Internationalization", then, we think about relations between nation-states and their economies and how they are organized at a national level. That's a very different way to think about the world than when we talk about globalization. So, at least in the Anglo-Saxon world, I think it is fair to say that until the late 80s or early 90s people didn't use the term "globalization" very much. We used the term "internationalization".⁶ Then, all of a

⁵ For more on the SEIU and its global activities, see: Aguiar, L. and Ryan, S. (2009) "The global geographies of the Justice for Janitors", *Geoforum* vol. 40.6, 949-958; and Ryan, S. and Herod, A. (2006) "Restructuring the architecture of state regulation in the Australian and Aotearoa/New Zealand cleaning industries and the growth of precarious employment", *Antipode* vol. 38.3, 486-507.

⁶ By way of example, Herod (2009: 48-49) *Geographies of Globalization* (Wiley-Blackwell: Chichester, UK) looks at the growing use of the term "Global" in the names of transnational organizations, showing that whereas the word "International" has a long history in the naming practices of various organizations, "Global" is a relatively new phenomenon. In the world of labour, the growing use of the term "Global" can be seen in the 2002 rebranding of the International Trade Secretariats, formed in the 19th century to represent workers in various economic sectors, as Global Union Federations.

sudden the term “globalization” became common. What I find interesting in this discursive shift is that when we talk about “globalization”, the point of reference is the globe, whereas for internationalization the point of reference is the nation-state. When we think about relationships in terms of a global perspective, then, that shapes the way in which we talk about things in very fundamental ways. For example, think about a corporation which may have operations in 20 or 50 or 100 countries around the world. We could describe them as being global or international or multi-locational, and which one of these ways we use to describe the corporation has very real sets of political implications. When we talk about a corporation being “global”, then, it is often very difficult to imagine challenging it because the global seems to be so overpowering. But if we think about those same companies as being instead “multi-locational”, then I think that it appears much easier to challenge them at each of their facilities around the world. I think that such differences in the scalar language we use to talk about things can have significant consequences for how we think about things.

So, going back to your original question I think that talking about scale has been very central to labor geography for those two reasons. The first one was the interest that labor geographers have had in looking at how workers organize themselves and how they have had to change the scales at which they organize themselves as, say, firms have become transnational, which has required workers to think about moving from a system of local negotiations to maybe trying to have a national or even global contract. There are, then, material practices through which workers develop new scales of organization. The second one is the issue of language, which has been influenced by post-modern thinking, such as that of Julie Graham and Kathy Gibson in their book *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew it)*.⁷ The idea of scale being used discursively is very important. As Don Mitchell has pointed out, when there are campaigns trying to organize, for example, migrant farm workers, quite often we see that farmers will say that the migrant workers don't have any legitimate standing in the local community because they are “not local”.⁸ So we can see how the rhetoric or the discourse of locality and localness is often used to delegitimize people from the outside. I think, then, that the way in which the discourses around scale are used is something interesting and important for labor geographers for these very reasons.

Professor Juscelino E. Bezerra: *Recently, a tragedy happened in Bangladesh when many workers from the garment sector died in an accident and an*

⁷ Gibson-Graham, J. K. (1996) *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew it): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy* (Blackwell: Oxford).

⁸ Mitchell, D. (1998) “The scales of justice: Localist ideology, large-scale production, and agricultural labor's geography of resistance in 1930s California”, in A. Herod (ed.), *Organizing the Landscape: Geographical Perspectives on Labor Unionism* (pp. 159-194) (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis).

important question here is what the responsibility of multinational corporations is, especially retailers that buy products from Bangladeshi companies. This is very important for me because it can express how labor geography can help me understand the question of the governance of labor and labor inside the global production network. So what's your opinion on this, what is the role of labor geography and how labor geography can understand the new relations between the responsibility of retailers and the workers who sometimes are miles away from the company?

Professor Andrew Herod: I don't know the specifics of the Bangladeshi tragedy except that a building collapsed and killed more than 1000 workers and that a man in the building was told the day before that the building might collapse and he chose to ignore the warning. But in general terms, I think labor geographers can contribute in a couple of ways to understanding the kinds of events we are talking about. One is at a local level, to see the conditions of the workers in a factory like a textile factory in Bangladesh and to understand how those workers are embedded in a particular community and how they live their lives and what kinds of opportunities or non-opportunities that geographical situation offers. Some workers, even in Bangladesh after the building's collapse, might say "well, we don't have any other opportunities and if regulations are too tight in Bangladesh the companies will close and move somewhere else and we will have no work". So thinking about the daily reality of how those textile workers and other workers have to live in order to survive I think are questions to which labor geographers can contribute.

More broadly, though, there's a second set of issues for labor geographers and this to look at the way in which the global economy functions and to think about how, for instance, that factory in Bangladesh is connected to so many other places. So, to start off, where does the cotton grow? Once those textiles are manufactured, how do they diffuse throughout the global economy? As I understand it, a lot of textiles from that factory were made for export to North America, so there are a number of large North American clothing companies and retailers who were having products made for them by the company in the building that collapsed. I think what labor geographers could do in situations like this is to emphasize the connections between what was going on in this factory and the kinds of consumption patterns that you see with North Americans and others who consume those textiles. What kind of culpability do consumers have in that accident because we demand very cheap t-shirts or socks or underwear? So I think that, in many ways, what labor geographers are doing or should be doing is to emphasize the connections, to trace the commodities as they move from place to place as a way of trying to

address what Marx called the “fetishism of commodities”.⁹ Once a commodity has left that factory and made it to the US and consumers buy it at their local store or supermarket, they have no idea where those goods came from. One of the things this tragedy has done, then, is that many people now are being made aware of where these things come from and that raises again the rhetorical question of what kind of culpability overseas consumers have in what happened in Bangladesh. So I think in terms of labor geographers, those two scales of analysis can be important: understanding the daily lives at a local scale of these workers and what other options they have but also tracing the flow of these commodities to North America, Western Europe and other places.

Professor Juscelino E. Bezerra: *In your opinion, what is the main trend in labor geography in the US nowadays?*

Professor Andrew Herod: Well, I think if you look at the development of the field, a lot of the early writing on labor geography was specifically on trade unions and I think there was good reason for that. One of the reasons was that when workers come together they usually have more power to reshape the world than when they try to do it individually. I think since those of us who were involved in the project of developing labor geography were trying to develop a theoretical argument that helped us to understand the geography of capitalism, we felt that you can't just look at capital. You have to also look at labor. So looking at unions was an obvious choice because that would be an example of workers coming together and having very concrete impacts upon how the geography of capitalism is made. Consequently, we thought that if we could find empirical examples of workers making a difference to how the geography of capitalism is made, then that would make it easier to make the conceptual arguments to challenge theoretical accounts of capitalism that focus only on capital as an actor, accounts that essentially assume that to understand the geography of capitalism all we have to do is to understand how capital operates. I think that those empirical studies were important to put some meat on the theoretical bones because, given the way in which many academics operate, it is one thing to make a theoretical argument but they also want to see the empirical evidence for such an argument. This is one reason why labor geographers focused upon unions, because they are collections of workers and they therefore have more influence in shaping things than do workers individually.

The second reason to focus upon unions was quite practical in that, as organizations, unions have very particular structures and often good records, so it makes it easier to do the field research necessary to flesh out the empirical

⁹ Marx, K. (1976 [1867]) *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Volume One (Penguin: London, 1990 printing).

examples that we needed to use to illustrate the theoretical claims we were making. So it's fair to say that the focus to date has been mostly on labor unions. But, as labor geography matures, I think the focus is moving to looking at other types of workers because, obviously, not all workers are members of trade unions. Indeed, in some countries such as the US, most workers are not members of unions. Hence, although I think that there was a very good reason to focus on unions in the development of the discipline in the early days as a way to make theoretical claims, I think that these theoretical claims are now fairly well entrenched in the literature and how people think about things. Consequently, now I think what we are seeing is that the empirical focus is moving onto non-union workers, for example precarious workers, migrant workers, workers who are members of other types of organizations.¹⁰ I think that's an important development that is taking place now and we can consider that to be a sort of second generation of labor geography studies.

Professor Juscelino E. Bezerra: *And in the United States, which is the main university where you can study labor geography?*

Professor Andrew Herod: There are a number of us who have done work in this area, including me at my own institution, the University of Georgia, Don Mitchell at Syracuse University in upstate New York, and Jamie Peck, who is at the University of British Columbia in Canada but he was at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. There's also Todd Rutherford at Syracuse University, who has done some research on workers in Canadian industry. Lydia Savage is at the University of Southern Maine and she's been doing work on janitors and the Service Employees' International Union that I mentioned before. There's also Megan Cope at the State University of New York at Buffalo.¹¹ So there are a number of

¹⁰ For example: Cumbers, A., and Atterton, J. (2000) "Globalisation and the contested process of international corporate restructuring: Employment reorganisation and the issue of labour consent in the international oil industry", *Environment and Planning A* vol. 32.9, 1529-1544; Datta, K., McIlwaine, C., Wills, J., Evans, Y., Herbert, J., and May, J. (2007) "The new development finance or exploiting migrant labour? Remittance sending among low-paid migrant workers in London", *International Development Planning Review* vol. 29.1, 43-67; Gallin, D. (2001) "Propositions on trade unions and informal employment in times of globalisation", *Antipode* vol. 33.3, 531-549; Rhee, N., and Zabin, C. (2009) "Aggregating dispersed workers: Union organizing in the 'care' industries", *Geoforum* vol. 40.6, 969-979; Scott, S. (2013) "Labour, migration and the spatial fix: Evidence from the UK food industry", *Antipode* 45.5, 1090-1109; and Wills, J. (2005) "The geography of union organising in low paid service industries in the UK: Lessons from the T&G's campaign to unionise the Dorchester Hotel, London", *Antipode* vol. 37.1, 139-159.

¹¹ In addition to the works by Herod, Mitchell, and Peck already noted above, see: Rutherford, T. (2010) "De/re-centering work and class? A review and critique of Labour Geography", *Geography Compass* vol. 4.7, 768-777; Rutherford, T. (2013) "Scaling up by law? Canadian labour law, the nation-state and the case of the British Columbia Health Employees Union", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series* vol. 38.1, 25-35; Savage, L. (2004) "Public sector unions shaping hospital privatization: The creation of Boston Medical Center", *Environment and Planning A* vol. 36.3, 547-568; and Cope, M. (1998) "'Working steady': Gender, ethnicity, and change in households, communities, and labor markets in Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1930-1940", in A. Herod (ed.), *Organizing the Landscape:*

BEZERRA, J.E. Entrevista ao Prof. Dr. Andrew Herod. Revista GeoUECE - Programa de Pós-Graduação em Geografia da UECE Fortaleza/CE, v. 4, nº 6, p. 175-191, jan./jun. 2015. Disponível em <http://seer.uece.br/geoeuce>

campuses where people have been writing about workers in the geographical sense. But to my knowledge – and this was a lovely discovery here in Brazil – we don't have any centers like yours at UNESP. For me, it was very exciting, when I was invited to come to Brazil and did some research on the institution, to discover the Center's existence. This is the only center that I know of anywhere in the world that officially has “labor” and “geography” in its name. So in that respect I think we still have some catching up to do in the United States.

Professor Juscelino E. Bezerra: *Labor geography has developed here in Brazil in special groups, such as the Center for Studies in Labor Geography. For 17 years much research was developed in the Center and, from the beginning, there have been changes in the labor processes, so that one of the most interesting turns throughout all this time has been the issue of the growth of social movements, especially social movements related to access to land and water, which is very important in many Brazilian regions. This raises important issues, as studying social movements is often more important than studying unions. So, in your opinion, how should we understand these movements, which are another kind of organization of the working class that does not involve unions?*

Professor Andrew Herod: Well what is interesting about these social movements is that very often they are created by people who do not have access to paid work. People who belong to labor unions by definition usually have access to paid work, even if they are temporarily unemployed. But a lot of the social movements are organized by people who don't have access to paid work. If you want to apply a crude Marxist terminology they are part of the lumpenproletariat. They are not even proletariat, they are the lumpenproletariat and that raises some different sets of questions. Here in Brazil there's the MST, and their struggle is largely over their access to land and their right to produce food for themselves. So there are a lot of differences between these two types of movements. But in the end there is one similarity between the people in unions and the people in social movements which is that they need to work in some fashion in order to survive, because they don't have the economic resources that allow them not to labor. The people in social movements who are agitating for land reform, they do that because they need land to be able to grow food to sustain themselves. So, although people in these two types of organizations may be different, they share the similarity that both groups need to work, because they don't have investments or a bank account that allows them the luxury of not working. Their demands are usually different; steel workers may be union members and probably will not be demanding access to land to grow vegetables like members of some social movements. But I don't think that they are

Geographical Perspectives on Labor Unionism (pp. 297-323) (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis).

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as different as we tend to think they are because, in the end, both groups of people have to work because they don't have any other alternatives.

Professor Juscelino E. Bezerra: *In much research carried out by our group we can see that students show that, many times, you can find workers working at companies or in agribusiness or the urban sector or many different kinds of activities but at the same time they are taking part in social movements because they hope to have their own land and work by themselves. That is a trend found in our research. Based upon this, Professor Thomas developed a theory on the plasticity of work. He says the same person can have experience in different sectors and, at the same time, participate in social movements and unions and have a project to face capitalism from a different perspective. This is hard when we think about the segmentation of the working class. Many people say the working class makes no sense. But in your opinion, where's the glue that can reunite people together to face capitalism?*

Professor Andrew Herod: I think this goes back to one of the issues we discussed earlier on, which is identity. In the case of Brazil, do union members in a car factory in São Paulo see themselves as having any similarities in their lives with landless peasants in Brazil's rural interior? If they don't, they are not likely to be particularly sympathetic to them. If they do see themselves as having similarities because, say, neither of them has sufficient economic resources to not have to work, then I think that if they see that similarity, then the kind of glue that you're talking about is more likely to stick them together. So part of the work of organizers is to make these people see the links between themselves. We can educate them to see the connection between landlessness in the interior of Brazil and the patterns of capitalist industrialization in a place like SP, what other connections there are between them, what the role of multinational capital is in shaping both how the rhythms of work operate in car factories and why it is that certain people don't have access to land in the rural interior of Brazil, and so forth. I think our job as geographers and educators and activists is to trace the linkages between people and places to show, for example, in what ways might agricultural patterns in rural areas be shaped by the demands of industrial production. Take, for example, sugar cane workers. There is an industrial demand for sugar for different reasons, as a sweetener, to make alcohol, for biofuel. So as the industrial demand for sugar increases what does that mean for rural landscapes? Maybe more rural areas will be converted into places to grow sugar cane. What does that mean for rural workers who are cutting the sugar cane? Well, one thing it means is that their livelihoods are tied to industrial processes and affected, perhaps, by consumer demand coming from far away, maybe from Europe. If there is an increase in the demand for sugar in Europe, that's going to affect rural sugarcane workers here in Brazil and elsewhere as well.

I think as geographers and, hopefully, as engaged academics that have a sense or a desire to create a more just world and help people to have more social justice, we need to discover and highlight the connections between these kinds of things. Most academics will not be waving flags with demonstrators in the avenues of capital cities but our work in the classroom is to make students and citizens think about the connections between places and how what happens in one place may affect what happens in another. I think that's an important contribution for we geographers, to make people understand those connections, because understanding the nature of the connections between places is the basis for developing strategies to improve the life of working people. So that's where we, as academics, can work best to help people understand how the life of a worker in an urban factory can be connected to the life of a rural sugar cane harvester in many real ways.

Professor Juscelino E. Bezerra: *Andy, in your opinion, what is the challenge for the future of labor geography?*

Professor Andrew Herod: I think there are several intellectual challenges. The first – looking beyond just unionized workers – is being addressed and there is already a second generation of labor geographers who are starting to look at workers who are not just union workers but other types of workers. That represents an important evolution from when labor geography first started. But I do think we have more work to do in terms of theorizing the role of the State. We have studied a lot on workers and the relationship between workers and capital but not much about the State. I think, therefore, it's time to better incorporate the State into our analyses.

Another area that needs more analysis is the question of agency.¹² This is because it is one thing to wish to do something and another to be able to do it. So, looking at what are the enabling conditions – in other words, what are the structural forces which limit what workers may be able to do in terms of making landscapes – is something that deserves a little more theoretical scrutiny, perhaps. We must remember that workers make their own geographies but not under the conditions of their own choosing. This means not having too voluntaristic a conception of worker agency.

I think another issue, one which is not just confined to labor geographers but certainly is something from which labor geography suffers, is the lack of funding, for to be able to meet and organize a conversation, to be able to have a panel of 5, 10 or 15 labor geographers to get together in one room or country or one continent

¹² Herod, A. "Labour geography: Where have we been, where should we go?", in Bergene, A.c., Endresen, S.B., and Knutsen, H.M. (eds.), *Missing Links in Labour Geography* (pp. 15-28) (Ashgate: Farnham, UK).

is a very expensive enterprise. Certainly, the internet and Skype and all these technologies can be very helpful but I am a firm believer that meeting people face-to-face is not the same as having a conversation on Skype.¹³ A lot of interesting conversations with regards to thinking about research and empirical work come when you are having a coffee or a beer together late in the day, so I think those kinds of meetings are important. But in order to make them happen you need access to financial resources. I think this is more difficult for labor geographers than for other fields. I imagine that if you are in the field of management or financial analysis it is easy to go to a powerful financial institution or company and have them donate 50,000 dollars for academics to come together and meet and discuss questions of mutual interest. It is much more difficult to do that when you study workers, I think. There are not many institutions or unions that I can think of that would give you a check for 50,000 dollars. So I think simply gaining access to funding to make these meetings happen is a major challenge. I think what's interesting is that this tells us a little bit about how geographic ideas are spread. Certainly, they are spread through the internet and telecommunications but ideas are also spread through person-to-person contact, sitting around a table and having a conversation. It is much easier for people in a business school to get funded and organize these kinds of conversations than for people working on labor geography studies. This, then, tells us something about power and how power shapes the production of knowledge and its geographical spread. It may be that when you're physically isolated you have great ideas within your group but it is much more difficult for these ideas to be transmitted elsewhere. To me, that's an interesting geographical question, looking at the geography of intellectual influence and how that geography shapes the very material questions about access to funding to allow people to travel, to allow people to study and go to other departments and other centers and exchange ideas.

Professor Juscelino E. Bezerra: *Andy, what is the question that I should have asked and I haven't?*

Professor Andrew Herod: When can you come back to Brazil?

Professor Juscelino E. Bezerra: *Ok, so when can you come back to Brazil?*

Professor Andrew Herod: As soon as I'm invited!

Professor Juscelino E. Bezerra: *Ok, thank you very much!*

¹³ For more on how unions and labour organizers have used the internet to facilitate organizing, see Lee, E. (2010) "Online union campaigns and the shrinking globe: The LabourStart experience", in S. McGrath-Champ, A. Herod, and A. Rainnie (eds.), *Handbook of Employment and Society: Working Space* (pp. 421-435).

Professor Andrew Herod: You're welcome!

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