

The Genesis of a Class Machine: Cybernetic Behaviors of Capitalism

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Capital, formal labor, and citizenship preserves and begets capital, formal labor, and citizenship. Poverty, informal labor, and non-citizenship preserves and begets poverty, informal labor, and non-citizenship. It is a cybernetic system, and the genesis of a class machine.

A Mechanical Blueprint

To sketch the contours of this paper, here I will apply the theories of the scientific and social scientific discipline of “Cybernetics” to investigate some of the systematic and machine-like behaviors of capitalism in relation to sustaining particular conditions and class types. For analytical power and context, Capitalism, with its central and organizing tenant of capital accumulation and ownership, here will be emphasized as a colonialism-forged (Blaut 1989), racialized (Leong, 2013), state fused, enforced and fueled (Scott 2006) socio-cultural-politico-economic entity, which produces, sustains, and is sustained by “class”, as Nesbit notes by saying, “Capitalist societies are stratified into classes, hierarchies of power and privilege related to the ownership and control of various forms of capital. Capitalist systems of structured inequality continue because society portrays them as normal or inevitable”(Nesbit, 2010).

More specifically, I will showcase the cybernetic relationships between the interplaying and feedbacking variables of citizenship status, labor types (formal vs informal), capital status and by extension economic status (such as poverty vs prosperity), and kinship-based networks as existing under the delineated type of capitalism. This will be done through a synthesis of legal, theoretical, historical, and sociological sources, as well as through an investigation of and heavy spotlight on the lives, struggles, kinship networks, and relationships with the mentioned variables, of the “Fruteros”, who are mostly “unauthorized” non-citizen latinx immigrants that reside and labor within the capitalist, white settler colonial (Glenn, 2015), U.S. nation-state by “informally” selling fruits; insights into Fruteros realities will be provided to us through Rocío Rosales's in-depth ethnographic book, *Fruteros* (Rosales, 2020).

Subsequently, we will see how these cybernetic relationships of citizenship, capital, labor type, and kinship network work to control, sustain, and preserve particular and current advantageous or disadvantageous socio-politico-economic conditions, resources and privileges, and by extension class types; Thereby revealing a cybernetically-encoded machine within racialized, colonialism-forged, U.S. state fused/enforced/fueled capitalism, that works to produce and sustain particular and current conditions and types of class.

Furthermore, we will see how the cybernetic machine sustains disadvantageous conditions and class type under capitalism for the Fruteros and how this, then, makes the Fruteros tie themselves to racialized (non-white latinx) immigrant kinship networks that seeks to ameliorate some of the disadvantageous outcomes of this particular cybernetic machine of capitalism; making the networks function as parallel, (to the capitalist formal-civic U.S. society), mutual aid type/giving informal-“civic” societies. These informal-“civic” societies are composed of parallel and informal “civic” and financial institutions, like a taxation-sustained rotating fund and credit system (called tandas) and threat reduction system (that mitigates state enforced public-health crackdowns); Institutions which are sustained by parallel informal-“civic” member duties/obligations, that, taken together, confer onto the kinship-network members, such as the Fruteros, a type of informal “citizenship”. Yet, when the mutual aid giving networks are understood as both ameliorating some of the capitalist conditions, while simultaneously being part of a disadvantageous cybernetic machine of capitalism, a type of “paradox under capitalism” is revealed. Lastly, we will end on a brief discussion of historical continuities and the opportunities for cooperatives to emerge from these parallel mutual aid networks, promising a possible escape from the cybernetic class machine.

A Need to Delineate “Class”

Because this paper crucially considers class and its realities, we must first delineate its definition within this paper. Scholars seeking to delineate “class” within capitalist societies have had various yet often overlapping perspectives and definitions (Nesbit, 2010), yet, here, we will define “class” as a social identity composed of a dynamic interplaying of economic, racial, gendered, social, cultural, political, and geographical variables, among others, which is part and parcel of a broader reality of oppression and exploitation under capitalism (Nesbit, 2010). This definition, then, focuses in on the ecosystem of variables that jointly produce a spectrum of “class” types, allowing us to investigate variables such as race and citizenship in class production and outcomes. This definition is not par excellence the traditional Marxian definition of class, in which class is construed as a binary between the “working class” and the “capitalist/dominant class” (Nesbit, 2010), and we are not using that

Marxian traditional definition, per se, as it could tacitly overlook the, crucially considered for this paper, variables such as race and citizenship as significant parts to the equation producing class outcomes and structures.

Yet, that does not mean we reject a Marxian-founded definition of class, as the structure of capitalism does indeed showcase itself, through the analysis and work of multiple scholars as well as socio-economic-political statistics as Reuss has complied, to be one where the majority of capital and wealth flows to and is retained by a minority dominant capital owning class that secures itself through political levers of power, and which exploit and oppress those that work underneath to produce the value that sustains their wealth and capital (Reuss, 2020). Expanding on this, the essential relationship between labor and capital on which this Marxian class binary rests is understood as a background foundation of capitalism, as a fundamental and defining of capitalism core social relation of production, labor, and capital, which is indeed accepted by our definition of class here; a background and fundamental relationship and structure in which the majority of a capitalist society's population, the “working class”, must sell their mental and physical labor to the minority-of-the-population dominant capital owners, the “dominant capitalist class”, in order to survive; where the majority working population produces a certain amount of value/wealth/profit from their labor, which is then appropriated by, and the majority of which flows to, the minority dominant capital owning class and to the building and maintenance of their own capital and its needs, with what is then left being returned to the workers as a wage which the worker needs to survive (Wolff and Resnick, 2012).

To also emphasize the importance of the state in maintaining class, a theme and reality crucially considered in this paper, this wage-based relationship between capital and labor is preserved through the dominant capital owning class fusing with the state to sustain the status quo class and capital structure, this preservation of capital and class order is achieved through state-capitalist machineries, for example, the broad economic-political mechanisms of the 20th and into the current-21st century that have run on neoliberal and austerity logics which ultimately worked to foreclose the ability to escape the wage relationship, thereby sustaining the capital and class order (Mattei, 2022).

In this sense, the definition of class we are using in this paper may be understood as an expansion of this outlined Marxian-founded definition of class, where a binary “dominant capitalist class” vs “working class” dynamic works as a essential background structure of capitalism, yet, that binary being injected with nuance as to see class as a multifaceted spectrum of class types within the general nation-state population, in this case, of the U.S. nation state, that lives under, and indeed draws from, the dominant relationship of capital to labor and to class more broadly. Thereby, this expanded definition of class allows us to focus in on how

certain “class types” and class structures within a broader, majority “working class” population become constructed by the interplaying variables of capital status/economic status, citizenship, labor type, and kinship network membership/engagement, and how citizenship, capital, labor, and kinship network status itself creates new class binaries within the working population under capitalism.

Sustaining Advantageous Class Through Feedback Relationships of Capital, Citizenship, and Labor-Type

The first step to understanding the cybernetic class machine is to understand the powerful feedbacking relationship between capital status, citizenship and labor type within modern-day culturally/ideologically Western U.S. nation-state Capitalism; and an insightful place to start is to understand the historical and ideological roots of the modern-day conceptions of U.S. citizenship. Therefore: current U.S. conceptions and constructions of citizenship have deep roots in ancient Greek and Roman conceptions and constructions of citizenship, whose foundational core were independence and ownership of property and people, as Glenn writes, “Although the concept of citizen differed in the Greek and Roman formulations, in both traditions independence was a necessary condition for exercising citizenship; independence was established by family headship, ownership of property, and control over wives, slaves, and other dependents” (Glenn, 2011, pg. 21). Here Glenn points out that independence was one of the central tenets of citizenship in Greece and Rome, and that this independence was judged through ownership and control over material property or other human beings of lower socio-economic-politico (class broadly construed) status, and because this ancient Greek and Roman ideology is continuous with U.S. ideology of citizenship, as Glenn showcases extensively in Chapter 2 of her book (Glenn, 2011), we come to understand that an ideological precondition for the status of citizenship within the U.S. is independence as undergirded by generalized property ownership.

Now, within a capitalist-operating nation-state like the U.S., whose capitalism is a state-private fusion that utilizes the state to legally defend and enforce property ownership rights in order to sustain its existence and development (Deakin, et al., 2017), the mentioned historical ideological precondition for citizenship, I argue, is manifested and made practice by a cybernetic mechanism (of plausibly many other); That mechanism being that within a capitalist society, those who own property, who have accumulated capital already, are able to leverage their material and social resources to go through the process of formal citizenship and are generally more likely to obtain it. In essence, “capital”, here primarily understood as mediated by money/“universal equivalent” wealth that functions under capitalism to produce even more wealth itself in a way of recurrent expansion (Felluga, 2011), confers social and material privileges

and resources that make citizenship more possible and likely within a capitalist U.S. nation-state. This relationship of capital status/(thereby)-economic-status to citizenship not only applies to an individual when they are already within the U.S., as I am outlining, but it also applies to even before the individual enters the U.S. if trying to enter as an immigrant, like a latinx immigrant. This is because whether the immigrant is able to legally enter the U.S. and thereby whether they can begin the citizenship process, and whether they can legally labor within the formal economic sector to by extension gain certain resources and privileges that would grant them a greater ability to accumulate capital which would further their capital and economic status, or whether the immigrant is instead denied said legal entry and forced to become an “unauthorized” non-citizen to enter the U.S., is (that decision) based on state-dished-out sorting strategies that use the immigrants capital accumulation/status as a powerful judgment/decision-making factor.

As Shachar writes, the state denies or provides legal entry to immigrants based on “sorting strategies – restrictive closure and selective openness – which rely on ‘varieties of affluence’ (income, wealth, equity, credit, and the like) in shaping possibilities for entry, settlement, and naturalization” (Shachar, 2021). Here naturalization in most senses just meaning the legal granting of citizenship to non-citizens who did not automatically obtain citizenship through being born on the claimed lands of the U.S. nation-state (Legal Information Institute of Cornell University Law School, n.d.), lands such as one of its 50 states or one of its “unincorporated territories” including Puerto Rico, Guam, and The U.S. Virgin Islands (U.S. Embassy and Consulate 2016) yet notably excluding the U.S.-exclusively-controlled for 120 years and sworn-to-permanent-allegiance American Samoa “unincorporated territory” and its people from this at-birth U.S. citizenship right (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2020) (Olivera and Derieux, 2022); Also to note here (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2021) is that the people inside U.S.’s “unincorporated territories”, 98% of whom are racial and ethnic minorities, those who do have citizenship are, regardless, denied the ability to vote for a U.S. President while living in the “unincorporated territory”, while U.S. citizens who resided in one of the 50 states who now live in or are visiting the territories do indeed have legal pathways to vote, this means that millions of racialized U.S. citizens are denied the fundamental right to vote due to living in a U.S. “unincorporated territory”, effectively making them racialized second class U.S. citizens.

Yet, in relation to the immigrant sorting strategies that favor capital which required us defining “naturalization” and its nuances in the first place, we see through those sorting strategies how capital powerfully influences an immigrant's chances for U.S. entry, naturalization, and citizenship status even before they find themselves within the U.S. . Furthermore, once an immigrant legally enters the U.S. and obtains citizenship through the legal, albeit difficult, 10-step naturalization process

(U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2022) that among other things requires one to pay a money fee, give their biometrics to the nation-state for consideration and data, and showcase to the watchful and judging eye of the citizenship-carrying government agents ones english fluency, ones historical and governmental knowledge (with civic tests), and one's very much ill defined, yet in part arbitrated by the government agents, "good moral character" (USA Government, n.d.), or, once any person obtains U.S. citizenship in any way, the doors to laboring in the formal economic market open (access to "formal" labor types), and certain socio-economic-political rights, privileges and protections also become legally guaranteed (Legal Information Institute of Cornell University Law School, n.d.) through state-enforcement; These rights, privileges, and access to formal labor allowing for much easier and more likely further accumulation of capital by the newly minted U.S citizen. That granted-by-citizenship, new and more likely, state-enforcement sustained, created by granted privileges and access to laboring in the formal economy ("formal" labor type), furthering of the accumulation of capital, leads to a general increase in capital ownership which, as discussed, is a historically continuous ideological/cultural precondition for citizenship that leads to the reinforcing of citizenship status in that cultural/ideological way.

Yet, crucially, that capital ownership also grants the individual certain advantageous economic, social, cultural, and political resources (e.g. social networks, greater economic stability, resources to possibly contest the breaching of human, property or labor rights), as well as if already a newly minted citizen, the individual also obtains legal and state-enforced privileges (e.g. legally-enforced human, property, and labor rights, a legal pathway to contest the breaching of those rights, and access to the state network of enforcement which achieves enforcement through incentives/disincentives, coercion or violence). Those mentioned advantageous resources and privileges, then, reveal to us a newly minted type of class with particular social access and relationships, a class type whose conditions, resources and privileges work to sustain and preserve further the individual's citizenship status itself, through making the individual's citizenship more secure against possible threats and dissipation that may be caused by a shifting socio-economic-politico and temporal landscape.

Furthermore, because formal citizenship status aids in creating this advantageously interplaying feedback system of capital/economic status, access to a formal labor type, and access to class-based-kinship networks, and this interplaying securing advantageous resources and privileges which themselves aid in sustaining citizenship status, the individual's newly minted, citizenship-based, type of class status is also sustained and ossified. In this sense, here, the relationship between capital status/economic status, citizenship, labor type (in this case formal "type"), and class-based-kinship social networks, is one of a *cyclical feedback loop*, with each component working to reinforce the other, and that

working in a *machine*-like manner, as in where disparate parts work together to produce particular outcomes, to control and sustain a current class type and condition of: having citizenship, access to laboring in the formal market, access to certain class-based-kinship social networks, having a capital and economic status that makes low capital and poverty status much less likely, and having advantageous resources and privileges. This relationship of variables under capitalism that is qualitatively a cyclical feedback loop and which in a machine-like way works to control and sustain particular conditions and outcomes, forming a type of class status, in a phrase, reveals itself as a class producing, sustaining, and preserving machine that runs on, and is encoded with, *Cybernetic* relationships.

Cybernetics and The Class Machine

Yet, to more concretely and formally understand what is meant by “Cybernetic” as pertaining to our class machine’s relationships, allow me to provide a historical, theoretical, and definitional account of “Cybernetics”. Cybernetics, or the Science of Cybernetics, is an academic and intellectual concept and movement that has been applied to and in psychology, biology, economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, and other fields; yet, has not been a unitary phenomenon, and instead has had various forms and definitions across the 20th century that all influenced the human sciences in the U.S. in their own particular ways (Kline, 2020). Although, most of those forms and definitions centered around certain common tenets, and I will seek to prove a basic and common definitional contour of “Cybernetics” here; a basic, common contour that I mainly use and mean in this paper when referring to a relationship or system (such as between capital/economic status, labor type, citizenship, and social kinship networks) as being “Cybernetic”.

In an etymological sense, Cybernetics comes from the ancient greek word of “kybernetes”, which means a device/rudder/pilot used to steer a boat or used for the governance of people, with French physicist Ampere using it to denote to the science of civil government (Marinescu, 2017); this etymology already allowing us to see the historical and cultural links of Cybernetics to political-economic-social systems and mechanisms/machineries as tied to the state. Definitionally, Norbert Wiener, an American mathematician and the founder of the science of Cybernetics (Britannica, 2023), defined cybernetics as “the study of control and communication in the animal and the machine” (Wiener, 1961, pg. 248). Expanding on that definition, W. Ross Ashby, a pioneer in Cybernetics and Systems Theory (University of Illinois Archives, n.d.), wrote that cybernetics is a “‘theory of machines’, but it treats, not things but ways of behaving. It does not ask ‘what is this thing?’ but ‘what does it do?’” (Ashby, 1958, pg. 1).

Furthermore, Ashby states that cybernetics is foundationally concerned in delineating and producing systems and machines of “feedback, stability, regulation” (Ashby, 1958, Chapter 1), that are intrinsically complex and underpinned by a quality of change (Ashby, 1958, Chapter 2). In essence, a Cybernetic system is a complex, based-in-change system composed of feedbacks/feedback loops which works to regulate and control the stability and condition of a given reality, and seeks to capture the behaviors of particular organic, inorganic, or both-organic-inorganic reality, which are often framed as created through type of machineries; a bio-physiological example of a cybernetic system might be the homeostatic systems of the organic body, such as internal temperature regulation in warm-blooded mammals (or even the external temperature regulations of cold-blooded animals through behavioral feedback loops for that matter).

Thereby, Cybernetics, as an analytical tool, gives us a powerful method for understanding socio-economic-political systems, where there is an inherent complexity of interplaying variables underpinned by behaviors of change, and in which some condition or reality is in a systematic and pattern-based way re/produced, sustained, and preserved. Specifically, for our discussed socio-economic-political reality, we have already seen, and will see more, how the complex, interplaying ecosystem of the variables of citizenship, labor type, capital/economic status, and kinship-based social networks, work in mutually reinforcing feedback loops, that create a constant current of reactive change, which come to control, sustain, preserve and re/produce, in a systemic and patterned way, specific socio-economic-political conditions and types of class realities; this feedbacking and sustaining system, then, also reveals itself to be a socio-economic-political “machine”, as in something whose composite parts work together to re/produce given outcomes, that runs on a cybernetic system. A class machine running on and encoded with cybernetic system, which controls, sustains, and re/produces outcomes of prosperity and class for certain citizenship-owning groups, while for other groups, like racialized non-citizen groups, like the latinx “unauthorized” non-citizen immigrant Frueteros, it controls, sustains, re/produces, and preserves outcomes of non-prosperity and a different, disadvantageous class-type.

The Plight of the Frueteros as Beginning with the Laws of the State
The U.S. Department of Justice states that under Title 8 U.S.C. § 1324a, which was codified in 1908 and remains instituted today, “it unlawful for any person or other entity to hire, recruit, or refer for a fee, for employment in the United States an alien knowing the alien is an unauthorized alien” (The United States Department of Justice, 2020); with the term alien being defined by the U.S Department of Homeland Security, as the “Terminology in Title 8 of U.S. Code to describe a person

who is not a citizen or national of the United States” (U.S Department of Homeland Security, n.d.). This means that anyone who is deemed an “unauthorized” non-citizen or non-national within the U.S., such as an immigrant Frutero, is barred from legal employment within the formal (explicitly state sanctioned through laws) U.S. economy.

Now, even though the “unauthorized” part of “unauthorized alien” is definitionally hard to pin down with its broad nature, likely due to the shifting and changing nature of laws/authorizations themselves, for the purposes of this paper, we can come to understand “unauthorized” through its relationship to a given population, specifically, the “unauthorized” immigrant population, which the U.S Department of Homeland Security defines as “all foreign-born non-citizens who are not legal residents [...] Most unauthorized immigrants either entered the United States without inspection or were admitted temporarily and remained past the date they were required to depart” (U.S Department of Homeland Security, n.d.).

This, then, means that the entire immigrant population of non-citizens in the U.S. who are deemed by the state as “unauthorized”, due to evading immigrant inspection or evading immigrations laws stipulating the date given by the state as to when the immigrant should extract themselves from the country, are effectively barred from working/laboring legally within the formal U.S. economy while residing and living in the U.S., and thereby by extension, are barred from obtaining any kind of legal formal-economy wage and formal-economy-job labor protections for any labor they do within the country, which they must do anyway in order to survive the capitalist economy.

Therefore, and this is central to their plight, to survive the capitalist economy, the non-citizen “unauthorized” immigrants will often turn to “informal” types of labor that are outside of the formal economy, such as turning to laboring as a “Frutero”; “Fruterros”, to recall and expand, being informal-economy laborers who sell fruit stored in pushcarts on mostly urban street corners, and who often live in economic poverty that is linked to their majority demographics of low english proficiency, low capital, low educational, and “undocumented”/“unauthorized” statuses (Rosales, 2013). These Fruterros living inside the U.S. labor to sell their fruits across the U.S., especially in States like California and its Southern metropolices such as Los Angeles, and are often non-citizen latinx “unauthorized” immigrants, this as detailed in Rocío Rosales's book *Fruterros* (Rosales, 2020). This forced funneling into informal work/labor and its socio-economic sphere is the first step to sustaining, preserving, and reproducing the Fruterros capital status/economic status of poverty, and thereby their plight of being pigeonholed into a type of class status as poor, “unauthorized” non-citizen, informal workers/laborers who reside within the capitalist U.S. nation-state.

The Cybernetic Machine’s Reverse Outcomes for the Fruterros:
Sustaining Disadvantageous Conditions and Class

For the non-citizen, “unauthorized”, informally laboring, low capital status individual like the Frutero, this “virtuous” and advantageous cybernetic cycle of citizenship, capital status/economic status, and labor type is reversed by working to sustain, re/produce, and preserve a disadvantageous condition and class type. In the U.S., the “unauthorized” non-citizen latinx immigrant, due to their citizenship status, is forced to labor in informal jobs, such as laboring as a Frutero, which in addition to low pay (low capital accumulation) relative to formal job wages, comes with a plethora of risks; risks as for example dished out by the state through police enforced public health crackdowns, as Rosales extensively details in her ethnography on Frutereros (Rosales, 2020). In these public health crackdowns, which are a common reality in a laboring Frutereros life, state-sanctioned professionals freeze the work of the Frutereros, this taking away time for capital accumulation. They also can and do confiscate the Frutereros goods and tools of labor such as their fruit vending carts, this destroying what capital the Frutereros have if they own the capital and means of production for their labor (e.g. the push cart), or this can increase the chance of reduced wage-pay for the Frutereros if an informal boss owns the capital and means of production for Frutero labor due, to the boss now having to spend their own capital, of which some they would spend on the wages, to repurchase the tools/means of labor and production that the Frutereros use. The public health crackdown officials can/do also fine the Frutereros, further reducing their capital, and can sometimes imprison the Frutereros, freezing Frutero’s capital accumulation and reducing it if bail is paid; not to mention any negative mental health outcomes that imprisonment may create which could hamstring the Frutereros productivity, thereby hamstringing capital accumulation.

These public health crackdowns, then, work as mechanisms that, most likely unbeknownst to the cracking down professionals, sustain and re/produce Frutero’s low capital status and economic status of poverty, which by extension works to sustain the Frutereros condition of non-citizenship in both a cultural/ideological way (citizenship being construed through ownership of capital under capitalism), and in a way of denied access to resources and privileges. For the cultural/ideological way, one’s low capital status and its tied property ownership status preclude one from accessing an ideological/cultural means of obtaining citizenship; a means which not only could produce for someone with high capital and economic status a “para-citizenship” status, where an individual is granted the resources and privileges relegated often only for citizens making it easier to formally obtain citizenship, or even obtain above and beyond the resources and privileges of citizenship, as Harrington recounts in her sociological study of wealth managers and their elite, dominant-capital-owning-class clientele, but could also directly lead to expedited and removed of state-regulatory red-tape pathways to citizenship for those “high networth” (using wealth manager jargon) individuals (Harrington, 2020).

Yet, also, the ideological/cultural means for obtaining citizenship for Fruteros is barred not only due to actual low capital status, but also, “potential” capital status. To explain, here is Glenn describing how propertyless white men obtained citizenship in the historical U.S., “Even with the end of property requirements, independence remained a key ideological concept anchoring citizenship. However, the meaning of independence was transformed to be consistent with propertyless white manhood. Two sorts of rhetorical revisions occurred. The first was to depict all wage-earning white men as potential, if not actual, property owners. American political leaders from the time of Franklin to that of Lincoln subscribed to the notion that wage work was a temporary, not permanent condition” (Glenn, 2011, pg. 27-28). Here, Glenn showcases how in U.S history actual low capital and linked economic poverty status was pushed aside for citizenship requirements for white men, being replaced by the “potential” for white men to get out of poverty and accumulate capital. Yet, the non-white immigrant Fruteros, within the modern U.S, through actively state-enforced public health crackdowns are both not only are relegated to a status of poverty and low capital through their forced condition of informal labor, but also, the public health crackdowns makes sure that any notions of the Fruteros “potential” to accumulate capital become ideologically/culturally null and void, making any ideological/cultural pathways for obtaining citizenship, or making it easier to obtain citizenship, unlikely.

Furthermore, on the “way of access to resources and privileges” in relation to citizenship, low capital status bars Fruteros from access to certain advantageous economic, social, and political resources (as mentioned: social networks, greater economic stability, resources to possibly contest the breaching of human, property, or labor rights), which would have been advantageously used to both obtain citizenship status and keep it; thereby, the “unauthorized” non-citizenship status of the Frutero is reinforced, sustained and preserved itself through capital status and its outcomes as mediated by informal labor type. Furthermore, because the Frutero doesn’t have citizenship, they are also denied legal and state-enforced privileges (as mentioned: legally-enforced human, property, and labor rights, a legal pathway to contest the breaching of those rights, and access to the state network of enforcement which achieves enforcement through incentives/disincentives, coercion or violence) which further makes it harder to accumulate capital and escape poverty.

Allow me to give two examples as to the latter point and how lack of citizenship privileges hamstring the Fruteros ability to escape their low capital status and its cybernetic outcomes. As Rosales showcased in her ethnography (Rosales, 2020), firstly, Fruteros experience a common reality of wage theft, where an informal boss of a Frutero, often a latinx ethnic-kin who may indeed have citizenship, doesn’t pay promised wages for the informal labor the Frutero has done for the boss and through the bosses capital/property/means of production, such as a pushcart; to note,

and referencing our past discussion of Marxism-founded conceptions of binary class under capitalism, here we see a wage worker “class” and dominant capital owner “class” relationship, par excellence, emerge in the informal, ethnic-kin based, capitalist economic sphere. Secondly, the Fruteros commonly experience “debt-peonage”, where an informal boss, often a latinx ethnic-kin, provides the Frutero access to a smuggler that helps to “illegally” transport the to-be-Frutero across the U.S. border, yet the boss does this for a fee, and so the Frutero comes to the U.S. indebted, and having no access to the formal labor market the “unauthorized” non-citizen immigrant is made to labor for the boss he is indebted to as a Frutero; this indebtedness made worse with the mentioned wage theft (can’t repay the debt), and also because the boss will sometimes charge for food or housing that is often provided, ostensibly “free” at first, to the laboring Frutero.

To note also, if accessible legal means to enter the U.S. where available for these immigrants, this smuggling and its linked debt peonage circumstance would be stamped-out/solved due to no/almost no need for smuggling people across-border, but as mentioned, such legal access to the U.S. is a far dream for these low capital owning immigrants, considering that the sorting-strategies used by the nation-state that allow people to enter the U.S. is based on capital and economic status which favors high capital status (Shachar, 2021). Therefore, through both of the delineated examples/conditions of wage theft and debt peonage, the Fruteros ability to accumulate capital and thereby seek to obtain citizenship is hamstrung, and the irony here is that if the Frutero had the privileges afforded by citizenship, such as human and labor rights and a legal-based ability to persuade the state to enforce and uphold them, they would not be hamstrung by a common reality of wage theft and debt peonage, and would be able to accumulate more capital which in turn would make it more likely for them to obtain the citizenship status that would prevent such exploitative conditions itself.

Through all of these realities and conditions of labor for Fruteros, we see how laboring as a Frutero perpetuates the low capital status/economic poverty, thereby, disallowing them from obtaining citizenship which is, in both directions, tied to capital accumulation/status, and, in essence, a cybernetic system is revealed to us. “Unauthorized” non-citizen status forces immigrants like Fruteros to work in the informal labor sector, laboring in the informal sector significantly decreases their ability to accumulate capital through a myriad of ways, such as state-created public health crackdowns and exploitative labor conditions with no access to state aid (privileges and rights), and this lack of capital accumulation and sustained low capital status thereby makes the non-citizens Frutero unable to leverage social, political, material and ideological/cultural resources to and means for obtaining citizenship; A lack of citizenship that then reinforces the entire cybernetic cycle which controls, sustains, and re/produces, like a cybernetic-code-running machine, the Fruteros

conditions and type of class, that of being an: “unauthorized” and no citizenship holding, informal laboring, low-capital and poverty status, denied access to resources and privileges of citizenship, racialized, exploited and oppressed worker/laborer under racialized, state-enforced/fused capitalism.

Kinship Networks and Parallel Citizenship

These cybernetical relationships between capital, citizenship, and labor type, as mediated/fueled/oiled by the state, which impose onto the Frutero and sustain a disadvantageous class type, and disadvantageous conditions such low capital/poverty and a denial of access to certain beneficial resources, privileges, and rights, then leads the Fruteros to tie themselves to ethnicity based immigrant-kin, majority “unauthorized” non-citizen social kinship networks, that themselves confer a type of informal and parallel type of “citizenship”, which then itself sustains the Fruteros lack of formal-citizenship status and by cybernetic extension, sustains their class status.

These kinship networks, as Rosales writes about (Rosales, 2020), are called “*paisanos*” networks, and they function to try to mitigate some of the negative effects of the Fruteros labor conditions as created by, say, public health crack downs. Yet, at the same time, these networks, through financial and other obligations, work to sustain the Fruteros status of poverty and class. As Rosales writes, “The dependence on *paisanos* helps vendors counteract the negative effects of crackdowns and financial hardship. The risks tied to fruit vending are greatly diminished by kinship and *paisano* networks; in fact, some vendors argue that this occupation could not be performed successfully without heavily relying on social networks. Financial bailouts offered by social network peers allow vendors to get back to work, but the reappearance of vendors often prompts the health department and police department to renew their efforts and conduct crackdowns again.

However, the bounded nature of kinship and *paisano* networks means that if one vendor suffers financial hardship, it will weigh heavily on all the vendors in the network. This is the trap of social networks. While social networks may ease financial hardship by distributing it over many shoulders, the web of reciprocal obligations impedes individual and collective upward social mobility” (pg. 65). Here we see how the kinship network is a lifeline to which Fruteros attach themselves to in response to their particular informal labor risks, such as public health crackdowns, yet because of this attachment, the Fruteros become embedded into these networks, bearing the brunt of collective economic pain as well becoming entangled in a myriad of social and material obligations to the mostly non-citizen racialized (latinx) immigrant kin, refuge giving, network; this thereby conferring onto the Frutero a sort of allegiance and “civic” duty to the network, a sort of parallel to formal-citizenship, non-citizen-kin

informal-“citizenship”. The Frutero becomes a citizen of a racialized and immigrant non-citizen dominated, informal and parallel to the formalized U.S civic society, informal-society. This parallel, informal, ethnic and non-citizen kin based civic society requires, as Rosales describes (Rosales 2020), participation in kinship network obligations/duties, which I would describe as “parallel” kin-based social obligations/duties, such as informing other Frutereros of impending public health crackdowns (an economic, political, and behavioral obligation) as well as parallel kin-based material obligations such as contributing money (possible capital) regularly to the rotating credit fund which can be used by members for their needs and in time of collective crisis.

This rotating credit system reveals itself as a sort of parallel financial institution maintained by collective immigrant-kin network “civic” duties of regular payment...a sort of parallel system of taxation within a parallel “civic” society. Therefore, through the state mediated disadvantageous class type and conditions like poverty, the non-citizen Frutereros come to be attached to the paisanos kinship network and woven into a sort of parallel citizenship that obligates them in a myriad of ways which stifles the Frutereros ability for individual social mobility through the stifling of the accumulation of capital.

All of this, then, reveals an interesting paradox under capitalism in regards to the aid giving network. The network aids its users in ameliorating some of the punishing aspects of racialized state-fused capitalism, such as aiding a Frutero in preventing and bearing the negative effects of recurrent public health crackdowns, while at the same time, the network works to tie and sustain the Frutereros further into their low-capital/poverty condition and class status through the network’s parallel “civic” obligations. The financial obligations of the paisanos network themselves, such as contributing to the rotating credit fund, a fund that may mitigate a public health crackdown’s capital destruction and reduction, indeed do sustain the Frutereros capital status by preventing utter economic annihilation, yet, the obligations, such as regular tax-like payment to the fund, indeed reduce the Frutereros individual ability to accumulate capital; this therefore works to control to sustain the Frutereros general low capital/poverty status, preventing upward mobility.

This reality, therefore, also reduces the Frutereros ability to obtain the capital-status-linked formal U.S. citizenship in an ideologically/culturally way, but also, by tying them further to their informal labor type, that of a street corner fruit seller. This sustained labor status then exposes them to even more public health crackdowns and exploitations, which further makes the Frutero rely on, and thereby tie themselves to more deeply, the racialized-immigrant, informal and parallel “civic”, paisano kinship network and it’s parallel, informal, “civic” obligations, which worked to sustain the Frutero’s condition of cybernetically feedbacking low capital/poverty, informal labor and non-citizenship status in the first place,

thereby firing up once again the cybernetic feedback loop that works to sustain and preserve the Fruteros conditions.

Furthermore, by extension, the sustaining of these conditions then sustains the Fruteros access, or more aptly lack of access, to advantageous material resources and privileges further, which, taken all together reveal to us that the Fruteros particular type of class status is also sustained. In essence, here too, we see a socio-economic-political machine that is chugging along encoded with a cybernetic system which is fueled/oiled by fused state and capitalist realities (e.g. of legal policies and their enforcement which favor capital). Yet, instead of controlling to sustain advantageous and prosperous outcomes, the machine systematically behaves to preserve a condition of non-prosperity for the marginalized Fruteros. Specifically, it works to sustain a condition composed of the interplaying variables of non-citizenship, low capital and poverty status, informal labor type, and a membership in a parallel-“civic”, ethnic-immigrant-kinship-based, social network. This condition then brings with it lack of access to advantageous resources and privileges, which, taken together with the general condition, shows us how a particular, disadvantageous type of class status is systematically maintained by the cybernetic machine under capitalism.

Frutero’s Kinship-Based, Mutual Aid Network as a Paradox Under Capitalism

The class machine and its cybernetic behavior of sustaining the disadvantages class type and conditions of the marginalized, racialized, and socio-politico-economically oppressed Fruteros, as touched on, reveals through its functional relationship with the variable of kinship networks, a interesting and valuable for analysis paradox under capitalism. Specifically, it has revealed that the parallel-“civic”, ethnic immigrant kinship network, through its parallel institutions and “civic” duties/obligation, which have manifested to ameliorate the cybernetically interplaying relationship between the variables of non-citizenship, informal labor type, and low capital and poverty status, works paradoxically as both a mutual aid network that challenges capitalism through providing parallel-to-capitalist-systems of aid and institution, while simultaneously, it works to sustain the capitalist status quo of capital and class structure/order. The parallel financial institutions, like the rotating credit system (tandas) that require the pooling of economic resources by parallel-“civic” members of the immigrant-kin network through a sort of taxation, regularly grant loans for needs (like buying a car) or to ameliorate hardship to the fellow kinship members (Rosales 2020) of the parallel “civic” network. This working to confer to these non-citizen immigrants increased economic power in an immediate sense through collective resource pooling and sharing.

Furthermore, the “civic” immigrant-kinship duties/behavioral activities composed of notifying other immigrant-kin of public health

crackdowns, in an immediate way, also increases economic power through collective behavioral efforts that help prevent state-enforced fines, jailing, or confiscation of pushcarts and goods, thereby helping to prevent Frutero capital loss. In this sense, parallel-“civic” institutions duties/obligations of the kinship network do provide a safety net that reduces economic and capital risks from a state-fused, racialized capitalism which seeks to stamp out certain non-formal types of labor and markets that may in the end compete (by taking away clientele) with formal capitalist enterprises and their profits (e.g. grocery stores that sell fruit in a state-sanctioned way), and which functionally tries to stamp out (e.g. through public health crackdowns) the economic viability of “unauthorized” racialized non-citizen immigrants like the informally laboring Frutereros. In a sense, the parallel institutions and duties/behavioral activities are mutual aid forms that are not only “*parallel*” in that they exist within a parallel citizenship network, but are also parallel to and in some sense *outside* of and *challenging* to the dominant nation-state-legitimized/formalized status quo of capitalism.

In essence, the importance of these mutual aid institutions and duties/activities thereby lies in their ability to, through working parallel to and in some sense outside of and challenging to a capitalism, ameliorate some of the most exploitative and painful aspects of a capitalism that is racialized, colonialism-forged, and nation-state forged; aspects such as the public health raids, the lack of citizenship that bars access to advantageous resources and privileges, and the general pigeonholing of these immigrants in their low capital accumulation of informal labor type.

To pause, the “racialized” ,“colonialism-forged” , and “nation-state” forged parts of capitalism I emphasize here due its inherent foundational quality of and centrality to the Frutero’s plight of non-citizenship. This is because the U.S.-state in which most Frutereros, who often hail from a Mexican latinx heritage as Rosales found in her ethnography, labor informally in, and are cybernetically pigeonholed into a disadvantageous condition and class type by extension, is California. A piece of land, as Suárez writes (Suárez, 2019), that was a historically contested, yet Mexican nation claimed (Library of Congress, n.d.), space in which a vibrant diversity of indigenous, Mexican, and starting in the 1820s white settler communities/peoples resided; a diverse and largely indigenous and latinx demographically, Mexican claimed land which was ultimately occupied through a steady and persistent white settler colonialism that was economically tied to U.S.-european capitalism, and which was annexed from Mexico through war by the capitalist and relatively young U.S. nation-state. An ultimate outcome that displaced, or genocidally (by UN definition) eradicated (Reed, 2020), the non-white native and Mexican population, and not only constructed the capitalist U.S. state of California, but also constructed a racialized and white-privillaging, colonialism-forged conception of citizenship within California (Suárez, 2019), which as we have seen, to this day, works to exclude certain low-capital

Mexican-immigrant groups like the Fruteros from citizenship, and works to oil the cybernetic class machine.

So, the utilization of collective mutual aid networks by these oppressed and marginalized socio-economically-politically latinx immigrant Fruteros, in order to ameliorate some of the exploitative realities of racialized, colonialism-forged, nation-state forged and fueled capitalism, can be said to be a parallel and outside of dominant capitalism, powerful effort that challenges capitalism, yet, simultaneously, it contributes to cybernetically sustain the Fruteros disadvantageous conditions (low capital status, non-citizenship, informal laboring) and class type, which in the end bolsters the dominant status quo of capitalism and its class and capital structures/order. This thereby reveals the mutual aid kinship network to be a paradox under capitalism which both challenges and reinforces/sustains capitalist conditions and class structures/orders.

Conclusion/Discussion: Escaping the Cybernetic Class Machine?

We have now captured and witnessed the cybernetic behaviors of capitalism. We have seen how, under the U.S. colonialism-forged, racialized, state enforced/fused/fueled capitalism, the cyclically feedbacking advantageous variables of formal-citizenship status, high capital/economic status, formal labor type, class-based kinship networks, and access to advantageous resources and privileges, work together to sustain, preserve, and re/produce those very conditions and a type of advantageous class status as an outcome. In essence, we have witnessed the genesis of a cybernetically-encoded class machine under capitalism. And we have seen how this same cybernetic machine chugs along, in its state-fueled glory, to sustain, preserve, and re/produce the disadvantageous condition and class type of U.S. Fruteros, which consists of the cyclically feedbacking variables of “unauthorized” non-citizenship status, low capital/poverty status, informal labor type, embedding in latinx immigrant kinship networks, and denial of access to advantageous resources and privileges.

Furthermore, we have uncovered how the immigrant kinship networks of the Fruteros, through responding and attempting to ameliorate, with mutual aid, the cybernetically created non-prosperous conditions and class-type, confer a parallel, informal citizenship that brings parallel and informal “civic” duties/obligation, making the network work as parallel, informal “civic” society of parallel institutions and of mutual aid; this also makes the kinship network, in some ways, outside of and challenging to the capitalist capital and class status quo structure/order.

Yet, this parallel “civic” society and mutual aid network simultaneously, through its parallel “civic” duties/obligations, sustains the Fruteros condition and class-type, and that inadvertently also sustains the capitalist capital and class status quo structure/order; this thereby revealing the mutual aid, kinship network to be a paradox under

capitalism. Yet, racialized and ethnic kinship networks that have worked as mutual aid networks trying to ameliorate the exploitations, oppressions, and pigeonholing into disadvantageous conditions and class-type under capitalism are not novel in a historical sense, nor are they exclusive to the realities of Latinx immigrants like Fruteros.

Indeed, as Hamilton and Sandelowski have noted (Hamilton and Sandelowski, 2003), the African American community within the U.S. has been known to rely upon ethnic and racialized kinship mutual aid networks that extended far beyond nuclear household kin, and which sought to ameliorate the oppressive conditions and marginalized and disadvantageous class status of African Americans under colonialism-forged, racialized, state-enforced/fused capitalism; kinship networks that were utilized when they were slaves (non-citizens), when they were second class citizens (thereby not real citizens) under the Jim Crow era, or even now when they are still second class citizens due to them living under a modern U.S. nation-state that is institutionally, politico-economically, and socio-culturally systemically racist; a systemic reality that is extensively noted as a scientifically and statistically tangible phenomenon by both scholars (Banaji, et.al, 2021) and by nonpartisan civil rights organizations (National Urban League, 2022).

Yet, us now knowing how the racialized, mostly non-citizen, mutual aid, kinship networks of the Fruteros work in part to, in a paradoxical way when under capitalism, cybernetically and under the class machine, sustain the Fruteros oppressive conditions and disadvantageous class type, one must wonder if the racialized, non-citizen or quasi/second-class-citizen, mutual aid, kinship networks of the African-American Community, both historically and possibly even now, have/do work to paradoxically also sustain African-American's oppressive conditions and disadvantageous class type through cybernetic mechanism of a class machine under capitalism. This would be a valuable area for future research. Furthermore, one must wonder if there is a way to escape the paradox of the mutual aid kinship network produced by cybernetic systems under capitalism, be it for Fruteros or possibly, and if research bears out, for other oppressed and marginalized groups.

One interesting pathway of escape to consider would be allowing for these mutual aid networks to transmute into full fledged, sanctioned by the state, and integrated into the economy and broader community, cooperative ("co-op") enterprises, institutions, and indeed "civic"-type societies. The fact that the mutual aid kinship networks, in order to exist, have necessarily taught oppressed and marginalized groups, like the Fruteros, and embedded them into, lifeways, institutions, and social organizations that are in interesting and important ways outside of and parallel to capitalism, and which dependent on an ontology that is collective, cooperative, and mutual aid centered, is significant. As it reveals to us a possible fertile substrate for the successful and healthy development of cooperative enterprises, institutions, and societies, which

could instead of becoming trapped in the paradox under capitalism that is produced by the cybernetic class machine, work to nurture and uplift the marginalized and oppressed community already practicing collective, cooperative, and mutual aid ontologies, and making them flourish socio-politico-economically-culturally; this, crucially, making them ultimately escape their disadvantageous conditions and class type, thereby, allowing them to escape the thralls of the cybernetic class machine

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