

The Everyday Spaces of Global Politics: Work, Leisure, Family*

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Abstract *Despite many innovative contributions to international relations theory over the past two decades, a “common sense” view of global politics continues to persist both in the field and in the arenas of public policy and opinion. This article investigates the origins of this persistence and offers an alternative framework for the analysis of global politics that considers international relations as social relations produced by a broad array of actors in multiple spheres. Drawing on the work of Henri Lefebvre, the article investigates the role of alienation in everyday life and the resulting mystifications of the realities of global politics and goes on to consider the social spaces of work, leisure and the family as important arenas where these mystifications can be overcome and international relations be reclaimed from the realm of experts and statesmen.*

Introduction

In the last 20 years, international relations (IR) theory has been dramatically transformed by events in the world it studies, including both the end of the Cold War and the progress of globalization, and by extremely interesting and innovative theoretical work drawing on a variety of sources. The oil crises of the 1970s gave rise to a greater recognition on the part of IR scholars of the importance of economic forces and agents in world politics. Feminists have made fundamental challenges to both the epistemological and ontological assumptions of IR theory. Materialists, especially in the Gramscian tradition, have radically rethought the problem of power in world order and rooted its analysis in a deeper understanding of global social forces. Critical theorists inspired by postmodern and post-structuralist theories have deconstructed the elemental concepts of international relations and have analyzed the disciplinary practices that sustain international relations as practice. Within the liberal-pluralist vein, innovative

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social theory has been brought to bear on problems of world order in the form of “constructivism,” in an effort to reconceptualize the constitution of international relations as relations between social agents.

Yet, in spite of all of these innovations, the common sense of a “dominant paradigm” for thinking about international relations would appear to remain deeply rooted, especially in the areas of public opinion and of policy making. Old ideas based on the simplifying assumptions of *realpolitik* seem to remain the ruling ideas of the day. The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 and the US retaliation against the Taliban government in Afghanistan have highlighted the staying power of this “common sense” paradigm. Even our pedagogy has been slow to respond to the profound rethinking that has characterized our field for such a long time now. Distorting assumptions remain in place with the gravest of consequences, and make the need to understand the reasons for the persistence of the dominant mode of analyzing international relations all the more urgent.

This discrepancy between theoretical innovation and the continuing persistence of the statist model of *realpolitik* results, in our opinion, from the continuing failure of much of IR theory to live up to its emancipatory potential, that is, its ability to generate those questions that allow individuals to uncover the linkages between global politics and their everyday lives. We hope to address this failure through the adaptation of the work of French philosopher Henri Lefebvre, the “quintessential critical theorist of everyday life.”¹ In particular, we will highlight two of Lefebvre’s insights that have important repercussions for our thinking about global politics: his notion of everyday life and his related conceptualization of space. These insights, we believe, permit an analysis of global politics that is both more comprehensive and more concrete than much of the work done in the field today. It takes into account a broader array of social forces while also eschewing the kinds of abstractions with which IR theory often obscures the world it seeks to explain and thus shrouds any emancipatory potential it could have.

For Lefebvre, everyday life² is a contested place characterized by mystifications and the struggle to overcome them. These mystifications derive from the experience of alienation in modern society and take many forms. Lefebvre, for example, critiqued both the concepts and experiences of individuality, freedom, money, needs, work and leisure as part of his effort to unpack the

¹ Michael Gardiner, *Critiques of Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 71.

² Lefebvre provides a useful note on the distinct terms he uses to discuss the everyday: “I have elsewhere distinguished *la vie quotidienne* (daily life) from *le quotidien* (the everyday) from *la quotidienneté* (everydayness): ‘Let us simply say about daily life that it has always existed, but permeated with values, with myths. The word everyday designates the entry of this daily life into modernity: the everyday as an object of a programming (*d’une programmation*), whose unfolding is imposed by the market, by the system of equivalences, by marketing and advertisements. As to the concept of ‘everydayness,’ it stresses the homogenous, the repetitive, the fragmentary in everyday life.’” (*Le Monde*, December 19, 1982, pp. ix, x)”. Henri Lefebvre, “Toward a Leftist Cultural Politics: Remarks Occasioned by the Centenary of Marx’s Death,” in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), p. 87. An excellent overview of a variety of approaches to the critique of everyday life, with an especially useful chapter on Lefebvre, is Gardiner, *op. cit.*

link between the reality of everyday life and our ideas about it.³ The common thread visible in his critiques is an emphasis on the contradictions between the ideological concept of the autonomous individual and the actual loneliness of the atomized person confronting real life. The attempt to come to grips with these contradictions in the context of modern society leads to the creation of mystifications that are then accepted as reality. Lefebvre saw the possibility of transformation in the recognition and thus the demystification of these contradictions. In short, the potential for emancipatory action is created through the recognition of the contradictions between the hegemonic claims about life in capitalist societies and the actual experience of everyday life. We believe that this insight is equally relevant for IR: its hegemonic claims about the nature of global politics can be overcome through the recognition of the contradictions between the reality of global politics in everyday life and the theoretical claims which reserve this area of social relations to elites in government and business.

Lefebvre's continued interrogation of everyday life and his move towards urban analysis all point to a moment in which he felt that "tout converge dans le problème de l'espace."⁴ The critique of everyday life already anticipated the emphasis on space in his later work. After all, to focus on actually lived experiences entailed attention to the spaces where these experiences take place. However, his explicit emphasis on space also expanded the orthodox dialectic of historicity and sociality to what Soja⁵ calls a trialectic of sociality, historicity and spatiality. In Lefebvre's words, "[s]pace does not eliminate the other materials or resources that play a part in the socio-political arena ... Rather, it brings them together and in a sense substitutes itself for each factor separately by enveloping it."⁶ Thus the convergence of everything in space remedies what Lefebvre perceived as the separation of the dialectic method from spatiality, the privileging of the abstract over the concrete, and the curious tendency to accept positivism and social engineering in both critical and mainstream social theory.

Lefebvre's departure from this model set the stage for another important contribution to social theory. His perspective on social space begins with the rejection of space as a natural element or container in the manner in which Newtonian physics conceived it. Instead, he advances a concept of space as socially produced, as both the precondition and the outcome of social action "that permits fresh action to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others."⁷ Therefore, in the process

³ The three volumes of *The Critique of Everyday Life* elaborate on these themes. John Moore's 1991 translation, published under the title *Critique of Everyday Life*, is of the 2nd edition of Lefebvre's *Critique de la vie quotidienne, I: Introduction* (Paris: L'Arche, 1958) which included a new and lengthy forward by Lefebvre. The original text was published in 1947. The second and third volumes are: *Critique de la vie quotidienne, II: Fondements d'une sociologie de la quotidienneté* (Paris: L'Arche, 1961), and *Critique de la vie quotidienne, III: De la modernité au modernisme (Pour une métaphilosophie du quotidien)* (Paris: L'Arche, 1981). An English translation of the second volume is forthcoming from Verso.

⁴ Lefebvre cited in Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 43.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 410–411.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

of inscribing themselves in social space, these social relations also produce that space.⁸

Traditional conceptualizations of space fall into one of two categories, both of which rest upon illusions: the illusion of transparency and the illusion of opacity. The illusion of transparency portrays space as “luminous” and easily apprehensible and posits a clear correspondence between social space and space as mental construct.⁹ The illusion of opacity, on the other hand, conceives of space as an objective, natural thing which can be measured and described and which is “more real” than thoughts about space.¹⁰ However, it would be incorrect to regard these illusions as a conflict of competing philosophies—instead, each is linked to the other. In IR theory, the illusion of transparency suggests a geopolitics that takes “its” space for granted, as, for example, Realism takes anarchy as a given and unchanging condition of international politics. The illusion of opacity suggests the commitment to positivism: a static, hollow and descriptive account of international relations that cannot explain how these relations are produced. That one illusion rests on, and does not preclude, the other is abundantly clear in the development of IR theory.

While we realize that current approaches to social space in IR are far more complex than we indicate above,¹¹ we nevertheless believe that the addition of Lefebvre’s concepts of everyday life and social space to the repertoire of research strategies available to the discipline allows us to make IR theory into a tool with which people can understand, interrogate, and thus transform international relations as social relations—that is, overcome the reification of international

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁰ Soja, *op. cit.*, pp. 64–65.

¹¹ Critical IR theorists and critical political geographers have made significant contributions to a broader understanding of the spaces of global politics. These contributions have dealt with a critique of the notion of fixed territoriality: John A. Agnew and Stuart Corbridge, *Mastering Space: Hegemony, Territory and International Political Economy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995) and John Ruggie, “Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations and Beyond,” *International Organization* 47: 1 (1993), pp. 139–174; deconstruction of the imagery of security and geopolitics: Gearoid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby and Paul Routledge, *The Geopolitics Reader* (London: New York: Routledge, 1998); and, at a more meta-theoretical level, challenges to the aspatial nature of modernist social science thinking: Peter Taylor, “On the Nation-State, the Global and Social Science,” *Environment and Planning A* 28 (1996), pp. 1917–1928. Feminist IR theorists have particularly highlighted the importance of the everyday, of lived spaces. Cynthia H. Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches & Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989) was among the first widely available works to stress the role and the work of women in global politics. Christine Sylvester, *Feminist Theory and International Relations Theory in a Postmodern Era* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994) has stressed the concept of “homesteading” in order to bridge the divide between personal lived experience and global processes, and Doreen B. Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994) has highlighted the multiple overlapping spaces which characterize a world in which the neat distinctions of nationality do no longer hold, if they ever have. While each of these contributions in its own way represents a crucial departure from a view of international relations that appears spatially frozen and conceptually wedded to historicity, they continue to remain at the margins of the discipline and have failed to seep into the representational spaces of international relations, or put differently, the more popular venues through which international relations is represented today.

relations in social life. We thus begin the main section of the article with a discussion of IR theory as mystification—that is, as a set of representations that obscures the social relations it sets out to explain. This section is followed by an illustration of the applicability of Lefebvre’s notions of work, consumption and leisure, and the family to global politics as a strategy for overcoming the mystifications of IR theory. We conclude with a reflection on the emancipatory potential of IR theory and suggest future directions for research.

The Mystifications of IR Theory

The concept of mystification refers to the relationship between appearance and reality. For Lefebvre, this relationship was not a separation “like oil and water in a vessel” but more an amalgamation “like water and wine.”¹² It originates in the experience of alienation in the broad sense. The concept of alienation, as developed by the early Marx, goes beyond the strictly economic notion of the production process and addresses the “distancing of all subjects from the world, from themselves and from others around them.”¹³ The effort to overcome this separation within the confines of the very system that created it leads to the acceptance of appearance over reality, that is, mystification. This concept bears a similarity to Gramsci’s notion of “myth,” which he derived from Sorel; it suggests that ideas have a definite productive energy. Mystifications “disguise or transpose ... real life”¹⁴ by providing explanations which achieve the status of common sense. In IR theory, such mystifications occur when the larger reality of global affairs is hidden behind a veil, which designates the practice of IR as the exclusive domain of experts, statesmen, diplomats, and, more recently, the chieftains of global business. However, such mystifications do not arise spontaneously in an ahistorical fashion. Instead, they derive directly from the contradictions present in any given society which, in turn, reflect its particular social relations. How, then, did IR theory emerge as a mystification of global relations? Lefebvre’s approach to social space provides us with the analytical tools to unpack these processes. It rests on two sets of interrelated dialectical movements—the historical dialectic of spatial forms (absolute space, historical space, abstract space and differential space), and the dialectic of spatial terms (spatial practice, representations of space and lived spaces), which governs the internal dynamics of each historical form.¹⁵

¹² Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), p. 147.

¹³ Rob Shields, *Lefebvre, Love, and Struggle: Spatial Dialectics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 42.

¹⁴ Lefebvre, *Critique*, p. 146.

¹⁵ *Absolute space* arises from fragments of nature chosen for their inherent qualities of place (often for ritual reasons) but which lose their naturalness the moment they are occupied by political force. It is both “civil and religious” (Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, p. 48), thus preserving unmediated relationships while also establishing the beginnings of administrative apparatuses. It was differentiated between producers and those who appropriated their products, but not yet between public and private spheres. See Edward Dimendberg, “Henri Lefebvre on Abstract Space,” in Andrew Light and Jonathan Smith (eds), *The Production of Public Space* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), pp. 17–47. *Historical space* is the space of the town that controls its surrounding countryside; it is the space of accumulation and production for exchange with “exchange value becoming general through the circulation of gold and silver” (Dimendberg, *op. cit.*, p. 23). More importantly,

The ancient Greek city-states serve as an excellent example of absolute space and it is here that we find some of the earliest writings on IR. Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian wars, in particular the often-quoted passages of the Melian dialogues, reveals a politics that was far less mediated and thus mystified than today's. The direct nature of absolute space, the lack of a strong distinction between private and public spheres translated into the stark immediacy of the choice faced by the Melians—death or slavery—which, even by analogy, cannot be applied to conflicts in today's world. The fact that contemporary IR theory has nevertheless appropriated this account to justify modern power politics and stress the supposedly unbroken theoretical tradition upon which it is built, including the patriarchal IR reading of "women-and-children"¹⁶ as the objects rather than the subjects of IR, is but one example of its mystification.

The public/private divide which makes its appearance in historical space had a direct impact on thinking about IR. In his theory of just war, Aquinas, for example, highlights the distinctions between a "private person" and "those who are in authority," placing the "power to declare and counsel war in the hands of those who hold the supreme authority."¹⁷ The desire to justify the conduct of (just) war required a separation of the political class from the rest of the population, thus codifying a distinction between public and private, family and state and, by extension, also masculine and feminine.¹⁸ We see here a key aspect of the mystifications of current IR theory—not only is the conduct of IR expressly reserved for political elites, it is also given moral sanction, thus permitting the use of force outside of society. Although Aquinas expressly limited his just war to conflicts with non-believers, this limitation has been discarded in current interpretations. Nevertheless, as the current war against

(Footnote continued)

it is a space where production and reproduction are separated and thus everyday life is more compartmentalized and mediated. As abstract space is the main concern of this article, we will address its characteristics in more detail below. In the dialectic of spatial terms, *spatial practice* refers to the perceived spaces that constitute the medium but are also the result of human activity (Soja, *Thirdspace*, p. 66). It is revealed through the analysis of the spaces that a society creates for itself. *Representations of space*, in turn, address the manner in which space is conceived of in a given context. For Lefebvre, this part of the triad falls into the realm of power and ideology. As such, relations of power are manifested both in the manner in which space is described (representations of space) and in the manner in which space is utilized (spatial practice) to legitimate social relations. *Espace vécu*, or *lived space*, refers to "the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users' " in everyday life (Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, p. 39). These spaces are by their very nature open and are the "terrain for the generation of 'counterspaces,' spaces of resistance to the dominant order" (Soja, *Thirdspace*, p. 68). This final leg of the triad, for Lefebvre, subverts the false dichotomy of the spatial practice and the representation of space by incorporating both without privileging either; it is the strategic location for social struggle.

¹⁶ See V. Spike Peterson, "Security and Sovereign States: What is at Stake in Taking Feminism Seriously?" in V. Spike Peterson (ed.), *Feminist (Re)Visions of International Relations Theory* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1992), pp. 35–37.

¹⁷ Thomas Aquinas in John A. Vasquez, *Classics of International Relations*, 3rd edn (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996), pp. 32–33.

¹⁸ See J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992) and Charlotte Hooper, *Manly States: Masculinities, International Relations, and Gender Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

terrorism demonstrated, the invocation of the ideas pioneered by Aquinas is still necessary to justify the conduct of modern warfare.

For Lefebvre, abstract space is the social space in which mystifications flourish. Abstract space is the space of abstract labor, generalized exchange relations, mass production and consumption, the space of bureaucratic power, the space of modernity, in short, the space of capitalism. It is a space of wealth and power, a space against which violence is directed and

... which subordinates and totalizes the various aspects of social practice—legislation, culture, knowledge, education—within a determined space; namely the space of the ruling class's hegemony over its people and over the nationhood that it has arrogated.¹⁹

It is dominated by representations of space, which relegates both spatial practice and especially lived spaces to the background.²⁰ In other words, the qualitatively experienced aspects of social life are being replaced by abstract measurements and quantifications

... exemplified in the mass production, economic rationalization, social scientific management of space, urban planning, and bureaucratically controlled mass consumption that increasingly determine the experience of citizens in capitalist societies.²¹

The emergence of abstract space represented a change in geographical scales from the urban to the territorial state²² and it is here that IR theory fully becomes a system of abstractions that obscure the reality of global politics. The emergence of the territorial sovereign state as the dominant form of political organization in space was conditioned by violence.²³ This violence eliminated, or at least severely curtailed, the multi-layered links, which characterized the earlier, non-territorial forms of political organization.²⁴ This process of fixing in space the territorial state as the sole legitimate form for social space also fixed IR, and thus IR theory, in class terms. Machiavelli (whose work has been appropriated in a fashion similar to that of Thucydides) was an early commentator on this transition. His advice to the prince was much less an exercise in Realism, than an effort to come to grips with the spatial and temporal position of the emerging territorial state after the universalist Christian claims which characterized

¹⁹ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, p. 281.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

²¹ Dimendberg, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

²² Neil Brenner, "Between Fixity and Motion: Accumulation, Territorial Organization and the Historical Geography of Spatial Scales," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 16 (1998), pp. 459–481; see also Hendrik Spruyt, "Institutional Selection in International Relations: State Anarchy as Order," *International Organization* 48:4 (1994), pp. 527–557, on the factors that led to the supremacy of the territorial state.

²³ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, p. 280.

²⁴ See Ruggie, *op. cit.* For the theoretical treatment of such non-territorial notions, see, for example, the writings of the 17th century Monk Emeric Crucé, *The New Cyneas of Émeric Crucé* (Philadelphia: Allen Lane and Scott, 1909). Even Kant's account of the interplay of political fixity and economic flows does not yet contain the inevitable acceptance of the territorial division of the world and with it the reservation of IR for a small elite; see Immanuel Kant, *Eternal Peace* (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1914).

Aquinas' conception of IR had finally been shattered.²⁵ The ensuing separation of diplomacy and statecraft from everyday life was both socially and spatially conditioned in that the class distinctions, which turned diplomacy into a task of aristocratic experts, were embedded in the "durable institutional infrastructure" of the territorial state.²⁶

However, the political ascendance of the bourgeois class, which distinguished itself by its capacity to expand and accumulate material wealth, undermined the conditions that could sustain the aristocracy. Holbein's 1533 painting *The Ambassadors* captures the atmosphere of this transitional period. It depicts two luxuriously clad aristocrats in a splendidly appointed room with the things that separate the elite from the common people, specifically, the tools for navigation that serve as a placeholder for the position of the two men in society.²⁷ Berger argues that the depiction of the instruments of navigation, the globe charting Magellan's voyages, the hymn book, the book on arithmetic and the lute all strongly suggest the role of European colonialism in setting up the slave trade, transporting the wealth of conquered lands to Europe, and thus accelerating the system of industrialism and capital accumulation: "To colonize a land it was necessary to convert its people to Christianity and accounting, and thus to prove to them that European civilization was the most advanced in the world."²⁸ The diplomats depicted in the painting thus occupied a liminal position in history and in spatial practice, being of a vocation that arose with the absolutist state but which also increased in social prominence as the holders of the office could define themselves socially through the accumulation of wealth.

The territorial state of the Westphalian system, initially reflecting the order desired by absolutism, soon represented the new order of capitalism. By the 18th century "[t]he basic unit of international relations was the impenetrable, unitary, territorial state, whose professional élite acted on reasoned calculations about states' material capabilities."²⁹ Scientific inquiry, which was part and parcel of the newly emerging social relations, generated the concepts of equilibrium and balance as basic component of the natural order, which, in turn, were adopted by IR theory in the form of concepts such as the balance of power as the natural order of IR, never quite recognizing this major paradox: "This age, which emphasized so insistently the primacy of human reason, built its most characteristic social vision on an irrational, extra-human principle of self-adjustment,"³⁰ a

²⁵ R. B. J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 26–49.

²⁶ Brenner, *op. cit.*, p. 469.

²⁷ See John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (New York: Viking, 1973), pp. 94–95. A more recent contribution by Costas Constantinou, "Diplomatic Representations ... or Who Framed the Ambassadors?," *Millennium* 23: 1 (1994), pp. 1–24, challenges the widely held notion that the persons depicted in the painting are indeed ambassadors as opposed to simply men of high social standing. His argument, that only by calling them ambassadors do the objects in the painting assume their specific meaning, does not contradict our analysis. The analysis that follows will show that the designation of what constitutes international relations has been the domain of the dominant classes.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Torbjørn L. Knutsen, *A History of International Relations Theory* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press), p. 121.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

principle which continues to be the mainstay of IR theory and of neoliberal economic theories of the market.

Twentieth century IR theory emerged from these foundations. Brenner identifies three crucial periods during which the nature of capitalism and its abstract space changed:

the *engagement* of capitalist territorial relations within the national scale of state territoriality (1890s–1930s): the *entrenchment* of nationally scaled forms of territorial organization as scalar fixes for the Fordist–Keynesian round of capitalist growth (1950s–early 1970s): the *denationalization* of capitalist territorial organization and the pursuit of glocal scalar fixes (post-1970s).³¹

Although these periods are not precisely reflected in the development of IR theory, we can nevertheless see connections. Both Carr³² and Morgenthau's³³ seminal contributions to the field were strongly influenced by the violent disruptions which began at the highpoint of colonialism and lasted through the two world wars. Their state-centered analysis, which combined early positivist methodology with a "common sense" approach to the question of the political power, strongly emphasized the role of balance of power, self-help and discounted the ability of states to manage global affairs in consort. Keohane and Nye's attempt to square a state-centered theory with increasing evidence of global non-state activities grew out of the period of relative stability commonly associated with Fordism.³⁴ At the same time their contribution already anticipated the denationalization, which characterizes the current era. Waltz's contribution, reflecting the early period of denationalization, rejected talk of interdependence and advocated a "scientific" approach, which replicated the main claims of the earlier theorists but embedded them in a systemic framework, thus eliminating human factors.³⁵ With its emphasis on systemic factors and the persistent use of the analogies of firms and markets, Waltz's contribution, despite its emphasis on states, actually captures the current representation of globalization as a systemic process impervious to human interference quite accurately.

For most of the 20th century, therefore, the dominant conception of IR theory is clearly that of the state embedded in an anarchic international system and led by an elite set of experts. Currently, this representation is changing, in that the anarchic movements of the market are added to those of power relations, thus demolishing the old demarcations between power and wealth. Similarly, the task of maintaining the mystifying order of the international system has increasingly fallen on the shoulders of the "talking heads" of corporate news programming, thereby adding the reassuring communicative expertise of the news anchor to the practical expertise of the diplomat. What has not changed, however, is the manner in which IR theory continues to marginalize working people throughout the world.

³¹ Brenner, *op. cit.*, p. 473.

³² E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis* (London: Macmillan, 1940).

³³ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 3rd edn (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960).

³⁴ Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, *Power and Interdependence* (Glenview, Boston and London: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1989).

³⁵ Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

When the public rejects this marginal position and attempts to force open the doors that keep citizens out of diplomatic discussions—witness the demonstrations surrounding the negotiations for a Multilateral Agreement on Investment, the meetings of the WTO, the IMF, the World Bank, the World Economic Forum, or the meeting of the Free Trade Area of the Americas—it undermines this separation of diplomacy and statecraft from everyday life, along with the mystification it sustains. As the death of Carlo Giuliani in Genoa, Italy, in the summer of 2001 demonstrated, the force of arms will be used to protect the rarefied sphere of diplomacy when this separation is threatened.

Contemporary global politics are part of the ever-increasing process of extending abstract space into all spheres of human life. Globalization represents a “re-scaling”³⁶ of social relations in the sense that capital is being denationalized while, at the same time, other social relations are being re-scaled to regional or local levels. Spatial practices today are global in nature, following the patterns of the globalization of production, the flexibilization of labor, and the elimination of controls on capital flows.³⁷ These practices confront the everyday life of workers and peasants as alien, external forces, not only beyond their control, but also reconfiguring state institutions in such a way as to disrupt the possibility of state protection from such practices.

An ideological localism and bounding of space in spatial practices reacts to such globalizing spatial practices in the form of xenophobia, restrictive immigration rules, reactionary nationalism, and other reassertions of bounded space.³⁸ Such representations of space tend to reinforce the spatial organization that conforms to most people’s perceptual habits. Here we see the ideological inward turn so visible not just in the global North, but also in those areas of the global South which display standards of living above those of the surrounding areas. Such bounded spaces prove much more restrictive of the possibilities for organizing counterspaces, as opposed to the possibilities for controlling global flows of capital and commodities.

However, even abstract space contains within it contradictions which may lead to its dissolution. These lie in the representation of space in a totalizing, global fashion and the always-present fragmentation of space as it is lived daily.³⁹ Humanized social relations, in the end, are only possible in the spaces of

³⁶ See Brenner, *op. cit.*

³⁷ The literature on the various aspects of globalization is voluminous and growing every day. Key contributions are David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 1989) and David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) on spatial changes; Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society* (Cambridge, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) on technological changes; Ash Amin, *Post-Fordism: A Reader* (Cambridge, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) on changes in the production process; Eric Helleiner, *States and the Reemergence of Global Finance: From Bretton Woods to the 1990s* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994) on changes in financial structures; Stephen Gill, *Globalization, Democratization, and Multilateralism* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997) and Jan Aart Scholte, *Globalization: A Critical Introduction* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000).

³⁸ Mark Rupert, *Ideologies of Globalization: Contending Visions of a New World Order* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 94–131.

³⁹ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, p. 355.

everyday life and it is the concrete a sense of place,⁴⁰ as lived in juxtaposition to abstract space, that holds the potential for emancipatory action. By emphasizing the process of living in space, and thereby creating the spaces in which representation—and living—takes place, space loses its fetishized character and theory has a chance to elaborate on the messy, contradictory, and creative character of the social production of concrete social reality and its unfolding in historical time.

To sum up, the practice of IR theory has not yet understood its own ontology, namely, that social relations, including international relations, are realized and *produced* by people and thus require an analysis of the processes involved in this production. Conjoined with his nuanced theory of the production of space, Lefebvre's focus on everyday life can provide the key for understanding that a robust sense of the production processes is crucial for understanding social relations.

The study of everyday life affords a meeting place for specialized sciences and something more besides; it exposes the possibilities of conflict between the rational and the irrational in our society and our time, thus permitting the formulation of concrete problems of *production* (in its widest sense): how the social existence of human beings is *produced*, its transition from want to affluence and from appreciation to depreciation.⁴¹

The implications of this focus on everyday life for the study of global politics are far ranging. We can no longer be satisfied with an exclusive or even predominant focus on the conduct of statecraft or diplomacy, even under their contemporary guises of multilateral and international agreements for regulating the world economy or for peacekeeping and the protection of human rights. Instead, we must examine how international relations are produced in the daily activities of all people at various levels and scales. Furthermore, we must account for the waxing and waning of the capacities of specific social agents to effect global politics, and for the circulation of struggles among different actors and between the various levels of social life.

The analysis of lived space directs our attention back to what Lefebvre called the sub-systems of everyday life, in particular consumption and leisure activities. As we will elaborate below, such activities are both the spontaneous critique of concrete social life and the means by which the critique is once again subsumed. What Lefebvre called the "repressive organizations of everyday life through compulsions and by a persuasive ideology of consumption more than by consumption itself,"⁴² integrates the dominated classes into the capitalist system and thus forestalls the emancipatory potential present in everyday life. However, this attempt to control everyday life creates new contradictions, the most important of which are the contradiction between "technocratic myths"

⁴⁰ Edward Casey, "The Production of Space or the Heterogeneity of Place," in Andrew Light and Jonathan Smith (eds), *The Production of Public Space* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), pp. 71–80.

⁴¹ Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 23.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 78.

and everyday life and the contradiction between “compulsion as the basis for social order ... [and] the ideology of Liberty as a face-saver.”⁴³

Work, Consumption, Leisure and IR

We have argued that the still-dominant tendencies in IR theory mystify the social relations that constitute international relations, and that in part they do so on the basis of a mechanical and technocratic conception of the spaces of international social relations. In other words, by conceptualizing space as a container, IR theory occludes an examination of how people actually produce their international social relations. What is the outcome of such a blinkered view of international relations, especially for people as they live and produce international social relations? The blind spot of IR theory’s conception of space disguises the concurrence between the ideological *localism* of reactionary representations of space and *globalizing* spatial practices. It also produces a common sense view of the world in which the conduct of international relations appears to be an activity for experts who are situated in clearly demarcated spaces with little relevance for the everyday concerns of people, beyond their control and inaccessible to them. In other words, international relations are not merely mystified by IR theory; international relations are also *alienated* relations.

Work, Alienation, and IR

Lefebvre follows Marx, especially the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* which he cites at length,⁴⁴ in finding the key to a theory of alienation in modern societies in the social and technical divisions of labor. Alienation is more than the expropriation of surplus value from the worker; it is the result of the production process as a whole under capitalism, where the worker confronts the results of the production process, commodities, and work itself as alien and oppressive powers. Productive forces develop not only as a process of improving machinery or deploying technology more widely; they also develop in the organization and specialization of the tasks of work itself. Thus the social process of the production of goods and services becomes an individualized set of tasks which the worker finds already in place, and the selfhood of the worker as realized in production is reduced to the more or less successful realization of individualized tasks determined by these alien, external, and—from the point of view of the individual worker—uncontrollable social forces of capitalist production.

Bourgeois society took on a contradictory unity based on a reassertion of the value of labor in the development of individuality and on labor’s subordination in the production process. Industrialization meant that labor became increasingly fragmented and specialized as the social and technical divisions of labor developed.

At the same time the individual, more and more involved in complex social

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁴⁴ Lefebvre’s translations of the *1844 Manuscripts* were the first to appear in France (in the review *Avante-Poste*, 1933, and in *Morceaux choisis de Marx*, 1934, both in collaboration with Norbert Guterman; see Lefebvre, *Critique*, p. 258, note 5, by the translator John Moore).

relations, became isolated and inward looking. Individual consciousness split into two (into the private consciousness and the social or public consciousness); it also became atomized (individualism, specialization, separation between differing spheres or activity, etc.).⁴⁵

Thus at the moment when the emergence of bourgeois society gives rise to a fluid public sphere, where individuals become increasingly aware of their mutual dependence and their fluid social dynamics, specialization through the division of labor separates *individuals* as bearers of particular tasks, the social organization of which appears beyond the control of particular individuals and, especially, of subordinate classes. Consequently, an *individual* may take an interest in politics and, according to that interest or the level of skill or access to material capacities, even play a predetermined role in the political process. And just as the worker then confronts the products of his or her labor—as commodities or as the labor process—as alienated and alienating forces, so also does the worker *as citizen* confront social unity in the form of the political constitution as an external, alien, and ultimately oppressive force.

Similarly, most working people encounter international relations as external, alien, and oppressive forces, and not as the products of their daily practices. The workplace is one part of lived space in which people produce international relations. In the workplace, they form part and parcel of an international division of labor for which they produce goods and services, which, in turn, appear in international markets as alienated commodities; they also compete with or form relations and organizations of solidarity with similar workers in other parts of the world. The international character of such relations is usually not obvious within the labor process, however, and inherited ideas concerning which social relations count as international further contribute to obscuring the quality of these relations.

The global neoliberal consensus forged to overcome the crisis at the end of the post World War II boom and of “embedded liberalism” was couched from the beginning in terms of the inevitability of deregulation and liberalization, as controls over and the regulation of capital loosened and the protections of a social welfare state and organized labor were dismantled. That there be “no alternative” to such policies depended on the atomization and isolation—whether realized in the market or by state repression—of workers in both national and international contexts. The neoliberal ideology of globalization, or more precisely, the requirement to produce for and in the context of competitive global markets, thus becomes another overweening representation of global space, and this space is alienated and alienating.

In terms of the spatial practices of neoliberalism, this means that to the extent that post-Fordism has replaced earlier forms of industrial relations—in terms of flexible specialization, increasing reliance on information management, and informalization—the last refuges of the development and expression of the worker’s self in the production process have been subsumed to the requirements of capital accumulation. Flexibilization, coupled with the management of the details of the production process, locks workers into production “just in time” for delivery to a certain market while leaving the flexibilized worker idle between cycles of demand. While few workers are likely to feel nostalgic for the

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

factory floor discipline of Fordism, under that regime the impulse to express oneself individually was often expressed as a resistance to work discipline. Sometimes workers could make innovations in the production process on the factory floor to reduce the intensity of the work and to increase down time or breaks. Under post-Fordist management, this same impulse is subsumed into the accumulation process in the form of labor management committees and employee input mechanisms, in an effort to recover the workers' resistance to discipline and their creative impulses. Similarly, informal sector activities become survival strategies for unprotected workers, and not the opportunities for small-scale self-development of petty-capitalists envisioned by the ideologues of "the other path." That workers are increasingly unprotected and their lives increasingly organized by the need to attract internationally mobile capital (or disorganized by the failure to do so) underscores the production of the particular world order of neoliberalism through their alienated working lives.⁴⁶

Leisure, Alienation and IR

Does this alienated worker simply passively reproduce, through work, alienating international social relations of production? In fact, however burdensome the daily grind of the worker, work does not exhaust the entire complex of everyday life. Everyday life resists its abstraction and reduction to spatial practices and the representation of space: everyday life takes place in the concrete lived spaces people make for themselves. For Lefebvre, the everyday is a dialectical unity between work, leisure, and family: "Everyday life involves all three elements, all three aspects. It is their unity and their totality, and it determines the concrete individual."⁴⁷ This unity is dialectical in the sense that each of the elements

⁴⁶ The literature on labor and international relations is not vast, but it is growing. The relatively recent development and reception of a materialist IR theory, especially the Gramscian turn inspired by the signal contributions of Robert Cox, is the exception that proves the rule. For the most part, Gramscian IR theory, in its concern with understanding the problems of transnational hegemony, has focused on the roles and activities of ruling or dominant classes. The irony of the situation is even more striking when considering the reception—or rather, the non-reception—of Jeffrey Harrod's major book, *Power, Production, and the Unprotected Worker* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), which was written as a companion volume to Robert Cox's now much more familiar book, *Production, Power, and World Order* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987). The common themes and project of the two volumes notwithstanding, world order remains a much more comfortable terrain for IR theory than the status and condition of workers. Notable exceptions to this tendency can be found not only in Harrod's work, but also in the 1984 volume edited by Charles Bergquist, *Labor in the Capitalist World-Economy* (Beverly Hills: Sage). See also Jeffrey Harrod's "Social Forces and International Political Economy: Joining the Two IRs," in Stephen Gill and James H. Mittelman (eds), *Innovation and Transformation in International Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 105–117. For more recent important efforts to understand labor in world politics, see Mark Rupert, *Producing Hegemony: The Politics of Mass Production and American Global Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), or Robert O'Brien's "The Agency of Labour in a Changing Global Order," in Richard Stubbs and Geoffrey R. D. Underhill (eds), *Political Economy and the Changing Global Order*, 2nd edn (Oxford and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 38–47. Rupert and O'Brien each pay particular attention to the ways that workers, particularly in the form of organized labor, attempt to influence state policy or the behavior of firms, or begin to create a kind of global civil society in relation to other popular struggles.

⁴⁷ Lefebvre, *Critique*, p. 31.

excludes (contradicts) the others, and yet along with the markers, which distinguish each, they form an identifiable whole. Everyday life is thus the grind of the job, daily reproduction at home with the family, *and* the recreational or leisure activities pursued outside of the job and the home. At the same time, it is in leisure as time taken away from work that Lefebvre finds the everyday critique of everyday life: "... the man [sic] of our times carries out in his own way, spontaneously, the critique of *his* everyday life. And this critique of the everyday plays an integral part in the everyday: it is achieved in and by *leisure activities*."⁴⁸

The fragmentation of labor through the development of the social and technical divisions of labor, and the attendant fragmentation of consciousness, means that the worker cannot realize selfhood in the production process. Leisure, as the spontaneous critique of everyday life, indicates one avenue through which people attempt to escape this fragmentation and alienation. Thus, leisure is the search for *compensation* for the alienation of work.

There is no doubt that today—in capitalist, bourgeois *society*, which has its own way of manipulating the needs arising from a specific level of *civilization*—the most striking imperative as far as the needs of leisure among the masses are concerned is that it must produce a *break*. Leisure must break with the everyday (or at least appear to do so) and not only as far as work is concerned, but also for day-to-day family life.⁴⁹

Breaking with everyday life is a way of beginning to define a time and a space not structured by the demands of work, where time and space are ordered according to the demands of the production process, which are determined for the worker according to the requirements of capital.

However, the time and space of leisure are not themselves uncontested, and just as the concept of production encompasses more than the immediate production of goods and services, so also does alienation take place in each of the dimensions of everyday life. Lefebvre continues:

Thus there is an increasing emphasis on leisure characterized as distraction: rather than bringing any new worries, obligations, or necessities, leisure should offer liberation from worry and necessity. Liberation and pleasure—such are the essential characteristics of leisure, according to the parties concerned ... They mistrust anything which might appear to be educational and are more concerned with those aspects of leisure which might offer *distraction*, *entertainment* and *repose*, and which *might compensate* for the difficulties of everyday life. If we are to believe the subjective opinions revealed by surveys, this is as true for workers (proletarians) as it is for the other social classes.⁵⁰

Leisure compensates for the difficulties of everyday life inasmuch as it offers the possibility of pleasure. In a somewhat problematical formulation, Lefebvre distinguishes between those leisure activities that produce passive attitudes, and those that are linked to technique or "a technical element independent of any

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 29, emphasis in the original.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 33, emphasis in the original.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 33, emphasis in the original.

professional specialization."⁵¹ As an example of the first attitude, Lefebvre offers the image of someone sitting in front of a cinema screen, a model that, in his view, makes immediately apparent its potentially alienating nature.⁵² Lefebvre suggests that these passive attitudes are particularly easy to exploit commercially. As an example of the latter attitude, Lefebvre offers two examples: photography, and the rise in popularity of painting in post-war France.

Nevertheless, those activities, which suggest an active attitude, are at least as commercially exploitable as those that allegedly produce passive attitudes. Not only do those leisure activities that require "a technical element independent of any professional specialization" (photography or painting, in Lefebvre's examples) require specialized equipment, but the act of producing social distinctions produces ever changing, commercially exploitable needs for equipment, training, and leisure time itself. Undoing Lefebvre's analytical distinction between the "passive" and "active" attitudes in leisure strengthens his assertion that "with its fragmentation of labour, modern industrial civilization creates both a *general need for leisure* and differentiated *concrete needs* within that general framework."⁵³ The general need for leisure finds expression as consumerism, and the individual who is increasingly blocked from developing individuality and satisfaction from the production process turns to consumption to satisfy his or her concrete needs.

Thus just as people in their everyday lives encounter work as an alien, oppressive force thanks to the technical and social divisions of labor, so also do they encounter leisure in terms predetermined by the need to accelerate the circulation of commodities. In this sense, the need for a break from work, the need to take away time and space from the fragmentation and alienation of the labor process (another way of saying *the general need for leisure*) is also alienating. Given the alienation of the worker from international relations and the mystification of these relations, that is, given the representation of international relations as beyond the scope of the life of the worker, understanding leisure is especially important for IR theory. This is the part of daily life in which the vast majority of people can pursue an interest in world affairs defined in the narrow sense—by reading the paper, by watching television, by reading novels or going to the movies. It is through such leisure activities that the non-professional or

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁵² The "passivity" of the spectator at the cinema is far from certain. For example, part of the pleasure of the cinema comes from the audience's ability to master the rules of a genre. In Wes Craven's *Scream*, both the plot and, by implication, the pleasure derived by the audience revolve around the ability of the characters in the film and the spectators to use the knowledge of the conventions of horror films. Yet even in those circumstances where a spectator at the cinema has not mastered the intricacies of a genre or of film making technique, the viewer nevertheless brings interpretive skills and competence to the movie. The viewer continuously interprets the film both in the theater and, if the film was successful in satisfying the concrete needs of leisure, in conversation about the movie later on. An even clearer example would be the case of sports fans, whose pleasure in being spectators is at least proportional to the knowledge and expertise they have developed about the sport and the teams they follow. Part of the importance of abolishing the analytical distinction between passive and active attitudes lies in understanding how even the activities that Lefebvre classifies as "passive" involve skill and technique recognizable by one's peers, which in turn produce social distinctions and markers of identity. They are, in other words, crucial for the reproduction of the social relations of production.

⁵³ Lefebvre, *Critique*, p. 32.

non-expert has access to the representations of the space of international relations. With respect to subordinate groups or classes, shaping the political possibilities in terms of images (films, news footage) and in terms of alternatives (“there is no alternative”) takes place in the form of occupying leisure time (e.g., watching television) and leisure spaces (e.g., the living room). Building a consensus—however deeply or shallowly the consensus penetrates the soil of daily life—around questions of world order and the methods for achieving it, whether military intervention or structural adjustment, is a central element of the struggle to develop or sustain hegemony or dominance. That many people cannot enjoy such activities for reasons of material deprivation only highlights their alienation from the international relations they produce in their daily lives.

As we have argued, this struggle must take place on the terrain of everyday life, and Lefebvre stresses the role of marketing in the ordering of this terrain:

the everyday is not only programmed, but it is entirely mediated and mass-mediated. Marketing allows projections of up to ten years. The everyday is not only controlled, it is completely manipulated. It is managed and administered, in large part by multinational corporations that have colossal investments in it.⁵⁴

Marketing, in this view, is not only needed to accelerate the circulation of commodities, but it is also the science of the administration of everyday life. Marketing is one of the crucial manners in which both need, as expressed in the realm of the reproduction of labor power, and the critique of everyday life in the form of leisure are recuperated for purposes of capital accumulation. People produce international relations in leisure, therefore, not only as expert opinion and the practices of diplomacy represented in media consumed for information or entertainment. They also produce international relations through the machinery of the creation of need and of consumerism.

This underscores another dimension of the importance of understanding leisure for demystifying international relations: the struggle for hegemony also takes place in terms of consumerism. A potent example of this would be the popularity in the US market of Humvees following the 1991 Gulf War. The subsequent growth of the market for “sport utility vehicles” reinforced the strategic and political economic efforts of the forces arrayed against Iraq. Just as in Lefebvre’s example of the purchase of a kilo of sugar, the whole of global political economy can be read in this everyday activity of driving an SUV: securing oil supplies, financing consumption with debt, the technology to move people and goods quickly and over distance and terrain, the reluctance of North American consumers to compromise their lifestyles for either environmental protection or to divert economic resources to the execution of militarily strategic efforts, etc.⁵⁵

The Family, Household Labor, and International Relations

Regarding the third dimension of everyday life, life in the family, Lefebvre

⁵⁴ Lefebvre, “Toward a Leftist Culture,” p. 79.

⁵⁵ For an analysis of how the market for SUVs has been cultivated by the automobile industry and its allies in the United States government, see Paul Roberts, “Bad Sports—Or: How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the SUV,” *Harper’s Magazine* (April 2001), pp. 69–75.

makes comparatively few references. His key argument has to do with the role of the family in the reproduction of the social relations of production.⁵⁶ There are three crucial elements in Lefebvre's argument: the relation between biological reproduction and the social reproduction; the relation between the family and the enterprise or firm; and the relation between the family and the production of space.

Biological reproduction is an imperfect metaphor for social reproduction. Lefebvre suggests that biological reproduction is akin to the notion of producing things; thus having and raising children does supply labor for production. At the same time, however, the production of things is not sufficient for capitalist accumulation. The initial conditions for the production of things must themselves be reproduced. Marx's schemas for simple and expanded reproduction capture this notion. But in Lefebvre's view, Marx's deeper insight was that the reproduction of the initial conditions also had to include the reproduction of the social relations of production. Biological reproduction is necessary for this, but the concept of biological reproduction does not cover the reproduction of social relations.

Biological reproduction itself takes place in definite social relations. The family is the social context for reproduction. The family is a form inherited from history but transformed by capitalism. Lefebvre cites Wilhelm Reich in his discussion of the bourgeois family. In the first place, the family is not a mere reflection of the industrial order; rather, the bourgeois family is the factory in which the production of the social relations of production, as well as the production of labor power, takes place. It is a sort of enterprise, with the father as "boss" and the mother, children, and domestic servants as laborers: "both exploited *and* dominated."⁵⁷ Thus patriarchy is also a key component of the reproduction of the social relations of production.

The production of space is also key to understanding the role of family life in everyday life, and the constitution of the family is central to the production of space. A key transformation of both space and family takes place in the passage to capitalism. For peasants the "workplace is all around the house; work is not separate from the everyday life of the family."⁵⁸ Industrial capitalism, however, relies on the space of the town, where a separation of the workplace from the space of reproduction accompanies the separation of the worker from the means of subsistence. Today, even this separation of productive and reproductive spheres is being dismantled through the extension of the abstract space of market relations into all aspects of family life, and particularly child rearing.

If, as Lefebvre argues, the importance of the family lies in its role in the reproduction of the social relations of production, what is the importance of the family for international relations? The extension of abstract space into the intimate sphere of family life on first glance appears to take place "outside" of international relations, as an extension of market rationality towards a micro-social sphere, not in the direction of macro-social relations at the global level.

⁵⁶ See Henri Lefebvre, *The Survival of Capitalism: Reproduction of the Relations of Production* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁵⁸ Lefebvre, *Critique*, p. 30.

However, each of these levels is clearly necessary for the other. The outsourcing of garment assembly to home workers literally transforms the space of the family, the home, into a factory within an internationally organized technical division of labor. As Fiona Wilson has shown in her study of the workshop based garment industry in Mexico, this industrial arrangement not only relies on various family relations to supply labor for the garment workshops, it also transforms family relations as young women in particular must renegotiate their roles in the family.⁵⁹

The relation between immigration policy and the hiring of immigrants as domestic laborers is another way of illustrating the necessarily international character of the extension of abstract space into the family. The tenuous legal status of domestic laborers in the host country, coupled with their difficult economic situation in their home country, keeps them vulnerable and therefore affordable for middle class families in developed countries. A similar double bind affects immigrant women in the sex industry, who, despite the brutality of their exploitation, often find it difficult to go to host country authorities for protection because they also fear deportation. In these cases, the commodification of biological reproduction and of sex is evidently an increasingly international economic relation. Also in both cases, the labor of the domestic servant or of the prostitute comes to resemble wage labor with its attendant form of alienation; at the same time, such forms of labor as domestic work and sex work depend in turn on unwaged or unpaid labor reproducing both the labor power of these workers and the social relations of production which makes their labor possible.

By addressing the contributions of unwaged labor, such as that of house workers, to production, contributors to the volumes edited by Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Giovanna F. Dalla Costa⁶⁰ have also demonstrated the role of enforcing bourgeois and other patriarchal family relations for the implementation of structural adjustment programs imposed under the burden of international debt. As social services are cut back, for example, the burdens and costs of structural adjustment are imposed on women, whose unwaged labor in the family is intensified in various ways.

This overview of the alienation of the self and of the product of labor in everyday life, through work, leisure, and through family life, could lead to a strikingly pessimistic conclusion, as totalizing spaces of exploitation and domination subsume the partial critiques which emerge from everyday life. Yet at the same time, just as the break leisure takes from work is the everyday critique of everyday life, alienation in work, leisure, or in family life is never complete or absolute. Two opposing forces are always at work here: the potential of workers to transform everyday life, and the control of everyday life by dominant or hegemonic classes with their own alienated projects. "Everyday life is the vital element in which the working classes thrive, and they could—or might—challenge and change it; but it is the bourgeoisie who control the quotidian, and

⁵⁹ Fiona Wilson, *Sweaters: Gender, Class, and Workshop-based Industry in Mexico*, International Political Economy Series (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991).

⁶⁰ See Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Giovanni Dalla Costa (eds), *Paying the Price: Women and the Politics of International Economic Strategy* (London: Zed Books, 1995); and Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Giovanni Dalla Costa (eds), *Women, Development, and Labor of Reproduction: Struggles and Movements* (Trenton, NJ and Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press, 1999).

they try, without much success, thanks to their higher incomes, to make it into one long holiday so as to avoid its drudgery.”⁶¹ The balance of these opposing forces and the possibility for emancipatory action lies in the possibilities of differential spaces, where we recognize difference and thus oppose the homogenization of abstract space. The struggles for the practical realization of differential space “... are waged on many fronts—and along many frontiers; they may have no obvious links with each other ...”⁶² but they take place at this level of experience, the level of everyday life.

Future Directions (Conclusion)

This paper began with the assertion that two of Henri Lefebvre’s concepts for the analysis of social life are strongly relevant for understanding global politics: his concept of everyday life and his reconceptualization of space. Lefebvre’s concern with everyday life sprang from his dissatisfaction with the analytical separation of the abstract and the concrete, and the way that philosophy—or “truth without reality”—stands on this separation to insulate itself from everyday life—“reality without truth.” Bringing these moments together requires focusing on the emancipatory potential in everyday life, exposing mystifications and the struggles to overcome them. His concerns with everyday life inevitably led him to explore the ways that daily practices constitute the spaces of social life, opening a new and highly productive problematic for social and political theory: the problem of space itself. Against the common sense view of space as a “natural” phenomenon, Lefebvre insisted that space is socially constructed, making social action possible. The problematic of space and that of everyday life converged in his insistence that lived space is a strategic location for social struggle.

For such concepts to be relevant to the study of international relations, international relations must be seen as social relations. However, as we argued, the elitist bias of IR theory mystifies international relations by hiding their social character. By virtue of its links to the emergence of the modern state and statecraft and to the rise of the bourgeoisie as a dominant social class, that is to say by analytical and historical fiat, IR theory obscures the concrete production of international relations in the daily practices of workers, families and consumers.

Today, spatial practice is increasingly global, as exemplified by globalization of production, by the flexibilization of labor, and by the elimination of capital controls internationally. In reaction to such practice, there is also an increase in the representation of space as bounded, restrictive, and exclusionary. The atomization of bounded states and isolated individuals in this predominant representation of space in no way contradicts the ideology of neoliberalism, as the latter in fact reinforces this atomization through the ideologies and practices of global competition. Thanks to its aversion to questions concerning the concrete production of international relations in everyday life, IR theory has not been able to find a satisfactory resolution to the antinomy between globalized spatial practices and localized representations of space. Lefebvre’s concept of lived space (*espace vécu*), we argue, points to the way that the mystifications of

⁶¹ Lefebvre, *Everyday Life*, p. 39.

⁶² Lefebvre, *Production*, p. 418.

IR theory can be overcome and the practical struggles against such practices and representations can be grasped. Following Lefebvre, we trace the origins of the mystifications of IR theory to alienation and the struggles against it that characterize everyday life, that is, in work, leisure, the family, and consumption.

However, if we are to follow Lefebvre's lead thoroughly, the demystification of IR theory cannot be a "merely" theoretical problem—truth without reality. This is why we insist on recovering—or discovering—IR theory's emancipatory potential. This potential resides in IR theory's all-too-implicit utopianism: its desire, at its best moments, for a world without war or poverty. To realize this potential, IR theory must overcome its fascination with elites and investigate the concrete experience of people. It is in this concrete experience that people struggle against their alienation. IR theory that can grasp both these concrete struggles and the global forces abstracted from them can begin to overcome its own mystifications. More specifically, IR theory must change its conceptions of space as merely the container of the interactions of states and firms, and examine the everyday social practices that produce space.

The study of the everyday in IR will raise difficult problems. For example, if the critique of everyday life is crucial for a more robust theory of international relations, does Lefebvre's conception of the everyday as an aspect of modernity limit its usefulness in discussing the global South? In other words, does an everyday, spontaneous critique of everyday life rooted in leisure have any relevance for people without access to leisure? Lefebvre provides a partial response in a footnote to an article on the cultural politics of the Left:

The project described here begins with the question of how people live their everyday lives. It leaves unanswered those considerations that might result from looking especially at those whose incomes are well below the social average. ... Do they manage? But how? Is there not a parallel and underground economy being constructed in relation to ultramodern industry? It is not only a matter of turning one's attention to the way in which hundreds of millions of people manage to survive, but to know if this modern society—from the capitalist side—is not in the process of breaking up. A theoretical, practical, and political problem, as soon as one does not accept that the growth of production as well as of information is sufficient to conserve the unity of society.⁶³

If IR theory is to realize its emancipatory potential, it too must turn its attention to the hundreds of millions of people struggling to survive, and to the question of whether the social and cultural systems in which the hundreds of millions produce international relations are breaking up, and with what consequences. In any case, the emancipatory potential of all social theory lies in the ability to generate questions rather than to tell us what reality is.

⁶³ Lefebvre, "Toward a Leftist Culture," p. 88.