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Editor’s Introduction

The papers in this issue all address some aspect of the incorporation and disincorporation of unequal places and regions into world-systems. They address the accumulation processes that drive capitalist expansion as well as the ideological work that helps sustain hegemony and reproduce inequality. They also point to counter-hegemonic dynamics that help drive world-systemic change. As the daily headlines continue to bring forth new signals of U.S. hegemonic decline and of a world-system that is in deep crisis, these accounts can aid our effort to understand our current predicament and perhaps shed light on the various paths that might lead to more desirable alternatives.

Papers by Adam Driscoll and Edward Kick and by Thomas Hall lead this issue by exploring how world-system peripheries are incorporated and reproduced over long periods of time. They refocus our lens on regions rather than states as sites of important world-system dynamics, reminding us of the centrality of underlying logics and processes of world-systems. Driscoll and Kick show how Britain’s reliance on and development of extractive industries in eastern North Carolina during its period of hegemony generated “degenerative sectors” oriented towards production for export, which undermined domestic development and ensured the region’s continued peripheralization even after British hegemonic decline. This fascinating study helps explain why poor regions stay poor, and it may enhance readers’ understandings of how such world-system dynamics ensure that countries of the global South remain on the bottom of the economic hierarchy.

Taking an even longer time frame, Hall’s study comparing China’s and the U.S. southwests similarly looks at the effects of world-systemic hierarchies on regions, illustrating how the dynamics of frontier areas perpetuate long-term inequalities over time. Interestingly, Hall finds that patterns seen in frontiers are common across different historical world-systems, despite some important differences in the methods of incorporation of borderlands. What seems key to Hall’s account is variation in how native populations are incorporated into the world-system. In China, native groups were mobilized into administration, unlike in the United States. Despite the relative neglect of frontiers in the study of world-systems, Hall argues that these regions and people play important, and often the most visible, roles in system change.

The paper by Erynn Masi de Casanova and Barbara Sutton explores the globalized consumption practices of cosmetic surgery tourism. They put forward the concept of “transnational body projects” to draw our attention to how capitalist expansion is extending into ever more personal, physical spaces. Examining media discourses in different countries, they show how the commodification of bodies and beauty reinforce and replicate world-system inequities between core and periphery countries as well as gender and class. The article also contributes to analyses of tourism as a form of transnational consumption that has been important to capitalist accumulation processes in more recent times.

World-systems analysts have argued that hegemons in decline tend to rely more heavily on coercion, thereby deepening the contradictions between practices and the ideals that legitimate hegemony. The article by Eric Bonds illustrates this dynamic as seen in contemporary U.S. policy. He demonstrates how U.S. government discourses have been used, often clumsily and unconvincingly, to justify illegitimate violence, providing evidence of the decline of U.S. hegemony. Such decline is apparent in the more frequent and blatant reliance on military force instead of nonviolent, persuasive forms of influence characteristic in times of less contested
hegemony. The recent scrutiny by the United Nations of the U.S. use of drone strikes to counter global counterterrorism reinforces the conclusions of Bond’s analysis.

The question this study raises for those concerned with human rights and the advance of humanitarian norms is how much a hegemon can stretch the distance between normative claims and actual practice before its hold on power crumbles. How much more violent and blatant might hegemonic violence become? What impact do such contradictions have on the viability of international law and institutions? On the one hand, Bond’s work reinforces the idea advanced in the work of scholars like Kathryn Sikkink, whose recent book *The Justice Cascade* demonstrates a gradual strengthening of international human rights norms, often evidenced in behavior such as that documented in Bond’s article. By appealing to humanitarian norms even to justify bad behavior, states signal the legitimacy and significance of international norms. Will such norms eventually render the contradictions of hegemonic behavior untenable? Or will hegemonic violence undermine the very idea of a world-system based on human rights?

Reinforcing the idea that systemic contradictions help sow the seeds for the rise of counter-hegemonic and anti-systemic challenges, Brent Kaup’s analysis illustrates how capitalist development and the processes of displacement and exclusion it generates forced population movements in Bolivia that encouraged the emergence of new forces of resistance. Countering the traditional structural impediments to the creation of alliances between peasants and industrialized workers, more recent trends have thrust dislocated peasants and workers into common spaces in the margins of society. It is here where their ability to develop more systemic analyses that account for their shared grievances and the common sources of those grievances contributes to the formation, or what Kaup calls “reintegration” of new and potentially potent alliances. Indeed, these dynamics contributed to the election of Evo Morales, South America’s first indigenous president, who has helped fuel Latin American counter-hegemonic resistance to U.S. hegemony. Thus, the contradictions of advanced capitalism are expanding the fissures in the foundation of the existing hegemonic regime.

Asafa Jalata’s contribution complements Hall’s analysis of how the United States incorporates frontier regions by manipulating and pitting different indigenous populations against one another. He details the extreme violence that has been essential to the expansion of the modern world-system, arguing that such violence is more accurately labeled “terrorism.” This paper demonstrates the ways ideology is used to negate the experiences and history of indigenous peoples. Jalata calls for a retelling of history as a necessary step towards challenging “hegemonic knowledge” and its reproduction in public discourse and the academy. By framing colonial genocide against indigenous populations as terrorism, his work helps counter the erasure of history and, complementing Bond’s article, further challenges the legitimacy of a system whose authority is based on claims of human rights that are contradicted in this retelling of history from the perspective of the periphery.

I’ve offered just a few thoughts to entice readers to dig into this issue of the *Journal of World-Systems Research* and to consider how the ideas put forward by these authors can advance new thinking and guide practices in a time of great uncertainty and change. In addition to these great articles we’ve got reviews of some important recent books on themes related to the study of world-systems. I am grateful to our contributors, our editorial team, and to the many reviewers who have contributed to making this issue possible, and I hope readers are pleased with the results of our collective efforts.

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Naval Stores Extraction in Eastern North Carolina: The Historical Basis of Spatial Inequality within a Core Nation

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Abstract
Within world-systems research there is an overwhelming tendency to treat nation-states as homogenous wholes. With some notable exceptions, this approach downplays the existence and operation of core-periphery relations on the sub-national level and the resultant inequality between different regions of nation-states. This study uses various complementary literatures in an integrative fashion to address this lacuna within the world-systems approach. We argue that uneven geographical development within core nations can at least partially be explained by the historical appropriation of natural capital; a universal process in which site-specific geographic factors and the larger political-economic context of the world-system interact, over time, to produce linked regions of relative accumulation and deprivation. To demonstrate the utility of this approach, we examine eastern North Carolina’s history as the principal producer of naval stores for Great Britain’s navy during Britain’s ascension toward hegemonic status in the world-system during the eighteenth century. We highlight how those initial extractive activities functioned as a “de-generative sector,” hindering the region’s overall development. We argue generally for a synthetic approach to development theory and corresponding empirical examinations of modern and historical inequalities.

Key Words: Internal peripheries, extractive processes, regional economies

World-systems analysis, as initially formulated by Immanuel Wallerstein (1974), is a theoretical strand (Lakatos 1978) that examines how global processes of capital accumulation inherently generate inequality between those who exploit and those who are exploited. As noted by Wallerstein himself, the world-system is an integrated whole with a single (although highly

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1 We would like to thank Brett Clark, Laura McKinney, and Gretchen Thompson for their kind and insightful comments on earlier drafts of this paper. Additionally, Christopher Chase-Dunn, Wilma Dunaway, and Andrew Jorgenson all provided input at various junctures in this paper’s formation. Finally, we would like to thank Jackie Smith and the two anonymous reviewers for their valuable feedback.
complex) division of labor. As such, the world-system itself is the only appropriate unit of analysis. However, research within this perspective has overwhelmingly focused on the quantitative comparison of nation-states; treating these entities as homogenous wholes, rather than structured affiliations that encompass a wide range of peoples, geographic regions, and interests. This tendency downplays the operation of core-periphery relations at the subnational scale. As a number of critics have noted, structured inequality exists within nation-states as well as between them (Chase-Dunn 1980; Agnew 1987; Smith 1987; Taylor 1988; Hall 1989a, 1989b; Dunaway 1994, 1996a; Hanna 1995; Harvey 2006). Therefore, an occasionally observed and accurate conception of the world-system is probably that of a continuous network of power and dependency relationships that possesses sets of nested hierarchies (Chase-Dunn 1998). While states are important actors within this system, they are not the only relevant unit. Instead, regions are the sub-unit of the world-economy that may be best defined as engaging in core or peripheral activity (or both in the case of the semiperiphery) and consequently should be focused upon in world-systems analysis (Chase-Dunn 1998: 208).

While the world-systems approach acknowledges the region as a critical unit for study, the understanding of the origins and functioning of regional inequality requires further development. To address this, we augment world-systems arguments with complementary insights from the dependency and spatial inequality literatures, as well as the pioneering work of scholars such as Stephen Bunker and Paul Ciccantell (1994, 1999, 2003, 2005) and Jason Moore (2000a, 2000b, 2003, 2011). When these arguments are utilized together, the operation of core-periphery relations within nation-states and the resulting geographic inequalities that occurs on the subnational level may be more effectively ascertained and analyzed. Such an integrative method of theory building can help cumulate knowledge into general explanatory principles (Collins 1989) and seeks to build a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of how the world operates, rather than validate one particular theorization at the expense of others (Merton 1973; Ritzer 1991). We argue that the historical appropriation of natural capital (e.g., raw materials) by core powers from dependent peripheries outside the core is a process replicated with peripheral areas within core nations. This dynamic explains much of the spatial inequality that has characterized the world-system to this day. We explore how the historical interaction of ecological and geographical factors with the greater political-economic context accounts for contemporary uneven development.

To demonstrate the utility of this approach, we present a case study in which eastern North Carolina’s geographical suitability for naval stores (tar, pitch, and turpentine) production caused the area to be exploited by Great Britain as a peripheral source of natural resources during the eighteenth century. This locked the region into a path-dependent development strategy built around circumscribed extractive activities, structuring subsequent economic activity in ways that

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2 We are aware of the critiques that exist of the term “natural capital,” which focus upon its implication that elements of the natural world are substitutable with other forms of capital to an unreal degree (Burkett 2003; Harvey 1993). While we acknowledge the merits of this critique and its relevancy for arguments against the reductionist attribution of economic value to the natural world, we use the term in this paper as it is a widely accepted means of conveying how natural resource endowments are a depletable source of wealth that can be transformed into other forms of capital.

3 We acknowledge that the history of the region did not originate with the arrival of Europeans, and that there is a rich history of various world-systems that have emerged and declined before this area came into contact with the central world-system of European origin. For a theoretical framework of such world-systems see Chase-Dunn and Hall’s (1997) comparative world-systems approach.
stunted the region’s development. Simultaneously, the extraction of naval stores contributed to Great Britain’s ascension to hegemonic status in the world-system and arguably advantaged the semiperipheral northeastern colonies (and later states). Therefore, the naval stores industry provides a useful example of linked processes of extraction and accumulation generating uneven development at successively smaller levels.

Most immediately, we describe eastern North Carolina’s geography and current state of relative underdevelopment. Following this, we develop our theoretical perspective more fully. We then analyze the rise of the British Empire, and its absolute dependence upon a reliable supply of naval stores for the warships that established and maintained its position at the head of the world-economy. We explore how that demand resulted in the rise of naval stores production in eastern North Carolina and how those activities conditioned subsequent economic development in the region, contributing to the current spatial inequality between that area and other parts of the state and nation. Finally, we offer conclusions and implications that, among other things, argue for future analyses of comparable situations across multiple sites within core nations of the world-system, broadening the expanse of the world-systems perspective.

**Eastern North Carolina**

North Carolina is physically divided into three regions, each of which possesses a unique geography and history. The western territory is comprised of the Smoky Mountains and contains a distinct Appalachian heritage. The red clay hills of the Piedmont region form the geographic center of the state and include both the “Research Triangle” (Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill) and Charlotte areas. Our focus is on the Coastal Plain or “Tidewater” region, bounded by the Atlantic Ocean on the east and the Piedmont to the west (See Figure 1). The area is dominated by flat swampland and possesses sandy soil that, prior to the use of artificial fertilizers, was relatively infertile. This set the geographical stage for an early history of poor agricultural productivity. However, for millennia the region has contained extensive pine forests, which also cover much of the coastal plains of the southern United States. The make-up of these forests and the initially poor quality of the area’s soils limited the production of food and fiber products and partially accounted for the path of development that led this region to form an extractive economy producing naval stores.

Contemporary eastern North Carolina is a region characterized by lower status across a range of economic and social dimensions, relative to the more-developed regions of the United States (see Table 1). It is overwhelmingly rural, and contains only one city with a population greater than 100,000. There is some light manufacturing in the area, but the economy has historically been dependent upon agriculture and extractive industries such as fishing, mining, and pulpwod forestry (OPPNCDA 1990; Delia, Brockett, and Gauland 2002). The percentage of the region’s earnings that come from the primary sector are more than twice that of the adjacent Piedmont and almost six times that of New England (U.S. Census 2011). Accordingly, income levels in eastern North Carolina are substantially lower than nearby areas. Nineteen of the forty-one counties in the region have poverty rates over eighteen percent, and ten of those fall under the USDA’s definition of Persistently Poor, the only counties in the state to qualify as

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such (NCREDC 2004; USDA 2011). Thus, individuals who are born in eastern North Carolina face poorer life chances than those born in the more-developed areas within the United States. This study explores the basis for eastern North Carolina’s relatively lower state of development in the economic activities of the colonial and antebellum eras.

Table 1: Demographic indicators for eastern North Carolina as compared to the averages for the Piedmont region and New England States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>New England* Average</th>
<th>Piedmont Region</th>
<th>Eastern North Carolina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of Population in Poverty</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$48,195</td>
<td>$44,707</td>
<td>$34,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Values</td>
<td>$161,270</td>
<td>$120,389</td>
<td>$91,956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Population in Rural</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Population Af. Amer.</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Pop. over 25 with a Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.
All indicators are for the year 2000. Source: 2000 U.S. Census.

Theoretical Perspective

Prolegomenon

This study utilizes a synthetic theoretical framework that complements the world-system approach with concepts from the dependency and spatial inequality literatures. By integrating insights from the common ground found within multiple literatures, we are able to benefit from the various strengths of different approaches and avoid the premature dismissal of valid interpretations. Such an integrative strategy cumulates knowledge and builds theories that better understand and explain phenomena of interest, inventing “more and more powerful searchlights” that illuminate the real world more clearly (Popper 1966: 361). This approach possesses a distinct advantage in the generation of models with greater and broader explanatory power when compared to what we term “gladiator science” or a “theory-bashing” mindset (Lofland 1993). Gladiator science is the unfortunate tendency to pit a competing theorization’s hypothesis (often singular and decontextualized) against one’s own in hope that the contender will be felled (falsified) and the favored one left standing (validated) at the end of the empirical contest. Such a strategy leads to increased fractionation within the discipline and an overall narrowing of the applicability of different theoretical perspectives. However, gladiator science is a strategy that is heavily rewarded within our institutional system where distinction and recognition are favored over the selfless pursuit of knowledge (Merton 1973). Eschewing such a method, we answer the numerous calls for more theoretical integration (Collins 1989; Merton 1973; Ritzer 1991; Small 1994[1895]; Turner 2010) and draw from the complementary insights of several approaches within world-systems and related dependency approaches.
Theorization: Integrating Multiple Perspectives

Our theoretical framework draws from multiple perspectives to broadly explain how uneven development has its historical origins in both foundational ecological dynamics and political-economic relations. We argue that the historical appropriation of natural capital from one region by another creates different economic trajectories that, over time, result in spatial inequalities between historic sites of accumulation and historic sites of extraction. This process of appropriation, in which more-developed states and regions utilize resources from less-developed states and regions is an “irreducibly socio-ecological” one that can only be fully understood by examining the interactions between social and environmental factors (Moore 2011: 110). Understanding this process provides a basis for explaining the formation of spatial inequality (Hooks, Lobao, and Tickamyer 2007) on multiple scales. Importantly, our framework highlights the functioning of these mechanisms at the subnational level (i.e. eastern North Carolina), connecting broader relations of power and dependency to regional formations of unequal development.

As our initial point of departure we broadly proceed from the work pioneered by Stephen Bunker (1984, 1985, 1992) and expanded upon by a number of his students and collaborators (e.g., Bunker and Ciccantell 2003, 2005; Leitner 2003, 2004; Priest 2003, 2007; Gellert 2010). While drawing from general arguments about the role of power and dependency relationships in creating unequal development, their approach emphasizes the global flow of raw materials as the primary dynamic of unequal development within the world-system. We also integrate a number of insights from the work of Jason Moore (2000a, 2000b, 2003), who examines the accumulation of capital as a socio-ecological process, driven by “the exhaustion of specific complexes of nature-society relations” (2011: 124). By blending concepts from world-systems analysis and the metabolic rift perspective (see Foster 1999, 2000), Moore presents his own unique integrative theory of capitalist world-ecology that, like Bunker and Ciccantell’s, emphasizes the material basis of capital accumulation. Both perspectives view the depletion and degradation of environmental resources as a key motive for the expansion of the modern world-system into previously unincorporated regions (Leitner 2007).

Given that the process of accumulation is rooted in material processes of production, economies that successfully accumulate capital will be those that are best able to secure and control the flow of raw materials (Bunker 1992; O’Hearn 2005). Rural sociologists have gone as far as to state that natural capital “is the base on which all other capitals depend” (Flora and Flora 2008: 17). All productive activities require natural resources in some stage of refinement, and competitive expansion of production requires a corresponding increase in resource input. When local supplies have been exhausted, the “commodity frontier” must expand to incorporate new regions, labor, and modes of extraction (Moore 2000b, 2003). These new resources may be obtained through force (primitive accumulation) or, alternatively, by creating new trade relations that advantage the already dominant economy. Competition among nations to secure access to the raw materials necessary to support an expanding economy is one of the fundamental mechanisms driving the expansion of the capitalist world-economy and a nation or region’s degree of success in that competition is the primary determinant of its economic trajectory (Moore 2003; Bunker and Ciccantell 2005; Harvey 2006).

The processes of raw material extraction and transport possess a basis in the geological and ecological properties of both the resource and the region of extraction (Bunker 1992; Cronon 2003). Therefore, explanations of the control and flow of resources must include relevant
environmental variables along with political-economic ones (Harvey 1993; Moore 2003). A commodity’s natural location, material form, and physical scarcity create issues rooted in physical principles (Bunker 1994). Different regions’ initial endowments of natural capital structure the character of their incorporation into the world-system. Additionally, the physical basis of a resource can be degraded or destroyed through the processes of extraction itself (Bunker 1984). Once a socio-ecological system of extraction has been taxed to the point where profits begin to fall, capital is spurred to reorganize production and expand the commodity frontier to ensure continued accumulation (Moore 2000b). Accordingly, both the ascension of regions that successfully appropriate natural resources and the stagnation of those from which the resources are extracted possess a foundation in ecological dynamics.

The key driver of economic growth within an ascending economy is a strong generative sector, which is the portion of the economy that engages in core-like production and contains a number of forward and backward linkages which stimulate innovation and development across other sectors while fostering the growth of the over-all economy (Bunker and Ciccantell 2003). Generative sectors of rising economies often involve the procurement (and transport) of raw materials while stimulating economic activities that require increased supplies of said materials, simultaneously increasing both the supply of and the demand for resource extraction. Therefore, growth within generative sectors is dependent upon access to raw materials and encourages growth in activities that obtain them. Nations and regions with strong generative sectors function as sites of accumulation of natural capital and experience correspondingly rapid economic development (e.g., Dutch shipping, British warships and iron industries, U.S. shipbuilding and railroads).

While generative sectors within ascendant semiperipheral and core nations function to spur economic growth and the further acquisition of resources, this growth is directly linked to a corresponding underdevelopment that occurs in the peripheral regions that supply the raw materials. The global demand for specific commodities reorganizes local and regional modes of production and extraction within both internal and external resource peripheries (Moore 2000b). This reorganization creates extractive economies and conditions subsequent developmental pathways by degrading the physical environment and redistributing human populations in ways that limit future economic activity (Bunker 1984). These extractive economies have been described in the dependency literature as “disarticulated” (Baran 1957; Amin 1974). This term denotes a structural distortion that is characterized by weak or non-existent integration among unevenly developed economic sectors. Disarticulated economies suffer from “extraversion” (the domination of an economy by an external market orientation), where the export sector is more highly developed and uses more modern technology and capital intensive practices than the domestic sectors (Amin 1976). However, this developed sector of the economy is poorly linked to other sectors due to its reliance upon foreign capital, thus growth and investment in the export sector does not facilitate growth in other sectors (Breedlove and Armer 1997). We term such an economic activity a “de-generative sector,” in that it stunts the over-all economic growth of the region that it characterizes.

De-generative sectors hinder the development of the local economy through a variety of mechanisms. The development of extraverted economies involves relatively little capital being transferred to the resource-rich nation or region (Baran 1957). Additionally, in a form of path dependency, what little capital is transferred is often “inflexibly sunk in technologies of extraction and transport,” which only create external economies for further extractive industries (Bunker 2005: 6). De-generative sectors also reorganize human populations and labor forces in
ways that limit future productive potentials. The displacement or elimination of indigenous populations from areas of extraction (Bunker 1984), along with a heavy reliance upon slave labor made possible through the simplification of both the labor process and the physical organization of the land itself (Moore 2003), reduce the pool of future laborers and consumers in a heavily exploited region.

There is also a stagnation in basic food production as land and labor are devoted toward the production of exports instead of staple crops (Baran 1957; Bunker 1985) and because cheap labor requires appropriately cheap food which can easily be provided by subsistence production within the traditional sector (de Janvry and Garramon 1977; de Janvry 1981). Finally, extractive industries tend to degrade the natural capital that they are based upon, depleting its availability for future use (Moore 2003; Gellert 2010). In this manner, de-generative sectors deplete their own conditions of production, leaving the region in which they are located poorer in foundational resources than it was before the extractive activity began (O’Conner 1998; Moore 2000b). Through the mechanisms outlined here, regions that are incorporated into the global economy through de-generative sectors built around resource extraction often fail to achieve sustainable economic growth.

Within world-systems and dependency approaches, the role of these linked processes of extraction and accumulation in generating uneven development has primarily been conceptualized and explored at the cross-national level. While notable exceptions exist that examine core-periphery dynamics at the subnational level – for example, Chase-Dunn’s treatment of the antebellum South (1980, 1998: 210), Dunaway’s studies of Southern Appalachia (1994, 1996a, 1996b), Hall’s work on the U.S. Southwest (1989a, 1989b), and Cronon’s (1991) and Robbins’ (1994) accounts of the incorporation of the Western United States – a great deal more work is required in this understudied area. Rural sociologists have recently highlighted the existence of uneven development within core nations, particularly within the United States (Tickamyer 2000; Hooks, Lobao, and Tickamyer 2007). They use the term “spatial inequality” to identify differences in various characteristics of well-being and life chances that exist across several geographic regions and scales within the world-system. However, the approach has most explicitly focused upon uneven development across middle-range units of analysis within core nations (Lobao 2004). While studies of spatial inequality have done much to document and redirect focus onto developmental heterogeneity within core nations, an explicit theory of spatial inequality has yet to be developed (Lobao and Hooks 2007). We argue that the origins of spatial inequality can best be theorized through processes described by extant world-systems and dependency arguments.

Some have argued that the geographic “region” (spaces in which processes of production, labor, exchange, and consumption “hang together within an open system that nevertheless exhibits some kind of structural coherence” [Harvey 2006: 102]) is the most appropriate unit that can accurately be designated as engaging in core or peripheral activities (Smith 1987; Taylor 1988; Chase-Dunn 1998; Hall 2009). Accordingly, the historical appropriation of natural capital can occur between different regions within a core nation through mechanisms that closely approximate the ways in which it occurs between developed and developing nations. The regions within core nations from which raw materials are being extracted can contain de-generative sectors that stunt their development in the same manner that they stunt the development of peripheral nations. The resulting difference in development between the regions that are accumulating resources and the “internal peripheries” that are providing them creates spatial inequalities within nation states (Walls 1978). These processes of internal exploitation can even
play a vital role in “bootstrapping” upwardly mobile semiperipheral states into higher positions within the world-system (Wright 1990; Chase-Dunn 1998).

**Empirical Analysis**

The proceeding is an account of eastern North Carolina’s incorporation into the world-system as a region of naval stores extraction for the British Empire. We analyze the history of naval stores production in the region, focusing upon the manner in which the appropriation of this natural resource dually contributed to the rise of the British Empire and the lack of development in eastern North Carolina. While reviewing that history, we highlight the dynamics we have outlined above, paying particular attention to the interaction between social and ecological factors. In this way, we empirically test the degree to which our theoretical framework is reflected by the historical record.

**The British Empire and Naval Power: The Source of Demand for Naval Stores**

The British Empire has a rich history that has been well explored in a number of works. We engage that history to establish three facts: 1) naval power was a key factor in England’s (and later Great Britain’s) rise to global power, 2) access to sufficient supplies of naval stores was necessary for the establishment and maintenance of that naval dominance, and 3) a combination of geographical and political-economic factors ultimately drove Great Britain to look outward to supply said naval stores.

The Royal Navy was central to England’s economic ascension and Great Britain’s eventual attainment of global hegemony at the beginning of the nineteenth century due to both its strict military role and its related role in overseas trade. At the beginning of the “long sixteenth century” (Wallerstein 1974), when the modern (or central) world-system was emerging, England was a burgeoning world power, vying with the Dutch and the French to challenge and to ultimately replace the Spanish and Portuguese monopoly on colonization and overseas trade (Mancke 2009). The Dutch were able to initially overtake the Spanish in shipping and trade due to a competitive advantage in shipbuilding and ship designs that allowed for more economic transportation of bulk goods (Özveren 2000; Bunker and Ciccantell 2005). However, England was eventually able to supplant the Dutch through imperialistic naval might. The contentions of these various competing world powers across an approximately 300-year period were marked by nearly continuous warfare.

Beginning in 1585, England initiated a series of wars with Spain, due in part to attempts by English seamen to break into the lucrative Spanish trade with the Americas as both merchants and pirates (Friel 2003: 92). These wars included constant raiding of Spanish towns, shipping, and overseas holdings, as well as epic naval battles, such as the defeat of the Spanish Armada in

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6 England did not unify with Scotland until the Acts of Union in 1707 (Rose et al. 1960: 266); therefore we only refer to Great Britain as an entity after that point in time.
The wedding of privateering, mercantilism, and warfare came to define the role of England’s navy in supporting that nation’s ascension to global dominance. Once the Dutch replaced the Spanish in dominance of overseas shipping at the end of the sixteenth century (Wallerstein 1980), they became England’s chief rival for global control over ocean-based trade routes and a series of Anglo-Dutch wars were fought in the seventeenth century over these prospects. These wars centered on a series of naval struggles, and England’s eventual victory was primarily based on their innovations in naval warfare technology and the expansion of the Royal Navy. By 1715 the British Royal Navy had 182 wooden ships on its books that exceeded 300 tons, making it the greatest naval power in the world by a substantial margin (Friel 2003: 131).

Accompanying these wars and Great Britain’s rise as a military power was a general trend of first the Dutch and later the British assuming control of overseas trade. With Spain declining in dominance, the Spanish empire opened up as a market for British traders and colonists (Rose et al. 1960: 125-128). This trend resulted in the colonization of North America and the establishment of national trading companies such as the English East India Company in 1599. Following the conclusion of The War of the Spanish Succession, the British were able to enter into the lucrative slave trade, which had previously been dominated by the Spanish, Portuguese, and the Dutch (Friel 2003). The scope of the expanded trade and the acquisition of new colonies throughout both hemispheres reflected the Empire’s economic rise, based to a significant degree on the global reach enabled by its command of the seas.

The success of the British Navy in both warfare and trade was dependent upon a tremendous growth in shipbuilding and an accompanying increase in demand for shipbuilding materials, including naval stores. The term “naval stores” originally referred to all materials used in building and maintaining ships (including timber and cloth). Later it came to solely denote tar, pitch, and turpentine, the three derivatives of pine resins used in making ships (Perry 1968). Tar is a sticky liquid produced by burning pine branches and logs slowly in a kiln. Tarred yarn formed the waterproof ropes for ships’ rigging. When tar is boiled to remove some of the water, it becomes the thicker pitch, which was used as a sealant on ships, making their sides and bottoms watertight and extending the longevity of the hull (Özveren 2000). Finally, turpentine is a spirit distilled from living pine secretions which had only a few uses in the manufacture of ships. However, it was later applied to a wide variety of commercial purposes (paint thinner, rubber solvent, lamp oil), and grew to be the most heavily demanded naval store product (Butler 1998). While modern variants of these products can be artificially synthesized, up until the beginning of the twentieth century they could only be obtained from piney forests.

As early as the 1500s, a royal bounty was offered by England to encourage shipbuilding. Shipbuilding booms occurred during the Anglo-Spanish war of 1585-1603 and between 1595 and 1618, when 508 ships of 100 tons or more were built in England (Friel 2003: 115). This trend continued throughout the seventeenth century, as 22 men-of-war ships were built in 1654 alone (Özveren 2000: 32). The growth of the Royal Navy was the key generative sector behind Great Britain’s ascension in that it created a number of linkages with other industries that spurred growth of the over-all economy while securing access to a range of external natural resources (Bunker and Ciccantell 2003, 2005). In addition to encouraging shipbuilding, the Royal Navy’s need for warship armaments stimulated growth in Great Britain’s fledgling iron industry, which would later become a vital industry during the period of British hegemony (Wallerstein 1980).

The emphasis on shipbuilding also created a need for the raw materials that supported it, including timber and naval stores. Initially England was able to meet its need for shipbuilding
materials through domestic resources, but the concurrent timber demands of the shipping and iron industries, along with consumption for various domestic purposes (e.g., home heating), rapidly depleted native stocks (Albion 1926). The degradation of their domestic forests contributed to the English colonizing Ireland in the late 16th century and exploiting Irish timberlands (Rose et al. 1960: 56). However, within approximately 100 years Ireland’s “woods were used up to supply England with timber” (Wallerstein 1974: 281). By 1660, England was forced to look further outward to meet their demand for naval stores (Albion 1926). Here we see the dynamic of an expanding commodity frontier, where the ecological depletion of an essential natural resource in one region drives the incorporation of new regions to maintain profitable access to the commodity (Moore 2000b).

The Naval Stores Act: Securing Raw Materials for British Naval Power

As England attempted to secure an external source of naval stores, a series of historical developments led Great Britain to turn to its North American colonies to meet its shipbuilding supply needs: the breakdown of the Baltic tar trade, the rise of competitive manufactures in their northern American colonies, and the domination of parliament by the Whig party with their strong mercantilist policies. Initially, England was able to import shipbuilding supplies from Prussia and later, Sweden. However, by the 1690s, Swedish naval stores production had become monopolized by the Stockholm Tar Company, which subsequently raised prices (Silver 1990: 123). Additionally, Baltic naval stores trade was interrupted by the Great Northern War (1700-1721), further leaving the English in search of a new source (Özveren 2000: 66). At this time, England’s dominant Whig party stressed that her colonies were to act as suppliers of raw materials for English manufacturing and markets for those processed goods (Airaksinen 1996). The Board of Trade noticed that the northern colonies were not operating within this mercantilist structure. Not only were they failing to provide adequate raw materials, but they were beginning to compete with English woolen manufactures (Rose et al. 1960: 572-574). In response, Parliament passed a series of laws and acts that were intended to return the colonies to the production of raw material commodities.

The combination of the break in Baltic naval stores trade and the Whig party’s mercantilist designs for the northern colonies led to the passage of the 1705 Naval Stores Act, which provided a bounty of £4 per ton of tar and pitch and £3 per ton of rosin and turpentine produced in the New England and the “Middle Colonies” (Jensen 1955; Cook 1967). The purpose of this bounty was to offset the higher shipping costs colonial naval stores faced relative to those of Scandinavian manufacture. The act also classified naval stores as “enumerated commodities,” meaning colonists could only export these products to England, and then only through English traders (Airaksinen 1996). Despite the incentive created by the bounty, the forests of the northern colonies were less suited to the expansive production of naval stores, due to previous timbering and a lack of resin-producing pines. Instead, for reasons developed in the following section, North Carolina became the primary source of naval stores, although many of those stores were exported through the northern colonies’ ports in order to capitalize upon the bounty.

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7 In 1709, Great Britain sent 3,000 Palatine immigrants to New York with instructions to produce naval stores. However, the effort failed due to the scarcity of suitable pines, poor financing, and the German immigrants’ preference for establishing independent settlements rather than laboring on large private estates. (Otterness 1994; Outland 2004: 14)
Following the passage of the Naval Stores Act, the American colonies rapidly became Great Britain’s principle source of tar and pitch. Previously production had been sporadic and modest in scale, but by 1715 exports of naval stores from the colonies were equal to those from the Baltic region (Silver 1990: 123) and in 1718 the colonies exported 82,084 barrels of pitch and tar – seven times that which Great Britain was receiving from Europe (Williams 1935; Cook 1967). The supply was briefly interrupted when the Naval Stores Act expired in 1725, but upon the bounty’s restoration in 1729 the colonies quickly returned to their status as Great Britain’s primary supplier, and production rebounded to the point where Great Britain started exporting surplus naval stores to other European powers (Outland 2004: 13). This supply continued until it was interrupted by the Revolutionary War (1775-83), at which point Great Britain was annually importing up to 135,000 barrels of colonial tar, pitch, and turpentine (Williams 1935). Thus, the Naval Stores Act was successful in promoting production in the colonies and freeing Great Britain from the Swedish monopoly.

Eastern North Carolina and Naval Stores Production

In order to more fully appreciate the role played by the naval stores industry in shaping eastern North Carolina’s development, it is necessary to understand the causal forces that led to this industry’s emergence in the region during the colonial era. In this section, we explore how the interaction among geographic, environmental, and political-economic factors created a socio-ecological complex that favored naval stores production in eastern North Carolina. The region’s ecology was dominated by the type of pine tree best suited to naval stores production. When this natural capital endowment was combined with the economic incentive created by the Naval Stores Act and a lack of viable alternative industries, the socio-ecological stage was set for naval stores production.

At the time of colonization, the forests of the southeastern coastal plain consisted of over 80 percent longleaf pine trees (Pinus palustris). Due to its high resin levels, this species of pine is the most suitable for naval stores production of all trees. The southeastern coastal plain is an environment that favors the longleaf pine, relative to other species, due to its relatively infertile soil, sustained dry periods, and high winds. The longleaf pine possesses a long taproot that enables it to access nutrients and water that are beyond the reach of many plants’ root structures. Additionally, the long taproot serves to anchor the longleaf against windy conditions, including hurricanes. Accordingly, these ecological features give the longleaf a natural advantage over other competing tree species (Outland 2004: 15-19) and the southeastern forests a comparative advantage in naval stores production.

An additional factor that accounts for the longleaf pine’s predominance in the southeastern coastal plain is its high degree of resistance to fire (Silver 1990: 18). The combination of long protective needles and a deep root system that serves as a food reservoir in the event of needle loss makes young longleaf pines better able to survive low burning fires than rival species. Mature longleafs develop a layer of thick bark that serves as further protection. Routine fires consequentially eliminate less tolerant trees species and allow the longleaf to dominate the area (Heywood 1939). The southeastern forests were frequently exposed to fires, both natural and anthropogenic in origin. The natural fires were the result of frequent lighting storms and accumulated ground litter. Given that thunderstorms tend to be accompanied by precipitation, these fires burn slowly and low to the ground. The majority of the fires in the region, however, were induced by Native American peoples. The evidence that exists on fire
history indicates that humans had been using fire to manage the landscape of the coastal plain as far back as 5,000 years ago to make it more conducive to their means of subsistence (Pyne 1982). An unintended consequence of this use of fire, however, was encouragement of the growth of the longleaf pine (Kaliz, Dorian, and Stone 1986).

While the actions of the indigenous peoples may have structured the environment and helped shape the post-colonization history of the region, their societies were severely disrupted by the arrival of Europeans and the subsequent incorporation of the native civilizations into the global capitalist economy. Similar to other indigenes, such as the Cherokee of Southern Appalachia (Dunaway 1994, 1996), the Native American tribes in the region that would become eastern North Carolina were initially incorporated into the world-economy through trade with the colonists in animal skins and food. However, as the English colonies expanded, the various indigenes either were eliminated or were driven from the area. So while the Native American tribes played a vital role in fostering the natural capital that provided the base of the naval stores industry in this region, their societies did not survive to play a role in the industry’s development.

Given that the piney forests of the entire southeastern coastal plains were dominated by a species of pine particularly well suited to naval stores production, the question arises as to why these activities developed in the eastern part of North Carolina more so than other colonies within the pine belt (Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia). This is explained by the presence of alternative commodities in the other colonies and their essential absence in North Carolina (Silver 1990: 123). The manufacture of naval stores was a labor intensive process with workers using hand tools and human power to gather the pine lightwood, build an earthen kiln, and extract the tar (in the case of tar and pitch) or to box the trees and extract the resins (in the case of turpentine) (Williams 1935). Virginia was initially encouraged by English officials to produce naval stores, but the higher returns to labor that could be obtained through tobacco production pulled Virginia colonists in that direction (Outland 2004: 11). Similarly, the cultivation of rice and indigo in South Carolina and Georgia offered more profitable uses for slave labor. While tar and pitch were produced in small quantities in those colonies, in relative terms they were never viable as an export commodity. North Carolina was sparsely populated and with its comparatively infertile soil, it was the poorest of the colonies (Perry 1968). Consequently, it lacked both the natural capital and the labor force to compete in the production of those other, more profitable commodities.

Although the production of naval stores in North Carolina dates as far back as 1608, large-scale production did not take place until after the Naval Stores Act came into effect in 1705.

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8 Fires kept the forests open, which encouraged the growth of grasses and shrubs that fed bison, deer, elk, and other grazing animals that the indigenous people hunted, while improving the production of edible berries, easing the gathering of nuts, and suppressing larger fires by clearing away potential fuel (Pyne 1982; Outland 2004: 17).

9 The original English colony on Roanoke Island traded deer and buffalo skins and food with the Hatteras people, an Algonquian-speaking tribe that occupied the outer banks region (Lefler and Powell 1973: 7). Later English colonists, who migrated into the region from Virginia, encountered the Chowanoc (another Algonquian-speaking tribe) and the Tuscarora (an Iroquoian-speaking group) peoples and engaged them in similar trade relations, including the trade for land (Lefler and Powell 1973: 29-31). The Hatteras people were quite friendly with the English and eventually became fully assimilated into English society (Powell 1989: 21). The Chowanocs, while initially friendly with the colonists, later joined various Virginian tribes in war with the English and were ultimately defeated in 1677 (Powell 1989: 21-22). The Tuscarora people, in response to a wide range of insults and encroachments, declared war on all white colonists and nearly destroyed all white settlements in their territory. However, troops from South Carolina joined in the war and aided in the defeat of the Tuscarora in 1715, and the survivors left to join the Iroquorian Nation of New York (Lefler and Powell 1973: 67-79).
(Silver 1990: 123). The bounty in the act boosted naval stores prices to the point where they were an economically viable commodity. Following its passage, manufacturing of those products blossomed in the region between the Cape Fear River in North Carolina and Charleston, South Carolina (see Figure 1). Between 1705 and 1718, the area exported 134,212 barrels of tar and pitch, a tonnage that exceeded that of any other product (Outland 2004: 20). Initially, production was largely carried out on plantations in each colony, whose owners possessed both large tracts of wooded land and slaves to work them. Slaves would work at crop cultivation during the growing season and naval stores production during the winter, “thus making sure the slaves had work all through the year” (Airaksinen 1996: 121). When the bounty was temporarily dropped in the late 1720s, the subsequent fall in prices drove most South Carolina producers out of naval stores and into the more profitable production of rice and indigo (Perry 1968).

**Figure 1: Historical Map of Eastern North Carolina**

With the bounty’s renewal in 1729, part-time production continued on the plantations in the Cape Fear River Valley, where the river could provide transport down to the ports of Wilmington and Brunswick (Williams 1935; see Figure 1). However, in this region naval stores had to compete with the more profitable timber industry and largely remained a secondary economic activity. At the same time, a second center of naval stores production emerged in the sparsely settled Albemarle region in the north-eastern part of the colony. Unlike the plantation-style extraction in the Southeast, production in this area was primarily carried out by small-scale  

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10 The production of naval stores as an off-harvest activity allowed for the year-round utilization of labor, a condition that fostered the use of slave labor over part-time wage labor (Moore 2000b).
farmers and backwoodsmen who used income from naval stores to supplement their own subsistence agriculture. These early settlers lacked the capital resources to purchase large slave labor forces or sizeable timber tracts. Therefore, naval stores extraction occurred at a small-scale, part-time level with the work being largely provided by the settlers themselves, as so few of them owned slaves (Perry 1968). The Albemarle naval stores manufacturers faced transportation challenges, as roads in the region were limited and Edenton, the most convenient port in the area, was much less accessible from the sea than the southern ports of Beaufort, Brunswick, and Wilmington (see Figure 1). Small-scale producers from the Albemarle region gradually spread southward into the Washington and New Bern areas and migrated up the Tar and Neuse rivers. With better transport options, the area west of the Pamlico Sound rapidly outgrew the Albemarle region and joined the Cape Fear River Valley as a central nexus of production (Outland 2004: 31). In 1775, North Carolina alone was exporting up to 130,000 barrels of tar and pitch annually (Williams 1935).

The Revolutionary War (1775-83) created a temporary upheaval in the industry, but eastern North Carolina continued to dominate North American production of naval stores, even without the bounty. By 1787, production in the region had rebounded to pre-war levels and North Carolina remained the primary American naval stores producer. While trade with Great Britain had been disrupted, eastern North Carolina was freed from the bounds of mercantilism and began to export naval stores to other countries. Additionally, the end of the war saw a revival in American shipbuilding and at the turn of the century the northern states had replaced Great Britain as the principal buyer of North Carolina naval stores (Özveren 2000: 67).

**Naval Stores Production as a De-generative Sector**

To this point we have described how Great Britain’s rise to global power was dependent upon the strength of its navy and how the concurrent demand for ships and shipbuilding supplies led it to seek external sources of naval stores. Eastern North Carolina’s ecology and lack of competing industries made it an ideal region to provide the necessary raw materials. British economic policies drove the development of an extractive naval stores industry in the region, carried out through the part-time labor of slaves and yeoman small farmers. In this section we will explore the various mechanisms through which that industry constituted a de-generative sector, initiating a path dependent development trajectory for the region that stunted its future economic growth and partially accounts for its current state of relative underdevelopment. The mechanisms involved include a failure to form economic linkages, the lack of substantial capital accumulation, the development of extractive infrastructure, size limitations on the future labor force, the diversion of resources away from basic food production, and the degradation of the region’s natural capital.

Throughout the colonial and antebellum periods, the naval stores industry constituted a major portion of the economy of eastern North Carolina. However, the industry failed to bring any lasting economic development to this rural area, as evidenced by the relative lack of industry today (Outland 2004). One of the primary shortcomings of this industry as a source of development was its extraverted, disarticulated nature and the corresponding absence of either forward or backward linkages with other economic activities within the region. Being a labor intensive process, the extraction of naval stores had minimal capital and materials requirements (Cook 1967). Therefore, it required no substantial inputs from the region and failed to stimulate growth in any industries that would provide building blocks or tools for production (backward
linkages). Additionally, the shipbuilding industries of Great Britain (and later the New England States) that generated the demand for naval stores were entirely absent in eastern North Carolina (Powell 1989). Thus, none of the products of this industry were being utilized by other economic enterprises in the region (forward linkages). The absence of these economic linkages is characteristic of what we term a de-generative sector and helps explain why this industry did not stimulate future growth. Without any substantial connections between the manufacture of naval stores and other economic activities in the region, the industry failed to circulate resources throughout the area and promote any sustained economic development in eastern North Carolina.

In addition to failing to stimulate other economic sectors, the naval stores industry also hindered the formation of a capital base in the region that could be converted into other industries. As described above, the production of naval stores was carried out by laborers working with hand tools, which required very little by way of investment capital (Butler 1998: 10-12). As a source of supplemental income for yeoman farmers’ subsistence, the export of naval stores did not involve a large transfer of wealth to the producers (Airaksinen 1996). Instead, much like pre-industrial agriculture and other extractive industries, the manufacture of naval stores required little initial capital investment and provided few capital returns (Outland 2004). By failing to facilitate the transfer of capital into the region, the industry failed to provide the most fundamental base for future economic growth. However, in a form of path dependent development, the naval stores industry did lay the foundation for a future investment of capital in the region in the form of a transport infrastructure.

In the early 1800s a series of new applications for turpentine led to a spike in global demand for it. As eastern North Carolina was already the leading producer of turpentine, much of the initial increased production came from that region and by 1860 the area was the world’s leading producer (Perry 1968). This expanded production was accompanied by a number of improvements and investments in transportation infrastructure. The Cape Fear River underwent improvement during the 1850s in the form of a series of dams and locks that extended the navigable portion of the river. Additionally, in the 1840s and 1850s the construction of a series of plank roads that radiated out from Fayetteville (the inland center of the turpentine trade) provided access to large areas of the pine forest that had previously been too remote for profitable naval store production (Outland 1996: 33). The biggest transportation innovation connected to the naval stores industry was the construction of a number of railroads that terminated at Wilmington, the primary port for turpentine export. The largest of these, the Wilmington and Weldon, was the longest railroad in the world at the time (Outland 2004: 52). This entire transport infrastructure, while constituting an investment of built capital into the region, created external economies that were only suitable for future extractive industries (i.e. timber, cotton, and tobacco). Therefore, the inflexible capital that the naval stores industry did eventually bring to eastern North Carolina only served to further lock the area into the primary production of basic raw materials, a path that has historically failed to generate relative development (Frank 1969; Amin 1976; Bunker 1985; Freudenburg 1992).

The extraction of naval stores also reduced the potential for future economic growth by severely degrading the natural capital on which the industry depended. Turpentine production in eastern North Carolina relied upon the destructive box system (chopping a wide, shallow hole into the base of a tree) which injured and weakened trees, leaving them susceptible to wind, disease, drought, infestation, and fires. Boxed trees were three times more likely to fall during a hurricane or strong windstorm, and the boxes served as sites for fungal growth and decay as well as damaging infestations by a number of wood-boring insects (Perry 1968). The most destructive
factor, however, was the increased vulnerability of boxed pine trees to fire. White settlers had continued the Native American practice of using low burning fires to open forests, encourage grasses, and reduce pests. But while fires cultivated the growth of healthy longleaf trees, they often destroyed those that had been boxed (Cook 1967). All of these debilitating consequences of the boxing process led to the widespread destruction of eastern North Carolina’s pine forests. In this way, rather than create a stable base for future economic activity, the industry exploited a particular resource until it was exhausted and left ruined forests behind in which “the still-visible mounds of ancient tar kilns [give] silent testimony to colonial exploitation” (Silver 1990: 129).

In addition to destroying its own conditions of production, the production of naval stores also sharply limited the development of eastern North Carolina’s labor force. As we mentioned before, the settlement of the area involved the displacement of most of the indigenous people, largely eliminating them as potential workers. Instead, the extraction of naval stores was carried out almost exclusively by slave labor in the southern part of the region and a combination of slaves and free white yeomen in the north. When the pine forests collapsed in the second half of the nineteenth century, the larger producers shifted their operations to virgin timber stands further south, taking their slaves with them (Outland 2004: 111-121). The slaves who remained in the area and their progeny would face a future of marginalization and disadvantage as an under-privileged and secondary work force that continues to this day.11 Only the few descendants of the white yeomen would go on to function as full participants in the labor market. Thus, the production of naval stores in eastern North Carolina largely failed to cultivate sufficient human capital to later transform the region.

The naval stores industry also hampered future economic development in eastern North Carolina by drawing both land and labor away from the production of basic food stuffs. Particularly during the turpentine boom of the early 1800s, the production of naval stores was more profitable than basic agriculture and a large number of the region’s farmers and planters diverted their efforts from the fields and into the forests. As a result, the region became a net importer of food, with the area’s importation of both corn and bacon quadrupling as the naval stores industry expanded (Outland 2004: 109). This lack of self-sufficiency in basic food production was a hindrance on the region’s economic growth as it pulled money out of local circulation, thus negating any possible Keynesian multiplier effects. The situation runs parallel to the contemporary world economy, where dependent rural economies produce agriculture for export rather than subsistence, resulting in severe domestic hunger (McMichael 2009).

While the production of naval stores was one of the primary economic activities for eastern North Carolina during the colonial era, through the constellation of mechanisms outlined above, it failed to promote, and in substantial ways hindered, any sustained economic growth. The failure of the region to move forward stands in stark contrast to the rapid growth exhibited by a number of other areas within the United States. Other regions with more strongly articulated economies during the colonial and antebellum eras were able to diversify their economic activities around local generative sectors such as shipbuilding and trade in the Northeast, manufacturing in the Ohio River Valley, iron works in the Lehigh Valley, and railroads in the

11 The history of the exploitation (an understatement, we concede) of blacks in the south, initially as slaves and later as second-class workers is a subject of tremendous nuance, detail, and argumentation that largely falls outside of the scope of this paper. (For an overview of such see Wimberley and Morris [1997, 2002]) We certainly acknowledge the uniqueness and importance of the racial dynamic, but focus here on the manner in which both white and black laborers were used as vehicles in a process that stripped the region of its natural wealth while enriching others, typically located on the outside.
Midwest. The economies of these regions were not dominated by export-oriented extractive activities that degraded their natural capital and led to path dependent development in future extractive activities. Unencumbered by a dominant de-generative sector, these regions developed a diverse range of well-articulated agricultural activities and manufacturing industries that served as a stable base for capital accumulation, population growth, and the development of human capital. However, eastern North Carolina, inhibited by a lack of capital, an extraction-oriented infrastructure, and a degraded base of natural capital, continued to specialize in primary sector activities and fell behind the more developed areas within the nation. Having provided Great Britain with an essential factor for its rise to power, the area received in return a legacy of economic stagnation.

**Discussion and Conclusions**

In this paper we have drawn from multiple approaches within the world-systems and dependency perspectives to argue that the historic appropriation of natural capital is a key dynamic that links processes of deprivation and accumulation to generate spatial inequality at multiple levels. As developed nations and regions exhaust the socio-ecological complex that provides them with the raw materials needed for production, they are forced to expand the commodity frontier to incorporate new peripheral sources of natural capital (Moore 2000b). Generative sectors in the developed regions increase the acquisition of natural resources, aiding in the accumulation of capital and economic growth in that region. The corresponding de-generative sectors in the peripheral regions from which the resources are being extracted stunt economic development in that area through a range of mechanisms. These interconnected processes of accumulation and extraction result in very different economic trajectories for the two linked regions and ultimately create spatial inequalities between them.

In our case study of eastern North Carolina’s naval stores industry, Great Britain’s reliance upon naval power as both a generative sector for its economy and as a key factor for its rise to global domination created a tremendous demand for shipbuilding materials, including naval stores. The exhaustion of domestic forest resources forced Great Britain to seek out external supplies of naval sources. A combination of mercantilist trade policies and political-economic factors made securing naval stores from the European continent troublesome for Britain. Instead, in a process that is fairly representative of the colonial era, Great Britain turned to its colonies to supply the needed resources. With the appropriate natural capital and a lack of alternative economic options, eastern North Carolina became the region from which Great Britain extracted its naval stores. Naval stores production was a de-generative sector in eastern North Carolina that hindered economic development in that region. Thus, Great Britain’s rise to power was founded upon the appropriation of eastern North Carolina’s natural capital; the extraction of which contributed to a legacy of stunted development and the current spatial inequality that exists between that region and other parts of the state, nation, and world-system.

Rather than view the history of eastern North Carolina as an isolated account, we argue that it is part of a broader global dynamic in which the appropriation of natural capital resources from the relatively powerless peripheries throughout the world-system by the relatively powerful industrial centers of the global economy has been a central mechanism in generating spatial inequality, both globally and locally. These historic processes can be seen operating at the international levels with the extraction of furs from Canada (Innis 1956), as well as rubber and
iron from the Amazon basin (Bunker and Ciccantell 2005). They are also evident within developed nations as noted with the extraction of furs, coal, and timber from rural Appalachia (Hanna 1995; Dunaway 1996, 1994; Davis 2000); timber from northwestern Wisconsin (Leitner 2003); copper from Michigan’s Upper Peninsula (Leitner 2004); and timber, mineral, and agricultural resources from the western United States (Cronon 1991; Robbins 1994).

In all of these instances, core powers of the world-system create extractive industries in peripheries (which may be foreign or within the core nation itself), facilitating the shift of natural capital from those peripheries to the centers of accumulation within the core. These mechanisms are grounded in the ecology of both regions, as well as the global political-economic structure of the time period. The end result is that the peripheries are left with degraded natural capital and a disarticulated economy, severely reducing prospects for future growth. These linked processes of extraction and accumulation are a fundamental dynamic in creating spatial inequality at both the inter- and sub-national levels.

Our study has utilized a synthetic theoretical framework in which related but seemingly disparate approaches were treated in an integrative fashion, rather than in a competitive one. By highlighting the shared principles among dependency and world-systems approaches and the spatial inequality literature, we are able to better understand the historical processes that generate inequality across a range of spatial scales and units. We argue that future work should continue this process of theoretical synthesis. If others continue working in this direction, drawing from multiple theoretical strands and disciplines, we will be able to further our understanding of global inequality. This strategy is a distinct improvement over competitive gladiator science that serves to further fragment our discipline into smaller and smaller camps that acknowledge outside work less and less. As Albion Small ([1895]1994: xvi) stated in the first issue of *The American Journal of Sociology*, “analytic and microscopic scholarship is abortive without the complementary work of the synthetic scholar who builds minute details into comprehensive structures.”

In addition to future theoretical efforts, there is a need for further empirical work that assesses the accuracy of our theoretical framework. This current study illuminates but one aspect of the historical mosaic of exploitation that peripheral regions have undergone worldwide. A single case study cannot establish a general pattern, but may suggest the existence of such and provide incentive for further exploration. Other potential case studies abound within the United States itself, along with other core nations. The historical appropriation of natural capital is a universal dynamic that occurs on multiple levels and consequentially needs to be studied as such. Particularly, the degree to which it accounts for instances of spatial inequality within core nations is a subject of great interest that has not been sufficiently studied. Exposing these mechanisms at work within other core nations would support the validity of the theoretical approach advanced here and increase our understanding of the origins of unequal development as a whole. There is also much room for quantitative analyses at various subnational levels which, if historical data limitations can be overcome, could greatly improve our grasp of the global flow of natural resources and how it relates to global power and dependency relationships. The historical appropriation of natural capital is a highly complex process that needs to be understood at a far deeper and more comprehensive level than has previously been attempted. In many ways, these dynamics underlie the recent and long-term history of inequality for the entire world.


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Lessons from Comparing the Two Southwesterns: Southwest China and Northwest New Spain/Southwest United States

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Abstract
I compare and contrast two “southwestern” frontiers: the southwestern United States, long northeast New Spain (short hand: New Mexico) and southwest China (short hand: Yunnan). Both have been, and even today remain, frontier zones. In the 21st century both are also important borderlands for two of the most important players in the modern world-system, the United States and China. They share a historical orientation to the areas outside of the two states into which they were ultimately incorporated. Both brought a great deal of new practices and ideas into the incorporating states. They serve to give deep historical backgrounds which put discussions of contemporary globalization in perspective. This comparison also makes clear that the concepts of nation-state and precise borders are typically modern and that setting precise borders is a continuing project, even while borderlands remain, like the frontiers that preceded them, frontier zones. These comparisons may also yield insights into world-system expansion and incorporation.

Keywords: World-system incorporation, borderlands, frontiers, indigenous peoples, comparative world-systems

In this paper I review some of the understandings of frontiers and borders in a deep historical and global perspective. I seek not only to enhance understanding of frontier processes, but also to begin to sort out what is really new in the 21st century and what is a continuation of older processes, some of which may go back millennia (e.g., Hall and Fenelon 2008, 2009).

A major property of world-systems is that they pulsate, that is, expand and contract, or expand quickly, then slowly (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997, 2011, 2012). Along these expanding edges a world-system incorporates new territory and sometimes new peoples – at least when they do not flee to hinterlands to avoid state rule. James Scott (2009) describes instances of such flight in detail for Zomia, or highland Southeast Asia, though not in world-system terms.1 The

1 There are extensive critiques of Scott (Griesch, 2010; Lieberman 2010; and a series of articles in the Journal of Global History July 2010). This discussion calls to mind Aguirre Beltran’s discussion of Regions of Refuge and Richard White’s discussion of “the middle ground.” All these types of regions are typically frontiers and share attempts to avoid state rule. Daniel Little (2013) also contributes to this discussion. Sing C. Chew (2013) has an interesting discussion of the development and influence of the first Southeast Asian world-system, and its importance to the development and processes of the growing Afroeurasian world-system.
processes of incorporation are complex and range along a continuum from minimal contact to complete peripheralization within a world-system (see Figure 1; Hall 2012 reviews this topic). To some extent incorporation is reversible, but in net tends to be grainy, that is, moving toward increasingly stronger incorporation.

**Figure 1: The Continuum of Incorporation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strength of Incorporation</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Strong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact of Core on Periphery</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Stronger</td>
<td>Strongest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of Periphery on Core</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Periphery</td>
<td>External Arena</td>
<td>Contact Periphery</td>
<td>Marginal Periphery or Region of Refuge</td>
<td>Full-Blown Periphery or Dependent Periphery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World-System Terminology</td>
<td>External Arena</td>
<td>Incorporation</td>
<td>Peripheralization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Of interest here is that incorporation is a process (or set of processes) that tends to create, modify, transform, and/or eliminate frontiers (Hall 2009, 2012). Incorporation always involves interplay between local individuals and societies with the incorporating world-system. The kind of world-system (its major form of accumulation), kind of state, organization of peoples to be incorporated, and trajectories of change at the time of incorporation all shape the process. The process is usually sporadic, with many changes and occasional reverses. Because incorporation is often only partial, especially in its early phases frontiers are excellent loci in which to study the interplay between the local and larger social structures. In addition to frontiers along the expanding edges of world-systems there are often frontiers between world-system zones – core, periphery, and semiperiphery. Furthermore these processes can take place along any of the world-system boundaries: bulk goods exchanges, political-military exchanges, prestige or luxury goods exchanges, and information/cultural exchanges (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997, 2011, 2012). A key point here is that such frontiers cannot be explained solely from local processes and events. But equally, neither can they be explained solely from forces and pressures emanating from core regions. Rather, it is the interplay between these two sets of processes. This is one reason why all frontiers seem to have a family resemblance, yet on closer inspection each seems unique. A second point is that boundaries or edges of world-systems are vague. A boundary is where there is a sharp change in the density of networks that constitute the world-system. In this sense mapping of networks may be more appropriate than somewhat arbitrary boundaries.

While this account holds in general, as always, the devil is in the details. One problem is that there little definitive sense of what the range of types of frontiers is, especially if one is examines frontiers anywhere on the globe over the last ten millennia, or even just since the rise of states some five millennia ago. To explore this range – in statistical terms, the universe of frontier – this comparison uses a variance maximizing strategy (Hall 2009). A variance maximizing strategy is an intentional selection of widely different instances of the object under study, in this case, frontiers. The goal is to begin a process of delimiting empirically the range of variation of what is included as exemplars of the object of study. This strategy is most useful
when the statistical universe – here frontiers – is not well known, which is certainly the case for frontiers over the entire globe over many millennia. A common critique of variance maximizing strategies is that one is comparing apples and oranges. But apples and oranges are fruit, edible, and spherical to name a few similarities. The key point here is that the legitimacy of a comparison is not found in the theoretical point of the comparison, not in the objects being compared. It is only after some sense of the extent of the “statistical universe” is known can more precise and delimited comparisons be made. In a variance maximizing strategy such issues as chronological time, consistency of regional area, types of geography, social structures of resident populations, and so on are, at best, of secondary interest. To be sure, they should become central in later, more refined comparisons. But without knowing the range of variation of what constitutes a frontier, choosing which secondary issues should become central is difficult if not impossible. Hence, in this paper I made a deliberate choice of two widely disparate frontiers. Before turning to more precise description of what a frontier might be, another methodological point needs to be underscored.

World-systems, in addition to pulsation, often exhibit a variety of other cycles (Hall 2012):

- a- or b-phase in Kondratieff cycles [about 50 years]
- rising or falling in hegemonic cycles [about 100 years]
- rising or falling ‘long waves’ [about 200 years]
- rising or falling Ibn Kaldhun cycles [about 300 years] (Turchin and Hall 2003)

Because of the existence, or even the possibility, of many different cycles, comparisons must be across parallel phases of cycles, or the comparisons will yield false or misleading conclusions (Hall 2009: 31-32 diagrams such cycles and discusses them in detail; see also Hall, Kardulias, and Chase-Dunn 2011). Thus, comparisons must take into consideration world-system time, that is, comparisons of appropriate phases of cycles. In Patterns of Empire, Julian Go (2011) compares the British and American empires, but not at the same times in chronological history. By carefully delineating hegemonic cycles of (modern) empires, he compares nineteenth-century Britain with twentieth-century United States. While the historical times are nearly a century apart, cyclical phases are the same. This of course is much more difficult in comparing frontiers, since often the cycles are not well known. Still, one must be attentive to potential distortions due to inappropriate comparisons in phases of cycles. It is for these reasons in this comparison that chronological time and length time considered are of secondary importance to variance maximizing.

So what is a frontier?

…a working definition is a zone, where two different social systems – nonstate societies, state societies, and even world-systems come into more-or-less sustained contact… A frontier is not a border or boundary between two states – though that is how the term is used in much of Europe. The term, “borderlands,” which refers to a zone on either side of a border or boundary, often is a frontier. Some might argue that transnationalism constitutes a kind of frontier. While that
suggestion is not without some merit, the term itself means spanning state boundaries, not the zone of overlap between two states (Hall 2009:25-26).²

Frontiers are zones or regions that may have changed through space with time. A useful metaphor is frontiers as membranes: membranes have thickness, but appear as lines from a distance; their permeability with respect to direction, what passes through them, the rate of flow (Slatta 1998). They often regulate flows of people and goods that pass through them. Occasionally they are barriers, either to outflow or inflow, but even when delimited by walls they are never entirely effective. In contrast borders are sharp demarcations of boundaries and are typically modern. Their delineation is a continuing project. Typically they are surrounded by borderlands which like frontiers are zones.

How might frontiers be compared? Variations can be spatial, temporal, physiographic, organizational, ethnic – among those already there, new settlers, or both. Also important are type of cycles, phase of cycles, types of boundaries, and conditions of the world-system(s) that shape them. In short, “world-system time” is a major context for comparisons (Go 2011 uses world-system time). Is a frontier on the edge of a world-system or internal between states within a core, a periphery, or a semiperiphery, or between these different zones (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997; Chase-Dunn et al. 2006, 2010; Hall 2006, 2012)?³ Finally, frontiers are where incorporation into a world-system occurs. Indeed the incorporation process creates frontiers (Hall 2006, 2012; Carlson 2011, 2012). The implications for empirical and theoretical issues in world-system analyses are discussed after discussions of the frontiers.

One hypothesis might be that modern and ancient frontiers vary with respect to genocide, ethnocide, ethnogenesis, amalgamation, or hybridization. Some frontier processes may be visible only in peripheral and/or frontier areas. Often issues such as these can only be studied from a world-system perspective, but one that examines the system from a local to the system-wide perspective. The comparison of the two Southwests sketched here is an attempt to explore such issues, and to point to the importance of such studies, both for the study of world-system evolution and for understanding contemporary border issues.

The American Southwest has been a frontier with respect to European states since 1542 or so – and much older if one examines inter-polity frontiers among indigenous populations since well before European intrusion. The Yunnan frontier (Yang 2004, 2008, 2011) lasted much longer, from at least two thousand years ago until the present. It was shaped by evolution of various Chinese and other earlier states, by states in Southeast, and to some extent South Asia. This frontier was relatively lightly impacted by European states, and includes multiple frontiers with both state and non-state societies. Both regions have been, and even today remain, frontier zones. In the 21st century both are also important borderlands for two of the most important players in the modern world-system, the United States and China. They share a historical orientation to the areas outside of the two states into which they were ultimately incorporated. Both also brought a great many new practices and ideas into the incorporating states, Yunnan possibly more so than New Spain.

² Hall (2009) elaborates on this discussion, and cites much earlier work. Also of interest are McCarthy (2008) and Parker (2002, 2006). All note that ancient borders and/or frontiers were typically poorly defined. Power and Standen (1999) have edited a useful collection on Eurasian borderlands.

³ For a discussion of an internal Chinese frontier see Standen (1999). Standen also discusses multiple boundaries (p. 76ff).
Indeed, the two areas of northwest New Spain/Southwest United States and what might be called “Greater Yunnan” are part of much larger set of frontiers with changing definitions. Northern New Spain/Southwest United States is a part of a very large set of Spanish frontiers throughout the Americas. In *Contested Ground*, Guy and Sheridan (1998a, 1998b) compare and contrast many of these frontiers to elucidate both general and regionally specific aspects of Hispanic frontiers in the Americas. That is not a variance maximizing strategy, but rather a set of close comparisons for which major outside drivers of frontier formation and transformation were much the same because of the dominance of the same imperial power, Spain. That type of comparison serves to highlight local differences precisely because global differences are minimized.

On the other hand Yunnan was one of many different frontiers. Crossley et al. note that “it would be advantageous to set research results side by side – on the oasis frontier of the Northwest, the transmural steppe / sown frontiers of the North, the intra-imperial economic and cultural frontiers of the Southwest, and the coastal frontier of the sands in the Pearl River delta” in the introduction to an edited collection that begins doing just that (2006: 17). As they note for China, so too with the Spanish empire: the various frontiers interacted, sometime directly, more often indirectly through a variety of administrative processes and personnel. More than one observer has noted that frontier administrators rotated not only through the Americas, but into the Philippines, where they referred to local indigenes as “indios” (e.g., Hall 1998).

In comparing these two regions I underscore discussions between Hall (1989, 1998) and Yang (2008) that any frontier, especially these two, can only be understood in the contexts of their larger, global interactions, but equally require careful attention to specific local contexts and interactions. To neglect either the local or the global hinders comprehension of complex social interactions. Some of the most neglected topics are the impacts of frontiers on core areas, whether considering the frontier as a whole, or individual frontier locations.

I begin with brief accounts of each region, then turn to a listing of similarities and differences, then focus on comparisons among pre-modern, proto-modern, and modern frontiers. I use these comparisons then to extract some broader lessons and questions about contemporary frontiers and borders.

**Southwest China as a Set of Frontiers**

Southwest China, centered more-or-less around what eventually became Yunnan (see Map 1), often included some contiguous areas. It was an amorphous, changing region. Manning (2005: 6) summarizes its history succinctly: “from autonomous region to center of major states to borderland of expanding Chinese dynasties to province within China.”

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4 I place “Greater Yunnan” within quotes because I am drawing a parallel to the term “the Greater Southwest” (see the maps below) and indicate a shifting region that more-or-less is around modern Yunnan, a point elaborated later in the paper.

5 This section draws heavily on Bin Yang (2009, 2004, 2011). Also useful were Crossley et al. (2006), Liu (2011), Liu and Shaffer (2007), Manning (2005), and Giersch (2001). Unfortunately Flad and Chen’s book (2013) on Central China appeared just at this paper was in final editing stage.
Yunnan, which means approximately “the land south of the clouds,” is an ethnocentric Chinese construct. The region was, and remains, home to several dozen different ethnic groups which in total outnumbered Han Chinese immigrants until just a few centuries ago. General maps of the Silk Roads do not show many of Yunnan’s connections (see maps 2, 3, 4, 5). However, Yunnan had many connections to the lands below the winds, that is, Southeast Asia, that were often as strong as or stronger than its connections to China and existed for at least two millennia. Yunnan was connected to what we now know as Tibet, India, and Southeast Asia via a Southwest Silk Road which complemented and supplemented the northern overland Silk Road and the more southerly maritime Silk Road (see Liu 2011; Liu and Shaffer 2007).
The Southwest Silk Road seldom was used to transport silk, but did carry cowries, jade, copper, Buddhist texts, occasionally horses, and other goods. Yunnan was a major source of information to China about Southeast Asia, especially Burma (Myanmar). Several products were very valuable for exchange: copper, silver, horses. Yunnan is a mountainous and highly varied region, which partially accounts for its ethnic diversity. It has extensive mineral resources. Because of its altitude much of the region is amenable to horse breeding, unlike more tropical areas. Thus, the region often served as an alternative source for horses, especially at times when access to Central Asia pastoralists was closed or difficult. Often it was an alternative to the northern steppe pastoralists as a source of horses or provided areas where steppe horse could be bred. Thus, a dire need for horses tempered the southern Song Dynasty’s interactions with Yunnan.

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6 China had many sources for horses, but typically did not have access to all of them simultaneously. Yunnan often was a “plan B” source when access to Central Asian sources was curtailed. On the importance of horses to China see, e.g., Beckwith (1991, and especially 2009).
Map 3: Southwest Silk Road Before the 3rd Century BCE


Map 4: Southwest Silk Road in the Nanzhao-Dali Period (7th to mid-13th Century CE)

Prior to the 13th century, various local kingdoms were able to use geographic, climatic, and geopolitical conditions to maintain a degree of autonomy from other states, especially China, and to negotiate, often favorably, the degree and type of incorporation the region experienced. In lowland areas, the presence of diseases not common in the north killed many invaders (Yang 2010). Mountainous regions presented difficult terrain and at times extremes of cold. During the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE, Han attempts to conquer the region had minimal success and were eventually abandoned because of the much more serious threats from the Xiongnu in the north. After the northern frontier somewhat stabilized, there were further Han forays into Yunnan, but its control was soon weakened with the decline and finally collapse of the empire in the late 2nd century. Serious attempts at conquest did not begin again until the 3rd century during the Three Kingdom period, followed by a few centuries of semi-autonomy for local peoples until their unification under the Nanzhao kingdom in the seventh century. The Nanzhao state maintained considerable autonomy by playing Tang China and Tubo (Tibet) against each other. Early in the 10th century Nanzhao, Tubo, and Tang China collapsed.

The succeeding Ming Dynasty sought stronger control of the region in order to avoid a dependency like the Southern Song had experienced with Yunnan in order to gain access to horses. The Ming sought “to make Yunnan a permanent part of China” (Yang 2008: 95).

Ironically, Yunnan became a part of China as result of the Mongol conquest in 1253 and became part of the Yuan Dynasty. The Mongol conquest was relatively mild because Mongol interest in trade and access to trade routes was more important than territorial expansion per

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7 For a discussion of negotiated peripherality, see Kardulias (2007). His analysis is based on ancient Greece and fur trade in North America. It is highly suggestive of questions that might be pursued throughout Greater Yunnan.
se, and because they were unable to penetrate local chieftainships. As long as those goals were met, local rule prevailed.

Up to this time rule was primarily indirect through local, native or indigenous leaders. Yang argues that “Sinicization and indigenization were two sides of the process through which a middle ground was negotiated” (2008: 102). The Chinese had long ruled frontier peoples based on native customs, but with the intentions of “civilizing” (sinicizing) them eventually. This took approximately five centuries in Yunnan; this is a major reason why it is an excellent locale through which to study these processes. Attempts to balance a need for frontier stability, continued sinicization, and the use of indigenous peoples in frontier defense, while clear goals, became messy or even unsuccessful in practice.

The parallel strategies of direct and indirect administrative systems continued through the Mongol Yuan period and extended into the Ming Dynasty. Centralized, province-wide administration was built on governors who were appointed to rule sub-regions. In rural areas that had a preponderance of indigenous populations, native chiefs were placed under the rule of these officials. While local leaders were required to pay tribute and meet other obligations, this did not eliminate continuing interactions including payments to other states in Southeast Asia.

Slowly the Ming and Qing Dynasties adopted the gaitu guiliu policy that sought to transform native chiefs into a part of the imperial administration. Gradually, the domination of ethnicity over administration in the native chief areas changed to a system in which ethnicity became a subdivision of administration. This was facilitated by many imperial regulations and practices, such as regulating the inheritance of chieftainship and taking sons of chiefs to Chinese schools (local or central locations in China) to train them in Chinese language and administrative processes. Upon their return they became agents of sinicization.

This process, however, was not one-sided. Yang argues that sinicization and indigenization were sides of the same coin. They contributed to the emergence of Yunnanese as provincial identity and in turn became an avenue for the absorption of some Yunnanese practices into Chinese identity and culture. Through immigration, settlement of soldiers, and movement of traders, Han people became the largest single ethnic population in Yunnan by the end of the Ming Dynasty. The introduction of Chinese agrarian production was challenged by local climate and topography: “climate, topography, mineral sources, and native economic practices all forced Chinese migrants to adopt native economic structures” (Yang 2008: 164). Thus, a hybrid society developed. Sinicization grew through bureaucratic administration and continued education of sons of local indigenous leaders. Indigenization entailed the introduction of many “barbarian” customs and goods into Chinese culture, such as clothing, dances, chairs, and so on. Local climatic conditions forced changes in Han agricultural practices.

The presence of large mining communities led to types of urbanization different from those in the central provinces. The use of cowries (shell money) in Yunnan continued longer than in any other part of China (Yang 2004, 2011). Gender imbalances in immigration led to extensive intermarriage, which gave traders and others better access to local networks. This was the main path for the introduction of different sexual practices and sexual tools from Yunnan into Chinese culture. All of these changes contributed to the emergence of a distinctive Yunnanese identity. Yang (2008) argues that these changes were also roots of the minzu system (officially recognized minority groups) which is still in operation today: “In essence, the incorporation of Yunnan helped build China as a multiethnic entity” (182). These processes allow a special window into changes in both the meaning and content of “ethnicity” in China.
Gradually the economy became redirected to China, and there was a slow shift from cowries to copper\textsuperscript{8} as money. Although cowries began to disappear from China about two millennia ago, in Yunnan as late as the Ming Dynasty cowries were used to pay taxes, to pay local salaries, and even used for donations to monasteries. Cowries remained useful for local small scale trade and along the Southwest Silk Road because no single state could implement a currency policy. The long use of cowries was due to Southwest Silk Road trade, but eventually disappeared when Europeans expanded into Southeast Asia and disrupted the supply.

In the Qing Dynasty, immigration to Yunnan increased gradually, no doubt aided by the introduction of New World crops like tomatoes, corn, and sweet potatoes, which opened hilly areas to increased food production. This was driven by and made possible increased urbanization and industrialization, which in turn spurred further increases in food production. The population grew from 5 million in 1700 to 20 million by the mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century. These shifts helped promote the creation of a Yunnanese identity that has remained somewhat distinct within overall Chinese identity.\textsuperscript{9}

Copper mining was the primary force toward industrialization. Reduction of Japanese copper supply heightened interest in Yunnanese copper. While Chinese administrations generally discouraged concentration of miners as potential sources of unrest, they were necessary in Yunnan. Increased copper mining and smelting took a severe toll on local ecology; decline in available charcoal eventually slowed copper production. Yang (2008) argues that the Yunnan frontier had significant impacts on the world-system through its various external links.

Yunnan’s many identities contributed to the development of a Chinese multi-ethnic culture. A key shift was from “barbarians” to imperial subjects, to “younger brothers” in larger Chinese ethnicity. In Yunnan ethnic groups were able to maintain a modicum of autonomy, and developed a larger Yunnanese identity which in turn shaped the history of the minzu (ethnic group) system. This is a particularly salient example of how frontier processes and policies can shape national policies.

Clearly, Yunnan has remained a frontier connecting multiple civilizations – China, Southeast Asia, and South Asia.

\textbf{“The Greater Southwest”: A Brief History}\textsuperscript{10}

Defining the “Greater Southwest,” like defining “Greater Yunnan,” is difficult because it is vague and has changed over time. Meinig says:

The Southwest is a distinctive place to the American mind but a somewhat blurred place on American maps, which is to say that everyone knows that there is

\textsuperscript{8} Silver was so abundant that it was used in many Buddhist statues. By the end of the Ming Dynasty, Yunnan produced seventy-five percent of China’s silver, a scale comparable to silver imports from the New World. China came to depend on frontier production.

\textsuperscript{9} The distinctiveness of Yunnan, as well as its ethnic diversity, figures prominently in many contemporary travel guides for Yunnan.

a Southwest but there is little agreement as to just where it is [...] The term "Southwest" is of course an ethnocentric one: what is south and west to the Anglo-American was long the north of the Hispanic-American. (1971: 3)

Reed facetiously defined the Southwest as reaching from Durango to Durango (Mexico and Colorado) and from Las Vegas to Las Vegas (New Mexico and Nevada; see Map 6) (1964: 175).  

**Map 6: The Greater Southwest**

For approximately the first three centuries of European domination, the American Southwest was the northwestern frontier of New Spain. There were two waves of modern incorporation into world-economies: the Spanish-Mexican from the 1530s to 1846; and the American from 1846 to the present. Spain and the United States offer an opportunity to compare a declining mercantile power with a rising semiperipheral industrial power that eventually became the hegemonic core state. At the regional and local levels there were many indigenous societies, each with its own trajectory of incorporation.

Spaniards entered the area in the 1530s and colonized New Mexico under Oñate in 1598. They did not encounter a large world-system, nor did they find a "new" Mexico, as the rumors of gold and of the seven cities of Cibola had led them to believe. Trade and other connections

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11 The first four entries of the *Borderlands Sourcebook* discuss the definition of the Southwest in detail (Stoddard et al. 1983).
between the Southwest and Mesoamerica had attenuated severely centuries earlier. Social change at the time of Spanish intrusion was toward decreasing social complexity. Disappointed colonists wanted to leave, but the Viceroy ordered them to stay in New Mexico to pre-empt potential claims by European rivals and to protect the silver mines far to the south surrounding Zacatecas. They extracted resources from the horticultural Pueblo societies, treating them as vassal “nations” to the Spanish king, and controlled trade with nomadic groups. Franciscan friars sought to force Pueblo groups to adopt the Christian faith, and these efforts sometimes were supported by local civil authorities. At other times, when the Friars interfered with economic activities such as the sale of captives, civil authorities undermined missionary efforts. Church and state often worked at cross purposes in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Continual lack of state support pushed the military to supplement its pay with booty taken during conflicts. Occasionally obtaining spoils was a major motivator of conflict. The main resources available from nomadic groups were captives to be used as domestic servants or sold to the miners in the south. Horses, and to a lesser extent guns, gradually spread to indigenous peoples, despite Spanish efforts to monopolize both. Again, acquisition of horses and/or guns was a major motivator of indigenous raids. Nomads who wanted horses or guns to defend themselves against raids by rivals had little to trade but captives taken from their own enemies. Raids by an indigenous group on another prompted vengeance by kinsmen, which quickly led to a state of endemic warfare. Continuous trade in captives, shortage of military resources, and frequent Spanish civil-ecclesiastic bickering reinforced endemic warfare among indigenous groups and between indigenous groups and Spanish settlers. Oppression, both economic and religious, of Puebloan peoples during the seventeenth century led to a rebellion (Pueblo Revolt) in 1680 which drove Spaniards from New Mexico for thirteen years.

Imperial worry about European rivals and Church worry over the few Christianized Indians left behind prompted reconquest and recolonization of New Mexico in 1693. Thereafter many of the same conditions arose again. Societies with fluid social organizations, changing leadership, and vague boundaries do not mesh well with bureaucratic organizations. Logistic problems exacerbated the problems generated by competing lines of authority in New Spain. Policies were influenced by local trade, especially in captives, and by the variations in ecological adaptation of local groups.

The Viceroy of New Spain needed to pacify the frontier, but had limited resources to do so. Endemic warfare was a major obstacle and caused expenditures of scarce funds. Even after the late eighteenth century reorganization of the frontier provinces (Bourbon Reforms), Northern New Spain cost at least 55,000 pesos annually to administer. Efforts to economize shifted pressures onto indigenous groups. Gradually, New Mexican administrators invented new strategies to curtail the fighting. The small Spanish minority maintained control through induced

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12 See Carter (2009), Crown and Hurst (2009), Mathiowetz (2011), and Liebman (2012) for recent evidence documenting some of the older connections.

13 These were vital to the Spanish Empire since the silver mines in north central Mexico produced more wealth than any other silver source in the Americas.

14 Nomadic does not mean random. It means moving through a known territory, often along well-known paths.

15 This sort of frontier violence is actually quite common. See Ferguson and Whitehead (1992) and Blackhawk (2006).
dependence on Spanish goods, a divide and conquer approach toward alliances, and pressure on nomadic groups toward political centralization.

Governors tried to settle nomadic groups into compact farming communities in imitation of Spanish villages. This process had worked in central New Spain, but it was not effective on the northern frontiers because of the ready opportunity to flee to hinterlands. Officials designated leaders with whom to negotiate and frequently gave staffs of office, medals, and other insignia to them. This worked better with sedentary groups than with nomadic groups. Pueblos became increasingly symbiotic with Hispanic settlers, a tendency reinforced by the continual threat of nomadic raiders. Often, however, this symbiosis was quite shallow and native cultures went underground. This is how and why in the 21st century many Pueblo religious practices and several indigenous languages persist.

Few nomads were sedentarized effectively, but they did become somewhat more centrally organized; they developed somewhat more institutionalized forms of leadership. This pressure was strongest on Comanche bands (Kavanaugh 1996; Hämäläinen 2008), while an opposing divide and conquer strategy promoted fragmentation of Apache bands.

Comanches, who occupied territory at and beyond the edge of the northern frontier, were able to trade with Plains groups and some Europeans to obtain guns. There are reports, disputed by some scholars, that Comanches brought French flintlocks to the Pecos (New Mexico) trade fairs in the seventeenth century. Settlers eagerly sought such guns to circumvent the official restriction of firearms to the military. Comanches obtained horses in return and also from Apaches and other groups. Comanches quickly became very successful mounted hunters and warriors by capitalizing on their middle position in the horse and gun trade. They developed extensive trade networks of their own and came to dominate the region north and west of the New Mexican frontier (Hämäläinen 1993, 2003, 2008).

New Mexican governor de Anza (1778-1787) repeatedly defeated Comanche bands and banned trade with them, while Texas blocked their trade with Louisiana. In 1785 many Comanches sought peace. Governors de Anza (New Mexico) and Cabello (Texas) required similar conditions: cease hostilities with Spanish subjects; release captives Spaniards; no trade with other Europeans; conformance to Spanish declarations of peace and war; fight against Lipan Apaches; pursuit of Apaches in Coahuila only with Spanish permission; and that all Comanches agree in unison. In return they would receive annuities. A treaty made in April 1787 led to the appointment of Ecueracapa as “captain general” of all Comanches. He was granted an annual salary of 200 pesos, with another 100 pesos for a subordinate chief.16 New Mexico would not grant asylum to Comanches who fled tribal law. During a drought a few years later, citizens of Santa Fe supplied food to Comanches, thereby cementing a lasting peace.

Without the treaty New Mexico might not have survived as a province. Comanches became a very effective “border patrol,” informing New Mexican officials of movements of other Europeans and buffering the region from raids by other indigenous groups. Comanches also became allies in subduing other indigenous groups, especially Apaches. They wanted no part of an Apache peace. The Comanche bands became the most centralized of the northern nomads, but did not become a permanent unitary organization. Still, there were short-term benefits to Comanche survival: relations with New Mexican Spaniards improved, and

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16 Ecueracapa (Leather Jacket) was an important leader of a large Comanche band known as the Buffalo-eaters (Cuchantica or Cuchanche). When he died of wounds received in a campaign against Apaches, a replacement was elected by an encampment of some 4,500 Comanches.
communication and cooperation among the bands increased, which enhanced trading and raiding activities.

Initially Apache groups gained advantage over other groups by early possession of horses. In the 17th and early 18th centuries they had developed semi-permanent villages on the Plains, allowing organization of large war parties. However, they had poor access to guns, because Spanish policy restricted guns to the Spanish army. Later Apaches gave up this village living and gradually were displaced from the Plains by Comanches who had better access to guns. Large horse herds became necessary for fighting, and pushed toward a more nomadic life.

As Apaches were forced southwest from the Plains their raids made trade and communications between the far north and the interior provinces of New Spain more difficult. This prompted Spanish officials to pursue a divide and conquer strategy. Later there were some attempts to regroup some Apache bands into sedentary farmers on establecimientos de paz (peace establishments). Apaches who sought peace also had to help subdue other, hostile Apaches. This approach worked for a few years, but became less effective because seeds, tools, and provisions for supervisory troops were too expensive. Restrictions on movement chafed those on establecimientos de paz. Still, the peace did allow population growth that overshot the carrying capacity of the region, prompting a return to raiding.

Thus, Apache social ecology differed significantly from that of Comanches. Apaches competed directly with Spanish settlers for resources. Their trade was local and typically played one Spanish community against others. Settled Apaches and settlers resented the cost of help given to those recently pacified.

In the late 18th century peace became precarious, but differently for Apaches and Comanches. Apache population decreased during war and increased during peace. Apaches hindered Spanish development. Comanches thrived under the subsequent alliance with New Mexico and supplied necessary goods to the local economy, such as buffalo hides, jerked meat, and captives, and they protected the borders. These differences were rooted in differential access to horses and guns, adaptation to local ecology, and position in regional social ecology.

Slowly the frontier became more tightly incorporated into the Spanish Empire, and became more fully peripheralized. The change was moderate because frontier policy needed to balance competing goals; still there was some development.

When rebellions in New Spain led to Mexican independence (1810-1821), the frontier peace began to unravel further. Raiding increased during the Mexican era. Yet Comanches maintained the peace with New Mexico though they did raid other Mexican provinces. Mexico began to lose control of its northern provinces due to internal political disorder and British-American rivalry over the West.

With independence, trade opened along the Santa Fe Trail from St. Louis to Santa Fe. This quickly reoriented northern New Mexico toward St. Louis, and away from Chihuahua in the south. Santa Fe became an entrepôt for American goods into Mexico. Many traders married Mexican women in order to gain licenses to trade in Santa Fe. American traders were attractive husbands because of their reputation of treating women better than Mexican men. This, unsurprisingly, stirred considerable resentment among Mexican men.

The American conquest (1846-1848) transformed much of northwest Mexico into a rising capitalist state and unleashed renewed raiding. The old patterns repeated: the use of volunteer fighters with low pay supplemented by booty and captives, instigation of hostilities by locals bent on their own advancement, continued bureaucratic bungling, and the use of local bureaucratic positions as stepping stones to higher office in eastern centers. It seemed like the
Americans had studied the Spanish archives in order to repeat their mistakes; actually, it was due similar structural conditions.

There were four major differences under American control. First, all territory became part of the national state. Second, the United States had far greater resources to enforce its will, even in remote areas. Third, Americans removed the means of subsistence for nomadic groups, forcing them on to reservations. Fourth, New Mexico and Arizona Territories were primarily a land bridge to California. Once the “bridge” was open there was little need to disturb the region, allowing time and “space” for indigenous groups to adapt to the new situation.

Large numbers of Europeans, most from the United States, poured into Texas and California. Those two states began their climb toward major U.S. population centers. New Mexico no longer was the center of European population in the American Southwest. During the Civil War, New Mexico split into two territories, New Mexico and Arizona, as a result of complex political maneuvering designed to block Confederate access to California ports. These two states remained territories until 1912 primarily because they had such large Hispanic and Indian populations. Indeed, in New Mexico primary speakers of Spanish only became a minority in the 1920s. It is noteworthy that in the 21st century continued immigration from Mexico and other former Spanish colonies is beginning to reverse these trends.

After annexation by the United States, the continued growth of Santa Fe Trail traffic increased intergroup competition. Incompatible land uses – cattle grazing versus buffalo hunting – strained ecological resources for productive technologies of nomadic groups, leading to intensification of fighting. Many indigenous groups needed to raid European settlements or starve. Attitudes among United States citizens toward Indians exacerbated conditions. They rejected Apache overtures to become allies against Mexicans. Traffic in captives again promoted fighting. The army was an important factor in local economies. Military efforts to "pacify" nomadic groups were helped by a thriving national economy, but slowed by the Civil War (1861-1865). American actions reversed the trajectories of Comanche and Apache social change.

Comanches blocked westward expansion into Texas, straddled the Santa Fe Trail, and occupied a narrowing no-man's-land between Texas, New Mexico, and northern Mexico. They prospered initially by trading and raiding among these territories, escaping to the unmapped south Plains, but were gradually surrounded. Other groups from the north were pushed further onto the Plains and hunted more intensely. Europeans also hunted on the Plains, severely depleting the buffalo herds, a major Comanche resource. Some of the "Civilized Tribes" were relocated to Indian Territory from the southeastern United States and infringed on eastern Comanche territory. New Mexican livestock operations – first sheep, later cattle – encroached on their western range. Texans blocked movement to the southeast. Apaches blocked movement to the southwest.

The United States attempted to ease the problem by making treaties with several Plains groups at Medicine Lodge Creek in 1867, which defined the first Comanche reservation. The Comanche Indian Agency was poorly funded, and their small cattle herds were raided by other Indians and by neighboring Texans. Comanches responded by raiding in Texas and provoked counter raids by settlers. After the final Comanche battle at Palo Duro Canyon, Texas (1875) they were forced onto a small Fort Sill reservation.

Apaches lived in a large number of small bands scattered over a diverse territory, making their final subjugation complex. That history is difficult to summarize. Unlike Comanches, Apaches had long been a barrier to trade, and had developed a very effective raiding mode of
production. They did not depend on any one food source and could change targets for raids easily and frequently.

Because of competition with new settlers, military pressure grew. Arizona developed as a "mineral empire." Both miners and Apaches depended on sedentary producers for supplies. Since the public in the east would no longer tolerate the annihilation of Indians, the only alternative was for the government to feed them. But there were insufficient funds to do so. Also, Indian wars became a vital part of the local economy. This difference of opinions about Indian policy is one root of the western opposition to “government interference” from Washington. Some local leaders initiated conflicts to keep the federal funds flowing into their pockets. This ended with Geronimo’s surrender in 1886.

After the Civil War, nomadic groups were forced onto reservations, eliminating or severely modifying traditional lifestyles. Nomadism, barter, raiding, and sale of captives could not coexist with more intensive uses of natural resources. Farming, ranching, and mining were seen to use the land “more efficiently” than foraging or gardening. The American state did not tolerate such “inefficient” use of resources – a thinly disguised rationale for seizing Indian territories. Native Americans had two choices: join the lower classes of a capitalist state, or die resisting. Many chose the second option. Only where Americans had no desire for the land did native groups get reservations, where they became "captive nations" and welfare recipients.

Again, pacification had different effects on Comanches and Apaches. First, they had different degrees of ecological and political flexibility. Comanches depended heavily on the buffalo, and intentional destruction of the buffalo herds destroyed their base of adaptation. Apaches had more diverse survival strategies. For Comanches the slight increase in centralization and intense dependence on the buffalo made them more vulnerable to rapid defeat. Apaches could disperse and avoid annihilation. Over centuries, they had become adept at forming new alliances, using multiple survival strategies, and adapting to rapidly changing circumstances. Second, geopolitical location played a role. Comanches blocked expansion and communication across the western United States, as Apaches had done under New Spain. After annexation by the United States, Apaches were mainly a diplomatic nuisance along the new international boundary. Neither group could capitalize on a middleman or buffer role. So both groups were “pacified” and “sedentarized,” and the Comanches all but destroyed. Yet, these changes occurred within a larger context.

In the late 19th century the Dawes Act, also known as the General Allotment Act (1887), “freed surplus” Indian land by forcing Indians on reservations to take up farming, often with allotments that were far too small for the sparsely watered west. Also during the time the government, under direction of Louis Henry Pratt, sought to “kill the Indian, but save the man” with required education in boarding schools that sought to eliminate indigenous languages and cultures. While originally intended as a liberal, humane reform as opposed to outright genocide, this policy was disastrous. One of its major, unintended side effects was to facilitate organization of nationwide Native American associations (Adams 1995; Wilkins 2006).

Incorporation processes were episodic and sporadic, but tended to become stronger. The introduction of horses and guns in the Spanish era made pre-contact practices impossible. The contemporary groupings of indigenous peoples in the Southwest were constructed during this
era. The United States completed in a few decades what the Spaniards and Mexicans could not do in centuries: permanent sedentarization of nomadic groups.

Figure 2 provides a graphic display of the variations in degrees of incorporation for Apache groups, Comanche groups, and territories that became New Mexico, California, and Arizona. While there is an overall tendency to tighter incorporation, there is also considerable variation, among both the groups and the territories.

**Figure 2: Trajectories of Incorporation for the Greater Southwest**

![Figure 2: Trajectories of Incorporation for the Greater Southwest](source: Thomas D. Hall, copyright holder)

This example suggests that incorporation into any world-system is problematic: (a) according to the type of system doing the incorporating; (b) with respect to social organization of incorporated groups; (c) with respect to the conditions of the incorporating system; and (d) with respect to a variety of local factors. The degree to which an area or group is incorporated into a world-system defines the context within which local changes may occur. Local actions are major factors in the costs of incorporation. Incorporation is a matter of degree and is not fully elastic. Sometimes changes engendered by incorporation are difficult or even impossible to reverse, as with the consequences of the spread of horses.

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For more detailed explanation of incorporation processes see Hall (2009, 2012). A recent comparison of the British and American empires, *Pattern of Empire* (Go 2011) shows that colonial and administrative policies were heavily shaped by local resistance and conditions. This type of influence remains under-investigated in frontier studies.
This account shows that incorporation begins with early contact. Second, incorporated groups, even non-state societies, play an active role in the process. Third, incorporation is variable and sporadic. Finally, more than economic reasons prompt attempts at incorporation.

Before turning to comparisons of the two southwests and some general conclusions about the comparative study of frontiers, Table 1 provides a summary timeline of events discussed above.

Table 1: Timelines for Greater Yunnan, Greater Southwest, and World-System (300 BCE – 1990s CE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Yunnan</th>
<th>US Southwest</th>
<th>World-System Conditions</th>
<th>Other (Boswell and Chase-Dunn 2000)</th>
<th>Epi/pandemics (Chew 2008)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ca 300 BCE</td>
<td>Frontier forms</td>
<td>Only Native American frontiers</td>
<td>Tributary world-systems</td>
<td>3854-2400 BCE Dark Age 1 (Chew 2007: 54)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd &amp; 1st century BCE</td>
<td>Han attempt, then abandon conquest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Threats from Xiongnu; 2402-594 BCE Dark Age 2</td>
<td>Smallpox in Rome (2nd century); China (2nd century)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd century CE</td>
<td>Three Kingdoms conquered</td>
<td></td>
<td>0-200 A phase (Chew 2001: 113)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bubonic plague in Europe, Arab world, North Africa; Smallpox in India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca 600 CE</td>
<td>Nanzhao unification</td>
<td></td>
<td>200-450 B phase</td>
<td>plagues throughout Eurasia; 1188 BCE-689 CE Dark Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca 900 CE</td>
<td>Weak links to Mesoamerica</td>
<td></td>
<td>450-775 A phase 775-950 A phase</td>
<td>Nanzhao, Tubo, and Tang China collapse; 296-1171 CE Dark Age</td>
<td>Smallpox in India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1253 CE</td>
<td>Mongol conquest</td>
<td></td>
<td>950-1200 A phase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca 1200-1500</td>
<td>Declining complexity</td>
<td></td>
<td>1200-1500 B phase</td>
<td>1311-1733 Dark Age</td>
<td>Bubonic plague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca 1450-1640</td>
<td>Capitalist world-system in Europe, mercantile phase</td>
<td></td>
<td>1496 B; 1509 A; Portugal is hegemon; 1529 B; 1539 A; Hapsburg is hegemon</td>
<td></td>
<td>Smallpox in Americas through 1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca 1542</td>
<td>Spanish enter the Southwest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1598</td>
<td>New Mexico colonized</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1559 B; 1575 A; 1595 A; Netherlands is hegemon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600s</td>
<td>75% copper production for China; Han become majority</td>
<td></td>
<td>1500-1700 B phase OR 1689 A</td>
<td>Cowrie use declines; 1595 B; 1621 A; 1650 B; Netherlands is hegemon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19 The ways in which incorporated peoples resist incorporation and the degree to which they can negotiate the terms of incorporation has come to be more widely studied, and has been found to be very wide-spread for any type of world-system (Kardulias 2007).
The Two Southwesterns: Similarities and Differences

Some key similarities between the two regions are that both supplied valuable goods and avenues of trade to other areas for other goods. Both have highly variegated topography. Both have a high density of indigenous, non-state peoples. Both were avenues for the penetration of new ideologies in the form of religions: Buddhism in Asia, Christianity in the Americas. Both, for considerable time – at least two millennia in the case of Yunnan, four centuries in the Southwest – were nodes on important routes connecting to other areas. Yunnan was a key node on the Southwest Silk Road that had links with the northern, land-based Silk Road, and the southern, maritime Silk Road. New Mexico connected to New Spain/Mexico via Camino Real to Chihuahua and Vera Cruz, later to the United States via the Santa Fe Trail, and to California via the Old Spanish Trail. Both regions underwent considerable identity shifts, albeit very different ones. These processes continue today.

There are some other similarities that seem to be quite common in frontier areas. Traders intermarried with local women to gain better access to local networks. This was officially promoted for soldiers in Yunnan to create both a permanent military presence and to introduce Chinese farming techniques. The latter was often undone by local ecological conditions. All of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>late 18th century</th>
<th>Bourbon Reform</th>
<th>Dark Age ends 1733; 1720 B; 1747 A; 1762 B; 1790 A</th>
<th>Cholera in Afroeurasia throughout 19th century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>Mexican Independence; open Santa Fe Trail</td>
<td>Capitalist world-system in Europe, industrial phase</td>
<td>1814 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846-48</td>
<td>US-Mexico war; Southwest annexed to US; Texas statehood 1845</td>
<td></td>
<td>1848 A; UK is hegemon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850s</td>
<td>Muslin Rebellion 1856-1873</td>
<td>California statehood 1850</td>
<td>U.S. [re]opens Japan to trade; Meiji restoration 1868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Muslin Rebellion</td>
<td>Defeat of Comanches</td>
<td>1st wave of globalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Geronimo surrenders</td>
<td></td>
<td>1893 A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918-19</td>
<td>Yunnan-Annam Railway (1910)</td>
<td>New Mexico and Arizona statehood 1912</td>
<td>1917 B; 1940 A; 1914-1918 WWI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940s</td>
<td>1949 PRC</td>
<td></td>
<td>1939-1945 WWII; US is hegemon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd wave of globalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>Tourism up</td>
<td>Tourism up</td>
<td>1969 B; US hegemonic decline begins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Thomas D. Hall
these instances led to the development of hybrid populations, some of which, at least for some time, became distinctive ethnic groups themselves.

For both, the local population was surpassed by immigrants only late in its incorporation process. This actually occurred twice in the American Southwest: first for Spanish populations versus indigenous populations, and second under the United States for U.S. citizens over descendants of Spanish/Mexican populations and indigenous populations. In Yunnan, Han population surpassed local population only in the Ming Dynasty. Thus, in both regions ethnic diversity has remained quite high, indeed the highest in both China and United States. And in both the Southwest United States, especially New Mexico and Arizona (old New Mexico province), and Yunnan this ethnic diversity has become a tourist attraction in itself, actively promoted by local governments. In the United States the presence of Indian owned casinos has added to that draw. With reservations in the United States and the minzu system in China, surviving ethnic groups have maintained a modicum of autonomy. Also in both areas some indigenous individuals were trained in schools run by the dominant state as agents of assimilation and acculturation. It seems that this was more effective and less brutal in China than the United States, but much more detailed research is needed to substantiate such a claim.

There are also key differences. Most obvious is the much longer timeline of the Yunnan frontier/borderlands. Connections to neighboring states also differ considerably. New Mexico connected to French colonies (in what became Louisiana), to the United States, and after the war with Mexico, to Mexico itself. Yunnan, via many branches of the Southwest Silk Road connected to states in Southeast Asia – Vietnam (Annam), Laos, Thailand, and Burma, to the west and north with Tibet, and to the west and south to South Asia – India, Assam, and Nepal. Over at least the last two millennia, connections between Greater Yunnan and other places shifted considerably, and these connections were more variable than those for the Greater Southwest.

There are differences in types of states involved in incorporation, ranging from some of the least complex states in areas surrounding Greater Yunnan two or more millennia ago to the hegemonic power of the current capitalist world-system (United States) for the U.S. Southwest, and many types in between. A key factor is the power differential – political, military, economic, technological, cultural – between the incorporating state and/or world-system and the societies being incorporated. Also important here are roles of those states in the world-system within which they are embedded – whether they are peripheral, semiperipheral, core, or hegemonic core states. The complexity of these issues precludes detailed analysis here, but a few approximations which might serve as hypotheses for further research include:

a) the larger the power differential, the less room available to negotiate incorporation;
b) state actions will vary with position within their world-system: hegemonic core states have wide latitude, while peripheral states have much less;
c) the greater the cultural differences, the more difficult the interaction – e.g., complex states have difficulty understanding nonstate societies, often seeing them as unorganized “barbarians,” when in fact they may be very well organized, but not along the same lines as the states (for examples see Hall and Fenelon 2009);
d) the prevailing ethos differs about whether “barbarians” are to be destroyed or civilized, (even in more recent times where destroying indigenous peoples is generally not approved, though it still occurs);
e) areas being incorporated that are located between competing states or world-systems might be able to maintain greater local autonomy than those facing only one – typically large – state.

This last condition seems applicable to early Greater Yunnan (late first millennium BCE and early first millennium CE), but from the Mongol Conquest on (1253), it is one large state, sporadically growing in power. Given the longer span of time considered, the situation in Greater Yunnan changed much more than that in the Greater Southwest.

Finally, the indigenous populations were quite different. In the U.S. Southwest the most complex societies were the Pueblo villages and Comanches late in the colonial era; most of the rest were nomadic or semi-nomadic. In Yunnan, there were few foragers or semi-foragers. More common were fairly robust sedentary, agricultural chiefdoms with sufficient military power to offer considerable resistance to the Chinese military.

These comparisons make clear that the concepts of nation-state and precise borders are primarily modern. Even where ancient states, such as China, tried to set precise boundaries or borders, this was more often than not wishful thinking. Often a mapping of networks might be more useful (see Berman 2005 and Mostern 2008 for examples from China). Indeed, Monica Smith (2005) goes so far as to argue that ancient states might be better understood as networks than as bounded territories. She says “our current notions [of boundaries] date to seventeenth-century Europe […],” and argues that “in sum, contemporaneity in archaeological and historical maps should be viewed as the hypothesis upon which further research is based, rather than an immutable conclusion about the relationship among sites” (834; 838). In short, states expand by taking over new networks and collapse when “networks of interaction are broken” (838). This is why ancient claims – and even some contemporary ones – of precise borders or boundaries should be seen more as wishes than as facts. Their existence is a working hypothesis at best. Thus, setting precise borders is a continuing project even while borderlands remain, like the frontiers that preceded them, frontier zones.20

Even though separated by over a millennium, there were similar processes, though the particulars varied immensely. According to Yang:

The power struggles among Han China, the Southern Yue, and the Xiongnu people vividly illustrate how Central Asian frontiers and the Southwestern frontier mutually influenced one another. Indeed, it was because of Han China’s expansion into Central Asia and into South China that the Middle Kingdom first noticed and then conquered Yunnan. (2008: 75, emphasis added)

Under Spain the concerns were with French to the east and southeast, the British to the northeast, and vague other Europeans to the west and northwest. In addition to contraband trade, blocking access to the highly productive silver mines in Zacatecas was a major concern. Indeed, these are reasons why New Mexico was maintained as a colony even at considerable expense. Under the

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20 This discussion would benefit from a careful analysis in light of the arguments of Doreen Massey (2005; Anderson 2008) about space and its portrayal. That, however, is beyond the scope of this paper. Daniel Little (2013) also provides an interesting analysis of what place means in world history and how that relates to concepts of nation and region.
The Two Southswests

United States the concerns were with Russians to the far northwest (northern California, not Alaska), French to the east and southeast, and British for control of seaports along the west coast of North America. Thus, the processes along any one frontier are influenced by other frontiers.

Yang also points out an important difference on the effects of the frontier regions on the central or core states:

Yunnan silver in the Ming period, copper cash replacing cowry currency during the Ming-Qing transition, and Yunnan copper in the Qing period, collectively demonstrated the central penetration over the frontier on the one hand and the significance of a frontier in the Chinese world-economy on the other hand. Thus, Yunnan's case contrasted with the incorporation of the American southwestern frontier by a modern European world-system, which, as Thomas Hall [1989] has pointed out, greatly influenced the Southwestern frontier but did little to affect the modern world-system. (2008: 232, emphasis added)

This is an important contrast, albeit slightly overstated. There were effects of the Southwest on the now capitalist world-system, albeit considerably lower and more indirect than those of Yunnan on China. By annexing the land from Texas to California, the United States gained secure land routes to the California ports, which gave it a considerable advantage over Europeans in trade with Asia. Indeed, the [re]opening of Japan to trade with Europeans by Commodore Perry in 1853 was a direct attempt to get solid, although rather late, foothold in the trade with Asian countries. That opening, in turn, played a role in the Meiji Restoration (1868) and the rise of Japan as a modern state. While significant, these effects in no way matched the effects of Yunnan, especially the copper and silver trade, and through Yunnan, China’s impacts on the emerging global world-system.

However, it remains a somewhat open question whether the roots of these differences lie in the differences between ancient and modern frontiers, or in the relative power of the state with respect to the frontier, or in a combination, or in something else. It is not clear whether the gap in power between China and Yunnan was larger, about the same, or smaller than that between the United States and its Southwest. No doubt for Yunnan the power gap changed many times over its long connections with China and other earlier states. In relative terms, though, it is clear that the Southwest region had far less power than Yunnan.

Bin Yang draws the following comparisons between the Yunnan frontier and the New World Frontier at large (2008: 174). In addition to the longer time span, Yunnan differed in two other aspects. First, the long persistence of the frontier in Yunnan meant that it could use its multicultural and external links, including those to China, to develop its own mechanisms and methods to deal with Chinese colonization. These mechanisms were often quite effective. They illustrate one of the longest periods of “negotiated peripherality” (Kardulias 2007). Yang also draws attention to this being the longest lasting instance of a “middle ground,” a concept Richard White (1991) developed to describe the long period interaction in what is now the middle west of the United States. Indeed, Yunnan is an excellent place to explore further the concepts of middle ground and negotiated peripherality through more localized and precise case studies.

Such “middle grounds” may be instances of what Peter Turchin (2006) calls a “metaethnic frontier,” a fault line between two metaethnic communities. A metaethnic community is a large, typically the largest, grouping of people with some degree of shared identity, often containing many subdivisions. These include “not only the usual civilizations –
the Western, Islamic, and Sinic – but also such broad cultural groups as the Celts and Turco-Mongolian steppe nomads” (5). So a metaethnic frontier is “an area where an imperial boundary coincides with a fault line between two metaethnic communities” (6). He further argues that metaethnic frontiers between semiperipheral and core areas are “incubators of group solidarity” (asabiya, after Ibn Khaldun) (Turchin 2003, 2011). Metaethnic communities are “typically unified by religious markers; specifically, by belonging to one of the world religions, so this marker became particularly relevant beginning in the Axial Age (800–200 BCE)” (Tuchin 2011: 9). He further notes that “world religions that aimed to integrate diverse ethnic groups first appeared during the Axial Age. They include Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and later Christianity, Islam, and Tengrism (the religion of Turko-Mongolian nomads), as well as such integrative ideologies without a supernatural content as Confucianism and Stoicism” (2011: 10). Hence, these are areas ripe with the possibility of formation of semiperipheral marcher states and ethnogenesis which combines formerly disparate communities.

The sharpness of such frontiers may be intensified if the metaethnic boundary coincides with a sharp geographical boundary. World-systems have two sorts of boundaries: those with other world-systems and those with non-state groups. The same might be said of core-noncore boundaries. What is interesting about semiperipheral areas is that they have both types of boundary or frontier zones, and both are metaethnic. The frontiers with the core area(s) are potentially metaethnic in at least three ways. First, the core is often different ethnically as well as politically. Furthermore, as core-semiperiphery rivalry intensifies, the salience of that frontier will increase and is very likely to become metaethnic if it was not already so. Second, the mode of organization, and possibly technological modes (modes of production in a non-marxian sense) are likely to be different. Third, core elites will typically see the semiperipheral elites as inferior, as “barbarians.” Examples are Han views of Yunnan chiefs or American views of Spanish/Mexican elites. Indeed, these differences delayed the admission of both New Mexico and Arizona as states until 1912, and are reviving today in debates about undocumented workers.

Frontiers with peripheral areas are of the second type, between state and non-state peoples. This, too, is metaethnic, first, on the basis of very different political structures. Second, there is the “tribal zone” effect (Ferguson and Whitehead 1992a, 1992b), which intensifies warfare among non-state groups and between them and the incorporating state(s). Third, in such settings raiding and trading are often alternative means for non-state groups to obtain goods originating in states. There is a tendency for both sides to view the other as undifferentiated. Thus states see non-state peoples as barbarians, whereas non-state peoples see members of the state from peasant, to local administrator, specific city, and the entire state as the same entity.

As frontiers persist knowledge develops on each side. Each side may use such intentional misunderstanding to manipulate relations. This is the stuff of any detailed frontier history, and accounts for why even with a steep metaethnic frontier there can be continued interactions, trade, intermarriage, alliances and so forth across the frontier. 21 For both types of metaethnic frontiers a critical, and very thorny, issue is: when do these relations build larger and stronger identities and when do they divide? This is part and parcel of frontier ethnopolitics. In the U.S. Southwest the effect occurred in both directions in the fragmentation of Apachean peoples and the amalgamation of Comanche peoples, and of course in the construction of “the American Indian” as an imposed identity. The spread of Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, in China, and

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21 See Brooks (2002) for detailed examples and Reséndez (2005) for a discussion of how nationality (here we could read as asabiya) is constructed in such situations.
Christianity in the Americas were also factors in building metaethnic identities. Further exploration of these frontier/middle ground/metaethnic boundaries will require many detailed studies of frontier areas, and comparisons among them.

Another difference is the role of disease, especially tropical and sub-tropical diseases, on contact, conquest, and colonization. In the Southwest, as throughout the Americas, European diseases decimated indigenous populations. In Yunnan it was the opposite; disease and the threat of disease slowed attempts at conquest and colonization. Indeed, the fear of and presence of disease eventually became a marker of Han and non-Han differences as well as a boundary marker for the Yunnan region (Yang 2010).

All three incorporating states – Spain, United States, China – made extensive use of indirect rule and indigenous leaders in governing the frontier regions. China seems to have been much more successful than Spain. It is not entirely clear why this was so. Certainly there is merit to an argument that China was more powerful than Spain relative to the frontier region. But how much of that difference can be attributed to direct overland connection as opposed to transoceanic connection? It is also clear that the United States used indirect rule minimally and for a very short time.

A clear difference is that indirect rule was used for a much longer time in Yunnan, and used in more complex relations, than in northwest New Spain. The tripod system developed by the Mongols became the gaitu guiliu policy that sought to transform native chieftains into a part of the imperial administration during the Ming-Qing transition. Gradually, the domination of ethnicity over administration changed into a system in which ethnicity was a subdivision of administration. This is very different. Part of the explanation lies in the considerably greater power of the indigenous populations in Yunnan and existence of very valuable resources there (e.g., copper and silver). This contrasts with Spanish New Mexico where indirect rule was used primarily with already sedentary, village peoples, with a major exception for Comanches. Under Spain or the United States, indigenous leaders never became part of the national state administration. Indeed, a major theme running through U.S.-Indian relations is the preservation of Indian sovereignty (Wilkins 2006; Hall and Fenelon 2009, Ch. 7).

Finally, Yang (2008: 205-6) asks “But was Yunnan a frontier area, an independent world-system, a section of another world-system, or an external area over which the two world-economies were contending?” He also notes that “Yunnan belonged to the Indian Ocean economy, at least before the Ming period.” My answer to his question would be “all of the above,” albeit at different times and for different reasons. The closest to that sort of complication in the Southwest are the debates about the connections to Mesoamerica, which were gone by the time the Spanish arrived. It seems worth contemplating how much of Yunnan’s long-lasting (partial) autonomy was due to the ability of local leaders to make use of their position as a contested periphery between early states – China, Southeast Asian states, and South Asia. This is a complex question, but one worth eventually pursuing for its potential insights into how separate world-systems keep separate and how they merge.

What then might we learn from all this for 21st century border issues?

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22 There is an extensive literature the role of disease in the Americas. Mann’s 1491 (2005) and 1493 (2011) provide very readable summaries of those literatures, the debates, and the authors.

23 See chapter 5 of Go’s Patterns of Empire (2011) where he explains this shift was part and parcel of the various phases of empire growth.
Humans now are facing an impending crisis, and likely a bifurcation point (Wallerstein 2010, 2011), spurred by political and economic collapse. The processes and results of a bifurcation are not predictable, but we may be able to sketch a “possibility space” of consequences. Other recent developments play into this issue.

First is Sing Chew’s work on “dark ages” (2007, 2008) which may be intermediate between complete bifurcation and routine cycles in world-system processes. Chew sketches some insightful comparisons among the onsets of dark ages. While by no means certain, climate change, decline of oil, rise in spills, the potential nuclear disasters like the 2011 Japanese earthquake, and the rise in severe weather suggest that the possibility of the onset of a new dark age cannot be dismissed out of hand.

Glen Kuecker (2007) analyzes how a “perfect storm” of political, economic, demographic, and ecological changes might bring greater destruction to core states than the rest of the world-system. Kuecker and Hall (2011) use the analysis of semiperipheral regions as “seedbeds of change” (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1977, Ch. 5) to argue that peoples living in semiperipheral and especially peripheral areas may have the highest likelihood of surviving a “perfect storm” of collapse. This is because they are typically less embedded in the current system, and because they often have been able to maintain lifeways different from those found in core areas. Chief among these are indigenous peoples, who have preserved lifeways that are the most different from, and often most challenging to, the current world-system (Hall and Fenelon 2008, 2009; Fenelon 2012). Wallerstein (2011) argues:

The so-called forgotten peoples (women, ethnic/racial/religious “minorities,” “indigenous” nations, persons of non-heterosexual sexual orientations), as well as those concerned with ecological or peace issues asserted their right to be considered prime actors on an equal level with the historical subjects of the traditional antisystemic movements. (34, emphasis added)

Indigenous peoples are not saviors nor can they be imitated directly. Rather, their practices may be suggestive of alternatives to the current system. How they have preserved maintained differences from neoliberal capitalism may provide clues for developing a new kind of world-system.

These issues are closely related to contemporary borders and frontiers. Survivors of major changes have been for millennia most common in frontier regions. But we must not get bogged down in studying repeated, older cycles. Comparison with past frontiers may help us identify what is actually new and what are only permutations of old processes.

The comparison between the U.S. Southwest and Southwest China and studies of indigenous survival suggest that claims that the origins of contemporary troubles are in the modern state or in capitalism are overstated. The fundamental origin of these problems is in states, qua states. Certainly capitalism does drive older processes more strongly, but capitalism per se is not the only problem. Gary Snyder argued: “Grandmother wisdom suspects the men who stay too long talking in the longhouse when they should be mending nets or something. They are up to trouble – inventing the state, most likely” (1990: 64). Long ago (7th century CE) Tu Fu wrote (Hinton 1988:101):
Before Three emperors hatched civilization, 
people ate their fill and were content. 
Someone started knotting ropes, and now we’re 
mired in the glue and varnish of government.

The remark about knotting ropes refers to a very early form of keeping records. Warren Wagar (1999) suggested possible forms of organization that transcend the state. Some of these processes may well be studied in contemporary border regions. The possibilities of such discoveries and understandings are a fundamental value of continued examinations of border processes.

Variations among frontiers can be spatial, temporal, physiographic, or social organizational: different kinds of native peoples and different sorts of settlers. The context of world-system time is likewise important: type of cycle, phase of cycle, type of boundary, and state of the world-system(s) that are shaping frontiers and that frontiers are influencing. It would also seem reasonable to consider whether the frontier was on the edge of a world-system as opposed to an internal frontier within the system, whether it was at the bulk goods, political-military, luxury goods or informational edge or along some internal boundary. Internal boundaries could be between states or groups in similar positions within the world-system (e.g., core, periphery, or semiperiphery) or they could be between these different zones. A reasonable working hypothesis would be that these two broad categories of frontiers would exhibit different dynamics. Blackhawk’s (2006) study of the fringes of the Southwest frontier focuses on the very edge of the system, whereas Reséndez’s (2005) study is concerned with the processes of identity change within the system (when what is now southwestern United States was wrested from Mexican control).

In Colony and Empire William Robbins (1994) examines the American West and argues that far from being an open or free frontier, it was highly constrained by the demands of assorted capitalist enterprises. This, of course, makes sense within a world-systems framework. But it also sheds a different light on the common claim that in Canada the law arrived before the settlers, whereas in the United States the settlers preceded the law, and hence the western U.S. was far more violent than western Canada. Rather, frontier violence served the interests of capital in the United States.

Blackhawk (2006) shows that violence served to “ethnically cleanse” indigenous peoples from the U.S. west. This, in turn can be seen as yet another instance of “war in the tribal zone” (Feguson and Whitehead 1992a, 1992b). Here it interesting that the “war in the tribal zone” effect occurs in both tributary and capitalist world-systems. Thus, as with ecological degradations discussed by Chew (2001), a key component of change is the state, irrespective of its primary mode of accumulation or that of the dominant world-system.

In analogous ways comparisons of modern and ancient frontiers show that genocide, ethnocide, culturicide, ethnogenesis, amalgamation, hybridization, and fractionation are common processes on many different kinds of frontiers. What remains to be studied systematically is how various local, regional, state-level, and world-system conditions and dynamics shape these processes. Again, states seem to be as important as the mode of accumulation and local relations of production in shaping ethnic change.

Finally, the study of frontiers illustrates how much can be learned by the study of peripheral regions and peoples and their roles in system change. Indeed, some of these processes may be visible only in peripheral and/or frontier areas. Frontier areas are also where the consequences of both individual and collective action by subordinated groups is often most
visible, and at times successful. This then becomes a method to explore how it is that actions and changes in peripheral areas (and semiperipheral areas) play important roles in world-system evolution. The effects of frontiers, in total or for only one specific frontier, on overall system processes and change are topics that need a great deal more research. A key point here is that many if not most of these questions can only be asked from a world-system perspective, even though they must be answered in large part locally.

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Map 1: Thanks to Columbia University Press for permission to reprint Map 6.1 from Between the Clouds, Bin Yang. Copyright © 2008.

Map 2: Thanks to Westview Press for permission to reprint Map 8.3 from Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997).


Map 6: Thanks to University Press of Kansas for permission to reprint Map III.1 from Hall (1989), pp. 35.

Figure 1: Thanks to William Parker for permission to reprint Figure 3.1 from Kardulias (2010), pp. 59.
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Transnational Body Projects:  
Media Representations of Cosmetic Surgery Tourism in Argentina and the United States

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Abstract
Cosmetic surgery tourism (CST) is part of the growing trend known as medical tourism. As people in the global North travel to less affluent countries to modify their bodies through cosmetic surgery, their transnational body projects are influenced by both economic “materialities” and traveling cultural “imaginaries.” This article presents a content analysis of media representations of cosmetic surgery tourism in a major country sending patient-tourists (the United States) and a popular receiving country (Argentina). The power relations of globalization appear to be played out in the media. U.S. sources assert U.S. hegemony through a discourse emphasizing the risks of CST in the global South, in contrast with medical excellence in the U.S. Argentine sources portray Argentina as a country struggling to gain a foothold in the global economy, but staking a claim on modernity through cultural and professional resources. The analyzed articles also offer a glimpse of how patient-tourists fuel sectors of the global economy by placing their bodies at the forefront, seeking to merge medical procedures and touristic pleasures. There is a gender dimension to these portrayals, as women are especially likely to engage in CST. Their transnational body projects are tainted by negative media portrayals, which represent them as ignorant, uninformed, and driven mainly by the low price of surgery overseas. Our comparative approach sheds light on converging and diverging perspectives on both ends of the cosmetic surgery tourism chain, showing that patterns in CST portrayals differ according to the position of a country in the world-system.

Keywords: Cosmetic surgery tourism, media discourses, transnational consumption, commodification of the body, U.S., Argentina

¹ The authors are listed in alphabetical order and contributed equally to this article.
Headlines of reports on cosmetic surgery tourism from U.S. and Argentine media, 2001-2010

Cosmetic surgery tourism – traveling in order to undergo cosmetic surgery – is part of the growing trend known as medical tourism, which includes both urgent and elective medical procedures. Although cosmetic surgery tourism (CST) can happen within a country, it is generally conceived of as involving international travel. For decades, wealthy elites from the developing world have traveled to the “North,” usually the United States and Europe, to have elective procedures done. Now we are seeing the reversal of this model: people from rich countries are traveling to less affluent ones for surgery. Exact figures on how many people engage in CST are difficult to obtain, yet media and academic sources suggest that CST is becoming increasingly popular and that, as with cosmetic surgery more generally, most of the people going abroad for surgery are women (Ackerman 2010; ASPS 2010; Edmonds 2011). In contrast, plastic surgeons tend to be men. Countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, India, Mexico, and Thailand are important CST destinations; Thailand receives 400,000 medical tourists per year, and “tiny” Costa Rica 150,000 (Bookman and Bookman 2007: 3). It is estimated that in 2007, a total of 750,000 U.S. residents engaged in medical tourism, and projections for 2012 exceeded 1.6 million patients (Deloitte 2009).

Considering the number of bodies moving across borders for surgery and the potential economic impact, it is not surprising that cosmetic surgery tourism has attracted media attention. We examine how this transnational practice is portrayed by media outlets in one sending and one receiving country: the United States, a major source of these patient-tourists, and Argentina, a popular destination for them. Media representations are worthy of critical inquiry because they are often “constitutive rather than representative of common notions” (Reimers 2007: 240). Media reports help create as well as frame public response to the social or economic phenomena they describe. In light of this creative power of media, we ask: How do media reports depict travelers who go abroad for cosmetic surgery? How are the members of the medical establishment in destination countries portrayed? What kinds of messages do potential CST participants, and the public at large, receive about CST, especially about dangers and benefits?

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2 In one highly publicized recent case, the first lady of Nigeria died after undergoing cosmetic surgery in Spain (Knight 2005).

Our analysis sheds light on the ways that transnational practices are discussed in countries differently situated in the global economy and at opposite ends of the CST chain. These representations provide social commentary on the circulation of bodies, money, and cultural ideas across national borders. We begin by situating our study in relation to the literatures on globalization and consumption, and introducing our concept of transnational body projects, to highlight how gendered bodies may be constructed (in this case literally) across and within nation-states. We bridge scholarly approaches that focus on globalization but not on bodies, or that discuss body projects without attention to their transnational dimensions. After a discussion of our content analysis method, we examine the media representations of CST in Argentina and the United States, focusing on the three necessary elements of transnational body projects: material conditions, cultural imaginaries, and social actors. In our conclusion, we sum up the links between media representations and location in the world system, as well as the class and gender aspects of these portrayals. Our comparative approach shows that patterns in CST portrayals differ according to the position of a country in the global political economy.

Globalization, Consumption, and Transnational Body Projects

The globalization of travel and communications makes medical tourism possible, allowing people to obtain information about destinations and services via internet, arrange travel and procedures, and access international transportation. These practices exemplify the “space-time compression” (Harvey 1990) that characterizes globalization. In this context, new types of travel and transnational consumption, such as CST, remind us that “spatial and temporal practices are never neutral in social affairs … they always express some kind of class or other social content” (Harvey 1990: 239). Cosmetic surgery tourism creates new kinds of classed and gendered international travelers and consumers who are drawn to the lower costs of procedures resulting from global economic disparities between nation-states.

The democratization of travel in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has led to tourism becoming one of the world’s largest industries (MacCannell 1976; Crick 1989; Urry 1990; UNWTO 2011). Whereas international tourism was once the monopoly of elites, it is increasingly seen as a desirable part of Western middle-class lifestyles. Tourism is a form of transnational consumption, and tourists are the modern consumers par excellence, engaging in conspicuous recreational activities as members of the “leisure class” (MacCannell 1976). Economic and cultural globalization resulted in novel patterns of consumption (Harvey 1990; Kondo 1997; Miller 1997; García Canclini 2001; Wilson 2004), and diverse motives for international travel exemplify these shifts (Munt 1994).

Cosmetic surgery tourism illustrates the emergence of new kinds of travelers/consumers. While still more privileged than other categories of transnational travelers (e.g. impoverished migrants, refugees), the new cosmetic surgery tourists are usually not elite, but middle- and lower-middle-class individuals aspiring to the “improved” bodies that elites can achieve through cosmetic surgery and other expensive treatments in their home countries. Though some forms of tourism, such as “sex tourism,” have catered specifically to men’s bodies and desires (Wonders and Michalowski 2001), women traveling in CST reverse such trends in international travel.

Cosmetic surgery has been characterized as a consumption practice increasingly aimed at the general population, and not just targeted at bodies deemed “sick” or “abnormal” (Holliday and Cairnie 2007; Pitts-Taylor 2007). Cosmetic surgery – and by extension CST – is part of a
larger social and cultural process of “turning the patient into a consumer” (Pitts-Taylor 2007: 28). The ideal cosmetic surgery patient, as portrayed in both news and entertainment media, is the supposed “informed, rational consumer” of the capitalist market (Pitts-Taylor 2007: 154). This consumer is expected to make rational choices about products and practices that will presumably result in the successful modification of her/his body, which is often a central dimension of identity in contemporary societies (Shilling 2003). Recasting cosmetic surgery as a form of consumption allows for an excavation of the “political economies underlying identity projects” (Pitts-Taylor 2007: 33). This move is particularly relevant in the case of CST, as the practice cannot be fully understood without examining the economic layers that shape this phenomenon.

Favorable exchange rates and lower prices for medical procedures in places like Argentina are important CST motivators, making surgery accessible for those who cannot afford these procedures in more affluent countries such as the United States. If we view class as linked to lifestyle, appearance, and bodily habits (Weber 1946 [1924]; Bourdieu 1984), CST can be seen as blurring class boundaries by allowing non-elite people access to elite bodily forms of consumption. U.S. cosmetic surgery patients are willing to make financial sacrifices and go into debt in order to pay for their procedures (Gimlin 2000; Gimlin 2007), and CST offers a more economical alternative and/or an opportunity to undergo multiple procedures for a low price.

The positioning of cosmetic surgery patient-tourists as transnational consumers points to the importance of incorporating the body in analyses of globalization. Indeed, patient-tourists travel to modify their bodies, and this “work on the body constitutes not only a project of the self” but a project with transnational dimensions (Molz 2006: 7). This is the case both in a material and discursive sense: 1) CST exemplifies how concrete practices on the fleshy body are enabled through transnational border crossings, which are in turn propelled by economic conditions or materialities, and 2) with increased contact between cultures via media, migration, and travel, representations and conceptions of beauty and the body travel across national boundaries, and infuse CST practices and expectations. Thus we offer the notion of CST as a transnational body project. This idea carries forward theories of the body as a “project which should be worked out and accomplished as part of an individual self-identity” (Shilling 2003: 4; see also Brumberg 1998). The transnational body project is a (re)fashioning of individual bodies that makes use of resources that stretch across national borders. CST is just one type of transnational body project, and we use this example to sketch the outlines of the material, cultural, and interpersonal aspects of such projects. Theories of globalization tend to overlook bodies, and theories of the body and embodiment often leave out the extra-local context; the transnational body project concept is useful precisely because it links bodies and globalization.

Scholarly literature on globalization usually focuses on macro-economic processes: trade agreements, global production sites, financial markets, and international financial institutions. These processes are not just abstract economic exchanges, but depend on, enlist, affect, and reconfigure human bodies. These bodily dimensions of globalization, however, have received less scholarly attention. Attending to bodies in relation to global trends (Harcourt 2009; Mackie and Stevens 2009; Sutton 2010; 2012), including the movement of bodies across borders to undergo cosmetic surgery, can help advance our understanding of “transformations of the intimate in the context of global restructuring” (Runyan and Marchand 2011: 239-240). For instance, in his study of CST in South Africa, Andrew Mazzaschi (2011) argues not only that the neoliberalization of health care enables CST, but that this practice actually produces notions of bodies’ value in projects of bodily modification. In other words, CST involves connections
between the large-scale forces of globalization and the realm of the body, desire, and subjectivity.

Bodies are central to globalization processes. Drawing on Marxist perspectives, theorist David Harvey (2000: 27) underscores the significance of the “laboring body” to global capitalist production (see also Harvey 1998; Callard 1998). Feminist scholarship adds to such analyses by bringing into focus the intersections of various inequalities – including gender, class, race, sexuality, and nation – that shape bodily practices in a globalizing world. For instance, feminist literature on the global factory shows the entanglement of such inequalities in the disciplining of the bodies of low-income, racialized women working in export processing zones in the global South (Freeman 2000; Salzinger 2003; Bank Muñoz 2008). We also learn about the violence against marginalized women’s bodies – including sexual violence and “feminicide” – in global production hubs, such as the maquiladoras area on the Mexico-U.S. border (Fregoso and Bejarano 2010). Surrogacy arrangements, through which relatively affluent couples in the global North rent the wombs of poor women in the South, throw into stark relief the intersecting inequalities that fuel these practices (Twine 2011). Feminists show how diverse women’s bodies are alternately enmeshed in, absent from, or disempowered in much of the development discourse that permeates global and domestic economic policies (Harcourt 2009).

Here we are particularly interested in the transnational dimensions of embodied forms of consumption, such as CST, and their attendant inequalities. Businesses can profit by catering not only to classed, gendered, sexualized, and racialized bodies embedded in particular nation-states, but also to those able to travel internationally. In the age of globalization, consumer goods link geographical sites and connect diverse people in a chain of hierarchically organized interdependence. Through CST, transnational flows and interdependencies are set in motion, including the circulation of information, culture, capital, technology, and people. In this way, we can think of CST and other transnational body projects as “global assemblages,” constellations of practices that “articulate” broad cultural, political, and economic changes (Collier and Ong 2005: 4). The patient-tourist’s journey literally results in a transformed body, and this transformation requires that a myriad of institutions, economic conditions, and governmental policies be in place.

In addition to bringing the body into our understandings of transnational processes, the study of CST can reveal social dynamics that are relevant to sociology of the body. Research on cosmetic surgery tends to focus on seemingly contained national settings, examining either one country or using cross-national comparisons. More recent works about medical tourism, including cosmetic surgery, sex reassignment, and reproductive tourism, are starting to shed light on the transnational dimensions of bodily surgical/medical practices. Our work contributes to this budding field of research by analyzing media representations of CST in two countries involved in these exchanges at opposite ends of the transnational chain.

Attention to the media illuminates an understudied aspect of CST: the public conversations that surround the phenomenon, which may shape this medical tourism sector and participants’ practices. For example, potential patient-tourists may learn about CST through the media, shaping their perceptions. Although an analysis of media sources is an indirect approach to understanding relevant dimensions of CST, this analysis offers insights about how cultural contexts and the position of different countries in the world system affect prevailing

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4 See, for example, Ackerman 2010, Aizura 2009, Jones 2008, Martin 2009, Turner 2010; also, the Winter 2011 issue of Signs and the June/September 2011 issue of Body & Society.
representations, which may in turn motivate people’s behavior. Our concept of transnational body projects emerged from this analytical process, as we gained a glimpse of the material, cultural, and interpersonal aspects of transnational relations that enable this type of bodily transformation. That is, like other transnational processes, CST connects “materialities,” “imaginaries,” and embodied social actors (Sassen 2007: 2).

We consciously use the term “tourism” in our exploration of CST, and refer to these travelers as “patient-tourists,” in recognition of their dual role as individuals seeking medical treatment and visitors to destination countries. In scholarship on medical tourism, some have objected to the term “tourism” to describe people seeking fertility treatment or other types of medical services (Martin 2009; Bergmann 2011; Gilmartin and White 2011; Kangas 2011). We use the terms tourism and patient-tourists to emphasize the international travel aspect of CST, the elective nature of the surgeries, and the cultural fantasies about destinations that may affect travelers’ expectations. For some time, luxury resorts around the world had already been including services dedicated to the upkeep of the physical body (e.g., massage, facials, detoxification procedures, and other spa-like services), practices that blur the lines between care of the body for aesthetic versus health purposes, and between body-maintenance and touristic activities.

Methods

Although figures on the prevalence of CST are scattered and often not separated out from statistics on medical tourism, it is commonly agreed that the U.S. is one of the main sending countries and that Argentina is a popular destination for patient-tourists in the Western hemisphere (Bookman and Bookman 2007). Argentina was an ideal country to use as a case study not only because of its popularity among CST patient-tourists, but also because of our familiarity with the cultural, social, and economic context. One author (Barbara Sutton) is an Argentine citizen who has been doing social research there for the past decade, and the other (Erynn Masi de Casanova) has conducted research on Latin American and Latino/a media since 2001. Similarly, as U.S.-based scholars with research experience there, we had the access and competency to analyze sources from the United States, selected due to its prominence as a sending country. Thus we compared media reports from both countries and from similar types of sources during the same period of 2001-2010. Because of our comparative focus and expertise in Latin American issues, only articles that mentioned Latin American CST destinations were selected, including those that also mentioned other destinations along with Latin America. We only included sources that mentioned cosmetic surgery tourism specifically, even though some also addressed local cosmetic surgery or medical tourism more broadly.

We focused on representations of CST in media and news reports that were directed to a general audience rather than more specialized groups. For example, advertisements and CST websites specifically target prospective and actual cosmetic surgery patients, whereas media reports are disseminated to the public at large. This was important, as we wanted to examine the emerging public discussions of CST as a social and economic phenomenon, discussions that any literate person might read about or participate in. To identify articles from U.S. news outlets (newspapers, magazines, and their online sites), we conducted searches in the Lexis-Nexis database and monitored news coverage with a Google News E-mail Alert. We decided to expand our search criteria to include local broadcast news reports after finding that they accounted for a
significant proportion of media reports on this topic. The Argentina-produced media reports were found by performing searches in the online archives of two major national newspapers, Clarín and La Nación, as well as the smaller nationally circulating newspaper Página 12 and national magazines. Because we were interested in the portrayal of practices and people and not just in stories of abstract global processes, we paid particular attention to articles that included either interview quotes or narratives from people directly involved in CST (e.g., doctors, patients, travel agents).

We used qualitative content analysis, beginning with what has been called “directed” analysis, in which texts are coded according to key themes drawn from theory or previous research (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). Theories of globalization and bodies led us to focus on coding actors (patients, doctors, and others), the material/economic dimensions of this practice (such as cost), and the representation of “other” cultures and countries. We simultaneously made use of “conventional” content analysis, in which “coding categories are derived directly from the text data” (Hsieh and Shannon 2005: 1277); in this way, certain repeated themes, such as the “horror stories” of surgeries gone wrong and the construction of patient-tourists as good or bad consumers, emerged as important for the representation of CST. The unit of analysis was the news article or report, and we coded fragments of text as well as assessed the overall message of the report. In all, we conducted content analysis on 28 U.S. media reports, which we supplemented with four additional internet-only and entertainment-oriented sources that we analyzed in less detail. We also analyzed 30 articles from Argentina, bringing the total number of media reports examined to 58.

This sample gives a good idea of what types of public conversations about CST were taking place over the past decade (2001-2010) in these two countries. After an initial read of the articles, we devised a coding scheme in order to qualitatively analyze their content and the messages they conveyed about CST. We coded articles for their discussion of the driving forces behind the expansion of CST (both individual motivations for travel and macro-scale factors); outcomes of CST (with CST “horror stories” emerging as a subsequent sub-category); doctors as participants in CST; and patient-tourists as participants in CST. Significant themes (e.g. “horror stories,” emphasis on costs, quality of doctors) were quantified for comparison. Both authors conducted the analysis of both sets of articles, and in the few instances in which our assessment differed, we came to an agreement or modified categories through discussion. We then compared the U.S. and Argentina sources to identify similarities and differences in their depictions of CST. All translations from the original Spanish to English in this text were done by the authors.

Content analysis reveals the portrayals offered by one of the key social institutions shaping public perceptions on CST: the media. Analysis of media coverage helps trace some key developments in the field of CST and identify its participants. Our method enabled us to indirectly access a variety of perspectives from social actors involved in or providing opinions on the practice of CST, but more importantly, to compare the public discussions of CST in the two countries on both ends of the cosmetic surgery tourism chain. We now turn to the description and analysis of how media reports on CST represent: 1) materialities, or the economic imperatives of CST; 2) imaginaries, or the cultural fantasies and ideologies that enable or discourage CST, and 3) key social actors (patient-tourists and doctors). Together, these three areas comprise entwined dimensions of transnational body projects.

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5 For examples of this approach, see Casanova 2003 and Lutz and Collins 1993.
Materialities: Economic Imperatives

Economic conditions set the stage for CST on both sides of the travel chain. The sources analyzed offer a variety of economic reasons for the emergence and growth of CST as an individual embodied practice and an industry. Both Argentine and U.S. sources (91% of the articles analyzed) emphasized the relative low cost of cosmetic surgery in receiving countries as a chief engine of this trend. U.S. articles mention lower wages, lower training costs, and lower prevalence of malpractice lawsuits driving down the cost of surgeries in global South destinations. The large majority of the articles from Argentina (83%) implicitly or explicitly mentioned low cost as a motivating factor, and over half of these referred to the impact of the 2001 economic crisis, which led to the devaluation of the Argentine currency and made cosmetic surgery there relatively inexpensive for foreign visitors. The magnitude of cost savings is exemplified by a La Nación article, which stated that breast implants cost about $10,000 in the United States, but only $2,300 in Argentina (Ríos 2009).

CST’s expansion has been facilitated by macro-economic restructuring in receiving countries (Turner 2010; Sengupta 2011). Scholarly and media reports mention not only the role of economic crisis but also of neoliberal development strategies in the rise of medical tourism. CST is made possible by a free-market health care model, even as it reinforces and benefits from the disparities between private and public health systems. For example, Edmonds’ (2011) research on Brazil shows that local and international medical residents use public hospitals (serving poor and working-class people) as training grounds for their cosmetic surgery skills before they transfer to the more highly paid private sector. Furthermore, while expensive private health services and facilities are directed to international tourists, they are unaffordable to local populations marginalized by race, gender, and class (Turner 2010; Mazzaschi 2011, Sengupta 2011). In one of the media reports we analyzed, the facilities serving patient-tourists are even referred to as “export-oriented hospitals,” (Pierce 2006) mimicking, with a twist, other global production sites (e.g., export processing zones).

Catering to patient-tourists requires changes in medical and building infrastructure, and some medical centers are turned into hospital-hotels, with amenities appealing to international patients. The New York Times reports on the luxurious Bumrungrad Hospital in Thailand, where a foreign visitor could expect five-star hotel extras: meet-and-greet service at the Bangkok airport, a multilingual personal escort to take him from test to test during physicals. And the rooms themselves were luxe and, by American standards, cheap -- some just $54 a night. There were 250-thread-count cotton sheets and complimentary toiletries in baskets woven by Thai hill tribes. The hospital brought in chefs from Bangkok's most glamorous restaurants -- a new one each month -- to cook patients' menus. For customers who found the cuisine too exotic, a McDonald's was installed in the lobby's food court. (Talbot 2001)

While patient-tourists may not be elite in their countries of origin, they can still receive first-class treatment and feel at home, the description suggests. In some ways, the dynamic described
replicates an extractive/colonizing relationship between members of an affluent country and those in a poor one.6

Yet it is not only the characteristics of the destination’s medical facilities (or touristic attractions) that are mentioned in the examined media. Both U.S. and Argentine articles also referred to deficiencies in the health systems of sending countries in the global North. For instance, uninsured or underinsured people in the United States cannot afford the expensive health costs in their own country, while patients in countries with socialized health coverage, such as the UK or Canada, face long waiting periods to undergo some surgical procedures.7 This dimension of the media reports reflects the non-elite character of many patient-tourists, people who do not have sufficient disposable income to completely bypass the problems of health care access in their own countries. While the characteristics of the destination countries may be seen as “pull” factors, the inadequacies of the sending countries systems constitute “push”8 factors, encouraging individuals to pursue a transnational body project, that is, a body transformation out of reach at home.

Governmental economic policies are also cited as playing a role in facilitating or discouraging the practice of CST. Six of the Argentine articles (20%) present CST as part of a broader economic development strategy, in which tourism is a central dimension. For instance, the national government launched the program Medicina Argentina to promote the country as a major world player in medical tourism, aiming to attract 100,000 patients annually (Ríos 2009). This program involves combining a business orientation with a health care approach. The blurring of categories of health care and business or of patient and consumer are already underway in largely privatized medical systems such as the U.S. one (Pitts-Taylor 2007). In such contexts, medical care is often presented as a consumer good, even a luxury, to be bought and sold in the market, available to those with the means to pay. The emergence of medical tourism takes this confusion of categories to a global scale. Forty of the reports we examined (69%) use language that (directly or indirectly) identifies CST as an industry, business, or market, with some discussing vacation tours and medical procedures offered as bargain “packages” and “all inclusive” services. A Frommers article suggests that CST mimics aspects of fast food service, reporting on a CST operator whose “general inquiry form with drop down menus is like ordering an operation and expecting them to ask if you’d like fries with that!” (Heelan 2005).

Economic imperatives – individual financial motivations, business profit-seeking behavior, economic disparities between countries, and government development strategies – are frequently mentioned in the sources that we examined and they constitute the engine that drives CST. Without these economic conditions the transnational body project would not exist. These materialities are important, but, as we will see, the circulation of cultural fantasies and ideologies matter, too.

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6 The disparities that mark this relationship include Thailand’s more meager health care resources along various dimensions, such as personnel. For example, according to data published by the World Health Organization (2011), the number of physicians per 10,000 people in Thailand is 3.0; for the U.S. it is 26.7.

7 See Turner (2010) for a scholarly analysis of these and other macro trends influencing the proliferation of medical tourism.

8 The concept of “push” and “pull” factors have been used to explain transnational migration trends (Massey et al. 1994), but could also be applied to trends in cosmetic surgery tourism.
Imaginaries: Traveling Cultural Fantasies and Ideologies

The increase in CST to Latin America is related to circulating imaginaries that enable the commodification of bodies, cultures, and places. The body as a consumer project and product in advertising and media is a global phenomenon. Similar images of ideal feminine beauty circulate in the U.S. and Latin America, and the Latina/Latin American body is increasingly incorporated into beauty ideals (Casanova 2004). This incorporation can be seen in the frequent victories by Latin American contestants in global beauty pageants such as Miss Universe, and in the increased visibility in the U.S. of Latina “beauties” including Jennifer López, Salma Hayek, and Sofia Vergara. Scholars have critiqued the misrepresentation of Latinos/as in the U.S. media, and the sexualized and homogenizing portrayals of Latinas in particular, which reinforce stereotypical perceptions (Rodríguez 1997). Because of the global reach of current communications, particularly those that are U.S.-based, such images have more than a local impact. The fact that U.S. and Latin American popular culture often present similar images of beauty, in some cases representing the same celebrities as ideal beauties, may partly facilitate CST. There seems to be a common language of beauty, and an agreement on what is attractive that likely makes patient-tourists more comfortable in contracting with Latin American surgeons. High rates of cosmetic surgery in many Latin American CST destinations, like Argentina, may also contribute to a sense of safety or confidence among prospective and actual patient-tourists. If not universal, beauty may at least be translatable across borders in this new global context.

Ideas about “other” cultures play a role in individual decisions to embody a particular kind of beauty through CST. Along with hegemonic Western ideals valorizing youthful, slim, and firm bodies, traveling fantasies about “exotic” places and peoples appear in the media reports we analyzed. Stereotypical (racialized/sexualized/gendered) portrayals of different world regions help promote CST. Thus we learn about “sexy” Buenos Aires (Byrnes 2009), the “stunning women” of Brazil (many benefiting from the “helping hand” of cosmetic surgery; Heelan 2005), or Colombian women “renowned for their beauty” who embrace a “pro-plastic surgery” context (de Leon 2006). Here the fantasy seems to be the ability of individual patient-tourists to capture the exotic/sexy/beautiful qualities of people (particularly women) in the global South while still being able to return to the North, with all its benefits. These ideas are reinforced through the language in ten of the U.S. articles, which refer to the “lure” or “alluring” features of cosmetic surgery tourism – wording that connotes seduction, temptation, or attraction to the forbidden.

Beauty cultures, both local and transnational, matter in terms of circulating media images of desirable bodies, but also with respect to the recipes for achieving particular kinds of bodies. At the local level, the prevalence of some procedures in destination countries (e.g. the popularity of cosmetic surgery in Argentina or the portrayal of Thailand as a paradise for sex reassignment) adds to the attraction for certain forms of medical tourism. At the same time, the global proliferation of “extreme makeover” reality shows (mentioned in a couple of articles) may compound the influence of low prices and limited time in the decision of some patients to undergo multiple surgeries. In these ways, traveling cultural ideas help fuel increasingly

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9 See Aizura (2009) for an analysis of cosmetic surgery and gender reassignment tourism in Thailand. According to the author, circulating ideas about “Thai beauty’ represent a form of idealized femininity that is both desired as exotic and culturally appropriated” by international tourists interested in changing their bodies (305).

10 These are television shows in which participants undergo multiple surgeries and other beauty treatments.
transnational body projects. Individual bodies can be literally produced in multiple sites across national borders according to prevailing beauty standards and in places imagined as beautiful or sexy. Or so goes the promise. As we will see later, media sources alert us that there is a danger for the “bad” patient-tourist: damaged rather than perfected feminine bodies.

In addition to beauty ideals, cultural differences and similarities are also drawn upon to explain why individuals prefer certain places for cosmetic surgery tourism destinations. Just over ten percent of the U.S. sources speak of the gentle and friendly character of people in destination countries such as Costa Rica and Thailand (presumably resulting in more personable care). Likewise, cultural difference emerges from the juxtaposition of Argentine articles’ representations with regard, for example, to punctuality. People from Argentina are supposedly “used to waiting” (La Nación 2009) and medical tourists appear to be “demanding about schedules” (Pandolfo 2005). In addition, Argentine doctors maintain that “the foreign patient is not accustomed to the humanized and warm treatment they receive in Argentina, or to discussing personal issues in the consultation” (Pandolfo 2005). Positive perceptions of cultural difference presumably attract patients to Argentina as a site for cosmetic surgery. Sometimes, cultural similarity is presented as the magnet; for example, U.S. sources speak of migrants to the United States returning home for surgery, or people of Latin American descent or with relatives in the area going to Latin America for surgical procedures because of cultural and linguistic affinities.

In some cases, cultural difference is presented as discouraging cosmetic surgery tourism to some destinations. One article in the Argentine newspaper Clarín subtly implies that Argentina is a better destination than India by portraying the latter as a country “known for its dirtiness” – a concern for prospective patient-tourists – while still clarifying that “the main private hospitals in India offer the same standards of cleanliness as in the Occident” (Dhillon 2005). Prospective patient-tourists reading this description would have to imagine moving through the “dirtiness” to get to the pristine hospital, and decide whether it was worth it. Referring to the advantages of medical tourism in Argentina, an official from the national institute of tourism is quoted in La Nación as saying, “There is also an issue of cultural proximity [of Argentina] with the United States, Europe and other Latin American countries… For a norteamericano [North American] it is a sensitive situation to go to receive treatment in a country like India, that does not share the language, or religion or have the same views on the mystery of life” (Ríos 2009). Ethnocentrism and cultural stereotypes seem to inform the portrayal of different locales, favoring some destinations over others. A transnational body project is a very personal venture, so the right cultural match is critical for a successful experience, these representations imply.

On the tourism side of the equation, cultural and natural attractions play a key role in CST, and these amenities are often packaged as alluring fantasies. Six U.S. articles (21%) emphasize the appeal of “exotic” destinations, and 43% of the U.S. sources mention cultural attractions and idyllic natural settings, including hotels close to beaches, lagoons, and lush vegetation. In Argentina, the wonders of Buenos Aires and its tango tradition, along with excursions to other parts of the country (e.g. Patagonian glaciers, Iguazú Falls, wine country) are mentioned. An Argentine article summarizes this perfect combination with the title, “Silicone, Tango, and the Rest” (Nudler 2004). Similarly, U.S. articles mention other combinations, such as “Surgeon and Safari” in South Africa,11 surgery and visits to the Taj Mahal in India, or cosmetic

11 See Mazzaschi (2011) for an analysis of medical tourism drawing on ethnographic work on the Johannesburg-based company, Surgeon and Safari.
treatments and immersion in the natural beauty of the Caribbean. Tourism brings money, and the key is to attract this source of income by emphasizing and developing what might be desirable to modern tourists: “Meet Buenos Aires, the wonderful and incredible city of Evita and tango: direct flight… and eyelid surgery, liposuction, lifting or breast implants” (Roa 2006). In an interview with Página 12, actor and politician Hector Bidonde, critically comments that in addition to tango and fútbol (soccer), cosmetic surgery is now part of the Buenos Aires “brand” (Cabrera 2008). And it is precisely this “brand” of transnational body projects that is being marketed internationally.

**The Social Actors**

Globalization is often discussed in abstract terms, with attention paid to markets and economic flows. Yet markets are designed and regulated by people, and are made up of people and their decisions. Capital and corporate products move across borders, but so do human beings. In studying CST, we focus on media depictions of what actual people are doing (or having done to them). The sources we analyzed provide images and narratives of some of the social actors who enable the industry. Entrepreneurs and intermediaries in the tourism, beauty, and medical fields transform cultural and economic practices in order to make this brand of tourism possible. The players include translators, beauticians, personal assistants, travel agents, clinic directors, advertisers, doctors, and of course, patient-tourists. Here we examine two key groups of people brought together in CST and commonly portrayed in popular media accounts: patient-tourists and doctors.

**Patient-Tourists.** The patient-tourist blends an interest in undergoing medical procedures and the desire to enjoy a visit to a vacation spot. The magic promised is to turn an unpleasant, or at best neutral, medical intervention into a positive experience, framed as an expansion of choice. The patient-tourist is expected to weigh the choices available, like “good” consumers do, and embark on a tourism/medical journey, but—as the U.S. sources we analyzed emphasize—at her/his own risk. While the language of consumer/patient-tourist may seem gender-inclusive—at her/his own risk. While the language of consumer/patient-tourist may seem gender-inclusive—at her/his own risk. While the language of consumer/patient-tourist may seem gender-inclusive—but as the U.S. sources we analyzed emphasize—the articles we examined tend to feature or refer to women in this role, and some of the articles that portray both men and women do so in a different light. The patient-tourist embodies a transnational social relation that brings together the tourist industry, medical systems, and beauty enterprises. These coordinated efforts make possible gendered transnational body projects.

Content analysis of media representations of CST in the U.S. and Argentina reveals a tendency to separate “good” patient-tourists from “bad” ones. Moral evaluation of cosmetic surgery patients in general has been documented in the United States by Pitts-Taylor (2007), and our research shows that such discussions have crossed borders, particularly in reference to women. The U.S. news reports, and to a lesser extent, those from Argentina, equate being a good patient-tourist with being a good consumer.

In the U.S. media depictions, the single most important action a patient-consumer can undertake prior to going abroad for surgery is research. More than half of the U.S. sources emphasized due diligence on the part of the prospective traveler before deciding on CST. According to these articles, “travelers who seek care abroad can follow several measures to boost the chances it will be adequate,” including checking out doctors’ credentials and training and learning about the facilities where procedures are conducted (Doheny 2006). Readers are also advised to “find out about your procedure, recovery time, and possible complications” (Bradley 2010) – and reports in the U.S. sample often describe these complications in gory detail. This
type of research takes time, and, media reports remind prospective patient-tourists, “it is difficult to sue over surgery gone wrong in a foreign hospital” (Kerr 2006). As one article puts it, “You have to be a smart consumer; don’t be afraid to ask questions when talking to the hospital or physician [...] do your homework before booking that trip [...] Be a very cautious consumer” (Bradley 2010). Good CST patients are smart, cautious, and conduct research before making travel arrangements.

When transnational body projects go wrong, as the U.S. articles warn is possible, it is often patient-tourists who are blamed for not doing enough research. The following exchange took place on a 2007 episode of The Montel Williams Show, featuring a patient-tourist who “says she went overseas to get plastic surgery and almost died”:

Montel [talk show host]: You didn’t research the facility?
Carla: No, or the mortalities.
Montel: Or the mortality rate.
Carla: Mm-hmm.
Montel: Didn’t even ask questions about it on the Internet? “Does anybody ever know anybody who’s got a surgery at this place?” Didn’t do that, right?
Carla: Nope… I felt safe.

The good patient-tourist is implicitly defined in opposition to the bad patient-tourist, who is a bad consumer, and does not get recommendations or seek enough information prior to engaging in CST. Even in news reports that portray patient-tourists (women) with “botched” surgeries sympathetically, they are blamed for not researching their options thoroughly enough. In the story of one woman who had an unsuccessful surgery in the Dominican Republic, “there was no research, it was based totally on the word of [her] hairdresser… [she] says word of mouth was enough, along with the price tag” (Corderi 2005). Bad consumers, then, in addition to not investigating prior to CST, prioritize price over bodily safety and quality. “Horror stories” (Bookman and Bookman 2006) – defined here as descriptive, even gruesome, narratives of transnational body projects gone wrong – show up in nearly one quarter of the U.S. media reports. The patient-tourists featured in the horror stories in our sample were all women.

In many of the sources we analyzed, the news media and U.S. doctors deliver the same message about the dangers of CST and the responsibility of patient-tourists for their outcomes. The president of the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery is quoted as saying (in reference to patient-tourists who need to get unsuccessful surgery outcomes “fixed” after returning home): “these are angry, disappointed people… you feel badly for them, but you feel they’ve been dumb too” (Talbot 2001). In one local news report, a Texas doctor states: “you get on the [U.S./Mexico] border and you got the dregs. You got the people who can’t make it in the city and they’re saying cheap, cheap, cheap, quick, quick, quick. Pay a price they never expected to pay” (Zigman 2005). Interestingly, this quote does not clearly distinguish the doctors or businesspeople who take advantage of patients from the patients themselves, painting all participants in CST negatively. However, in some of the articles it is clear that people whose primary consideration is the cost of surgery are ridiculed and portrayed as bad consumers. Indeed, a classist undertone is apparent in words such as “bargain-basement” and “cut-rate” used to describe CST procedures. If bad consumers travel abroad in order to afford to alter their bodies, then good consumers are those who can afford to pay for top-quality surgeries in the United States.
Individual patient-tourists and their stories receive less attention in the news reports from Argentina. However, the good/bad or smart/dumb consumer dynamic also appears in these sources. The mix of admiration and contempt for patient-tourists that emerges in the Argentine reports may reflect diverse perspectives, but it may also point to ambivalence about foreign visitors and their activities in relation to the local culture and context. One Argentine doctor praises foreign consumers for their savvy: “the patients from countries with higher levels of education really look into who will be caring for them” (Para Tí 2010). Another physician is quoted as saying, “foreign patients usually require the résumé of the surgeon, and, if possible, ask an Argentine friend about the quality of the professional” (Roa 2006). Here CST patient-tourists coming to Argentina are portrayed as sophisticated, well-educated, and able to obtain the information they need prior to planning their trip.

Still, some Argentine sources, like the U.S. reports, also present an image of the patient-tourist as negligent or unintelligent. One article, narrating the positive experience of a mother and daughter who traveled from Colorado to Buenos Aires for surgery, features the following interview excerpt: “Did they know anything about the country before coming? ‘Nothing. Only what we saw in the movie Evita’” (Piotto 2007). This report goes on to poke fun at CST patient-tourists: “It is amazing, the trust with which they submit themselves to the operating room even when they know absolutely nothing about the country… there are even some who find out, once in Buenos Aires, that Argentina is not the capital of Brazil!” (Piotto 2007). The message is clear: these foreigners are not savvy consumers. In another article, an Argentine doctor opposes CST as “one more business that takes advantage of people’s irrationality… in the future, they’ll go to the moon or Mars for treatment” (Román 2009). The president of the Argentine Society of Plastic Surgery believes that patient-tourists have unrealistic expectations. One cannot move from one country to the next for medical treatment, he says, “without knowing the doctor” (Himitian 2002). He goes on to say that he does not believe that “thinking people” will get surgery just because it is offered along with travel opportunities (Himitian 2002). It is clear that for this doctor, “thinking people” do not blithely combine surgery with international travel.

In addition to being naïve, the bad consumer is also portrayed as dishonest. When a Spanish patient-tourist died in Buenos Aires in 2008, newspapers and the physicians and family members they interviewed were hesitant to place blame on the surgeon. However, as in the U.S. cases, the unlucky patient-tourist was vulnerable to criticism. One doctor stated that “sometimes the patients hide information about their health status because they are afraid the surgery will be canceled” (Página 12 2008). He also complained about “anorexic women, people with depressed immune systems,” and “people on psychopharmaceuticals” who wanted to get surgery (Página 12 2008). There seemed to be a gendered angle to his portrayals of “bad” cosmetic surgery patients: “many women think that this is like going to the hair salon, they pick the cheapest, look for doctors who minimize all [the risk] and don’t explain anything” (Página 12 2008).

In contrast, in the context of a practice largely associated with women, when men undergo cosmetic surgery they are more likely to be described in positive terms, for example, as more knowledgeable of the country, as “daring” to undergo the medical procedure, and as successful businessmen or professionals (e.g. Piotto 2007, Selser 2006). In a couple of the articles that depict both male and female patients, competition in love or business is an important motivation for men, while women seem to just desire to look beautiful, and appear more likely to be willing to undergo more invasive surgeries or multiple interventions. One article’s (Ríos 2010) assertion that men are more “fearful” than women to go under the knife is somewhat neutralized by also saying that “they prefer less invasive procedures” (i.e. given that invasive
procedures may produce harm, perhaps it is not bad to be afraid). In one *La Nación* (2002) article, the stereotypical image of a woman as an avid shopper – a patient who goes on a shopping “raid” despite her recent breast surgery and hip treatment – is contrasted with the case of a man who undergoes surgery to repair his nose, damaged in a car accident. Furthermore, it is men’s desire to look younger and better that seems to require more of an explanation, whereas women’s concern with looks is perhaps taken for granted.

There is one major difference between the depictions of patient-tourists in the U.S. versus the Argentine media: the greater prevalence of “horror stories” in the U.S. reports. The two patient-tourist deaths mentioned in the Argentine sample are presented in a straightforward way. In contrast, the U.S. reports were more likely to feature detailed narratives of patient-tourists’ post-surgical troubles, some accompanied by explicit images not for the faint of heart. The absence of “horror stories” in the Argentine articles alters the context in which ideal types of good and bad consumers, wise or unwise transnational body projects, are elaborated. In the U.S. sources, bad consumers – those who don’t “do their homework” before going abroad for surgery – reap the consequences of their laziness in the form of bodily infections, disfigurement, gangrene, or even death. These are failed transnational body projects. The Argentine sources also divide consumers into good and bad, or smart and dumb, but the majority of these patient-tourists seem to go home happy, their transnational body projects fulfilled. In this way, the Argentine sources support the national goal of tourism promotion.

**Doctors.** Among CST service providers, doctors are the most essential, as they have a direct hand in the outcome of transnational body projects. In both countries, the media reports tend to mostly feature or refer to male doctors. So while the patients portrayed tend to be women, those operating on their bodies tend to be men. A gender hierarchy is thus implied in the media representations, particularly when pairing the “bad” female (embodied) patient-tourist and the authoritative (disembodied) voices of doctors commenting on the practice.

We can also think of the doctors’ practice in transnational terms. They are at the intersection of local opportunities and global trends, bridging the distance between people from different nation-states. Some are transnational doctors in the sense that they travel physically and have professional investments across national boundaries. For instance, a doctor who has a cosmetic surgery practice in Manhattan also travels to Jamaica to treat U.S. patients who spend a “Botox weekend” in a resort-hospital in Jamaica (Valhouli 2002). Doctors in destination countries are more place-bound in terms of their practice, but there may still be transnational dimensions to their work: the reports tell of doctors trained in the U.S., or who seek international credentials or advertise on the worldwide web.

The doctors performing CST operations are ready to function in a globalized arena. These transnational body projects require transformations in both the kind of medical procedures offered and the kind of vacation planned, for example, when doctors modify their normal procedures for the convenience of traveling patients. An Argentine doctor reports: “We adopt techniques for patients who cannot stay to have the stitches taken out: instead of sewing we use a spray that sticks or sutures that reabsorb themselves.” He described medical techniques which “[r]equire the visitor to be in the city for ten days at the most” (Himitian 2002). The vacation aspect of the trip, such as visits to tourist attractions, is worked around the demands of the surgical interventions.

Many articles (36% of the U.S. sample and 57% of the Argentine sample) refer to the good quality of care, doctors, and facilities in receiving countries, including their growing efforts
to cater to and live up to the standards of more affluent countries (but, as we shall see, there is a marked difference in the two countries’ portrayal of doctors engaged in CST). Thirty-nine percent of the U.S. articles mention that many medical professionals in receiving countries have even been trained in the global North. The implicit assumption seems to be that the quality of medical knowledge and practice in wealthier countries is inherently superior. At the same time, 18% of U.S. articles mention as an advantage the traditions or inclusion of alternative care that is compatible with patient-tourists’ needs for rejuvenation and relaxation (for example, Thai-style massage and spa treatments). The Argentine sources, as compared to the U.S. ones, place greater emphasis on the high quality of care offered to patient-tourists, taking nationalistic pride in Argentina’s “medical tradition” (Clarín 2005) and “first class” medical professionals (Ríos 2009). U.S. doctors are also involved in a less direct way in the U.S. reports, frequently weighing in on the appropriateness and possible risks of CST.

In comparing the media coverage in the two countries, we encountered glaring differences in representations of the surgeons who operate on patient-tourists. The depictions of Latin American doctors in the U.S. sources were generally unfavorable, and often damning. In contrast, the Argentine articles praised surgeons involved in CST, citing the high quality of medical care in the country as a key incentive for foreign patient-tourists. Though the representations of superior versus inferior doctors may be partly about competition for customers between nations, these discourses seem also to be rooted in longer standing ideologies and positioning of the countries in the world-systemic hierarchy. The Western medical establishment claims superiority over other medical traditions and the implicit expectation for professionals to emulate European and U.S. doctors reinforces dichotomies of civilized/barbaric, modern/backward that discursively uphold the U.S. as a dominant nation in relation to others. These assumptions are implicit in the U.S. reports’ graphic depictions of transnational body projects gone awry, which function as cautionary tales. Conversely, Argentina emerged as a country castigated by an economic crisis, but one that held on to distinctive strengths, the reports suggest. Argentine sources’ positive portrayal of the country’s doctors fits well with a more generalized sense of national pride documented by other scholars, particularly in relation to Argentina’s technological and scientific advances (see, e.g., Sautu et al. 2008).

The U.S. sources were more likely to depict “horror stories.” These include reports of patients whose “blood levels started dropping” and “stitches started opening,” or who suffered “a rare bacterial infection” or experienced “fatal events” after their cosmetic surgeries abroad (Zigman 2005). One article is accompanied by a picture of a person’s badly scarred belly. In a New York Post article, a woman who had surgery in Argentina, and was left with a “drastically abbreviated nose,” states that “[i]t was cored, scooped out” (Graham 2001). Another woman who underwent surgery in the Dominican Republic reported that during the operation she “literally felt their hands inside [her] stomach” (Corderi 2005). The U.S. articles reiterate the difficulty of getting U.S. doctors to repair surgical mistakes made overseas. Some articles raise the question of whether U.S. doctors have self-interested motives when they oppose CST, but then this possibility is rejected by the more typical narrative that points to the risks patients face. One article states: “American doctors… simply may not like the idea of losing business” (Moeller 2010). Another notes that “some critics believe American surgeons might have an agenda. After all, bargain basement prices are luring customers away” (Zigman 2005). A third report referred

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12 See Baronov (2009) for a discussion of these issues in the African context.
to CST as “foreigners poaching their [U.S. doctors’] clients” (Dickerson 2008). Still, these articles did not explore such possibilities, devoting much more text to the potential risks of CST.

“I was butchered.” So states the recipient of a “botched tummy-tuck” in the Dominican Republic at the beginning of one U.S. news article (Waller 2005). The surgeon in this highly-publicized case was later accused of causing several deaths, including those of some U.S. citizens (Corderi 2005; Waller 2005). The figure of the Latin American surgeon as butcher appears in several U.S. news reports. Some articles use implied or explicit references to animals to highlight the ways that doctors’ mistreatment dehumanizes patient-tourists and disfigure their bodies. One woman who had rhinoplasty in Argentina described the results as a “pig’s nose” (Byrnes 2009). According to a woman who had medical problems after returning home from surgery in Mexico, a U.S. surgeon whom she consulted “refused to treat me, and he actually told my mother I should go see a vet[erinarian]” (Zigman 2005). While it was a U.S. doctor who made this comment, the origin of the dehumanization of the patient-tourist’s body lay in the Mexican surgeon’s hands. One patient-tourist “says she was prescribed a skin cream for her scars that is not even intended for humans” (Corderi 2005). The foil for the negligent Latin American surgeons is the shocked U.S. doctor who is asked to “fix” these mistakes. “I have never seen a worse case of gangrene anywhere,” claims one Texas surgeon, describing the condition of a patient-tourist who underwent cosmetic surgery in Mexico and later died. Some U.S. doctors turn away patients whose surgeries abroad have gone wrong, according to these articles, again questioning the intelligence of patient-tourists who choose to undergo procedures in “backward operations run by physicians with questionable credentials” (Gómez 2005).

One gruesome horror story from the U.S. highlighted unsterile conditions (including a buzzing fly in the operating room) in a Mexican clinic (Gómez 2005). The clinic is run by a man who calls himself a doctor, despite not having a medical license. In one disturbing scene, a nurse began to shave a Texas woman’s pubic hair to prepare her for a liposuction. The patient-tourist said, “no, no liposuction, no liposuction” and then complained to the “doctor” about this mistake. He said that the nurse had misunderstood him and gone to the wrong patient’s room. Then, “pretending to pick her shaved hair off the floor and placing it over his lip, he joked, ‘Oh, I just wanted to use it [pubic hair] as a mustache. I’m sorry, honey’” (Gómez 2005). Here medical incompetency is made more objectionable by the fake doctor’s inappropriate behavior, resonating with U.S. stereotypes about Latin American men as being lascivious or hypersexual. Bad consumers end up with bad doctors, and failed transnational body projects are the result, U.S. reports such as this one implicitly suggest.

The portrayal of surgeons attending CST patient-tourists could not be more different in the Argentine sample. The majority of these articles (57 %) list Argentina’s high-quality medical care and well-trained surgeons as a driving factor in the increase of CST. In a typical description, one newspaper article claims that Argentina has surgeons who are “first-class, able to conduct medical and surgical procedures comparable to those of any developed country” (Ríos 2009). Both Argentina and U.S. sources state that 1 in 30 Argentine citizens has undergone cosmetic surgery, meaning that surgeons have had the opportunity to develop a great deal of experience and are informed of the latest surgical developments and innovations. In Argentina, doctors serving CST patient-tourists are presented as competent and ethical. One surgeon’s anecdote exemplifies this: “A week ago a lady came from the United States who had arranged a plastic surgery through a medical tourism company… they had told her that everything was okay, but when I asked her to do some routine tests, it turned out that she had a severe coronary risk, and I had to tell her that there was no way I could operate on her” (La Nación 2008b). Rather than
being out to make a quick buck, this surgeon is portrayed as thorough and responsible, doing what was best for the patient.

In contrast, while four Argentine sources report fatal results due to complications and warn about some of the risks of cosmetic surgeries, the stories are more matter-of-fact rather than gruesome or sensational. The sources that report on patients’ deaths have straightforward titles such as “A Woman Died During a Breast Implant” (La Nación 2008a) or “A Tourist Died in a Porteña [Buenos Aires] Clinic After a Breast Implant” (Página 12 2008) or “A Spanish Woman who Came to the Country to Undergo Plastic Surgery Died” (Clarín 2008). In the case of a Spanish patient-tourist who died in Buenos Aires after going under the knife, news reports did not portray the surgeon unfavorably, but took the position of waiting to find out all of the facts. The story was not written up in the media as a morality tale or a warning to potential patient-tourists, the tone often taken in the U.S. sources that discussed surgeries gone wrong. Yet, a couple of these articles show concern about how the death of patients could affect Argentina’s international reputation. For example, a La Nación (2008a) article notes that sectors of the Spanish media covered the death of the Spanish patient as “an emergent case of what they defined as ‘cheap sanitary tourism in Argentina.’”

In U.S. sources, the Latin American doctors seen as responsible for negative outcomes came across as callous, negligent, and cruel. Non-U.S. doctors were implicitly treated with suspicion (thus the instruction to potential patient-tourists to do their homework). This presentation stands in opposition to the characterization of U.S. doctors in these sources as benevolent experts whose warnings about the dangers of CST are based not on economic greed but sincere concern for patients’ safety. In Argentine media reports, doctors treating CST patient-tourists (as well as the handful who are quoted as criticizing the practice) are described and presented as well-trained and responsible. These different representations are probably linked to the economic aspect of CST – U.S. doctors lose and Argentine doctors win in CST. However, the negative representations of foreign doctors in the U.S. sources also line up with and thus reinforce existing stereotypes about Latin Americans as being less civilized and less moral. While these notions may serve to discourage CST, as we have seen, other sets of stereotypes and cultural fantasies on beauty, places, and cultures may act to promote the practice.

Pairing media sources from both sending and receiving countries adds nuance to understandings of CST portrayals. This comparative approach helps to explain why some scholars find that “media coverage often minimizes health risks” (Edmonds 2011: 298) and others observe that “news media coverage of ‘medical tourism’ commonly addresses risks related to obtaining treatment abroad” (Turner 2010: 463). In our study, both assessments are true, but what we find is that location in a global hierarchy of nations matters for how risks, as well as other features of the practice of CST, are represented by the media.

Conclusion

Despite more than a decade of discussions in the popular press, medical tourism – and cosmetic surgery tourism specifically – is only relatively recently receiving attention from scholars. The existing research has tended to focus directly on the experiences of the people involved, or alternatively, on macro-level trends. Here we add a needed perspective on media representations of CST. The media have a pedagogical dimension, and the lessons in this case are not only about CST per se, but also about broader accounts of transnational practices that in turn influence
people’s attitudes and behaviors. In reporting about CST, media sources reflect and construct national pride, cultural stereotypes, and a sense of one’s country in relation to others in the world system. These reports illustrate the public conversations on CST. Potential patient-tourists may get the idea of CST in the first place, or have their perceptions about the practice shaped, through the media. Since most people are not cosmetic surgery patient-tourists, surgeons, or others directly involved with the industry, the main contact that the general public has with this phenomenon is probably through media exposure.

In juxtaposing the reports from countries at opposite ends of the CST chain, a picture of CST as a contested cultural and economic terrain appears. In addition to varied reports on individual experiences, the articles we analyzed also mention a host of developments in tourism, medical practice, and governmental policies in the Global North and South. What does this comparative focus reveal about CST portrayals? While we indirectly learn about multiple economic, social, and cultural layers shaping transnational body projects, the comparison yields two central – and related – findings: one is about globalization and the other is about gender relations and ideologies (which intersect with other systems of inequality, such as class and race-ethnicity).

With respect to globalization, our comparative focus reveals that patterns in CST portrayals differ according to the position of a country in the global political economy. These representations may be partly grounded in the logic of economics (nations and businesses competing for customers), and they also point to longer histories of how nations see themselves and relate to others in an unequal world-system. That is, the power relations of globalization appear to be played out in the media. The U.S. strives to assert its hegemony, while peripheral or semi-peripheral countries, such as Argentina, struggle to gain a foothold in the global economy. Indeed, the Argentine economic crisis sharply undermined the country’s position in the world-system, but the Argentine articles also tell a story of a nation that still has cultural resources and technical expertise to draw on, and to feel proud of – resources that could rival any first-world nation. The U.S. articles deliver a message about U.S. superiority by giving voice to its presumably excellent doctors. Echoes of U.S. and Western hegemony permeate perceptions about CST in several articles.

We also learn about ordinary people as key players in globalization processes. Patient-tourists fuel sectors of the global economy by placing their bodies at the forefront, seeking to merge medical procedures and touristic pleasures. As social actors involved in globalization, these patient-tourists are different from multinational corporation executives, dispossessed migrants and workers, or globetrotting social movement activists. They have similarities with other tourists, but their transnational body projects are what motivate their border crossings. Through the media reports we get an idea of how these transnational body projects link macro and micro dynamics. These projects assemble global economic transformations, broadly circulating ideologies, and individual subjectivity. For many of these non-elite patient-tourists, bodily expectations cannot be fulfilled within the borders of their own country, and yet, those who go abroad are often portrayed as problematic in the U.S. sources. Are they, to some extent, perceived as betraying the nation? After all, their journey exposes the flaws of the “best medical system in the world” (touted by some U.S. politicians). Yet in these negative portrayals, a moralizing tale of personal failure is more prevalent. If patient-tourists do not have the means to transform their bodies in the U.S., then a transnational journey will not get them what they were unable or unwilling to obtain at home, as it may result in one of the gruesome outcomes epitomized by the media “horror stories.”
The patient-tourists’ transnational body projects are symbolically dashed in the negative and gendered media portrayals of CST, in which they are represented as ignorant, uninformed, and driven mainly by the low price of surgery overseas. The bad consumer/patient-tourist is thus someone who does globalization incorrectly. There is a gender aspect to the implicit rejection of middle-class and lower-middle-class women’s transnational body projects. Clifford wrote about the binary opposition “naturalized along the lines of gender” of “female, domestic space versus male travel” (1997: 84-85). Freeman has argued convincingly that “travel, with its embodiments of worldliness, adventure, physical prowess, and cultural mastery, is widely constructed as a male pursuit” and that the movement of women across borders, whether for pleasure or work, can be seen as a “challenge to the traditionally gendered configuration of space and motion” (2001: 1018). The mostly female CST participants deemed bad consumers do not do enough research before blithely tripping across the globe to alter their bodies. They are not elites, with whom international travel (and cosmetic surgery, for that matter) has traditionally been associated. In the narratives featured in many U.S. media sources, and some Argentine articles, these transgressions can lead to miserably failed transnational body projects. In contrast, the authoritative voices of doctors (which have particular weight in the articles from both countries) tend to be male, reinforcing gender and class hierarchies.

The entwined threads of gender and globalization are also apparent in yet another aspect of CST representations: the benefits that destination countries boast. The media portrayals are not just about the “failed” transnational body projects of travelers from the global North. When looking at the Argentine reports, we see the efforts of a country in the global South trying to claim a stake in globalization by exalting its modern culture, including the technical competency of its professionals, the high quality of its services, and the resourcefulness of its entrepreneurs. Interestingly, the “successful” body projects of local women are also enlisted to further make the case. Reports implicitly draw on gendered national myths about Argentine women’s superior beauty and explicitly mention the popularity of cosmetic surgery among Argentines as perhaps reassuring evidence of good results. Local gendered bodily practices and ideas are deployed as resources to bolster transnational business opportunities, in this case CST.

The examination of media sources enables simultaneous access to the public conversations in two countries at opposite ends of the hemisphere and of the CST chain. Future studies can further examine the interlocking components of transnational body projects – materialities, imaginaries, and social actors – through approaches that incorporate direct observation and interactions with the people involved. To date, micro-level accounts have not systematically linked individuals’ experiences to the public conversations about CST that have been occurring in the media of both sending and receiving countries. This article aimed to provide an introduction to the content of these conversations, as a first step toward studying media’s role in the construction of transnational body projects.

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Hegemony and Humanitarian Norms: The US Legitimation of Toxic Violence

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Abstract
Despite widespread beliefs that the United States has not used chemical weapons since the distant past of World War I, this study suggests a more complicated history by examining U.S. use of herbicides and incapacitating gases in the Vietnam War and its use of herbicides in the “War on Drugs.” This article places such use of toxic violence within a context of U.S. hegemony, by which U.S. officials have used contested forms of violence to secure geopolitical goals, but have also been pressured to comply with humanitarian norms or—when there is a gap between norms and state policy—to do legitimating work in order to maintain domestic and international consent. Based on case study analysis of archival and secondary sources, this article identifies three main techniques U.S. officials use to legitimize contested forms of violence. These techniques are defensive categorization, humanitizing discourse, and surrogacy.

Keywords: legitimation, hegemony, humanitarian norms, chemical weapons, Vietnam War, War on Drugs

The world economic and political system has long been uneasily saddled with the ideology of centrist liberalism, a “geoculture” that promises incremental and moderate reforms to guarantee political and social rights (Wallerstein 1995, 2011). One important component of global liberalism has been the century-old effort to reform and humanize war, in which state governments and civil society actors have sought to promote humanitarian norms, formalized through international treaty-making, as a means of prohibiting certain forms of state violence that have been identified as especially indiscriminate or inhumane. But like the political ideology of liberalism as a whole, this is often irreconcilable with the realities of the world-system, which is premised upon the threat and actual use of mass violence between states as they vie with one another over territory and as they work to promote the continuous accumulation of capital (see Arrighi 2010).

This contradiction – between liberal humanitarianism and the realities of the structure of the world-system – poses significant challenges to policymakers, especially those in the United States where, as a hegemonic power, the contradiction may become most acute. As a hegemonic power, the United States has had disproportionate capacity to shape and benefit from the
contours of the world’s political economy in the past half century\(^1\) (Wallerstein 2004; Arrighi 2010). Exercising hegemony, however, necessitates more than simply achieving military and economic dominance (Arrighi and Silver 1999). It also means that a global power must earn the consent of the governed by providing global moral leadership and making a convincing case that it represents a general—as opposed to its own particular—interest in world affairs (Arrighi and Silver 1999), which in contemporary times has often meant upholding broadly-shared humanitarian norms. While it is clear that both coercion, achieved through real or threatened military violence, and consent, achieved through cultural appeal, are both necessary components of hegemony, it is important to ask, when these needs are contradictory, which trumps the other, and why? Through the course of this article, I work to answer these questions in a case-study of U.S. toxic weapons policy from 1961 to the present time.

There is a longstanding and broadly-shared norm that stigmatizes and prohibits the use of chemical weapons (Price 1997). It is widely presumed that the United States has not utilized chemical weapons since World War I, after which they were outlawed and condemned by the Geneva Protocol of 1925. But, as is documented here, actual events are much more complicated and tend to contradict conventional understandings. In this paper, I make the analytic distinction between toxic violence and chemical weapons. Toxic violence is a broad category in which implements of force are used primarily for their chemically toxic qualities.\(^2\) Chemical weapons, however, are a subset within the larger category of toxic munitions that have been internationally banned as such. So, while it might appear that the strong norm expressed in the Geneva Protocol—first signed by the U.S. in 1925 and then ratified in 1975—has steered the U.S. away from the use of toxic violence when it outlawed the use of “asphyxiating, poisonous, or other gases, and of all analogous liquids, materials, or devices,” an examination of U.S. policy tells a different story.

In this study of U.S. policy development regarding toxic violence, I make the case that long-standing and broadly-shared humanitarian norms, even those regarding chemical weapons, have not necessarily prevented the U.S. from using stigmatized or prohibited forms of violence in its pursuit of hegemony. Rather, I argue that the United States has sought to maintain a distinction between certain forms of toxic violence. On the one hand, the United States has abided by international norms regarding chemical weapons by abdicating the use of immediately lethal chemicals. Doing so was certainly in the United States’ hegemonic interest because it strengthened efforts to prevent militarily-weak nations from developing their own chemical weapon stockpiles that could be real deterrents to invasion from a Western power (Price 1997). On the other hand, the United States has not strictly complied with the norm by abandoning all forms of toxic violence, but has widely used other chemicals in wars and violent conflicts, such as the herbicides and incapacitating gases widely used in Vietnam, as well as herbicides used in the “War on Drugs.” The cases in this study show, however, that any use of toxic violence is contested and condemned as a breach of international humanitarian norms. Its use, therefore, requires that U.S. officials do legitimating work.

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\(^1\) The author certainly acknowledges the contemporary decline of U.S. power, which has lead notable world-systems researchers to determine that the U.S. no longer remains a hegemonic state (Wallerstein 2003; Arrighi 2010). However, this paper mainly focuses on the periods between 1961 and 2000, in which it can safely be said that the U.S. exercised hegemony, even if in a period of decline.

\(^2\) While the lead in bullets or the depleted uranium in anti-armor shells is chemically toxic, neither is used primarily for its toxicity. Such weapons do not constitute methods of toxic violence by the definition used here.
The cases investigated here demonstrate that U.S. policymakers have consistently employed three main techniques of legitimation in efforts to justify, obfuscate, or distance themselves from uses of toxic violence: defensive categorization, humanitizing discourse, and surrogacy. Through defensive categorization, officials deny that the U.S. government has violated an international standard. In doing so, officials work to normalize such contested violence by stressing its routine, everyday nature. Through what I call humanitizing discourse, officials emphasize the care taken to avoid humanitarian harm when the U.S. government uses a contested form of violence, and indeed may even claim that the use of such violence has humanitarian benefits. Through surrogacy, the U.S. provides another state or armed group the means of carrying out contested acts of violence, providing U.S. officials some plausible deniability that they are responsible for any resulting violations of humanitarian norms. Such legitimating techniques may be very useful to officials working to manage the inherent contradictions of hegemony in our particular time.

Managing the Contradictions of Hegemony

According to Wallerstein (1995), the “ideological cement” of the world-economic system has been the geoculture of centrist liberalism, which has two fundamental components. First, centrist liberalism, like all forms of liberalism, proclaims the “sovereignty of the people.” Second, it promises methodical reform of existing conditions to increase political and economic equality as a means toward its achievement (Wallerstein 2011). Centrist liberalism has legitimated global capitalism by providing a political program that promised concessions as a means of placating and controlling the “dangerous classes.” However, it has always been at odds with, and continuously contradicted by, the structural realities of the world-system, which require stark inequalities between peoples and the continuous geopolitical rivalries between states (Wallerstein 2003; 2011).

Nowhere is this contradiction more apparent than that between the efforts to reform and “humanize” war in the past century and the reality of military violence during the same period. Beginning in the late 1800s, states and civil society actors sought to fulfill the promise of liberalism by reforming warfare through the introduction of a number of normative restraints, such as securing protections for captured or wounded soldiers, protecting civilian populations, enacting universal prohibitions on certain weapons, and even promoting disarmament (Roberts 1994). While efforts toward disarmament failed, multilateral treaties emerged that have since come to be called the “Laws of War.” These international agreements resulted in bans on certain kinds of weapons and, through the Geneva Conventions formalized between 1886 and 1929, sought to impose more general restraints on war-fighting (Roberts 1994). Altogether, the outcome of these liberal efforts to reform war is an international normative framework that attempts to outlaw certain forms of state violence, such as the use of chemical weapons, torture, and the deliberate targeting of civilians. Some scholars have argued that such international norms have had a real impact on state behavior (see Finnemore 1996; Price 1997; Wotipka and Tsutsui 2008; Koo and Ramirez 2009). A careful study of U.S. violence may, however, require that such assertions be tempered.

Certainly, the United States could not shrug off or ignore the emergence of humanitarian norms in its pursuit of hegemony during the twentieth century. Hegemony requires, after all, that a dominant nation exercise the global “moral leadership” necessary to garner the consent of a
critical mass of domestic and international political factions (Arrighi 2010). Likely for this reason, the United States became the “world spokesman for liberalism” during its era of hegemony, promoting the idea of the “rights of the people,” including the notion that they should not be deprived of their most basic rights to life during times of war (Wallerstein 1995: 156). Furthermore, several scholars have argued that powerful nations work to establish global humanitarian norms as a means of controlling or diminishing the military capacities of weaker nations or insurgent non-state groups, as in the case of chemical weapons (Price 1997), landmines (Beier 2011), or the small arms trade (Stavrianakis 2011). Hegemony, however, requires more than an economically dominant nation’s ability to exert global cultural leadership; it also requires the use of violent coercion (Arrighi 2010; see also Gramsci 1971).

There are several reasons why military force is particularly important to the U.S. during its era of hegemony. First and foremost, the United States was called upon to secure “international order,” including the maintenance of inequitable relationships between nations first forged through colonialism (Wallerstein 2004). Securing “international order” has often meant that the United States has used its military power to open and preserve access to foreign markets and to protect its own military and economic supremacy. It has also used its substantial military power as a threat or through actual belligerence in order to maintain access to valuable natural resources that are necessary for the continuous accumulation of capitalism (Klare 2004; Downey, Bonds, and Clark 2010). In sum, the period of U.S. hegemony has been one in which the U.S. military was continuously poised to use coercive violence to defend the established world order, and one in which it was often embroiled in one conflict or another somewhere around the globe.

There is, therefore, a real contradiction that U.S. officials had to manage during the period of U.S. hegemony; in order to secure international and domestic consent, officials had to proclaim the values of liberalism and act to protect the “rights of the people,” even in times of war. This presented some pressure to comply with international humanitarian norms that prohibit and stigmatize certain acts of violence that have been identified as especially cruel or harmful. On the other hand, ensuring U.S. hegemony required the consistent use of military force that, at times, resulted in widespread killings that deprived unarmed persons of their most basic right to exist. Such contradictions have typically been managed, which is to say actively suppressed, through appeals to “military necessity” and through the dehumanization of real or potential “enemies.” Through these appeals, officials attempt to justify acts of egregious violence by claiming that they are necessary for victory or even survival. Through processes of dehumanization, aided and abetted by longstanding notions of white supremacy, state officials and other elites may portray enemy populations as subhuman, inhuman, or as being barbarous and therefore outside the bounds of civilization (Dower 1987; Steuter and Wills 2008). Such symbolic treatment of others may suppress the contradiction between the humanitarian norms that emerged during the period of liberal reformism and the brutal and altogether inhumane realities of actual state violence that characterize it.

Though appeals to military necessity and the dehumanization of enemies have been important means by which the United States has historically legitimated wars and mass violence, they may not by themselves be sufficient in the contemporary era. This is particularly due to anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles that have countered dehumanization and sought to affirm the humanity of all persons, along with the development of global human rights networks that seek to publicize and shame state practices that violate international normative frameworks (Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999; Wallerstein 2004; Blau and Moncado 2005). Historical research
presented in this article indicates that the U.S. government has utilized three additional techniques to do legitimating work as a means of attempting to hide, distance itself from, or explain away perceived violations of international humanitarian norms. These techniques include defensive categorization, the use of humanitizing discourse, and surrogacy.

**Defensive Categorization**

Governments that are criticized for committing atrocities or violations of humanitarian norms often categorically deny all accusations (Cohen 2001). There are some situations, however, when certain facts about contested acts of state violence are undeniable and beyond dispute. In such instances, state officials often seek to place these acts and outcomes within an interpretative framework through which they would not be considered major violations of humanitarian norms (Cohen 2001). Defensive categorization is one such technique, by which U.S. governmental officials attempt to make the case that a certain act of state violence is quite different and altogether separate from another stigmatized category of violence. Instead, officials attempt to normalize such acts by stressing how similar they are to routine and commonplace behavior.

**Humanitizing Discourse**

U.S. officials may further attempt to legitimate contested forms of violence through the use of a humanitizing discourse, by which they may stress the extreme care that their military takes to avoid humanitarian harms when using contested weaponry. Of course, such claims are often misleading and may, in some situations, simply not be true. U.S. governmental officials may also use a humanitizing discourse in defense of contested forms of violence by stressing their alleged humanitarian benefits. For instance, wars are increasingly justified in recent times as being fought in the interest of human rights and democracy (Bricmont 2006).

**Surrogacy**

Through this legitimating technique, U.S. officials can direct client states to utilize weapons or violent practices that breach international humanitarian norms, often supplying these governments with the means to do so. Surrogacy provides the United States distance and/or the ability to argue that it is not ultimately responsible for any resulting violations of international standards committed by its adjuncts (Bonds 2012).

Through the remainder of this article, I will examine three historical instances where the United States has used chemically toxic weapons from the 1960s to the present, documenting the consistency through which these three legitimating techniques were used.

**The U.S. Use and Legitimation of Toxic Violence**

It is widely presumed that the United States, like all Western nations, disavowed the use of chemical weapons in the aftermath of World War One and has not used them since. Richard Price (1995, 1997) tells one such story when arguing that there is a very powerful chemical weapons “taboo” in global political culture that has had a real impact on the development of state policy. Price argues that attention to this norm is necessary to explain why immediately lethal
chemical weapons—of the sort used during World War One—have not been used since by Western nations and, more generally, why chemical weapons have been used so little in recent times. Price argues that this is not simply due to a supposed lack of military utility, as chemical weapons could be used very effectively by modern militaries to kill large numbers of people and sow terror in an enemy population, which are outcomes often valued by military planners.

To Price, the effectiveness of this norm has much to do with the political power of Western nations and their own military interests. Ever since a global norm stigmatizing chemical weapons was developed and formalized in global political culture, according to Price (1995: 95), it has “come to function as a symbol of the hierarchical relations of domination in the international system.” The first nations to commit to the non-use of chemical weapons were “civilized” states and, as the argument goes, non-Western states banned their use in emulation (Price 1995). In the latter half of the century, however, Western nations foisted this normative restraint on the rest of the world when they stigmatized chemical weapons as “weapons of the weak” and the “poor man’s bomb.” According to Price, it made good military and geopolitical sense for Western states to pressure Third World nations to abandon chemical weapons stockpiles, because such weapons could pose a real, non-nuclear threat to Western military intervention (1995, 1997).

But, according to the argument, in order to make this norm credible, powerful nations like the U.S. had to forgo the use of chemical weapons, even in situations when their use would have been militarily advantageous (Price 1997). There is some evidence to this effect (see Table 1). First, the U.S. signed the Geneva Protocol in 1925, which prohibits nations from being the first to use chemical weapons in war, and later ratified the accord in 1975. More recently, the United States ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993, which is a stronger treaty that requires nations to eliminate their chemical weapon stockpiles. Perhaps more importantly, the United States has not used chemical agents intended to directly kill enemy soldiers through asphyxiation or by causing chemical burns since World War I.

By looking more broadly at the U.S. history of toxic violence in order to draw out and examine political debates about what does and does not constitute a “chemical weapon,” this paper builds on Price’s analysis but also tells a more complicated story: one which indicates that even longstanding and broadly-shared humanitarian norms, such as that governing chemical weapons, do not strictly determine or entirely restrain the forms of violence the United States employs. The cases below demonstrate that herbicides and incapacitating gases used since 1961 by the United States – as methods of violence in wars and conflicts – could quite plausibly be considered chemical weapons by the definition of the Geneva Protocol of 1925, which sought to prohibit the use of “asphyxiating, poisonous, or other gases, and of all analogous liquids, materials, or devices.” Archival evidence, for instance, shows that U.S. officials knew in advance that their use of herbicides to destroy foliage and food crops in hostile territories during the Vietnam War would be condemned as a form of chemical warfare, but chose to use the

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3 One objection to this argument might be the supposed risks that chemical weapons use might pose to friendly combatants, as frequently happened in World War I. However, this is not an inherent quality of chemical weapons because, with more advanced weaponry, they could be remotely delivered without fear of friendly exposure.

4 Signing such an agreement does not, of course, make it legally binding without ratification. But it does signal an intent to ratify. At the very least, it is an acknowledgement made by U.S. officials of the existence of a global norm against chemical weapons.
Table 1: U.S. Policy on Toxic Weapons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>U.S. government signs Geneva Protocol, which prohibits the first use of “asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases, and of all analogous liquids, materials or devices.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941-1945</td>
<td>Refrains from using chemical weapons in World War II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-1953</td>
<td>Refrains from using chemical weapons in Korean War.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-1971</td>
<td>Uses large amounts of herbicides in Vietnam War as a defoliant and to destroy food crops.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965-1972</td>
<td>Uses large amounts of incapacitating gases in Vietnam, including tear gas, enhanced tear gas, and nauseating agents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969-present</td>
<td>Supports drug crop eradication with herbicides in—at various times—Mexico, Burma, Pakistan, Guatemala, Panama, Belize, and Columbia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Ratifies the Chemical Weapons Convention, which prohibits chemical warfare and commits all signatory nations to destroy their chemical weapons stockpiles. The Convention classifies incapacitants as prohibited weapons.</td>
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chemicals regardless. And when the Nixon Administration sought to formally interpret the Geneva Protocol as excluding herbicides and incapacitating gases, it was strongly rebuked by the United Nations General Assembly, which voted in an overwhelming majority to support a resolution that explicitly interprets the Protocol as prohibiting their use in war. Indeed, in 1975, with the war in Vietnam winding down, the U.S. Congress ratified the Geneva Protocol with the explicit recognition that the treaty bars the use of herbicides and incapacitating gases in war (see Washington Post 1974). Even with this recognition, however, the United States has continued to

5 The Nixon Administration was attempting to push Congress to ratify the Geneva Protocol as part of a larger strategy to strengthen the norm against immediately lethal chemical weapons in order to limit the military capacities of weaker nations, but still wanted to maintain its own ability to use herbicides and incapacitating gases in Vietnam and in future wars (see Smith 1969).

6 The vote on the resolution was 80-3, in which the only dissenting votes came from the United States, its Australian ally also fighting in Vietnam, and Portugal, a country that had recently employed herbicides in its war to maintain control over its African colony of Angola (Baxter and Buergenthal 1970).

7 The Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993, signed and ratified by the United States, also explicitly defines incapacitating gases used in war as banned chemical weapons.
use herbicides as a method of violence in counter-insurgency campaigns in numerous countries across the world in its “War on Drugs.”

What is, and what is not, a chemical weapon is therefore not as easy to determine as it might at first seem. Quite the contrary, the interpretation of whether or not a method of toxic violence should be declared a “chemical weapon” has much to do with politics and the structure of the world-system within which a national government acts. Nevertheless, as these cases make clear, whenever the United States has used toxic chemicals as a method of violence in overseas conflicts, it has faced both internal and external opposition and has been condemned for violating international humanitarian norms. In an effort to maintain the consent of critical constituencies—both foreign and domestic—the United States has sought to legitimate this violence.

**Herbicides: Vietnam, 1961-1971**

From 1961 to 1971 the United States Air Force sprayed millions of gallons of herbicides over Vietnam and Laos, intending to defoliate vegetation to eliminate the cover it provided to enemy soldiers and to destroy “enemy” agricultural crops in hopes of creating food shortages (Buckingham 1982). From the start of this enterprise, the U.S. government was confronted with claims that it was using a chemical weapon. Indeed, some of these initial challenges came internally, when members of the Department of State counseled against using herbicides to destroy food crops. In one internal memo Edward Murrow (1962), the director of the U.S. Information Agency, privately warned that

> chemical and biological warfare are subjects which arouse emotional reactions at least as intense as those aroused by nuclear warfare [...] No matter how reasonable our case may be [to utilize chemicals to destroy food crops]. I am convinced that we cannot persuade the world—particularly that large part of it which does not get enough to eat—that defoliation “is good for you.”

Likewise, Secretary of State Dean Rusk (1962), wrote to the President that “the use of strange chemical agents, to destroy crops, strikes at something basic implanted in human beings (even if the people do not—as many will—fear that the chemical agents are also directly harmful to people).”

When the U.S. defoliation and crop destruction programs were made public, criticism became widespread. U.S. House of Representative member Robert Kastenmeier (1963), for instance, wrote a letter of protest to President Kennedy, decrying the use of herbicides, which he specifically called a chemical weapon. Public criticism of these weapons came not just from the U.S. student antiwar movement, but also from well-recognized and outspoken scientists of the era, who regularly petitioned the government and otherwise spoke out against the military’s use of herbicides in Vietnam, also classifying them as chemical weapons (New York Times 1966a; O’Toole 1967; Reinhold 1969). In response to these challenges, U.S. governmental officials worked to legitimate their contested weapons.

**Legitimating herbicides in Vietnam through defensive categorization.** Through the technique of defensive categorization, officials deny that the military is using a condemned form of violence. They attempt to make such denials convincing by stressing how different a contested form of violence is compared to other types of violence that are universally reviled and deemed
impermissible. In the case of herbicides, officials sought to do this by claiming that the chemicals used in Vietnam were the same as those widely used for agricultural and industrial purposes around the world and therefore, it was implied, could not possibly be considered chemical weapons.

For instance, when the Chiefs of Staff presented their proposal to President Kennedy to use herbicides for defoliation and crop destruction in Vietnam, asking for his approval, they were already practicing defensive categorization by claiming that the chemicals are “commercially produced in this country and have been used for years in industrial and agricultural plant growth clearance operations” (Gilpatrick 1961). Similarly, in preparation to legitimize the use of herbicides in war, a memo was sent out to instruct U.S. embassies on how to deal with press inquiries regarding defoliation. In the memo, the Department of State (1961) advised officials to tell reporters that the “operation involves use of material which are similar to those used everyday for clearing rights of way in the United States. As our people know from experience, these defoliants of the 2-4D variety [including Agent Orange] are not harmful to humans, animals, or the soil.”

This rhetorical strategy would continue to be used throughout the war. One example of defensive categorization comes from a 1965 *New York Times* article, which reads, “officials describe the crop destruction chemical as a commercial weed killer, identical with a popular brand that many Americans spray on their lawns. It is not poisonous, and officials say that any food that survives its deadening touch will not be toxic or unpalatable” (Mohr 1965). Another example comes from a press conference held in 1968, in which U.S. officials told reporters, “no chemical is in use here that has not been thoroughly tested and available on the American domestic market. [Officials] said that one of the agents sprayed from planes over Vietcong areas is a chemical popularly used to fight crabgrass in America” (Lescaze 1968).

The logic of defensive categorization requires a very narrow interpretation of what constitutes a prohibited form of violence. In the case of chemical weapons, such a narrow interpretation means that a chemical weapon, in order to be defined as such, must cause direct, immediate, and intentional harm through exposure. The logic that U.S. officials were relying on in their practice of defensive categorization was made explicit in a letter sent by the Kennedy Administration in response to Representative Kastenmeier’s letter, which had—as mentioned above—accused the U.S. government of using chemical weapons in Vietnam. In reply, Assistant Secretary of Defense William Bundy (1963) wrote that, “in the Republic of Vietnam, the use of chemical and biological weapons has not occurred, and the compromise of moral principles has not been an issue.” This was true, he explained, because,

As you are aware, chemical warfare as defined by international law requires injury to the physical person of the enemy. The chemicals that have been used are weed-killers of the same types... used—especially by farmers—in the United States and other countries. They are commercially available in the United States and many other countries. They are not injurious to man, animals, or the soil.

Despite such claims, there are many reasons why herbicides—as used by the United States in the war in Vietnam—could be considered chemical weapons. Certainly, they were used for their chemical toxicity and could reasonably be considered “poisonous or other gases” banned by the Geneva Protocol of 1925. The actual text of the document does not include, after all, a stipulation that in order to be considered a prohibited chemical weapon, a toxic weapon used in
war must cause direct harm to a person and could not be a commercially available product, despite the Kennedy Administration’s interpretation of the treaty.

Regardless, while it is now known that these herbicides produced tremendous physical harm to successive generations of people in Vietnam, due to their carcinogenic and teratogenic effects, this was not common knowledge at the time. 8 But Kennedy Administration officials must have known that destroying food crops with chemicals – in effect creating hunger and potentially killing persons through starvation – was causing a kind of “injury to the physical person of the enemy,” and to civilians alike. 9 In this sense, using herbicides to destroy food crops could constitute the use of a chemical weapon even by the Kennedy Administration’s own narrow interpretation. But such logic undermines the practice of defensive categorization, and was therefore suppressed and certainly not made part of an official discourse.

Historical records indicate that defensive categorization was a primary means by which the United States sought to legitimate its use of herbicides in Southeast Asia. But it was far from the only legitimating technique U.S. officials used. They also employed a method of surrogacy.

**Legitimating herbicides in Vietnam through surrogacy.** Through the legitimating strategy of surrogacy, the U.S. government directs other nations or armed groups to utilize weapons or violent practices that may breach international humanitarian norms as a means of cloaking its own culpability (Bonds 2012). U.S. officials elected to utilize this legitimating method when they first decided not to conduct herbicidal crop destruction missions directly, but to, instead, provision the Republic of Vietnam’s military with the equipment and technical knowledge necessary to carry them out. A memo from the Department of Defense to President Kennedy, for instance, stated, “American participation would be as unobtrusive as possible and limited to technical advice and assistance” (McNamara 1962). So, while the first crop destruction missions utilized U.S. supplied helicopters, herbicides, spray equipment, and technical advice, they were conducted by Southern Vietnamese pilots and soldiers (Joint Chiefs 1963).

Direct surrogacy, however, was not a long-term practice in that, by 1964, the U.S. government began carrying out crop destruction missions in Vietnam and Laos itself because its fixed-winged aircraft could spray greater areas, had a longer range, and were not as vulnerable to enemy small-arms fire compared to the U.S.-supplied Vietnamese helicopters (Buckingham 1982). Regardless, officials misleadingly claimed, up until 1965, that U.S. aircraft were not involved in any crop destruction missions (Raymond 1965). 10 But U.S. officials did not only attempt to use strategies of defensive categorization and surrogacy to legitimate the use of herbicides in Vietnam, they also employed a humanitizing discourse.

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8 The major manufacturers of 2,4,5-T, which is the major component of Agent Orange and other herbicides used by the government in Vietnam, were aware of the presence of dioxins in this widely-used herbicide, but they did not disclose this information to the public. While Dow Chemical claimed, in its legal defense against a lawsuit filed by Vietnam War veterans, that it told Secretary of Defense McNamara about dioxin contamination in 1965, this remains unsubstantiated (Chicago Tribune 1983).

9 Members of the Kennedy Administration knew, for example, that the first major crop destruction campaign had, by the military’s estimate, destroyed enough rice to feed 1,000 people for an entire year (Joint Chiefs 1963).

10 U.S. crop destruction missions were, to some extent, an open secret by 1965 (Mohr 1965). But it was not until 1966 that the U.S. government took responsibility for the program, when it released an official statement in response to the hunger strike of a landscape architect living in New York, who demanded in his protest that the government inform the public about its crop destruction campaigns (New York Times 1966b).
The use of humanitizing discourse to legitimate herbicides in the Vietnam War.

Through the use of humanitizing discourse, U.S. officials may attempt to legitimate contested forms of violence by emphasizing the care taken to avoid civilian harms. This tactic was often used during the Vietnam War, where U.S. officials regularly stressed how careful military planners were to avoid directly spraying civilians or their crops. Numerous examples can be cited. For instance, a news reporter for the New York Times wrote in 1965, “officials say that elaborate pains are taken to prevent defoliants from falling on areas inhabited by friendly civilians” (Beecher 1965). An article the following year stated, “the key to the defoliation question is discrimination. If the weapon is used discriminately, it can be effective. At least this is the official appraisal here of the strictly technical aspects of the United States’ defoliation program [...] Defoliation is carefully controlled” (Oka 1966). Officials also repeatedly stressed that care was taken to ensure that herbicides were only used to destroy food crops in areas “known to be used to produce food for Vietcong military units” (Mohr 1965). For instance, a question and answer sheet distributed by the State Department to advise U.S. embassies around the world on how, among other things, to speak about the military’s use of herbicides included this hypothetical exchange:

QUESTION: How can you justify the deliberate destruction of rice fields and other crops by herbicide spraying? Isn’t this taking food from the mouths of poor farmers and their families, and gaining nothing but hostility?
ANSWER: The destruction of rice fields and other crops impedes the Viet Cong. Crop destruction has taken place only in areas fully controlled by the Viet Cong for a considerable period of time. There the harvested foodstuffs, used solely by the Viet Cong, sustain the attackers in their military operations and their acts of terrorism against innocent civilians (USIA 1967: 18).

Later attempts were made to convince the public that civilians were not harmed by the use of herbicides to destroy food crops because, officials stressed, the U.S. only targeted cultivated lands in “remote” areas. For example, an article from the New York Times states that crop destruction campaigns “are targeted on pockets of land cultivated by enemy troops in the largely unpopulated areas of central Vietnam. No food denial mission has been flown in an area with a government-registered population of more than 20 people per square mile, the officials said” (Lescaze 1968).

The humanitizing discourse used by U.S. officials, however, was not an accurate reflection of real world events. Geographical estimates since the War—using archived flight records of spray missions—contradicted claims that U.S. officials exercised a great deal of caution to avoid spraying civilians (Stellman et al. 2003). Quite the contrary: records show that 3,181 hamlets were directly sprayed. Based on military estimates of the populations of these communities, a minimum of 2.1 million persons were under U.S. planes that were showering down Agent Orange and other herbicides\footnote{This estimate does not include the hundreds of thousands of people who were directly sprayed while traveling along roads, working in fields, or otherwise outside their communities but still underneath U.S. planes.} (Stellman et al. 2003). Further contradicting claims of care and discretion to avoid civilian harm, studies commissioned by the U.S. military itself during the Vietnam War found that herbicidal crop destruction campaigns largely affected civilian farmers (Bretts and Denton 1967). Internally, despite the military’s humanitizing
discourse, officials acknowledged that “available evidence indicates that the civilian population in VC [Vietcong] controlled areas bears the brunt of these operations” (Warren 1968: 27). So, taken together, defensive categorization, surrogacy, and the use of a humanitizing discourse were all used to legitimate the military’s use of herbicides in Vietnam and Laos. Many of these same tactics, as we will see, were also used to legitimate the use of incapacitating gases used in the War.

**Incapacitating Gases: Vietnam 1965-1972**

The Johnson Administration was taken by surprise by the international and domestic controversy created after the U.S. military attacked villages in the Boi Loi Woods in Vietnam in an attempt to defeat enemy soldiers and push civilians into “strategic hamlets,” or government controlled refugee camps. U.S. jets first bombed the area, then sprayed surrounding forests and rubber plantations with herbicides, and then inundated the area with napalm and incendiary bombs in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to create a self-sustaining forest fire that would destroy any tree that could provide enemy cover (Buckingham 1982). The uproar created by this military campaign did not, surprisingly, focus on the U.S. military’s campaign of near total destruction in the Boi Loi Woods. Rather, the controversy focused more specifically on the U.S.’s use of tear gases and other incapacitating agents on civilians to force them from their homes and villages in the midst of the bombardment.

The Johnson Administration quickly learned that the use of incapacitating gases would be decried as the use of a chemical weapon. The *New York Times*, for instance, reported that this was the, “first time the U.S. has used gas in warfare since WWI” (Frankel 1965). Internationally, the United States faced immediate criticism from members of Britain’s governing Labor Party, which had otherwise been an important international supporter of the U.S. war in Vietnam (Bruce 1965). Domestically, democratic Senator Frank Morse told reporters that the tactic was “justly condemned by the general opinion of the civilized world” (Frankel 1965). U.S. Senator Mike Mansfield, a powerful democratic ally in the Senate, made a more quiet protest in the form of a letter to the President, questioning whether the use of incapacitating gases may do more harm to the U.S. in regard to international opinion than any military advantages it could give in Vietnam (Johnson 1965). And the U.S. government would face enduring opposition from the scientists and scientific organizations advocating against the use of herbicides in Vietnam, who were just as opposed to the use of incapacitating gases, which they also condemned as a type of chemical weapon (see O’Toole 1969).

Though these gases were themselves nonlethal, they were primarily used by the U.S. military as a means of forcing suspected enemies out of bunkers, trenches, and other protected areas so they could be more easily killed by conventional weaponry. Used as such, the U.S. government determined that these gases were a very important military tool that it would continue to use, despite international and domestic condemnation (Bundy 1965). But in doing so, U.S. officials sought to obscure the gap between humanitarian norms and actual military policy.

**Legitimating incapacitating gases through defensive categorization.** Through defensive categorization, officials claimed that such gases were simply “riot control gases” or tear gases commonly used by police around the world, and therefore could not plausibly be considered chemical weapons. For instance, when President Johnson met with the UK Foreign Secretary in an attempt to dampen the international uproar after the U.S. military sprayed incapacitating gases
on civilians in the Boi Loi Woods, he claimed that “the gas was one in common use by our own police forces, was frequently employed for quelling riots, and was stocked by many countries” (Bruce 1965). Likewise, Secretary of State Rusk gave a press conference after the Boi Loi Woods attack, in which he stated,

The shadow of gas warfare has been raised in connection with these incidents. That is not involved. We are not embarking upon gas warfare in Viet-Nam... We are not talking about gas that is prohibited by the Geneva Convention of 1925, or any other understandings about the use of gas. We are talking about a gas which has been commonly adopted by the police forces of the world as riot control agents—gases that are available commercially, and have been used on many occasions, some in this country; and on many occasions in other countries.

U.S. officials would use this rhetorical strategy in successive years, and indeed throughout the war, to legitimate the use of incapacitating gases (USIA 1965).

For instance, a question-and-answer sheet put out by the U.S. Information Agency, created to help U.S. embassies around the world prepare for press inquiries, includes this hypothetical dialogue:

QUESTION: Why do you use poison gas against the other side? Don't you adhere to the Geneva Conventions which prohibit this kind of warfare?
ANSWER: Neither the RVN [Republic of Vietnam] nor any of its allies has used poison gas... Tear gas is a nontoxic agent which police forces use for riot control in almost every country of the world as a means of limiting violence and casualties... Its use is not contrary to any Geneva Convention (USIA 1967: 19).

As the examples above demonstrate, the Johnson Administration, and later the Nixon Administration, consistently sought to legitimate incapacitating gases by claiming that they were commercially available and widely used for law-enforcement purposes, and therefore should not be considered a type of weapon banned by the Geneva Protocol of 1925. There are inconsistencies, however, with such claims-making. First, the actual context in Vietnam was very different than that to which it was being compared: the U.S. was not using tear gas in police actions but in military campaigns where it was simultaneously dropping bombs and firing bullets. Second, the scale was very different between police use of tear gas, which implies infrequent and sporadic use, and the regular and sustained use of incapacitants by the U.S. military in Vietnam, which regularly deployed them by helicopter, high powered fans, and through shells and bombs. Finally, while the U.S. regularly claimed that these incapacitant gases were the same tear gases used by police around the world, officials later acknowledged that much of the gas used by the military was a “super” tear gas created to last longer in the environment and was not actually used by police (Committee on Foreign Relations 1971). Furthermore, U.S. forces also, at least initially in the war, often added a nauseating agent that could induce vomiting for up to two hours after contact (Frankel 1965; Margolis 1965). Archival evidence further shows that the Johnson Administration knew as early as 1965 that the tear gases

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12 The U.S. military itself estimated that it had purchased and transported more than 13,000,000 pounds of incapacitant gases for use in Southeast Asia between 1964 and 1969. A Harvard biologist at the time estimated that this was enough gas to effectively cover 80,000 square miles (Wilson 1969).
used in Vietnam and those used in domestic police work were very different (Horning 1965), but Administration officials nevertheless practiced defensive categorization by claiming that the two were one and the same.

These above inconsistencies cast doubt about U.S. claims that its use of incapacitant-type gases should not be considered a type of chemical warfare banned by the Geneva Protocol. The text of the Protocol and the context in which it was written raise further misgivings. After all, the Protocol seeks to ban “asphyxiating” gases, and tear gases certainly seem to fall into this category because they induce coughing and make breathing more difficult. And while the U.S. hoped to promote a narrow definition of the Geneva Protocol as banning only lethal chemicals, the drafters of the Protocol never made such a specification and likely had non-lethal incapacitants in mind. They were, after all, the first chemical gases used in World War One and constituted up to a tenth of all chemical agents used throughout the war (Coleman 2005). Despite these inconsistencies, defensive categorization was likely an effective tool used to legitimate toxic violence in the Vietnam War, as was the use of a humanitizing discourse.

The use of humanitizing discourse to legitimate incapacitating gases in Vietnam. U.S. officials also regularly sought to defend the use of incapacitating gases in Vietnam with a humanitizing discourse, which did not stress so much the care taken to avoid civilian exposure, as with herbicides, but instead stressed that the use of this contested weapon may have humanitarian benefits. This rhetorical strategy is well expressed in a 1965 New York Times article that reads, “US officials claimed gassing the village was more humane than bombing it or sending in a barrage of artillery” (Frankel 1965). Throughout the War, officials—including President Johnson—argued that the use of incapacitating gas was “authorized in an effort to save lives” (Johnson 1965) and that the gas did little harm to persons, having “only a temporary effect” (Committee on Foreign Relations 1971) of “nausea, choking, and copious weeping” (Washington Post 1972). According to this humanitizing discourse, “these riot control agents frequently make it possible to capture enemy soldiers unharmed and are particularly useful in reducing civilian casualties when the enemy has infiltrated into populations centers or built-up areas or is believed to be holding civilian hostages” (official quoted in The New York Times 1969).

Despite these claims, the historical record indicates that incapacitating gases were not primarily used to achieve humanitarian goals, but were used because they increased the capacity of the U.S. military to kill suspected enemies. A former official in the Johnson Administration, George Bunn, who participated in constructing the humanitarian rationale for the use of incapacitants later acknowledged this in Congressional testimony. He stated that “the humanitarian justification given to the United Nations was not observed in practice... From saving civilian and enemy lives—tear gas had become simply a better killer—at least in some of its uses” (Committee on Foreign Relations 1971: 54). This same point was made much earlier, in 1965, by a former administration official who complained to The New York Times (1965) that “the American use of tear gas in Vietnam does not match the humanitarian justification for its use given by the government.” The former official was further quoted as saying, “large numbers of tear gas grenades have been dropped on Vietcong strongholds from helicopters that were followed by B-52s dropping explosive or anti-personnel-fragmentation bombs” (The New York Times 1965). In other words, the United States was not using incapacitants to save lives. It was using them, much like in World War I, to push soldiers out of protected positions so they could be more easily killed and their positions could be overtaken using more conventional weapons.
The United States, after all, was dropping 270-pound bombs, grenades, and artillery shells filled with incapacitants along with, not instead of, lethal weapons. The previously discussed 1965 incident at the Boi Loi Woods is a case in point. While the United States sprayed tear gas and nauseating gases into hamlets, it did this within a context of aerial bombardment using napalm and cluster bombs (Buckingham 1982).

**Herbicides: International “War on Drugs,” 1970-Present**

The aerial eradication of drug crops, accomplished by spraying herbicides from fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters in foreign countries, has been a longstanding component of U.S. foreign policy (Buxton 2006). The history of this policy dates back to the Nixon Administration, which provided helicopters, herbicides, and technical assistance in 1970 to the Mexican government to destroy marijuana and poppy fields (*The New York Times* 1970). Since that time, the United States has provided support for, or actually operated, anti-drug herbicidal campaigns in Burma, Guatemala, Panama, Belize, and Pakistan (*Courier-Mail* 1988). The United States also began providing major support in 2000 for drug eradication in Colombia through a multi-billion dollar military aid package to support the government’s drug suppression and counter-insurgency efforts known as “Plan Colombia.” Today the United States continues to fund the private company DynCorp to conduct aerial drug crop eradication in Colombia.\(^{13}\)

While the United States’ long-standing policy regarding the use of herbicidal chemicals during the “War on Drugs” has not been widely criticized as a violation of international normative commitments regarding chemical weapons, the case below makes clear that it certainly is a form of toxic violence and has been strongly criticized by international human rights organizations (Robberson 2001), peace and environmental NGOs (Earthjustice 2002; Witness for Peace 2002), and has been treated with some suspicion and criticism by the U.S. Congress (Pauker 2003). As such, U.S. officials have worked to legitimate the use of herbicides as a weapon in the “War on Drugs” in familiar ways.

*Legitimating herbicides for drug eradication through defensive categorization.* U.S. officials have sought to legitimate the use of herbicides in the “War on Drugs” as if they were simply chemical tools used for conventional agricultural purposes, stating for instance “that the coca spraying is being carried out in accordance with regulatory controls required by the Environmental Protection Agency as labeled for use in the United States” (State Department 2002; see also State Department 2006). However, their use in these circumstances is better defined as that of a toxic weapon.

That herbicides used to destroy drug crops are a kind of weapon, and not simply an agricultural tool, is made clearer when examining the broader context in which they are used: often in the midst of wars, counter-insurgency campaigns, or other social conflicts. In particular, there has been no clear defining line between U.S. anti-drug policies and counter-insurgency foreign policy in the U.S.-backed drug eradication programs of Mexico, Burma (now Myanmar), and Colombia (Buxton 2006). Revolutions and armed rebellions, after all, require the provision of weapons. In the absence of superpower patrons, revolutionaries may look to use “highly lootable” resources for funding, such as drug crops (Le Billon 2001). Or, on the other hand, the

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\(^{13}\) More than three million acres in Colombia have been sprayed with herbicides since Plan Colombia was put into effect (EarthJustice 2011). Colombia’s Council for Human Rights and Displacement estimates that aerial fumigation displaced more than 70,000 people in the first two years of spraying alone (Dion and Russler 2008).
capacity to grow and profit from drugs crops may create conditions in which organizations arm themselves and fight battles in order to protect their illicit source of wealth (Le Billon 2001). In either case, efforts to eradicate drug crops are not simply counter-drug tactics, but as a matter of intention or as a matter of effect, are also military campaigns in larger armed conflicts. In the context of the “War on Drugs,” herbicides have been used as a weapon in the sense that they are an implement of force used against the will of and despite the resistance of others. Paying further attention to U.S.-backed drug eradication in Colombia makes this point clear.

U.S.-backed drug eradication campaigns in Colombia since the 1990s occurred during a period in which the nation’s government was engaged in a full-scale counter-insurgency war, in which its main adversaries were communist rebel forces that were profiting from drug production and trafficking (GAO 2008). It was in this context that the United States spent $4.9 billion dollars on “Plan Colombia” between 2000-2006 in order to provide “the Colombian military and National Police with a range of capabilities, primarily air mobility, needed to pursue Plan Colombia’s counternarcotics and security objectives” (GAO 2008: 5). This “air mobility” came primarily in the form of the increased capacity to destroy drug crops with herbicides from above. The communist forces in Colombia consequently sought to protect drug crops from destruction by attempting to take down spray planes. As a result, efforts to destroy drug crops from the air in Colombia resembled military strikes much more than they resembled more conventional agricultural uses of herbicides, as the below quote from a U.S. Congressional report describes:

A typical spray mission consists of four spray aircraft supported by helicopter gunships to protect the spray aircraft along with a search and rescue helicopter to rescue downed pilots and crew. In addition, ground security is provided as needed by the Army Counternarcotics Brigade. (GAO 2008: 39)

Because herbicides in the “War on Drugs” were used as a kind of weapon in violent conflicts, their human health impacts are likely much more extensive than when used in conventional agriculture. For instance, the U.S. State Department practices defensive categorization by asserting that its use of the herbicide glyphosate in Colombia, which is the active ingredient in the commercially available herbicide “Round-Up®,” is consistent with its commercial use in the United States. However, such a comparison ignores an additional chemical agent called “cosmo-flux” that makes the herbicide more effective, but is not domestically available in stores (EPA 2002). Moreover, higher concentrations of glyphosate are used in Colombian drug eradication than are allowed in U.S. agriculture (Pauker 2003). And because the aircraft deploying herbicides often come under enemy fire, they fly at higher altitudes and faster speeds than they would fly when “crop dusting” in the United States, increasing the extent of herbicidal drift and other unintended applications of herbicides that contaminate water and destroy plants in adjacent legal cropland, forests, and wetlands (Pauker 2003). Beyond defensive categorization, the U.S. has used a humanitizing discourse to legitimate its toxic weaponry used in the “War on Drugs.”

**The use of humanitizing discourse in drug eradication campaigns.** In order to convince critics that its herbicide campaign in Colombia was not adversely affecting civilians, the State Department required the government of Colombia to “compensate growers for legal crops sprayed in error” (State Department 2003). This presumably would be quite common because the
planes applying herbicides in Colombia move at a much faster speed and at a much higher altitude than planes would fly under normal agricultural circumstances, in order to avoid being shot down by enemy fire (EPA 2002). Press (Forero 2001) and NGO accounts (Earth Justice 2002; Witness for Peace 2002), as well as the findings of the government of Columbia’s Human Rights Ombudsman (Robberson 2001), attest to the frequency of this problem.

The U.S.-instituted program, however, appears to be more hollow rhetoric than an actual plan to compensate people for their losses due to errant herbicides. According to the U.S. State Department in 2003, the government of Colombia had received 4,329 complaints of legal crops wrongly destroyed by the aerial application of herbicides. The Colombian government claimed it investigated 2,745 of these cases and found that all but five were fraudulent (State Department 2003). The situation in 2007 was no better; after having received a total of 6,778 complaints since the program’s inception, the government of Colombia denied compensation to all but 43. The government of Colombia determined that the several thousand other cases are “false” claims, in which growers of coca plants have allegedly sought compensation for their destroyed drug crops (State Department 2003, 2007). It must be taken into account, however, that the government of Colombia is regularly rated poorly in terms of corruption and has often been accused of committing human rights abuses against its citizens (Livingston 2004). Taken in this context, this U.S.-required program, undertaken by the Colombian Government, is a humanitizing discourse used in hopes of satisfying critics, even if it has not actually rectified human rights abuses committed through the destruction of legal crops through the aerial application of herbicides.

**Surrogacy and herbicides in drug eradication campaigns.** Through surrogacy, the United States implements policies that violate international humanitarian norms, but it does so in such a way to create the impression that other national governments are ultimately responsible. This is despite the fact that the United States may fund such campaigns and provide the technical means to carry them out. For instance, by 1980, the U.S. government had provided Mexico a total of 70 million dollars in equipment and technical assistance, including spray equipment, 41 helicopters, and 22 spotter planes to conduct aerial drug eradication campaigns (Riding 1980). The United States continued providing the Mexican government herbicides, aircraft, and funding throughout the 1980s, and eventually even supplied pilots to conduct aerial missions to destroy illegal crops. Under Plan Colombia, the United States also provided substantial support for drug eradication. According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office (2008: 39), the United States has provided hundreds of millions of dollars in support for drug fumigation in the form of “U.S.-owned spray aircraft and helicopters, as well as contractor support to help fly, maintain, and operate these assets at forward operating locations throughout Colombia.”

The United States, through surrogacy, can distance itself and maintain plausible deniability of human rights violations that occur through such campaigns, even if they were only begrudgingly accepted by host countries. Mexico, for instance, initially refused U.S. proposals for herbicidal drug eradication in the 1970s, and only submitted to them after the United States instituted an economically crippling border blockade (Onis 1969; Buxton 2006). Colombia, while undertaking some U.S.-supported herbicidal drug eradication in the 1990s, initially refused U.S. plans to dramatically increase fumigation. The country’s leaders buckled to U.S. pressure, however, after Colombia was placed on a list of non-cooperating countries in the drug war, which affected the nation’s ability to receive international loans and other forms of assistance.
Surrogacy, then, is another important means by which U.S. officials have sought to legitimate toxic violence in the “War on Drugs.”

**Legitimation and the Contradictions of Hegemony**

Hegemony does not simply mean military and economic dominance. Rather, it means that a hegemon must exert its influence over the world-system through some combination of coercion and consent (Arrighi and Silver 1999). The cases in this article contribute to our understanding of hegemony by demonstrating that these two forms of power do not only complement one another, but that they are also potentially contradictory. On the one hand, the United States has sought to exert global moral leadership by proclaiming the “rights of the people” and by promising a liberal reformatory program toward their full provision (Wallerstein 1995). Even in times of war, the United States has experienced pressure to comply with international norms that outlaw and stigmatize certain acts of violence that are identified as especially cruel or harmful to civilians. On the other hand, the United States has regularly used military violence across the globe throughout its tenure as hegemon in order to maintain its leading position within a system of global inequalities that can only be maintained through coercive force. The question is, then: which is most fundamental to hegemony, coercion or consent, when the two seem at odds with one another?

This already difficult question is complicated further when we account for the fact that powerful nations are not only passive recipients of global political culture, but are also active co-creators of global norms. An additional question here, then, is whether, after having co-constructed a global norm as a means of controlling the military power of weaker nations—as in the case of landmines, nuclear weapons, or chemical weapons—a hegemonic power will itself be pressured to comply. Social constructionist theorists in international relations have argued for the affirmative (Price 1997; Tannenwald 2007; Sikkink 2011). More critical scholars of humanitarian arms control efforts are likely to disagree (see Cooper 2011; Stavrianakis 2011). The cases here, however, show some evidence in support of both positions, though in the end a hegemonic power’s need to utilize militarily effective power likely trumps its need to exercise cultural leadership, which might be diminished by violating long-standing and widely-shared humanitarian norms.

The examination of U.S. policy on toxic violence demonstrates that, on one hand, the United States has complied with the global ban on chemical weapons by abdicating the use of immediately lethal gases, even in situations when their use may have been militarily effective (Price 1997). It was likely in the hegemonic interest of the United States to abandon such weapons because, since 1969, it has undertaken efforts—along with other powerful nations—to strengthen the “chemical weapons taboo” and stigmatize them as “weapons of the weak” in order promote the more conventional military power of nations in the global North (Price 1997). On the other hand, however, the United States has not strictly complied with the ban on chemical weapons. Rather, it has regularly used toxic violence—albeit utilizing types of chemicals that are not immediately lethal—to achieve geopolitical goals since 1961.

The fact that, when doing so, the United States has sought to either hide or exempt its own use of toxic violence from the chemical weapons ban is significant. It means that, while a hegemon’s ability to utilize coercive violence may be of ultimate importance, its need to attain the consent of the governed in global affairs does not go away. These cases demonstrate that the
United States has consistently used three main techniques to legitimate its use of toxic violence. Through the strategy of defensive categorization, U.S. officials claim that the military’s use of a contested form of violence is very different from the kinds of violence that have been prohibited through international treaty-making. To make this case, they work to normalize this violence by stressing its routine and commonplace nature. U.S. officials also seek to legitimate contested forms of violence by using a humanitizing discourse, through which they either stress the care taken to avoid harm or argue that, in fact, the use of a controversial form of violence has humanitarian benefits. Through surrogacy, the U.S. government denies responsibility for the results of contested forms of violence used by client states, even if U.S. officials provided the resources and direction to carry it out. It is through these legitimating mechanisms that U.S. officials have sought to manage the contradictions of hegemony, in order to obscure the difference between professed appreciation of liberal or humanitarian norms and the violent military practices used to maintain a starkly unequal world.

Other researchers studying the legitimation of state violence might find the interpretive categories introduced here useful, as this brief application to the U.S. “War on Terror” shows. For one, U.S. officials certainly practiced defensive categorization in response to domestic and international criticism that the nation was using torture as a method of gathering intelligence. “The U.S. does not torture” proclaimed President Bush (2005), while other officials stressed the supposedly routine and commonplace nature of the “enhanced interrogations” used by the United States (Rejali 2007). And the United States and its allies have relied upon a humanitizing discourse to justify its military occupations in other nations during the “War on Terror” (Bricmont 2006). In Iraq, after no chemical weapons were found, the war was justified as being fought to bring democracy to the people of Iraq and to protect them from a ruthless tyrant. And the war and occupation in Afghanistan has been legitimated in terms of furthering women’s rights. Likewise, despite evidence that the U.S. use of drones to carry out targeted assassinations has resulted in hundreds of civilian deaths (Woods and Lamb 2012; Ackerman 2013), U.S. officials continue to legitimate this violence by stressing the “precision” of these weapons and the “care” taken to avoid harming non-target persons (see Brennan 2012).

Finally, the United States has used the technique of surrogacy as a legitimating tool as well during the “War on Terror.” For instance, leaked diplomatic cables between the Yemeni government and the United States reveal that Yemeni officials were willingly claiming responsibility for missiles fired into the country by the U.S. aimed at insurgent groups (Amnesty International 2010). This was certainly in the interest of the Yemeni government, which did not have to disclose to its citizens that the United States was directly attacking rebels within its borders and infringing on Yemeni sovereignty. This was also in the interest of the United States when, for instance, in one 2009 attack, it did not have to take responsibility for the cluster bombs that killed 41 civilians, including 21 children (Amnesty International 2010). Of course, researchers studying the legitimation of violence outside a U.S. context may also find this typology useful, because practically all states, to a greater or lesser degree, work to secure geopolitical interests using military violence that is not entirely consistent with global humanitarian norms. These states, too, might utilize the techniques of defensive categorization, humanitizing discourse, and surrogacy in hopes of distancing themselves from, justifying, or explaining away stigmatized forms of violence.

In conclusion, it is important to note that there is general agreement among world-systems researchers that U.S. hegemony is expiring, if not already expired years ago. What this means in terms of U.S. military violence is far from certain. On one hand, it might mean that the
United States will increasingly institute policies of “adjustment and accommodation” to other rising economic and political powers (Arrighi 2010). In such a situation, the U.S. government may be less likely to use egregious forms of violence in order to secure political and economic goals. This may be especially so in the wake of the “human rights revolution” of the past thirty years (see, for instance, Risse et al. 1999). Indeed, there is some evidence of increasing U.S. compliance with global norms over the course of time in U.S. toxic violence policy. While at the height of its economic and political power, the United States used toxic weapons at an incredible scale during the Vietnam War, showering herbicides across entire landscapes in an attempt to destroy whole forests and to poison crops that fed hundreds of thousands, while also using enormous quantities of incapacitating gases to increase the lethality of artillery and aerial bombardment campaigns. It is hard to imagine the United States using toxic violence on this scale at the current historical moment. And while the United States continues to fund the aerial fumigation of drug crops in Colombia, this use of toxic violence also seems to be waning. For instance, while the U.S. government sought to instigate a program of aerial fumigation to destroy poppy crops in Afghanistan used to make opium, it eventually had to abandon its plan due to strong opposition from the national government of Afghanistan and the United States’ NATO allies (Landay 2007).

Rather than instituting a program of “adjustment and accommodation,” however, another possibility is that the U.S. will instead attempt to re-impose its will on the world-system primarily through its military might, regardless of its flagging economy (Wallerstein 2003; Arrighi 2010). In such a situation, compliance with international humanitarian norms would likely be cast aside if they interfered with the United States’ ability to utilize militarily effective violence. While this study of U.S. chemical weapons policy provides no evidence indicating that such a situation is likely in the near future, other world events suggest that it remains a distinct possibility. Under such circumstances, we should expect U.S. officials to use many of the same legitimating techniques identified here.

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14 The United States instead carried out a program of manual poppy eradication, which it ceased in 2009. This work has been carried forward by the United Kingdom and the Government of Afghanistan (Farmer 2009).
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In Spaces of Marginalization: Dispossession, Incorporation, and Resistance in Bolivia

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Abstract
Recent scholarship conceptualizing primitive accumulation as an ongoing process in global capitalism has noted the difficulties faced in bringing struggles against exploitation and dispossession together. While some scholars suggest that an ‘organic link’ exists between these conflicts, they have yet to clearly specify the conditions and mechanisms through which such a link can form. Examining cases in Bolivia at the turn of the twenty-first century, I argue that struggles against exploitation and dispossession do not merely converge when facing a common oppressor, but also as the changing forms and geographies of exploitation and dispossession bring people together in more proximate locations. I illustrate that the changing means through which Bolivia was incorporated into the global economy enhanced levels of marginalization and subsequently resulted in patterns of migration that led to a convergence of peasant and proletarian struggles. As both segments of Bolivian society were excluded from the country’s major economic sectors, they migrated to the places where they thought they could best satisfy their livelihood needs. But as people continually struggled to meet these needs, these places became spaces of marginalization, and eventually, spaces of resistance.

Keywords: primitive accumulation, incorporation, Bolivia, peasant-proletarian struggle

Bolivia’s rich natural resource base has long attracted international interest. Bolivians have continually been dispossessed by global hegemons, neighboring countries, and even by some of their own people for their country’s silver, guano, rubber, tin, and natural gas. But recently, struggles against this dispossession have taken a new form. Whereas Bolivia’s campesinos and workers historically had different demands and were often pitted against one another, over the past three decades these two factions have frequently taken to the streets together in common protest. But what led to this convergence of Bolivia’s peasantry and proletariat in struggles for social change?

To answer this question, I engage and extend contemporary theories that see primitive accumulation as a continual process within the expansion of global capitalism. While the divides between the peasantry and proletariat have long puzzled scholars of development, social movements, and social change (e.g., Wolf 1969; Amin 1977, 1974; Wallerstein 2000, 1979), the question of how to bring them together has found renewed interest amongst scholars examining
resistance to primitive accumulation in the contemporary neoliberal era (e.g., Harvey 2003; Moore 2004; Glassman 2006; Hough and Bair 2012). Bringing this work into closer dialogue with world-system theorizations of incorporation, I suggest that scholars should see ongoing forms of primitive accumulation not only as a response to crises of overaccumulation, but also as evidence of shifting global power structures that can result in the reformation of global trade networks and the restructuring of local economies. Taking such an approach, I argue that struggles against exploitation and dispossession do not merely converge when facing a common oppressor, but also when the changing forms and geographies of exploitation and dispossession bring people together in common places.

To make this argument, I examine Bolivia’s changing role in the global economy from being a provider of tin to being a provider of natural gas. I illustrate that the changing means through which Bolivia was incorporated into the global economy enhanced levels of marginalization and subsequently resulted in patterns of migration that led to a convergence of peasant and proletarian struggles. As both segments of Bolivian society were excluded from the country’s major economic sectors, they migrated to the places where they thought they could best satisfy their basic needs. But as people continually struggled for their livelihoods, these places of migration became spaces of marginalization, and eventually, spaces of resistance.

In this study, I deploy a variant of the extended case method (Burawoy 1991). I bring interview and ethnographic data, government statistics, archival research, and primary document and media analysis from Bolivia into conversation with existing theories of primitive accumulation, accumulation by dispossession, and resistance. Focusing on Bolivia, I am not attempting to draw attention to an understudied case. Indeed, there has been a recent proliferation of scholarship about contemporary Bolivia and its social movements, some of which has drawn upon theories similar to those engaged herein (e.g., Kohl and Farthing 2006; Hylton and Thomson 2007; Spronk and Webber 2007; Webber 2011). Instead, my intention is to better historicize resistance to continual forms of primitive accumulation by more closely accounting for the relationship between global economic change and local acts of dispossession. By doing so, I seek to provide a deeper understanding of some of the causal mechanisms driving social uprising and socioeconomic change in Bolivia – and elsewhere – over the past three decades.

Conceptualizing Struggles Against Economic Oppression

The system of capitalism is based upon the imperative of continual accumulation and economic growth. This accumulation and growth is most often achieved by gleaning and reinvesting profit accrued from a worker’s surplus labor. Through what Karl Marx (1867) called expanded reproduction, such a profit-making strategy is often perceived as the principal means of capital accumulation and economic growth in advanced capitalism. But capital accumulation and economic growth can also be achieved in another way. Instead of profiting from the products of a worker’s labor, capitalists can also profit through what Marx called primitive accumulation. Primitive accumulation is most often conceptualized as the process through which peasants were forced off the lands upon which they subsisted. Divorced from their own means of production, these peasants moved from being primary producers to wage workers. In the words of Marx (1867), such a process transformed “the social means of subsistence and of production into capital” and turned “immediate producers into wage laborers.” The enclosure and privatization
of land provided capitalists with their initial stock of capital and the removal of peasants from the land provided capitalists with an initial labor supply.

Marx’s primary focus was upon expanded reproduction and the class struggles resulting from it. While he recognized the brute violence that often accompanied processes of primitive accumulation, he was less than sympathetic to the peasant way of life. He saw resistance to primitive accumulation as a regressive attempt to cling to a livelihood strategy that he believed had little potential to ease the everyday trials and tribulations of human existence. In contrast, Marx saw resistance to expanded reproduction as potentially liberating. They could lead to higher wages, better working conditions, and the eventual usurpation of the capitalist class, as workers fought for control of the means of production.

More recently, scholars have drawn greater attention to ongoing forms of primitive accumulation. Attempting to disrupt depictions that posit primitive accumulation as occurring merely in the early stages of capitalism, such scholars assert that primitive accumulation is a continual process through which to relieve crises of overaccumulation (Perelman 2000; Harvey 2003; Glassman 2006). What this continual form of primitive accumulation, or “accumulation by dispossession,” does is “release a set of assets (including labor power) at very low (and in some instances zero) cost. Overaccumulated capital can seize hold of and immediately turn them to profitable use” (Harvey 2003: 149). As per Marx’s conceptualization of primitive accumulation, accumulation by dispossession is a way to accumulate capital without the use of wage labor, through ‘extra-economic’ means. But scholars move beyond seeing accumulation by dispossession as the mere capture and enclosure of the means of subsistence and other previously non-commoditized assets. The processes are more dynamic. Through accumulation by dispossession, profit can also be made by expropriating and/or de- and revaluing already commoditized assets.

For a number of scholars of accumulation by dispossession, such a process underpins contemporary globalization and neoliberal forms of capitalism. Suffering from crises of overaccumulation, transnational investors have sought to capture and enclose new tracks of land and natural resource reserves that previously were insulated from or rested outside of global commodity circuits. This can be seen with the end of the ejido in Mexico in 1991, the ongoing privatization of water throughout the globe, and the pricing of air and carbon through the creation of carbon markets. In addition, such investors have sought to push already commoditized assets into apparent disarray, buy them at low prices, and then return them to the market in an ‘improved’ form. This is evident in the privatization of state owned productive enterprises throughout the world and the ongoing transfer of devalued assets (land, houses, retirement funds, etc.) from the general masses to the rich after the global financial crisis of 2008.

In conjunction with these observations, a number of scholars argue that while accumulation by dispossession can follow Marx’s theorization of primitive accumulation and result in the creation of wage laborers, there is no necessary reason it must (Glassman 2006: 615-616; Prudham 2007: 411). Throughout history, capitalists have not always sought to include the labor of everyone in the work process, as a reserve army of labor can drive down costs (e.g., Wallerstein 1979; Wolpe 1980). People have also actively and successfully resisted proletarianization, not wanting to subject themselves to the poor working conditions and lifestyles available to entry-level wage laborers (e.g. Scott 1976, 1985). And some commodities can be ‘made’ or expropriated without directly displacing people from or disrupting their everyday livelihood activities (e.g., McCarthy 2004; Prudham 2007).
Seeing primitive accumulation as accumulation by dispossession in some ways challenges traditional Marxist notions of class struggle and social change. If accumulation by dispossession is ongoing and does not always result in the creation of wage laborers, the objects and means of class struggle may differ. While the proletarianized have historically focused their struggles upon improving the lives of workers and the conditions in the workplace, the dispossessed have engaged in a myriad array of struggles over everything from the land upon which to subside (e.g., Martin 2005; Wolford 2005), to trade and financial rules (e.g., McCarthy 2004), to the basic necessities of life such as water and air (e.g., Budds 2004; Perreault 2006).

A range of scholars have noted that the vast number and heterogeneity of struggles against accumulation by dispossession pose difficulties for contemporary social movements (e.g., Harvey 2003; Glassman 2006). On the most basic level, the sheer quantity of these struggles and their different objectives make it difficult to draw connections between them. Moreover, as Harvey (2003: 162-180) asserts, Marx’s original ‘reticence’ to see anything progressive about struggles against primitive accumulation seems to still exist today. In particular, a divide remains between the participants in struggles against expanded reproduction and accumulation by dispossession. The traditional focus of workers upon the struggle between capital and labor has excluded many from the benefits they receive (or at least once did receive). In turn, this has led the dispossessed to see labor, and in many instances the state upon which labor depends, as less relevant to achieving their goals.

Despite these differences, Harvey (2003) insists that struggles against expanded reproduction and accumulation by dispossession are “organically linked.” But if an organic link exists between such struggles, how can they be brought together in practice? What factors allow this organic link to be realized? While Harvey (2003: 179) notes that “the umbilical cord between the two forms of struggle that lies in financial institutional arrangements backed by state powers (as embedded in and symbolized by the IMF and the WTO) has been clearly recognized,” he does not explain what this umbilical cord can possibly be made of. In other words, the conditions and mechanisms through which struggles against expanded reproduction and accumulation by dispossession can come together on the ground are not theorized. To better understand the convergence of such struggles, I suggest that scholars should draw more closely from world-systems perspectives that not only see primitive accumulation as ongoing and dynamic process, but also see incorporation into the global economy as an ongoing and dynamic process.

A World-Systems Approach to Conceptualizing the Convergence of Struggles Against Economic Oppression

World systems scholars have long observed how people and places are brought into global circuits of production. For Immanuel Wallerstein (1989) and others (e.g., Arrighi 1979; Sokolovsky 1985), incorporation followed Marx’s ideas of formal and real subsumption. Formal, or what some have called “nominal,” incorporation occurs when a place is brought into global circuits of capital accumulation but the existing means of production and reproduction remain largely unchanged. For example, when the conquistadors claimed Latin America for the Spanish crown, they forced local peoples to work in the mines. However, the livelihood strategies of these people remained largely dependent upon subsistence farming. They were nominally incorporated into the global economy in that the conquistadors and Spanish crown exercised a
level of domination over their lives and territory, but their subsistence livelihood strategies remained largely the same. In contrast, real, or what some have called “effective,” incorporation occurs when a place is brought into global circuits of capital accumulation and the existing means of production and reproduction cease to be dominant and “disintegrate qua systems.” For example, after forced labor regimes were eliminated in Latin American mining activities, increasing numbers of people worked in the mines for a wage. As this occurred, the systems of agriculture and trade in some places changed so that those primarily working in the mines could purchase their everyday subsistence needs. These people were effectively incorporated into the global economy as the very means of societal organization shifted.

While a number of world-systems scholars see effective incorporation as the moment in which places become “hooked” into the global economy in ways that are difficult to escape (Wallerstein 1989: 130), this does not mean that incorporation should be seen as a static process. As Denis O’Hearn argues, places are continually incorporated, disincorporated, and reincorporated into the world-system. As this occurs, places can move from having “more to less proletarian social relations of production” (O’Hearn 2001: 16). In other words, the levels and means of economic oppression experienced by local peoples often change with global power shifts. Exploitation, the incorporation of a person into the global economy for their labor, can be deepened if new forms of production and reproduction require increasing quantities of labor. Exploitation can give way to marginalization, or the outright exclusion of a person from the global economy, if new forms of production and reproduction require less labor. And marginalization can be deepened if the already marginalized see access to what few resources they have – resources such as access to the commons or ownership over small parcels of land – taken or spoiled.1

At first glance, it seems as if the observations made by scholars of accumulation by dispossession can account for the observations made by world-systems scholars. As powerful countries and transnational corporations seek to resolve crises of overaccumulation, they incorporate new people and places into the global economy. If such people and places do not exist, powerful countries and transnational corporations seek to disincorporate and reincorporate them. Upon disincorporation, the value of the disincorporated’s assets fall and the powerful countries and transnational corporations seek to acquire them at discounted rates. They then reincorporate and sell the assets they acquired at costs above what they paid for them. But seeing accumulation by dispossession in this way overlooks a number of key insights made by world-systems scholars that hold significant implications for understanding why and how struggles against accumulation by dispossession and expanded reproduction can converge.

First, seeing accumulation by dispossession largely as a means to resolve a crisis of overaccumulation can cause scholars to overlook the broader global economic shifts happening during crises of overaccumulation and thus who is actually benefitting from acts of dispossession. As Giovanni Arrighi argues, crises of overaccumulation have been recurrent throughout the history of capitalism and often mark the descent of one hegemon and the rise of another (1994, 2005; see also Braudel 1984). Taking this into account, while some capitalists do indeed utilize processes of accumulation by dispossession to create or access new sites in which to invest stagnant capital, other capitalists utilize them to access necessary human and material inputs and/or to merely increase profits. Seeking to overcome relative scarcity, ascending powers

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1 These definitions of exploitation and marginalization are based on O’Hearn’s (2001) descriptions of exploitation and marginalization in the world-system. O’Hearn distinguishes between the two by drawing upon Wright’s (1985) distinctions between exploitation and economic oppression.
and aligned transnational firms may utilize processes of accumulation by dispossession to secure supplies of labor and/or raw materials.

Recognizing global power shifts allows scholars to consider a second insight made by world-systems scholars. Ascending global powers seeking to satisfy their labor and raw material needs face different spatial constraints than existing or falling global powers. In particular, rising global powers are often more easily able to incorporate raw material and labor supplies from places that are closer to the point of production and/or use. As a result, global economic and hegemonic shifts can result in a reorganization of global trade networks and processes of de- and reincorporation. As Stephen Bunker (1984: 1019) argues: “Different regional levels of development result from the interaction between changing world demand for specific commodities and the local reorganization of modes of production and extraction in response to new or changing market opportunities or pressures.”

The importance of recognizing the needs of rising global powers becomes even more evident when accounting for a third and related observation made by world-systems scholars. A location’s de- and reincorporation into the global economy according to the needs of ascending powers affects local people’s livelihood strategies. In other words, as places’ roles in the global economy change, so do the demands for labor. On occasion, the ability to earn a living may decline in one place or industry and rise in others. Those who can, subsequently migrate to places of perceived opportunity (Bunker 1984, 1985). However, as Anibal Quijano (1983: 79; see also 1970) observes, the global expansion of circuits of capital accumulation can result in “a growing incapacity to absorb and reabsorb cyclically an increasingly large part of the inactive labor force.” Indeed, as new global powers rise, they not only source different things from new locations, they use different methods to do so (O’Hearn 2001, 2005; Bunker and Ciccantell 2005). In a world in which the last remaining remnants of the population are still being pushed into the global labor force and mechanization continues to increase, the ranks of those marginalized in some places within global commodity circuits have grown.

These three insights made by world-systems scholars change our understanding of the convergence of contemporary struggles of the oppressed. People are not merely struggling against exploitation and dispossession, but against the changing forms and geographies of exploitation and dispossession. In the contemporary era, most people and places have in some way – be it nominally or effectively – been incorporated into the global economy. But as rising powers alter global trade routes to better satisfy their needs, people and places in the periphery become de- and reincorporated into the global economy. In the process, their established livelihood strategies are disrupted, often in ways that make it more difficult to meet their daily needs. As people subsequently migrate to places of only perceived opportunity – to spaces of marginalization – workers and peasants alike have often been forced to eke out a livelihood together. And in these spaces of marginalization, struggles against exploitation and dispossession can converge.

We can see these processes over the past three decades in Bolivia. Peasant and proletarian struggles slowly converged. As power in the global economy began to shift away from the United States and as ascending states sought to satisfy their material needs, Bolivia was de- and reincorporated into the world system in a way that affected both peasants and workers. Moving from being incorporated into the global economy for minerals to being incorporated for natural gas, growing segments of the Bolivian population became marginalized. Removed from their livelihood strategies, Bolivia’s peasants and workers migrated to places where they believed they could earn a living and satisfy their everyday needs. But still excluded from
Bolivia’s major economic sectors, they forged an organic link that brought them together in the streets.

**Incorporation in the Long Twentieth Century**

In the early 1900s, Bolivia’s role in the global economy shifted. While the country had long been a source of silver and rubber, it rapidly became incorporated into the global economy for another of its underground riches – tin. Global tin demand had been increasing since the 1850s as some of the most easily accessible supplies in the Cornwall mines of the United Kingdom were tapping out. By the end of the century, the price of tin ore had experienced a tenfold increase. With the completion of a railroad from Bolivia’s mining regions to the Pacific Ocean in 1892 and the development of new smelting technology that made processing tin contained in hard rock ores possible, the country’s tin supplies became highly attractive and competitive in the global marketplace (Contreras 1993). Such changes substantially increased the amount of tin extracted in Bolivia. In 1880, less than 1,000 tons of tin were extracted in the country. By 1910, this had increased to more than 20,000 tons. During this time, tin became Bolivia’s top export and the country’s share of global tin production increased from less than 2 percent to more than 20 percent (Ayub and Hashimoto 1985).

The change in Bolivia’s incorporation into the global economy came as a shift in global power was occurring. Great Britain’s power was slowly being yielded to the United States. This was evident in the global trade and consumption of tin. Great Britain was the largest global consumer of tin until the early twentieth century. However, a number of smelters were built in the United States during World War I, and by the 1920s the United States was importing over 50 percent of the global tin supply, a significant share of which came from Bolivia (Warshow 1927). The United States’ demand for tin dramatically decreased during the Great Depression. But its demand for Bolivia’s tin rebounded during World War II, particularly after the Japanese cut off Allied access to the tin supplies of Southeast Asia (Griess 1951).

In the early years of the post-war era, the extraction of tin in Bolivia again rapidly declined. The end of the war decreased global demand for tin. In addition, a glut of tin flooded the market as southeast Asian tin producers reentered global tin commodity circuits and the United States began to sell-off tin from its strategic wartime stockpile. In Bolivia, the decreasing market for tin occurred amidst local social unrest. Segments of the country’s upper and middle classes began to push for democratic rule and an end to the tin oligarchy’s control over the state. Tin miners formed more radical unions and began to forcefully struggle for better wages and improved working conditions. And *campesinos* started to demand greater access to land. Struggling to meet their livelihood needs and deprived of opportunity, the common angst of these groups seemed to align towards the end of the 1940s.

In 1952, revolutionary insurrection resulted in the eventual nationalization of the mines and a process of land reform. Through this nationalization, the miners secured a level of worker control within the newly formed state-owned mining company – the Corporación Minera de Bolivia (COMIBOL). Through agrarian reform, over 5 million hectares of land were redistributed in less than a decade. However, the gains made by both Bolivia’s miners and *campesinos* proved to be bittersweet. The miners inherited an industry in which technological investment had not been made in decades. With a decreasing global demand for tin and a cash-strapped state unable to upgrade the extraction technology in the mines, COMIBOL found it
difficult to turn a profit. At the same time, while many campesinos benefitted from the agrarian reform program, they often only received relatively small plots of land. The majority of Bolivia’s land thus remained in the hands of latifundia owners.

But in the decades following the revolution, the differences between the struggles of Bolivia’s workers and campesinos became apparent and whatever illusion of convergence that existed quickly disappeared. Whereas Bolivia’s miners were in fairly constant struggle with the state, the country’s campesinos seemed somewhat appeased. As global tin prices and extraction levels remained stagnant throughout the 1950s and 1960s, so did COMIBOL’s profits. The miners’ case for improved wages and working conditions thus rested on shaky ground. In contrast, the state was able to more easily satisfy the country’s campesinos. While land ownership remained highly concentrated, the small parcels of land granted to the campesinos allowed them maintain a subsistence lifestyle and sell their surpluses in local markets. This allowed the state to gain the support of campesinos and pit them against the miners.

While global tin prices and demand increased again in the 1970s, the commodity boom was quickly followed by a commodity bust. The tin market began to collapse in 1980 and global prices fell by close to 300 percent in less than five years (USGS 2011). Global tin flows also began to change, as companies from the United States and Europe began to outsource and manufacture increasing amounts of goods in cheaper places throughout the world and rivaling global powers began to challenge for global dominance. Since tin made up close to half of Bolivia’s total export value, the loss of demand for tin from the United States and Europe brought Bolivia’s incorporation into the global economy as a tin producer to a rapid end (CEPALSTAT 2011; ITRI 2011).

Dispossession and Disincorporation

By the mid-1980s, Bolivia was in the middle of an economic crisis. The collapse of the tin market severely hampered one of the state’s primary means of acquiring foreign exchange. At the same time, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank had also refused to lend money to the Bolivian state unless it prioritized the repayment of foreign debt (World Bank 1983; Sachs 1987). Unable to meet its financial needs, the newly elected leftist government undertook a form of quantitative easing by increasing its money supply. The measure failed to resolve the crisis, and the government was forced to hold early elections. In August 1985, a burgeoning segment of the elite that favored private enterprise took control of the state and embarked upon a path of systematic dispossession. But the major beneficiaries of such dispossession were not from the United States or Europe. Indeed, the profits from Bolivia’s natural resource wealth increasingly filled the pockets of internal elites.

With COMIBOL suffering from the fallen price of tin, Bolivia’s mineral reserves became ripe targets for dispossession. In the 1952 nationalization of Bolivia’s mines, the state granted COMIBOL the rights to country’s most lucrative tin mines and guaranteed the company exclusive rights to 80 percent of the country’s mineral reserves (Ayub and Hashimoto 1985; Morales and Espejo 1994: 21-22). However, a small private mining sector survived and became quite profitable selling zinc, antimony, tungsten, and lead (Fox 1985; Contreras and Pacheco 1989). The private mining sector’s more diversified mineral portfolio allowed it to better withstand the collapse of the tin market. And with the rise of a government favoring private
investment, the internal private mining elite pushed for the end of COMIBOL and its rights over the majority of Bolivia’s mineral reserves.

As part of a broader policy package known as the New Economic Policy (NEP), the Bolivian state put forward a plan to “rehabilitate” the mineral sector. The rehabilitation entailed ending COMIBOL’s near monopoly over the mining sector, granting private investors long-term leases to mineral reserves, eliminating the centralized mineral marketing bank, and giving investors the rights to commercialize the minerals they extracted on their own (GOB 1985a, 1985b; Seyler 1989: 134). The result was the tacit privatization of the sector. Given the rights to some of COMIBOL’s most lucrative reserves, private Bolivian mining firms more than doubled their investments. As they did, their share in the production value of the country’s minerals increased from 17 percent in 1980 to 57 percent by 1990 and the total value of their mineral exports increased from US$64.768 million a year to US$157.6 million a year (Ministerio de Minería y Metalurgia 2011). But the rehabilitation of the mining sector resulted in neither an increase in mining activities nor an increase in total mining revenue. While extraction levels rebounded from their lows in 1985, average annual extraction rates over the following decade remained below what they were in the 1970s (CEPALSTAT 2011). Indeed, the internal private mining elite merely made what were previously the state’s profits its own (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Percent Share of Bolivia’s Total Mineral Export Value by Subsector, 1980-1990**

![Figure 1: Percent Share of Bolivia’s Total Mineral Export Value by Subsector, 1980-1990](source: Ministerio de Minería y Metalurgia 2010)

While Bolivia’s internal mining elite prospered, its miners found themselves unemployed or pushed into precarious work situations. As part of the mining sector’s rehabilitation, the state cut COMIBOL’s workforce by close to 75 percent in less than two years. Between 1984 and 1986, the number of miners working for COMIBOL decreased from 29,803 to 7,500. While some of these miners regained employment in the sector with private firms or by forming worker cooperatives, most did not. The private mining sector tended to use more technologically advanced means of production and thus had a lower demand for workers. In addition, with private companies being granted the rights to some of Bolivia’s richest mineral reserves, those who formed cooperatives were frequently left working mines that were nearly tapped out and/or contained low-grade ore. And while COMIBOL lacked the funds for frequent technological upgrades, the cooperatives had even less access to capital and credit, leaving them with outdated
and inferior equipment (Fox 1985). As a result, miners who formed cooperatives made less money and received few – if any – of the benefits they once did working for COMIBOL.

The NEP also adversely affected Bolivia’s campesinos by opening segments of the country’s economy to private investment and liberalizing trade. In the agricultural sector, the state eliminated agricultural subsidies, ended restrictions on the quantity of agricultural imports, and lowered agricultural tariff rates (Morales 1990). Since Bolivia’s neighbors and other countries subsidized agricultural production, large quantities of agricultural imports flooded local markets, making it difficult for campesinos to sell their agricultural surpluses in local markets at competitive rates.

Thus, both miners and campesinos struggled to meet their livelihood needs in the wake of the international tin market collapse and the introduction of the NEP. Export levels in the mining sector remained stagnant and decreased to Bolivia’s previously dominant trading partners – the United States and to a lesser extent Japan. While exports of zinc increased in the late 1980s, such increases did not make up for the loss in demand for the country’s other minerals (see Figure 2). Economic growth in general mildly rebounded in the late 1980s, but such growth came only after Bolivia’s mineral wealth and riches had been significantly devalued.

Figure 2: Bolivia's Mineral Exports, 1970-1990

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Source: CEPALSTAT 2011

Dispossession and Reincorporation

In the early 1990s, another commodity from the Bolivian underground began to attract international interest: natural gas. First nationalizing its oil and natural gas in 1936, Bolivian control over its hydrocarbons had largely rested in the hands of the state-owned company, Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos (YPFB). Gulf Oil briefly became the dominant actor in the country’s hydrocarbon sector in the 1960s, but a second nationalization in 1969 gave YPFB control over the private company’s assets. Historically, oil and natural gas played a lesser role in the Bolivian economy than minerals. Natural gas briefly became the country’s number one export during the 1980s, but this was more due to the collapse of the mineral market than any increase in the volume and export of natural gas. However, an increasing demand for energy in Brazil – Bolivia’s eastern neighbor and a rising global power – drew the attention of
transnational oil and natural gas companies. With a nationally owned hydrocarbon company that found it increasingly difficult to expand its operations after its earnings were redirected towards central state coffers in the 1980s through the NEP, Bolivia’s oil and natural gas reserves were another ripe target for dispossession.

In 1993, the Bolivian state did to YPFB what it did to COMIBOL in the decade prior. Through a policy package known as the Plan de Todos (Plan for All), the Bolivian state granted private investors long-term leases to oil and natural gas reserves and gave them the rights to commercialize the hydrocarbons they extracted. However, the state also sought to largely remove YPFB from the sector. While COMIBOL continued to extract minerals even after private investors were allowed into the mining sector, the state auctioned off YPFB’s assets to private companies and thus removed it from all hydrocarbon extraction and transport activities. The new investors in Bolivia’s hydrocarbon sector also differed from those in Bolivia’s mineral sector. Whereas the internal private mining firms grew to dominate mineral extraction in the 1980s, there were few internal private hydrocarbon firms. As a result, transnational hydrocarbon firms became the dominant actors in Bolivia’s oil and natural gas extraction and transport activities (Kaup 2013).

In contrast to Bolivia’s internal mining firms, the transnational hydrocarbon companies were not merely interested in transferring the profits once accrued by YPFB to their own pockets. Instead, they were interested in strategically expanding the market for Bolivia’s natural gas. In particular, the Brazilian state-owned company Petrobras was interested in reincorporating Bolivia into the global economy to serve the demands of its home country. Brazil had already sought to import Bolivia’s natural gas into its energy matrix prior to the Plan de Todos in an agreement with YPFB. However, after the sector was privatized, Brazil negotiated to double the amount of natural gas it sought to import from Bolivia. After doing so, Petrobras became the largest investor in the sector. While transnational hydrocarbon firms as a whole invested over US$3.435 billion between 1997 and 2006, Petrobras alone invested over US$1.5 billion. These investments led to over a fivefold increase in the amount of natural gas exported from Bolivia, nearly all of which went to Brazil (Campodónico 2007).

Despite the increase in the production and export of natural gas from Bolivia, employment in the hydrocarbon sector in some ways resembled that of the mineral sector. The state asserted that opening the country’s hydrocarbon sector to private investment would both make it more efficient and eventually lead to greater job creation and salary increases. However, the opposite proved to be true. As a YPFB union representative noted when speaking of the Plan de Todos:

> We thought that there would be an injection of money that favored the Bolivian state, the business, and the workers. But lamentably the only ones that it favored were some people in the government and the transnationals. And those really affected were the workers. Many thousands ended up in the streets (personal interview).

Whereas YPFB had sought to continually invest and employ people in both exploration and extraction activities, the transnational hydrocarbon companies that entered after the sector was privatized largely only invested in extraction activities. Given the materiality of hydrocarbon extraction, once an oil and natural gas reserve is found and a well-head is put on, very little labor is needed to keep the oil and natural gas flowing. When the transnational extraction firms did
invest in exploration, they usually sub-contracted out the activities. As another YPFB employee explained:

Before, Yacimientos [YPFB] had 1800 people here. There were 200 people in perforation, 200 in production, etc. But what happened? The new businesses that entered, they didn’t do perforation and if they had to perforate they got somebody else to do the job (personal interview).

And the “somebody else” was the subcontractor who bid the lowest. When private energy firms first entered Bolivia and expanded the extraction activities in the sector, there was more work than workers and thus plenty of opportunity. But after the most easily accessible reserves in Bolivia were tapped, such opportunity decreased. The employment and wages of workers in the hydrocarbon sector became contingent upon fickle demand. Talking about one of his employees, a president in a sub-contracting service company summed up the state of the situation after the initial boom: “One of our technicians ran a chicken farm. He came and worked for us whenever we had a job because the money was really good, but chickens are a bit more stable” (personal interview). As with workers in the mineral sector, workers in the hydrocarbon sector found themselves in highly unstable employment situations.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Bolivia was thus reincorporated into the global economy as a rising global power, Brazil, tapped the country’s energy supplies. However, the terms of reincorporation – with a commodity requiring minimal labor for production – left the majority of Bolivians dispossessed and marginalized in global commodity circuits. In response, Bolivia’s dispossessed began to form the organic links that would bring them together in the streets.

Forging Organic Links in Spaces of Marginalization

As Bolivian workers and campesinos alike found their livelihood strategies undermined, they increasingly began to migrate to places of perceived opportunity. For many, these places were the outskirts of Bolivia’s largest cities of La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz de la Sierra. Between 1976 and 1992, all three nearly doubled in size (INE 2011). 2 But while these urban migrant destinations served as beacons to those affected by processes of dispossession, many were merely spaces of marginalization. Migrants found the cities bursting with displaced workers. With a surplus supply of labor and minimal labor regulations, employers with jobs offered low wages and little or no security or benefits (Arze and Kruse 2004). Many of the jobs were in the informal economy. After the introduction of the NEP, informal employment in urban areas rarely dropped below 50 percent of the economically active population, and estimates at the turn of the twenty-first century put close to 70 percent of the working population in the informal economy (Rossell 1999; Rojas and Guaygua 2002). The influx of migrants to urban destinations, combined with poor city planning and a lack of funds, forced many into precarious living conditions. Developers often failed to follow zoning regulations and constructed neighborhoods that had little or no access to basic services (Kohl and Farthing 2006; Arbona 2007).

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2 By way of comparison, the Bolivian population grew by 40 percent during this time.
The sprawling city of El Alto that adjoins La Paz served as a textbook example of a space of marginalization. Starting in the early 1980s, tens of thousands of miners and campesinos migrated to the city. The first wave of campesinos arrived as a two-year drought starting in 1982 forced subsistence farmers to seek out an alternative means to earn a living. These campesinos were joined in 1985 by miners who lost their jobs at COMIBOL and later by a new wave of campesinos who, as we saw above, had lost their means of earning additional income by selling surpluses in local markets after the introduction of the NEP. In El Alto, the migrants found poor working and living conditions. In addition to precarious work conditions, 65 percent of people in El Alto lived in places with no indoor plumbing, and 94 percent of roads were unpaved (Arbona 2007).

But as they attempted to resolve the problems they faced, the city’s miner and campesino migrants slowly turned El Alto into a common space of resistance. Residents in urban migrant hubs converged in neighborhood groups under the banner of the Federación de Juntas Vecinales (FEJUVE). In 1989, El Alto’s expanding population had organized 166 juntas vecinales. By 2005, this number had more than doubled (Kohl and Farthing 2006:160). The groups sought to have their basic livelihood needs met and struggled for services such as electricity, sewage, and water. They also sought secure land titles and other social services (Gill 2000: 160). And by focusing upon the common needs of people and shared forms of oppression, FEJUVE and similar groups in urban migrant places gradually began to form the organic links necessary to overcome the traditional peasant-proletariat divide in Bolivia.

Some rural areas in Bolivia also became places of perceived opportunity in the 1980s and 1990s. While the elimination of import tariffs with the introduction of the NEP threatened the livelihood strategies of many people in rural areas, one Bolivian agricultural commodity went largely unaffected by the changes: coca. A number of miners who lost their jobs at COMIBOL thus joined campesinos looking for land and opportunity in the coca-growing regions in the Chapare and Carrasco provinces of the Department of Cochabamba. Between 1976 and 1992, the populations of these provinces more than tripled (INE 2011).

As the Bolivia’s masses were continually dispossessed and pushed out of legitimate forms of work, coca cultivation – and the production of its lucrative derivative cocaine – proved to be an economically viable means of employment for some. In the words of one coca grower from the Chapare: “Coca gave us life. With coca, we were able to raise our children. With yuca we got nothing. It doesn't cost anything and you cannot harvest it as much. Coca can be harvested every three months and with it you get more money” (personal interview). But with coca serving as the raw compound in the production of cocaine, coca growers in Bolivia became targets in the U.S. War on Drugs. Receiving aid, money, and training from the United States, the military worked in tandem with the Drug Enforcement Agency to end Bolivia’s coca ‘problem.’ While an array of repressive techniques were used to coerce coca cultivators into ‘voluntary’ eradication projects, coca production and processing provided some Bolivians with a means to meet their livelihood needs and thus continued largely undeterred (Healy 1991; Léons and Sanabria 1997). While thousands of hectares of coca were eradicated each year, coca producers continued to expand the crop’s cultivation in the 1980s and 1990s (Léons and Sanabria 1997: 187). Indeed, as in El Alto, the miner and campesino migrants of the Chapare slowly turned a space of marginalization into a common space of resistance.

In the Chapare, the organic link between miners and campesinos was forged as both sought to combat coca eradication projects. This convergence was displayed in the demands, discourse, and mix of tactics deployed by the coca growers. Mirroring the campesino struggles of
the past, the coca growers called for greater autonomy from the state and an end to the external interventions of the United States. In addition, they frequently evoked the historical and cultural uses of coca to build support and mobilize people. In Bolivia, coca has been used for centuries as a stimulant, appetite suppressant, and ceremonial offering. Many Bolivians chew coca leaves daily or use it in tea. The traditional use of coca, combined with Bolivia’s history of occupation by outsiders, allowed coca growers to portray themselves as defenders of Bolivian culture struggling for national sovereignty. As one *cocalero* stated:

> The tropics of Cochabamba [the Chapare] is a coca producing zone. It has been a victim of imperialism under the pretext of fighting against drugs […] Coca production is one thing, cocaine production is another […] The production of the leaf in its natural state is not harmful to your health. It is medicinal, traditional (personal interview).

The *cocaleros* also used tactics traditionally employed by Bolivia’s miners’ unions. As another *cocalero* noted when talking about the actions taken after the passage of a law to increase coca eradication:

> The organizations, the communities, and the federations, we began to organize ourselves. We became more united in order to resist the forces of repression […] we would not accept a law that was unconstitutional […] In 1988, we rejected the law. Then we blockaded roads, started mobilizations, marched, and had hunger strikes in La Paz with the COB [the Bolivian workers union] […] Different movements united to defend the coca leaf in its natural state (personal interview).

In their struggles and protests, coca growers both took to the streets and constructed a coalition with other organizations and unions to bolster their cause.

For much of the 1980s and 1990s, groups such as FEJUVE and the coca growers largely directed their attention towards local issues resulting from accumulation by dispossession. In other words, they struggled to stave off the adverse effects resulting from dispossession not necessarily to stop or reverse these processes. As increasing numbers of people migrated to urban areas, organizations such as FEJUVE sought more just living and working conditions. As more people became dependent upon the coca sector to meet their basic livelihood needs, the coca growers organized against eradication. But as the needs of workers and *campesinos* merged and they began to struggle together in these spaces of marginalization, they began to more directly question who was benefitting from Bolivia’s incorporation into the global economy. This became evident in Bolivia’s social movement struggles to regain control over the country’s hydrocarbon riches and eventually the state itself.

**From Struggles Against Dispossession to Struggles For Incorporation**

At the turn of the twenty-first century, Bolivia’s marginalized masses began to change the focus of their struggles. For close to two decades, they had resisted policies such as the NEP and Plan de Todos and sought to insulate themselves from the effects. Such conflicts repeatedly played out in the everyday lives of many Bolivians and occasionally manifested into larger scale
protests such as the Guerra del Agua in 1999 (Olivera and Lewis 2004). But in 2002, the marginalized masses directed their struggles to the benefits being gleaned from Bolivia’s incorporation into the global economy as a natural gas supplier. Indeed, once Bolivia’s workers and campesinos had come together, their struggles focused on the broader systemic causes that led to their marginalization.

The shift in the allied movements’ focus became evident as a consortium of transnational energy firms made up of Repsol-YPF, British Gas (BG), and Pan-American Energy forwarded a plan to export the country’s natural gas to the United States and Mexico (El Deber 2001). According to the transnational energy firms, new investments in the sector for the project would be greater than US$2 billion (La Prensa 2002). The investments would allow Bolivia’s natural gas to not only be sold to the United States and Mexico, but also to emerging markets in western Bolivia and northern Chile. According to several industry experts, the project would have increased the demand for Bolivia’s natural gas and thus prices at which it would be sold (La Razón 2002).

The project would have undeniably boosted the volume of Bolivia’s natural exports and generated short-term revenue increases. However, the majority of natural gas exported by the consortium would have been sold for significantly less than the natural gas exported to Brazil at the time. As a representative of YPFB explained:

> The selling price for Bolivia was going to be only US$0.70 per million BTU. And we’re getting US$5 with our neighbors. So why should we sell all the way to the United States for peanuts? There’s a funny thing about the oil industry, especially with natural gas. Do you know how they calculate the selling price? They discount all the transport costs and infrastructure built [...] So you’ve got to put a cryogenic plant at the seacoast of Peru or Chile. So you discount that cost. And then you discount the re-gasification plant in Mexico. Any you discount all the transport costs. And you discount all the investments. Then they tell you that you have to sell it for US$0.70 [...] They take the selling price and then go back. They call it netback [...] It is 8,000 kilometers from Bolivia to the seacoast of the United States. If it was much further they would have told us that we had to pay them so we can export our gas (personal interview).

The sale of Bolivia’s natural gas to the United States and Mexico would not have left the country completely empty-handed. The Bolivian state would have earned around US$67 million a year in rents off of exports of 25mm3 per day (El Deber 2002). However, for every US$1 earned by the Bolivian state, the consortium of transnational energy firms spearheading the project would have earned US$24, or approximately US$1.608 billion a year (Opinión 2003).

In July 2002, a group of 21 organizations – including representatives of leftist political parties, the military, neighborhood organizations, workers unions, coca growers, and other campesino groups – began to call for the nationalization of Bolivia’s hydrocarbons. Known as the Coordinadora Nacional de Recuperación y Defensa del Gas, the group started to mobilize

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3 The Water War.

4 Natural gas can be used as a reduction agent in mining processes. At the time, the San Cristóbal mine in western Bolivia was drawing international interest, and investors were seeking to secure a share of Bolivia’s natural gas to further develop the mine.
Bolivia’s marginalized masses to take to the streets and demand a share of the profits from the sale of the country’s natural gas. In September 2003, the mobilizations escalated into what became known as the Guerra del Gas. Close to half a million people took the streets in the city of La Paz. After months of social unrest that resulted in over 70 deaths and 400 wounded, the social movements forced the resignation of then President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada. His vice president assumed the presidency and addressed the Coordinadora’s demands by forwarding a referendum vote on the future of Bolivia’s hydrocarbon sector (Kohl and Farthing 2006, 2012; Spronk and Webber 2007). Bolivians overwhelmingly voted to nationalize the country’s hydrocarbons, reestablish YPFB, and increase the rents paid on oil and natural gas extraction activities.

Over the following years, the organic link between Bolivia’s workers and campesinos became solidified in the formal political arena with the rise of the political party known as the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS). While MAS began primarily as a party representing Bolivia’s coca growers in the 1990s, its acceptance and promotion of an array of the demands of the marginalized eventually made it the dominant party through which the country’s social movements entered the formal political arena (Harten 2011). By 2002, MAS representatives from throughout the country were elected to the national government, with the party taking 8 of 27 seats in the Senate and 27 of 130 seats in the Chamber of Deputies (CNE 2011). Of the 14 MAS deputies that were directly elected, four came from coca growing regions, six from mining areas, two from El Alto, and two from rural areas of La Paz.

In 2005, early elections were called after the Bolivian masses again took to the streets and forced the resignation of the interim president after he proved unable to satisfy the demands forwarded during the Guerra del Gas. In the elections, MAS made considerable gains throughout the country. It captured 12 seats in the Senate, 72 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, and Evo Morales won the presidential vote with an unprecedented simple majority, taking 53.74 percent of the vote. Following through on the marginalized masses’ demands to nationalize Bolivia’s hydrocarbon sector while also instituting an array of redistributive social programs, MAS and other electoral parties representing Bolivia’s historically marginalized masses continued to gain power. In the elections for the assembly to rewrite Bolivia’s constitution, MAS and its allied parties took 156 of 255 seats. The constitution guaranteed the state the rights to all of Bolivia’s natural resource riches, and in 2009 it was approved by 61.4 percent of voters. In the general elections that followed later that year, Morales took 64 percent of the vote and MAS took a majority of seats in the both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate (CNE 2011).

Taking control of the state, MAS oversaw a dramatic increase in the rents Bolivia obtained from its natural resources. After the nationalization of Bolivia’s oil and natural gas, the government’s take of rents more than tripled, increasing from US$608 million in 2005 to US$1.85 billion in 2010 (see Figure 3). The state used these rents to fund a number of social programs, increase the amount of money going to departmental and municipal governments, augment investment in the hydrocarbon exploration and extraction, and bolster its foreign reserves. Around 29.7 percent of the Bolivian population has directly benefitted from the social programs being funded by the country’s hydrocarbon rents and the increasing amounts of money going towards local governments have allowed the municipalities in both El Alto and the

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5 The Chamber of Deputies is similar to the Congress in the United States.

6 Since Bolivia’s return to democracy in the 1980s, no presidential candidate had received more than 35 percent of the vote and thus was forced to rule by striking power sharing agreements with other political parties.
Chapare to spend more on education, health, and public infrastructure (Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas Públicas 2011b). In addition, the government’s investment in the hydrocarbon sector has resulted in a revitalization of YPFB and an increase in the number of workers employed by the state company and in the sector more generally. The MAS government has also satisfied some of the demands of the coca growers by expelling the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency from the country, supporting the traditional uses of coca, and funding programs to develop alternative markets for coca.

**Figure 3: Earnings from Hydrocarbon Taxes and Royalites in Bolivia, 1995-2010**

![Graph showing earnings from hydrocarbon taxes and royalties in Bolivia, 1995-2010](source: Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas Públicas 2011a)

**Conclusion**

The uprisings in Bolivia at the turn to the twenty-first century provide a case through which to see the mechanisms and conditions behind the convergence of peasant and proletarian struggles. The struggles of Bolivia’s peasants and workers did not merely come together in the face of a common oppressor. Instead, they came together as the changing forms and geographies of exploitation and dispossession throughout the globe brought them into common spaces – spaces of marginalization. Indeed, Bolivia’s de- and reincorporation into the global economy dramatically affected the sociospatial organization within the country. As Bolivia moved from being predominantly a tin-producing country to being predominantly a natural gas-producing country, increasing numbers of people were excluded from global commodity circuits. This led to large-scale internal migration, as people flocked to places where they believed they could make a living. But in these places, Bolivia’s marginalized masses did not simply disappear. Instead, the country’s historically divided peasant and worker popular class factions converged. And as they did, they challenged the means through which Bolivia was incorporated into the global economy.

Scholars have often conceptualized the struggles by peasants and proletarians differently. Whereas peasants have often been seen to be struggling against dispossession, workers have often been seen to be struggling against exploitation. But at certain points in time, an organic link can form and the struggles of these two class factions can converge. In particular, as the means through which places are incorporated into the global economy shift, different class factions can
simultaneously find their livelihood strategies disrupted and their once seemingly fractured interests can meld. The alignment of such class factions can present a formidable foe to powerful entities seeking to satisfy their labor and raw material demands without care for local places and peoples. Indeed, as shown in Bolivia, changing how a place is incorporated into the global economy without incorporating its people can result in a convergence of class struggle in a way that threatens the power and profits of the already powerful.

A convergence of peasant and proletarian struggles can produce a formidable force, but the long-term stability of such an alliance is delicate at best. In Bolivia, the interests of peasants and proletarians converged in places where the difference between peasants and workers eroded. In the Chapare, marginalized *campesinos* and miners became coca growers. In El Alto, marginalized *campesinos* and miners became workers in the informal urban economy. The convergence of peasant and proletarian interests in these places created moments in which peasant and proletarian groups across the country aligned and solidified in the formal political arena under MAS, but the differences between the interests and demands of such class factions did not completely disappear.

Recent uprisings in Bolivia by both worker and peasant popular class factions illustrate just this. In the country’s mining regions, workers in some of the largest mines have taken to the streets in struggles against exploitation to demand higher wages. In some places where pockets of more subsistence-based lifestyles still exist, peasant groups have protested against the construction of roads and other infrastructure that would alter the means through which they are incorporated into the country’s and the region’s economy. The Morales administration seems to see such protests as part of a vibrant democracy. Others see it as the weakening of the class coalition formed under MAS. Taking this into account, scholars studying the convergence of peasant and proletarian popular class factions should not only seek to understand how the organic link between these different groups is forged, but also how it can be maintained.
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The Impacts of Terrorism and Capitalist Incorporation on Indigenous Americans

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Abstract  
This article demonstrates the connections between terrorism, colonial state formation, and the development of the capitalist world system, or globalization, exploring the consequences of colonial terrorism on indigenous American peoples. First, the piece introduces the central argument and conceptualizes and theorizes terrorism. Second, it examines the structural aspects of colonial terrorism by connecting it to specific colonial policies and practices. Third, it explains the ideological justifications that Euro-American colonial settlers and their descendants used in committing crimes against humanity and dispossessing the homelands of indigenous Americans, as well as in amassing wealth/capital by ignoring moral, ethical, and philosophical issues and human rights.

Keywords: colonialism, global capitalism, racism, state terrorism, genocide, indigenous Americans, indigenous movement

Promoting and defending self- and racial-centered interests and accepting culturally and ideologically blind thinking have prevented the Euro-American colonialists, their descendants, and even scholars from critically understanding the meaning and consequences of the violence inherent in Western state formation and in the expansion of the capitalist world-economy – what I refer to as colonial terrorism. By acquiring new territories and obtaining precious resources through colonialism, terrorism, and genocide, the Euro-Americans and their scholars have developed ruling ideas and hegemonic knowledge in explaining, rationalizing, and justifying all forms of colonial projects. In these processes, they objectified indigenous Americans in order to deny them the right to exist in their own homelands and continents by claiming that these peoples lacked histories, humanity, and cultural achievements (Wolf 1982). By degrading and erasing the cultures, histories, and humanity of the indigenous Americans, the settlers and their descendants convinced themselves that they could terrorize, annihilate, and dispossess the resources of these peoples without moral/ethical and political responsibilities. Specifically, because of its rejection of multi-cultural knowledges and wisdoms and its tradition of “abyssal thinking” (Santos 2007), Euro-American hegemonic knowledge could not recognize the humanity of indigenous peoples. Euro-American hegemonic scholarship and the ruling ideas have ignored that the colonized world has been “a data mine for social theory” and the source of objective knowledge production (Connell 2007).

Despite the fact that colonial states and their agencies organized various forms of
violence, hegemonic scholarship has glossed over the terrorist aspect of the violence and its importance in the broadening and deepening of the capitalist world system. Raewyn Connell (2007) and Bonaventura de Sousa Santos (2007) explain how the hegemonic knowledge of the West limits our understanding of the whole world by ignoring the geo-cultures of indigenous and other subaltern thinkers and framers. In order to critically and thoroughly understand the relationship between global capitalism, colonialism, terrorism, and genocide, we need to stretch our intellectual horizons beyond the limitations of mainstream scholarship and the ruling ideas of the dominant system. This is what I try to do by focusing on the impacts of colonial terrorism and capitalist incorporation on the indigenous Americas.

Since colonial terrorism is one form of terrorism, broadly defining this phenomenon is essential. So, I define terrorism as a systematic governmental or organizational policy or strategy through which lethal violence is practiced openly or covertly to threaten and impose fear on a given population group, beyond its direct victims, to undermine or repress resistance to domination and oppression by a dominant group. Among their many weapons, the Euro-American powers systematically imposed colonial terrorism on the indigenous Americans in order to exploit their economic and labor resources and to ultimately destroy them and take over their homelands.

Without violence, it is impossible to separate people from their homelands, their means of production, or to otherwise deny their human rights. The development of capitalism and the concomitant advancement in technology and organizational structures strengthened the interconnections among world-systemic processes, colonization, incorporation, and the use of terrorist violence to intensify these complex processes.

Generally speaking, there is a lack of consensus on a precise definition of terrorism among the experts of terrorism studies, other scholars, and politicians. Some scholars define terrorism as premeditated or intentional violence by non-state actors that impose fear on a target population in order to achieve certain political objectives (Enders and Sander 2006: 3-4). Of course, such a definition does not deal with all forms of terrorism since it only focuses on non-state terrorism. A great number of experts define terrorism without identifying its agent (Cooper 2001). Richard Jackson (2009: 174) argues that terrorism is “the intrusion of fear into everyday public and private life, the denial of the right to live free from fear and the erosion of the capacity, for clearly thinking and unimpeded decision making.” Although several representative definitions of terrorism converge on the notion that terrorism is “the deliberate use of violence in order to influence some audience (or audiences)” [author’s emphasis], these definitions diverge on several issues, such as which agents engage in terrorism and who can be its target (Goodwin 2006). Many scholars and other experts of terrorism studies do not adequately explore the role of state terrorism in the creation and maintenance of the capitalist world system, and they focus on non-state terrorism. But in reality both state agencies and non-state actors engage in terrorism, although the impacts of the former are greater than those of the latter (Sloan 1984: 84).

Some critical scholars, not limited by their social locations and geo-cultures, have characterized capitalist expansion as a form of violence, or even terrorism. For instance, Tony Barta points out that “Arendt brought us closer to historical understanding of the murderous progress of modernity, by relating... genocide in the colonies to developments far away” (2007: 100). For Escobar, capitalist development, perpetual violence, and globalization are inseparable (2004a, 200b). Farmer notes that various forms of violence and dispossession that started in the late fifteenth century still continue in the Americas (2004, 2005). McMichael focuses on the roles of racist and modernist ideology and massive violence that the West has used in dehumanizing and impoverishing indigenous peoples for more than five centuries (2006). Scholars such as Blakeley (2009) and Curtis (1995, 1998) explore how the global North, particularly the United States and the United Kingdom, have been contributing to
gross human rights violations and state terrorism in the global South. Blakeley (2009: 4) provides “a detailed history of Northern state terrorism, within the context of the foreign policy objectives of those states and the strategies they use to achieve them, dating back to the European colonial era, through to the practices of the US and its allies in the ‘War on Terror.’” Jalata explains the relationships among global imperialism, dependent colonialism, and colonial terrorism in Oromia (the Oromo country), Ethiopia, and the Horn of Africa (2000, 2006).

Elkins (2005) discusses the role of British colonial government in using political terror to destroy a Kenyan liberation movement. Western powerful states still engage both directly and indirectly in various forms of terrorism to dominate economic resources and markets in the Global South. Since the 1970s, with the intensification of the crisis of capital accumulation and the decline of the US hegemony in the modern world system, the West under the leadership of the United States started to promote a policy known as neoliberalism to revitalize global capital accumulation (Harvey 2005). As David Harvey (2005: 7) demonstrates, through the policy of neoliberalism the neoliberal state has intensified the process of capital accumulation by dispossessing ordinary individuals and groups of their economic resources and rights through all forms of violence: the “fundamental mission [of the neoliberal state] was to facilitate conditions for profitable capital accumulation on the part of both domestic and foreign capital.” Further, Berch Berberoglu (2003: 108) writes that “the process of integration of neocolonial states into the global economy, seeking the protection of the imperial state, has been to a large degree a reaction to a perceived threat to the survival of capitalism in the Third World—one that is becoming a grave concern for both imperialism and the local repressive capitalist states.” Terrorism has thus been an integral part of the capitalist world-system from 1492 till today. Although the competing European colonial forces initially used contacts, cooperation, exploration, trade, and diplomatic mechanisms such as negotiations, treaties, and land cessions, as well as different forms of violence, their main political tool for dispossessing, destroying, and/or suppressing indigenous communities and establishing settler colonialism and its institutions in the Americas was colonial terrorism.

Obviously, at this historical period there was no legal conception of crimes against humanity, and the ways such crimes have been conceptualized and defined remains problematic, since states that have been implicated in all form of violence have been the authors and interpreters of international law. The contradictions between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic international laws must be rethought and reformulated to promote human-centric sustainable development and human rights laws and eliminate the gap between the theories of human rights and its practices (Rajagopal 2003: 2006). In 1948 the adoption of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide defined genocides as “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.” When “state terrorism can be seen as a method of rule whereby some groups of people are victimized with great brutality, and more or less arbitrarily by the state or state supported actors, so that others who have reason to identify with those murdered, will despair, obey or comply” (Schmid, 1991: 31), genocide can be considered as the elimination in part or in whole of a certain group of people in order to expropriate their resources or stop their resistance to the state or the agents of the state (Lemkin 1944; Kuper 1981; Jonassohn 1998: 9).

According to Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn (1990: 23), “GENOCIDE is a form of one-sided mass killing in which a state or other authority intends to destroy a group, as that [group] and membership in it are defined by the perpetrator.” Genocide, terrorism and war are thus interconnected. Since war and terrorism can be seen as a continuous process, it is often impossible to draw a clear boundary between political repression, state terrorism, war,
and genocide. With the formation of nation-states and the modern world-system, colonial terrorism and genocide expanded all over the world since the sixteenth century (Frank 1978: 51-52). A few scholars, such as Raphael Lemkin (1944), Leo Kuper (1981), David E. Stannard (1992), Russell Thornton (1987), Irving Louis Horowitz (2002), Samuel Totten Steven and Leonard Jacobs (2002), and others have documented the crimes of states in forms of genocide and other gross human rights violations. Similarly, social movement scholars, such as Sonia E. Alvarez and Arturo Escobar (1992), Deborah J. Yashar (2005), Donna Lee Van Cott (2007), Alison Brysk (2000), Franke Wilmer (1993), Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink (1999), A. Kim Clark and Marc Becker (2007), Suzana Sawyer (2004), and others have written about colonial atrocities against indigenous peoples. However, these scholars do not link terrorism, colonial state development, capitalism, and genocide. As capitalism emerged and developed in Western Europe, the need for raw materials, such as gold and silver, food, markets, and free or cheap labor expanded due to the desire to minimize the cost of production and to increase the rate of profit and accumulation of capital/wealth.

These needs were fulfilled through colonialism, racial slavery, terrorism, and genocide (Jalata 2001; 2011). “The treasures captured outside of Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement, and murder,” Karl Marx (1967: 753-754) writes, “floated back to the mother-country and were there turned to capital.” Capitalism saw its “first long, sustained, and widespread quantitative and qualitative development… in its mercantile stage and the first period of concentrated capital accumulation in Europe” (Frank 1978: 52). Western powers and states in the global South still engage in terrorism and genocide to implement their draconian economic and political policies. Furthermore, the West uses “the economic weapons of the international financial institutions” and other means, such as the “the war on terrorism,” to continue its war on social justice (Eisenstein 2001: 136). Western powers, multinational corporations, the World Bank, the IMF, and state elites in the Global South have collaborated and engaged in massive human rights violations and terrorism (Blakeley 2009) even as Western-based human rights organizations have systematically exposed such crimes. Overall, colonial terrorism, capitalist incorporation, and the maintenance of the capitalist world-system have been inseparable global processes since the late fifteenth century. As demonstrated below, the social history of the indigenous Americans demonstrates these processes.

**Colonial Terrorism and Capitalist Incorporation**

A few world-systems analysts and other critical scholars have explored some aspects of colonial violence during different phases of the incorporation of indigenous peoples into the European-dominated capitalist world-system. However, they do not adequately explain that the extermination of the indigenous Americans and the implementation of the capitalist system in the Americans involved colonial terrorism and genocide. As Blakeley notes,

Violence against the indigenous populations [. . .] involved the initial terrorising of the indigenous populations into supplying conquerors with food supplies, threatening them with death if they did not acquiescence, and the wiping out of whole [cultural groups] that were deemed of no use to the economic projects of the European settlers. Those that did survive were terrorized into forced labour, often as slaves, as part of the imperial efforts of [the European crowns]. (2009: 55)
Scholars such as R. Brian Ferguson and Neil L. Whitehead (1992), Eric Wolf (1982), and others who tried to explain the impacts of colonial violence on indigenous peoples did not go far enough to explain the essence and consequences of colonial terrorism. The colonial powers could not defeat indigenous Americans without imposing fear through various forms of violence, including terrorism.

When indigenous groups were coerced through various forms of terror to provide their economic resources, such as food items, land, and labor to the European colonizers, neighboring populations would “witness the violence and would then be sufficiently terrorised into providing the resources demanded by the colonisers, or face the same violence outcomes” (Blakeley 2009: 56). The incorporation of indigenous Americans into the European-dominated capitalist world-system resulted in repeated warfare among indigenous Americans and between Europeans and indigenous peoples, causing social and institutional disruption and devastation (Dunaway 1994; 1996a). It also resulted in the development of the racialized capitalist world-system and colonial state formation through “violent expansion [that] included a land takeover literally on a continental scale, massive labor exploitation systems including genocide or slavery, natural resource extraction that fueled industrialization, and development of large states” (Hall and Fenelon 2004: 155). For instance, from 1503 to 1660, the Spanish colonialists amassed 185,000 kilograms of gold and 7 million pounds of silver (Elliot 1996: 180); from 1760 to 1809, they expropriated from the Zacatecas and Guanajuato of Mexico mines gold and silver valued for more than $5 billion (Green Left 1992). As Eduardo Galeano observed, “gold and silver were the keys used by the Renaissance to open doors of paradise in heaven and of capitalist mercantilism on earth” (1997: 14).

Furthermore, colonialists forced the surviving indigenous peoples and enslaved Africans to mine bullion and produce crops, such as sugar, cotton, rubber, and food in large quantities. They defeated native peoples by terror because they had “armor and coats of mail, lustrous caparisons that deflected arrows and stones; their weapons emitted deadly rays and darkened the air with suffocating smoke” (Galeano 1997: 17). Juan-Carlos Córdoba (2007) demonstrates the relationships among colonialism, transoceanic trade, technological and institutional developments, the Industrial Revolution in Atlantic Europe, and the consolidation of the capitalist world-system between 1500 and 1850. Regarding the so-called discovery of the Americas, Galeano asserts that

> everything, from the discovery until our times, has always been transmuted into European—or later United States—capital, and as such has accumulated in distant centers of power. Everything: the soil, its fruits and its mineral-rich depths, the people and their capacity to work and to consume, natural resources and human resources. (1997: 2)

European and American states and their agents used colonial terrorism in dispossessing people of their lands, committing genocide, and in reorganizing peoples on a racial criterion, and “these processes coincided with the spread of European diseases, which tore apart the social fabric, especially the system of marriage alliances” (Hall 1993: 243).

The spread of European diseases was extended for many centuries, as ‘contact’ actually refers to a “temporally extended process, rather than a single instant or event that ruptured the otherwise pristine Garden of Eden into which the Europeans at first believed they had stumbled” (Whitehead 1993: 288). Sometimes, European and African diseases affected indigenous Americans who had not encountered any person from the European and African continents; since the spread of epidemics was not uniform, the transmission rates were “affected by diet, physical settings, social practices and active native responses to
epidemics” (Whitehead 1993: 289). Some colonial forces used smallpox as warfare to eradicate some indigenous Americans (Fenn 2000). In addition to colonial terrorism, “the introduction of new pathogens was probably the single most dramatic source of change in Indian Society, within a century reducing native population to about one-tenth of its former extent” (Hall 1989a: 71). The destruction of indigenous ecosystems, “germ colonization,” warfare, slavery, famine, and alcoholism dramatically depopulated indigenous peoples (Dunaway 1996a, 1996b).

**Colonial Terrorism and the Emergence of Spanish America**

Initially the Spaniards moved from place to place, destroying the indigenous Americans through several terror tactics, including torture. As Blakeley states, torture was a tool of terrorism, “carried out by representatives of the state against civilians to instill fear for political purposes” (2009: 228). The complex processes of incorporation started on April 17, 1492 when Queen Isabel and King Ferdinand of Spain granted Christopher Columbus the privileges of exploring, colonizing, and plundering by financing his expeditions. The monarchs appointed Columbus as the Admiral of the Ocean Sea, promising him 10 percent of the profits from gold and spices he would bring back and appointment as governor over new areas he would colonize (Zinn 2003: 2). On October 12, 1492, Columbus’s expedition’s three ships accidentally arrived in the so-called Indies, as Columbus claimed to have “discovered” Asia. When they first arrived, “the Spaniards were favorably received and entertained by the Arawak people, who traded food and water and a few gold ornaments for such trifles as newly minted copper coins, brass bells and even bits of broken glass and pottery” (Cohen 1969: 17-18). Columbus called the Indies “the earthly Paradise” (Cohen 1969: 19), and wrote a letter explaining the behaviors and conditions of the Arawak people as he understood them: “They have no iron or steel or arms… All the weapons they have are canes cut at seeding time, at the end of which they fix a sharpened stick, but they have not the courage to make use of these” (Cohen 1969: 17-18).

Assuming that the Arawak people and others could not defend their homelands from the invading Spaniards, Columbus wrote a letter to the monarchs of Spain stating that “I found very many islands with large populations and took possession of them all for their Highnesses; this I did by proclamation and unfurled the royal standard. No opposition was offered” (Cohen 1969: 115). The Spaniards characterized one of the indigenous groups called the Caribs cannibals and singled them out for annihilation (Josephy 1991). The Caribs suffered at the hands of the Spaniards and other Europeans:

Spanish, French, and English invaders, colonizers, pirates, and imperial exploiters all but exterminated them, slaughtering Caribs wholesale with fire, steel, European torture, and wiping out their settlements with the pox, measles, diphtheria, and other white men’s diseases to which the Indians had no resistance. (Josephy 1991: 3)

The Spaniards imposed terror on the peoples they encountered to frighten the surrounding peoples and reduce their will to resist colonization (Blakeley 2009: 56-57). To prove the profitability of his expeditions to his sponsors, Columbus frequently sent to Spain cargoes of gold, other valuables, and slaves that he obtained through terrorizing the indigenous Americans. Initially his main goal was to obtain gold. He captured some indigenous peoples as soon as he arrived in the Indies to collect information from them on its sources (Zinn 2003). This first expedition set the stage for “the racism and savagery of the world conquest” (Chomsky 1993: 5).
The arrival of Columbus and his sailors in the Indies thus brought disaster and violence, including colonial terrorism, to the peaceful and generous Arawak people and others. At the beginning, without knowing with what kind of people they were dealing, native peoples peacefully traded with and even brought food and gifts to Columbus and his sailors “because of their culture of hospitality and their belief in sharing” (Zinn 2003: 1). The Spaniards, however, considered the kindness and hospitality as backwardness and weakness and took advantage of the people by intimidation, force, and terrorism. Columbus thus established the first colony early in 1494 on the island of Hispaniola (now Haiti and the Dominican Republic), and collected a sizable amount of gold to ship back to Spain. With his associates, he continued to use terrorism to obtain more food, gold, women, slaves, and lands. In 1495, the Spaniards went from island to island taking indigenous Americans, known as the Taíno people, as captives and taking women and children as slaves for sex and labor: “Some of the captives were forced to wear copper tokens on their necks . . . those who were ‘found without a copper token had their hands cut off and bled to death’” (Zinn 2003: 4). The Spaniards forced the indigenous peoples to work on mining of gold and silver and agriculture to grow crops, cotton, and sugar cane; in almost two decades their population shrank “from a quarter of a million to fourteen thousand; in a few more years they had become extinct” (Debo 1995: 19-20).

There were also other estimates for the Taíno population during this period; one estimate puts the size of the population between a few hundred thousand and 8 million during pre-Columbus period (The Healing Center 2007: 10-12). The Spanish priest Bartolomé de Las Casas (1971) estimated the deaths of Taíno by war, slavery, diseases, and the mines at 3 million. Forced labor and all forms of violence gradually caused the destruction of the indigenous peoples. As we shall see below, the Spaniards and other European groups continued the projects of terrorism, slavery, and genocide. As de Las Casas testified: “They forced their way into native settlements, slaughtering everyone they found there […] Some they chose to keep alive and simply cut their wrists, leaving their hands dangling, saying to them: ‘Take this letter’—meaning that their sorry condition would act as a warning to those hiding in the hills” (1992: 15). All these crimes against humanity were intended to terrorize and defeat the surrounding populations. Although “it is beyond human capacity to compile an accurate log of the murder, cruelty, false imprisonment and other crimes committed” (de Las Casas 1992: 37), let me further explain the essence and consequences of colonial terrorism in the Indies and other places. The Spaniards used the strategy of terrorism “in all lands they invaded: to stage a bloody massacre of the most public possible kind in order to terrorize those meek and gentle people” (de Las Casas 1992: 45).

As de Las Casas testified, “the indigenous peoples never did the Europeans any harm whatever” (1992: 13). But the settlers and their descendants terrorized indigenous peoples and raped their girls and women for not only sexual gratification, but in order to perpetuate violence. “The serial rape of captive Indian women became ritualized public spectacles at [...] trade fairs,” Ned Blackhawk (2006: 77) writes, “bringing the diverse male participants [...] together for the violent dehumanization of Indian women.” Terror and genocide studies ignore the full extent of the humiliation of the ethnic group through the rape of its women, the symbols of honor and vessels of culture. When a woman’s honor is tarnished through illicit intercourse […] the ethnic group is also dishonored. The after effects of rape—forced impregnation, psychological trauma, degradation, and demoralization—go beyond rape victims themselves. (Sharlack 2002: 107)
When the Spaniards needed more and more lands and labor of the indigenous peoples to build their expanding colonial settlements, the latter began to realize the essence of their agendas (de Las Casas 1971: 121). As the indigenous peoples refused to supply food and labor for the Spaniards, the latter intensified the use of violence and intimidation. Practically “every Spaniard went out among the Indians robbing and seizing their women wherever he pleased, and doing them such injuries that the Indians decided to take vengeance on any Spaniards they found isolated or unarmed,” even killing some of them (Cohen 1969: 187).

The Spaniards used varied tactics of terrorism and warfare for annihilating indigenous peoples. They recruited and mobilized warriors of one indigenous group against the other to divide and conquer through mutual self-destruction:

this fighting generated many captives who could be traded to Spaniards who would ask no questions and pay in horses and guns [...] As both raiding and trade increased, more and more horses and guns came into Indian hands, making formidable foes of formerly annoying attackers and intensifying inter-group fighting. Horses and guns became vital necessities for any group that wished to remain safe and free. (Hall 1989a: 68)

Consequently, some indigenous warriors enslaved and merchandized their war captives, collaborating with competing European colonial powers. The Spaniards intensified their tactics of terror; at least once, they

built a long gibbet, low enough for the toes to touch the ground and prevent strangling, and hanged thirteen [indigenous Americans] [...] When the Indians were thus still alive and hanging, the Spaniards tested their strength and their blades against them, ripping chests open with one blow and exposing entrails [...] Then, straw was wrapped around their torn bodies and they were burned alive. (de Las Casas 1971: 121)

The Spaniards first focused on establishing their colonial settlements in the Greater Antilles (the four largest islands in the Caribbean Sea and included Cuba, Hispaniola, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico) that led to the decimation of the indigenous people by warfare, diseases, and slavery or forced labor (Wilson 1997: 7). After 1620, the Lesser Antilles—included the smaller islands of the Caribbean, the Virgin Islands, the Windward Islands and Leeward Islands—became a contested area for colonization by the French, Dutch, and English and other European groups. Ricardo Alegria asserts that the Spaniards’

eagerness to impose their religion and to obtain the greatest possible profits, were far from scrupulous in their treatment of the natives. Indeed, their cruelty hastened the disintegration of the native culture and its eventual annihilation. By 1510 the Indian population of the islands was almost totally extinct, and colonizers had to import natives from South America to work in the Antillean gold mines. (1997: 12)

Within twenty years, the conquistadors colonized the islands of Hispaniola, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and Cuba, captured Mexico in 1519 and Guatemala in 1523, and dramatically reduced the size of the indigenous population through enslavement, deportation, and other forms of terrorism. Spanish colonial authorities used Christianity to justify their domination of indigenous groups. According to Neil L. Whitehead, “Evangelism was itself often a military
process, and where it was successful it exacerbated existing intertribal divisions or even opened new divisions within the discrete tribal structures that had been created by the first phase of conquest and occupation” (1992: 147).

When the settlers exhausted the exploitation of bullion, they began to use indigenous peoples as slave labor for agriculture (Zinn 2003). As de Las Casas observed, “The reason the Christians have murdered on such a vast scale and killed anyone and everyone in their way is purely and simply greed. They have set out to line their pockets with gold and to amass private fortune as quickly as possible so that they can then assume a status quite at odds with that into which they were born” (1992: 13). By 1542 the Spanish colonizers had killed more than twelve million people in the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central America (Kiernan 2007: 77). To impose terror and fear on the surrounding population groups, the Spaniards started flogging, beating, thrashing, punching, cutting the legs or hands off, burning and roasting them alive, butchering babies and throwing them to wild dogs.

In the process, the Spanish settlers had lost their own humanity and “had become so anaesthetized to human suffering by their own greed and ambition that they had ceased to be men in any meaningful sense of the term and had become, by dint of their own wicked deeds, so totally degenerated and given over to a reprobate mind” (de Las Casas 1992: 3). De Las Casas (1992:103) also expounds “that the longer men have operated in the New World and the more they have become accustomed to the carnage and butchery around them, the more brutal and more wicked have been the crimes they commit against God and their fellow-men [and women].” Seen from this angle, the conquistadors were criminals who deliberately engaged in terrorism, genocidal massacres, and extermination through different mechanisms (Kiernan 2007).

They burned people alive or cut them to pieces or tortured them or killed them by swords to terrorize and frighten the surrounding population groups. Men were separated from their wives and communities to work the soil or to mine bullion; they were not allowed to take care of their families and communities. Mothers were also overworked and famished and had no milk; consequently, their newly born babies perished. Beginning in 1514, the Spaniards developed a new policy known as a repartimiento after annihilating most of the indigenous peoples; they divided the lands of the indigenous peoples and the survivors among the settlers to work as semi-slaves in encomienda.

The settlers put men to work in gold mines and sent women ‘into the fields of the big ranches to hoe and till the land,’ preventing them from cohabiting and having children. Men and women died ‘from the same causes, exhaustion and hunger.’ Cruelty, violent greed, and the imposition of agricultural serfdom all took their continuing genocidal toll (Kiernan 2007: 86).

The indigenous of Central America were hunting and agricultural communities with a few complex empires such as Aztec and Inca. Jared Diamond notes that the Inca emperor Atahualpa was “absolute monarch of the largest and most advanced state in the new world,” and this monarch with his army of 80,000 soldiers confronted the Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizzarro in 1532 (1999: 68).

This powerful monarch was only defeated because of the Spaniards’ superior weapons. Various Spanish forces continued to terrorize and extract economic resources of the indigenous Americans; Spanish merchants and landlords from Spain financed the expedition of Hernando Cortés to extract gold and other resources. To further these objectives, “Cortés [...] began his march of death from town to town, using deception, turning Aztec against Aztec, killing with the kind of deliberateness that accompanies a strategy – to paralyze the will of the population by a sudden frightful deed” (Zinn 2003: 11). With an army of 400,
Cortés started his “spectacularly brutal campaign” to colonize Mexico in April 1519 with the help of his coastal native allies. He first attacked and terrorized the kingdom of Anahuac and its capital, Tenochtitlan, and then annihilated the Otomi people by lancing, stabbing, and shooting them with iron bolts, crossbows, and guns (Kiernan 2007: 88). The conquistadors captured Tlaxcala, killing thousands of people and burning thousands of houses. After reaching the city of Cholula in October 1532, the Spaniards massacred its residents and destroyed the town. One official of Cortés noted that the conquistadors “were dripping with blood and walked over nothing but dead bodies” (quoted in Kiernan 2007: 90).

Cortés and his army furthered the conquest of the areas that became Guatemala and Colombia by sending his lieutenant, Pedro de Alvarado, with 120 cavalry, 300 infantry, and four artillery pieces to repeat the butchery of the indigenous in Mexico (Kiernan 2007). The colonial terrorists needed human trophies to show to and terrorize the surviving population; they also used these trophies to demonstrate their achievements and convince the colonial governors that they accomplished their missions. Using their knives and “approaching the victims and pulling up their heads by the hair, they swiftly removed tender cartilage from the skulls of all the dead. After filling their sacks with the lightweight, blood harvest, the attackers returned to camp and prepared for another campaign” (Blackhawk 2006: 16). The barbarism and cruelty of these terrorists were also demonstrated by their displays of strings of dried ears in their homes (Blackhawk 2006). The Spaniards totally controlled the city of Tenochtitlan and Ixtapalapa; in 1521 they destroyed Ixtapalapa by indiscriminately killing its people and reducing it to “human wreckage” (cited in Kiernan 2007: 91). The de Soto expeditions also exterminated the entire indigenous population of the Southeast of North America (Hollis 2005). Yet, it was not only the Spaniards who committed horrendous crimes against humanity in South and Central America.

Portuguese Colonial Terrorism and the formation of Colonial Brazil

The colonial Portuguese engaged in similar colonial terrorism and genocide in the area that is called Brazil today. With increased competition from Spain, France, and England to colonize Brazil, João III, the king of Portugal, granted to Martin Afonso de Sousa the right to establish the first official colony in Brazil at São Vicente. Then within short time the Portuguese monarch announced his plan to colonize all Brazil, “already inhabited by hundreds of Indian groups” (Metcalf 2005: 77). The Portuguese settlers established alliances with indigenous American groups, such as the Tupinikin, through marriage strategies as headmen “adopted” outsiders as son-in-laws. These alliances gradually assisted the expansion of Portuguese colonization, and “the captaincy of São Vicente had six hundred colonialists, three thousand slaves, and six sugar mills [in 1548]. These slaves were Indians from traditional enemies of the Tupinikin” (Metcalf 2005: 79). The private colonization initiative was not successful, so the Portuguese king sent his governor to build the capital city in Brazil and to expand Christianity. According to Alida C. Metalf (2005: 83), “The justification for the colonization of Brazil […] was no simple possession but evangelization. It quickly became apparent that it was not enough for the Tupi-Guarani speaking peoples to supply brazilwood and labor for the Portuguese. They were now expected to accept and practice Christianity.”

The Portuguese promoted Christianity and racial slavery simultaneously. Racial slavery was “firmly rooted in Brazil, where it would be the foundation of Brazil’s economic development for nearly four hundred years” (Metcalf 2005: 157). These colonists enslaved the Tupi, Guarani, Gê, and Arawak peoples, and these “slaves cleared the first fields and planted them with sugarcane; Indian slaves built the first mills and produced the first sugar harvest. [Enslaved Africans] joined Indians on the sugar plantations in the first half of the sixteenth century, and the numbers increased rapidly after 1550” (Metcalf 2005: 158). Both
slavery and diseases that were brought to Brazil from across the Atlantic led to the rapid
decline of the indigenous peoples during the second half of the sixteenth century.

Unlike Spanish America, where epidemics accompanied colonization, the first
epidemics that likely occurred in Brazil before 1550 did not destroy the
political or social structure of independent indigenous groups [...] But
between 1550 and 1580, Brazil began to follow a pattern similar to that seen in
the Spanish Caribbean in the thirty years after 1492: significant outbreaks of
disease coincided with the ratcheting up of the tempo of colonization. (Metcalf
2005: 120)

Gradually colonial terrorism, racial slavery, and diseases decimated the indigenous peoples of
Brazil.

Violence, Genocide, and the Formation of Colonial States in North America

The processes of colonization, incorporation, and terrorism gradually moved from South and
Central America to North America. Thomas D. Hall (1989a: 17-18) notes that incorporation
of North America started with exploration and trade that had serious impacts on lifestyles,
security, tastes, social organizations, and communities. Despite the fact that Sir Walter
Raleigh attempted to create an English colony at Roanoke in 1584 on the coast of North
Carolina, the English did not successfully establish a colony until 1607, when the Virginia
Company under the leadership of Captain John Smith established this first settlement in
Jamestown, Virginia. After settling in Jamestown, the English expanded their settlements,
leading to the opposition of the Powhatan people. As this Virginia settlement grew from
1,300 in 1625 to 8,000 in 1640, the settlers’ policy “did not seek the Powhatans’ total
extermination, but it required their full subjugation, and eventual slavery for survivors”
(Kiernan 2007: 223). Gradually, however, the Powhatans were annihilated (Kiernan 2007).
English settlers continued to confiscate the lands of indigenous peoples by using colonial
terrorism.

In 1621, English pilgrims also settled at Plymouth, in a section of the continent that
later became New England, where they pursued policies of terrorism, extermination, and
slavery on the Wampanoag, Narragansett, Pequot, and other indigenous peoples. To transfer
the communal ownership of the lands of these peoples, the Puritans “developed a tactic of
warfare used by Cortés and later [...] even more systematically: deliberate attacks on
noncombatants for the purpose of terrorizing the enemy” (Zinn 2003: 14).

John Winthrop, the governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, “created the excuse to
take Indian land by declaring the area legally a ‘vacuum.’ The Indians, he said, had not
‘subdued’ the land, and therefore had only a ‘natural right’ to it, but not a ‘civil right.’ A
‘natural right’ did not have legal standing” (Zinn 2003: 14-15). By abrogating the communal
land rights of the Pequot and Narragansett peoples, Winthrop justified the establishment of
private property through violence and expropriation. The Puritans asserted that the heathens
who resisted the power of Europeans, God’s children, should be condemned and lose their
lands violently. In the seventeenth century, the Spaniards, English, French, Russians, and
Dutch simultaneously began to establish their permanent colonies in the area north of
Mexico. As the English settled at Jamestown in 1607, the French founded Québec in 1608.
However, the French had arrived in North America around 1524 in the region presently
called Canada, and their explorers such as Jacques Cartier and Samuel de Champlain
established business relationships with indigenous American peoples from the Upper
Northeast down the Mississippi River and New Orleans. The Russians also established fur-
gathering posts on the Alaska Peninsula, where they exterminated the Aleut people and "treated them with unspeakable cruelty; they raped the women and held them as hostages until the men ransomed them with furs; they destroyed settlements and murdered people from sheer barbarity. It is estimated that the population when they came was 25,000; a count made in 1885 showed 3,892" (Debo 1995: 83).

As we saw above, European powers used diplomatic intrigue to incite indigenous American nations to fight against one another and thereby advance their respective colonial interests. Angie Debo notes that

the imperial rivals used their colonies as footholds from which they worked to outdistance their adversaries and enlarge their dominions by bringing as many native [groups] as possible into their spheres of influence—obtaining their trade, inciting them to war against their opponents or the Indian allies of their opponents, and reducing them to protectorate. (1995: 69)

Thereby indigenous Americans were reduced to serfdom or enslaved or exterminated. The economic and labor exploitation of the indigenous Americas gradually transformed western European countries such as Spain, England, and France and “gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry an impulse never before known” (Loewen 1995: 69). The competing imperial powers introduced competition to the indigenous peoples by changing their lifestyles and tastes through new technology of house building, farming, domestic animals, European fruits, hunting, cooking, and luxury items such as rum or whisky (Debo 1995: 69-70). Consequently, various nations, for perceived or small material benefits, “allied with rival powers scalped each other or fell upon outlying white settlements with fire and death” (Debo 1995: 70). After the thirteen English colonies emerged as the United States following the American Revolution of 1776, the colonial settlers continued to expropriate the lands of indigenous Americans under different ideological pretexts.

The United States began to expand to the Pacific west coast by terrorizing indigenous American peoples and by expropriating their homelands. White Americans convinced themselves that it was God’s will for them to control from the Atlantic Sea to the Pacific Sea and later across the continent and beyond. The United States also intensified terrorism on indigenous peoples within its geo-political territories and its neighbors, opening up western frontiers later in Texas, California, and the Great Plains to confiscate lands and other resources. American apartheid and sexist democracy under the leadership of George Washington, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and others promoted colonial terrorism, war, expansion, and genocidal massacres on indigenous Americans. Soldiers, vigilante groups, and other settlers burned villages and towns, destroyed cornfields, massacred women, old men, and children, and scalped their heads for trophies. In 1779, George Washington declared war on the six nations of the Iroquois Northwest and ordered troops to “ruin their crops now in the ground and prevent them planting” (Kiernan 2007: 325). That fall, General John Sullivan burned down 40 Iroquois towns and destroyed 160,000 bushels of corn. White American forces attacked one town and “‘put to death all the women and children, excepting some of the young women, whom they carried away for the use of their soldiers and were afterwards put to death in a more shameful manner’” (Kiernan 2007: 325).

After becoming President in 1801, Thomas Jefferson continued and intensified terrorism and war on indigenous Americans; he dispatched his general, George Rogers Clark, and the U.S. Army to attack, terrorize, and destroy the Cherokee, Shawnee, Peankeshaw, Ouabash, Kickapoes, Mingoes, Munsies, Windots, and Chickasaws (Kiernan 2007). Jefferson wrote a letter to John Page describing “even friendly Indians as ‘a useless, expensive,
ungovernable ally’” (Kiernan 2007: 320). While governor of Virginia, Jefferson ordered attacks on Cherokees. The forces of Arthur Campbell destroyed over “1,000 houses of the over hill Cherokees” in 1780, and the next year, John Sevier “burned fifteen Middle Cherokee towns,” while the year after, his son participated in another attack, reporting “we destroyed their towns, stock, corn, [and] everything they had” (Kiernan 2007: 325). After purchasing Louisiana from France in 1803, Jefferson promoted the policy of forcefully removing of indigenous peoples from their territories. In the letter he wrote to the German scholar Alexander von Humboldt in 1812, Jefferson (1813: 792-93) said: “The confirmed brutalization, if not extermination of this race in our America is therefore to form an added chapter in the English history of the same colored man in Asia, and of the brethren of their own color in Ireland and wherever else Anglo-mercantile cupidit...
disease, terror, death, genocide, and holocaust were imposed on indigenous Americans of California; the Chico Courant of July 28, 1866 notes, "it is a mercy to the red devils to exterminate them, and a saving of many white lives Treaties are played out--there is one kind of treaty that is effective--cold lead" (Trafzer and Hyer 1999: 1). Colonial terrorism and genocidal massacres also took place on the Great Plains. Texas declared its independence from Mexico in 1836, and its government, militia, and settlers exterminated almost 20,000 indigenous Americans (Kiernan 2007: 334-49). With the annexation of Texas in 1846, the extermination of indigenous peoples continued, as the new state’s territory was expanded in this way. Persifor F. Smith, the U.S. major general, warned: “All predatory Indians, no matter where discovered, will be pursued, attacked, and put to death. It is not advisable to take prisoners” (Kiernan 2007: 349). Those who killed indigenous peoples prospered, as they transferred indigenous lands and other resources to themselves, their states, and the federal government. They killed or relocated the remaining indigenous peoples from Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, Iowa, Nebraska, and Texas, before moving on to the Apaches of the Southwest. In 1871 the U.S. Congress allocated US$70,000 “to collect the Apache Indians of Arizona and New Mexico upon reservations” (Debo 1995: 270).

Like other Native Americans, the Apache resisted – unsuccessfully – colonialism and terrorism. The Geronimo-led resistance of the Apache nation symbolized the violent resistance of indigenous Americans during the second half of nineteenth century; Geronimo was a leader who organized his people and fought fiercely against the colonial Mexican and U.S. governments and settlers in the Apache homeland of what is today Arizona and New Mexico (Davis 1929; Faulk 1969). Like others, the Navajo, the Nez Perce, and the Sioux peoples were removed from their respective homelands. “From such policies came the reservation system, the practice of assigning native peoples to specified federal lands, and the trust system,” Amy H. Sturgis (2007: 65) notes, “the practice of the U.S. government holding funds owed to native nations on their behalf, much in the same way as guardians would hold property on behalf of their wards.” In order to further dispossess indigenous peoples by breaking up reservations, the United States government passed the Dawes law of February 8, 1887, which privatized and divided reservation lands to heads of a family (160 acres for each family), allowing the sale and transfer of remaining lands to white settlers. Thus we see how colonial terrorism targeted most of the indigenous Americans and their institutions to destroy them and transfer their resources to the colonizers.

Out of about 2,000 indigenous nations, approximately 250 lived in North America, some 350 in Mexico and Central America, and about 1,450 in South America (Josephy 1991). At the time of Columbus’s arrival, there were between 72 and 75 million indigenous Americans, and some scholars estimate 100 million or more (Josephy 1991: 6; Stannard 1992: x; Taylor 2002: 4). A few scholars have documented the consequences of Euro-American colonialism, various forms of violence including terrorism, and diseases in relation to the extermination of the indigenous populations. As David E. Stannard (1992: x) notes, many “historical demographers have been uncovering, in region upon region, post-Columbian depopulation rates of between 90 and 98 percent with such regularity that an overall decline of 95 percent has become a working rule of thumb.” Also, some demographers estimated that “the first hundred years of European presence in America brought about the demise of ninety-five percent of the Native population, while others suggest that a death rate of seventy-five percent may be accurate” (Perdue 2005: 18). Generally speaking, for others, the population of the Americas was reduced to about 4.5 million in a few centuries (Thornton 1987: 36, 42). Recently, the size of the indigenous population groups has been increasing. In 1990, from the total population of about 663 million in the American continents, there were about 42 million indigenous Americans, which is about 6 percent of the total population (Pandó 1990).
The Ideological Justifications of Colonial Terrorism

The Euro-American colonizers, their descendants, and mainstream scholars have harnessed a variety of rationalizations and discourses to justify the scramble for foreign territories as “fulfillment of a sacred duty to spread their form of civilization to the world” (Bodley 1982: 12). According to Eduardo Galeano, “ideological justifications were never in short supply. The bleedings of the New World became an act of charity, an argument for the faith. With the guilt, a whole system of rationalizations for guilty consciences was devised” (1997: 41). The discourses of Christianity, commerce, culture, civilization, progress, and race or culture were commonly used in rationalizing and justifying colonial terrorism and its consequences. The concept of Christianity combined the heavenly power of God with the earthly power of monarchy or state and the unbounded love for money and became a lethal combination for the destruction indigenous peoples of the Americas. In these ways, the Euro-American colonizers and their descendants have created and maintained a “heavenly world” for themselves and a “hell” for the native peoples.

Missionaries also played a central role in undermining the political, economic, and cultural institutions of the indigenous populations and facilitating their destruction. Pope Alexander VI of Rome set the tone of robbery in the Americas through various forms of violence including terrorism by endorsing the charter that Columbus received from the monarchs of Spain in 1492 (Shiva 1997: 2). John Frederick Schwaller traces this papal involvement:

Alexander VI and his successor Julius II, gave the Spanish monarchs the basis for supervising missionary activities in the newly discovered lands and the means whereby to financially support the activity. Alexander VI issued three bulls […] The first of these granted to the Spanish monarchs all the powers that the Portuguese enjoyed in their overseas possessions. The second of the three provided the monarchs with a means of a royal tax. The third bull, dating from 1501, granted the Spanish monarchs the right to collect and use ecclesiastical tax, the tithe, in the New World. (2011: 47)

These bulls gave the monarchs control of the colonial possessions and the church by establishing the administrative structure and appointing church officials and paying them salary from the tithe. Consequently, the Catholic Church lost its autonomy and became a tool of colonialism and terrorism in the Americas. In the process, the monarchs, most missionaries, and religious leaders connected Christianity, European civilization, and capitalism to the project of colonial terrorism and the dispossession of the native peoples.

Spanish clergies accompanied the conquerors like Hernán Cortés and Hernando Pizarro and participated in all forms of colonial projects. The Spaniards and other Europeans claimed that they were sent by God to spread Christianity; but, in reality, they “fostered violent hatred and racism, massacres, and the plundering and dispossession of the Indians” (Josephy 1991: 5). The colonial settlers and their descendants had manufactured lies, deceptions, illusions, and misinformation about the indigenous Americans to hide their crimes against humanity. The claim of discovery and the ideological rationalizations of civilization, racism, culture, and Christianity helped in creating unity against indigenous peoples and controlling internal populations after colonial state formations. Peoples or groups that engage in any large-scale oppression, discrimination, segregation, enslavement, and massive political violence for annihilation use dehumanizing name-calling, such as deficient human beings or less human, animal or beast, parasitic creature, infectious disease, waste product, and non-person (Bernnan 1995). The settlers called indigenous Americans inferior,
not human, untamable carnivorous animals, vermin, pestilence, anthropological specimen, the
dregs and garbage of the earth, and non-persons (Bernnan 1995: 7).

Semantic warfare is “a deliberate and unremitting phenomenon usually under-girded
by fully elaborate systems of concepts, beliefs, and myths,” and groups “who control
language control thought and eventually semantic corruption leads to the adulteration of
thought itself” (Bernnan 1995: 8, 12).

With time, these “fully elaborate systems of concepts, beliefs, and myths” have
become the ideological foundation of society and started to corrupt the minds of the public.
evildoing its long-sought justification and gives the evildoer the necessary steadfastness and
determination. That is the social theory which helps […] acts seem good instead of bad in
[one’s] own and others’ eyes, so that [one] won’t hear reproaches and curses but will receive
praise and honors.” Individuals like Columbus and most religious and political figures are
celebrated today, and very few pay attention to the reality of their deeds. The ideologies of
racism, Christian fundamentalism, and Euro-American centrisity thus deny the public the
opportunity to learn about the humanity, cultures, and histories of indigenous American
peoples. Today, elites who run and maintain institutions such as governments, schools,
churches, and colleges, publishing houses, as well as reporters, broadcasters, columnists,
editors, bureau chiefs, and executives, writers, artists, producers, and actors serving as
“gatekeepers of information who determine what ideas, perceptions, attitudes, and values are
allowed into the public domain” have continued to objectify indigenous peoples (Bernnan

In history books, films, and other forms of media, indigenous Americans have been
wrongly portrayed “as wild savages who wantonly slaughtered innocent white settlers and
displayed their scalps as an exhibitions of hunting acumen” (Bernnan 1995: 58-59). The
legitimate struggles of indigenous peoples for resistance, survival, and national liberation
have been also distorted and criminalized while the criminal acts of the settlers and their
descendants have been rationalized and glorified. The colonizers and their descendants have
maintained the identities of the dominant population groups and their power and privileges
through policy formulation and implementation by socially and culturally constructing the
concepts of race and racism (Jalata 2001). “Scientific” claims have been made to promote
personal and group interests at the cost of humanity. The ideology of white racism portrayed
indigenous peoples as savage and barbaric in order to rationalize crimes against humanity and
exonerate the executioners. The Euro-Americans have actually only been superior in their
destructive weapons and in their greed-inspired cruelty: according to William Bernnan (1995:
57), “The wholesale departure of Native Americans from the landscape of North America
was not the inevitable result of a primitive, inferior race naturally wilting before the march of
progress and modern civilization. It was due, instead, to a deliberate and pervasive policy of
[…] extermination.”

Indigenous Americans never passively accepted all these crimes against them. Indeed,
they continue to struggle against the violent occupation of their homelands and continents.
Several indigenous national movements have emerged and developed since the 1950s to
change resistance struggles to protests and revolutions in order to restore their humanity,
collective land rights, to have access to bilingual and intercultural education, to introduce
constitutional reforms, and to promote multicultural democracy by emphasizing economic
and social equality and justice (Van Cott 2007, 2009; Fischer 2009; Langer and Muñoz 2003;
Warren and Jackson 2002; Postero and Zamosc 2006; Hall and Fenelon 2009). “Over the
fifty years or so, American Indians have become emblematic of movements to reestablish
their legitimate status as sovereignty” (Hall and Fenelon 2009: 91). Native Americans and
“First Nations” of Canada have struggled for self-determination. Other indigenous
organizations, such as the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, the Interethnic Association of the Development of Peruvian Rainforest, the United Multiethnich People of Amazonas, and others have participated in liberation struggles in Latin American countries to introduce some changes on individual and collective rights and in the areas of engaging citizens in public policy decision-making and in holding leaders accountable. Donna Lee Van Cott (2007: 9-10) notes that Latin America’s indigenous social movement and parties offer a “unique perspective for addressing democratic deficiencies, as well as the capacity to mobilize social capital for democratic ends and to forge consensus on common political projects. They are expanding public expectations of democracy by insisting on greater participation, the reduction of inequality, and the protection of collective rights.” Furthermore, indigenous peoples of the world and their activists have intensified their struggle for self-determination, multinational democracy, the rule of law, and legal protection (Wilmer 1993). Transnational indigenous activism and social movements facilitated the formation of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2000 in the United Nations, a development that can be seen as contesting the legal sovereignty of UN member states (Morgan 2007).

Throughout the Americas, several changes have taken place since the 1970s, including the election of an indigenous president of Bolivia and an official apology from the Canadian government for at least some of its mistreatment of native peoples. Other oppressed communities and progressive forces have started to form political alliances with indigenous movements to fight against reactionary regimes and the policies of neoliberalism (Fischer 2009). Similarly, some progressive religious leaders and figures in the Roman Catholic Church and missionaries in Latin America have changed their religious and political positions toward indigenous peoples and have begun to support their movements for social, political, economic, and human rights (Domínguez 1994). In the mid-twentieth century, the Catholic “church began to develop its own social change while remaining at arms length from the political process. Some priests, however, embraced radical political movements and revolutionary struggle. The period also saw the beginning of a way of doing theology, which became known as liberation theology” (Schwaller 2011: 11-12). At this moment, however, the Catholic Church is facing internal crises and lacks an active and progressive political agenda regarding the poor in general and indigenous peoples in particular.

**Conclusion**

Today some descendants of colonialists have become rich and powerful because of intergenerational upward mobility based on the exploitation of the resources of indigenous peoples. Therefore, all powerful individuals and groups should critically interrogate themselves morally, ethically, culturally, socially, religiously, philosophically, and politically in order to develop their full humanness by exposing the crimes committed against humanity. Refusing to recognize these crimes is tantamount to continue to commit similar crimes by supporting unjust and corrupt political and ideological practices. For whatever reasons, engaging in or supporting a system that has been annihilating certain human groups is morally and ethically wrong. While some descendants of the settlers own lands and other economic resources, businesses, as well as organizations and institutions, including governments, corporations, education, the media, and healthcare systems, the surviving indigenous peoples live an impoverished life on reservations and in cities in North America and in rural and ghetto areas of South and Central America. By understanding the devastating effects of colonial terrorism and genocide on the indigenous Americans, the present generations of colonial settlers should recognize the crimes against humanity and start to
uplift the surviving indigenous peoples by offering apologies, making restitution, and by
promoting their struggles for self-determination and multicultural democracy.

The descendants of executioners and their victims need to develop a multicultural-
centric knowledge of history and use this to construct a personal and collective future based
on the principles of multinational egalitarian democracy, self-determination, and the rule of
law. To do this, governments and other institutions need to recognize and incorporate the
authentic histories, cultures, and humanity of indigenous Americans in all levels of education.
Celebrating the contributions of indigenous American peoples, recognizing and making
restitution for the crimes committed, and accepting the diversity of these cultures will
contribute to the full development of humanity by resurrecting the damaged humanity of the
executioners and the victims. Without critically and thoroughly understanding the processes
of capitalist broadening and incorporation, and without adequately learning about the crimes
of colonial terrorism, we cannot confront the moral, ethical, philosophical, and political
contradictions in the capitalist world-system and move towards establishing a just and truly
egalitarian democratic world order. For more understanding of the human agencies of the
indigenous peoples, future research is necessary on their resistances, movements,
organizations and mobilizations in the framework of world-systems approach and analysis.
References


Impacts of Terrorism and Capitalist Incorporation


Book Reviews


John Owen’s *The Clash of Ideas in World Politics* is a timely and fascinating book. Readers should know, though, that there are really two books here. One is about “regime change” or “forcible regime promotion.” Think the US in Iraq since 2003; though Owen also includes France’s attempt at regime change in Scotland in 1559, Prussia’s intervention in the Netherlands in 1787, and an almost staggering range of others reaching back to 1510. The other book is about transnational ideological conflict. Think secularism vs. Islamism today; though Owen speaks also of the conflict between Catholicism vs. Protestantism in the sixteenth century as well as communism vs. capitalism in the mid-twentieth century. Each of these books merits serious attention in itself. But the analytic strand that weaves the two stories together is particularly worthy of close consideration.

Owen defines “forcible regime promotion” as an attempt “by any state to use direct force with the object of constructing, preserving, or altering one or more political institutions in another state” (272). With this definition, Owen unearths two-hundred and nine cases (according to my count) from 1510 A.D. to 2010 A.D. Plotting these over time, Owen also finds clusters or “waves” of regime promotion, identified by their heightened frequency (though not necessarily their amplitude). He finds three waves in particular: one from 1520 to 1650, another from 1770 to 1850, and the third from 1917 to the present. In between these waves are lulls, when there is less action in terms of regime promotion. Within each are discernible patterns. In the first wave, Catholic or Protestant rulers tried to promote their own regime type in faraway lands (such as attempts by Elizabeth I of England to fight for Protestantism in Scotland in 1559, or efforts by Spain’s Philip II to install Catholicism in Cologne from 1583 to 1589). In the second wave, rulers tried to promote republican, constitutional-monarchical or absolute-monarchical regimes (such as Napoleon’s myriad of efforts from 1799-1815 to promote republicanism, or attempts by absolute monarchies in Austria or Russia to overthrow republicanism). In the third and most recent wave, governments tried to promote liberal democracies, fascist regimes or communist states.

The data collected for the analysis is original. I have not seen anything like it. And it offers a new way to think about international politics over a long swath of history. Yet this story is not interesting only in itself. The acts of regime promotion relate to, and indeed manifest, something else entirely: large-scale ideological struggles in the world-system.

Enter the other book that is embedded in this work: transnational ideological contests. Looking at the diverse cases of regime promotion over time, Owen finds that they were not merely, if ever or only, about material interests. Rulers did not promote regimes in foreign lands in order to win spoils (arguably, that was what imperialism and colonization was for). Rather, rulers promoted particular regimes on behalf of, or in the interest of, specific ideologies. Regime promotion has been part and parcel of “ideological polarization.” Hence the different character to the waves: the first was about Protestantism vs. Catholicism, the second about monarchy vs. republicanism, and the third was about communism, liberalism, and fascism. The conditions leading to regime promotion were also partly about ideology (though not only). Owen finds that states “tend to impose regimes in regions of the world where there is already deep disagreement.
as to the best form of government” and they tend to do so in periods when “elites across societies in the target’s region are sharply divided along ideological lines” (4). There are other conditions leading to regime promotion too (one is that it tends to happen when the promoting state sees its own security as tied to the fate of the target state). But to ideological factors, Owen bestows paramount importance. How else to make sense of the fact that, in nearly all of these cases, the promoting state imposed its own ideology upon the target state? The U.S. did not promote Communism in Vietnam in the 1960s any more than Philip II of Spain promoted Protestantism in France in the 1590s.

Owen concludes the book with a fascinating set of observations about regime promotion and ideological contests in more recent times. Here the story gets even better. As Owen evinces, potential transnational ideological contests today are brewing around ideologies of Bolivarism (represented by Hugo Chávez), authoritarian capitalism (exemplified by China and Russia), and Islamism and secularism (or rather fundamentalism and secularism). Here, in these concluding stretches of the work, *The Clash of Ideas in World Politics* does what some of the very best studies in macro-level social science aim for. It puts present day processes into a longer historical perspective, persuasively showing us that the seemingly large and overwhelming events of today are actually small when put into their proper historical place. Bolivarism, authoritarian capitalism, and Islamism are part of a longer history stretching all the way back to the sixteenth century – not in terms of content, but rather form and function. Thanks to Owen, we can see that they are merely the most recent forms of long-standing transnational ideological contests that have shaped regime promotion since the sixteenth century.

In this sense, *The Clash of Ideas in World Politics* is more than a story of regime promotion in the past and present. It is a veritable re-reading of world history. Owen himself asserts at the beginning that *The Clash of Ideas in World Politics* is “in effect, an alternative history of the past centuries of international relations” (7). And it is a riveting one at that, capturing transnational ideational structures and conflicts over centuries with a breadth and depth missing from other such works (such as crude versions of “the clash of civilizations”).

If some readers will be disappointed in the book, it will be those seeking an understanding of history outside Europe. While the concluding part of the book covers global ideological contests, the discussion of regime promotions begins with the European world and hovers around there for most of the time. Apparently, even in the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, regime promotion only happened in and by Europe states. Readers interested in whether or how polities in Asia or Africa may have conducted their own brand of regime promotion will remain in the dark. It may very well be that regime promotion did not happen outside of, or by, the non-Western world. But we cannot tell for sure from this book.

This limitation of the work is dictated by the very definition of regime promotion itself. Regime promotion, as Owen defines it, occurs when one state seeks to support or alter the regime of another “state”, i.e. a sovereign state defined as “sovereign” by the terms of the Western-based Westphalia system; more precisely, “Westphalian sovereignty and international-legal sovereignty” (273). Colonies are excluded, because they did not retain their sovereignty after the intervention. And presumably polities outside Europe are excluded as potential regime promoters (or as possible targets) until they enter the world of states as defined by the Western-based Westphalian system. But why restrict the definition of regime promotion to this? Owen remarks that it is not because of lack of data. Rather it is because such “cases are most relevant to IR theory” (273). Most of the world is thus excluded because it is analytically irrelevant to the categories of theories known as “realist” or “constructivist.” For some readers, especially
conventional IR scholars, this will be easy to swallow. It may even go unnoticed. But for everyone else, it will be puzzling if not disappointing. In either case, *The Clash of Ideas in World Politics* is not actually about “world” politics. A properly global history of regime promotion, unfettered by the categories of conventional IR theory, awaits.

Still, this critique is not immanent. *The Clash of Ideas in World Politics* remains true to its categories and task. Taken on its own terms, it fares well. Anyone interested in either regime promotion or transnational ideological conflict (even those not worried about whether realist theorists or constructivists win the most points), will have to engage this novel work of impressive analytic scope.

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Dale, John G. 2011. *Free Burma: Transnational Legal Activism and Corporate Accountability*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 296 Pages, ISBN 978-0816664670 Paper ($25.00); 978-0816664663 Cloth ($75.00)

By the early 1990s, many foreign observers had concluded that Myanmar’s junta\(^1\) had consolidated its hold over domestic political power (e.g., Callahan 2009). The military had crushed prodemocracy protests, arrested opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, and signed ceasefire agreements with most of the ethnic insurgent groups. However, in *Free Burma: Transnational Legal Activism and Corporate Accountability*, Professor John G. Dale points out that the prodemocracy movement simply went transnational. The Free Burma campaign used transnational legal action as a means to pursue political change from abroad. Dale’s account also shows that, even in an era of globalization, civil society can challenge neoliberalism by utilizing transnational mechanisms in order to hold corporations accountable.

Dale uses the Free Burma campaign for his extended case study because of its innovative use of transnational legal action. With political opportunities in Myanmar closed off, the Free Burma campaign shifted its focus to targeting American corporations that conducted business in the country. The immediate goal was to hold corporations accountable for human rights violations committed by the Myanmar military, which was impossible to do from within the country. Moreover, the campaign hoped that forcing American companies to withdraw from Myanmar would put economic pressure on the regime, which in the early 1990s had low reserves of foreign exchange. Dale demonstrates the variety of options available to activists in the “transnational legal space” by addressing how the Free Burma campaign pursued legislative, executive, and judicial remedies to pursue their agenda.

The first chapter summarizes modern Burmese history and the democracy movement before 1988. Dale emphasizes the role of ethnic insurgencies and geopolitical rivalries between China and the United States in destabilizing Burma’s postwar civilian government. In March 1962, General Ne Win launched a coup and implemented the “Burmese Way to Socialism.” Dale then recounts the history of student movements against first British colonialism and then the Ne

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1 In this review, I adopt the same convention as Dale regarding the name of the country. I use “Burma” when discussing events before 1990 or the “Free Burma” campaign, while I use “Myanmar” when referring to the government (xiii-xv).
Win regime. The chapter concludes with the critical 1988 mass protests, in which hundreds of thousands of students, monks, workers, and even government officials took to the streets, as well as the military’s subsequent crackdown on the protests. This lesson in Burmese history serves to emphasize the ineffectiveness of domestic social movements and the severity of the state’s response—both necessary to understanding why the movement went transnational.

The second chapter introduces the transnational dimensions of Burma’s prodemocracy movement. Although Myanmar’s military dominated state institutions after 1988, the Free Burma movement mobilized transnational networks in order to continue the campaign from abroad. Dale’s analysis challenges the state-centered “political process theory” by showing that activists were not limited by the political opportunities available within Myanmar. The Free Burma movement enabled Burmese to exploit political opportunities outside their home countries, particularly in the United States, in order to pursue change within their home country. While Dale acknowledges that the Free Burma movement has not succeeded in effectuating regime change, he blames the international community’s unwillingness to enact strict economic sanctions rather than the limited scope of domestic political opportunities (93-96).

In Part II of *Free Burma*, Dale discusses the legislative, executive, and judicial remedies that the Free Burma campaign pursued. The third chapter covers the Massachusetts selective purchasing law, which prohibited companies that conduct business with the state government from also conducting business in Myanmar. U.S. companies challenged the law in court, alleging that the state government overstepped its constitutional authority by creating its own foreign policy. In 1999, the Supreme Court ruled the law unconstitutional, but not simply on the grounds that a state law was directed at a foreign country. Rather, the court found that the Massachusetts measure conflicted with a 1997 federal law, which banned new investment in Myanmar but did not adopt impose purchasing restrictions. According to the justices, the Massachusetts law would have restricted the president’s freedom to negotiate with the regime for concessions. Despite the setback, Dale argues that the court’s reasoning affirms the possibility of using selective purchasing measures, when doing so does not conflict with federal law.

The fourth chapter covers a petition asking the California attorney general to revoke the UNOCAL Oil Corporation’s charter. In 1992, UNOCAL had signed an agreement with the Myanmar government to construct the Yadana pipeline in order to export natural gas. However, human rights NGOs received credible reports that the military employed forced labor during the construction of infrastructure around the pipeline. Dale situates the UNOCAL Charter Revocation Campaign within the broader history of corporate charters in the United States. During the 19th century, citizens and politicians took a more active role in approving or revoking corporate charters. As corporations demanded more rights as constitutional “persons”, charter revocation fell into desuetude. Ultimately, the California attorney general’s office rejected the petition to revoke UNOCAL’s charter, claiming that it lacked jurisdiction to investigate human rights abuses abroad. Here, again, Dale contends that the petition helped demonstrate that the government had the means, but not the will, to act against UNOCAL.

The fifth chapter covers the Alien Tort Claims Act (ATCA) litigation against UNOCAL. ATCA gives federal district courts jurisdiction over suits by foreign citizens for torts committed in violation of the “law of nations.” During the late 1970s, human rights’ lawyers interpreted “law of nations” to include human rights violations. In 1996, EarthRights International and a coalition of NGOs used ATCA to sue UNOCAL on behalf of a dozen Burmese peasants who were victims of forced labor. *Doe v. UNOCAL* represented the first time ATCA was used to sue a U.S. corporation for abuses committed abroad. During trial, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals
appeared skeptical of UNOCAL’s claims that the incidents of forced labor were unconnected to construction of the pipeline. In December 2004, UNOCAL settled with the plaintiffs for $7.2 million. Dale emphasizes that transnational litigation not only generated significant publicity for the Free Burma campaign, but also forced corporations to acknowledge the human costs of conducting business in Myanmar.

Dale’s analysis provides a fascinating alternative narrative to the standard theories about state-society relations. The Free Burma movement attempted to utilize political opportunities in one country to challenge human rights violations in another country. While suppressed at home, the Free Burma movement remained active in the U.S. during the late 1990s and 2000s. At the very least, the book reminds sociologists and political scientists to look beyond a country’s borders when assessing the options available to social movements. *Free Burma* also challenges the widespread fear that globalization only brings free trade and greater corporate power, reducing the power of states to hold corporations accountable for their actions. The Free Burma campaign uncovered legislative, administrative, and judicial mechanisms that gave state governments the power, if not the will, to challenge corporations. Moreover, the campaign helped popularize the norm that American corporations are responsible for their actions abroad.

One topic not adequately covered in *Free Burma* is who actually participated in the Free Burma campaign. During the early 2000s I participated at the margins of the campaign, so I am familiar with the key individuals and NGOs. However, even I had some remaining questions after reading *Free Burma*. How active were Burmese based in Burma?² What was the relationship between Americans and Burmese expatriates? For all of the emphasis on *transnational* legal networks, Dale never unravels their supposedly transnational nature. Indeed, in a chart of key organizations supporting the Free Burma campaign (146-47), all but a handful are American NGOs. Dale does mention Zarni, perhaps the most famous Burmese expatriate and the founder of the Free Burma Coalition, but a deeper discussion of the individuals involved would have helped readers assess his claim that the U.S.-based Free Burma campaign was the heir of the 1988 protests.

*Free Burma* also leaves doubt regarding the effectiveness of transnational legal action. Both the Massachusetts legislation and the UNOCAL Charter Revocation Campaign ultimately failed. Dale is careful to show why the Supreme Court’s decision might not undermine selective purchasing laws more broadly, but he provides no evidence that charter revocation remains a viable tactic. Even ATCA has been scaled back since *Doe v. UNOCAL*. In 2004, in *Sosa v. Alvarez-Machain*, the Supreme Court limited ATCA claims to international norms that are as “specific, universal, and obligatory” as anti-piracy and diplomatic immunity during the 18th century (although Dale points out that forced labor/slavery would have satisfied this test (189-191). More recently, the circuit courts have split regarding corporate liability under ATCA. The Supreme Court is expected to clarify the law in this area when it issues a decision in *Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Petroleum Co.*, currently on appeal from the Second Circuit.³

The question of effectiveness extends not just to tactics but also strategy. In *Free Burma*, Dale contends that the campaign failed to displace Myanmar’s government in part because the international community did not impose rigorous sanctions. He claims the selective purchasing law would have had more “teeth” than the 1997 federal ban on new investment (123, 139-140).

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² While Dale does mention that he conducted over one hundred interviews in Burma (xvi), he understandably cannot jeopardize the safety of his informants by revealing their names or information about them. Hopefully, now that Myanmar is undergoing political liberalization, perhaps he could mine those interviews in future work.
³ As of January 2013, the Supreme Court has not issued its decision.
However, Dale does not mention the subsequent Burma legislation Congress passed in 2003 and 2008, which enacted a general ban on imports from Myanmar and visa bans against senior government officials (Congress did continue to grandfather UNOCAL’s investments). For its part, the military junta insulated itself with revenue from natural resource exports and improved relations with its neighbors. China has given Myanmar over $2 billion in military aid and exercised its veto at the United Nations Security Council to shield Myanmar (Steinberg 2013). The junta transferred formal governing authority to a civilian government in February 2011, but this move appears to have been motivated more by the desire of Senior General Than Shwe to retire in peace than it was by economic sanctions, which had already been in place for years.\(^4\)

Of course, it would be unfair to ask Dale to establish the effectiveness of transnational legal action by proving a counterfactual. It is impossible to know if Myanmar would have democratized sooner had the international community adopted tougher sanctions in the early 1990s. Unfortunately, while the Free Burma case study effectively demonstrates the variety of transnational legal remedies available, it seems poorly suited to evaluating their effectiveness. As such, it would be useful to compare the experience of the Free Burma campaign with that of other social movements that have attempted to use transnational legal action. Have other movements used selective purchasing laws or ATCA litigation in order to effectuate political change abroad? Were differences in outcomes the result of differences in campaign tactics or in the movement’s goals? At the least, an additional chapter discussing other transnational social movements might have allowed readers to better evaluate the potential of transnational legal action.

Future scholars could also assess when and for what ends transnational legal action remains a viable option. In the *Free Burma* example, one could argue that regime change was out of the campaign’s reach, but that it did at least hold some corporations accountable for rights abuses. However, would either corporate accountability or regime change alone been a sufficient goal to mobilize both Burmese and American activists? On the one hand, many members of the Burmese expatriate community participated in the Free Burma campaign because they believed their actions would help “free Burma” from military rule. On the other hand, Dale notes that many key American participants, including Simon Billenness, then a senior analyst at the Franklin Research and Development Corporation, and EarthRights International, came to the movement initially more interested in questions of corporate accountability. In order to disaggregate these distinct motivations, future research might focus on cases in which social movements pursue only corporate accountability or only regime change.

*Free Burma* is a promising start to a new research agenda about transnational social movements. Dale simultaneously challenges the “political-process theory” of social movements and neoliberal narratives about globalization. It serves as a reminder that social movements have a broad range of options beyond protests and violence. As somebody who participated in the Free Burma campaign, I found Dale’s recounting of the campaign to be both informative and insightful. Dale’s writing is always smooth and engaging. Indeed, at times readers might forget that they are reading a work of academic scholarship as they become engrossed in the story of Myanmar and the Free Burma campaign.

Recommended for students of social movements, legal activism, or Burmese politics.

\(^4\) For more discussion about possible motives behind Myanmar’s recent liberalization, see Nardi (2012) or Steinberg (2013).

In this book, Hall and Fenelon develop a comparative analysis of a variety of indigenous movements that confront and challenge neoliberal globalization. This is an ambitious task, particularly for a relatively short book, but the authors’ intimate familiarity with many of these indigenous groups and their effort to create a unifying framework to examine these struggles give readers a much richer understanding of these conflicts.

The structure of the book combines a focus on theory-building via comparisons in the introductory and concluding chapters with historical examinations of several indigenous groups from various areas in the middle chapters. The theoretically focused introductory chapters advance important claims regarding indigenous groups and their roles in world-systemic history. Most fundamentally, the authors argue that “indigenous peoples who struggle to preserve much, or some, of their noncapitalist roots-for example, communally held property rights-constitute, by virtue of their continuing existence, a form of anticapitalist resistance to incorporation into the world-system, and a challenge to the assumption of the state as the basic political unit of human social organization. Their claims for autonomy are a challenge to those globalizers who argue that ‘there is no alternative’ (14). The efforts of indigenous groups to assert their rights to survival and autonomy thus challenge not just the inevitability of capitalist globalization but also the inescapable organization of social life via the structure of states; in other words, there are many very different types of social organization, some of which long predate capitalism.

In order to understand historical and contemporary cases of indigenous groups that have challenged capitalist globalization, the authors argue that four elements of these groups must be examined:

1. “Global historical context;
2. Cultural traditions built around community, usually with consensus-driven forms of governance by a collectivity;
3. Holistic, undifferentiated spiritual values that tend to embody generosity of group and reciprocity rather than competition and accumulation; and
4. Worldviews that positively interact with the earth’s environment and land, rather than destroying it through extensive, privatized natural resource exploitation” (21).

The empirical chapters in the book use a variety of historical cases to examine these elements, and this comparative analysis lead Hall and Fenelon to advance four key points that they feel differentiate the social organization of indigenous groups that are resisting capitalist globalization from that of the capitalist world-economy today: “1. Economic relationships are redistributive, partially or wholly; 2. Political relations of ‘cultural sovereignty’ and ‘community autonomy’ predominate; 3. Environmental relationships tend to be symbiotic, with less destruction to animal and plant life than in capitalist societies; and 4. Communities value inclusive relationships that tend toward common goals” (24-25).

The main chapters of the book provide introductions to the historical experiences of a variety of indigenous groups in different regions of the world and the challenges they have faced in their efforts to survive over the long term. The authors have made extensive efforts to learn about and then analyze the experiences of these groups in both theoretical and comparative terms.

The first empirically focused chapter compares the Maori of New Zealand and the Adivasi of India, alongside briefer comparisons of Australian Aboriginals and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. The chapter emphasizes that struggles for indigenous survival are not solely a product of European colonialism, but instead are part of a far older type of conflict between states and nonstate peoples that has been taking place for thousands of years.

The second empirical chapter focuses on the indigenous peoples of Mexico and makes comparisons with other cases in Latin America, arguing that the concept of indigeneity and definitions of who is indigenous are highly contentious and historicized. In Latin America generally and particularly in Mexico, the concept of indigenous peoples began after the Conquest as part of a stylized and at least somewhat permeable classification system placing those born in Europe at the top of the social hierarchy and the indigenous at the bottom. Efforts to build a Mexican national identity later subsumed indigeneity into an essential element of Mexican identity, ignoring the fact that, as was typically the case in Latin America, members of different indigenous groups did not see themselves as members of the same category, but instead saw each indigenous group as having its own separate historical and cultural identity. Moreover, those groups that have survived the five centuries since the Conquest view their struggles for survival and autonomy today as the continuation of struggles that began 500 years ago, rather than as something “new” that emerged in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

The third empirical chapter examines Native Americans in the United States, highlighting the experiences of the Wampanoag, Lakota, Navajo and California Indians as examples of indigenous groups seeking to preserve and revitalize their cultural and political traditions, despite significant variations in the histories and changing natures of these groups’ relations with the U.S. government. These experiences demonstrate that indigenous survival and resistance are both extremely localized and specific processes and heavily shaped by broader national and global processes. Moreover, Hall and Fenelon emphasize that simplistic accounts of indigenous survival and resistance largely ignore the historical bases and trajectories of these processes, even though these histories are tremendously important to the indigenous groups themselves.

The two concluding theoretically and comparatively focused chapters build on the empirical chapters in an effort to begin formulating a historically informed, world-systemic
theory of global indigenous survival and resistance. The authors argue that “survival of indigenous groups, and hence movements intended to promote their survival, are inherently antisystemic because they promote the legitimate right of groups of humans to organize and live their lives in ways other than those permitted or favored by neoliberal capitalism” (121-122). This initial theory-building effort includes the creation of a typology of indigenous survival modalities that derives from the varied experiences of the indigenous groups examined in the book; this typology is incorporated into a comparative world-systemic summary presentation.

Although written to be accessible to students and general readers, the book makes several significant contributions to world-systems analysis. First, it explicitly extends world-systems theory to the study of indigenous groups around the world, an area that world-systems theory has not adequately addressed. Analyses that examine individual indigenous groups in isolation or that focus on indigenous groups within one state do not adequately consider the broader world-systemic processes shaping the challenges and opportunities that have faced indigenous groups over the last five centuries or, more generally, nonstate peoples over the last five millennia. Efforts to consider today’s growing internationally linked indigenous movements that are challenging state power, including those discussed in this book but many others as well, as New Social Movements are inadequate as well because of a similar lack of historical perspective. The authors argue that “indigenous peoples and many other analysts, including ourselves, do not see indigenous movements as a subcategory of some larger set of movements. Rather, they are much older and more complex, though they are related, especially to the new social movements, in important ways” (64). Hall and Fenelon’s book is a vital starting point for developing a more theoretically and historically informed understanding of these indigenous movements.

Second, there is an extensive engagement with world-systems theory in the book to provide a coherent framework for examining these very diverse movements in different regions of the world. Hall and Fenelon then seek to build a framework for examining the experiences of a diverse set of indigenous groups from a world-systems perspective. Although their theoretical model is only partial and somewhat disconnected, this model provides a valuable initial formulation that they intend to build upon in their future work.

Given the growing variety and diversity of challenges to neoliberal globalization, the book adds a great deal to our understanding of one very important type of challenge from below. Hall and Fenelon provide an excellent foundation for future comparative analysis of these indigenous movements with other types of social movements active in the early twenty-first century. Further, the goals and strategies of these indigenous movements could also provide valuable practical lessons to other social movements, given the frequent complementarity of goals and strategies that bring together issues of social and economic justice, local control over decision making, and protection of the natural environment.

The first main weakness of the book is inadequate theoretical development. The characterizations presented in the two concluding chapters are intriguing, but cannot be considered a fully-fledged theory of indigenous survival and resistance. Similarly, the argument that indigenous groups’ struggles can be analytically divided into three types of conflict (over sovereignty, over autonomy, and over minority group status) seems well-founded, but it is not really integrated with the theoretical models presented earlier in the book. In short, the authors do not provide a cohesive, integrated framework, although I suspect that both would have a great deal to say about how to develop such a framework. One step in this process would be building a fuller explanation of the schematic models included in the book, such as Figure 2.2 on “Four Modes of Indigenous Resistance and Revitalization”; the empirical chapters move in this
direction by providing focused discussions of some dimensions of these models, but a stronger theoretical model would lay out the characteristics and relationships in greater detail.

Second, more extensive and more explicit comparisons between the fascinating cases presented would have been very interesting and useful. I would really like to know what the authors would have to say about the comparisons and contrasts that could be drawn between these divergent and important cases of indigenous resistance to neoliberal globalization.

Third, emerging evidence about the massive environmental transformations that some indigenous groups have undertaken in Latin America in areas such as the Amazon, the Beni, and the Central American rainforest makes it essential for the authors to consider the relationship between indigenous groups and the natural environment more extensively in any future edition of the book. Are these large-scale environmental changes the product of the social organization of these indigenous groups into states, as was the case in the Maya region of Central America? Or is the society-nature relationship more varied across indigenous groups than the theoretical model advanced in the book suggests?

Overall, the book serves as an overview and introduction to the central issues confronting indigenous peoples around the world and raises issues for other world-systems analysts to investigate. The book should be very useful for graduate and undergraduate courses in sociology, anthropology, global studies, and Native American studies that examine social change, globalization, social movements, or indigenous groups. The authors argue that “There Are Thousands of Alternatives” to the seemingly inevitable march of capitalist globalization, and many of these alternatives are or could be rooted in the long history of indigenous groups’ survival and resistance. This book is a very interesting first step to bringing some of these alternatives into view.

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In her widely cited 2005 article, “Global Capitalism and Commodity Chains,” sociologist Jennifer Bair brought attention to the shift in commodity chains analysis away from its original use in world-systems scholarship as an analytical construct to understand the reproduction of the global hierarchy of wealth, and towards new sectoral analyses focused primarily on the ability of lead firms to shape the industrial upgrading possibilities of suppliers, and the developmental prospects of states in the global south. In a nutshell, Bair argues that these newer meso-level insights made by “Global Commodity Chains” (GCC) and “Global Value Chains” (GVC) scholars can and should be reintegrated into the broader macro-structural focus of the past, and that promising new areas of research can be found by examining the social processes of inclusion/exclusion that constitute chain dynamics and the central role of workers as chain participants.

Ben Selwyn’s *Workers, State and Development in Brazil* is a powerful response to Bair’s call for a labor-based GCC approach and is certain to push this entire research agenda forward. He does some of the theoretical heavy-lifting by offering a conceptual framework aimed at centering GCC studies on worker struggles and processes of class formation. He also provides us
with a rich and timely empirical case study of the central role workers played in the development of table grape production for export in the São Francisco Valley region of northeastern Brazil that is a useful blueprint for further research.

The introduction of the book essentially lays out Selwyn’s argument for a labor-centered commodity chains analysis. He begins by arguing that the “upgrading bias” of contemporary GCC scholarship is rooted in a Schumpeterian understanding of value creation that relegates workers as a “residual category” impacted by, but not significantly impacting, the chain as a whole. He argues that incorporation of the São Francisco Valley into the grape commodity chain demonstrates that local grape workers were not simply victims of the global retail revolution and the race to the bottom dynamic that it engenders. Instead they actively resisted their exploitation by exporters and therefore “co-determined” through their dialectical relationship with capital the conditions of their incorporation into the chain.

The first chapter is perhaps Selwyn’s most polemical. In it he traces the GCC’s Schumpeterian roots back to Wallerstein’s early conceptualization of capitalism as a “system of production for profit in the world market” rather than as a “system of generalized commodity production” defined by the extraction of surplus value from workers. Rather than side wholeheartedly with Brenner (1977) in his critique of neo-Smithian world-systems analysis, however, Selwyn acknowledges that the modalities of surplus extraction vary significantly across time and space. The trick of re-incorporating labor back into the GCC framework therefore lies in investigating exactly how specific groups of workers become dependent upon the market for their livelihoods and how market dependence is itself mediated by state institutions. In particular, Selwyn argues that this dependence is shaped by three key factors: commodity specialism (the specific labor process required for production), class conflicts between labor and capital (including the balance of class power and its institutionalization), and the developmental politics of states as ultimate guarantors of capital accumulation.

Selwyn begins his empirical analysis in chapter 2 with a fairly traditional GCC approach. He contextualizes the case of grape exports in the São Francisco Valley, showing how it is part and parcel of the global retail supermarket revolution wherein Latin America has emerged as a primary exporter of a wide range of fresh fruits and vegetables to meet burgeoning global and domestic demand. Like other buyer-driven chains, retailers subject Brazil’s grape-producing suppliers to an increasing number of demands, including larger and more reliable yields, increasingly stringent quality standards, and greater consistency of price, quality and conditions of production. He then discusses the key role the Brazilian state played in transforming the São Francisco valley from a relative economic backwater composed of cattle ranching, small-scale riverside and flood-plain agriculture, and artisan fishing in the 1960s into a capitalist agricultural center composed of large and small-scale production systems and large-scale irrigation systems. Perhaps most interesting is his analysis of the way locally-based public and private organizations, including the Japanese-Brazilian Agricultural Cooperative of Cotia (COTIA), its successor the Agricultural Cooperative of Juazerio (CAJ), and the Brazilian Agricultural Research Agency (EMBRAPA), emerged to assist landless peasants and small farmers in the region but over time ended up creating the institutional incentives underlying their depeasantisation and subsequent incorporation into the circuits of capital as commercial farmers and proletarianised workers.

The meat and potatoes of Selwyn’s argument about the central role of labor and class conflicts in shaping the overall developmental trajectory of the region is hashed out in the remaining four chapters of the book. In chapter 3, he uses Erik Olin Wright’s distinction (later
developed by Beverly Silver) between the structural and association power of workers to investigate the ways that the region’s grape workers were able to win concessions from their employers and therefore steer development in a more worker-friendly way. Most interesting here is Selwyn’s argument that the “quality-driven” nature of the grape commodity chain forced local employers to continuously upgrade and rationalize their production systems in ways that provided workers with greater leverage vis-à-vis capital. The ability of workers to transform this structural form of power into associational power embodied in the powerful Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais (STR), however, was rooted in the labor and agrarian struggles that emerged in the 1960s in response to the “conservative modernization” developmental policies of Brazil’s military regime and that later blossomed into the heyday of union radicalism under the leadership of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) and the Central Única dos Trabalhadores (CUT) in the 1980s.

Chapters 4 through 6 make extensive use of Selwyn’s multiple visits to the region between 2002 and 2008, where he conducted interviews with workers, government officials and employers. Chapter 4 examines the gendered division of labor in the region’s grape industry (women workers comprise roughly 40 to 50 percent of the permanent labor force) and the gender politics of the STR. In sharp contrast to the generalized sexism characterizing the garment industry, for example, he finds that women grape workers have been actively involved in all levels of the STR, that the union has won a number of important gender-specific concessions, that women have been overwhelmingly proud of their status as workers, and that this status has positively impacted their relations with their husbands and families. Chapter 5 describes employer efforts over the past two decades to undermine the marketplace bargaining power of workers by restructuring the local labor market, adopting temporary fixed-term contracts, patronage-based labor recruitment and retention strategies, and human resource departments to counter the influence of the STR. Chapter 6 examines how these strategies, in combination with the rise of the PT party to national prominence, have been effective in de-radicalizing the STR and channeling its energies to more institutionalized forms of bargaining. Selwyn is quick to note, however, that this contemporary situation of “class compromise” has not necessarily led to a significant loss of worker gains due to the labor-politics of the PT government and the structural and associational power that local grape workers maintain.

Like all good research, Workers, States and Development in Brazil has a few blind spots. First, Selwyn’s decision to focus on “class conflicts” at the point of production largely ignores the widely-held argument that class reproduction occurs at the level of the household, where various members of a household pool their incomes and subsistence activities in order to survive. If this is true, then class conflicts, the gendered division of labor, and the state’s role in perpetuating each should be understood in terms that extend beyond the workplace. Selwyn’s analysis could certainly benefit from a reading of Bair and Werner’s special issue of Environment and Planning A on “commodity chains and disarticulations” (2011), which provides a theoretical framework sensitive to the ways that the incorporation of a place into a chain creates new boundaries of inclusion and exclusion from access to the wealth generated at the point of production.

Second, Selwyn’s shift of analysis away from the trans-spatial dynamics of chains characterizing mainstream GCC analysis and towards the particularities of the Sao Francisco Valley leaves one wondering what impact, if any, did local dynamics have “upwards” onto the rest of the fresh fruits and vegetable commodity chain? Did the rise of the STR and the institutionalization of class conflicts affect the overall distribution of value created along the
chain? Did it have any influence on the governance structure of the chain or the labor regime dynamics scattered across other supply nodes of the chain? These questions are not altogether unreasonable to ask because he himself argues for a GCC framework that places worker agency at the heart of the analysis. In this sense, I think Selwyn could have benefitted from a reading of, say, John Talbot’s *Grounds for Agreement* (2004), which provides an interesting case study of the systemic nature of struggles over the overall distribution of wealth and power characterizing the global coffee commodity chain.

Third, and relatedly, Selwyn continuously cites Beverly Silver’s *Forces of Labor* (2003) when discussing the structural and associational power of labor in the region. However, he does not systematically engage with any of her core arguments and findings about the global patterning of labor unrest, the strengths and weaknesses of spatial and other fixes of capital to rising labor demands, and the central role of geopolitics and interstate conflict in the shaping of developmental prospects for states and workers. For example, Silver finds there to be an overall weakening of labor’s workplace bargaining power over the past quarter century due to both global transformations in the organization of production (of the type Selwyn identified for the fresh fruits and vegetables chain) as well as major transformations in the “world of politics and war” which have minimized the ability of workers to gain concessions from their states as soldiers or simply supporters of domestic political regimes. Minimally, one wonders to what degree the fact that the Sao Fernando Valley grape industry exists in Brazil – an emergent global economic and political powerhouse, rather than, say, Honduras, has any bearing on the ability of workers to leverage gains from their employers and respective states.

Finally, Selwyn’s conceptualization of development itself is pretty thin. He draws loosely from Amartya Sen in describing it as a “process leading increasingly to freedom from want and the ability to participate in public life based on rising levels of collective and individual prosperity.” However, in practice he seems to fluctuate in his use of the term, sometimes associating development with the growth and consolidation of capitalist production relations in the valley, other times associating it with the labor concessions that the STR won from their employers. What Selwyn does not describe as development, however, is the subsistence agricultural systems that pre-existed the growth of the grape sector. This developmentalist orientation is not necessarily problematic in itself. However, he does not provide us with any comparative analysis of the “freedom from want” or the “ability to participate in public life” experienced by São Fernando residents before they were dispossessed of the means of subsistence and forced into proletarianised conditions of work. You might then say Selwyn’s orientation towards development is decidedly proletarian-centered and point of production-centered—post-modernists and peasant studies scholars be warned!

Be this as it may, *Workers, State, and Development in Brazil* is certainly a masterful analysis that tackles a timely and important question about how and to what extent workers have the ability to shape the conditions of their incorporation into the global economy. It is an important contribution to the commodity chains literature, and a must-read for scholars and students of labor movements, gender, development, and global political economy.

References

Will the struggles of the 1990s over genetically modified organisms (GMOs)—involving “Frankenfoods,” hormone-free milk, and the like—be remembered as a blip or as a formative moment in the evolution of the world agro-food system? According to Rachel Schurman and William Munro’s insightful and well-written book, the answer is, in effect, “both.” On one hand, anti-GMO campaigns in the U.S. failed to block governmental approval of genetically modified crops, to undercut the power of Monsanto and other companies that aggressively developed these crops, or to generate robust, widespread consumer rejection of GMOs in the food supply. On the other hand, in Europe, anti-GMO campaigns and broader concerns about biotechnology led to a widespread rejection of GMOs, with major food retailers committing to avoid GMOs and governments ultimately restricting the approval of GM crops. This scrutiny and closure of European markets also had ripple effects on export-oriented agriculture in other parts of the world, although not so much as to displace GM crops that had already gained a foothold. Furthermore, even while the U.S.-based movement against biotechnology failed to change national policy and markets, it did influence the emerging international regulatory order.

Overall, although their analysis clarifies the power of corporate and government investments in privately owned genetically modified crop species, their conclusion about the power of social movements is also striking: “In early 2010, the box of potential solutions to the challenges of agricultural productivity and sustainable development in the twenty-first century looks far more open than it did ten years ago” (183).

Schurman and Munro take on two major tasks—to explain the varied outcomes of anti-biotechnology movements and to make sense of the dramatically different views of biotechnology in activist and agri-business circles. Part of their explanation of differential social movement influences focuses on differences in opportunities arising from the organization of agro-food commodity chains. In Western Europe, the concentration of the food retail sector, combined with its emphasis on high-quality store-brands, consumer preferences for quality over price, and growing public concern about biotechnology, allowed anti-GMO activists to effectively push retailers to lock GMOs out of the market. In this case, activists were able to
pressure the retail end of the commodity chain to change practices among farmers and seed companies. But the commodity chain was structured differently in the United States, where there was little concentration among grocery stores, leaving activists with many small targets instead of a few big ones, and where stores competed more on price than on quality, making it harder for activists to mobilize consumer demand for non-GMO food. In addition, seed companies had built strong relationships with farmers, making this end of the commodity chain difficult to penetrate.

They also argue that corporate cultures in the agribusiness industry also created some opportunities for activism. In particular, the aggressiveness and arrogance of Monsanto’s corporate culture led to a hasty and ill-fated attempt to push GM crops in the European market and made it a perfect target for activists there.

While their explanation of the U.S.-Europe difference rests largely on these factors, they also highlight ways in which the global character—or more importantly, the cross-national character—of the agribusiness industry allowed activists to have an influence in other parts of the world. Because GM crops had to be approved country-by-country, the transnational movement was able to slow the growth of GM crops in some African countries. In a chapter on Africa, Schurman and Munro show how even in a GM-enthusiast country like South Africa, the regulatory regime was not entirely closed to activist influence.

More in the foreground of the book is its argument that divergent views of biotech should be understood in terms of the distinctive “lifeworlds” of the staunch critics and avid supporters of GM technology. More than just having different ideologies, interests, or frames, these actors have coherent but incommensurable assumptions about technology and society. Whereas managers and scientists within industry circles had an abiding faith in “good technologies,” anti-biotech activists viewed technology as uncertain in its outcomes and tightly linked to the political-economic context, which in this case meant commodification and privatization of property rights. Rather than treating either set of actors as stooges or as hyper-strategic in their views, Schurman and Munro argue that scholars need to attend to the development of everyday lifeworlds that generate and support competing sets of “true believers.”

There is a great deal to like about this book. It uses interview evidence to draw vivid portraits not only of activists and movement intellectuals but also of scientists and managers who see widespread environmental benefits in GM crops (because they require fewer pesticides), among other perceived benefits. It provides insight into the strategies of agribusiness firms, the strategic maneuvers of the movement, and the architecture of global GMO regulation. Schurman and Munro’s focus on the US, Europe, and (to a lesser extent) Africa gives the book not only analytical punch but also a broad substantive scope.

The book also provides a compelling explanation of the varied influences of the anti-biotech movement, which very nicely highlights conditions under which targeting particular links in a global commodity chain can be powerful. While the book is linked to Schurman and Munro’s other published work, it goes well beyond their articles on anti-GMO campaigns. Both newcomers to their work and those already familiar with it should read this book.

The writing is extraordinarily clear and effectively draws the reader into the debates, strategies, and effects of the struggle over GMOs. This also means that it would be a good book for graduate or undergraduate teaching, particularly in a course on social movements or on global food and agriculture (where it might be productively coupled with Micha Peled’s recent film, Bitter Seeds).
The weaknesses of the book primarily stem not from the tasks that Schurman and Munro take on but rather from the tasks that they decline to take on. Most importantly, the book discusses but does not really engage with a number of questions about the actual risks and benefits of transgenic agriculture. The problem is not just that Schurman and Munro remain agnostic, though they sometimes give an impression of being frustrated with activists’ blanket rejection of biotechnology even as they are highly sympathetic to their concerns about ownership rights and the political-economy of this technology. The problem is that they do not actually delve into the merits of arguments and evidence about the environmental, health, and social consequences of GMOs. Readers who are already versed in these issues may not need it, but I found myself wanting a much clearer sense of what is now known about the risks and benefits in different settings. Ultimately, making sense of the consequences of this movement requires us to understand the consequences of the practices the movement is opposing.

Second, there is more to say about how commodity chain structures, consumer tastes, and cross-national variation in these factors shape the influence of social movements, but Schurman and Munro stay very close to their case. This is unfortunate, not only because it misses a chance to speak powerfully to other movements that target global commodity chains, but because other cases that might be on readers’ minds—the anti-sweatshop movement or campaigns against destructive logging, for instance—may be different in their ability to shape markets and consumer preferences. These movements have not had the influence of anti-GMO campaigns in Europe, perhaps in part because it is easier to mobilize consumer concern over products that are ingested and perceived as carrying health risks for the consumer or his/her children. This raises broader questions about whether food is a special case for social movements, an issue that might have been productively addressed in this book’s conclusion.

Third, there is both a danger and a set of unanswered questions in using “lifeworlds” to explain social movements and their oppositions. The danger is that the concept lends itself to an uncritical reading of the claims on either side or of the interests that may support those claims (which are more recognized by terms like “ideology” and “frame”). Schurman and Munro are certainly not guilty of that, but in other hands, the concept may not produce as astute an analysis. An emphasis on lifeworlds does have its benefits, most notably in directing attention to unstated background assumptions and styles of everyday life, not just publicly articulated frames. But this raises questions about what kinds of data and methodologies are necessary to tap into lifeworlds—an issue for which Schurman and Munro provide little guidance.

In spite of these concerns, Fighting for the Future of Food is a truly outstanding book that deserves to be read by students and scholars of social movements and of agriculture and development. Schurman and Munro have succeeded in writing a book that is rich in substance and analytical insight, accessible, and may help in rethinking global agribusiness.

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Based on Fransen’s PhD thesis at the Amsterdam Institute for International Development and the University of Amsterdam, this book draws on extensive fieldwork, including 70 interviews and a
survey of 178 European corporations, in its examination of so-called private regulation. Within
the field of private regulation, Fransen focuses on labor standards in global production chains
that are intended to improve working conditions and protect the rights of workers laboring in the
manufacturing links of these chains.

More specifically, Fransen studies global supply chains for apparel that are coordinated
by European companies (mostly clothing retailers and brands). He reviews the academic debate
that has arisen in recent years over the scope, significance, effectiveness, and desirability of
private labor regulation, which encompasses both the codes of conducts by which buyers
collectively commit to have their goods produced in factories that observe core labor standards,
and the factory certification schemes guaranteeing the compliance of suppliers with these
standards. Rather than siding with what he qualifies as either left-wing or right-wing positions in
this debate, Fransen adopts a “pragmatic” perspective to address three core issues, respectively
dealing with (1) differences in terms of stringency between the main private regulatory
approaches developed in this field; (2) the determinants of firms’ choices to adhere to one or
another of these private initiatives; and (3) the patterns of cooperation, competition or conflict
that developed overtime between the main organizations promoting private labor regulation.

First, the stringency of regulation is measured by the level of labor standards, the detail
and scope of implementation guidelines, and the forms of monitoring adopted by eight major
organizations: the Fair Labor Association (FLA), Workers’ Rights Consortium (WRC), Social
Accountability International (SAI), Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI), Fair Wear Foundation
(FWF), Initiative Clause Sociale (ICS), Worldwide Responsible Apparel Production (WRAP),
and Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI). The comparison reveals that regulation
produced by multi-stakeholder organizations giving a strong role to labor activists, and/or
established in the earlier phase of field development, such as FWF and WRC, tend to be more
stringent—that is, promote higher standards, offer stronger guidelines, and/or use more inclusive
or participatory forms of monitoring rather than purely private-sector or firm-based auditing. By
contrast, business-led organizations such as WRAP, ICS or BSCI exhibit lower levels of
stringency in labor regulation, while intermediate levels characterize more mixed multi-

Fransen addresses the second issue via a statistical analysis of the industrial, national and
societal characteristics of a sample of European firms and their choice of private labor
regulation. The results are consistent with the salient characteristics of corporate membership in
the various organizations under study. In terms of industrial position, firms competing in a
higher-priced niche of the market are more likely to choose more stringent forms of private
regulation. Firm type also plays a role, with retail firms being more inclined than brand firms to
adopt less stringent forms of labor regulation. A broad geographical distinction appears between
higher stringency choices made by firms in Northern Europe versus lower ones made in Southern
Europe. Finally, having been the target of activist campaigns and/or having frequent contacts
with activists strongly correlate with firms’ choice for higher stringency options.

This statistical examination provides some quantitative background for a more qualitative
approach to the third issue that Fransen tackles in the book: the nature of relationships developed
overtime among organizations favoring different approaches to private regulation. Here the
author offers an original and well-documented analysis pointing to a lack of convergence and
persisting divide between labor activist-oriented and business-oriented organizations, the former
typically applying to niche markets for higher price, branded products (or collegiate-licensed
apparel in the case of WRC), while the latter dominates at the retail end of the chain, especially
for the kinds of products sold as mass discount chains. Fransen succeeds in deciphering the historical path of this field’s formation and in showing the influence of past choices made by firms and activists. He traces the well-known division of the U.S. landscape between the brand-oriented FLA and the labor-oriented WRC to initial conflicts in the broadly inclusive Apparel Partnership Initiative established by President Clinton in 1996, but also identifies a lesser-known link between the massive growth of the retail-dominated BSCI in Europe and the failed attempts of European labor activists to spread their FWF multi-stakeholder model beyond the Netherlands to countries such as France, Germany, Sweden or Switzerland.

Fransen further decrypts the complex evolution of the field in terms of the stringency of private regulation since the mid- to late-1990s. An upward evolution is observed, as a result of activist criticisms, notably in the level of labor standards adopted by large business-oriented organizations such as BSCI or the more recent Global Social Compliance Program (GSCP), or in some monitoring procedures such as those developed over time by the FLA. A simultaneous ratcheting down can be seen in the growing leniency of organizations that allow delays in firms’ compliance with labor standards, together with the growing strength of business-controlled groups (e.g. BSCI and GSCP), and a blurring of market signals due to the multiplication of private regulatory forms and standards. The book ends by outlining and assessing several possible scenarios that may result from the choices that are being (and will be made) by a variety of actors and organizations such as developing-country suppliers, governments, retailers, consumers, and international organizations.

Fransen’s rendering of the historical evolution of the field and the interactions between regulatory organizations sheds light on the complexity of private labor regulation in the European landscape. This is significant because most research on private regulation to date focuses on the United States and addresses the content of instruments such as codes of conduct rather than the political and institutional processes by which coalitions were formed and alliances or rivalries developed among organizations. The book conveys a nuanced assessment of the often-ambivalent positions adopted by various actors including firms, NGOs, national and international labor unions, and governments. It makes a valuable contribution to an emerging, although fast growing field of research making use of a global production/commodity chain or network perspective to situate the various actors involved in private forms of regulation and to analyze the power relations therein.

However, the book tends at times to promise more than it delivers. Fransen qualifies his research approach as inductive, but often shows little of the empirical material informing the analysis. For instance, no detailed information is provided on the content of the codes and standards that he is rating and comparing in terms of their stringency. Stringency also remains an abstract notion in the statistical analysis of corporate choices of private regulatory forms, with no information provided on the specific organizations that these firms have chosen to join. Some methodological choices are unclear, particularly regarding sampling. For instance, a number of business-led organizations such as the GSCP, formed by major global retailers, or the U.K.-based SEDEX, are not included in the sample for stringency measures, while an organization such as ICS, which is marginal in the field, is included. Finally, the histories of various regulatory organizations, and the role played by stakeholders in and around them, are not presented systematically and comprehensively but rather briefly summarized or alluded to in the course of Fransen’s discussion of particular issues. This makes it difficult for the reader to develop an in-depth understanding of the phenomena under study.
In terms of theoretical contributions, the book engages with a rich variety of institutional perspectives and adopts a multi-level analytical framework aimed at grasping the interplay between the agentic role of individuals and the influence of the broader economic and institutional contexts in shaping regulatory outcomes. At the same time, because Fransen’s analysis of private regulation has quite distinct implications for these different streams of literature, the descriptive position adopted by Fransen in his attempt to “cover a middle ground between liberal CSR enthusiasm and critical political economy cynicism” (41) is a difficult one to reconcile with substantive theory building. Perhaps for this very reason, the notion of private labor regulation remains loosely defined throughout the book, notwithstanding the fact that the term is unevenly used both among the variety of actors involved within the field and in the relevant academic literature. The concept of regulation as the use of (binding, enforceable and public) law to address inequalities among social actors is not reconciled nor convincingly articulated with the concept of private regulation as a self-defined, self-applied voluntary mechanism. Admittedly, this problem is not specific to Fransen’s book, but rather applies to the broader literature mobilizing this non-neutral notion to imply that codes of conduct or other forms of private governance are functionally equivalent or even comparable to public regulation.

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Scholars of transnational movements are familiar with calls for situating their understanding within world-historical context. Few have heeded this advice on a scale comparable to William G. Martin and his colleagues at the Fernand Braudel Center’s Research Working Group on Waves of Antisystemic Movements. Their book, *Making Waves*, impressively maps the past 250 years of antisystemic movement activity throughout the world. Immanuel Wallerstein, in the Foreword, explains that this volume is the first of “…a three-part investigation of what we think are the three pillars of the existing world-system – the systems of production, the knowledge systems, and the antisystemic movements,” and claims that this volume is “…the first attempt to look globally at social movements of all types since approximately 1750, to see their interconnections, strong points and strong moments, and the forces they confronted” (vii).

But what is an antisystemic movement? The concept is not often deployed outside of world-systems discourse, and few world-systems theorists have made it the subject of serious empirical investigation. Martin, the coordinator of the project and author of the introduction and conclusion, defines “antisystemic movements” as contentious collective action (organized or momentary, normative or disruptive, institutionalized or non-institutionalized) that specifically “…engage[s] and oppose[s] dominant capitalist forces and processes” (7). He admits from the outset that most contemporary movement scholars would find this conception of “movement” to be overly broad, conflating not only a good deal of collective action but also collective behavior with movement activity; and that many contemporary transnational movement scholars will discover that the objectives of their movements of interest do not qualify. This is a book by, and
to a large extent for, world-systems theorists. The revolution will not be televised. And reform-oriented movements will not be promoted in this book. Ironically, this book even tells the story of how anti-systemic movements unwittingly have strengthened the world system (178), possibly leading some readers to wonder if anti-systemic movements are devoid of agency – or if world-systems theorists are overly structuralist in their approach to understanding the constraints imposed by the world system, and/or teleological in their historicization of it. Despite this lesson of the longue durée, readers may be surprised to discover that Making Waves finds reasons to remain hopeful that “another world is possible”; that contemporary “alterglobalization” movement activity focused on social and economic justice may succeed in constructing alternative postliberal and postcapitalist modes of social life (176-179). This book also provides a trenchant critique of some dominant assumptions in social movement theory, as well as valuable insights for mining alternative transnational imaginaries, both “from above” and “from below.” In short, Making Waves is important reading for all scholars of contemporary transnational movements.

Each of the four substantive chapters of the book, the work of different authors within the Working Group, focuses chronologically on a separate time period (1750-1850, 1848-1917, 1917-1968, and 1968-2005) intended to loosely correlate with “a well-known outbreak of movement activity and by transitions in the [consolidating] world-economy and interstate system” (8). Drawing primarily upon historical records and survey data by country and continent, they explore their leading hypothesis: “significant clusters of movement activity existed across [core, semi-peripheral, and peripheral] zones of the world-economy from at least the eighteenth century” (9). This is a richly historical work, and attempting to highlight only “big events” would not do the book justice. Suffice it to say, the world tour is worth the price of the ticket (certainly in paperback).

In the conclusion, Martin confirms the book’s main hypothesis and “most fundamental finding of this project” (168): “world movement moments”— typically one to two decades in duration – clearly punctuate the past 250 years of global history. From this historical evidence, Martin derives several points that contemporary scholars of transnational movements must confront. First, and least contentiously, he claims that these world movement moments starkly challenge arguments that transnational movement activity appears only under conditions of late twentieth century globalization. Martin is hardly the first historical observer to make this claim, but few can marshal the volume of evidence that Making Waves has to support it.

Secondly, and more originally, he asserts that this evidence “…rebuts the dominant derivation of movement activity from national inequalities and conflicts, state-formation, nation-building, long-term global cycles of accumulation, or episodes of hegemonic rivalry and war” (168). This amounts to a full frontal attack on not only the state-centeredness but also the core modernization thesis of political process theory developed by Charles Tilly to identify the birth of the national social movement, elaborated by Sidney Tarrow, and extended and re-tooled for studying transnational advocacy networks by Keck and Sikkink. Indeed, this modernization thesis has become so taken-for-granted in social movement theory that, even when scholars challenge many of the tenets of the broader political process theory, they tend to reproduce it. Martin does sharpen and qualify this point, first contrasting the “surprising, if often short-lived, worldwide outbursts of antisystemic action” with “claims that locate protest and social movements by isolated locations and times, disconnected from each other” (168); and then, suggesting that the local movements clustered within world movement moments were not necessarily connected, either by organizational ties or even indirect, informal contacts.
But this concession only sets up his third point: restricting ourselves to these common conditions and traditional, linear (and even comparative) historical narratives, limits our ability “…to perceive simultaneous protests set within similar conditions, with similar hopes and dreams, and even with similar enemies. Such parallel phenomena in very disparate locations across the world-economy have been charted in each of our epochs…” (169).

Finally, Martin explains that the evidence does more than identify worldwide movement moments and disconnected parallel phenomena across the zones of the world-economy. It also reveals significant transcontinental linkages (long prior to contemporary globalization or anti-globalization movements) between corresponding organizations of abolitionist and revolutionary movements, between formal (black, labor, as well as socialist) internationals, and among “coordinated antiwar, anticolonial and student movements at different world movement moments” (169). Global flows of migration created and sustained informal networks of movement communication, and transoceanic diasporas throughout the entire period of study. Yet, as Martin explains, these networks and exchanges did not always produce greater cooperation. They were often conduits of irresolvable racial, gender, and class conflict among and within movements of all kinds and in each epoch. Thus, scholars of contemporary transnational movements, who often emphasize how formal and informal networks (including transnational advocacy networks) enhance movement power vis-à-vis external actors, should remember to consider how these same networks also may, over time, constrain and ultimately demobilize movements from within.

Making Waves also draws upon these insights and outcomes of past movement waves to offer three scenarios for the future. The first draws upon the findings presented in Fouad Kalouche and Eric Mielants’ “Chapter 4: Transformations of the World System and Antisystemic Movements: 1968-2005,” in which 1968 is identified as the beginning of the decline of traditional anti-systemic movements and the rise of identity movements. Combined with the advance of financial and speculative capital (as well as neoliberalism), and the concomitant and—after the fall of the Berlin Wall—rapid implosion of socialism, internationalism became a hollow discourse of rights, at the expense of justice and economic equity. Drawing upon Cornelius Castoriadis’ classic work on social imaginaries, they describe this period as one in which “capitalist social imaginaries” come to dominate cultural aspects of the world-system, the “means of subjectivization,” and alternative social imaginaries (148). If today’s antiglobalization movement (not to mention international terrorism and a wide range of new identity movements) seem to be able to contest dominant capitalist imaginaries, Scenario 1 sees them too fragmented, largely conservative and even prosystemic, and generally “unable to mount a long-term institutionalized challenge to a rampant, postliberal, capitalist world” (176).

Scenario 2 is more optimistic, suggesting the possibility that “the fragmentation of past movements and the search for new, transnational social imaginaries becomes an indicator of fundamental, anticapitalist challenges to come…” (177). But this future, according to Martin, hinges on the possibility of avoiding exclusively state-centered politics while forging “an alternative social and political existence through world political alliances” (177).

Martin refers to Scenario 3 as the “postliberal world regime” possibility (178). As transnational modes of challenging both capital and states continue playing a key role in developing and legitimizing a post-nation-state and postliberal institutional arrangement of power that is suitable to continued global capitalist accumulation, antisystemic movements will have to address “the demise of liberalism’s promise of wealth and equality, the demise of the legitimacy of the interstate system, and the absence of development and social welfare polices”
As a parallel development to the emerging global structures of governance operating with less democratic accountability and above and below the increasingly hollowed-out nation-state, Martin points to the noir possibility that we are constructing “a networked mode of political control above and below the putative democratic liberal state” in which transnational movements and networks of civil society organizations become “institutional partners of newly legitimized international institutions” (178). In short, it may be possible that movements for an alternative democratic globalization are playing into the hands of an undemocratic postliberal globalization, helping to prepare the next wave of capitalist expansion.

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