



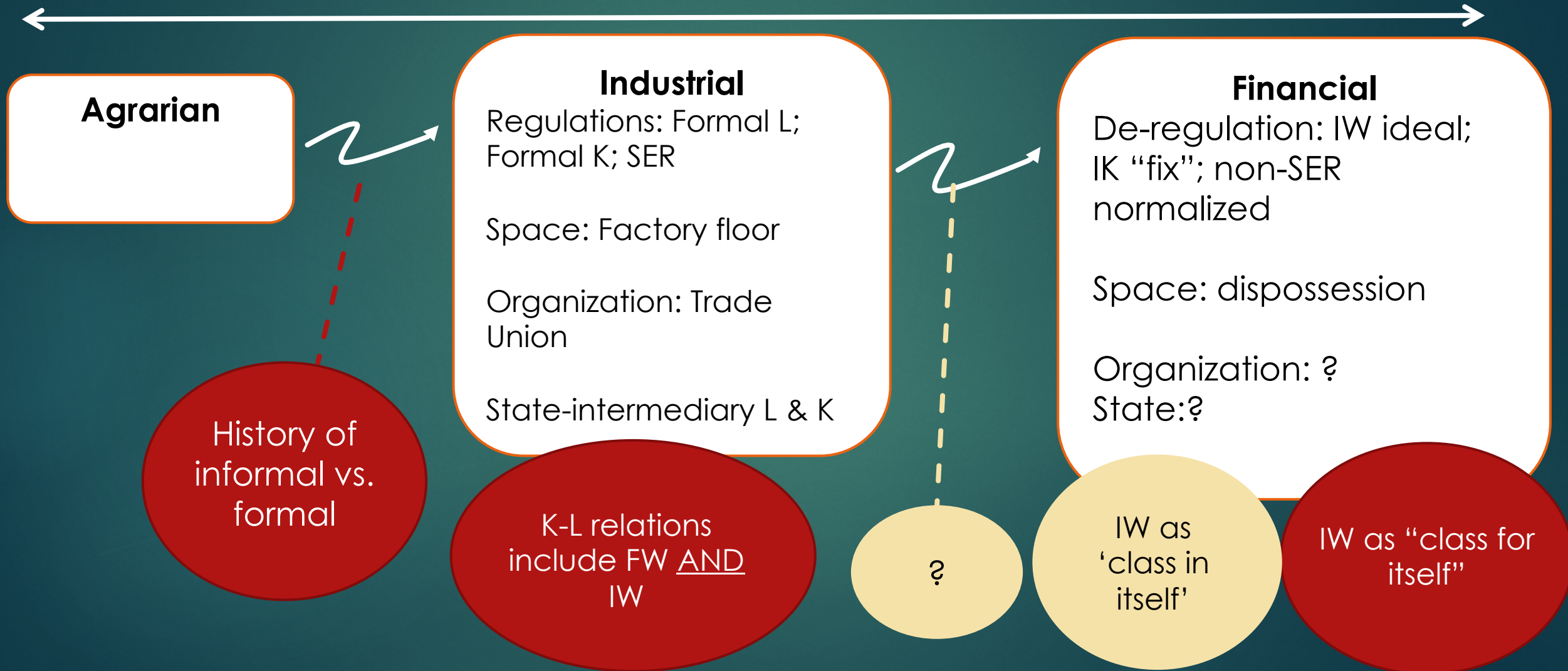
Informal Workers & the Indian State

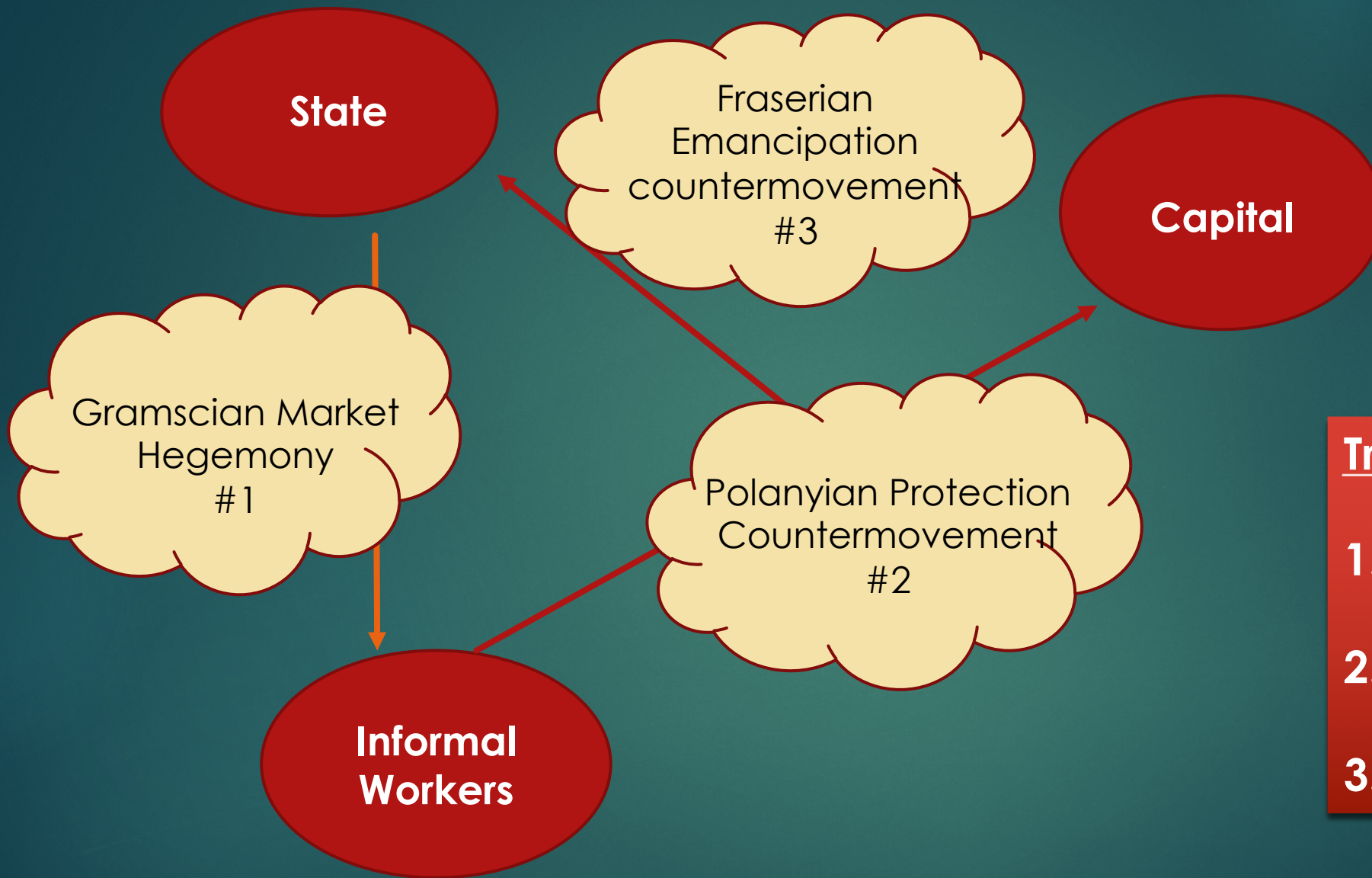
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WIEGO WORKSHOP

Regimes of Accumulation





Triple Movement:

1. **Marketization**
2. **Protection**
3. **Emancipation**

Burrawoy 2003

Fraser 2013

State's Hegemonic Project

Informality is the new and overt normal

- ▶ 50% rise in *large, organized sector* firms (private and public)
- ▶ New category: “informal-regular” (contract, lower wages, no non-wage benefits)
- ▶ Unequal, side-by-side employment (automobiles, garments)

Non-agricultural labor is growing; not “jobless”; just BAD jobs (not manufacturing)

- ▶ Services: 26% in 1999 to 31% in 2011
- ▶ Construction: 5% in 1999 to 11% in 2011

Informal work is increasingly male

- ▶ Drop in female labor force participation rate since 1980s.
- ▶ Despite improved efforts to capture informal work
- ▶ Pronounced among poor households
- ▶ Women becoming increasingly invisible (domestic work, garbage collection, home-based work)

Joint Solidarity against State Project

IWs and FWs joint action for first time

- February 20-21, 2013: Longest mass strike since Independence
- Autoworkers strike in Maruti (Harayana in 2012)

Threatens basis of the state's political project of defining informal workers as an alternative to formal workers

Quick response: Altered business strategy to increase outsourcing *to companies*

New Legislations

Trying to codify, regulate, and protect within contemporary employment relationships

(Street Vending, Bidi, Construction, Informal Workers' Social Security)

Domestic Workers into existing laws and new Comprehensive Legislation—WHY?

- ▶ RECOGNITION
- ▶ THREAT of enforcement
- ▶ Expand our notion of who is a worker, who is an employer, what is work

Identity Cards

State recognition for their work

(Bidi manufacturing, construction, waste-pickers, home-based garment workers)

Dignity

Access to citizenship rights (education, water)

Against police harassment

Platform for demands on legal protection

*Folding state into labor exploitation relationship

*Folding SE into proletariat

Welfare Boards

Construction Workers' Comprehensive Legislation & Welfare Boards

- ▶ Modicum of accountability on employers through tax
- ▶ Accrued massive sums to cover reproductive costs
- ▶ Mobilizational tool
- ▶ Creating an identity as “workers”
- ▶ Weekly off and timely payments

Mired with challenges

**Remain the only attempt (*by workers*) to address informal workers' reproductive costs

Bidi (national); garment workers, domestic workers (some states)

State conditions success & failure

Greater success in populist and liberalizing political-economies

Empowerment vs. cooptation

Global Counter-Movements

South to North?

More beneficiaries-women, migrants, occupations

Politics of Recognition-laws and identity

Politics of Redistribution using a rhetoric of “citizenship rights” as workers with reproductive costs

Variety of organization types-unions, NGOs, cooperatives

Stage of Counter-Movements



Infant stage

But crucial stage of mobilization under common frame

Stage that precedes attainment of legal rights