

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Wainwright, Joel. 2008. *Decolonizing Development: Colonial Power and the Maya*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing. 312 Pages, ISBN 978-1-4051-5705-6 Cloth (\$94.95) ISBN 978-1-4051-5706-3 Paper (\$40.95)**

Critical scholars of development understand how the process works. They understand the empirical consequences of development, from modernization schemes to austerity policies for local populations. They understand the structural motivations behind development strategies and how they function in support expansion of capital accumulation. With all of this knowledge, however, one area continues to elude consensus: how to critique effectively and combat development. This is the daunting task undertaken by Joel Wainwright in *Decolonizing Development: Colonial Power and the Maya*, who argues that the solution to this vexing problem is the synthetic fabrication of a “*postcolonial Marxist critique of development*” (pg. 10, emphasis in original).

Wainwright offers a sophisticated yet strikingly responsible approach to the critique of development by eschewing the unfortunate tradition of “straw-man” construction and demolition. Instead, he seeks to synthesize Marxist critiques of development with postcolonial studies for the purpose of creating a framework for developmental critique that does not suffer from the structural limitations of traditional Marxist approaches or from the overtly subjectivist tendencies of discourse-oriented postcolonialism. The result is a broad discourse analysis of religious narratives, Latin American literature, academic studies, governmental policies, and museum exhibitions. Wainwright’s goal is to illustrate the continual construction of “Mayanism,” as a discourse of colonialism and development. The concept of “Mayanism” is derived from Said’s “Orientalism” but, as the author argues, contrary to Said’s postcolonial concept, “Mayanism” does not minimize its roots as a mechanism of capitalist integration. This synthesis of postcolonialism and Marxist concepts serves as the analytical framework for the project.

Wainwright’s primary analytical argument is that many contemporary critiques of development suffer from an inability to properly locate development in historical context. In his view, this omission enables two assumptions to be made about the Mayan colonial/development experience in Belize (and critiques of development in a more general sense). While the assumptions reflect the theoretical traditions mentioned above, Wainwright moves beyond implicit defense or abject critique by pointing out areas of complementary agreement and convincingly arguing for a synthetic alternative that would be more effective in critiquing the development project without alienating proponents of either postcolonial or Marxist critiques of development.

The first assumption, rooted in postcolonial critique, states that development is a project that cannot be divorced from colonialism. The implication of this assumption is profound, particularly with respect to contemporary Marxist critiques of development. Development is predicated on the social discourse constructed during the era of colonialism. How subaltern communities and their traditional activities were defined by the process of Eurocentric colonialism – these external, monolithic definitions *become* history, which means that both development *and* counter-development discourse is erroneously based on socio-spatial definitions that reflect colonial-imposed assumptions that then parade as fact. This resultant “Mayanism”

subsequently informs not only development schemes but also structures the counter-hegemonic Mayan resistance to these same developmental activities. Put simply, the assumption that development can simply be rejected or “unmade” is impossible. As Wainwright states:

Rejecting “development” – the hegemonic denomination for our responsibility – is neither morally possible nor desirable. Thus there can be no simple negation or rejection of development. Not because development is good (it is not), but because a rejection still turns within the analytic space opened and shaped by development discourses (pg. 11).

Put simply, Wainwright argues that any development must be understood as a historical product and any critique or resistance to development must recognize that contemporary conditions are structurally rooted in colonial practices.

The second analytical assumption understands both colonialism and development to be processes rooted in capitalism – specifically, the expansion of capital accumulation processes. This observation, while obvious to Marxist scholars, is essential to Wainwright’s goal of expanding postcolonial discourse analysis. While development may be based on discursive constructions, this construction process is purposive and focused on expanding capital accumulation. Put another way, capitalism is the mechanism that structures continuity between colonialism and development. In this sense, Wainwright offers a succinct conceptualization of development as “capitalism qua development” – like colonialism; development cannot be understood as anything less than capitalist integration. However, this realization cannot serve as an efficacious critique of development in isolation. It is only when these two assumptions are joined that a useful critique of development emerges. These assumptions and a detailed justification for the synthetic alternative of a “postcolonial Marxist critique of development” comprise the first, introductory chapter

Wainwright divides the remainder of the text into two primary sections. The first section (encompassing chapters one through three) examines the process of colonial discourse construction that would define the Maya as a colonized people and establish the discursive definitional framework of “Mayanism.” This section is also where Wainwright establishes his three main empirical concepts of *capitalism*, *settlement*, and *trusteeship* as components of contemporary development. Wainwright proceeds in pragmatic fashion by first providing a succinct background chapter that describes the initial process of colonization of Belize and then beginning the task of illustrating the discursive construction of “Mayanism” in the two subsequent chapters. Of significant value is the second chapter in which Wainwright clearly describes substantial shifts in European (i.e., Spanish and British) discourse on Mayan agricultural practices. Prior to the emergence of a distinct colonial presence in Belize, Mayan agriculture was discussed as a relatively haphazard process of an indigenous people living within the context of a natural environment. This discourse shifted after the imposition of the British colonial presence with Mayan agriculture coming to be defined as a distinct “*milpa* system” and in particular, a destructive system in need to paternal guidance and reform.

The final chapter in section one analyzes diverse historical narratives including Spanish religious narratives, contemporary Latin American literature, and Mayan artifact exhibitions in the British Museum. This chapter firmly illustrates the discursive development of “Mayanism” and also highlights the continuity of this process by offering a content analysis that spans

hundreds of years. At first glance, the comparative analysis of Spanish narratives from the 16th Century, a Nobel prize-winning novel (*Hombres de maíz* by Miguel Ángel Asturias) published in 1949, and contemporary British Museum exhibits appears awkward and disjointed. However, this chapter is a primary example of Wainwright's skill as a writer and discourse analyst. The discussion of these historically disparate sources is presented as a discursive continuity – the project of constructing “Mayanism” began in the early period of Spanish conquest and continues through the present day. This continuity justifies a narrative analysis spanning roughly 500 years and requires a challenging illustration of this continuity while at the same time maintaining clear presentation and focus. Wainwright clearly meets this latter requirement – his prose is one of the highlights of this book.

The second section of the book is comprised of three detailed chapters under the sub-heading “Aporias of Development,” with the concept of *aporia* playing a useful narrative role in both organizing empirical cases and illustrating their inherently contradictory reality as both historical and contemporary artifacts. Wainwright continues his analysis of select narratives that illustrate the discursive construction of “Mayanism” and empirically demonstrates how his three primary categories of development – capitalism, settlement, and trusteeship – are rooted in colonial definitions and maintained through development discourse. He examines the work of Charles Wright in particular detail in Chapter Four and pays particular attention to the shift in the author's work over time – from an agent of British colonialism to a critic of development. One of the most effective illustrations in this chapter is how Wright's early work, particularly his definition of the Mayan *milpa* agricultural system and Mayan identity, was used as a foundation to frame later development issues and practices. Wright's lack of support for development in Belize during the end of his career could not disrupt the use of his earlier colonial definitions to support contemporary development practices on the part of the Belizean government.

This latter point, of the continuity of colonial discourse, is reinforced in Chapter Five. Here, Wainwright examines the failure of the TRDP (Toledo Resource Development Project) initiative as a strategy to “settle” the Maya through a series of land reforms (i.e., the commodification of property) and agricultural reforms (i.e., the subsidization of rice to transition the Maya away from “traditional” corn production) both enforced through the mechanism of micro-loans. The story here is well-known to development scholars: the immiserating poverty and whole-sale proletarianization of formerly agricultural, rural populations. Wainwright's contribution to this base of knowledge is to point out the connections between colonial definition of “Mayanism” and the continual project of integrating the Maya into a larger national context in which their “Mayan-ness” can be incorporated into a larger Belizean identity.

The final chapter in section two is perhaps the most intriguing. Wainwright returns to his overall goal of conceptualizing a means of critiquing development, but does so in an interesting way: by critiquing existing counter-development strategies that he himself had a role in producing. The final substantive chapter is a fascinating deconstruction of the *Maya Atlas: The Struggle to Preserve Maya Land in Southern Belize* – which is an attempt to offer a distinctly Mayan interpretation of space and geography through the mechanism of “counter-mapping.” In short, the Maya in the Toledo District of Belize, with the logistic assistance of scholars such as Dr. Wainwright, mapped the region using their own interpretation of the spatial environment. The result is a map of geographic space that is produced outside of the colonial/development context and does not conform to the dictates of capitalism. Wainwright, while sympathetic to the project of “counter-mapping” (“We cannot *not* desire counter-mapping” (pg. 272, emphasis in original),

maintains his focus on the legacy of colonialism and subsequent impossibility of simply replacing development. The very critique of development inherent in the *Maya Atlas* project is itself rooted in colonial definitions and developmental discourse. For example, Wainwright convincingly argues that Mayan work was specifically gendered during the TRDP reform process, yet these gendered definitions of work are replicated in the Mayan counter-mapping project. Similarly, the Maya incorporate the European definition of the *milpa* agricultural system into their own cultural and spatial definitions. Thus, for Wainwright the very nature of counter-developmental resistance remains a discursive artifact of colonialism.

The book as a whole is an impressive piece of discourse analysis and a welcome synthetic alternative to entrenched development perspectives that seem more at odds with each other than the project of capitalist development. Having said that, proponents of both postcolonial studies and Marxist development studies will undoubtedly find the level of Wainwright's attention to discourse and capitalist structure wanting, but the sympathetic critique of both perspectives should not cause any substantial resentment from either camp. I did find the concluding chapter on possibilities of applied resistance of development somewhat lacking, perhaps because that the book is designed as an analytical critique of development, not a primer for movement resistance – or due to the enormity of the task: how to enable indigenous/subaltern redefinition *and* combat capitalist integration at the same time. As an analytical critique of development however, this book succeeds on many levels. Wainwright's scholarship is rigorous; his writing is clear, and organization impeccable. While he does not specifically address world-system(s) research, the issues raised in this book with regards to the development of an analytical critique of "capitalism qua development" will be of interest to anyone focused on the global capitalist system. This is a substantial and unique approach to studying development that should encourage development scholars to reassess their own assumptions about counter-development context and strategy.

Cory Blad  
 Department of Sociology  
 Manhattan College  
 cory.blad@manhattan.edu

**Hicks, Robert L., Bradley C. Parks, J. Timmons Roberts, and Michael J. Tierney. 2008. *Greening Aid?: Understanding the Environmental Impact of Development Assistance*. New York: Oxford University Press. 344 Pages, ISBN 978-0-19-921394-8 Paper (\$35.00).**

In *Greening Aid*, Robert Hicks, Bradley Parks, J. Timmons Roberts and Michael Tierney argue that current environmental crises make understanding international environmental aid flows crucial, but that a lack of data and empirical hypothesis testing have left the issue poorly understood. According to Hicks et al., the international community has identified environmental problems as global problems and recognized that developing states are simultaneously at highest risk for and least able to prevent environmental degradation nationally. As a result, the global North has repeatedly made agreements to assist the global South in environmental reform through international aid that should not detract from development aid generally. However, Hicks et al. argue that the amount of money actually transferred from North to South for environmental

purposes was previously unknown because no systematic analyses of international environmental aid allocation had been conducted.

Here they aim to inform policymakers, academic and laypeople alike through a comprehensive comparative study of environmental and development aid allocation patterns over a twenty-year period. In order to conduct such a comprehensive analysis, they compile the Project-Level Aid (PLAID) database, which allows for longitudinal comparison of donors and recipients of aid by sector. Consistency in coding allows for cross-national statistical analysis, which they supplement with illustrative case studies. *Greening Aid* addresses several debates through systematic cross-national analyses and case studies, including the motivation for giving environmental aid, which states get more of it and why and the effectiveness of environmental aid. The comprehensiveness of this data set allows them to analyze environmental aid donors and recipients as well as domestic and international aid agencies.

Hicks et al. enlist a single explanatory framework that can accommodate the wide range of considerations facing key actors involved at every stage of the aid allocation process. This framework is principle-agent theory, a variant of the strategic choice approach, which focuses attention on the causes and consequences of different choices made by donors in the aid allocation process, where aid allocation is treated as a series of nested games between strategic actors. This framework assumes that the aid allocation process begins with citizens in the Global North who elect government officials who then delegate funding to either domestic or international aid organizations who finally distribute the aid to countries in the Global South.

The first stage in their analysis considers overall patterns in aid allocation from 1980 to 1999. They begin this analysis by categorizing aid in terms of its impact on the environment and charting the overall trends in environmentally damaging, beneficial, and neutral aid over the twenty-year period. They find a large decrease in damaging, a small increase in beneficial, and a huge increase in neutral aid. The second stage of the analysis disaggregates types of environmental aid allocation by issue that environmentalists and governments deem critical. Hicks et al. find that the type of aid recommended by scientists is very weakly correlated with the type of aid given and that aid is not following to the places where it is needed the most in terms of environmental effects on human life.

The next stage of the analysis focuses on aid recipients. They begin this section by conducting case studies of five aid recipients in order to address the question of motivation for the particular cases donor states choose to give aid. Here, they infer donor motivation based on case studies of recipients with a comparative analysis of the relative need for aid and political benefits for donating between cases. They conclude that aid may be benefiting donors geopolitically more than it is benefitting recipients environmentally. The second component of the aid recipient analysis uses cross-national statistical analyses to further address the question of who gets aid and why. They find that need for environmental aid partially explains its receipt, but overall aid allocation patterns are better explained by national income, population size and colonial history of the recipient state, which supports their conclusions from the case studies of aid recipients.

Next, Hicks et al. focus their attention on the donors of environmental aid. They conduct case studies of five major donors, two of the greenest, two of the least green and one that went from least to most green within the span of a decade. This analysis reveals a strong convergence in donor behavior regarding the environment, where all five cases become increasingly 'green,' albeit at different rates, over time. They compliment the case studies of aid donors with an investigation of donor behavior through cross-national statistical analysis. They find that GDP

and 'post-materialist values' predict aid allocation, especially the fall of 'dirty' aid. However, they are surprised to find that strong national environmental policies are negatively related to environmental aid expenditures.

In the final stage of their analysis, Hicks et al. investigate the use of multilateral aid agencies compared to domestic bilateral options. They begin by analyzing the patterns in aid allocation over time for multilaterals and find an overall 'greening' trend. They proceed with case studies of the multilaterals that rank the highest in overall environmental friendliness in order to investigate the 'greening' process. They find contrasting motivations between agencies. In the final component of this section they investigate the motivations of donors for choosing multilateral versus bilateral organizations for aid distribution and find consistent motivations where donor governments with small or ineffective bilateral aid agencies and small populations and economies are more likely to prefer multilateralism. They conclude with a call for further research and attention to environmental issues and acknowledge the limitations of this study.

As promised, *Greening Aid* delivers empirical evidence on a range of questions relating to international environmental aid that had previously been neglected due to data limitations. Hicks et al. are able to accomplish this through a massive data collection project paired with a mixed method approach. Their cross-national statistical analyses paired with in-depth case studies gives the project considerable breadth and depth and allows them to address a wide range of issues relating to environmental aid.

This study sheds light on crucial aspects of development and environmental aid but also leaves many questions unanswered. For instance, Hicks et al. set out to compare environmental aid to development aid generally in terms of allocations patterns and to provide a complete, coherent account of the causes and consequences of environmental aid to developing countries as a whole. While they pay considerable attention to the causes of development aid, the consequences are neglected in comparison. They consider the effectiveness of aid only indirectly through inferences based on allocation patterns. The under-treatment of environmental impacts of development aid is especially surprising considering the subtitle of the book. However, *Greening Aid* provides a solid foundation on which to build future work in this area thanks to their tremendous accomplishment in data collection and identification of key areas requiring further systematic investigation.

The methodological comprehensiveness of this work is impressive. However, world-systems scholars will likely find the theoretical framework employed somewhat limiting. The focus on individual and group-level decision making as the casual mechanism for aid allocation ignores, or at least downplays, the importance of the historical context of current environmental problems. Rather than locating the source of global environmental problems in a broad historical context where the system of global capitalism drives degradation and resource consumption, Hicks et al., along with the international community, treat peripheral states as the main culprits of environmental problems and developed states as benefactors acting on behalf on the global good. From this perspective, the aid allocation processes is driven by the choices made by key actors in the global community. The actor oriented theory of *Greening Aid* puts considerable power in the hands of individuals at the expense of global historical processes, which will likely leave world-systems scholars unsatisfied.

Although this analysis departs substantially from a world-systems perspective, the work done by Hicks et al. provides a promising avenue for development studies within the political economy tradition. For instance, Hicks et al. highlight the importance of determining the

relationship between particular types of aid and particular development outcomes that are now possible with their PLAID database which is scheduled to become publically available in 2010. Overall, this is a methodologically complex analysis that, although departing theoretically from the perspective advocated for by this journal, offers new insights and future possibilities for world-systems scholars. *Greening Aid* is an ambitious project that promises to be useful to policymakers, concerned citizens and scholars from a wide range of academic disciplines. Anyone who is interested in global environmental issues would benefit from adding *Greening Aid* to their collections.

Kristen Shorette  
 Department of Sociology  
 University of California, Irvine  
 kshorett@uci.edu  
<http://www.socsci.uci.edu/~sgsa/2006/2006-kristen.html>

**Bush, Roderick D. 2009. *The End of White World Supremacy: Black Internationalism and the Problem of the Color Line*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 258 pages. ISBN 978-1-59213-573-8, Paper (\$28.95).**

[Ed. note: Rod Bush received the 2010 Marxist section's The Paul Sweezy Marxist Sociology Book Award for 2010].

White world supremacy is both a metaphor for racial domination on the global level and an expression of the structural and social conditions of racial hierarchies, racist practices, and subordination by race within historically constructed conquering systems. This ambitious and wide-ranging book about the "End of White World Supremacy" particularly within the lens of "Black Internationalism" and the "Problem of the Color Line" written by Professor Bush manages to present these arguments in a cogent, well-developed work that analyzes the Black international tradition using world-systems theory.

Black social movement history, ranging from Fanon's critique of colonialism in both the Caribbean and in Africa, through the struggles of the Jim Crow south and emergence of racial stratification on a global level, is developed as a central theme of the modern world-system, and a primary problem of systems that see themselves as democratic and free. Bush's discussion of the Black intellectual tradition and its many scholars, especially W.E.B. Du Bois, is particularly brilliant and will remain as a major contribution to race studies on its merits alone.

Bush develops his work within two large and familiar analytical constructs of Theory (part 1) and Radical Social Movements (part 2). Within the first couple of chapters, he takes us through World War I and into the struggles between the great wars, with the gradual emergence and early development of Black internationalism and some of its leading voices, such as the evolution of the New Negro radicals. Later, with terms such as the "Blackening and intensification of U.S. radicalism" (p. 178) Bush demonstrates linkages between movements, including the Black Power and Civil Rights movements. Here is where he observes how neoliberal globalization intersects with an official and popular "color blindness" (p. 88) as the structuring of power and socioeconomic position, found in "strata that exist in all of the core

states of the world-system” (p.179). Further, in a trend that correlates well with Wallerstein’s observation of hegemonic decline over the same period, Bush sees that:

During the past twenty-five or thirty years, the bottom layers of the populations of the core states have been devastated by policies of neoliberal globalization that have reversed the social regimes of the power-World War II period (p. 180).

Especially pertinent to world-systems theory, and powerfully set into a colonialist development into the modern world-system as conquest over the Americas, is the application of Quijano’s fundamental historical processes as racial domination (pages 127-130). This includes a “massive extermination” (p. 128) of indigenous peoples in the western hemisphere, and a maximized system of labor control including race-based slavery, that helped to build capitalism and the world market.

These analyses are primarily critiqued through an adapted Marxist framework that considers capitalist development as ridden with racism that is deeply embedded in the entire system. Here it proves useful to provide the essence of the work, in a larger quote, that this reviewer not only completely agrees with but believes would be well-served to develop into a larger work:

I have argued here that systemic racism is the foundation of the new world formed with the European conquest of the Americas, the destruction of the Amerindian civilizations, and the capture of Africans to serve as slave labor in the colonial societies. It was at this time that the concept of race was introduced into scientific and public discourse as a means of naturalizing the relationship between the conquerors and the conquered, and was generalized to the entire world-economy during the subsequent European conquest of the rest of the world (page 216).

Perhaps the only real issue that could be taken with the world supremacy, or globalization part of the overall discussion is that Blacks, while becoming the primary subordinated groups in the core of the modern world-system, are not the only nor probably even the first. The general ideological analysis of this struggle therefore is somewhat limited, brilliant and comprehensive as it is in terms of the color line for Blacks. In Latin America, and indeed in Africa itself, it is the indigenous peoples, or what some term the tribal nations, that constitute the bottom strata of society. With the gradual decline of “white world supremacy” (p. 165) as a hegemonic phenomena, some of these differences may be important to tease out.

However, in linking what Bush identifies as the “spirit of Bandung” (p. 193) with the important voices of DuBois, Malcolm X, Aime Cesaire, and Franz Fanon, among others, he observes the critical moments when Africans, Blacks from America, and the “dark world” (p. 15) in general, begin to see their common struggles, especially in terms of various forms of decolonization and challenges to systems of global stratification. Imperialism in its post-modern form of “invisible” (p. 216) racism is thus threatened, and takes note of this common detestation of colonialism. Various individual caveats demonstrate this, such as when he notes how DuBois and Robeson were kept from attending Bandung by the State Department which did not allow them to travel. The mask is thus unveiled.

Near the end of the work the possibility of ending white supremacy emerges, but carefully within the construct of continuing struggle and the essence of movement, against the backdrop of the election of Barack Obama, also viewed within the global lens. Bush sees the election as a sign of this ongoing, progressive struggle, but one fraught with danger in how it can be utilized by conservative forces to deny racism. He calls for decolonization of the “U.S. Empire” (p. 219) in both its internal constructions and its external manifestations, and a shift from centrist policies that will reproduce current systems, toward an agenda of needed change that will address ongoing issues of social injustice, and an altering of the world-system in favor of subordinate forces. In this analysis, as in his major contributions toward understanding of how we have collectively reached this point of struggle against white world racism, we must hope that this is the beginning of the end of racial supremacy.

James V. Fenelon  
 Department of Sociology  
 California State University, San Bernardino  
 jfenelon@csusb.edu

**Smith, Jackie. 2008. *Social Movements for Global Democracy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 286+xiii pages, ISBN 13:978-0-8018-8744-4 Cloth (\$55.00), ISBN 10:0-8018-8744-5 Paper (\$25.00)**

There probably is no academic researcher who knows more about transnational movements on the political left today than Jackie Smith. For quite some time she has been putting out important studies: of the UN as a site for movement action, of the changing emphases and organizational structures of transnational movements, and of specific events like the “battle of Seattle”. She has also shaped the field through important edited collections. This splendid book is another richly detailed and original treatment on her part. It draws on her previous work in the area, but it amounts to a new, large, bold statement. It is densely packed with bold claims, thoughtful argument, and impressive data and deserves extended discussion.

*Social Movements for Global Democracy* addresses a vast field of political contention involving a great variety of actors in many countries, pursuing many specific tactics in many venues. It takes you into UN negotiations and into the formally organized movement organizations that rub shoulders there. It takes you into the looser World Social Forum process and its spinoffs and subprocesses. It takes you into the streets when the meetings of the key institutions of neoliberal globalization – the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO – attract a diversity of protestors. And it pays heed to the great variety of movement participants, from professionals in formally structured, transnationally organized bodies seeking to shape national legislation, EU policy or UN resolutions to more loosely connected temporary coalitions and on to anarchists set on disrupting the plans of the powerful. Other eminent scholars have lately had their sights on this arena: Sidney Tarrow had been extending the tools of social movement studies to the transnational arena, Peter Evans is tackling counterhegemonic movements, Chris Chase-Dunn is examining the World Social Forum process. Jackie Smith’s book is a grand synthesis of this recent scholarship by herself and others.

The title suggests a broad subject matter but this study is actually broader than that title because it has a great deal to say about the antidemocratic institutions the democratic forces are up against. As Smith portrays the global field of conflict, her movement professionals and anarchists are not simply challenging the great inertia of the status quo, but are contending with an at least equally active, dynamic, and savvy collection of opponents. For her, the neoliberal order, supported by powerful states, transnational organizations, and wealthy corporate interests is not something that is established and well-entrenched, hallowed by the centuries—far from it. It has been actively expanding its reach and is vigorously engaged in trying to beat off potential challenges. To understand the global political scene, Smith shows, we will need to understand the movements on the right as well as the left. (Ongoing research by Clifford Bob is illuminating this part of the terrain.)

This book makes major contributions to two important, lively literatures: studies of social movements and studies of globalization. Some prominent scholars have been skeptical about the prospects of movements that cross borders. Many social movements fail, more than is often recognized in a body of research skewed toward successful instances. The barriers to transnational movements seem especially formidable. One might question whether people with little common identity, with very different life-situations, with access to radically differing resources, involved in different patterns of national politics, and subject to the barriers of distance (both spatial and cultural) can come together for coordinated action, let alone effective action. While social movements for a couple of centuries have been major actors in shaping the democratic politics of the wealthier national states, it is hardly obvious that transnational movements can play some similar role in challenging and reshaping global structures of domination. For one thing, there is no global state to act as common target for movement action, and mechanisms for carrying out global policies are highly problematic. In addition, one of the very important resources of national social movements for democracy has been the democratic legitimacy claims of states themselves, something strikingly absent in many of the major institutions of transnational power.

As for the globalization literature, its students have with some frequency seen the construction of cross-border connections in recent history as some combination of economic, political, and cultural processes in which the major players have been multinational corporations and financiers, states, and the established media. Some would now add to this list well-funded transnational NGOs. Grass roots movements seem either impediments or insignificant. Even some of the movement activists of whom Smith writes accept that “globalization” denotes the top-down processes against which they mobilize.

To all these skeptics, Jackie Smith has marshaled, not just in this book but in her entire corpus of work, a vast body of material that shows the reality of transnational movements and the extent to which globalization is happening bottom up as well as top down. The transnationally organized activism that she describes is part of the making of globalization, not just a reaction to it. It’s great to have this synthesis, and if there are any skeptics left after reading it, this is the book they are going to be debating.

Some of the chapters and arguments are simply brilliant, too many in fact to pause to enumerate them all. My favorite is chapter 9. It is the best account we now have of how strong are the transnational institutions that monitor the global economy compared to those that monitor such things as human rights and the environment. But rather than content herself with simply recounting the disparity in resources, Smith points to the degree to which the coexistence of

incompatible priorities surrounding different UN-related agencies might constitute a galvanizing spur to movement demands. Throughout the entire history of modern democracy from the late eighteenth century to the present day, contradictory claims and commitments have provided the basis for compelling social movement activism. If, to take one historically significant example, democracy's legitimacy reposes on the kind of claim of inclusiveness of political rights enshrined in a phrase like "universal suffrage", the exclusion of some from that universe has been a frequent source of movement mobilization. Smith is very interestingly arguing that the tension in our day between valuing human rights and valuing the play of market forces is yet another vital contradiction that has already fuelled activism on a transnational scale and will do so again.

Chapter 7, on the media, is very insightful, too. It's a masterful account of the advantages of the neoliberal network in getting its case out there and hence in shaping the public part of the global agenda. The degree to which many routinely use a phrase like "democracy and the market" as coequal and mutually dependent values is a remarkable statement of the commonsense of our era, although it has of late been looking less commonsensical. At least as striking is the degree to which my undergraduates show up with the notion that this book's subject matter is "antiglobalization movements", when many of Smith's democratizers are actually proposing alternative models of globalization. There are of course xenophobes who truly object to globalization in any form, but they are not what this book is about – something I want to return to.

I want to take note of one other profoundly admirable trait in this book, the way in which Smith's open ethical commitments energize rather than impede her scholarship. We have had endless discussions in the social sciences of whether one should or should not, could or could not, put down one's moral and political commitments when one takes up the researcher's toolkit. Jackie Smith's commitments lead her to obviously favor one network over another, to take pleasure in the thought that the one she favors is acting effectively in the world, and to draw on her research to advise the like-minded on how to do even better. But rather than simply substitute hope for observation, she provides a multiplicity of instances of movement activism. And she always casts her keen scholar's eye on the strengths and energies of the opposition, too. In short, her ethical commitments may have energized her search for data, but she gives us a lot of data, not just wishful thinking. Some may see that data as supporting a significantly less optimistic reading of the trends than her own.

In thinking about how we might try to build on this important work let me point to five sets of questions. First, I want to question whether the central barrier to global democracy is adequately characterized as neoliberalism. Second, I want to consider the role of the national states in today's globalization and consider whether we need to add something beyond their role in defense of global capitalism. Third, I want to raise some issues surrounding the effectiveness of democratic movements. Fourth, I want to draw on the history of the democratization of the national states to think about what may be other resources for democratic globalizers. Fifth, I want to open the question of global democracy itself.

**First, then, neoliberalism.** The book is framed as an ongoing contest between the champions of neoliberal globalization and the champions of a more democratic global vision. Smith depicts with great power the resources available to the neoliberal network and argues that despite these formidable resources, the proponents of a more democratic global order have their own resources, opportunities and successes. "Neoliberalism", she tells us, "limits government roles in providing social welfare and regulating economic activities within and between nations,

maximizing the role of market forces over political negotiations in shaping economic policies” (see p. 243, note 1). While one can indeed find such a social vision promoted in some of the think tanks on the political right, it seems to me a misleading characterization of the policies actually promoted by some very powerful shapers of globalization.

My large reservation, therefore, is that I think she has too radically narrowed the field of global contention by so tightly focusing on the advocates of such neoliberalism and their increasingly active opponents on behalf of global democracy. But in her own big conceptual scheme she recognizes the existence of two other stances. There are those who, unlike her neoliberals, identify not with unhindered market processes but with the dominance of a particular national state and particular large firms and who deploy state power to serve particular economic interests and particular national power interests. I think it misleading to equate US policy in the global arena, for example, with neoliberalism as Smith and many others define it, when the US actually favors elimination of national defenses against the global marketplace when it comes to the export of US manufactures but is highly protectionist when it comes to the import of third world agricultural products. And much the same could be said of Western Europe. This is not a small difference about minor details. Nor could US immigration policy be described accurately as rooted in a commitment to the free flow of the factors of production. (It seems much closer to the mark to describe its objective as the creation of an insecure, low wage labor force.) In addition, many have described important parts of US economic policy as the socialization of risk for powerful corporate actors, as, for example, has James K. Galbraith in his recent *The Predator State*, whose title points to a reality that has nothing in common with the minimal state of free-market dreams.

Although Smith points up the harms connected to neoliberal policies in the Third World (and there is no shortage of those), many a Third World farmer would rejoice if the US and Western Europe were more genuinely neoliberal, opened their domestic markets, and abandoned their subsidies for domestic producers in the agricultural arena. In other words, some very significant proportion of neoliberal rhetoric is simply baloney, along with such preposterous notions as that the US Republican Party favors fiscal stringency. It is a very important question how claims of market freedom have come to be invoked to defend a system of social inequalities created in large degree by state policy. Talk about “free markets” is in some quarters a very important rhetorical strategy that deserves its own scrutiny, but we should not mix this up with the actual content of policies. Debating the social vision of free market utopias is an interesting exercise, but this vision has only a very limited connection to policies actually pursued by the world’s dominant powers, however much they invoke its language.

Those who are in opposition to the untrammled play of market forces include not merely her democratic globalizers, therefore, but the governments of most rich countries. In addition, however, besides her democratic globalizers, there is another, extremely diverse, collection of enemies of neoliberalism with an important role today, namely a variety of nationalists, religious zealots, and racists. Some of these are organized increasingly on a transnational scale thanks to the same social processes that have brought her global democrats together. Such movements are, in places, probably fuelled by concern over protecting “our” jobs, or culture, or political institutions from foreign workers, foreign ideas, or foreign funds, in short, from the transnationalized market. With all this in play, I am not persuaded that the political struggles to define a global order today are readily reduced to a neoliberal network vs. a democratic one.

Differently put, movements for global democracy have a lot more to struggle with than neoliberalism.

**Second, understanding the states.** One major player that is aiming for its own global domination is the United States, with its vast network of military bases. In the presidential campaign of 2008, the nominees of the major parties were more concerned to surround themselves at their nominations with encomia from generals than from business leaders. The foreign policy portion of their first TV debate was largely devoted to whether Afghanistan or Iraq was the right Middle Eastern war for restoring America's rightful place in the world. And by way of additional complication, adherents of such foreign policy proposals during the Bush years were apt to defend them as the vehicle for global democratization, too, a rhetorical element deserving of as much attention as the language of neoliberalism. But "democracy promotion" as a US goal preceded Bush and has been subject to much scrutiny by William Robinson and others. Whether such policies create opportunity for the kind of democratic globalizers Jackie Smith is studying deserves some scrutiny.

A corollary issue is the challenge to a democratic future presented by the global war on terror, with its enhanced security measures in many countries and the consequent constrictions on personal freedoms, enhancement of executive authority, and ready justification for state secrecy, all of which may seriously challenge democratic accountability to citizens. In addition, we should consider the ways in which security concerns have become entangled with issues surrounding immigration and the social integration of newcomers. This challenge is all the more serious to the extent that there actually are serious security issues that those managing the strong states are going to be paying attention to regardless of their views on the relationship of state and market. I refer not so much to al Qaeda as to the possible acquisition of nukes by terrorists, or criminals, or threatened states. If we try the thought experiment of asking what a nuclear detonation would do to the state of global democracy, we will again see that we can not sum up the challenge to a democratic order in our time as "neoliberalism".

**My third arena for further exploration is the criteria for claiming movement success.** At points this book seems to have in mind actual policy changes on the part of states or transnational agencies that benefit poor countries or poor people. But at other points, success is taken to be the achievement of democratic practices within the movement. At still other points what seems to count is the very existence of a lively movement. These are all important matters, but they are not identical. If movement activists are able to fashion a more democratic movement and include previously excluded voices within the movement, Smith contends, they are forging a culture that plants the seeds for future democratization. Maybe so. But as recent social movement scholarship has (at last!) begun to devote some sustained attention to thinking through how to analyze the impact of movements, we have been coming to understand how difficult it can be to develop firm conclusions and how complex the consequences of social movement action can be. Think of the ways in which the US Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, in its success in challenging the racial foundations of the southern branches of the Democratic Party, helped create the conditions for decades of dominance by the Republicans. (On such matters the collection *How Social Movements Matter* – edited by Giugni, McAdam, and Tilly – is deeply thought-provoking.) With regard to transnational democratic movements, I think it would be very helpful if we could differentiate among types of success, distinguish shorter from longer run impacts, and keep countermovements in mind. That is a big agenda this book raises for the future: either for the author, or her students, or the rest of us who admire this work.

**Divisions among the powerful.** Jackie Smith has many acute observations on the diverse missions of transnational agencies and the ensuing tensions among them. This strikes me as an important arena for further exploration, especially in light of the history of democratizing movements within the national states. With great frequency it has been unexpected divisions among the powerful that have opened the way for movements and have generated allies. To try out one example among thousands: in many parts of Europe, the nineteenth century campaign for voting rights for women was carried by the political left. But in the era of World War One, when workers' movements, military mutinies, socialist electoral successes, fears of radicalized immigrants, and the Russian Revolution scared the establishment, the political right discovered that enfranchising women, believed to be innately more conservative, might be a good plan. Or an even older one: long-standing conflicts of powerful local aristocrats and centralizing monarchs before the 19th century were an essential context for Europe's numerous popular movements all the way to such seminal events in democratic history as the English civil wars of the 1640s or the French Revolution. No one foresees such things, and popular movements are likely to be as hostile to monarchs as to aristocrats, but they happened again and again. Our world of antagonistic states, and organs of transnational power in significant disagreement, are going to create opportunities for global democratizers even if no one can foresee where or when or how. Jackie Smith's analysis of conflicting propensities among existing transnational institutions, however, does suggest that despite their enormous resources unexpected openings for transnational movements will emerge, just as they emerged for national movements.

**Finally, the question of global democracy.** Let me here draw on some of the typically tough questions Charles Tilly once troubled me with after reading something of my own on paths toward a more democratic world. How, Tilly demanded, will we know when we are headed down such a path? By what criteria? Measured how? Since there is no reason at all to expect that a more democratic global order will look like a democratic national state, just on a larger scale, to what extent can we draw on familiar ideas about what democratic institutions are at the national level – something with which we have had much experience – and specify right now how we would know global democracy if we ever run into it...and to what extent are we, as scholarly observers, inevitably engaged in ad hoc improvisations, just like the global democracy movement itself.

John Markoff  
 Department of Sociology  
 University of Pittsburgh  
 jm2@pitt.edu  
 www.pitt.edu/~jm2

**Schuerkens, Ulrike, ed. 2008. *Globalization and Transformations of Local Socioeconomic Practices*, New York: Routledge. 216 Pages, ISBN 0-415-96090-8 Cloth.**

This volume, published in Routledge's series *Advances in Sociology*, is quite interdisciplinary in character as it attempts to appeal to economists, sociologists, and anthropologists alike. A consequence of this however, is that the chapters are rather uneven in terms of the types of contributions world-systems scholars might appreciate. Some are summaries of recently

published books, others are essays, and a few read more like papers in progress. In addition, despite the editor's attempts in her introduction and more so in her concluding chapter to give the various contributions more coherence, they remain very disparate essays that primarily stand alone.

The first essay, by Peter Imbusch entitled "Contradictions of Social Responsibility – German Business Elites and Globalization," uses a content analysis of newspapers and business journals as well as dozens of interviews with business elites to contextualize the shift from "Rhenian Capitalism" to a model of neo-liberal Anglo-Saxon capitalism while referring to a Goffman-like 'front stage' of corporate responsibility juxtaposed with what happens backstage. Although well-written and easy to understand, the essay contains little new information: anyone who has read quality newspaper reports about Schroeder's socioeconomic reforms will have garnered the same information. The second essay is Nina Bandelj's "Negotiating Neo-Liberalism: Free Market Reform in Central and Eastern Europe." Her essay provides an in-depth comparative analysis of how neo-liberal shock therapy has played out differently in various post-communist Eastern European regimes due to differential domestic cultural and political legacies, such as the strength of trade unions and the prevalence or absence of nationalist protectionist discourse. The essay's arguments are sufficiently compelling that one will likely be tempted to further explore the matter in her book *From Communists to Foreign Capitalists* published by Princeton University Press in 2007. The third essay, Andrea Mennicken's "Mobilizing International Auditing Standards in Arenas of Political and Economic Change in Post-Soviet Russia," highlights how internationally recognized accounting and auditing standards were promoted by the Russian government after 1991. Written by a lecturer in accounting, this is the most turgid a-political contribution in the volume and the topic so specialized that it will likely only appeal to a select few. The fourth essay, Thierry Pairault's "China's Response to Globalization" is arguably the most provocative essay in the entire collection. Written by someone who is both a trained economist and sinologist at the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales* (in Paris), the author provides a fascinating analysis of how the notion of 'Confucian Values' has been manufactured throughout the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries to serve different ideological agendas and public policies. Some might find this a very interesting indirect follow-up to Giovanni Arrighi's *Adam Smith in Beijing* (Verso, 2007).

The fifth essay, by Frederick Wherry, addresses "The Export of Cultural Commodities as Impression Management" with a focus on Thailand at the World Fairs from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present. In the essay, derived from data based on semi-structured interviews with artisans as well as archival sources, the author provides an interesting theoretical typology about how ideal-typical cultural orientations toward cultural commodities manifest themselves in the various strategies that countries pursue to promote multiple cultural goods. Acculturated nation states such as Thailand, Wherry claims, preserve their pre-modern traditions as symbols of national identity with significant implications for tourism, schools, museums, etc., whereas assimilated orientations lead states to mimic the cultural institutions in core countries. Wherry also asserts that reactive states block the commercial circulation of culturally significant commodities. The author's ongoing research agenda directly addresses the extent to which states with somewhat similar economic, political, and social positions in the world system might experience different degrees of market demand for their cultural goods and services due to their country's cultural situation. This also indirectly contributes to the ongoing debate about agency versus structural constraints in the world economy today. The reader who would appreciate a

more comprehensive account of this topic would do well to consult his study *Global Markets and Local Crafts: Thailand and Costa Rica Compared* published by Johns Hopkins University Press (2008). The sixth essay, Mathilde Gauvain's "Informal and Formal Economy in Caracas" provides valuable insights and reflections about the different ways one can theoretically interpret the significance of the informal economy in the periphery. The author specifically links the increase of globalization with the growth of the upper and lower tiers of the informal sector in general and in contemporary Venezuela in particular. Unfortunately the essay, though based on ethnographic observation, is very brief in comparison with the others in the volume and somewhat gives the impression that it is more a draft from a chapter in a dissertation than a polished presentation of research findings. The seventh essay, by Dirk Kohnert entitled "Common Roots, Shared Traits, Joint Prospects?" analyzes (sub)-cultures of innovation and empowerment such as vodun or voodoo with reflections on Benin and Haiti. Not only is it a rather strange topic for an economist, but the overall contribution is unclear as the text, devoid of any methodology or data, did not enlighten the reviewer as to its theoretical position, notwithstanding some vague and passing references to 'glocalization.' The eighth and last essay is "Rethinking Free Trade – Practices in Contemporary Togo" by Nina Sylvanus. The author provides an interesting long-term historicization of female entrepreneurs in Togo and how the significance of South Asian and East Asian textile production has altered the local market as well as networks in the region. Like Wherry in the earlier chapter discussed above, Sylvanus's intervention is an important one: to what degree are local markets able to adapt to ever increasing global competition? And to what extent is the local able to structure certain aspects of the global?

Altogether, this edited volume contains some interesting contributions about various socioeconomic practices. But the lack of a unifying theme among the different chapters remains somewhat disturbing, resulting in a frustratingly imbalanced collection. This is undoubtedly what results when one collects papers from (former) graduate students, colleagues at the same institution as the editor and various papers presented at different conferences over a couple of years. Though the book is too dense and specialized to be used for undergraduate courses, its general lack of coherence does not make it a compelling required read for doctoral seminars either. Some scholars, however, might want to acquire it for the sake of consulting some of the specific essays or topics discussed above.

Eric Mielants  
Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology  
Fairfield University  
emielants@mail.fairfield.edu

**Modelski, George, Tesseleno Devezas, and William R. Thompson (eds.) 2008. *Globalization as Evolutionary Process: Modeling Global Change*. London and New York: Routledge. 444 pp. ISBN 0-415-77360-1 (hbk) 0-415-77361-x (pbk).**

The result of a project funded by Lisbon's Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, this volume is the tenth book in Routledge's Rethinking Globalizations series. Barry Gills, the series' editor, is also the founder of the Globalizations journal and an advocate of the multiple globalizations perspective. The notion of multiple globalizations is a means to argue in favor of a multitude of

voices & perspectives about globalization— which in turn is an argument set against the monolithic logic of contemporary neo-liberalism. Certainly this volume represents a distinct and hitherto underdeveloped perspective on globalization.

The impetus for funding this project has been in accordance to the Foundation's past sponsorship of major undertakings in the social sciences that aim to revamp the social scientific enterprise *per se* – such as the well-known *Open the Social Sciences* report of the Gulbenkian Commission. This book consists of 17 papers originally prepared for a seminar held in 2006 at the International Institute of Applied System Analysis in Laxenburg, Austria. The papers are grouped into four parts: one cluster of them looks upon globalization as an explicitly evolutionary process, a second one advances a set of different historical interpretations as processes, a third cluster focuses on recent changes associated with information technology, and finally the last cluster examines the potential for developing models of forecasting globalization trends and developing simulations of globalization processes. The volume's introduction and conclusions are a succinct and rather successful effort to sum up this bewildering array of topics and approaches into concise statements about the volume's overall orientation and the theoretical and methodological perspectives of the contributors. Providing a detailed, chapter-by-chapter account is impossible – at least for this reviewer. Not only is the volume's size an issue (444 pp.), but also the subject matter is difficult to summarize and communicate easily to non-experts. Most chapters deal with complex issues employing sophisticated language (unnecessary jargon, some will say). Furthermore, in several chapters the use of advanced mathematical modeling and quantitative techniques makes it hard for the less mathematically inclined to follow the arguments closely. Consequently, the choice made in this review is to sketch the material presented in the volume's four parts, while focusing more extensively on the theoretical and rather more reader-friendly arguments presented mostly in Part I. In this manner, the material's accessibility to the broadest academic spectrum is maximized.

In Part I, Modelski's chapter on 'Globalization as evolutionary process' sets forth the volume's most theoretically explicit argument, arguing in favor of an 'institutional' (versus a 'connectivist') approach on globalization, whereby globalization is viewed as 'the construction (and/or emergence) of institutions of planetary scale' (p. 12). That is, in contrast to the approach followed by David Held and his associates in their *Global Transformations* (1999), Modelski argues that the processes of globalization have to be explained in evolutionary terms, taking the *long duree* of human history as their frame of reference and the human species as the unit of analysis. According to his line of argument, the onset of globalization coincides with the start of the modern era of the world system – around 1000 AD (p. 14). From Modelski's point of view, world system evolution is a cascade of multilevel, self-similar processes that exhibit self-organization. Instead of the traditional notion of "adaptation", Modelski proposes the notion of evolutionary learning (p. 16) as the form of globalization. Accordingly, long 500-year cycles characterize globalization processes viewed in terms of evolutionary learning by the human species. In Chapter 3, Devezas and Modelski follow up on this logic of systemic learning by examining the Portuguese's technological innovations in the era of early globalization. They argue that Portuguese expansion in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries consisted of global processes (K-waves and long cycles) that exhibit the properties of systemic learning. In fact, the close relation between technological innovation and K-waves in the period preceding the Industrial Revolution can be accounted for via evolutionary analysis. Next, William R. Thompson applies Modelski's model of evolutionary globalization in the study of political globalization, arguing that in the long

run, the world is becoming more orderly and hierarchical. Yet, within this emerging picture, further complexities are explored both with regard to the nature of the measurements as well as several threads of substantive explanation. In his contribution, Joachim Karl Rennstich defines globalization as “a long term social system. . .without a single orderer” (p. 87), and argues in favor of looking upon historical globalization in evolutionary self-organizational terms. That is, while rejecting technological determinism, Rennstich argues that technological innovations, once fully embedded into their social context, result in the development of leading sectors which in turn enable specific units to become powerful leaders in the global system (p. 103). Fulvio Attina looks at long-term change in political institutions and ways of model building capable of social forecasting. He focuses specifically on the emergence and strengthening of formal institutions of organization and government over the last 80 yrs. & reflects on the advantages and the drawbacks the US’ decline of hegemonic position in the world-system.

Part II of the volume is devoted to presenting various models of long-term change. These models range from mathematical models of world-system development to examinations of periodic waves of integration in the Euro-Asian world system to analyses of city-size distributions in historical systems. Catia Antunes’ chapter on the applicability of various interpretations to the study of historical globalization was by far the most accessible for this particular reviewer: Antunes presents a lucid historiographical and analytical overview of the models set forth by Braudel, Wallerstein, Frank, and Held. In turn, that leads to a careful and well-thought argument about the scholarly progress made in conceptualizing globalization in history. Part III is devoted to studying the relations between evolutionary logic and the current phase or stage of globalization. The problematic takes its clue from Manuel Castells’ (1996) famous thesis about the contemporary period being an “information age.” The individual chapters of Part III focus on various aspects of the relationship between information technology and contemporary society. The topics range from the acceleration of socio-technical evolution to the growth of the Internet to developing an evolutionary perspective on Informatics research. Quantitative and historical analyses intertwine in most chapters of Part III. In this Part, the most interpretative-friendly chapter is the one by Shumpei Kumon and Yasuhide Yamanouchi, who combine systems theory with elements of world-system analysis in order to analyze the modern world-system (and modernity itself) in terms of three distinct globalizing phases – the latest of which is our current age. Part IV’s three chapters move on to the most challenging issue of forecasting globalization – a theme pursued in part in relation to the well-known A.T. Kearney/Foreign Policy *Globalization Index*. Barry B. Hughes uses the International Futures to measure globalization and extrapolate from the available evidence to social forecasting, while Rafael Reuveny argues in favor of using world models for the purposes of forecasting globalization trends. In fact, this chapter uses two such simulation world models (World3 and Globus) in an effort to find the most promising forecasting model.

Finally, the editors’ concluding remarks affirm the plausibility and viability of the evolutionary perspective in globalization studies. Their tone is self-congratulatory (“That is a no-brainer!” is the opening sentence) and shows the editors’ self-assurance. The volume’s substantive findings, they argue, lend themselves to two main conclusions: first, “globalization is a powerful, long-range trend that is not easily reversed or aborted”; and second, while “explanations of globalization are far from settled [ . . . ] an explanation based on evolutionary learning appears to be plausible” (p.419). The editors conclude that the volume “presents a good case in favor” of the evolutionary concept of globalization (p. 428) – and certainly that is

undeniably true. Further, they argue that “a reasoned outline of an evolutionary process model of globalization is now at hand” and that “should be modeled as a logistic, or a hyperbolic process” (p. 429).

The above provide a brief, crude, and rather extremely simplified summary of complex, articulate, detailed presentations and by no means do justice to the complexity of the arguments presented in the volume’s individual chapters. One should certainly praise the mostly exceptional quality of scholarship contained in the majority of the chapters. The editors have successfully employed a big tent strategy and have been able to accommodate sufficient pluralism within their broad epistemological perspective to avoid the charge of extreme partisanship or conventional narrow-mindedness. In fact, it is difficult to generalize about a volume of such diverse approaches and distinctive foci of research. But it is evident that this volume is the product of great sophistication of theorizing and of sufficient diversity in the perspectives, methodologies, and voices heard. That is certainly the editors’ main achievement.

Still, the apparent contradiction between evolutionary theory and critical theorizing is, I believe, sufficiently transparent to most academics. This seems to me an almost obligatory criticism when addressing the academic audience of *JWSR*. That is, for a fairly long period of time, critical perspectives – including world-system analysis itself – have taken pride in negating the evolutionary logic explored in this collection in favor of approaches that incorporate the potential of emancipation in the very fabric of their argumentation. Let me render this line of criticism more explicit: the volume’s sophisticated model building easily degenerates into a flirtation with scientism – that is, the pretension of objectivity whereby conceptual, methodological, epistemological, and empirical conservative choices are legitimized via the advocacy of a supposedly value-neutral scientific method. To play devil’s advocate for a moment, the volume’s conceptual and epistemological repertoire (structuralism, system-building, simulations, formal theory, and mathematical modeling) consists of methodological choices far removed from hermeneutics, interpretation, and humanist approaches to the study of global social change. The epistemological, philosophical, and sociological perspectives that view culture and agency as foundational to our understanding of the world around us lie completely beyond the scope of the perspectives employed by this volume’s contributors. Subsequently, while the volume will be undoubtedly convincing and definitely quite appealing to the converts of the contributors’ epistemological persuasion, it is quite doubtful that non-believers will be converted or even remotely touched.

This remark brings forth the final and perhaps most paramount issue of concern. To make a final judgment about the volume requires going beyond the specifics of the individual presentations and addressing the broader theme of the overall approach proposed and its value both for sociology as well as for the future of the world-systems research agenda. Let us not forget that for more than a decade world-systems analysis has seen its critical credentials progressively overtaken by more mainstream and rather conservative strategies of achieving academic legitimacy – such as the employment of evolutionary perspectives, the growth of quantification, the use of advanced mathematics, social forecasting, formal theory, and so on. To a degree, this trend registers the growing acceptance and routinization of this particular perspective within academia – something that is but the inevitable consequence of the progress of time or the “graying” of the world-systems perspective.

The issue, therefore, is rather different: Is the road traveled by the contributors and editors of this collection a promising window to a better tomorrow or is it a conceptual and

methodological dead-end? Needless to say, the answer lies inevitably in the eye of the beholder: Humanists and their opponents would provide radically conflicting evaluations and there is very little in this project that transcends this divide. Historically speaking, though, social forecasting, mathematical model building and simulations have been options that failed to gain sufficient acceptance – beyond small groups of devoted followers - among the social-scientific audience. If past experience offers a clue about our tomorrows, then, the conclusion one is compelled to draw is rather grim: that is, instead of exploring undiscovered territories of knowledge this volume registers a backward-looking trajectory straight into a labyrinth of dead-ends from sociology's tumultuous past.

Victor Roudometof  
Department of Social and Political Sciences  
University of Cyprus  
roudomet@ucy.ac.cy

**Knowles, Richard, Jon Shaw, and Iain Docherty. 2008. *Transport Geographies: Mobilities, Flows and Spaces*. Malden, MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing. 293 Pages, ISBN 978-1-4051-5322-5 Cloth (\$99.95) ISBN 978-1-4051-5323-2 Paper (#44.95).**

This volume comprises an impressive collection of papers discussing the relationship between transportation and geography. Taken together, the fourteen articles in this book explicitly emphasize the crucial role that transportation plays in shaping the function and nature of spaces and places as well as the flows, interactions, and exchanges that occur between them. Each contribution is issue-based and presents an analytical treatment of the relationship between transportation and substantive phenomena, such as economic development, the environment, and social justice, or offers a discussion of the various mobilities and flows that occur within and between places, including the connections between cities, global air transport, and individual transportation patterns. This volume is both readable as well as informative, and the generally qualitative approach taken by the contributors makes it a welcome addition to the body of quantitative scholarship on transport geographies that already exists. Richard Knowles, Jon Shaw, and Iain Docherty have compiled a wealth of scholarship on transport geographies that reaches far beyond disciplinary boundaries to offer insights to students and scholars from a variety of disciplines, including economics, transportation studies, political science, urban planning, sociology, environmental studies, and engineering.

Knowles, Shaw, and Docherty have divided *Transport Geographies* into three sections. First, they present five chapters that lay out the fundamentals of transport geographies. The topics discussed in this section include transport geographies, economic development, the environment, social justice, and transportation governance, and ownership. Next, they offer seven papers focusing on the flows and spaces of transport geographies. Topics addressed in this part of the book include cities, rural transportation, regional transport, global air transport, international maritime freight movements, individual transportation patterns, and tourism, and leisure. Finally, they provide two chapters that focus on the future of transport geographies. The quantity and detail of the scholarship in this book is far too vast to be summarized at more than a cursory level

here. Instead, I will highlight the sections of this book that may be of particular relevance to sociologists, especially those who study urban and global phenomena.

Of special interest to scholars of global political economy is the treatment of global freight movements, especially including the discussion of the logistics industry presented in the section on international maritime freight movements (Chapter 10). If transportation, generally, has been sometimes overlooked by social scientists, then freight transportation seems to be an extreme case of this. Despite of the centrality of freight transportation to the daily lives of individuals around the world through the transportation of consumer goods as well as the key role that freight transport plays in systems of global trade, the movement of freight has not compelled much scholarly interest in the sociological press, though exceptions to this statement certainly exist. *Transport Geographies*, too, provides an important contribution to the social scientific study of freight movements through its detailed discussion of logistics in Chapter 10 as well as the emphasis on how transportation undergirds the post-Fordist production techniques that have emerged in recent decades (Chapter 2). The emergence of logistics and supply-chain management in the field of global trade and transportation has allowed the spatial dispersion of manufacturing around the world by making distance less and less of an issue through the availability of ever-more expedient methods of transport. The expansion and profitability of global trade and capitalism relies on the smooth functioning of these networks of global production – including the transportation components. The analysis of the movement of goods around the world presented by Knowles, Shaw, and Docherty is complete and leaves the reader with a detailed understanding of how different modes of transportation work together to facilitate the workings of global production and trade.

Urban sociologists will also enjoy the discussion of the social impacts of transportation flows. The third chapter of *Transport Geographies* specifically focuses on the environmental consequences of transportation and the fourth chapter considers the implications of transportation for social justice. Health, noise pollution, climate change, and land use effects are all environmental consequences of transportation systems that are sometimes managed through government regulation or through the effective planning of transportation systems to minimize these costs. Social justice concerns center upon questions of who has access to what kind of transportation systems and at what cost these are made available. People with low incomes, the elderly, the disabled, and those living outside of metropolitan areas tend to have more limited access to quality transportation, and the costs, such as environmental issues, tend to be borne disproportionately by communities of the poor, minorities, or other disadvantaged social groups. Clearly, transportation systems are not neutral, and Knowles, Shaw, and Docherty offer a nuanced answer to the question of “who benefits?” from transportation systems.

These are only a few of many exciting topics covered in this book that could enhance sociological research and teaching. For instance, the section on transport governance and ownership (Chapter 5) raises powerful questions about the role of the state in managing transportation systems and more generally about the role of the state in the economy. In spite of the deregulatory tendencies of recent decades, this section of the book makes a convincing case that a resurgence of state regulation of the transportation sector may be occurring in order to ensure the sustainability of transport systems so that mobility can continue to exist without causing immense environmental damage or other social consequences. The section of the book dedicated to transport directions to the future (Chapter 13) provides an interesting analysis of our current and potential future transport trends, answering such questions as “why do we travel, in

the ways that we do?” and “how is the information age redefining accessibility?” For those looking for a broad overview of modern transportation trends, this chapter provides this information in a clear and interesting way. Finally, sections of this book also discuss the impact of transportation on city life (Chapter 6) as well as inter-urban and regional transport (Chapter 8), which specifically attend to urban issues surrounding the transportation process.

The quality and wealth of scholarship collected by Knowles, Shaw, and Docherty makes it difficult to find weaknesses in *Transport Geography*. This book seeks to provide a broad-based and intriguing survey of the field of transport geographies and it meets this goal easily. However, the geographical focus of this volume is one limitation, as it mainly centers on transportation geographies in developed countries. Though a few parts of this book, including the section on transportation and economic development (Chapter 2), do mention transportation issues in the developing world, these discussions are few and far between. Other sections of this book, such as the section on transportation and social justice, could potentially benefit from an inclusion of issues in the developing world, especially how transportation is (or is not) used to diminish social exclusion and promote social integration in other parts of the world. However, the editors themselves note this criticism, and certainly no book can do everything. Though a more detailed and comprehensive analysis of transportation in the developing world seems to be a fruitful area for study, perhaps this is the subject for another book. The research brought together by Knowles, Shaw, and Docherty is nonetheless compelling, if primarily focused on developed countries.

One of the greatest strengths of this volume is its explicit focus on transportation, which as Knowles, Shaw, and Docherty correctly note, is a subject that has often been taken for granted within the social science disciplines. Shaw, Knowles, and Docherty, as the authors of Chapter 1, emphasize that transportation is often overlooked as an “ordinary” phenomenon, especially in developed countries, to which we turn our attention only when transportation systems experience hiccups or other impediments to their smooth functioning. However, this collection of research demonstrates the impact of transportation on economies (both national and global) and to social life at large, which are important reasons why transportation should be the subject of more social scientific research. The contributions in *Transport Geographies* offer a broad-based and comprehensive survey of transportation, including its modes, geographies, and its social and economic impacts, with descriptive analyses ranging from the individual experience of transportation to the more macro-level issues of global transportation and trade. As such, this collection of articles is a must-read for urban sociologists as well as those interested in the sociology of globalization. This book contains something for everyone and is suitable as a textbook for advanced undergraduate or graduate courses related to planning, geography, and urban sociology.

Elizabeth A. Sowers  
Department of Sociology  
University of California, Irvine  
esowers@uci.edu

**Hanhimäki, Jussi M. 2008. *The United Nations: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press. 184 Pages, ISBN 978-0-19-530437-4 Paper \$11.95.**

This “very short introduction” by Jussi M. Hanhimäki is number 199 in a series of similarly formatted books, for general readers, that provide overviews of their subjects within about 150 pages of illustrated text. Within such length restrictions, it is common for fairly complex subjects to be handled by presenting selected subtopics that are more amenable to concise narrative treatment. The United Nations is a topic that could be introduced through a political, historical, or organizational description of its activities, structure, and functions. Hanhimäki emphasizes a historical and organizational description, but includes some insightful commentary as the book proceeds.

The book provides a good general understanding of how the U.N. originated, how its major administrative branches are organized, the political basis for its operation, and the types of goals, services, operations, and functions it has attempted to handle over its first 63 years. The book may prove useful as a supplementary text in a history, political science, or sociology course, or as background information for related research topics. However, it is probably too selective in its choice of topics to be used as a primary text in specialized or advanced courses. Furthermore, the book contains informational discrepancies that make it less than ideal as an authoritative research reference. Although organized in a way that makes it quite readable, this readability occasionally comes at the expense of clarity.

Although the first chapter provides a historical framework, later chapters also offer overlapping chronological treatments of related topics, and a separate chronology section appears at the very back of the book. History-minded readers will want to keep track of the sequence of key events by flipping back and forth between various sections of the book, but the dates and details provided in these sections do not match neatly together. When did Boutros Boutros-Ghali become the U.N. secretary-general? The table on page 39 states that it was 1992, but according to the chronology on page 152, it was 1991. How many U.N. peacekeeping missions were authorized during the Cold War? Page 80 states that there were eighteen, but page 71 refers to only thirteen. Insufficient explanation or detail is provided in the text to allow the reader to resolve such discrepancies or to determine the kinds of misinterpretation they might have arisen from. If one seeks specific factual information, it therefore seems necessary to refer to other sources to double-check the information provided. Many problems involving dates only disagree by one year and can thus may merely be rooted in the different between an event’s authorization and its actual implementation, but factual issues still remain, such as whether it was actually Mobutu Sese Seiko [sic] who headed a new government in Congo in 1964 (page 78) rather than Moise Tshombe.

It seems fair to say that although this is a problem, it is not so severe as to throw doubt on the credibility of Hanhimäki or his insights, nor to cause a reader to want to double-check every fact in the book. Readers who do not seek a general understanding and do not need to cite specific facts will find that the book is mostly informative and rewarding about its main subject. The lack of precise historical consistency is the primary weaknesses of the book, but this usually does not diminish the validity or effectiveness of the text in accomplishing its descriptive and explanatory goals. Despite their flaws, the book’s chronologies are nevertheless usable to provide a general understanding of how the U.N. arose and became more successful than the prior League of Nations institution had been, how it was granted the authority to undertake various peacekeeping

missions, and how it developed numerous additional goals and services to promote human rights, economic development, and other progressive causes. Where Hanhimäki's book succeeds quite well is in its level-headed explanations about why various choices were or were not made, how the organization of the U.N. seems to make sense despite (or because of) its apparent inefficiencies, and why the U.N. and its affiliated sub-agencies have received large amounts of both praise and criticism over the years. The text illustrates very well how that some of these topics are not simple factual matters, but must be understood in terms of their associated complexities and controversies. Although the length restrictions on this series of books prevents extensive detail and comprehensiveness, a few telling examples are provided to suggest these deeper issues. Where a topic might at first seem to involve merely a dry collection of facts or administrative descriptions, there are many points where Hanhimäki's insightful observations provide useful guidance and direction for readers. Hanhimäki provides effective transitional passages at the end of most chapters, explaining how seemingly disparate topics are linked together and necessary for understanding this complex global institution.

The book seems designed to be read in its entirety, rather than allowing individual chapters to be read in isolation. Only then can its information be pieced together into a fairly satisfying whole. Some passages soar with insight, while others suffer from wording that feels clunky and ambiguous. It is unclear whether given dollar values are adjusted or unadjusted, and occasional variations in the wording of proper nouns create unnecessary ambiguity and confusion for the reader, who must consider whether these references refer to objects that are indeed the same, or similarly named yet distinct objects. A glossary of acronyms is provided toward the end, to assist with such matters, but that glossary, plus the chronology that precedes it, seems mismatched with the importance given to various agencies and events in the main text, leaving out the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) as well as various dates that the text suggested were of very great importance, while including various additional information not referenced in the text at all. Formatting problems with some of the book's charts sometimes pose additional challenges to readers, including a tiny font that barely fits within the resolution of the print. Endnote citations are given only for direct quotes, rather than factual content, providing the reader instead with a 4-page list for "Further reading." All of these drawbacks may be acceptable among general non-specialist readers, but would seem to discourage more advanced academic use of this volume. The quality of the final index appears to be good, however.

From a world-systems perspective, this book will provide a handy overview that includes consideration of such issues as whether and in what ways the U.N. might be considered a tool for superpower domination, the origins and effects of favoring its permanent Security Council member nations with veto power, and the potential for existing and developing U.N. agencies and capabilities to be used by less industrialized nations. Particularly interesting were descriptions of a "sixth veto" that could potentially allow a sufficient majority of nonpermanent members to block a resolution supported by all permanent members. Hanhimäki is clearly concerned with issues of international inequality, human rights, poverty, conflict, and the need to assist oppressed and displaced persons and groups. Calling the U.N. an "impossible hybrid," he seeks to explore how it has been, and may be, used as an agency for promoting conditions of peace, equity, and human rights, as well as a set of agencies that has also tolerated and maintained the global state of power and wealth inequalities. As with so many other institutions, its role is not simply a predictable one that can be presumed to favor the same set of hegemonic players, but instead

proves to be a complex and contested construction that is subject to changes that also allow traditional power relationships to be questioned and contested.

Mike Sobocinski  
Independent Scholar  
Lansing, Michigan  
sobocinm@michigan.gov

**Wolf, Martin. 2008. *Fixing Global Finance*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 248 Pages, ISBN 9780801890482 Cloth (\$24.95)**

Martin Wolf's *Fixing Global Finance* is a useful contribution for those interested in the current global financial crisis as well as the evolution of global finance and its impact on the world-system more generally. Written before the extent of the sub-prime debacle had become generally known, the book focuses on the global imbalances of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which many (including Wolf) see as ultimately responsible for the US-centered financial implosion. Although the financial crisis has taken a different direction than that imagined by most economists writing in the mid-2000's – the debates with which Wolf is engaged – the book is an important reminder of the global macroeconomic issues which still remain in the background of the problems that have captured attention during 2009. In spite of the book's detailed reconstruction of the litany of financial ills that have characterized the era of financial globalization, Wolf differs from prominent economists such as Joseph Stiglitz and Jagdish Bhagwati, who have argued that financial (as distinct from trade) globalization should be tightly controlled. In contrast, Wolf argues that the benefits of global finance outweigh the risks and that the problems in the system can be fixed. These conclusions may strike many readers as unwarranted given the evidence presented in the book.

Wolf argues that the risks of global finance are inherent in the network of promises that make up the financial system, but nevertheless maintains that the putative benefits, including improved monitoring of companies, a more competitive financial sector, enhanced regulation, as well as improved access and reduced cost of capital, outweigh the risks. The principal risk is that of crisis. This is given detailed empirical treatment in chapter three, where Wolf lays out what has become the conventional wisdom among economists and policymakers on the emerging market crises of the 1990's, such as those that struck Mexico, East Asia, Russia and Argentina. Unlike some accounts which stress portfolio investment as the main variety of "hot money," Wolf emphasizes the propensity of bank credit to result in "sudden stops" or reversals of capital flows. Wolf places heavy emphasis on the role of currency mismatches (i.e. dollar-denominated debts that balloon in value during currency devaluations) and short-term debt in his account of these crises.

Chapter four, the core of the book, describes the evolution of the global financial system from the crises of the 1990's up till the eve of the sub-prime crisis. Wolf adheres to Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke's "global savings glut" hypothesis: that is, the argument that US current account deficits and accumulation of debt during the first decade of the twentieth century are largely caused by the excess of savings over investment in emerging markets, particularly China. In turn, he stresses that deliberate policy choices in these countries – particularly fixed

(and undervalued) exchange rates in the context of an export-led industrialization strategy – are in large degree responsible for these imbalances. In the wake of the exchange rate crises of the previous decade, developing country central banks have embarked on a program of massive foreign reserve accumulation in order to protect their exchange rates, with the resulting excess largely invested in US treasuries. Wolf downplays alternative interpretations of US current account deficits (and accompanying low real interest rates), such as what he calls the “money glut” view, which attributes global imbalances to excessive monetary expansion on the part of the Federal Reserve. Given that (as Wolf points out) the question of how to interpret US current account deficits is not just an academic debate but a geopolitical one – with US authorities favoring the “savings glut” view and Asian authorities favoring the “money glut” view – this issue surely deserves more attention than he gives it.

Chapter five – aptly titled “Calm before a Storm” – turns to the question of whether US current account deficits are sustainable in the long run. Here, Wolf joins a small chorus of economists who were arguing that the global economy was in an unsustainable state well before the sub-prime crisis erupted, though like most of these analysts, he saw problems at the global macroeconomic level while ignoring the asset bubble in the US financial system. In this sense, the issues Wolf highlights here have yet to play out on the global stage. The argument that deficits are unsustainable is simple: at current levels, the deficits will lead to a massive accumulation of claims on US assets. Wolf carefully considers alternative claims that deficits are, indeed, sustainable, convincingly rejecting this arguments. Some of his arguments here have only been strengthened by the subprime crisis, notably his rejection of the claim that the putative efficiency of the US financial system warrants the massive inflows of capital.

All of these issues lead to Wolf’s fundamental argument that the global financial system can and should be resurrected by reforms in key countries (again China looms large) as well as at the global level. These issues are addressed in the final chapters. Wolf’s proposed reforms are aimed at maintaining a liberal yet crisis-free global financial system in which the US no longer plays the role of “borrower and spender of last resort.” Wolf first considers shifts in exchange rates between the US and Eurozone without accompanying change in policy among the Asian countries. But the key issue, he recognizes, is China’s industrialization strategy. He argues that China is bumping up against the limits of export-led growth: excess capacity, rising inequality and slowing employment growth, environmental destruction, and the potential for a protectionist backlash in the US. Wolf thus prescribes increased Chinese public and private consumption in the form of investment in infrastructure, health and education, as well as exchange rate appreciation. Other suggested reforms include measures directed towards enabling developing countries to borrow in their own currency (thus mitigating the currency mismatch issue) and promoting domestic financial systems by encouraging investors such as pension funds and insurance companies. At the global level, Wolf advocates reform of the IMF and informal groups such as the G-7 and G-20.

The key remains that of the policies adopted by the Chinese state, and to a lesser extent those of other rising Asian powers. It is here that readers approaching this book from a world-systems perspective are likely to remain unconvinced that a liberal global financial order *can* be repaired (independently of their normative views on this question). If the fate of the financial system (and the global economy) rests on policies adopted by China, it is important to consider the political economy factors and strategic choices facing Chinese elites. Wolf fails to convince that it serves Chinese leaders’ interests to change policy course in the direction he recommends

for two reasons. First, as noted above, Wolf does not sufficiently consider the fact that Asian authorities in general do not subscribe to the savings glut hypothesis and instead blame imbalances on the Federal Reserve's excessive monetary expansion. Given this differing underlying analysis, it seems less likely that Chinese (and other Asian) leaders will see a major change as necessary. Furthermore, the limits to export-led development identified by Wolf seem likewise to be unlikely to force Chinese leaders to switch developmental paths, particularly given the monumental growth rates of recent years. No rising hegemon has ever allowed environmental destruction and social inequality to stop its advance, and while excess capacity or a protectionist backlash in the US may be serious concerns, they have yet to materialize as a significant impediment to East Asian growth. What seems most likely is that Wolf's argument boils down to hoping that Chinese elites will adjust spending and exchange rate policies because it is "the right thing to do" from a global macroeconomic perspective. From a political economy perspective, this argument is unconvincing.

More broadly, it is fair to ask whether the book offers sufficient evidence in favor of its contention that the benefits of global finance outweigh the risks. Given the ample discussion of the crises of the 1990's and imbalances of the 2000's, as well as references to the subprime crisis which was still on the horizon as Wolf was writing, it is hard to find firm support for this conclusion in the book unless one is predisposed to accept it. Wolf's discussion of the putative benefits of global finance remains largely theoretical, whereas the risks are given sharp empirical treatment.

Tod Van Gunten  
Department of Sociology  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
tvangunt@ssc.wisc.edu