

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Based on *Holler's* (2020) analysis above, this film addresses the three research questions regarding the conditions of deindustrialization in Ohio's Rust Belt, the nature of class struggle, and the limits of the main character's class consciousness. First, the film portrays deindustrialization as a concrete physical condition, not merely a backdrop, through shots of the urban landscape featuring empty spaces and abandoned industrial buildings in extreme long-shots, a cool color palette, and ambient sounds from the environment. The loss of stable industrial jobs, shared workspaces, and labor organizations resulting from factory closures creates a structural condition in which consciousness is limited, and class struggle becomes fragmented. Furthermore, *Holler* (2020) depicts working-class struggle as a series of limited individual responses aimed at escaping structural exploitation. This manifestation consists of Ruth and Blaze's attempts to negotiate against the terms imposed by Hark, the capitalist authority, yet they fail, resulting in injustice in both working conditions and wages. Subsequently, accommodation emerges in Ruth, who must accept hazardous working conditions without safety guarantees due to material necessity. Ultimately, Ruth chooses to leave Jackson as the final act of this struggle, representing the last and most individual form of resistance available to her. Furthermore, the collapse of the economic base, particularly depicted in this film, produces varying levels of consciousness, depending on how individuals internalize these structural conditions. Ruth demonstrates a form of consciousness that Lukács calls immediate awareness,

whereas Blaze internalizes structural poverty as a personal failure, a distorted consciousness. This condition is intertwined with the earlier explanation of historical materialism regarding the limitations of consciousness, which are constrained by the structural conditions in the Rust Belt. In the end, Ruth leaves alone, Blaze stays behind, and Jackson remains unchanged.

Ultimately, this film does not end with absolute victory or defeat but serves as a cinematic argument asserting that without the material conditions for collective consciousness, individual consciousness, no matter how sharp, is unable to become a historical force for change. Deindustrialization in the Rust Belt is not a local phenomenon in and of itself, but rather part of a global pattern of capitalism that shifts production to regions with lower labor costs. This leaves working-class communities without alternatives and deepens the contradictions of capitalism that Marx had predicted. Nicole Riegel, the director, grew up in Jackson, Ohio. Thus, she consciously uses the medium of film to give a voice to communities that have long been invisible in the grand narrative of America. In other words, this film is a form of cultural critique of American capitalism and its failure toward the working class in post-industrial regions. The film also challenges the ideology of the American Dream, which promises social mobility to anyone willing to work hard, because Ruth has worked hard, but the system has not given her a chance.

In this way, *Holler* (2020) functions not only as a cinematic work but as a social critique that uses the medium of film to document and challenge the structural realities experienced by working-class communities in post-industrial America.

Future research could expand this analysis by combining the Marxist framework with other theories to produce a more comprehensive interpretation of working-class representations in post-industrial American films, or by conducting a comparative study between *Holler* (2020) and similar films to map how American cinema more broadly represents the impact of deindustrialization on working-class communities.

