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WORLD ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ECONOMIC NATIONALISMS*

As recent nationalist and isolationist regimes have come to power, with powerful effects on immigration and trade policies – as well as responses to the COVID-19 crisis – we argue that combined anthropological lenses emphasizing historical, political economic, and ethnographic contexts can be useful in building transnational analyses of the lived effects and contestations of economic nationalist policies. Drawing on long-term ethnographic research by three political anthropologists in the US, India, and Brazil; comparative reflections on current economic nationalist policies in Uganda by a practicing anthropologist; and a concluding discussion of connected anthropological analyses across national borders by an economic anthropologist, the authors illustrate how economic nationalist policies are experienced and interpreted within specific livelihoods and localities and yet remain vitally shaped by transnational contexts¹.

Economic nationalism is a multivalent term, used to argue – sometimes simultaneously – for support for (or “protection of”) local workers and economic sectors and to aggressively and strategically devalue the rights of those either living in other nations or who are denied cultural and national citizenship (Ong, 2006) to the same conditions of well-being within the imagined national economy. We appreciate Stefan Berger and Thomas Fetzer’s (2019: 2) reference to “the nationalism-economy nexus” to indicate the plurality of political and economic forms and strategies encompassed in the term “economic nationalism,” which our comparative discussion aims to

explore. By historically, ethnographically, transnationally, and relationally looking at experienced economic nationalist policies, we illustrate ways in which nations (sometimes the same ones at different moments) and political movements have offered arguments for being “closed” or “open” to global economic engagement, “protecting” local economies or using transnational entities and policy instruments to discourage other nations from doing the same for their own economies, with goals ranging from capital concentration to redistribution. Economic nationalism takes more than one form and the ever-present silent partner of economic nationalism is the also-reified and multivalent “global economy.”

To be clear, we regard neither the nation nor economic nationalism to be stable concepts. Instead, we are ethnographically exploring how the strategic summoning of a coherent nation as a political project can rely on promoting “economic nationalist” policies. Much is obscured in such projections of a nation whose citizens’ livelihoods are imagined to be protected via various bordering technologies, especially the selective minoritization, oppression, and rejection of some residents of the state as belonging to the “nation” and the impossibility of enacting or enforcing a “national” economy since “local” production, distribution, and consumption are inextricable from global meshworks. We agree with Helleiner (2020: 230) that economic nationalism – often glossed as a single concept – actually refers to a broad array of state policies on labor, migration, and trade ranging from neomercantilist to neo-liberal approaches. Our attempt to connect our five analyses (through world anthropological lenses) aims to contribute to moving a political economic conversation about resurgent economic nationalisms beyond what Helleiner (2021: 230) notes have been ahistorical and Western-centric approaches, inattentive to the plurality of what gets called “economic nationalism.” We are aligned with Baltz’s (2021: 811) call for “rigorous investigation of economic nationalisms in specific times and places” and the quite different emphases (Baltz, 2021: 799) of those particular iterations of economic nationalism: “militarist, developmental, liberal and populist,” for example. In this article, our comparative analysis aims to emphasize the transhistorical, transnational, gendered, and contested nature of economic nationalisms agendas and discourses, which might inspire further ethnographic research on this timely issue².

Gustavo Lins Ribeiro and Arturo Escobar’s (2006: 24) assertion that “the present is a moment of enlargement of anthropological horizons that will make our scholarly practice a richer cosmopolitics, one that is capable of dealing with the challenges arising in the twenty-first century” greatly influenced our collaboration across national contexts, especially as some national administrations have been increasingly hostile to transnational analyses, interaction, or mobility. As many social movements have shown, sharing analyses and experiences across political borders can be an effective counterstrategy to isolationist and repressive regimes³. As Jamie Peck and Nik Theodore (2015) have observed, policies travel transnationally but take

different shapes in local contexts. Anthropologists' ethnographic methods, historical and spatial contextualization, and attention to the specifically employed meanings of terms and how they empower some and silence others, position the discipline to "take on the complexity, ambiguity, and messiness of policy processes" (Wedel et al., 2005: 44).

Our reason for focusing on economic nationalism is that, while it is a policy often promoted by national administrations as boosting the well-being of a national public, its logic frames internal and external exclusions: shrinking notions of who belongs within that national public (as in President Jair Bolsonaro's rejection of Indigenous Brazilians economic livelihoods), asserting an increasing state power and decreasing voices for minoritized residents, and closing borders to immigrants, imagined as harmful to the economic welfare of rightful citizens racialized as white (Kingsolver, 2001). This study foregrounds the internal contradictions of economic policy discourses in each analyzed context via an ethnographic perspective on how workers (whether marginalized or privileged in the private or civic sector) experience the everyday implementation of these policies in each context. In our collaborative transnational discussion of the refracted experiences via the unstable prism of economic nationalism, each of us has their own epistemological framing and set of methods as an anthropologist, in keeping with worldwide anthropological discussions of building in a decolonized and equitable way, as Susana Narotzky (2016: 845) puts it, "a global body of knowledge that will engage multisited and historically embedded theories in an ongoing conversation that will need to negotiate the power effects of a multipolar world." Of course, neither anthropological lenses nor traveling policies are restricted to national bases — as Victoria Bernal (2004) noted as she followed Eritrean nationalism across transnational diasporas —, so we invoke national discourses while recognizing the ongoing social and conceptual fluidity constituting them.

By linking our own ethnographic projects in the US, India, Brazil, and Uganda through the lens of economic nationalism, we offer a relational perspective for studying policies, which both travel transnationally (Peck & Theodore, 2015) and are implemented and experienced in very state-specific ways. Berger and Fetzer (2019) have argued that there is a need for such transnational analyses of economic nationalism. The methods we use to study economic nationalism within and across national contexts include archival and discourse analysis, participant observation, semi-structured ethnographic interviewing, oral history, analysis of aggregate data, and media analysis. Following Rachael Stryker and Roberto González (2016), we trace the power relations associated with everyday encounters with economic nationalism "up, down, and sideways" in state bureaucracies, factory floors, hopeful projections of future careers via training programs, and other local contexts. The following example is a reminder that economic nationalism and globalization have long and intertwined histories and figure in quite diverse political projects.

DEEP AND WIDE ROOTS OF ECONOMIC NATIONALISM

Conakry, 1958. On the eve of the independence of Guinea from France, political leader and union organizer Sékou Touré declared, “There is no Guinean market, no Senegalese market, no Ivoirian market, but an African market, common to all the African territories of French influence⁴.” Here, Touré gestures to transnational economies and their interdependencies within an empire which would persist long after the political independence of Guinea. National economic possibilities and inequalities, he reminds us, are forged in transnational histories. In Touré’s words, the pretext of “national economy” offers an analytic opening onto transnational economic power, interdependence, and inequality. In the ethnographic material from the United States, India, Brazil, and Uganda that follows, we see the consequential insistence on nationalist economic policy in a transnational world. However, rather than dismissing the national as mere pretext, our examples show how a given national economy “is not simply an ideological concept susceptible to intellectual debunking, but a materialization that participates in organizing the practices and processes that surround it, while at the same time being organized and maintained by them” (Gibson-Graham, 2006: XI).

We collectively suggest that the materialization of economic nationalism be taken seriously and held accountable for its consequences — whether in the family structures of Odisha women or in impeachment proceedings in Brazil. What vision of “the national” is at stake in the economic nationalist policies of Uganda, Brazil, India, and the United States? And what vision or specter of the transnational animates each account? Read together, what do we learn about the trans/national economies in which we dwell?

Ann Kingsolver, in our first ethnographic example, illustrates the ways in which economic nationalist policies of recent the US administrations have had symbolic value but belie the impossibility of separating “national,” “local,” and “global” economic production, distribution, and consumption in the US. Annapurna Devi Pandey, in our second case, ethnographically explores the experiences of young women being trained to populate India’s “Make in India” policies in an environment of increasing economic nationalism which would seem to mirror the Gandhian economic independence policies promoted as part of the decolonization of India but, as Pandey argues, are quite different. Gustavo Onto, in our third ethnographic example, explores the ways in which economic nationalism in Brazil has brought into focus (and crisis) explicit policy contradictions across government agencies. “National champion” corporations, encouraged by one branch of the government to increase Brazilian competitiveness in the world market, presented a dilemma for state workers in another agency responsible for implementing anti-trust regulations to limit monopolies. In the concluding sections, Chris C. Opesen reflects on the similarities and differences between the illustrations from the US, India, and Brazil from the perspective of recent economic nationalist policies in Uganda,

and Hannah Appel situates the economic nationalism ethnographically described in the preceding sections within a transnational historical context.

MADE IN AMERICA? THE CONTRADICTION LOGIC OF US ECONOMIC NATIONALISM

The economic nationalism cited as the rationale for the US Trump administration's withdrawal from multinational trade agreements and aggressive initiation of tariffs after demanding that other nations reduce theirs is a logic with a history as long as that of the nation itself. Framers of the US Constitution publicly promoted economic nationalism in their homespun cloth campaign while continuing to engage in the racial capitalist global market via the transatlantic trade of captive Africans and other "commodities" they envisioned as vital to their own exceptional livelihoods (Frank, 1999: 11-18; Ilc, 2017: 24-25; Robinson, 2000)⁵. Capital moved in the opposite direction of rhetoric, that movement silenced by privilege, much as in the US nearly 250 years later. Given the current landscape of production, distribution, and consumption, extricating the US from the global economy is a practical impossibility but economic nationalist rhetoric has had a strong symbolic value as a performative logic. One such performance by the Trump administration was "Made in America Week," July 17-23, 2017, during which physical evidence of the President's support for US industries was amassed around the White House. Construction equipment said to be made in the US was parked on the lawn, and there were ensuing displays set up by every state in the nation featuring a few products: baseball bats produced in Louisiana, for example, fishing gear from Montana, and space suits produced for NASA in Delaware. Trump launched the week in a speech, saying: "We want to build, create, and grow more products in our country using American labor, American goods, and American grit. When we purchase products made in the USA, the profits stay here, the revenue stays here, and the jobs — maybe most importantly of all — they stay right here in the USA" (Trump, 2017). Economic nationalist rhetoric and policies have by no means been restricted to a single administration or political party in the US. On January 25, 2021, President Joseph Biden signed a "Buy American" Executive Order focused on strengthening the regulatory environment for federal procurement and "Made in America" labeling.

But what would an American job and an American product *be* at this juncture? Promises of economic nationalism are contradictory given the offshoring onshore nature of the spatial organization of US production, as exemplified by the US Foreign-Trade Zones discussed later in this section. It carries several centuries of rhetorical power as a rallying cry, however, and the gathering of that support has been coupled with a strengthened xenophobic agenda, — especially in how President Trump invoked economic nationalism

– the key assumption of its logic being that jobs are stolen from white, moral, and deserving US citizens by non-white, immoral, and undeserving noncitizens; an assumption which state-by-state anti-immigration (often unconstitutional) legislation has fueled across the US for the last quarter of a century (Santa Ana, 2002; Kingsolver, 2010).

“Made in America Week” was promoted by the Trump White House as a pro-business event but industries were united behind an economic nationalist policy agenda. The automobile and aeronautical industries, for example, rely on the global supply chain for steel, other components, and a far-flung just-in-time production network, as well as international consumers of their products, and did not uniformly find the Trump administration’s steel tariffs good for business, as stated clearly in this 2017 editorial in *Automotive News*:

‘America First’... Does it mean American businesses? American workers? American consumers? Assembled in America? Made with American-made parts? American-made subcomponents? American know-how? American robots?... ‘America First’ is more than just banal. It’s a dangerous negotiating posture that only invites our trading partners to adopt ‘Mexico first,’ ‘Canada first,’ ‘China first,’ and even ‘America last’ policies (‘America...’, 2017).

The Trump administration self-described the tariffs aimed at reducing the importation of steel as protecting US jobs and the US steel industry but the binary inside/outside logic of that claim failed to consider the ownership of steel manufacturing facilities within the US by corporations headquartered in Taiwan, India, Brazil, Mexico, Germany, and Russia, for example. Steel is an example of an intensely global industry, even on US soil. Calling it a US industry constitutes a performative gesture (rather than a political economic description) and more jobs have probably been lost within the US due to steel tariffs from the loss of manufacturing contracts due to rising steel costs (including domestic steel) than were protected or created in the steel industry. As the Republican owner of a South Carolina business relying on steel said to Kingsolver in a 2019 interview, “The President is playing Russian roulette with the American citizens’ lives.” The persistent logic President Trump invoked of protecting “American workers” and “American jobs” seemed to refer more to restricting the definition of cultural and economic citizenship and promoting a version of job creation and economic well-being that masked growing structural inequities than actually parsing the national economy from the global one. So much so that President Biden felt compelled, in his Buy American Executive Order, to maintain economic nationalism as a central policy theme but to distance the economic nationalism of his administration from President Trump’s version by emphasizing that the Biden-Harris reading of “buy American” included all Americans.

An obvious example of the global “hidden in plain view” (Orenstein, 2011: 38) across the US is that of Foreign-Trade Zones (FTZs), often placed in very

rural areas to take advantage of contingent low-wage labor hired through staffing agencies so the corporations using the zones evade direct legal accountability to workers (Kingsolver, 2016, 2021). As Dara Orenstein (2011: 37) notes, “When Congress passed the Foreign-Trade Zones Act of 1934, at the dawn of the New Deal, it inaugurated a profoundly new spatial practice. Never before had the U.S. government partially denationalized U.S. soil.” Kingsolver has been doing ethnographic research on FTZs in the southeastern US for over 25 years. Economic development professionals and state administrations have often used FTZ status to attract transnational employers to the US, promising a nonunionized and low-wage workforce. US Customs and Border Protection regulates the FTZs now present in every state, hundreds in all. FTZs need to be linked to ports of entry – airports and seaports – but sub-zones can be up to 90 driving minutes away from those ports. They exemplify the global supply chain since products can enter and leave the zones multiple times for processing before they leave the zone, considered on US soil for customs purposes. Such physical, social, and economic global spaces within the US unravel the logic of economic nationalism, which has often used a generic job creation rhetoric to shift attention from growing economic and social inequities and shared concerns and experiences among workers globally. Dara Orenstein (2019: 132) sees the history of trade policy (and the way it has been spatialized) in the US as having always been intertwined with anti-immigrant and racist political projects, claiming that “Producing a flexible territory for capital was simultaneously a way of producing an inflexible territory for labor, and of reproducing a rigid hierarchy of racialized labor.” Aihwa Ong (2006: 103) theorized the “variegated sovereignty” produced by those “zoning strategies” cross-cutting national territories, and Patrick Neveling (2017: 123) has discussed export processing zones (another zoning strategy) as “a mode of governing labor conditions in their own right.”

Corporations get front-end, back-end, and middle advantages from state and federal governments for locating a factory in a US FTZ — as a long-term automobile assembly worker, interviewed by the author in 2019, claims: companies receive “hundreds of millions of dollars – unbelievable amounts of money” from the state in implementation incentives, reduced tariffs on parts moved in and out during the transnational production process at the back end, and, in the middle – the least visible advantage, he stresses –, state provisions like Medicaid and supplemental food assistance for low-wage workers in the plant, which he sees as labor cost subsidies to corporations increasingly replacing high-wage workers with low-wage workers hired through staffing agencies (over half the workforce now at his plant), with corporations keeping the profits rather than investing in what would be the buying power of the workforce in the community. Both permanent and temporary workers in US FTZs have told Kingsolver that the workers hired through staffing agencies feel devalued and more controlled on the shop floor. We find it significant

that United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) members on strike 2019 demanded, among other things, that contract negotiations with General Motors addressed the precarity experienced by those hired via staffing agencies. A permanent worker (a status increasingly occupied only by older workers near retirement) at a different automobile manufacturer assembling vehicles in US FTZs said in a 2019 interview:

I can only imagine, what would it feel like working next to another person that is doing the exact same thing that you're doing every day of the week and they get paid almost twice as much to do it as you do. So at one time... the variable work force [what the company calls those hired through staffing agencies], you know, they had to be identified like by t-shirts or, you know, something like that. Well they even got away from that because that made them too visual.... They have convinced the people who are full-time employees that these are your door-mat employees. When things go – when times get rough, you don't get laid off but these people do. And people buy into that, and they think that's great. They think that's a great benefit to have disposable employees. They think that's wonderful. The thing that they don't realize is, is these employees also have families, they have food to put on the table, they have houses to buy. You know, what happens to our economy when these people don't pay their bills?

The jobs-added figures touted by the Trump administration have focused on numbers, which can be largely generated by what a worker called “the revolving door” of staffing agency jobs, rather than elaborating on what kinds of jobs with what wages. Several workers in temporary jobs at warehouses and assembly plants in rural FTZs explained in separate interviews that they could end up failing to even break even with a day's work in the zone given the cost of driving to the job, paying for childcare, and having the workday cut short because there was no shipment to process.

US FTZs create “offshore” working conditions “onshore” by enabling corporations to exploit the ambiguity of which jurisdictions apply to the space. Kingsolver (2021) found that sometimes even those responsible for enforcing local laws were confused about whether they had the right to go inside the plant when company representatives in FTZ spaces behind barbed wire and turnstiles told them they did not (they do). The disciplining of workers inside the zones controlled by US Customs and Border Protection is so strong that one labor advocate said to Kingsolver in a 2019 interview that a death inside the zone was neither reported to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (which records national data on workplace injuries) nor by newspapers, given the restricted access of the press to the zones and workers' silence due to fear of losing their jobs. “*American jobs.*” The distinction often drawn between offshore and onshore in economic nationalist discourse (as though all onshore jobs had greater dignity and protections than all offshore jobs) not only erases extreme variations between employment conditions within each nation by emphasizing national differences but also contributes to justifying xenophobia (as though workers in the US deserve one set of

conditions and those in selected other nations deserve another) and doubly silences and isolates devalued US workers.

Attributing exceptionalism to one particular proponent of economic nationalism, such as Trump, though, with his theatrically xenophobic aims (describing asylum-seekers as carrying leprosy and criminal intent to justify selectively closing borders, for example) can draw focus from the continuous violence – since its inception – of a national project benefiting those who profit from white supremacist forms of control, as Arshad Imtiaz Ali (2017: 386) and Jonathan Rosa and Yarimar Bonilla (2017) argue. We find many iterations of economic nationalism in the US at the moment, promoted by constituencies ranging from white nationalists to labor activists to locavores. Both the Republican and Democratic 2020 US presidential campaigns advocated “American-made” policies. It is important, then (cf. Helleiner & Pickel, 2005), to understand economic nationalist arguments in their political and historical context and to examine whose interests, identities, voices, and well-being are advocated or silenced and how much sense it makes to even talk about disarticulating the local and the global. If offshored jobs which have been largely invisible to US consumers, like e-waste recycling, were really onshored (following the logic of “bringing jobs back to America”), how would that translate into employment, for whom, and with what kinds of protections or lack thereof?

The US Trump administration’s economic nationalist rhetoric intimated that jobs created in the US were somehow all positive and equal contributions to the moral, social, and monetary economy: each job equaling one economic nationalist unit, it seemed. But what kinds of jobs were lost and added under the Trump administration’s policies since workers (who have been told that the number of jobs created signals a strong economy) now often work in multiple jobs to make ends meet, and food security, access to education and health care, and workplace rights were all being deeply eroded across the US (with inequities amplified by the pandemic, which crossed into the Biden administration)? Men and women who are held in detention for deportation – sometimes for years – in private facilities built by transnational prison corporations in the US are being forced to sell their labor for as little as \$1/day (US Commission on Civil Rights, 2017). These, too, are American workers and American jobs. Just as with the founding fathers’ calls for economic nationalism, that imagined economic nation still relies on violent categorical exclusions from cultural and national citizenship, human trafficking (Kara, 2017), and the concealment of the global in the homespun.

“MAKE IN INDIA”: CHANGING LIFE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN THE APPAREL SECTOR

“Make in India” has become a buzzword since Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power in 2014. Modi’s government launched the “Make in India” campaign to create jobs and establish a world-class manufacturing base in the

country. He proclaimed, “I want to tell the people of the whole world: Come, make in India. Go and sell in any country... but manufacture here. We have skill, talent, discipline and the desire” (Modi, 2014). Modi glorifies cheap labor, which consists of young rural and tribal citizens whom India can provide to employers in the apparel industry.

There are workers available to meet Modi’s “Make in India” goal, which would require approximately 13 million more workers each year (Mishra, 2014) – given its young, underemployed, and unemployed labor force⁶, 90% of which currently works in the informal sector. The “demographic dividend” calculated into Modi’s economic nationalist plan is that the 65% of India’s population below the age of 35 will contribute to its national growth. The intervention by the state in actively skilling that population, though, is based on the rising unemployment of women in both the formal and informal sectors, despite the 9% increase rate in the Indian gross domestic product, which would indicate a favorable environment for their finding jobs. Women’s participation in the labor force reaches less than 25% in India, despite their comprising nearly half the population (see Mehrotra & Sinha, 2017).

Globalization has benefited the urban elite in Modi’s India, just as in Trump’s USA, but Modi’s economic nationalism is more of a global invitation, whereas Trump’s has been a seeming rejection of the global. In India, the rural and urban divide in benefits from national economic growth is very stark. In the apparel sector, which employs many rural and tribal young women, the turnover rate in employment is around 40 percent. To employ young people more effectively in the formal sector, then, the government initiated “Skill India” initiatives as part of “Make in India” in July 2015 to provide skill training to 400 million youth by 2022, with the goal of increasing gainful employment for marginalized youth. The “Skill India” program is specifically intended to address the national employment deficit, with 90% of the workforce in the informal sector and plagued with unemployment and underemployment. The government, however, has failed to meet its promises of job creation and the unemployment rate in the country is the highest it has been in the last 45 years. A new kind of economic exploitation is emerging. Young rural female workers receive training in garment industries but they often leave those jobs due to sociocultural and economic barriers such as language, social isolation, adjustment to the city, repetitive work for long hours, high targets set by factory owners, low wages, strict dormitory rules, and lack of vertical mobility in employment. Globalization and “Make in India” policies figure in multiple and sometimes contradictory ways in these women’s daily lives and identities as they train for and migrate to the new jobs Modi envisioned.

With the economic reforms of the 1990s, India’s economy grew and became more globally competitive, requiring a sharp increase in the availability of skilled workers⁷. The success of the “Make-in-India” manufacturing push depends on that skilled labor, which industry councils are pressured to provide

(Government..., 2016). Like China's President Xi Jinping, Modi emphasizes economic globalization and entices foreign companies to increase high-tech manufacturing operations within India. Make in India is all about attracting foreign companies to establish a world-class manufacturing base in the country and make their products with cheap labor in India, echoing the colonial East India Company, but with many more companies. Modi has hoped to attract them with his "Make in India" campaign but fewer companies are actually coming to India than he envisioned.

Odisha is a state in eastern India with a population of about 40 million people. Tribal communities⁸ (62 groups) constitute a quarter of Odisha's population; 83% of which is rural. Odisha is stereotyped as an "economically backward" state but it is quickly changing. Odisha has taken up the *Skill India Initiative* very seriously, starting a *Skilled in Odisha Initiative* to train millions of young people from rural and tribal areas and establishing the Odisha Skill Development Agency (OSDA) to facilitate the movement of labor from unskilled and informal to skilled employment in the formal sector via skilling and reskilling. Training in apparel-making⁹ has become an especially popular initiative for young tribal and rural women, whose employment rate is far below those in other South Asian countries (The World Bank, 2013) and whose stories we feature in this section¹⁰.

Sewing machine operation (SMO) training is the most popular training initiative introduced by state skill development schemes. The Centurion University GTET¹¹ program in Odisha provides employable skill training and facilitates the employment of rural and tribal youth in collaboration with multiple state government and national and multinational industry partners, having trained around 75,000 youth from marginalized communities. The trainers at Centurion are very passionate about their work and are focused on making a difference in the lives of these trainees. During their free training, women wear a uniform with the logo of the government training program¹² and get free room and board. Their completion of the program and a six-month retention in the job placement ensures a steady source of money from the government, which encourages program supervisors to be very supportive of their trainees. SMO trainees Pandey interviewed were always enthusiastic about their training, although many were unsure whether their families would allow them to work in the cities. According to the March 2018 Centurion Report, at least 25% drop out during training and about 50%, in the first year in the job. Even with so much hype about improving the quality of life of the youth from rural and tribal areas, migration is challenging and these women lack the opportunity to climb up the SMO ladder, which makes it difficult for them to join the global labor market. Most of them become typecast in their assembly line roles when they change jobs, which is a horizontal move rather than a vertical one.

The Odisha government partners with private enterprises to provide skill training, particularly to young women, with the hope that they will return

to their villages and become small-scale entrepreneurs. But there remains much local stigma against women who work in sewing factory jobs. Subroto Bagchi, the director of Skill Odisha, said in 2017, "It is an important mission to take the stigma out of these services because these jobs are just as valued as professions like doctor, engineer or electrician." Annapurna Devi Pandey has seen all of this at work in the daily lives of the young women that Pandey spent time during their work in garment factories and time off in their hostels. She interviewed them after their return to their villages; many of them are now daughters, wives, and single mothers deserted by their spouses. Many have returned to take care of their families, working as laborers in their villages and hoping to change their fates. This is the personal face of economic nationalism in India.

On February 6, 2018, Pandey met with a group of young women (aged 18-30) in the new Apparel Center Building at Centurion. An 18-year-old worker joined the line supervisor program and was the only one with a high school diploma. She is the eldest of three children; her father passed away when she was very young. She was sent to her uncle's house for her education. She was good at studying and had big dreams to become a designer but ill-treatment at her uncle's house made it difficult for her and she had to move back home. She lamented, "I was so interested in education but nobody supported me." When she heard from her block office about the Centurion Gram Tarang program, it made her hopeful about her future. She said, "Since I could not fulfill my dream to go to college, I do not want that to happen to my younger siblings." Her family woes still continue, reflecting the stigma mentioned earlier. Her sisters-in-law criticize her over the phone for choosing this career. They call her a cheap, worthless woman who brings shame to the family and warn her that no one will marry her because of her career. It breaks her heart and spirit but she is determined to pursue this path to a better life, and she is not going to look back. Another young woman, Usharini, had gotten married, but her husband did nothing to support her and her six-year-old child. She felt forced to take the training and was sad to be away from her daughter but glad that her skills at least brought income.

On a visit to Royal Exports¹³, Pandey met a few young women from rural Odisha. They were thrilled to be speaking Odia, their native language, because, in Bangalore, they are forced to listen to Tamil or Kannada, and struggle with the language barrier. Most girls looked thin and tired; they often worked overtime with little extra pay. The young women had quickly learned to follow the strict work schedule and factory discipline, to have a bank account, and to use an ATM to take care of their daily expenses and to send money home in the quickest and cheapest way possible.

Parbati, 28, sat on the doorstep of her thatched hut in Rayagad village, Gajapati district, with an empty look in her eyes. She had worked in Tirupur and Bengaluru for five and a half years. After returning to her village, she

got work as a laborer, making 150 rupees a day. On some days she picks cotton, collecting 130 rupees per bag. Compared to the 8000 rupees she made in Bangalore, the work in the village is boring and she has to endure her alcoholic father. When asked why she returned, Parbati replied, "Staying away from home and working is taboo for a girl. I came back because of family pressure." Parbati recalls all the positives of working away from home, saying, "I loved the hostel and my friends, and I loved being there. I learned a new skill, sent money home... helped build this house, contributed 2 lakhs. I could spend money on my health and my brother's education." She is now being forced to get married and feels constrained in the village.

The skill training associated with economic nationalism cannot simply be framed as either exploitation or empowerment – it is both, and young women in the SMO sector agentively navigate the contradictions of those opportunities. As they train in the cities and travel long distances for work, they become their own advocates for better pay and living conditions. They also have to tactfully negotiate the patriarchal social system in their training environments, job placements, and the villages to which they return as they create spaces for themselves as wives, daughters-in-law, and entrepreneurs in families who often express skepticism about their employment potential.

Family members Pandey interviewed were very skeptical about these women's employment opportunities in far-away cities. Even if the trainees sent much-needed money home, relatives looked down upon the nature of their work itself. A trainee expressed that her family was unhappy when she chose SMO rather than doing something like computer technology. So, while many trainees join SMO with enthusiasm, many others want to search for other lucrative means of employment.

The young women interviewed in Thirupur, Tamil Nadu, Bangalore, and Karnataka have learned quickly, adjusting and navigating their lives in the city. Still, we find a high attrition rate (50%) due to family pressure, personal health, and marriage plans. The 50% who stayed long enough to earn some income can have some economic empowerment when they return to their villages, playing major roles in choosing their marriage partners, having their own bank accounts and savings, and taking advantage of entrepreneurial opportunities in the village. Pandey observed the multiple and sometimes contradictory ways in which the economic nationalist program Skill India figures in the lives of these female migrants' daily lives and identities.

The neoliberal capitalist economy has been opening doors for employers to gather labor from the most marginalized groups of Indian society to make money for private institutions and the state, resembling colonization-introduced industrialization, which employed non-Western labor to make money for Westerners. The stories and experiences of migrant women in rural and tribal Odisha often illustrate, however, that skill training tied to their factory jobs is giving them powerful tools of intimacy and friendship that transform

their lives (see Hewamanne, 2020), providing a sense of meaning and agency that is worth much more to them than the economic nationalism framing their training. More than affirming the global connections of economic nationalist policies, expressed in the need to attract foreign companies, the recent experience of India shows that these policies produced diverging moral assessments of the experienced social transformations.

A CRITIQUE OF NATIONALISM AND THE NARRATIVE OF CRISIS AMONG BRAZILIAN REGULATORS

In July 2015, when yet another national economic crisis had already progressed to an advanced stage, the Brazilian Congress (Chamber of Deputies) set up a Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry to investigate loans made by the National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDES), a state-owned financial and investment institution founded in 1952. These loans had been made under the umbrella of a government initiative known as the “national champions’ policy” in line with which Presidents Lula da Silva (2003-2010) and Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016) pursued the expansion of large-scale Brazilian companies. The idea was that government-backed loans would enable the targeted companies in Brazil to become leaders in global markets¹⁴. The 2015 Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry was tasked with investigating allegations that at least some of the loans granted by BNDES had been made to benefit companies which had (legally or otherwise) financed the electoral and political campaigns of the ruling Workers’ Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*). The investigators failed, in fact, to either find any actions which breached the functions of the bank or censure any bank official for wrongful conduct. Nevertheless, the investigation was an important element in the complex political drama that led to the impeachment of President Rousseff a year later.

At the time of the investigation, President Rousseff’s economic policy was under strong attack from parliamentary opponents. She was accused of having caused financial disequilibrium by tampering with government accounts (practices that became known as *pedaladas fiscais*). In fact, her subsequent impeachment was on the grounds of fiscal irresponsibility, one aspect of which was the massive expansion of BNDES credit lines offered to “national champions.” Several economists considered that the loan policy, through which BNDES advanced vast sums at very low interest rates, led to severe imbalances in Brazilian public finances. Other critics argued that the loans were made to sectors which were strategically irrelevant to the economic development of Brazil. They asserted that instead of assisting construction companies or cold storage businesses, the government should have focused on companies that manufactured products of high aggregate value.

In 2013, two years before, the industrial policy was already under attack by the mainstream economic media, which accused BNDES of implementing

outdated nationalist industrial policies taken from the 1970s, such as tax reductions and subsidized credit, generally to little effect. In that year, the then-president of BNDES, Luciano Coutinho, revealed in an interview that the national champions' policy was being terminated, an announcement which was warmly received by the media. According to him, the investment planning implemented at the beginning of his mandate had been concluded. Commentators considered that the nationalistic character of these policies was symptomatic of the patrimonialism which still permeated government policy in Brazil, hindering the development of a private capital market. BNDES officials came to the defense of the policies, arguing that nationalism, far from being an outdated concept, was a laudable principle of industrial policy and that the financial support given to certain Brazilian companies was a means of preserving the autonomy of the country in these sectors (Kupfer, 2013). Others disapproved of the media's use of the expression "national" to describe the policy and rebutted the allegations that these financial "privileges" were being conferred on companies – "champions" – which had allegedly been selected without any established criteria. They argued that the policy was adequately designed to enable the expansion of transnational operations by Brazilian-based companies, responding to China's demand for commodities.

The economic crisis also re-ignited conflicts between certain state bodies regarding economic policy. These conflicts had been bubbling under the surface for a long time but had been somewhat muted during periods of relative prosperity¹⁵. Between 2012 and 2014, criticism of the industrial policy was a recurring theme at the Brazilian antitrust authority (CADE), when Gustavo Onto conducted an ethnographic study of antitrust knowledge practices. For many interlocutors, public employees who were responsible for overseeing fair competition in Brazilian markets, the national champions' policy had failed to take on board the potential negative impact of the creation of conglomerates. Company mergers supported and/or financed by BNDES, such as those involving Sadia and Perdigão, Oi and Brasil Telecom, Friboi and JBS, and the various acquisitions made by the cement-manufacturer Votorantim, were considered to be potentially disastrous for smaller competitors in the national markets and provoked a major risk of price increases for consumers (Assunção, 2013). In August 2011, at a time when Brazilian economic indicators were still positive, the media had already picked up on this clash of interests and objectives between key economic policy players. In that month, the business review *Exame* published an article under the heading: "What the State does, CADE [the antitrust agency] must undo," explaining how the policy of encouraging the development of large export companies was imposing a series of constraints on antitrust enforcement.

Competition regulators were less concerned by the nationalist rhetoric of the government's industrial policy than by its potential future economic effects within Brazil. Apart from investigating anti-competitive conducts such

as cartels, the Brazilian antitrust authority is responsible for analyzing and reviewing major mergers or acquisitions and it has legal powers to authorize or reject these operations, in line with future market projections. Company mergers which might lead to one entity controlling a large share of one or more markets – resulting in the “probable exercise of market power” – are prohibited by law. Economists and lawyers, particularly the few dozen who reviewed mergers, considered that, somewhat ironically, the policy which was deemed nationalist – aimed especially at capturing global markets – paid scant regard to the possible effects of mergers and acquisitions on individual (national) markets. Some regulators became more forceful in their criticism than others. A CADE commissioner complained privately to Onto in an interview: “I get completely lost when this Schumpeterian tale kicks off. I have no faith in this line of industrial policy. The [Development] Bank is useless”. Since national markets constitute the sole concern of antitrust bodies (given that they have no jurisdiction outside national frontiers), CADE antitrust regulators disputed the way policy makers spatially represented the economy (Appel, 2017) and how the pursued industrial policy affected it.

The regulators’ critique sought to ascertain an appropriate and alternative framework to assess the industrial policy at issue. The notions of “global economy” (and even “national economy”), were too unspecific and elusive to evaluate concrete policy achievements and potential negative results. Carlos¹⁶, a commissioner of the antitrust body, a middle-aged economist and public servant, who considered himself an old-time liberal, insistently argued during Onto’s whole semester of fieldwork in this office, that the (transnational) antitrust legal and economic concept of the “relevant market,” i.e., the affected market in concrete cases, made for a better form of representing economic relations since it defined a precise geographical and empirical boundary on exchange and competition between companies. This technicality enabled national competitive impacts to be taken into account in the evaluation of mergers and acquisitions promoted by BNDES at the same time it served as a basis for antitrust regulators to criticize its policy. Therefore, in this particular context, the delineation of an appropriate (market) framing for policy assessment became a main point of disagreement between economic competition regulators and Brazilian industrial policymakers, foregrounding contradictions between nationalistic ideals on the one hand and policy practices on the other.

However, the political-epistemological controversies surrounding the national champion policy had a more personal and emotional aspect for regulators. A sense of professional crisis was prevalent among competition officers as the usefulness of their knowledge and expertise became uncertain. The most immediate effect of the national champions’ policy was a relative increase in applications for corporate mergers or acquisitions promoted, financed, or supported by BNDES. For antitrust regulators, such as Camila, a young

advisor and lawyer, these cases were “particularly sensitive, and required careful negotiations, protracted meetings, and more complex agreements between parties,” frequently with political overtones. They found themselves in a situation in which the other side of the negotiating table not only contained representatives of private companies but also of the Brazilian State. Analysts such as Camila, who considered their role to be merely the “technical” one of following merger review guidelines and applying regulatory decisions, became more and more uncomfortable.

Some officers had ideological and political affinities with the government’s nationalist policies and their criticism was therefore understandably more muted. Most knew, however, that if they refused authorization for mergers or acquisitions which were of interest to other branches of government, it would almost certainly give rise to significant political friction which might even harm their career progression and reputation in public service. Even the presidency of the antitrust body had advised commissioners to give preference to the analysis of cartel cases and other anti-competitive practices whenever possible so as to avoid direct confrontation with other government bodies in merger and acquisition cases. According to one agency advisor, this was a “risk reduction strategy” because merger reviews usually depend on challenging prognostic analyses which may result in improper recommendations. For these public servants, known for their autonomy and technical capacity, this change of priorities undermined hope in antitrust goals and led to a considerable degree of disillusionment. The investigation of anticompetitive practices called for more administrative and legal work than the economic predictions and scenarios required in merger reviews. The overall perception among regulators was that the role of antitrust had shifted from guaranteeing a competitive context for the future to punishing unlawful acts committed in the past.

The public opinion of the national champions’ policy pursued by BNDES significantly shifted between 2013 and 2016. The policy, which had previously been criticized as an inefficient use of resources, began to be perceived as one of the causes of the economic crisis. The nationalist nature of the policy, which had not been considered to be particularly prejudicial to the Brazilian economy, was soon associated with “traditional political practices” in Brazil, a criticism clearly reflected in the political and moral arguments that formed the basis for the impeachment of President Rousseff. The narrative (or claim) of “economic crisis” itself gave rise to different meanings (Roitman, 2016), connecting the supposed nationalism of the national champions’ policy with inefficient, misguided, and ultimately illegal government actions. On the other hand, the conflict between the industrial policy and antitrust knowledge practices makes explicit some divergences which enabled the narrative of crisis to develop. In fact, as was the case with other nationalist economic policies (see other sections of this article), many contradictions

within the national champions policy were internal, exemplified, in this case, by the sharp criticism antitrust regulators voiced and their increasing frustration with the role they were asked to play.

More recently, President Jair Bolsonaro has brought to his advantage the narrative of economic, political, and moral crisis pervading the country. Playing with the ambiguities of nationalist ideals and rhetoric, Bolsonaro, a former parliament member critical of liberal economic policies (similar to the majority of the armed forces), supported strong pro-market fiscal and monetary policies, nominating a Chicago-trained neoliberal economist as his Minister of the Economy. President Bolsonaro was aligned with Donald Trump's nationalist policies and refused foreign environmental donations from European governments, claiming that the Amazon region should be a concern to Brazil only. At the same time, his government has continuously attacked former industrial nationalist BNDES policies. The sudden reduction in the Bank's budget and the attempt to bring civil and criminal charges against its directors and employees has also generated a sense of frustration among them (personal communication). In this last episode of conservative nationalism and neoliberal economic policies, this narrative of crisis has become a way to further erode the regulatory and policy capabilities of the Brazilian State and undermine its professionals' reputations and career perspectives. From an ethnographic perspective on the Brazilian bureaucracy, if economic nationalist discourses were at first a contentious issue between different governmental agencies, they ended up tragically associated with nationalist criticism and the undoing of the State itself.

THE RHETORIC OF ECONOMIC NATIONALISM IN UGANDA: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The rhetoric of economic nationalism this article analyzes using Indian, Brazilian, and US ethnographic insights comparatively resonates with African examples. Akin to its manifestations in the case studies above, economic nationalism also courts the realities of deception, contradiction, impunity, and political posturing in African nations.

In Uganda, the focus of these reflections, these realities are best illuminated by the contradictions in the 2014 "Buy Uganda, Build Uganda" (BUBU) policy vis-à-vis the "Come Invest in Uganda Initiative" (MTIC, 2014; URA, 2017). Like Trump's "America First" or Modi's "Make in India" sloganeering, many practices in these contradictions suggest the absence of "Uganda First" in the political undertones behind this rhetoric. The "Come Invest in Uganda," for instance, inundates foreign investors with exclusively preferential treatment at the expense of local investors. This preferential treatment manifests itself in many ways, including multinational companies paying Ush. 217 less a unit of electricity than their local small and medium counterparts (Wesonga, 2018) and enjoying exclusive medium-long term tax havens (SEATINI, 2012). Some

foreign investors, such as Amuru Sugar Works, also receive investment financing from the state in addition to huge free portions of land and financial bailouts during financial crises (Labeja, 2017). On the other hand, locally-owned firms in financial crises not only wrestle with higher tax regimes but are either left to die without a financial bailout, fraudulently sold (Arinaitwe, 2018; Bank of Uganda, 2016; Kazibwe, 2018; Leni, 2019), or are taken over by the state (SEATINI, 2012). Classic examples of this include Sembule Still Mills Ltd, WBS TV, Greenland Bank, the National Bank of Commerce, and the Crane Bank (Arinaitwe, 2018; Bank of Uganda, 2016; Kazibwe, 2018; Leni, 2019). The only local firms which receive bailouts and privileges are those that fund campaigns of political incumbents and those willing to give kickbacks to bail-brokers and build patron-client relationships (SEATINI, 2012). Local companies, such as the defunct Greenland Bank, perceived as unsupportive of the regime, are either framed on trumped up charges and closed (Dr. Kiggundu..., 2008) or simply closed. Watering down their economic nationalism, these policy-practice contradictions have disadvantaged “genuine” local investors in many ways. Facing a difficult investment environment, perpetuated by these contradictions, Uganda has one of the highest local investment mortality rates in the world, for example (MofPED, 2018). Analyzing how the Congress set up a Parliamentary Commission to investigate loans made by BNDES to expand large-scale companies, Onto also shows these contradictions in Brazil, especially the lack of clarity in beneficiary selection criteria.

Further, unlike BUBU, government leaders and elites continue to import even what is produced in the country (Ibid). This makes BUBU latently “be Ugandan, buy Chinese” (BUBC) or “be Ugandan, buy second-hand from America” (BUBA) rather than manifestly “buy Uganda, build Uganda.” The compelling questions, then, are: where is nationalism in BUBU and who does it target? Similar questions resonate in Brazil, the USA, and India. For example, who does “America first” target when Trump’s own companies have imported most of their inputs? And why has Modi’s “Make in India” failed to prevent the alarming capital flight in India? Answers to these questions beckon a critical re-thinking of economic nationalism as perhaps a structural dream in a rational *laissez-faire* and a global village economic order thanks to the dialectics between agency and structure (Giddens, 1984). The Ugandan example joins the other three in showing the hidden global interconnectedness of trade (or finance) in the midst of a profusion of economic nationalist rhetoric. It underlines the particular political uses of nationalist discourses and topics that should be further researched ethnographically.

CONCLUSION: ECONOMIC NATIONALISM IN A TRANSNATIONAL WORLD

In the recent United States, as Kingsolver describes, Trump’s economic nationalism was a performative logic aimed to create a particular definition of cultural and economic citizenship — “American workers,” “American jobs,”

“buy American.” That repeating adjective, *American*, was an ironic geographic modifier given the rest of the Americas that it implicitly but violently aimed to exclude, but it continues to be invoked – claiming a more inclusive intent – by the Biden administration. Centuries of transnational history, from the structure of settler colonialism in the United States to what C. K. Lee (2018) has called “the specter of global China,” saturate these glib categories with their racial capitalist subtext, as Kingsolver notes: “jobs are being stolen from white, moral, and deserving US citizens by non-white, immoral, and undeserving noncitizens.” “American workers,” “American jobs” are not only ciphers of race and morality but also gender, in that they conjure a particular figure of the white male worker ostensibly undifferentiated by class. “Narratives of capitalism gain their purchase through convincing protagonists — that is, exemplary figures through which we come to understand capital and labor” (Tsing, 2009: 152). The exemplary figure Tsing has in mind is the 19th-century Manchester worker as he appears in the writings of Marx and Engels. That worker came to embody a particularly enduring narrative of capitalism, an endurance Tsing attributes to this figure’s gender and race: “The race, gender, and national privileges that Manchester workers shared with their employers made their struggles over wages and working conditions appear unmarked by... principles of difference and exclusion,” she writes (Tsing, 2009: 153). “Thinking through this figure, class relations could be imagined as abstract... substantially gender-, race-, and nationally neutral” (Tsing, 2009: 153). *American workers, American jobs* does this same work of raced and gendered figuration, implicitly conjuring white male workers who hold jobs undifferentiated by class in which “each job [seems to equal] one economic nationalist unit,” as Kingsolver says, fetishized into baseball bats, fishing poles, and space suits.

American workers, American jobs, buy American. The nervous repetition tells us that economic nationalism is always already responsive to transnational histories. From the Homespun Movement to the New Deal inauguration of Foreign-Trade Zones within the territorial US to recent trade wars, Kingsolver traces the long arc of transnational hypocrisy at the heart of US economic nationalism. Consider, for instance, the geographies that open out from the Homespun movement’s refusal of British manufactures, as US founding fathers loudly advocated growing flax, carding wool, and making homespun cloth as they quietly continued their own brisk global racial capitalist trade. In that era, the most sought-after cloth sold by the British was, in fact, imported from India. “Indian cotton textiles were more desired in world markets than anything Britain could produce, but Britain was able to use its central point in imperial networks to become a relay station between Indian producers and markets” (Cooper, 2014: 12). The trade in enslaved Africans forms a key link here. The British imported textiles from India in part to pay for Africans who they would then enslave in the United States, the Caribbean,

and South America. The surplus value from the labor of these women and men working in sugar and cotton then went to the “founding fathers,” among others, who could then pay for more cloth. (Beckert, 2014; Cooper, 2014; James, 1938; Parthasarathi, 2011; Williams, 1944). *Made in America*, then, has long been entangled with *Made in India* (not to mention *Brazil and much of the African continent*).

For centuries, India was the technological, aesthetic, and productive center of the global cotton apparel industry, a status finally, intentionally, and violently undermined by the East India Company and British corporate colonialism. In Modi’s contemporary policies, analyzed by Pandey, verb tense holds these histories. Modi’s policy is not *Made in India* but *Make in India* — an imperative and an invitation beckoning a future. In place of the India at the center of the global genesis of capitalism (Beckert, 2014; Parthasarathi, 2011), *Make in India* conjures a fundamentally subordinated national — a national subordinated by gender and wage as Modi lures foreign investors to *make in India* with the promise of skilled, low-wage, and feminized labor. As with *Made in America* then, *Make in India* shows us the multivalent ways in which economic nationalism is always already transnational, transhistorical, and gendered.

As they enroll in sewing machine training, designed to upskill and reskill women for the global apparel industry, women from Odisha agentively “train in the cities and travel long distances for work, [and] become their own advocates for better pay and living conditions,” as Pandey writes. In this experience, Odisha women negotiate “the patriarchal social system in their training environments, job placements, and in the villages to which they return as they create spaces for themselves as wives, daughters-in-law, and entrepreneurs.” This tension between women’s autonomy and subordination, patriarchy and women’s struggles within and against it, is constitutive of global capitalism. As Parreñas (2008: 3) asks, “How do we understand the surge in women’s migration in the context of prevailing systems of gender inequality? Are such systems ruptured or maintained by the independent labor migration of women? Are the opportunities and mobility offered by migration to women constrained by these systems?” Using her work on the global reproductive labor of Filipina migrants, Parreñas answers these questions with what she calls *the force of domesticity*, in which “force” accounts both for being forced and developing one’s own force. As she writes, women’s participation in the global labor market “enhances their status in the family, increases their consumption power, and provides them with autonomy to make decisions independent from men. [But this is] overshadowed by the persistence of patriarchal standards that limit women’s choices in a sex-segmented labor market, trouble them with a wage gap, and burden them with a double day” (Parreñas, 2008: 9). Parreñas’ dual sense of force is mirrored at the level of the Indian nation, in which Modi seeks an increasingly autonomous, economic nationalism through structures of transnational subordination:

India as a low-cost manufacturing option in the global supply chain. Economic nationalism, rather than a vision of sovereign autonomy, more closely resembles what Cattelino (2008) has called sovereign interdependency.

In both India and the United States, economic nationalism is always already self-consciously global. The same holds true for Brazil, in which Presidents Da Silva and Rousseff earmarked loans from its National Bank to subsidize Brazilian corporations in the global market. However, because Gustavo Onto follows this particular nationalist policy over subsequent presidential regimes (Rousseff is impeached in 2016), we see that economic nationalist policies are always *contested*. (See also the *Automotive News* critique of Trump's "America First" policies in the first ethnographic section.) Even as we bear witness to a world of resurgent economic nationalism, ethnographic attention shows that each policy is contradictory, often at odds with itself, and meets various kinds of opposition. And the state itself, of course, is an internally contradictory apparatus, as Onto's material illustrates. The centrality of apparently arcane economic policies (loan terms and anti-trust regulators) to political processes as weighty as impeachment, reminds us that a given national economy is, first of all, an epistemological project of the state (Appel, 2017; Mitchell, 1998) and thus a perfect prism for rethinking the relationship between global capitalism and state governance. Against the neoliberal (and even laissez-faire liberal) fantasy that the economy is something out there to be set free from government intervention, the state is "the site of the modes of planning and regulation that take the economy as their object. It is also the apparatus principally responsible for constructing representations of the economy, by defining, gathering, and publishing economic data" (Mitchell, 1998: 92). Economic nationalism, in other words, bares the economy as plainly political terrain.

As Onto chronicles the investigations of corruption and the complex political drama of Rousseff and her detractors, he also lays bare the mirrorings and tensions between right- and left-wing economic populism. If Trump and Modi have exemplified forms of fascist populism (in Trump's case, rendered even more broadly visible at the end of his administration) — regimes undergirded by patriarchal, racial, and religious prejudice and violence — Rousseff's regime was something else entirely. However, economic nationalisms constitute the through line in between. Thus, the Brazilian case reminds us to attend to the multiple political contexts in which nationalist economic policies emerge, forcing us to include the more complicated legacies of Nyerere's Ujamaa in Tanzania or Evo Morales' nationalization of the Bolivian national gas industry, or even the failed efforts of Syriza to hold off the austerity policies of the Troika. Onto's account of Brazil pushes us to attend both to cases that trouble politically facile dismissals of nationalist policies and to the tensions and contradictions within any apparently singular economic nationalist policy.

It is in these constitutive tensions and contradictions that Opesen concludes — with the co-extant *Buy Uganda, Build Uganda* (BUBU) policy and the *Come Invest in Uganda Initiative*. Where the latter offers subsidized electricity, tax haven status, and even free land to foreign companies, the former demands that Ugandans buy Ugandan goods and invest in Ugandan infrastructure. But, of course, for Ugandan small and medium-sized enterprises paying full price for electricity, full taxes, and full real estate prices, it becomes impossible to compete with state-subsidized foreign investment. As they pay full price and pass those costs onto their consumers, *Buy Uganda* becomes impossible. “This makes BUBU latently ‘Be Ugandan, Buy Chinese’ (BUBC) or ‘Be Ugandan, buy second-hand from America’ (BUBA).” This is the starkest twinning of the impossible national and the powerful transnational, highlighting the delimited ways that political units defined by Westphalian sovereignty can make demands on political processes defined by centuries of transnational interconnection and exploitation.

What other political demands are possible? How can economic policy move through and past haunted nationalisms? India’s subordinated plea (*Make in India!*), and the US’s smug but nervous assertion (*Made in America*) speak to histories of colonialism and the end of (the US) empire. The Brazilian “national champion corporations” and the Ugandan promise of tax holidays and profit repatriation to foreign companies speak to modes of inclusion in historically exclusive processes. Uganda says, *come here and do what you want*; Brazil says, *our corporations will find this global market and participate in it*. How can we envision alternate economic demands that countenance the histories in which empire and its end, inclusion, and its violence, have been forged? “The most challenging current political demands go beyond the claims of political independence and instead involve demands for connection and for relationship, even under conditions of inequality and dependence” (Ferguson, 2006: 22; see also Achiume, 2019; Appel, 2019). Thus, we make the world in which Brazil might seek transnational reparations for its Afro-descendant populations. The world in which more baseball bats in the US give way to more corporate tax dollars staying onshore. *Make in India* might become a push for an end to US tariffs and the sanctions protecting cotton markets at home while the US forces “free markets” abroad – socialism for the powerful; capitalism for the poor. These are demands in which the transnational and the historically reparative become the grounds for economic policies. These are demands for recognizing connections which Touré made more than half a century ago.

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NOTAS

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1. Ann Kingsolver, Annapurna Devi Pandey, and Gustavo Onto presented their work on the resurgence of economic nationalism in multiple regions and on the parallels and disjunctures in those lived policies at the 2018 IUAES Congress in Florianopolis, Brazil. During the ensuing discussion, several anthropologists shared related experiences in their own nations, including Chris C. Olesen, whose comments are included here. Hannah Appel was part of the initial conversation but was unable to attend the congress. Thus, our introduction and the section on the US are by Kingsolver; the sections on India and Brazil, by Pandey and Onto, respectively; the comparison with Uganda, by Olesen, and the historical vignette in the introduction and the concluding section, by Appel.
 2. This article falls short of an integrated and comprehensive comparative analysis and would obviously differ if it had included a different set of nations in our rather arbitrary discussion but we venture this as a suggestion for what world anthropological perspectives might contribute ethnographically to broader conversations about current economic nationalist projects around the world.
 3. Existing frameworks for world anthropological collaborations, e.g., the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, the World Council of Anthropological Associations, and their new joint body, the World Anthropological Union, provide opportunities for comparing the specific and varied experiences of national policies that may be assumed to be uniform because they share a single name, like economic nationalism.
 4. Touré's speech is cited and discussed in Cooper (2014).
 5. Having been a British colony, the US' racial capitalism is intertwined with that of the UK, and the author has done comparative research on the Trump and Johnson administrations' economic nationalisms, in a separate forthcoming publication.

6. Overall, 65% of the workforce in India is aged under 35 years and the ILO estimates that nearly 13 million Indian workers are unemployed.
7. In total, 2.3% of the Indian workforce has formal skill training, compared to 68% in the UK, 75% in Germany, 52% in the US, 80% in Japan, and 96% in South Korea.
8. Tribal, also known as *Adivasi*, is an umbrella term for a heterogeneous set of ethnic groups considered to be the aboriginal population of South Asia, including India. The Indian Constitution has defined them as tribes or scheduled tribes (ST).
9. The apparel industry employs 45 million workers in India and constitutes 14% of its industrial production (Fair Wear Foundation, 2016).
10. From July 2017 to March 2018, as a Fulbright researcher, Annapurna Devi Pandey looked at the retention and sustained empowerment of rural and tribal women in Odisha in the apparel industry and focused on the impact that skill-and-training-based jobs have on their everyday lives. She used participant observation, interviews, and focus group discussions to learn about how young women are preparing themselves to participate in the projects of 21st-century globalization and development in India. She visited several skills training centers and stayed at Centurion University; a private training agency aligned with the national initiative Skill India.
11. Gram Tarang Employability Training, a non-profit unit of Centurion University of Technology and Management, Odisha.
12. DDUGKY, PMKVY, OSDA, etc.
13. A textile factory in Bangalore which exports T-shirts, dress shirts, and jeans to the European market.
14. As reported in *Os Campeões...* (2015).
15. According to several economists, the recent economic crisis was caused, among other factors, by a price decrease in international commodities and high rates of governmental and household indebtedness, as well as risky price control measures, which increased inflationary pressures (Carvalho, 2017).
16. This is a pseudonym, as are all other references to the names of interviewees in this section.

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PERSPECTIVAS ANTROPOLÓGICAS MUNDIAIS SOBRE NACIONALISMOS ECONÔMICOS

Resumo

Na medida em que um número crescente de governos nacionais tem promovido políticas econômicas nacionalistas e o rompimento ou a renegociação de relações políticas e econômicas globais, a impossibilidade de desconexão de circulações globais é ilustrada pela própria difusão do discurso do nacionalismo econômico, embora concebido e implementado diferentemente, em resposta a contextos históricos e políticos específicos. Com base nas possibilidades das antropologias mundiais, os autores constroem análises conectadas dos efeitos vividos e das contradições das políticas econômicas nacionalistas, por meio de exemplos etnográficos do Brasil, da Índia, de Uganda e dos Estados Unidos. Analisando esses contextos comparativamente, o artigo enfatiza a natureza plural, transhistórica, transnacional, generificada e contestada das políticas e discursos nacionalistas econômicos no mundo, apontando para a necessidade do aprofundamento de pesquisas empíricas sobre os diversos sentidos e mobilizações políticas de projetos nacionalistas econômicos.

Palavras-chave:

Cidadania;
Nacionalismos econômicos;
Política econômica;
Transnacional;
Antropologias mundiais.

WORLD ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ECONOMIC NATIONALISMS

Abstract

As rising numbers of national governments promote economic nationalist policies and the withdrawal from (or renegotiation of) global political and economic relationships, the impossibility of disconnecting from global circulations is illustrated by the traveling discourse of economic nationalism itself, although conceptualized and implemented quite differently as refracted through specific historical and political contexts. Drawing on the possibilities of world anthropologies, the authors build connected analyses of the lived effects and contradictions of economic nationalist policies through their ethnographic examples from Brazil, India, Uganda, and the US. In comparatively analyzing these contexts, the authors emphasize the plural, transhistorical, transnational, gendered, and contested nature of economic nationalist policies and discourses worldwide, pointing to the need for further empirical investigations into diverse understandings and political deployments of economic nationalist projects.

Keywords

Citizenship;
Economic nationalisms;
Economic policy;
Transnational;
World anthropologies.