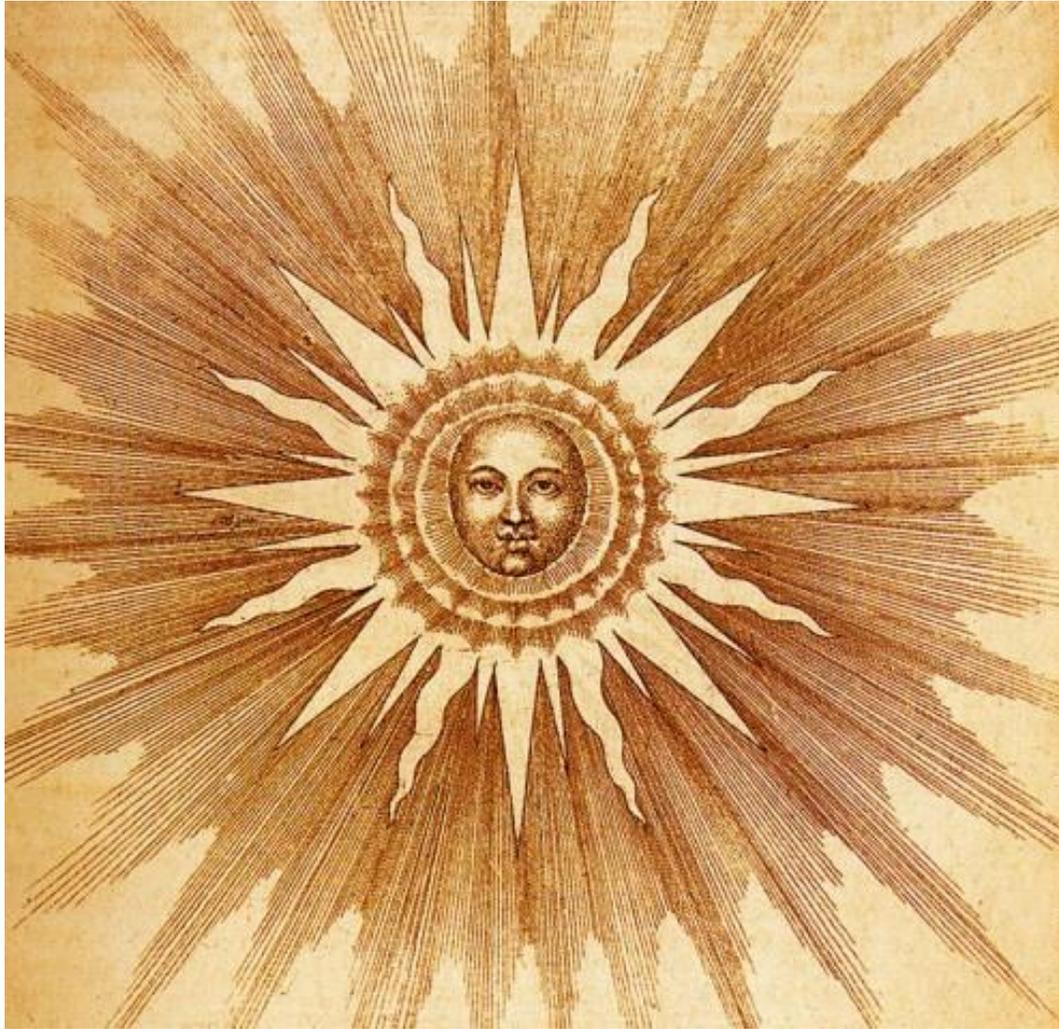


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Editors' Introduction

We recently lost a leading figure in world-systems research with the passing of Janet Abu-Lughod. Abu-Lughod was probably best known by world-systems researchers for her book *Before European Hegemony: the World System AD 1250-1350* (first published in 1989 by Oxford University Press), which has had a profound impact on the field. Her theoretical and empirical work is highly respected and widely cited by fellow anthropologists, as are her contributions to feminist research. Abu-Lughod received the Distinguished Career Award from the American Sociological Association's Section on Political Economy of the World-System (PEWS) in 1999, and is one of just four people whom the section has honored with this recognition. She also served on the editorial board of the *Journal of World-Systems Research*. In this issue we invited some other leading thinkers in the world-systems tradition to help us reflect on the [contributions Janet Abu-Lughod](#) has made to this field. In doing so, we seek to both honor and learn from our ancestors and help new generations of scholars further research on world-systems.

We are also proud to feature in this issue the [keynote address of Immanuel Wallerstein](#) to the 38th Annual Conference of the Political Economy of the World-System, which was held at the University of Pittsburgh in April 2014. Wallerstein helped launch two and a half days of fascinating discussion about the roles of social movements in world-system transformation by offering a wide-ranging overview of antisystemic movements over five centuries. While much of this account is familiar to *JWSR* readers, Wallerstein's analysis of the contemporary challenges and prospects for antisystemic movements should inspire innovative scholarly and political work at this critical world-historical moment.

Articles in this issue reinforce the tradition in world-systems scholarship of integrating insights from other disciplines and perspectives into our efforts to understand the workings of the world-economy. In particular, they draw attention to the ways in which the environment and gender affect world-system dynamics. Women and the environment represent the peripheries of the world-economy in the sense that their political marginalization/exclusion has meant that they have borne some of the highest costs of capitalist expansion. Our authors in this edition of *The Journal of World-Systems Research* remind us of what we learn about the prospects for addressing inequalities by focusing our attention on these critical dimensions of the world-system.

In the opening article, [Smith, Hooks and Lengefeld](#) draw from environmental sociology's notion of the 'treadmill of destruction' and from research on peace and security to show how environmental damage results not just from capitalist expansion but also from the efforts of hegemonic actors seeking to maintain their power through novel types of militarized interventions. They build upon Mary Kaldor's concept of "new wars" to analyze the Colombian case as one in which the United States and its allies use the war on drugs to employ technologies in ways that transfer the risks and costs of interventions to the peripheries—in other words, to the local populations and their surrounding environments. Their detailed accounting of these risks reinforces the need for scholars to focus attention on actors that are typically excluded from formal politics and discourses, and it should inspire more comparative research on military interventions and their implications.

[Daniela Danna's](#) article helps reiterate the need for world-systems scholarship to make visible those actors excluded from power. She reviews research in demography to identify how world-systems analysis can be enriched by incorporating a number of insights from this body of research. In particular, Danna demonstrates the roles women play as decisionmakers within

households, and how the contexts of their decisions are shaped by world-system dynamics. Her paper illustrates both the importance of expanding our attention to gender and of the interplay between the large-scale structures of the world-economy and women's agency.

[Primrose Nakazibwe and Wim Pelupessy](#) add to the case for incorporating gender into world-systems analysis. They note that women's contributions to agricultural commodity chains are overlooked in most analyses, and their meta-analysis of recent research finds that gender has yet to be fully integrated into these analyses, concluding that many studies "frequently fail to address whether this [the integration of women into agro-commodity chains] will lead to a durable form of empowerment that allows women to make meaningful decisions and socio-economic choices." Their article proposes remedies to this omission.

[Benjamin Marley and Samantha Fox](#) offer an analysis of how the accumulation of environmental costs, new regulations, and responses to the human and social impacts of West Virginia's coal industry, coupled with changes in the global demand, help account for the relocation of most U.S. coal mining to Wyoming. They demonstrate the need for greater attention to the inter-connected and world-historical dimensions of ecological, social, and economic factors that shape changing industries and practices.

In this issue, our book review section includes a [special symposium](#) on an important new book, *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* by Vivek Chibber, winner of the 2014 Political Economy of the World System Section Book Award. In this symposium, an interdisciplinary group of prominent scholars engage with the book's arguments and their relevance for issues of vital importance to world-systems research. We hope *JWSR* readers enjoy this issue and that our entire collection of [book reviews](#) will invite them to explore new and diverse works on the themes of our journal.

As we close our introduction, we want to acknowledge and celebrate the 20th year of publication of the *Journal of World-Systems Research*. Our journal was at the forefront of the effort to make scholarly research more easily accessible to readers around the world, and represents the first generation of free, open access publishing. We are proud to help carry forward the visionary work of *JWSR*'s founding editor, Christopher Chase-Dunn, and we thank him for his commitment and leadership over the years. We are preparing to move into the second generation of open access publishing, and will be migrating to a new online submission system in the coming months. This will improve our journal's online visibility/searchability and its presence in major scholarly indexes. Significantly, it will allow us to integrate new metrics for assessing the scholarly impact of our content, which is something for which librarians and open access advocates have long been advocating. As we work to keep information free and accessible, we are finding that we must engage in the political and educational work to resist efforts to privatize and commercialize the knowledge commons. We encourage readers of *JWSR* to learn more about and to support the open access movement (see Jackie Smith's [The Open Access Movement and Activism for the "Knowledge Commons"](#)) and to join us in celebrating the seventh annual [Open Access Week](#), October 20-26, 2014.

Jackie Smith, Editor

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Journal of World-Systems Research

Antisystemic Movements, Yesterday and Today¹

Immanuel Wallerstein

Yale University

immanuel.wallerstein@yale.edu

There have always been historical systems in which some relatively small group exploited the others. The exploited always fought back as best they could. The modern world-system, which came into existence in the long sixteenth century in the form of a capitalist world-economy, has been extremely effective in extracting surplus-value from the large majority of the populations within it. It did this by adding to the standard systemic features of hierarchy and exploitation the new characteristic of polarization.

The result has been an ever-increasing degree of exploitation by what we now call the 1% of the others (these days called the 99%). Within the modern world-system, resistance initially took the form primarily of either spontaneous uprisings or escape into zones in which it was harder for the 1% to reach and impose its authority. However, the increasing mechanization and concentration of productive enterprises within the modern world-system led, as we know, to an ever-increasing degree of urbanization. The urbanization of the modern world-system in turn opened new ways for the working classes to challenge the modes of extraction by the dominant forces.

The French Revolution further changed the structure of the modern world-system by unleashing two new concepts, whose impact was to transform the modern world-system. These concepts were the "normality of change" as opposed to its exceptional and limited reality, and the "sovereignty of the people" as opposed to that of the ruler or the aristocracy. This pair of concepts was the basis of something new, a geoculture that spread throughout the historical system and legitimated radical "change" of the system by the "people." It was in response to this danger to the dominant forces that the three modern ideologies—conservatism, liberalism, and radicalism—emerged.

Each of the ideologies represented a program of political action. Conservatism was the first and most immediate response, notably in the writings of Edmund Burke and Joseph de Maistre. The core of the conservative ideology was to deny the prudence, even the possibility, of substantial change. Conservatives reasserted the priority of the judgments of traditional elites, locally situated, and supported by religious institutions.

Liberalism arose as an alternative mode of containing the danger. Liberals argued that reactionary conservatism, which inevitably involved suppressive force, was self-defeating in the

¹ Keynote address delivered at the 38th Annual Political Economy of the World-System conference, April 10, 2014, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

medium run, pushing the oppressed to rebel openly. Instead, liberals said, elites should embrace the inevitability of some change and defer nominally to the sovereignty of the people, but insist that social transformation was a complicated and dangerous process that could only be done well and prudently by specialists whom all others should allow to make the crucial decisions. Liberals thus envisaged a slow, and limited, process of societal transformation.

Radicalism was the last ideology to emerge. It began as a small annex to liberalism. Radicals argued that relying on specialists would lead to no more than a slightly revised social structure. Instead, they said, the lower strata should pursue transformation of the system as rapidly as possible, guided by a democratic ethos and an egalitarian ideal.

The world-revolution of 1848 marked a turning-point in the relations of the three ideologies—rightwing conservatism, centrist liberalism, and leftwing radicalism. It began with a social uprising in Paris in February, in which the radical left seemed momentarily to seize state power. This uprising was unexpected by most persons—a happy surprise for the working classes, a serious danger from the point of view of the elites. It so frightened both conservatives and liberals that they buried their voluble differences that had loomed so large up to then and formed a political alliance to suppress the social revolution. The process in France essentially took three years, culminating in the creation of the Second Empire under Napoleon III.

Nor was the social revolution all that was happening. The same year, 1848, was the moment of nationalist uprisings in much of Europe—notably in Hungary, Poland, the Italies, and the Germanies. The historians have dubbed these uprisings "the springtime of the nations." Just like the social revolution in Paris, these various nationalist uprisings were suppressed within a few years—at least for the moment, but a long moment.

This pair of happenings in 1848—social revolution in France and nationalist revolutions in many countries—forced a reconsideration of basic strategy by the tenants of each of the three ideologies. The conservatives noticed that the one major country in which nothing seemed to happen in 1848 was Great Britain. That seemed very curious since throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, radical forces had seemed to be the most extensive, active, and well-organized in Great Britain. Yet it was the one major country in which calm reigned amidst the pan-European storm of 1848.

What the conservatives then realized, and historians later confirmed, was that the British Tories had discovered a mode of containing radicalism far more effective than forceful suppression. The British Tories had been making constant concessions to the demands for social and institutional change. These concessions actually were relatively minor, but their repeated occurrence seemed to suffice to persuade the more radical forces that change was in fact taking place. After 1848, the British example persuaded conservatives elsewhere, especially in continental Europe, that perhaps they should revise their tactics. This revised analysis brought conservatives nearer to the position of the centrist liberals, and took the label of "enlightened conservatism."

Meanwhile, the radicals were equally unsettled by what happened. The principal tactics radicals had employed up to 1848 had been either spontaneous uprisings or utopian withdrawal. In 1848 radicals observed that their spontaneous uprisings were easily put down. And their utopian withdrawals turned out to be unsustainable. The lesson they drew was the necessity of replacing spontaneity with "organizing" the revolution—a program that involved more temporal patience as well as the creation of a bureaucratic structure. This shift of tactics brought radicals closer to the

position of the centrist liberals, the radical bureaucrats now assuming the role of the specialists who would guide transformation.

Finally, the liberals too drew a major lesson from the world-revolution of 1848. They began to emphasize their centrist position, as opposed to their previously primary role of confronting conservatives. They began to see the necessity of tactics that would pull both conservatives and radicals into their orbit, turning them into mere variants of centrist liberalism. In this effort, they turned out to be hugely successful for a very long time—indeed until the much later world-revolution of 1968.

It was in the second half of the nineteenth century that we see the organizational emergence of what we consider to be antisystemic movements. There were two main varieties—social movements and nationalist movements—as well as less strong varieties such as women's movements and ethno/racial/religious movements. These movements were all antisystemic in one simple sense: They were struggling against the established power structures in an effort to bring into existence a more democratic, more egalitarian historical system than the existing one.

These movements were however deeply divided in terms of their analysis of how to define the groups that were most oppressed, and what were the priorities of achieving the objectives of one kind of movement relative to other kinds of movements. These debates between the various movements have persisted right up to today.

One fundamental debate was how to think about the role of the states in the achievement of a different kind of historical system. There were those who argued that states were structures established by the elites of the system, mechanisms by which the elites controlled the others. States were therefore an enemy, to be shunned, and against which the movements must ceaselessly struggle. The principal tactic therefore must be to educate and transform the psychology of those who were oppressed, to turn them into permanent militants who would embody and transmit to others the values of a democratic, egalitarian world.

Against this view were arrayed those who agreed that the state was the instrument of the ruling elites, and for this very reason could not be ignored. Unless the movements seized power in the states, the ruling classes would use their strength—military and police strength, economic strength, and cultural strength—to crush the antisystemic movements. This group insisted that, precisely in order to transform the historical system, movements had first to achieve control of the state. We came to call this the "two-step strategy"—first obtain state power, then transform the world.

The second argument was between the social movements and the nationalist movements. The former insisted that the modern world-system was a capitalist system and that therefore the basic struggle was a class struggle within each country between the owners of capital (the "bourgeoisie") and those who had only their own labor power to sell (the "proletariat"). It was between these two groups that the democratic and egalitarian gulf was enormous and ever-increasing. It followed that the natural "historical actor" of transformation was the proletariat.

The nationalist movements assessed the world differently. They saw a world in which states were controlled either by an internal dominant ethnic group or by external forces. They argued that the most oppressed persons were the "peoples" who were denied their democratic rights and consequently were living in an ever-increasingly unequalitarian historical system. It followed that the natural "historical actors" were the oppressed nations. Only when these oppressed nations came to

power in their own state could there be expectations of a more democratic, more egalitarian historical system.

These two splits—that between those who abjured state power versus those who sought to obtain it as the first step; and that between those who saw the proletariat versus those who saw the oppressed nations as the natural historical actors—were not the only matters under debate. Both the social movements and the nationalist movements insisted on the importance of "vertical" structures. That is, they both insisted that the road to success in obtaining state power was to have only one antisystemic structure in any state (actual state for the social movements, virtual state for the nationalist movements). They said that unless all other kind of antisystemic movements subordinated themselves to the single "principal" movement, the objective could not be achieved.

For example, take the women's or feminist movements. These movements insisted on the inequalitarian and undemocratic relationship of men and women throughout history and particularly in the modern world-system. They argued that the struggle against what was termed "patriarchy" was at least as important as any other struggle and was their primary concern as movements. Against this view, both the social and the nationalist movements argued that asserting an independent role for feminist movements weakened their cause, which took priority, and was "objectively" counter-revolutionary.

The "vertical" movements insisted that there could be women's auxiliaries of the social or of the nationalist movements, but that the realization of the feminist demands could only occur as a consequence of the realization of the demands of the "principal" historical actor (the proletariat or the oppressed nation). In effect, the vertical movements counseled deferral of the struggles of the feminist movements.

The same logic would be used against other kinds of movements—such as trade-union movements or movements of so-called "minorities" as socially-defined (whether by race, ethnicity, religion, or language). All these movements had to accept subordination to the principal movement and deferral of their demands. They could only be adjuncts of the principal movements, or else they were considered to be counter-revolutionary.

When these various movements first came to be large enough to be politically noticeable (circa the 1870s), the most important reality about all of them was that they were perhaps noticeable but in fact organizationally and politically quite weak. The idea that they could actually achieve state power seemed a matter of faith, unsustained by a sober assessment of the real *rapport de forces* in the modern world-system.

While their political power did increase slowly from then on, they still seemed relatively weak as late as 1945. It is therefore somewhat astonishing that in the period 1945-1970 the vertical antisystemic movements actually did achieve the first of the two steps. They did indeed come to state power, almost everywhere. This sudden shift in the political arena of the modern world-system warrants a careful explanation.

The end of the Second World War marked the onset of two important cyclical shifts in the history of the modern world-system. It marked both the beginning of a Kondratieff A-phase and the moment of undisputed hegemony in the world-system of the United States. The success of the antisystemic movements cannot be understood without placing it in this context. It is most revealing to start with U.S. hegemony, which can be considered a quasi-monopoly of geopolitical power.

Hegemonic cycles are very long occurrences. But the high point, true hegemony, is actually rather brief. There have in fact only been three such high points in the history of the modern world-system—the United Provinces in the mid-seventeenth century, the United Kingdom in the mid-nineteenth century, and the United States in the mid-twentieth century. Each lasted perhaps for 25-50 years or so. The phase prior to the achievement of full hegemony has been each time a "thirty years' war" between a land-based power and a sea/air-based power. The "thirty years' war" in the most recent case was that between Germany and the United States from 1914-1945, and ended as we know, in the total defeat of Germany.

Hegemony is built on the existence of an enormous economic advantage, combined with political, cultural, and military strength. As of 1945, the United States was able to assemble all this to its advantage. In 1945, the United States was the only important industrial power in the entire world that had escaped major destruction of its plants. Indeed, on the contrary, wartime production had made their productive enterprises more extensive and efficient than ever. At this time U.S. production was so efficient that it could sell its leading products in other countries at prices lower than these countries could produce these products themselves, despite the costs involved in transportation. These U.S.-based quasi-monopolies were guaranteed by the active role of the state in protecting and enhancing their exclusive privileges.

The result was the largest (by far) expansion of the world production of surplus-value in the 500-year-long history of the modern world-system. While the United States was the principal beneficiary—its state, its enterprises, its residents—the worldwide rise in production produced benefits to most countries, if to a far lesser degree than to the United States.

The problem with quasi-monopolies in leading products is that they are self-liquidating over time, for several reasons. The first is that the high rate of capital accumulation made these quasi-monopolies a very tempting target for penetration by other producers who sought to enter the world market. These other producers stole or bought technical knowledge and used their influence on other governments to counter the protectionist policies of the government primarily protecting the quasi-monopolies.

Furthermore, the U.S. government actively aided west European and Japanese economic reconstruction in order to provide customers for U.S. production as well as to maintain the political loyalty of these de facto satellite regimes. In addition, as long as the quasi-monopolies were in effective operation, the leading enterprises feared most of all any stoppage of production, since stoppages involved irrecoverable losses. Hence it made short-term economic sense to make wage concessions to their workers rather than risk strikes. But of course over time this raised the cost of production and lessened the advantage vis-à-vis potential competitors.

By the 1960s, the improved economic position of western Europe and Japan could be observed in the dramatic inversion in one key leading industry, automobiles. Whereas in 1950 U.S. manufacturers could undersell competitors in their home markets, by the mid-1960s the reverse was true. West European and Japanese automobile producers began to penetrate the U.S. domestic market.

For all these reasons, others over time did in fact succeed in penetrating the world market, thereby increasing competition. This no doubt benefited some consumers, but at the same time it reduced the level of profitability of the erstwhile quasi-monopolies. U.S. producers had to give

thought to how they could minimize the losses they were incurring in the rate of capital accumulation.

It was not helpful to U.S. capitalists that, as their quasi-monopoly of production was disappearing, so was the quasi-monopoly of U.S. geopolitical strength, which was beginning its inevitable decline. To understand how this happened, we have to see how it was established in the first place circa 1945. We have already mentioned the superiority in productive efficiency and the fact that this advantage underlay its political and cultural dominance.

There was however one last element in securing full hegemony, which was the military sphere. The fact that prior to 1939, the United States had *not* invested heavily in military technology and manpower had been one of the key elements in enabling them to achieve productive dominance. The Second World War changed that allocation of state revenues. The United States developed atomic weapons and displayed their power by using them against Japan. However, sentiment within the United States was heavily in favor of reducing the size of the armed forces.

The problem for the United States was that a hegemonic power cannot abstain from military commitment. It comes with the position. And in 1945 there was one other power that had a very strong military, the U.S.S.R., and unlike the United States it showed no signs of rushing to dismantle it. It was clear that, if the United States was to exercise hegemony, it had to make some deal with the Soviet Union.

They did make such a deal, and we have dubbed it "Yalta." This refers not really to the actual decisions of this meeting in February 1945 of what were then called the Big Three—the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. "Yalta" was rather a set of unsigned tacit arrangements to which the United States and the Soviet Union were committed and which were maintained in place for quite some time.

There were in fact three such tacit arrangements. The first was that there would be a division of the world in terms of zones of influence and control. The line would be drawn more or less where the two armies ended up in 1945, a division in the middle of Germany going from north to south called the Oder-Neisse line, and the 38th Parallel in Korea. In effect, the Soviet Union would have primacy in about one-third of the globe and the United States in the other two-thirds. The deal was that neither side would try to change these frontiers by the use of military force.

The second part of the deal had to do with economic reconstruction. As we noted, U.S. producers needed customers. The Marshall Plan and similar arrangements with Japan provided these customers. The tacit U.S.-Soviet agreement was that the United States would provide such economic assistance to countries in its zone but not to any country in the Soviet zone, where the Soviet Union could arrange matters as it saw fit.

Finally, the third part of the deal was the so-called Cold War. The Cold War refers to the mutual denunciation of both sides, each proclaiming its virtues and its inevitable long-term ideological victory as well as the evil machinations of the other side. The deal was that this was not to be taken seriously, or rather that the function of the mutual denunciations was meant in no way to countermand the first part of the deal—the *de facto* freezing of frontiers indefinitely. The actual objective of Cold War rhetoric was not to transform the other side but to maintain the loyalty of the satellites on each side.

Although the first part of the deal lasted until the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the second part until at least the 1970s, the cozy arrangement began to be eroded by several factors. The

de facto international status quo was not at all to the liking of a number of countries in what we then called the Third World. The first major dissident was the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which straightforwardly rejected Stalin's advice to come to a power-sharing deal with the Kuomintang. Instead, the CCP's army entered Shanghai, and it proclaimed the People's Republic of China.

This dissidence was followed by the insistence of the Viet Minh to achieve control over all of Vietnam, the insistence of the Algerian *Front de Libération Nationale* to obtain total independence, and the insistence of the Cubans to arm themselves against U.S. intrusion. In each of these cases, it was the Third World power that was forcing the hand of the Soviet Union and not the other way around. On the other hand, the Soviet Union and the United States successfully sought to ensure that there was no use of nuclear weapons, which would have violated the pledge of mutual restraint.

The Vietnam War, in which the United States committed its troops actively, weakened U.S. hegemony in several ways. The United States paid a high economic price for the war. And it turned U.S. public opinion against involvement there (and subsequently elsewhere—the so-called Vietnam syndrome). Furthermore, the United States lost the war, which strengthened the views of others around the world that U.S. military power was less effective than it had seemed to be—incarnated in the concept of the "paper tiger."

It is in this context that the world-revolution of 1968 took place. It was a world-revolution in the simple sense that it occurred over most of the world, in each of what were at the time considered three separate "worlds." And it was a world-revolution in the remarkable repetitions of two main themes almost everywhere, of course garbed in different local languages.

The first main theme was the rejection of U.S. hegemony ("imperialism") by the revolutionaries, with however an important twist. These revolutionaries equally condemned the "collusion" of the Soviet Union with U.S. imperialism, which was how they interpreted the tacit Yalta accords. In effect, they were rejecting the ideological themes of the Cold War and minimizing the difference between the two so-called superpowers.

The second main theme was the denunciation of the Old Left (that is, Communist and Social-Democratic parties and the national liberation movements) on the grounds that these movements were not in reality antisystemic but were also collusive with the system.

They pointed to the historic two-step strategy and said that the Old Left movements had in fact achieved the first step—state power—but has not in any serious way changed the world. Economic inequalities were still enormous and growing, internally and internationally. The states were not more democratic, possibly even less so. And class distinctions had not disappeared, merely renamed, the bourgeoisie becoming the *Nomenklatura*, or some equivalent term. The revolutionaries rejected therefore the Old Left movements as part of the problem, not part of the solution.

While it is true that the revolutionaries were not able to remain in a position of real political strength very long and were suppressed as movements, just like those in 1848, their efforts did have one absolutely major consequence. The world-revolution of 1968 transformed the geoculture. The dominance of centrist liberalism over the two other ideologies came to an end. Centrist liberalism did not disappear; it was simply reduced to being once again only one of three. The radical left and the conservative right re-emerged as fully autonomous actors on the world scene.

What happened next to the movements was largely the consequence of the global economic stagnation of the Kondratieff downturn. The attempts to create new movements of the global left—the various Maoisms, the so-called New Left Green movements, the neo-insurrectionist

movements—all turned out to have fleeting support in the face of the economic difficulties that had suddenly become so central to people's lives, again almost everywhere.

Meanwhile, the United States was undertaking a major shift of strategy in order to slow down the rate of its decline. To do this, the United States launched a threefold set of projects. The first had to do with its relation to its erstwhile principal satellites, western Europe and Japan. It offered a new arrangement to the now economically much more powerful and therefore politically more restless regimes. The United States would redefine their role, turning them into "partners" in the geopolitical arena. Institutions were created to implement this new relationship, such as the Trilateral Commission, the G-7, and the World Economic Forum at Davos. The U.S. offer was that the partners might engage in geopolitical moves of which the United States disapproved—for example, West Germany's *Ostpolitik*, the building of the oil pipeline between the Soviet Union and western Europe, a different policy towards Cuba. The proviso was that this policy independence would be limited and did not go too far.

The second reorientation was the abandonment of the advocacy of developmentalism. In the 1950s and 1960s, everyone (the West, the Soviet bloc, and the Third World) seemed to endorse the concept of national "development"—by which was meant essentially increased urbanization, the growth of an educated stratum, protection of infant industries, and the construction of state institutions and bureaucracies. Suddenly, the global language radically changed. Production for export was to replace protection of infant industries. State enterprises were to be privatized. State expenditures on education and health were to be radically reduced. And above all, capital was to be permitted to flow freely across frontiers. This set of prescriptions received the name of the Washington Consensus, about which Mrs. Thatcher famously proclaimed: "There Is No Alternative" or TINA. The mandate was enforced primarily by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which refused to give states the loans they badly needed because of the economic downturn unless they agreed to observe these new rules.

The third part of the new strategy was to erect a new world order that ended what is called nuclear proliferation. Essentially, the United States had to accept the reality that the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council all had nuclear weapons, but they wished the list to stop there. It made this offer to all other countries. A treaty would provide that the five nuclear powers would seek both to reduce their nuclear weapons and offer aid to the other signatories in the obtaining of nuclear power for peaceful uses to all the rest of the world, provided the others abandoned all pretention to obtaining nuclear weapons. As we know, four countries refused to sign the treaty—Israel, India, Pakistan, and South Africa. But many others acceded and ended their programs.

In fact this threefold redefinition of U.S. strategy, followed essentially by all U.S. presidents from Nixon to Clinton, was partially successful. It did slow down decline without stopping it entirely. The newly-regenerated conservative right, now being called neo-liberals, found this new geopolitical framework very conducive to the rapid growth of their movements. World discourse moved rightwards steadily. Regimes that didn't adjust to this new discourse fell from power. Finally, what had been symbolically defined as the symbol of successful Old Left politics and considered (by both partisans and opponents) to be unchangeable—the Soviet Union—collapsed from within.

This collapse was hailed in the Western world as their victory in the Cold War. This interpretation forgot that the whole point of the Cold War had not been to "win" it but to maintain it as a pillar of the world-system. It turned out in fact that the collapse of the Soviet Union would both accelerate the decline of U.S. hegemony and undermine the movements of the neo-liberal right.

The crucial geopolitical event was the first Gulf War (1990-1991), which commenced with the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Iraq had for almost a century contested the creation of Kuwait as a separate state by the British. However, it never was in a position to do much about it. During the period in which the Baath party had been in power, the Iraqi regime was supported by the Soviet Union. It had however also been supported by the United States during the 1980's when the United States encouraged it to engage in the futile war with Iran.

As of 1990, the situation from the Iraqi point of view was dismal. They had paid an enormous price for the destructive war and now owed considerable sums to creditors, one of the largest of which was Kuwait. In addition, they believed Kuwait was appropriating Iraqi oil through slant drilling. But most importantly, the collapse of the Soviet Union, then in process, removed the constraints that Iraq would have felt during the Cold War. It seemed a propitious moment to liquidate Iraqi debts and undo the long-resented "loss" of Kuwait to Iraq.

We know what happened. The United States, after initial hesitation, mobilized the troops necessary to push the Iraqis out of Kuwait. This very action, however, revealed U.S. geopolitical weakness in two ways. First, the United States was unable to bear the costs of its own participation and was subsidized at a 90% level by four other countries—Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Germany, and Japan. And secondly, U.S. President George H.W. Bush was faced with the question of whether victorious U.S. troops would proceed to Baghdad or not. He prudently decided that this would be politically and militarily unwise. U.S. action in Iraq thereafter was limited to the imposition of various sanctions. Saddam Hussein remained in power.

Meanwhile, the dismantlement of the Soviet Union and the possibility for all its ex-satellites to pursue independent policies led to a rapid adoption by all of them of neo-liberal policies. However, within a few years, the negative effects of these neo-liberal policies on the real standard of living of the lower strata provoked a reaction wherein erstwhile Communist parties (now renamed) returned to power to pursue a mildly social-democratic program. At the same time, rightist nationalist parties began to gain strength as well. The magic realization of a "Western" style of government with a "Western" level of real economic uplift turned out to be very difficult to realize, and many of these governments became quite unstable.

It is at that point that the antisystemic movements began to revive. The initial reaction to the collapse of the Soviet Union had been an emotional shock and even depression for left movements everywhere, even those that had been long very critical of the Soviet experience. After however a few years of this morose perspective, new light appeared on the horizon for the global left. Some movements refused the sense of inevitability of a triumphal right discourse. There could be a renewed global left discourse.

Thus far, we have been discussing the impact on antisystemic movements of the global stagnation that the Kondratieff B-phase involves. However, there was a further factor, which is the result not of cyclical shifts in the world-economy but of the long-term secular trends. In the ongoing life of historical systems, each cyclical downturn returns not to the previous low point but always to a point somewhat higher. Think of it as two steps upward, one step backward on percentage curves

that move towards the asymptote of 100 percent. Over the long term, the secular trends must then reach a point where it is difficult to advance further. At this point the system has moved far from equilibrium. We can call this point the beginning of the structural crisis of the historical system.

The short explanation of why historical capitalism has reached its structural crisis is the steady increase over time of the three fundamental costs of production: personnel, inputs, and taxation. Producers make their profits by keeping the total of these costs below the prices at which they are able to sell their products. As these costs rise over time, they reach levels at which the willingness of prospective buyers to purchase the goods is reached, at which point it is no longer possible to accumulate capital via production.

The three costs are each complex, since each is composed of several different subcosts. Personnel costs have always been the one that is most transparent. And among these costs, that of unskilled labor has been the one most discussed. Historically, costs of unskilled labor have risen as workers in Kondratieff A-phases found some way to engage in syndical action. The response of producers in Kondratieff B-phases has been the runaway factory, moving production to areas of "historically lower wages." This curious phrase actually refers to the ability of entrepreneurs to attract laborers from rural areas less tied into the world labor market who would work for lower real wages because these lower real wages offered higher real income than their previous work. After a number of years, these workers became more accustomed to their new environments and learned how to engage in syndical action. At this point, producers would begin to flee to still other areas. This solution for the entrepreneurs depended on the availability of these rural workers. The supply has now begun to be exhausted, as can be measured by the considerable deruralization of the world-system today.

The cost of unskilled labor has only been one part of personnel costs. A second part has been the relentlessly increasing costs of intermediate personnel, which were needed both organizationally to meet the complexities of larger corporate structures and politically to serve as a barrier to the syndical demands of unskilled labor.

The solution to increasing costs of unskilled labor has been to eliminate them almost totally from the work force through mechanization. In recent years this has also come to be the solution to increasing costs of intermediate personnel, whose tasks are also being taken over by mechanization. It is actually in the third personnel cost, that of top managers, that the biggest increase in personnel costs has occurred. Those in managerial positions have been able to use their positions as gatekeepers to exact enormous rents, which are extracted from the profits of investors (the shareholders). The bottom line is that today personnel costs are extremely high compared with past costs and constantly increasing.

The story is similar in the cost of inputs. Producers have tried to keep these costs low by externalizing three major types of expenditures: getting rid of toxic waste, renewing raw materials, and building infrastructure. They were able for some 500 years to deal with toxic waste simply by dumping it into public space. But the world has nearly run out of public space, which has led to a worldwide environmentalist movement pressure to clean up the toxicity. This could only be done by the states, which involved the need for higher taxes. It also led the states to seek to force producers to internalize the costs, which has cut into profitability. The exhaustion of public space is analogous to the exhaustion of rural zones largely uninvolved in the market economy.

Similarly, the renewal of raw materials was not a problem until the combination of 500 years of usage that was not renewed and an expanded world population led rather suddenly to worldwide acute shortages of energy, water, forestation, and basic foods (fish and meat). The shortages have led in turn to acute political struggles over distribution both within and between countries.

Finally, infrastructure is a crucial element in commercial outlets for production. However, here again producers historically have paid only very partially for their use of the infrastructure, foisting the costs on others, especially the states. Given the ever-rising costs of repairing and extending the infrastructure, the states have found themselves unable to bear the costs, which has led to a serious deterioration worldwide of necessary aids to transport and communications.

Finally, taxes have been steadily rising as well, despite what seems to be constant and enormous tax evasion. First of all, there are multiple kinds of governmental taxes—not only the national taxes that are widely noted but all kinds of local and intermediate structure taxes. These are used, when all is said and done, not merely to pay for the bureaucracy but also to meet the ever-increasing demands of the antisystemic movements for educational and health services and the provision of lifetime income guarantees such as pensions and unemployment insurance, which collectively constitute the "welfare state." Despite all the reductions of welfare state provisions that have been forced upon the states, the reality is that these expenditures continue to be significantly larger worldwide than they were in the past.

Nor does governmental taxation exhaust the story. We are daily bombarded with reports of corruption not only in relatively poor countries but even more in relatively rich ones, where there is more money to steal. From the point of view of the entrepreneur, the costs of corruption are every bit as much a tax as those imposed by governments. Finally, the constantly expanding reality of mafia-type operations resulting from the other constraints (especially the shortages) imposes real taxes on the entrepreneur.

As the costs of production have steadily risen (in the pattern of two steps forward, one step backward), the ability to raise the prices of products have been seriously limited by the vastly increased polarization of world income and wealth. Effective demand has fallen as persons have been eliminated from the work force. And as the possibilities of capital accumulation diminish, there has been increasing fear about survival and therefore willingness of both individual consumers and entrepreneurial producers to risk expenditures, which further reduces effective demand. Hence, the world-system arrives at its structural crisis, in which neither the underclasses nor the capitalist entrepreneurs find acceptable returns within the modern world-system. Their attention turns to the alternatives available.

Once we are into a structural crisis, the system becomes chaotic. That is, the curves begin to fluctuate wildly. The system can no longer function in its traditional manner. It bifurcates, which means two things. One, the system is absolutely certain to go out of existence entirely, but it is intrinsically impossible to know what the successor system or systems will be. One can only outline in general terms what are the two alternative ways in which the chaotic situation can be resolved into a new systemic order.

Two, the bifurcation leads to a great political struggle concerning which of the two alternative possibilities the totality of participants in the system will "choose." That is to say, while we cannot predict the outcome, we can affect it. In terms of the role of the antisystemic movements, the turning-point occurred on Jan. 1, 1995, when the neo-Zapatistas (the EZLN in its Spanish

initials) rose up in Chiapas and proclaimed the autonomy of the indigenous peoples. Why however on Jan. 1, 1995? Because it was the day on which the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) came into operation. By choosing that day, the EZLN was sending the following message to Mexico and the world. The dramatic renewal of the 500-year-old demand of the peoples of Chiapas for self-government was being aimed both at opposing imperialism throughout the world and at Mexico's government for its participation in NAFTA as well as for its oppression of the peoples of Chiapas.

The EZLN emphasized that they had no interest in seizing power in the Mexican state. Quite the contrary! They wished to withdraw from the state and both construct and reconstruct the local ways of life. The EZLN was quite realistic. They realized they were not strong enough militarily to wage a war. Therefore, when sympathetic forces within Mexico pushed for a truce between the Mexican government and the EZLN, they fully agreed. To be sure, the Mexican government has never lived up to the truce agreement, but it has been constrained in how far it could go because of the support the EZLN was able to muster.

This support was the result of the second major theme the EZLN pursued. It asserted its own support for all movements of every kind everywhere that were in pursuit of greater democracy and equality. And the EZLN convened so-called intergalactic encounters in Chiapas to which they invited the entire global left. The EZLN also refused sectarian exclusions in these meetings—the pattern of the Old Left. They preached instead inclusiveness and mutual tolerance among the movements of the global left.

The revival of the global left received its second strong reinforcement in 1999. One of the principal objectives of the global right had been to institutionalize the Washington Consensus by adopting within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO) a treaty that guaranteed what were called intellectual property rights in all signatory countries. This would have effectively barred these countries from producing their own less expensive products for their own use and for sale to other countries—for example, in pharmaceuticals.

There were two remarkable aspects to Seattle. First of all, there was a major protest movement surrounding the meeting, which was composed of three forces that had hitherto never joined forces: the labor movement (and specifically the AFL-CIO), environmentalists, and anarchists. In addition, the members of these groups who were present were largely U.S. persons, giving the lie to the argument that only in the Global South could one mobilize opposition to neo-liberalism.

The second remarkable aspect is that the protests succeeded. They enabled some sympathetic delegations within the WTO meeting to hold out against adopting the new treaty. The WTO meeting disbursed without a treaty. It was a failure. And ever since, any attempt to adopt the treaty has been blocked. The WTO became irrelevant. Furthermore, the Seattle protests led to widespread copying of the protest technique at international meetings of all kinds, to the point that conveners of such meetings began to schedule them for remote locations where they had a better possibility of blocking the presence and size of such protest movements.

This then brings us to the third major development in the second wind of antisystemic movements—after Chiapas and Seattle came Porto Alegre and the World Social Forum (WSF) of 2001. The initial call for the 2001 meeting was a joint effort of a network of seven Brazilian organizations (many of left Catholic inspiration but also the principal trade-union) and the ATTAC movement in France. They chose the name of World Social Forum in opposition to the World

Economic Forum (WEF) that had been meeting at Davos for some 30 years and was a major locus of mutual discussion and planning of the world's elites. They decided to meet at the same time as the Davos meetings to emphasize the contrast and they chose Porto Alegre as the site of the 2001 meeting to underline the political importance of the Global South.

The organizers made the crucial decision that the meeting was open to all those who were against imperialism and neo-liberalism. They also made the more controversial decision of excluding political parties and insurrectionary movements. Finally, they decided not to have officers, elections, or resolutions. This was in order to frame a "horizontalist" approach to organizing the world's antisystemic forces, as opposed to the "verticalist" and therefore exclusionary approach of the Old Left movements. To summarize all this, they chose as the motto of the meeting the now famous slogan, "Another world is possible."

Porto Alegre was unexpectedly a major success. The conveners had hoped to attract 5000 people and they attracted 10,000. To be sure, the initial participants were heavily from Brazil and close-by countries and from France and Italy. But they immediately did two things. They decided to continue with the Porto Alegre meetings, seeking to expand the participation geographically. And they created an international council, more or less by co-option, to oversee the organization of future meetings. In the years that followed, the WSF met in different parts of the Global South and with an enormous increase of the number of participants. In this sense, it has been a continuing success.

However as the first decade of the twenty-first century went by, the dilemmas of the WSF came to the fore. They can best be understood in the context of the evolution of the world-system itself. There were two major elements in this evolution. The first was the bubble crisis in the U.S. housing market in 2007-2008, which led commentators around the world to recognize the existence of some kind of "crisis" in the world-system. The second was the economic and geopolitical rise of the "emerging" economies—in particular but not only the so-called BRICS (or Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).

Together, the two issues led to a public debate about the enormous wealth gap and about the future of the geopolitical dominance of the Global North—and to great uncertainty among commentators about how to assess these events. Were we to think of it as fundamental change or as a passing bump on the world-economic and geopolitical scene? The antisystemic movements and their partisans have been equally ambivalent about how to assess the debate about inequality and the rise of the "emerging" nations. It has also led to an acute debate within the WSF about its successes and failures.

The antisystemic movements now face a number of serious dilemmas. The first is whether or not to recognize the existence of a structural crisis of historical capitalism. The second is about what should be the priorities of their short-term and middle-term activities. The most noticeable thing about antisystemic movements in the second decade of the twenty-first century is the degree to which the debates that embroiled them in the last third of the twentieth century, once exorcised in the world-revolution of 1968, have returned to plague them, virtually unchanged.

There were three debates that we outlined earlier. The first concerned the role of the states in the achievement of a different kind of historical system. The second was that between social movements and nationalist movements about the leading historical actor in the struggle for a more just historical order. The third was between the verticalists who insisted that multiple oppressed groups had to subordinate their demands to the priorities of the principal historical actor and the

horizontalists who insisted that the demands of all oppressed groups were equally important and equally urgent, and should not be deferred.

Well, here we are again! Inside the WSF and in the larger global justice movement, there are those who shun in every way state power and those who insist that obtaining state power is an essential prerequisite. There are those who insist on the priority of the class struggle (1% vs. 99%) and those who insist on the priority of the nationalist struggle (South vs. North). And there are those who are verticalist, insisting on joint political action whether within the WSF or the wider global justice movement, and those who are horizontalist, insisting on not neglecting the truly forgotten groups, the lowest global strata.

These debates have been most visible in Latin America because it has become a prime locus of global developments on all these fronts most vividly. For various reasons (including the decline of U.S. geopolitical power), there have come to power in the twenty-first century a large number of governments that are on the left or at least left of center. There has also been a movement, led in different ways both by Venezuela and by Brazil, to create South American and Latin American structures (UNASUR and CELAC) that excluded the United States and Canada. There have also been steps towards creating regional economic zones and structures (Mercosur, Bancosur).

At the same time, these governments of the left, center-left, and of course the few on the political right) have all pursued developmentalist policies, which involve extractive policies that violate the traditional zones of indigenous peoples. These latter groups have accused the left governments of being as bad in this respect as their rightwing predecessors. The left governments in turn have accused the indigenous movements of acting objectively and deliberately in accord with rightwing internal groups and the United States geopolitically.

The net result is a divided Global Left in the political struggle over the new systemic order it is trying to build by tilting the bifurcation in the direction of a relatively democratic, relatively egalitarian world-system (or world-systems). Of course, the Global Right is also engaged in an internal debate about tactics, but that is of little comfort to the Global Left.

One way to analyze the options for the Global Left is to put them in a time frame that distinguishes short-term priorities and middle-term priorities. All of us live in the short-term. We need to feed ourselves, house ourselves, sustain our health, and just survive. No movement can hope to attract support if it doesn't recognize this urgent need for everyone. It follows, in my view, that all movements must do everything they can to alleviate immediate distress. I call this action to "minimize the pain." This requires all sorts of short-term compromises, but it is essential. At the same time, one must be very clear that minimizing the pain in no way transforms the system. This was the classic social-democratic illusion. It merely minimizes the pain.

In the middle-run (that is, the next 20-40 years), the debate is fundamental and total. There is no compromise. One side or the other will win. I call this the battle between the spirit of Davos and the spirit of Porto Alegre. The spirit of Davos calls for a new non-capitalist system that retains its worst features—hierarchy, exploitation, and polarization. They could well install a world-system that is worse than our present one. The spirit of Porto Alegre seeks a system that is relatively democratic and relatively egalitarian. I say "relatively" because a totally flat world will never exist, but we can do much, much better than we have done heretofore. There is, in this sense, *possible* progress.

We do not know who will win in this struggle. What we do know is that, in a chaotic world, every nano-action at every nano-moment on every nano-issue affects the outcome. That is why I

continue to end discussion of these issues with the metaphor of the butterfly. We learned in the last half-century that every fluttering of a butterfly's wings changes the world climate. In this transition to a new world order, we are all little butterflies and therefore the chances of tilting the bifurcation in our direction depends on us. The odds are fifty-fifty. It follows that our efforts as activists are not merely useful; they are the essential element in our struggle for a better world.

**IN MEMORIAM:
JANET L. ABU-LUGHOD'S
CONTRIBUTIONS TO WORLD-SYSTEMS RESEARCH**

Contributors: *Christopher Chase-Dunn, Barry Gills, Saskia Sassen, Immanuel Wallerstein*

Christopher Chase-Dunn
University of California Riverside
Christopher.Chase-Dunn@ucr.edu

I would like affirm that we should remember the important contributions of Janet Abu-Lughod to world-systems research. Janet was an urbanist. She loved cities. Her time in Cairo and her research on the history of that old city made her very aware of the pervasive Eurocentrism of most social science. Her research on the thirteenth century was an important contribution to the strong wave of anti-Eurocentric scholarship that emerged in the last decades of the 20th century. I came to know Janet when she organized a session on urban research that was held at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association in San Antonio, Texas in 1984. She included my paper on “Levels of urban primacy in zones of the world-system since 1800” in which I discussed the issues involved in spatially bounding the modern world-system. Janet was already working on her study of the 13th century, published in 1989 as *Before European Hegemony*.

I am also grateful for Janet’s careful comparative studies of American global cities, but it was her 13th century book that raised the most important issues for world-systems analysis. Elson Boles (2012) has written the best critical examination of the main issues raised in Janet’s study of Eurasian interaction networks. The most important theoretical issue concerns differences between Abu-Lughod and Wallerstein regarding the spatial bounding of world-systems. Abu-Lughod uses interaction networks, mainly long-distance trade, whereas Wallerstein uses a hierarchical regional division of labor. The upshot of this dispute is that both conceptual approaches have productive uses for explaining the causes of world-systems evolution. Wallerstein’s (2011: Chapter 6) fascinating analysis of why Russia was an “external arena” in the sixteenth century despite that it was exporting the same goods to Europe as were being exported by peripheralized Poland, is a fascinating case in favor of his method of bounding. But Abu-Lughod’s focus on trade, especially when combined with a focus on geopolitical interaction among polities (see Wilkinson 1987; Chase-Dunn and Jorgenson 2003), is also a fruitful method that facilitates the comparative study of regional world-systems small and large. Another way in which Abu-Lughod helped to clear the way forward in world-systems analysis was by rejecting the notion that there has always been a global (Earth-wide) system (*ala* Frank and Gills 1994; Modelski 2003 and Lenski 2005). She agreed with Wallerstein that as we go back in time there were multiple regional systems that should be studied separately and compared. Janet Abu-Lughod was a leader in the confrontation between parochial core-centric social science and a truly anthropocentric approach. As my colleagues’ reflections below aptly demonstrate, her books are well worth reading and the issues she confronted are still front and center.

Janet Abu-Lughod and the World System: The History of World System Development and the Development of World System History

Barry K. Gills

University of Helsinki, Finland

Barry.Gills@helsinki.fi

Janet L. Abu-Lughod, in *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350*, made a remarkable contribution to scholarship, earning for this seminal work the status of a true classic. The intellectual influence and significance of this book was both pivotal and permanent, influencing the emergence and consolidation of post-Eurocentric perspectives of global history, which radically reinterpret the origins and historical development of the world system. What follows is a set of personal reflections on the intellectual context, arguments and framework of analysis put forward in this deservedly famous work.

The Intellectual Context of Abu-Lughod's World System

After completing a millennial history of Cairo (Abu-Lughod 1971) Abu-Lughod concluded that "...the Eurocentric view of the Dark Ages was ill-conceived. If the lights went out in Europe, they were certainly still shining brightly in the Middle East" (Abu-Lughod 1989, p. ix). She realized that Cairo "was only one apex in a highly developed system of urban civilization" (Abu-Lughod 1989: x). This insight led her to reconsider the role and character of medieval cities more generally, and to reject the Eurocentrism of Henri Pirenne and Max Weber and any hierarchically dichotomous analysis of (superior) Occidental versus (inferior) Oriental cities. She was also at "dis-ease" with Marx's treatment of the origins of capitalism. So when she came to read the first two volumes of Immanuel Wallerstein's path-breaking study *The Modern World-System* (Wallerstein 1974;1979), she came away with "a gnawing sense of Kuhnian anomaly, since they tended to treat the European-dominated world system that formed in the long sixteenth century *as if it had appeared de novo*" (ibid, emphasis added). Her historical revisionism stemmed from a realization that there was "no part of the so-called 'Third World' in which the received wisdom of ethnocentric western scholarship not had been called into question by 'subalterns'... who find in their own histories not the stasis of tradition but the dynamics of orthogenic change, not the backwardness vis-a`-vis the west assumed so off-handedly in much western scholarship, but *the development of underdevelopment* through subordination" (Abu-Lughod 1989:viii, emphasis added).

In 1984 she began her determined quest for answers. She was self-conscious of the magnitude of this task, knowing it was perilous scholarly ground. Most addressed various parts of the puzzle, whereas Abu-Lughod was explicitly attempting to "piece together in systematic fashion the connections among them" (Abu-Lughod 1989: xi), and construct an over-arching account of the world system "by looking at the *connections between* geographic entities that are usually treated by

separate sets of specialists...” (ibid:ix). The breath of the sources which she proceeded to use in a remarkable three year period in the mid-1980s is testament to her excellence as a researcher¹ and to the support of a circle of supportive scholars which included William H. McNeill, Immanuel Wallerstein, K.N. Chaudhuri, Andre Gunder Frank, and Charles Tilly, among many others.

The intellectual excitement surrounding her work began even before the book’s publication in 1989. There was a significant exchange between Abu-Lughod and several scholars in *Studies in Comparative International Development* (22 (Winter) 1987-88). Abu-Lughod presented her outline of the world system in the thirteenth century, and Andre Gunder Frank, William H. McNeill, James M. Blaut, Alastair Taylor and Antony de Souza, responded. Upon the book’s publication, Immanuel Wallerstein (1990) responded to Abu-Lughod’s “Restructuring the Premodern World System” in his comments in *Journal of World History* (1990: 249-56). Andre Gunder Frank enthusiastically contributed to that dialogue in *Journal of World History* and elsewhere, and in voluminous personal correspondence with Abu-Lughod.

Frank regarded Abu-Lughod as a key figure who had, “in pushing the starting date for the world system back to 1250” provided historical evidence and analysis that “cut into the gordian knot of the supposed break in world history at 1500” (1990). Frank’s engagement with Abu-Lughod in 1987-88 had a very important impact on his future direction. He began to ask a new question: Does the World-System begin before 1500? Frank joined together with the present author in 1989 to begin collaborating on a series of articles to elaborate a new world system (without a hyphen) framework.² We invited Abu-Lughod to a panel discussing her work, organized by the World Historical Systems Theory Group (within the International Studies Association), a new interdisciplinary circle of scholars analyzing long term and large scale patterns of social change in world history.³

Around the same time we invited her participation in a debate on world system analysis (Frank and Gills 1993), which included Wallerstein, Samir Amin, and David Wilkinson. There Abu-Lughod distinguished her position on issues of “discontinuity and persistence”; concerning the structural re-organization of world system(s); the role of regions as sub-systems in relation to the larger world system; her position on a “succession” of world systems (despite important continuities), and recapitulation of her argument that “The Fall of the East Precedes the Rise of the West”. In this collection Abu-Lughod argues that Wallerstein tends “to overemphasize the *discontinuity* between the Eurocentred capitalist world economy that began to come into being then and the system of world-empires and world-economies that had preceded it” (Abu-Lughod 1993:278). Wallerstein denied that pre-sixteenth century patterns of world trade could be understood as a world(-)system.

¹ Abu-Lughod carefully engaged with previous scholarship in general medieval studies. Moreover, she consulted specialist works covering Europe (and country cases: France, Flanders, and Italy), the Mediterranean, The Middle East (including the Arab World), Asia (including India, Southeast Asia, the Strait of Malacca, and China).

² See for example, Gills and Frank (1990; 1991) Gills and Frank (1992), and Gills and Frank (1994; 2011) which were the foundations for this approach.

³ The early core members of the World Historical Systems Theory Group included Christopher Chase-Dunn, Thomas D. Hall, Jonathan Friedman (and Kajsa Ekholm-Friedman), George Modelski, William R. Thompson, David Wilkinson, Robert A. Denemark, Stephen K. Sanderson, Sing C. Chew, Claudio Cioffi-Revilla, Alf Hornburg, Andrew Sherratt, Andre Gunder Frank and Barry K. Gills. The group’s scope and ambition was towards a “unified study of world system history” through “transdisciplinary cooperation” (Denemark et. al, eds. 2000).

In *Before European Hegemony*, Abu-Lughod had concluded that the 13th century world system of international trade and production was substantially complex and sophisticated. This included “the technology of shipping and navigation, the social organization of production and marketing, and the institutional arrangements for conducting business, such as partnerships, mechanisms for pooling capital, and techniques for monetization and exchange” (Abu-Lughod 1989:353). Thus, “No simple, deterministic explanation” or one that focused on “special technological, cultural, psychological, or even economic characteristics of European society” could be sufficient, “since they tend to ignore the contextual changes in the preexistent system” (*ibid*). The 13th century world system was characterized by co-existence and cooperation among several core regions and a variable set of cultural, social, religious, economic and political orders. However, “all seem to have permitted and indeed facilitated lively commerce, production, exchange, risk taking, and the like” (*ibid*, pp. 354-5). She is adamant that “the rise of the west was facilitated by the preexisting world economy it restructured.” (*ibid*:361) It was above all European “trade-cum-plunder” practices “that caused a basic transformation in the world system that had developed and persisted over some five centuries.” (*ibid*)

Frank and Gills found much to agree with in Abu- Lughod’s analysis. However, we emphasized *continuities* within one world system. Abu-Lughod at times seems to have sympathy with this position, but she added her own metaphor of “...a very long up-cycle with fluctuations that at times are so extreme that it is analytically useful to speak of ‘breaks’ and restructuring” (Abu-Lughod 1993:289).⁴ Both shared common ground in criticism of Wallerstein’s Eurocentric analysis of the origins of the world system, on the continuous role of capitalist practices within it, and the early and sophisticated participation of the “east”⁵ in world system history. Both put great emphasis on continuities and persistence of certain structural features and long-term patterns. Both agreed that the restructuring of the world exchange nexus away from the (millennia old) centrality of the East Mediterranean-Central Asian- India axis, towards a trans-Atlantic orientation, and the formation of new global transoceanic exchange routes (largely under European control) was a pivotal restructuring in world system history.

Abu-Lughod offered a highly complex and stimulating approach to “unevenness” and the interaction of various “cycles” within the world system. Her empirical mapping of diverse economic and political cycles lead her to conclude that “given this variability” scholars should not reify cycles (or regard Kondratieff waves’ 45-50 years) “as if they were forces in their own right” (Abu-Lughod 1989:356). “Rather, the theory we have been setting forth suggests that when there was a period of congruence among the upward cycles of related regions, these cycles moved synergistically” (*ibid*: 358-9). The linkages to the world system and their feedback effects “intensified local development,” and “the same was true in reverse,” i.e. whereby “declines in one (region or circuit) inevitably

⁴ The rest of the passage reads: “There is, then, no necessary contradiction between seeing the persistence and even improvement in economic activities over time *within a given region* and seeing that this region was falling increasingly below the average change for the system or the exponentially increasing shift in a region that, due to restructuring, was far outdistancing the subregion in question.” She concluded, “I urge study of not only the continuities at the subsystem level, but also the discontinuities most evident at large scale” (1993:289).

⁵ For a further critique of Eurocentric history and re-writing of world system history from a non-Euro-centric perspective, see Gunder Frank (1998). For Frank’s final work of world system history, See Andre Gunder Frank (2014) *ReOrienting the 19th Century: Global Economy in the Continuing Asian Age*.

contributed to declines elsewhere” precisely due to these linkages, and particularly in “contiguous parts that formed ‘trading partnerships’” (Abu-Lughod 1989:359).

Abu-Lughod’s theory of (world) systemic change

Abu-Lughod did much more than provide an empirical mapping of the production and exchange nexus of the medieval world system. She offers us an extremely rich and distinctive *theory of systemic change*. I will discuss the five main elements of this theory.

1. On the analytical centrality of “*connections*” in systemic change. She argues that contra the view that “independent” variables, such as “national character,” affect “dependent” ones, “systemic changes should rather be viewed as *shifts in the direction and configuration of central trends (or vectors)*.” “Such vectoral outcomes result from *the cumulative effect of multiple shifts* in smaller vectors, some of which are independent of one another but many of which derive from *interrelated or systemic causes*. In a system, it is the connections between the parts that must be studied. When these strengthen and reticulate, the system may be said to ‘rise,’ when they fray, the system declines, although it may later undergo reorganization and revitalization” (Abu-Lughod 1989:368, emphasis added).

2. On the succession of world systems in relation to *cumulative* aspects of reorganization: She argues that “...successive systems reorganize in a somewhat cumulative fashion, the lines and connections laid down in prior epochs tending to persist even though their significance and roles in the new system may be altered. Given cumulative technological change, which offers at least the potential to increase the range and speed of interactions, *systems tend to expand and become more integrated* unless major catastrophes interfere” (1989:368, emphasis added). She tends to vary the emphasis between continuity within a world system, and discontinuity between distinct configurations and *successive* world systems. She emphasizes that “*restructuring*, rather than *substitution*, is what happens when world systems succeed one another, albeit after intervening periods of disorganization” (1989:366). The “failure” of a world system refers more to the “declining efficacy and functioning of the ways in which they (the parts or regions) were formerly connected,” so that when a world system “*devolves*,” “[i]ts devolution was both caused by and a sign of the ‘decline’ of its constituent parts, with multiple feedback loops” (*ibid* pp. 366-7). Perhaps the most cogent passage on this topic is that on “rise and fall.” Her elegant and powerful formulation deserves quotation:

In the course of history, some nations, or at least groups within them, have gained relative power vis-à-vis others and have occasionally succeeded in setting the terms of their interactions with subordinates, whether by means of direct rule (empires), indirect supervision (what we today term neocolonialism), or through unequal influence on the internal policies of others (hegemony). When this happens, it is called a ‘rise’. Conversely, the loss of an advantageous position is referred to as a ‘decline,’ even if there is no real deterioration in absolute level of life...World systems do not rise and fall in the same way that nations, empires, or civilizations do. Rather, they rise when integration increases and they decline when connections along older pathways decay...the old parts live on and become the

materials out of which restructuring develops...such restructuring is said to occur when *players who were formerly peripheral* begin to occupy more powerful positions in the system and when *geographic zones formerly marginal to intense interactions* become foci and even control centers of such interchanges (1989:367, emphasis original).

3. On the historical limits of world system *integration*, and hegemony: She argues that “no system is fully integrated” and “therefore none can be completely controlled, even by the most powerful participants” (Abu-Lughod 1989:368-9). Power over the system is also limited, and never complete—in particular the power to control or prevent systemic change itself. She makes an important argument concerning how sub-systems, regional configurations, or even “small localized conditions” could interact with adjacent conditions “to create outcomes that might not otherwise have occurred, and large disturbances sometimes flutter to an end while minor ones may occasionally amplify wildly, depending on what is happening in the rest of the system” (*ibid*:369). This reflects her non-deterministic post-positivist perspective on social science knowledge. The whole may be greater than the sum of the parts, but sometimes the parts can alter the whole in dramatic unpredicted fashion.

4. On causality and social change in relation to world system(s): She argues “changes have causes but only in context. The very same acts have different consequences when they occur at different times and when the surrounding system is structured differently” (*ibid*). She rejects extremes of structuralism and reductionist thinking, implying an alternative methodology which recognizes complex conditioned contingency, and advocating a historically “open” approach to understanding causality in social change.

5. On “Rise and Decline” in World System(s): She argues that “...a theory of systemic change should be able to *account for system decay as well as system growth*” (*ibid*, emphasis added). Here, Abu-Lughod seeks an alternative to simplistic linear and cyclical perspectives. Her approach investigates both long term “development, expansion, and greater connectivity of a system,” (i.e. increases in “*systemness*”), and recurrent retrogressive historical tendencies, i.e. patterns of “decline” or “decay” (see point 2 above). Abu-Lughod admonishes scholars to study both modalities of long term large scale social change.

“Gaps” in Abu-Lughod’s Analysis of the World System

No work of such ambitious scope could be fully holistic and comprehensive. Thus, there are gaps in Abu-Lughod’s analysis. She omits the Baltic from her eight circuit schema.⁶ The Baltic circuit was existing during the so-called “Viking” era, and continued during the Hanseatic league of cities. She omits the Baltic/Dnieper-Volga/Black & Caspian Seas circuit, which is recorded by Arab and Islamic travelers’ accounts from the Medieval period.⁷ She also omits the West African- trans-Saharan-

⁶ The map of Abu-Lughod’s schema of the eight circuits in the thirteenth century world system appears on p. 34 of *Before European hegemony*, and is reproduced on p. 283 in Frank and Gills (1993).

⁷ See: *Ibn Fadlan: Ibn Fadlan and the land of darkness: Arab Travelers in the Far North*, (Lunde and Stone 2012), which includes detailed maps of the circuit, which linked Baltic Europe, northern Russia, and Islamic metropolises including Baghdad, Cairo, and Central Asian cities. Boris Kagarlitsky’s world system history of Russia (Kagarlitsky 2008) analyses the role of this circuit on the development of cities and states in the formative period of Russian history.

Mediterranean circuit, though this exchange nexus played a key role in formation of West African cities and states of the medieval period. Her Indian Ocean circuit (VI) could have been extended on the African coast to include Kilwa, Sofala, and Mauritius. Her circuit VIII, East and Southeast Asia, could have been extended to encompass the Korean peninsula and Japan. The inclusion of these circuits would have provided a more comprehensive analysis of the “Afro-Eurasian world system” of the medieval period.

Finally, in terms of theoretical gaps, Abu-Lughod offers no sustained analysis of “liberation” or “emancipation,” eschewing Marxist historiographical attention to class conflict and any telos towards emancipation or “socialism.” She argues that the state often played an active or key role in organizing and facilitating private capitalists in the pursuit of the accumulation of capital. However, she stops short of offering us a systematic analysis of this relationship. She does much more to contribute to the controversy over the role of capitalists and merchants. Her rich textual sources were deployed to convincingly argue the case for the continuingly influential role of “capitalist” or “bourgeois” classes (and perhaps even for a “medieval capitalism” in some regions) throughout medieval world system history. She succeeded in offering a fresh analysis of the continuous central role of “*an archipelago of “world cities”*” (Abu-Lughod 1989:353) in shaping world system history. Thus, Abu-Lughod’s magisterial analysis in *Before European Hegemony* added considerable force and authority to overturn traditional “feudalist” interpretations of medieval history, as well as to invigorate a new generation of scholarship that seeks a unified study of world (system) history and is enriched by transdisciplinarity. This impetus continues to profoundly influence scholarship to the present day, as post-Eurocentric and increasingly “holistic” perspectives on global history become “normal” along with implicit “world system” perspectives on the indispensable importance of seeing “connections” that have shaped human experience for millennia until the present. Abu-Lughod’s framework of analysis of the world system, and her theory of systemic change, are equally relevant to understanding contemporary restructuring of the world system as to the history of past millennia.

Extricating the Analytics: Janet Abu-Lughod’s *Before European Hegemony*

Saskia Sassen
Columbia University
www.saskiasassen.com

Armed with her strong ideas and desire to discover, rather than merely replicate, Janet Abu-Lughod was fearless in launching new interpretations about complex conditions. She saw no problem in developing critical analyses of the work of those she considered her friends, albeit in some Abu-Lughodian version of friendship. Over the decades, walking on ground strewn with her devastating critiques, Janet was always already focused on her next project.

All these features are present in her major contribution to world-system analysis, the much admired and controversial *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350*. It took

enormous work and courage to engage this subject. And it took seeing the complex shape of a historical possibility: a "world system" in a pre-European era -- the period A.D. 1250-1350—where Europe was merely one component. In this project Abu-Lughod both criticized and expanded Wallerstein's seminal *The Modern World System*. Janet was critical of what she saw as the Europe-centered bases and histories from which Wallerstein developed the analytic tools underlying his theorizing of a world-system. Abu-Lughod argues that the modern European "world system" is, in large measure the inheritor and continuator of an antecedent, a "world system" centered on the Asia of the Moguls.

Her theoretical framework is anchored in financial and commercial networks within and between the main zones she sees in her "world system": Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf and western Indian Ocean, the eastern Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia, and China. Empirically much of the focus is on major trading centers. So began the massive work of studying and sorting out vast literatures. The result was a masterful and often controversial account about a multimodal, distributed world-system. Janet's construction of this world-system is hers, even as each part of this world-system is the subject of much scholarly work.

Indeed, much of this scholarship has covered several centuries before her 1250-1350 focus and generally finds that the great commercial and trading periods for many of the components of this world system had happened earlier. However, what Janet emphasized is the articulation of these various components and thereby the possibility of a world-system. Prosperity and rising economic capacity was not enough for Janet's analysis. What she was after was the existence of networks connecting these diverse components and the modalities of such connections. This led her to focus on more than simply periods of maximum prosperity, as some of her critics argued she should have. In her interpretation of the evidence, the networks connecting the diverse parts of this system came later, often after the periods of highest growth. This explains why, for Janet, maximum prosperity or growth was not necessarily the defining factor.

What was particularly important for Janet's analysis was that Europe became part of that world system: one dominated by the Moguls, not by Europe! The interconnections among various parts of Asia had been in some cases stronger a century or so before 1250. And while it had included some parts of Europe, notably Spain, the core elements of that world system were far from Europe. In Janet's world system, it was the rise of the Moguls in the 13th century and onwards that were the dominant glue. Further, what mattered in her analysis was that they supported trans-Asian caravan trading, which in turn led to networks that enabled Europe's incorporation into a larger space of Eurasian commerce. This analysis both brought Europe into a vast Asian geography dominated by the Moguls and sought to show that, whatever the conditions explaining the rise of the later European world-system of the 16th century onwards, these conditions were not the only ones that could lead to a world-system.

Yet another major contribution of the research in *Before European Hegemony* is Janet's focus on the structural architecture of world-systems. The existence of a complex Asia-centered territorial formation long before the European world-system offered an opportunity for comparing this structural aspect. It was especially so because it was as yet unexamined through the lenses of world-systems analysis—though much studied by diverse specialized disciplines which in fact made Janet's examination possible. What matters most, perhaps, is that this literature allowed her to establish significant structural differences between that earlier Asian world system of the 1200s and the

European one that took off in the 1500s. What she found, even if controversial among historians, was that the Asian system was marked by a sort of balanced interdependence. This was a major contrast with the familiar developmental and spatial hierarchy of the European system under capitalist hegemony.

This then also led Janet to yet another important insight, already mentioned above: The conditions internal to Europe that are generally considered to have enabled the emergence of the European world-system were not the only ones to enable world-system formation. Other, non-European types of conditions could also enable this process. There was no historical necessity explaining the outcome of European domination over much of the planet. Even more, some of the technical advances that enabled the European trajectory came from the East, from that earlier, Asia-centered world-system. Janet also saw in this the fact that it was not European superiority that brought down the Asia-centered system: the latter degraded due to its own specific conditions long before Europe's rise. Rather, what might be more likely is that the fall of the Asia-centered system enabled the later rise of a Europe-centered system. It cleared the imperial space, so to speak.

I would so much like to have a long conversation with Janet and ruminate with her about the emergent formations, possibly world systems, that I detect today in our world. The fact that she had the courage and did all this work to establish the existence of an earlier world-system with its own specific dynamics and conditionalities, makes me think she would at least be open to some of what I see.

I see yet another structural architecture in the making today. It is neither similar to the Asian nor the European. Neither is it quite Arrighi's rise of a hegemonic China examined in his masterful *The Long Twentieth Century*. Very briefly, I see a disassembling of older, bounded formations, particularly of nation-states, but also of the ongoing de facto (even if not de jure) imperial dominations. While interstate borders are pretty stable, the emergent geographies that mark our epoch give us a very different shape. We see the making of economic and power spaces that cut across those boundaries and encompass only part of nation-states. Further, these geographies cut across many of the old divides, notably North-South and East-West. They incorporate elites and elite projects in all these diverse zones and discard much of the rest --in the Global South especially, but now increasingly also in the Global North. They are partial assemblages of pieces of existing national territories and are predicated on a [growing range of expulsions of the people](#), places, and operations that do not fit the new mode. While these expulsions may have been especially sharp in the Global South, now they are also increasingly happening in the Global North. Further, these emergent geographies cut across multiple divisions: for instance, the United States is a great host of global finance, but so is China. What matters more to our understanding of today's world? Is it that the political systems of these two countries are very different or that both increasingly financialize their economies? These new geographies are brutal, even if often complex and constituted through forms of knowledge we admire and respect --such as the algorithms so central to finance or the complex logistics of outsourcing jobs. It may well be a kind of new world-system, but one not centered in the old familiar distinctions.

Remembering Janet Abu-Lughod

Immanuel Wallerstein

Yale University

immanuel.wallerstein@yale.edu

Janet Abu-Lughod was a remarkable scholar and bequeathed a significant legacy to the historical social sciences. The first thing to remember is that her initial and continuing interest and identity was as a student of urban life, a subject to which her early reading of Lewis Mumford turned her. However, before she moved to Cairo with her husband Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, her life experience had been almost entirely within the United States. Going to Cairo changed and deepened her perspective about the world.

Janet was someone who wanted to learn from the world in which she lived. And living in Cairo was very different. She became engrossed in the urban life of Cairo. And she came to see urban life with different spectacles. Her first major work, published in 1971, was *Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious*. From there, it was only a short step to viewing Egyptian culture as it related to all the other cultures of the world. Egypt was not however just any non-U.S. (or non-"western" country to observe. Egypt had arguably one of the two longest-continuous historical legacies in the world, competing in this sense only with China. Studying Egypt empathetically had to mean immersing ourselves in a long-term historical perspective, something she had already recognized in writing her book about Cairo.

This turn to studying Egypt in relation to the rest of the world was the prelude to her intellectual journey that was to produce the book that made her famous, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350*. One should note two things about this title. It starts with the word "before." Janet intended her book to be one combatting Eurocentrism and any notion that the key to European triumph in the modern world-system had its roots in some special cultural characteristics of western Europe.

The second thing to note about the title is the time limitation. The book was not intended to be an exposition of world history over 5000 or 10,000 years. It focused on what she thought was a key period of prelude to the "rise of the west." Her method essentially was to demonstrate that there was a world system composed of a number of overlapping circles, somewhat equivalent in their political economies. Precisely because these circles overlapped, she could demonstrate the practical links between them, both of economic and political interconnections and of cultural diffusions.

I remember discussing this project with her at its beginning and through its later stages. She was in constant search of persons to whom to talk and books to read. She sought to learn, to elucidate, to integrate, and to conclude. The reason the book had so much impact is not because everyone agreed with it - in whole or in part - but because it forced just about everyone to face up to issues over which they had previously glided too facilely.

As many have observed, she continued to pursue her concern with urban realities - in many different locales. But her second major contribution in my view was one that many of her memorialists do not even mention. It happens to be one in which I was involved. When I was

president of the International Sociological Association (1994-1998), I engaged the ISA in sponsoring a series of small regional conferences. The objective was to get scholars of a region to reflect on their social realities and their social sciences. These regional meetings of up to 30 persons always included two to three persons from outside the region, in order to keep the reflection from being excessively introverted. ISA published their results.

It turned out to be relatively easy to find appropriate convenors for such meetings in most of the world. The trickiest region in which to do this properly was North America (the United States and Canada). As I thought about the innumerable prominent sociologists of the region, it seemed to me that Janet was the ideal convenor. She knew the United States and its sociology well. But she also had genuine interest in and concern with the rest of the world and had demonstrated that in her own scholarship.

I offered this role to Janet. Initially, she said sorry, but she had no time. But a week or so later, she wrote me and said that she hadn't considered what a gift I was offering her. She agreed to do it, enthusiastically. And she did it remarkably well. The final result appeared in a reduced version published by the ISA, reduced because it had to meet ISA's size limitation for these books. The title was [*Millennial Milestone: The Heritage and Future of Sociology in the North American Region*](#).

For those who haven't read it, I recommend very strongly looking at her introduction to the book, [“The Heritage and Future of Sociology.”](#) In this introduction she spelled out not only a very pertinent analysis of the historical origins of North American sociology and the reasons for its special characteristics, but also an agenda for the future with which we still need to come to terms. We do not always necessarily recognize that the turn that at least some sociologists have taken was in important ways inspired by Janet. But being forgotten in this way is a sure sign of success. Janet's proposals have become common wisdom. And, as she herself would surely have said, let us go forward from here.

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**The War on Drugs in Colombia:
The Environment, the Treadmill of Destruction and Risk-Transfer Militarism***

Chad L. Smith

Texas State University
clsmith@txstate.edu

Gregory Hooks

Washington State University
ghooks@wsu.edu

Michael Lengefeld

Washington State University
m.lengefeld@wsu.edu

Abstract

Ecological damage, including global climate change, is commonly connected to practices and behaviors associated with economic activity and the Treadmill of Production (ToP). Less attention is paid to the connection between the military and environmental degradation, but recently the Treadmill of Destruction (ToD) has been documented as a global phenomenon with negative environmental effects. The ToD directly and indirectly contributes to environmental problems on many fronts, but one of the least obvious means by which the U.S. military influences the environment is through its policies supporting the “war on drugs.” The U.S. military aids Latin American countries, particularly Colombia, in the war on drugs in a number of capacities, including military support and training, weaponry, fumigation of crops, and logistical and surveillance support. The effort of the United States to curb the proliferation of illegal drug crops in Colombia is the most direct role that the military has played in this effort. Within the context of the “war on drugs” the United States is now engaged in risk-transfer militarism in which the consequences of this military action are borne by the Global South. We document the scope, magnitude, and consequences of the ToD in the war on drugs and the ways it negatively impacts the environment. Our argument reframes the ToD by emphasizing the role of risk-transfer militarism within the emergence of “new” wars as represented in the case of Colombia.

Keywords: Treadmill of Destruction, War on Drugs, Colombia, Climate Change, Risk-Transfer Militarism, “New” Wars

In this article, we document the manner in which the militarized “war on drugs” waged by the United States contributes to environmental degradation in Colombia. The U.S. involvement includes military support and training, weaponry, fumigation of crops, and logistical and surveillance support. In addition to documenting the scope and magnitude of this militarized war on drugs in the Colombian Andes, we assess its impact on the environment, most notably with respect to deforestation and climate change. Our goals are two-fold: first, we pinpoint the spatial, historical, and social dimension of the treadmill of destruction in Colombia; second, we utilize the case of Colombia’s war on drugs and its connections to the treadmill of destruction in order to contextualize several nascent developments, namely the emergence of risk-transfer militarism and the “new” wars of the 21st century.

“Catastrophic convergence” (Parenti 2011) is the collision of multiple social, economic and environmental catastrophes (poverty, violence, climate change) playing out in the tropics of the Global South. Parenti describes the changing climate not only as the backdrop for these social and economic problems, but highlights an additional concern: climate change will exacerbate these problems and, thereby, produce a feedback loop. Parenti (2011: 8) contends that “Cold War-era militarism and the economic pathologies of neoliberalism” paved the way for this catastrophic convergence. Failed states can offer little institutional resistance to and are further weakened and delegitimized by the emergence of illegal trading of guns and illicit drugs. We believe that this militarized war on drugs contributes to the convergence Parenti has identified. Although our focus is upon the environmental costs borne by Colombia, it is clear that states, worldwide, are undergoing a series of crises. Chase-Dunn (2013) identifies the global scale of this crisis, and although we do not directly address all five of his “linked crises” we do think this case is reflective of this larger set of dynamics Chase-Dunn identifies.

In the pages that follow we situate the treadmill of destruction within the context of failed and struggling states with particular attention on the history of conflict in Colombia. We address the environmental and social effects that coca cultivation and the production of cocaine has in Colombia and, in turn, how efforts to curb its production, primarily through the U.S. policy of “Plan Colombia,” are problematic. As the metaphor of a treadmill suggests, the intensification of militarized drug production and destruction has resulted in an escalation of the accompanying environmental devastation. Finally, our argument reframes the treadmill of destruction by emphasizing the role of risk-transfer militarism within the emergence of “new” wars as represented in the case of Colombia.

Treadmills, Environmental Damage, and Failed States

The treadmill of production (ToP) is driven by commercial demands, primarily growth, market shares and profitability (Gould, Pellow and Schnaiberg 2008; Schnaiberg 1980; Schnaiberg and Gould 1994). The treadmill of destruction (ToD) is driven by the distinctive demands of geopolitics, militarism and war making. To highlight the distinctive effects of the ToD we begin with a discussion of the commercially oriented ToP stemming from the lucrative and globalized commodification of cocaine.

The ToP points to capitalist economic production as the driving force behind environmental damage. The treadmill refers to the relentless quest for economic growth and the high (and growing) levels of social inequality that result from this quest. With respect to the environment, the ToP makes unsustainable demands on the environment in the form of

extraction of raw materials used in the production and distribution goods and in the form of waste.

When first developing the concept, Schnaiberg (1980) was largely focused on the United States. However, the ToP framework has been extended to shed light on processes operating at a transnational and global scale (Gould, Pellow and Schnaiberg 2008). Consideration of global commodity chains and the resulting unequal environmental exchange provides valuable insights into the transnational implications of the treadmill of production. Hopkins and Wallerstein (1982:159) define global commodity chains as “a network of labor and production processes whose end result is a finished commodity” (see also, Ciccantell and Smith 2009). Global commodity chains introduce demands from distant and powerful actors, disrupting and distorting local economic and social relationships, resulting in “unequal environmental exchanges” that impose steep environmental costs on vulnerable people and places (Rice 2007).

Clelland (2014), adopting a metaphor from physics, distinguishes between “bright” value and “dark” value. Physicists estimate that dark energy and dark matter account for the preponderance of the universe (more than 90%). “By analogy, that invisible human and natural energy flows are converted into the dark value that forms part of the basic structure of the world-system” (Clelland 2014: 85). Dark value is added in the periphery—externalized to workers, communities, households and ecosystems. The United Nations’ Office on Drugs and Crime (2010: 170) estimates that a markup of roughly 30 times between coca derivatives (in the Andean producer states) and cocaine wholesale prices in the United States, and even more, 60 times, in Europe. Only a small portion of the spectacular street value of cocaine (its “bright” value) is derived from the risk (street violence and incarceration) confronted by organized criminal organizations that distribute cocaine in the Global North. The many externalities – ecological degradation and the coerced and undercompensated labor by Andean growers (cocaine’s “dark” value) form the basis of cocaine’s value. Ribot (1998), in a study of the commodity chain impacting Senegalese forestry, offers a reminder that securing access can be far more important than formal ownership in determining who profits. In the Andean regions of Colombia and especially the remote Amazonian regions where coca cultivation has spread in recent decades, access is often more important than nominal property rights. Without a formal title, squatters, guerrilla/paramilitary armies, and organized criminal networks take effective control of lands used for coca cultivation and coca processing. The prevalence of coercion in Colombian coca cultivation and processing contributes to the high rates of uncompensated negative externalities (unpaid labor by direct producers and ecological degradation), i.e., dark value.

The era of globalization – with the cheapening of transportation and communication – made possible the commodification of cocaine in the late-20th Century. The coca plant is indigenous and well adapted to the Andean region. As such, coca could be cultivated with few deleterious consequences for the environment. But the commodification of cocaine has set in motion powerful treadmill dynamics, sharply unequal environmental exchange, and widespread damage to the environment. Exacerbating this impact, a large number of ecological hotspots in the region have been severely damaged.

The Treadmill of Destruction and the “New” Wars of the 21st Century

With a focus on the United States in the 20th Century, Hooks and Smith (2004, 2005) introduced the “treadmill of destruction” by detailing the environmental dangers posed by the military. In this initial formulation, the understanding of the treadmill drew attention to the environmental degradation and inequality sustained by the world’s leading military powers and fully professionalized military organizations. A number of scholars have extended the treadmill of destruction framework to consider its global reach (Clark and Jorgenson 2012; Jorgenson 2005; Jorgenson and Clark 2009; Jorgenson, Clark and Kentor 2010; Lengefeld and Smith 2013; York 2008). But this focus did not fully consider the growing ability of powerful nations to intervene in and shift the risk of war to less privileged peoples and less powerful nations. Moreover, this focus does not allow full consideration of the wars (and attendant environmental degradation) attributable to less formal (and less powerful) military organizations.

Arms races and wars generate and are sustained by a treadmill dynamic that is distinct from that driven by commercial competition. In the context of “old” wars (involving professionalized armed forces under the state’s control), acquiring and controlling territory loom large. Military forces routinely degrade the territory controlled by opposing forces, and battlefields remain toxic long after peace is declared. To cripple the war-making potential of adversaries, military forces degrade the industrial and agricultural assets controlled by opposing forces; this routinely entails widespread, significant, and deliberate environmental degradation (Hooks and Smith 2005). To understand the environmental footprint of the “new” wars of the 21st Century, the treadmill of destruction framework must be refined and updated. The world’s most powerful nations are motivated to shift the risk of war to peoples and places of the Global South (Hooks and Smith 2012; Shaw 2002, 2005). At the same time, formal military organizations and the ability to sharply distinguish between combatants and noncombatants is less common in the “new” wars of the 21st Century. Instead, a wide range of armed organizations (e.g., guerrilla armies, temporary militias and organized criminal organizations of various size and capabilities, etc.) is playing a prominent role (Kaldor 1999). Finally, the control of territory is typically less important in “new” wars. Nonetheless, the environment is often degraded as these wars are pursued. To generate revenue to support privatized and less formal war making, military forces pursue unsustainable production and extractive efforts and maintain predatory relations with direct producers. These irresponsible practices are fueled by arms races and military competition; as the ferocity and stakes of military conflict accelerate so do the treadmill dynamics and the attendant impact on the environment.

War—defined broadly as organized violence by Kaldor (1999)—is and has been a social activity that builds on and reflects extant social relationships and structures. In the 19th and 20th Centuries, the world’s leading military powers maintained professionalized standing armies and navies. As such, waging war was monopolized by states and soldiers were sharply demarcated from the civilian population: “war made the state, and the state made war” (Tilly 1975: 142). The state as war maker remains intact for the United States and other major powers concentrated in the Global North. However, Shaw (2005) contends that the nations of the Global North, especially military powers such as the United States, are pursuing risk-transfer militarism. For the Global North, the homeland and citizens are shielded from the horrors of war and militarization because wars are fought on the terrain of vulnerable nations. If soldiers from the Global North are deployed, they fight from a distance, taking advantage of qualitatively superior military technologies. But the state’s monopoly over violence is not guaranteed. In the new wars

Table 1. New Wars and New Dynamics to the Treadmill of Destruction

		“New” wars	
	“Old” wars ^a	Global North ^b	Global South ^a
Military forces	Professional (standing) army under the state’s control	Professional forces under the state’s control with use of mercenary forces to obscure culpability	State lacks monopoly on means of coercion. Diverse military forces operate.
Patterns of violence	Pitched battles, war and peace demarcated by formal treaties. Soldiers suffer highest casualty rates.	Risk-transfer militarism, military operations in Global South without formal declaration of war. Suffer very few casualties while relying on high-tech weaponry to inflict heavy losses on adversaries.	Violence deployed to achieve a variety of ends, including income generation, intimidation and genocide. Noncombatant casualties far exceed casualty rates among soldiers.
Financing violence	State taxation; state plays prominent role in fiscal management of economy	State taxation supports interventions by nations of the Global North; aid provided to allied but failed states in the Global South.	Legitimate economy often collapses. Predation by armed forces on non-combatants: resource exploitation, kidnapping, extortion, and protection rackets.
Spread of violence	Battlefields where professionalized armies and navies encounter one another. In “total” war, industrial infrastructure and population centers become “legitimate” targets.	Global North intervenes indirectly or uses weapons that minimize risk to own troops. Rhetorical strategies deflect responsibility for violence and aftermath.	No clear spatial demarcation. Pockets of peace in violent regions; pockets of violence in peaceful areas. Armed forces extend zone of conflict; noncombatants relocate to more remote areas in search of safety.
Treadmill of destruction	Highly toxified battlefields; weapons manufacture environmentally destructive. In total war: wide-spread destruction of major cities and degradation of infrastructure.	Wars and attendant environmental impacts shifted to Global South. Decisions to degrade environment and to deploy environmentally irresponsible weapons (e.g., uranium tipped projectiles) and tactics (e.g., aerial dispersion of herbicides).	Rapacious extraction of natural resources to finance military operations; toxification of ecosystem to deprive enemy of resources and sanctuary.

^a Source: Mary Kaldor (1999). *New and Old Wars*.

^b Source: Martin Shaw (2005). *The New Western Way of War*.

of the 21st Century, especially those fought in the Global South, a wide range of armed groups wage war. Instead, these wars “are characterized by a multiplicity of types of fighting units both public and private, state and non-state, or some kind of mixture” (Kaldor 1999: 92) of these various combinations of combatant units. In turn, the environmental degradation and inequality resulting from war – the treadmill of destruction – varies with the manner in which military forces are organized, how they are financed and the manner in which battles are fought. Table 1 summarizes key features of the “new” wars of the 21st Century and the environmental implications.

The Colombian case brings into sharp relief the new forms of war and associated assaults on the environment. As will be discussed in greater detail below, there have been a wide range of *military forces* operating in Colombia, including the Colombian military, organized criminal organizations, paramilitary forces allied with the government, anti-government guerilla forces, and a variety of less formal and more transient (but still armed) fighting forces. The United States has participated directly and indirectly in this conflict, minimizing the risk to the United States’ territory and personnel, while heightening the scale of violence in Colombia and surrounding countries. In Colombia, *patterns of violence* diverge markedly from those characteristics of “old” wars. Instead of pitched battles among formally organized and state-controlled military units, violence is widely dispersed, sustained battles have been rare, and the violence has often involved efforts to generate revenues from illegal activities (especially coca and cocaine) and efforts to suppress the drug trade. The *financing of this violence* is also distinctive relative to “old” wars. The Colombian military forces have been financed through taxation, but the United States has also played a prominent role by providing sizeable military aid and by directly participating in drug eradication and counterinsurgency efforts. Especially in drug-producing areas, income generated from illegal activities often surpasses revenues from legal businesses. In predatory fashion, the diverse fighting forces have fought to control and/or profit from these illegal activities (e.g., extraconstitutional taxation and a variety of protection rackets). The resulting environmental degradation – the *treadmill of destruction* – reflects the specific forms of warfare. The predation of armed forces leads to unsustainable coca cultivation and cocaine production processes. The widespread conflict (both in number of casualties and in the spatial dimensions) and the disproportionate harm imposed on noncombatants results in dislocation of those caught in the crossfire. This contributes to accelerated deforestation and rapid degradation of lands newly brought under cultivation. The United States, in calculated fashion, amplifies these dynamics. Most notably, the U.S. commitment to crop eradication and other forms of military aid escalates the scale of violence confronting noncombatants and amplifies the environmental degradation.

While our focus will center on environmental degradation, the human suffering is staggering. In the context of widespread, low-tech and disorganized skirmishes, the civilian population is often treated harshly, including rape, dismemberment, kidnapping, and coerced conscription. Between 1990-2012 over 10,000 Colombians were victimized by landmines in 31 of 32 departments, an issue further exacerbated by humanitarian displacement crisis that is second only to the Sudan (Ballvé 2013; United Nations Human Rights Council 2013). From 1945-2000, at the global level, roughly 41 million people died due to armed conflict (Leitenberg 2006); a disproportionate number of wars and casualties occurred in the nations of the Global South (Summerfield 1991). More alarming still, noncombatants bear the brunt of this violence. Civilian deaths comprised roughly 5% of all deaths in World War I, but by the end of the 20th Century, civilians suffered roughly 90% of all deaths in war (Summerfield 1991: 159). Thus, it

appears that 21st Century warfare will exacerbate a host of social and environmental problems (crime, war on drugs, climate change), and the consequences for the civilian population will be disastrous.

The Treadmill of Destruction in Colombia

The violence and conflict in Colombia has a long history, with much of it characteristic of “new” wars. As Guerrero Baron and Mond (2001:13) assert, “there is consensus that great social inequality and instability give rise to a dynamic that confers legitimacy on revolutionary projects and violent alternatives.” The weak Colombian state lacked a firm monopoly on the means of violence long before the rise of guerilla armies, paramilitary groups and highly armed drug cartels (Holmes et al. 2008). The topography of Colombia and the longstanding history of regional and interdepartmental violence contributed to the Colombian state’s weakness in the late 20th Century. Colombia has a poor land transportation and communication infrastructure, lacking both roads and railroads; river transportation continues to be of central importance (Holmes et al. 2008). The decentralized state, poor infrastructure, rugged topography, and geographic isolation of independent regional powers set the stage for intensified violence.

Beginning in the 1940’s the Colombian people have endured political upheaval and civil war. Following the volatile years labeled as “la Violencia,” rural lands became concentrated in the hands of Colombia’s elite (known as the National Front agreement). In the 1960s, revolutionary peasant forces, such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), rejected the heightened inequality and challenged the state’s legitimacy (Brittain 2010). In the context of the Cold War and in the shadow of the Cuban Revolution, the United States actively participated in counterinsurgency efforts. “Operation Marquetalia” (1964) was a joint US/Colombian operation that foreshadowed the weapons and tactics that would be featured in Vietnam, including the use of napalm; the effort cost roughly \$3 billion (in inflation adjusted dollars) and though it was interpreted as a success by the Colombian government, this military action served as a rallying point for peasant forces (Brittain 2010). In subsequent decades (1970s-1980s) FARC increased its presence across the country, and by 1990 it had become a powerful force in and of itself. Wickham-Crowley (1992) emphasizes the expansion of modern capitalist agriculture -- especially commercialized coffee production -- to explain the growing peasant support for the FARC.

From these revolutionary origins, FARC moved in the direction of a “narco-guerrilla” organization. While the specificity of Colombia’s history shaped this transformation, it is also characteristic of the “new” wars of recent decades (see Table 1). FARC and other left-leaning guerrilla forces taxed drug organizations in the regions under their control and used the funds to finance military and political activities (Peceny and Durnan 2006; Saab and Taylor 2009; Holmes et al. 2008; Stokes 2001, 2005). Even as FARC became directly involved in coca cultivation and cocaine manufacture, it attempted to preserve its political objectives “by manipulating the conventional coca industry in the hopes of strengthening sociopolitical and economic conditions for the marginalized” (Brittain 2010: 89).

Even though the U.S. war on drugs officially began under the Nixon administration in 1969, it genuinely began when the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 was amended in 1981 to allow the Department of Defense (DoD) to mobilize the military in domestic legal threats, namely illicit drug trade (Ronderos 2003). With this legal backing, the Reagan Administration deemed

the drug trade a national security threat and began employing military personnel and equipment to combat drug trafficking at the point of production (Bagley 1991). The militarization of the war on drugs is reflected in budgeting trends. In 1981, Congress allocated no funding to drug interdiction efforts, but by 1987 Congress allocated upwards of \$379 million to such efforts (Bagley 1991; Mabry 1988). As the war on drugs became synonymous with military intervention, some influential leaders in the Pentagon voiced concerns (Mabry 1988; Zirnite 1997). In 1985 Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, argued that “reliance on military forces to accomplish civilian tasks is detrimental to both military readiness and the democratic process” (Zirnite 1997: 8). These reservations notwithstanding, a rapid militarization of the war on drugs ensued culminating in “Plan Colombia.”

“Plan Colombia” originated with Colombian President Andres Pastrana in 1998 (Scott 2003). The Clinton and Bush Administrations used the claim that military training and engagement would improve Colombia’s human rights climate to justify U.S. military involvement. Even though the human rights situation has seen little improvement since the initiation of this policy (Vaicius and Isacson 2003), Plan Colombia was supported, and at times expanded, by the George W. Bush administration and the Barack Obama administration. Between 2000-2010, under the auspices of Plan Colombia (and related programs), more than \$7 billion in aid flowed to Colombia (Congressional Research Service 2011); only Israel and Egypt received more military aid over this time period (Buxton 2006).

Pastrana’s original plan included military components, but it placed considerable emphasis on development. Buxton (2006) argues that the U.S. government reworked the effort into a highly militarized “battle plan” and that Pastrana “bypassed or ignored” agencies charged with maintaining checks on presidential power and a number of elected officials had no opportunity to provide input as Plan Colombia was revised and implemented (Buxton 2006). The revised Plan Colombia expanded aerial spraying of defoliants and authorized U.S. support of interdiction efforts by the Colombian National Police. The Plan also included limited support for development programs and social justice reforms (Messina and Delamater 2006). But it must be borne in mind that roughly 80% of Plan Colombia outlays supported military operations. The sharp discrepancy between U.S. spending on coca eradication (\$205 million) and economic development (\$72 million) in Colombia for 2006 (Davalos, Bejarano, and Correa 2009) underscores the military emphasis in the policy. Thus, Plan Colombia was in large measure “a military offensive aimed at debilitating Colombia’s powerful rebel groups and aeri ally fumigating the abundant coca and poppy crops” (Mugge 2004: 311).

Plan Colombia was adopted in 2000. In the following decade, the production of cocaine (and import into the United States) increased significantly. Furthermore, FARC and other left-leaning forces remained potent (relying on revenues generated through the drug trade to support military efforts). These failures were compounded by right wing paramilitary groups (promoted and/or condoned by the Colombian government to counter left-leaning insurgents) becoming major players in the drug industry. In short, the Colombian drug economy continued to expand and thrive (Scott 2003), thereby legitimizing FARC as a governing body and accepted taxation system throughout much of the coca producing region. FARC and its supporters would highlight that its involvement in coca cultivation and drug processing was more benign than alternatives (organized criminal organizations and rightwing paramilitary organizations). Regardless of which armed force was in control, the division between public and private and the distinction between military and civilian was obscured; coercion lay at or near the surface of coca cultivation and sale. In terms of treadmill of destruction dynamics, coca cultivation and drug

manufacture became an indispensable source of revenue to support military operations, leading to widespread adoption of environmentally irresponsible practices.

The links between the drug trade and the financing of war insured far-reaching environmental degradation in Colombia. These treadmill dynamics were amplified by U.S. policies, especially those premised on risk-transfer militarism. To obscure its far-reaching interventions and complicity, the United States sought to distance itself from the ugly consequences of Plan Colombia and maintain good standing within the international community by utilizing “surrogacy” (Bonds 2013). Technically speaking, U.S. policy only provides material support to the Colombian military by supplying helicopters, weapons, communications equipment and technology, infrastructure (i.e. building roads), and training (Mugge 2004). The Colombian government has allied itself (openly and covertly) with paramilitary forces. These paramilitary forces, at different times, have been both a legal and extra-legal means of confronting the left-leaning revolutionary force of FARC. The collusion of paramilitary factions with the Colombian military has convinced many analysts that these forces receive some share of the U.S.-sponsored equipment and training (Mugge 2004). It has been estimated that these paramilitary forces account for roughly 3,000 civilian casualties per year in Colombia (Mugge 2004; see also, Dube and Naidu 2010). Although the full range of U.S. involvement is cloaked in secrecy, the available evidence suggests that the United States is playing an active role. Priest (2013) reports that the Colombian military used Raytheon-produced smart bombs (weapons closely controlled by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency) against FARC leader Raul Reyes inside Ecuadorian territory. This violation of Ecuadoran sovereignty sparked both a military and diplomatic crisis in 2008, leading to the deployment of Venezuelan and Ecuadorian troops on the Colombian frontiers. Ecuador filed lawsuits with the International Criminal Court and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights against Colombia, claiming human rights violations related to violence and coca eradication efforts (both lawsuits were eventually dropped by Ecuador).

Colombia provides an unusually valuable lens in the tragic face of contemporary warfare. If we use Kaldor’s (1999) definition of war – i.e., organized violence – Colombia has been enduring war for more than 50 years. In recent decades, this warfare has displayed the distinctive pathologies of the “new” wars. Internal to Colombia, powerful criminal organizations, left-leaning insurgent forces and rightwing paramilitary forces have tapped into the lucrative drug trade to finance war efforts (directly and indirectly) and to sustain a highly corrupt and coercive economy. In his context, the state’s monopoly over the means of violence and its legitimacy is eroded. These dynamics are amplified by the direct and cynical involvement of the world’s leading military power (Bejarano and Pizarro 2005; Hough 2011). The increased militarization of the Colombian government not only led to the degradation of Colombian democracy (Bejarano and Pizarro 2005), but it simultaneously motivated FARC and other guerilla armies to adopt more repressive treatment of the local population and, ultimately, to engage in “state like” activities such as war making, state making, extraction, and protection (Hough 2011). Although Plan Colombia was pursued under the apolitical banner of an anti-narcotics effort, it is clear that the United States actively supported the Colombian state’s attempts to rid the country of left-leaning revolutionaries. As Buxton (2006: 186) points out: “Given the power and influence that the USA had over the Colombian government at the time, it is open to question how far the Colombian president would have been able to resist U.S. eradication plans and strategies.” Colombian officials were not merely on the receiving end of arm-twisting. Colombia benefitted from this relationship and used resources flowing from Plan Colombia to weaken revolutionary

challengers. The United States insulated its personnel and its homeland from the ravages of this prolonged war. The human costs were disproportionately borne by noncombatants, the environmental impacts were concentrated in some of Colombia's (and the world's) most ecologically diverse but vulnerable lands and resources.

The Environmental Consequences and Human Risks of the War on Drugs in Colombia

The “new” wars of the 21st Century continue and accelerate a disturbing trend: casualties among noncombatants far surpass those suffered by armed military forces. Casualties are inflicted – including a growing tolerance for casualties among noncombatants – where instrumental calculations point to strategies and tactics that achieve military objectives including a high casualty rate among noncombatants (even if inadvertent). The risk-transfer militarism adopted by leading military powers insures such outcomes. As is the case with other affluent nations of the Global North, the United States' overarching objective is to eliminate threats to the homeland and minimize casualties suffered by its own troops. Transferring risks and casualties to people (including noncombatants) and places in the Global South is inherent in this approach to warfare. Shaw (2005) points out that “small massacres” are inevitable and predictable in risk-transfer militarism. That is, when relying on high-tech weapons to fight from a distance, it is inevitable that errors in target selection and guidance systems will result in innocent people being hurt and killed. Because the overarching goal is to transfer risks, the United States accepts this trade-off between “small massacres” and remarkably low casualty rates among its soldiers.

The treadmill of destruction sheds light on the manner in which this extends to ecosystems and environmental systems. Just as the United States is willing to accept the loss of human life that occurs in “small massacres,” it is also willing to accept the degradation of the environment to achieve national security objectives. Of course, this is in the context of risk-transfer militarism. By the same token, the predation of the various military forces operating in Colombia is not limited to acceptance of human suffering. Environmental resources and ecosystems are also squandered and sacrificed to support the war effort. This includes irresponsible and unsustainable cultivation techniques; it also includes the deliberate toxification of the environment to punish and constrain adversaries. Cocaine's “dark value” (Clelland 2014) includes both human and environmental casualties on a tragic scale.

Environmental Degradation as a Military Tactic

The links between environmental degradation and the cocaine trade begins with cultivation practices and the processing of coca leaves. As Bunker (2005) reminds us, transportation and energy demands are integral to cultivation decisions and infrastructure. Coca leaves are bulky, requiring 250-500 kilograms of dried leaves to produce one kilogram of cocaine. Coca paste can and is consumed in the region. For cocaine manufacture, it is an intermediate product: 250-500 kilograms of dried leaves yields 2.5 kilograms of coca paste, depending on content of leaves and specifics of processing (Dombey-Moore, Resetar and Childress 1994). Transporting coca leaves, a bulky commodity, in the context of rugged topography and poor infrastructure would be quite costly. More to the point, coca leaves are also illegal and valuable. Transporting a large quantity of leaves over long distances risks detection by government officials and theft by armed forces operating in the area. For this reason, coca paste is typically fabricated near areas of cultivation, a process that is toxic for humans and damaging to ecosystems. The chemicals used include

organic solvents (e.g., kerosene and diesel fuel), sulfuric acid, and potassium carbonate (Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission 2005). The fabrication process consumes and contaminates a great deal of water, resulting in pollution of streams in the area (Mejía and Posada 2008). Reflecting the treadmill of destruction dynamics, producers are driven to maximize harvests as soon as possible and anticipate that coca plants will be eradicated within years of initial planning. For these reasons, heavy and unregulated use of herbicides, fertilizers and insecticides is common. The runoff from these agricultural chemicals further degrades water resources and compounds the environmental harm.

Just as the military forces involved in coca cultivation and cocaine manufacture adopt calculated policies that lead to environmental degradation, so too do those attempting to suppress drug production. The War on Drugs in Colombia relies heavily on spraying herbicides. Neither the United States nor Colombia discloses the specific mixture being used, but most experts agree that some version of Monsanto's glyphosate (i.e. "Roundup") is the base herbicide, but it is mixed with a locally manufactured surfactant, Cosmo-Flux 411 (Mugge 2004; Messina and Delamater 2006). The practice of aerial eradication is a joint operation involving the Antinarcotics Directorate of the Colombian National Police (DIRAN) and the National Affairs Section (NAS) housed at the U.S. Embassy in Bogota (Mugge 2004).

The secrecy surrounding the eradication effort makes it impossible to determine the specific form of glyphosate being used. This is unfortunate because impacts vary with the concentration and specific chemical composition in use (Mugge 2004). In addition, the content of the surfactant is also unknown. All that is known about this chemical is that it is produced in Colombia, where fewer environmental regulations are in effect (Mugge 2004). Regardless of the specific chemicals being used, there is clear and compelling evidence that the use of these herbicides, as practiced in Colombia, would violate regulations in place in the United States (Mugge 2004). In Colombia, glyphosate is being delivered via aerial fumigation from a height of 15 meters (49 feet), but the Environmental Protection Agency requires that it be applied at a height of 3-10 meters (10-32 feet) away (Alvarez 2001b; Buxton 2006). Similarly, the recommended dosage of glyphosate is approximately 2.3 liters/hectare (0.60 gallons/hectare). In Colombia, it is being applied at five to ten times the recommended concentration (23.7 liters/hectare or 6.26 gallons/hectare) (Alvarez 2001b; Buxton 2006).

With few exceptions (Solomon 2007, 2009), a large body of research points to negative environmental impacts from these eradication efforts. These negative impacts include adverse effects for amphibians (Meza-Joy, Ramirez-Pinilla, and Fuentes-Lrenzo 2013; Relyea 2005a, 2005b, 2011; Solomon 2007, 2009), rats (de Liz Oliveira Cavalli et al. 2013) and mice (Jasper, Locatelli, Pilati, Lcatelli 2012). Numerous on-the-ground reports point to the environmental damage attributable to these herbicides (Messina and Delameter 2006; Mugge 2004). While the evidence of environmental impacts is compelling, claims that the eradication program is having the desired effect of decreasing coca production are disputed. During the first ten years of Plan Colombia, there was little evidence that cocaine production suffered. Over the last several years, sharp reductions are in evidence. The Office of National Drug Policy (2012) reports that that cocaine production capacity in Colombia has declined 25% between 2010-2011. Likewise, the United Nations reports that the total area under coca cultivation in Colombia fell by one-quarter in 2011 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2012b). Although the recent evidence seems to indicate some decrease in coca production in Colombia, it is less clear that this is reducing the overall amount of cocaine available on world markets. It appears that coca cultivation and

cocaine manufacture is shifting to other Andean nations, resulting in what is commonly referred to as the “balloon effect” (The Economist 2013; Hellin 2001).

The broader environmental consequences of these eradication policies include deforestation, contamination of water and water systems, eradication of non-coca crops and natural vegetation, and a generally negative impact on the biodiversity of the region (Alvarez 2002; Armenteras et al. 2006; Davalos et al. 2009; Davalos et al. 2011; Etter, et al. 2006; Fjeldsa et al. 2005; Messina and Delameter 2006; Mugge 2004).

Human Risks

Research indicates that glyphosate has negative consequences for human cells (Benachour and Seralini 2009) and human cell lines (Gasnier et al. 2009), that it induces insidious diseases in humans (Samsel and Saneff 2013) and promotes breast cancer growth in humans (Thongprakaisang et al. 2013). In the effected regions, villagers, farmers, and health care specialists have complained of skin illness, eye irritation, vomiting, diarrhea, and miscarriages (Mugge 2004; Transnational Institute 2001). The United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2010) considers these reports to be “credible and trustworthy.” Although millions of dollars are budgeted to pursue this militarized war on drugs, no funds have been committed to examine these persistent complaints. As is characteristic of the treadmill of destruction, still another risk is transferred to the Global South: to protect the U.S. population from “unsafe” drugs, the people of Colombia are being subjected to environmental dislocation and heightened health impairment. In previous research, Hooks and Smith (2004, 2012) focused on the environmental legacy of weapons (conventional and nuclear) used in the 20th Century’s mass industrial wars and the ensuing Cold War. In the new face of militarism in the 21st Century, the most severe impacts on the environment and human health stem from chemical warfare waged on the people and places thought to be involved with coca cultivation.

Without providing details about specific chemicals, quantities and locations, the U.S. State Department acknowledges reliance on glyphosate; explanations of “defensive categorization” are used to justify its use (Bonds 2013). That is, the United States downplays adverse impacts of controversial (potentially illegitimate) military tactics by disputing and minimizing the harm they cause. Spraying in Colombia has been denounced by a wide range of critics in Colombia, throughout Latin America and around the world (Buxton 2006). The State Department describes Cosmo-Flux 411F as “essentially a soap that enhances the ability of the herbicide to penetrate the waxy cuticle of the leaf surface” (U.S Department of State 2002). Deflecting criticisms, the Department of State asserts that Cosmo-Flux 411F is *only* “lightly toxic.” The State Department also claims that glyphosate is safe because it is “one of the most widely used agricultural herbicides in the world” (U.S Department of State 2002). In similar fashion, although failing to meet EPA guidelines in this regard, the State Department emphasizes the dilution of chemicals used for eradication to downplay reports of harm to human health:

...the irritation and toxicity potential of the individual ingredients are reduced when diluted during mixing (the final product is approximately 75 percent water) and the mixture is dispersed when sprayed...The symptoms of such exposure are likely to be short-term and reversible. (U.S. Department of State 2002).

The U.S. government does acknowledge widespread environmental degradation in coca-growing regions yet emphasizes the irresponsible environmental practices of peasants and military forces involved in coca cultivation and cocaine fabrication. “Over the past 20 years, coca cultivation in the Andean region has resulted in the destruction of at least 5.9 million acres of rainforest—an area larger than the states of Maryland and Massachusetts combined” (United States Department of State 2003). This report offers an extended discussion of the toxic chemicals and herbicides and reduction in biodiversity due to coca production; it goes on to discuss the implications for climate change. But, the Department of State makes no mention of its own emphasis on militarized eradication and how this amplifies the environmental impact of coca cultivation and cocaine manufacture. Relying on the rhetorical strategy of “defensive categorization” (Bonds 2013), the United States obscures its own role in the social and environmental disruption and shifts all responsibility to Colombians.

Environmental and Ecological Damage

Given that Colombia houses the largest number of bird species in the world and the second highest number of plant species in the world, the global implications of these developments are significant. Fjeldsa et al. (2005) find that biodiversity has decreased in the Andes (particularly in the Colombian Andes) due to the convergence of drug markets, decades of military conflict, and a paucity of economic alternatives for the rural poor in these regions (see also Alvarez 2002). In addition, crop eradication efforts are impacting water supplies and aquatic ecosystems. Monsanto acknowledges that glyphosate can have far-reaching impacts upon water quality and aquatic life. The assault on biodiversity extends to species that rely on water resources that are being compromised by coca cultivation and militarized eradication efforts (Mugge 2004). To date, neither the United States nor the Colombian government has undertaken a thorough study of the damage. Moreover, because neither government will provide detailed information on the extent and chemical composition of the herbicides deployed, independent researchers have been stymied as well.

The eradication of coca plants has had “the unintended consequence of defoliating not only coca but also contiguous and interspersed native forest and food crop parcels” (Messina and Delamater 2006: 127). Banana, corn, and yucca crops suffer when glyphosate is applied (Mugge 2004). This, in turn, has two consequences. In some cases, farmers return to growing coca to compensate for the loss of legal crops (banana, corn, yucca). Second, many farmers turn to forested lands to begin anew. Thus, the eradication program pushes farmers to increase the land under cultivation and, thereby, accelerates deforestation. As farmers are forced to continually move into forested lands – often remote, frequently part of forest reserves – for the purpose of crop production, whether that be for coca production or subsistence farming, there is both an increase in the release of carbon dioxide (cutting down the forest) and a subsequent loss of carbon sink (annual crops are a less effective carbon sink than forests).

Deforestation is on the rise and is threatening important aspects of biodiversity value (Armenteras et al. 2006; Etter et al. 2006). Drug eradication is not the only cause of deforestation. Deforestation has been linked to the presence of pasture and agricultural lands, distance to roads and cities (Armenteras, Rodriguez, and Retana 2013; Eraso, Armenteras-Pascual, Alumbrosos 2012), colonization and population (Etter et al. 2006), and forestry export flows (Shandra, Leckband, and London 2009). Coca cultivation and eradication efforts intensify pressure on Colombia’s forests. Coca cultivation is concentrated in the “coca belt” of southern Colombia

(International Crisis Group 2005). This area is comprised of a low altitude humid forest wherein the cultivators of coca destroyed roughly 3.45 million acres of land between 1990 and 2000 (Buxton 2006). According to a report prepared by the Transnational Institute (2001), deforestation is a direct effect of the fumigation efforts sponsored by the U.S. military. Indiscriminate aerial herbicide spraying kills not only coca crops, but also food and alternative crops that are being promoted to reduce farmers' dependence on coca crops (Tenenbaum 2002). As coca crops are destroyed, the rural people migrate deeper into the rainforests or up the mountains to maintain their livelihood. Because "slash and burn" planting techniques provide the main method of farming in Colombia the result is increased rainforest destruction (Transnational Institute 2001; see also Achard et al. 2002; Nobre, Sellers, and Shukla 1991). Davalos et al. (2009: 382) concur, taking into consideration both the irresponsible practices used to cultivate and process coca and the damage caused by militarized eradication efforts, they conclude that "[c]oca is the single most important driver of deforestation in the country."

Alternative development initiatives meant to curb coca production have similarly exacerbated deforestation. Young (2004) observes that new road construction contributes to the spread of coca cultivation. Transportation improvements facilitate the acquisition of agricultural inputs, the purchase of chemicals for coca refinement, and shipment of coca leaves and coca paste. "Without exception, the current coca-growing areas are past tropical forest colonization projects... this began in the 1960s and continued into the 1990s despite a near universal failure of these projects" (Young 2004: 365). Foreign assistance offered to drug "source" countries typically includes funding for alternative development initiatives and infrastructural enhancements. Road construction requires the bulldozing of tropical forest areas and typically includes the circumvention of environmental protection mandates. In turn, these new and improved roads facilitate illicit drug production by providing a more reliable and cheaper transportation and access to remote forest regions (Young 2004).¹

While the social and environmental damage of Plan Colombia was immediate, the effects on coca suppression were mixed and slow to emerge. In the initial years of implementation, this militarized war on drugs may have contributed to expanded coca production in Colombia and other Andean nations. After the adoption of Plan Colombia, the number of coca-growing provinces in Colombia increased from 12 to 23 (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2010). Furthermore, roughly 42% of the land under coca cultivation between 2001-2011 is on land that was "formerly covered by forests" (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2012a). The local and global environmental consequences of this are staggering as the local population relocates to more remote lands and releasing CO₂ as forests are sacrificed to coca cultivation.

¹ Two important topics are beyond the scope of this article. First, while we are focused on Colombia, the impact of this militarized war on drugs extends to other Latin American nations. In the 1990s, the US spent more than \$500 billion attempting to immobilize the drug trade forcing illicit crops to the most ecologically fragile lands in Peru, Bolivia and Colombia: the Andean rainforest (Burke 2003; see also Count the Costs 2011). Second, it is essential to plan for remediation in the wake of this war. While challenging in many respects, removing economic incentives for growing crops (whether legal or illegal) would reduce the rates of deforestation and encourage farmers and citizens to invest in improvements in land already being cultivated (Alvarez 2002; Davalos et al. 2009; Davalos et al. 2011). For the sake of fairness and to promote durable social institutions, it will be essential to provide social and legal assistance to indigenous peoples (Young 2004) as they seek to recover from the adverse effects of this drug war.

Conclusion

Colombia faces formidable environmental challenges: deforestation, declining biodiversity, and degraded land and water. Colombia's challenges extend to the political and social realm to include failed economic policies, chronic poverty and unemployment, and overt and armed challenges to the Colombian government. The militarized war on drugs exacerbates these environmental, social and political crises. During its first ten years, Plan Colombia failed to stem the flow of illicit substances to the United States. Since 2010, it appears that coca cultivation and export of cocaine from Colombia has declined. Whether a final assessment concludes that Plan Colombia succeeded or failed to suppress cocaine exports to the United States, this militarized effort highlights the workings of the treadmill of destruction in the 21st Century: diverse armed forces profit directly and indirectly from predatory relations with noncombatants and unsustainable environmental practices. These trends are amplified by the policies of global powers. The risks of militarism—social, political and environmental—are systematically transferred to and borne by the people, ecosystems and institutions of the Global South.

There are signs that Colombia's internal wars might recede. The Colombian government has met with FARC to negotiate an end to the war (Brodzinsky 2014). The nation's presidential election is becoming a referendum on these peace talks—to continue the incumbent's current negotiations or to embrace a more bellicose and punitive posture toward FARC (see BBC News 2013; International Crisis Group 2012; Maloney 2013). Even if we make optimistic assumptions (that the negotiations with FARC go well and that Colombia's role in coca and cocaine production recedes), Colombia's future and that of other Andean nations remains perilous. First, the "new" wars of the 21st Century are notable for their concentration in countries with a prior history of conflict, and this has not always been the case. As late as the 1960s, the majority of civil wars took place in countries with no prior history of civil war. From 2000 to 2010, however, ninety percent (90%) of all civil war onsets have occurred in nations with a prior conflict (Walter 2010). As is the case in Colombia, prolonged civil conflict undermines fragile social institutions, generate profound and long lasting grievances, and undermine the state's legitimacy. The people and places in greatest need for peace and development—the bottom billion (Collier 2008)—are likely to be in a war zone, recovering from a recent war and/or on the verge of another round of war. Second, suppressing coca cultivation and cocaine exports from Colombia does not guarantee an overall reduction in supply at the global level. Prior to 1980, Colombia trailed Peru and Bolivia in drug production (and by a wide margin). In what is referred to as the "balloon effect," as pressure was placed on drug production in these neighboring countries, Colombia's output increased many times over. As Colombian production has ebbed, Peru recently overtook Colombia and is now the largest producer and exporter of cocaine (Brodzinsky 2014). Further, using species better suited for lower altitude rainforests, coca cultivation now extends into the Amazon rainforest, including sites in Brazil (Duffy 2008). Even if one makes very optimistic assumptions about Colombia, the prospects that coca cultivation, cocaine manufacture, and militarized eradication efforts will continue to impose horrific suffering on the people and ecosystems in the region remain high.

In one important respect, Colombia is not a representative case of the "new" wars of the 21st Century. Ethnic tensions have not been pronounced; genocidal policies have not been pursued. These tensions and social cleavages are all too common in 21st Century wars (Kaldor 1999; Mann 2005; Wimmer 2013) – and they bring a very specific dynamics and challenges. However, in other respects, the Colombian case can be generalized. Specifically, Colombia's

recent history provides a glimpse into dynamics where: (1) a state demonstrably lacks a monopoly over the means of coercion and has lost legitimacy in the eyes of many citizens, and (2) a wide array of non-state militarized groups establish predatory ties to a lucrative and illegal source of revenues, and (3) a prominent and affluent military power intervenes to amplify these dynamics while insulating its own troops and homeland from the human and environmental costs. In this context, the human suffering and human rights abuses are widespread and severe. With regard to environment damage, the consequences of the treadmill of destruction are alarming. Irresponsible production processes have been coupled with ecocidal eradication efforts to cause extensive damage to Colombia's water, soil and forests and has compromised entire ecosystems. In this way, Colombia exhibits several features of "catastrophic convergence" (Parenti 2011) and "linked crises" (Chase-Dunn 2013). Colombia faces years, perhaps decades, of environmental damage tied the cascade of multiple crises unfolding at once in a location where "new" war, illustrative of risk-transfer militarism, is commonplace. While this examination of Colombia's recent history offers preliminary insights, it will be important for researchers to continue studying war and its aftermath. And when doing so, it will be important to elucidate the distinctive drivers and dimensions of the treadmill of destruction.

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Population Dynamics and World-Systems Analysis

Daniela Danna

Università degli Studi di Milano

daniela.danna@unimi.it

Abstract

World-systems analysis has given scant attention to population dynamics. Overlooked are large-scale macrohistorical population trends and their microhistorical foundation on procreative decisions—decisions which are taken by a historically changing subject of procreation: local elders or other authorities, head(s) of the household, couples, and women. The discipline of demography is also not as helpful as it could be, given its basis in modernization theory, which fails to recognize intentionality in reproduction in pre-capitalist societies. It assumes a model of “demographic transition” from a state of “natural fertility” to a state of conscious family planning, while also treating mortality as independent of fertility. Marxism recognized the importance of population as a source of labor for profit and capital accumulation. With its tools Sydney Coontz developed a demand for labor theory explaining in particular the decrease in the birth rate in England and the United States at the turn of the century. This theory was further developed by anthropologists of the “mode of production and population patterns” who, with other authors, offer useful theories and insights to advance world-historical research on population. This article explores connections between population dynamics and world-systems analysis. I explore six key questions at different levels of analysis, including: 1) Are there world-systems' imperatives concerning human reproduction?; 2) Do human reproduction imperatives differ across world-systems?; 3) How do the (eventual) system's requirements get transmitted to households and individuals?; 4) Why do people have children?; 5) Who is the subject of procreation decisions?; and 6) How is the number of offspring chosen? Finally, I offer guidelines for applying the six questions to the capitalist world-economy.

Keywords: population, procreation, demography, labor demand, women's status, children's labor

The more human beings, the more surplus value is in principle possible. It is no accident that the so-called population law of capitalism is considered to be nothing less than the “general law of capitalist accumulation” (Marx). It is this law that turns women into child-bearing machines and is responsible for the so-called population explosion (Claudia von Wehrlof, 1984).

Population dynamics and their foundations in procreation are a fundamental field of historical-structural inquiry that has lacked attention in world-systems analysis, even though these dynamics contribute powerfully to the development of world-systems' historical trajectories.¹ In any world-system the new generations represent the future producers and a source of political power for the

¹ There are important exceptions, a few authors that I examine later on.

social aggregates they belong to. Yet, their number must be kept in balance with the resources at the disposal of households and society, given the environment and the technology that a particular world-system uses in accordance with its social relations of production. Population dynamics are the result of the interaction between the requirements of the systems and the choices taken by people within the institutions composing them, framed by the structures of opportunities configured by systems and institutions as a result of internal and external struggle. Population dynamics include mortality levels, which are not entirely within the range of social determination, and can be an important component of alterations in class relations. Finally, procreation dynamics are the result of the power conflicts within households over its costs and benefits and how to distribute them.

The disciplinary corpus of demography is not very useful in filling this gap. Demography is a late formation in the liberal intellectual division of labor (Livi Bacci, Blangiardo and Golini 1994, Szreter 1993), and – as the other disciplines resulting from this division of labor (Wallerstein 1996, Wallerstein 2004) – suffers from limitations of perspective and political bias. Demographers still consider as their founding father Thomas Robert Malthus, who saw excessive procreation as the main cause of poverty, and thus they tend to omit class analysis and reify as causes social phenomena that must themselves be accounted for: marriage rates, spacing of children, use of contraceptives (e.g. Dyson 2010).

Demography often naturalizes its concepts and “laws”: Malthus himself posited instinct as the cause of procreation, nearly completely disregarding social dynamics (he did find a check for this instinct in the variable age at marriage). With few exceptions, demographers use nations as units of analysis, applying to them its central concept of the “demographic transition.” Contemporary demographers supporting the demographic transition theory paint the familiar picture of a shift from “traditional” to “modernized” society where fertility moves from “natural” to “rational.” Contrary to this ideology, the act of procreation has hardly ever been left to “natural fecundity” (Henry 1953) or to chance, as the survival of human societies depends on the right balance between environment, technology and social relations of production on one side and the number of people on the other. The “number of people,” moreover, is not composed of homogenous individuals, but of humans of different ages and abilities who pass through phases of dependence and of active participation to production, cooperation and care for the young, the sick, the disabled, and the old.

Marvin Harris and Eric Ross gathered evidence against two such naturalized concepts, still fundamental in demography: “natural fertility” and “natural mortality.” The two anthropologists showed that the necessary and sustainable number of children is achieved even in precapitalist societies with various methods of birth and death control. Not only were contraceptive or abortifacients methods (such as prolonged breastfeeding or blows to the belly) known in a number of societies (possibly everywhere, even in the past), but high fecundity could even be a direct cause of high mortality. The methods of last resort for unwanted pregnancies were neglect, abandon, and outright infanticide. This is not to say that reproduction can be analyzed as a completely rational act,² but it is certainly shaped by human decisions, as the survival of a particular group depends upon such control.

While denying population balance as a target of precapitalist societies, demography postulates a central concept of balance in population at the unprecedentedly high contemporary human numbers, which its practitioners urge nations to assume as a target. This “stationary state” that nations should aim for with a “replacement rate” of 2.1 children per woman,³ is the

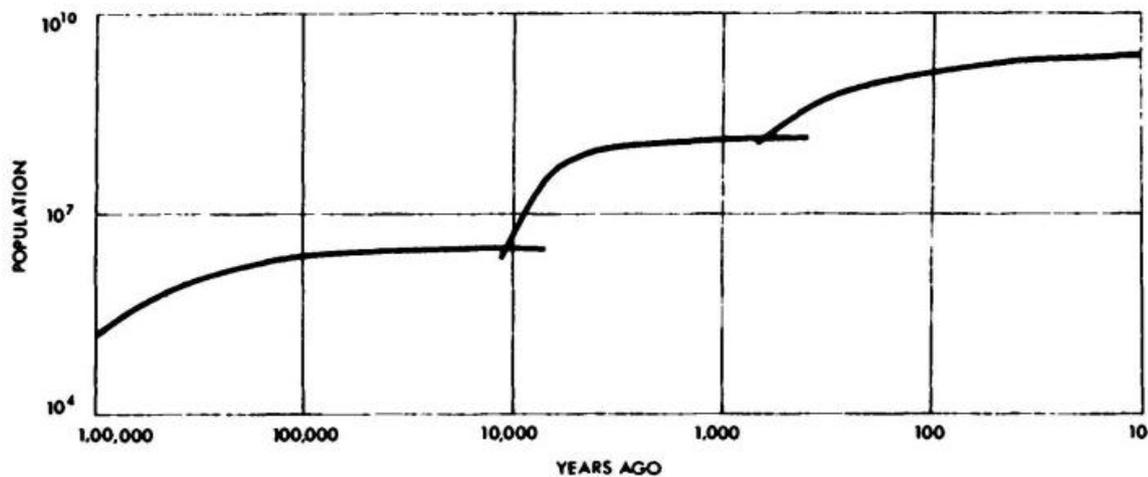
² See for example the volume edited by Handwerker (1986a), where Crosbie examines rationality models and finds them to predict demand for children instead of actual reproductive behavior, while Schumann finds that in Chiapas “variations in fertility have determined which families could take advantage of economic opportunities requiring increased family labor inputs” (Handwerker 1986a:1) without having directly caused these variations.

³ This number is highly popularized, but actually it is not very precise, as it does not take into account the mortality of women, supposing it not influential on the final fertility outcome, as it in fact it happens in Western countries. Wilson and Airey (1999) therefore argue that the prevalent use in demography of the total fertility rates (the “replacement rate”

demographic equivalent of the equilibrium point in neoclassical economics. But concepts of balance in capitalism are highly misleading, since growth of capital is the engine of the system, requiring a growing amount of labor during its expansive phases.

While the most common representation of aggregate human population by demographers is an exponential curve accelerating after 1750 (Chesnais 1991; Vallin 1995; Livi Bacci 2012), it seems much more likely that our species evolved along a series of successive logarithmic curves (net of oscillations), as seminal innovations and class dynamics permitted an increasingly intense appropriation of natural resources by humans from hunting and gathering to agriculture and from agriculture to those technologies permitting the large scale application of fossil fuel energy that we term “industrial revolution.”

Figure 1. Logarithmic population curves



Source: Polgar 1972:204

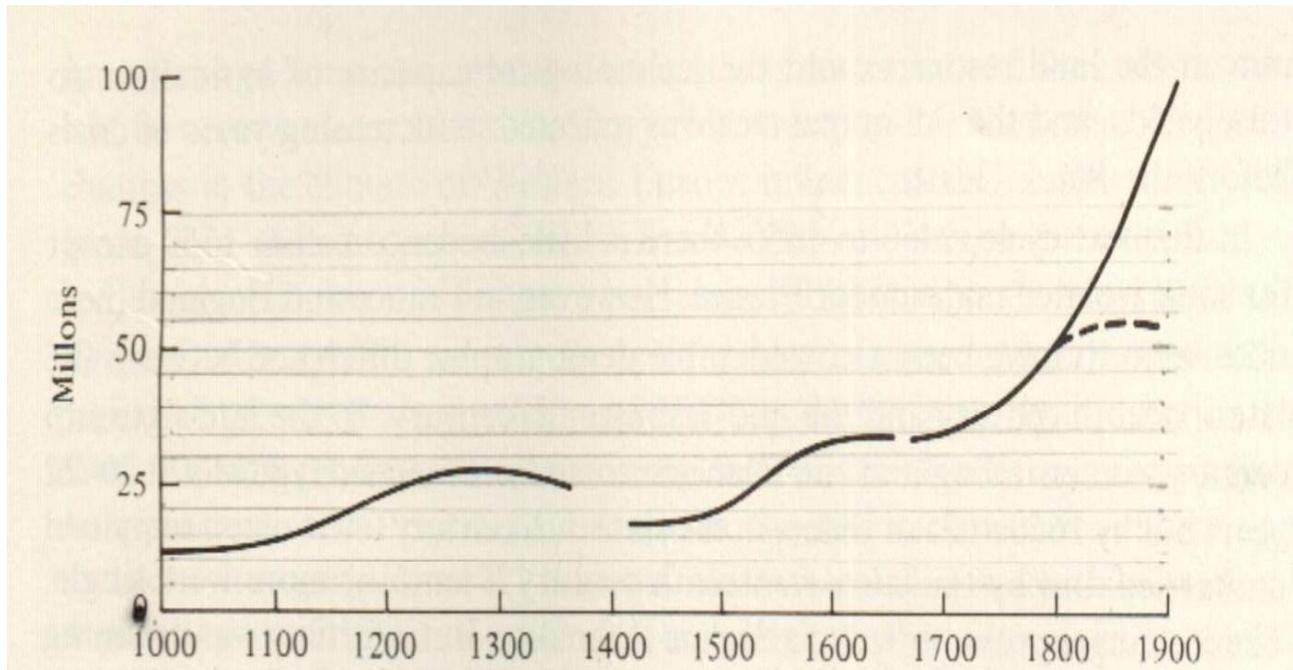
The end of massive epidemics after 1750 led demographers to consider this period as a turning point, starting an exponential population trend. But in fact this is relevant only for Europe and for the peoples of European descent, as the diseases they brought from the old country continued to kill the inhabitants of other regions in epidemic proportions (see fig.2). For instance, India suffered immense population loss when its system of granaries that had been effective for centuries in preventing famines was disrupted by English colonial administrators, who exported grain from famine-stricken regions, like the English landlords who were importing grain from Ireland at the time of the potato blight.

To study population dynamics and their foundations in procreation decisions⁴ means to truly consider society as an evolving whole. This includes a temporal dimension to the analysis, and attention to the organization of cooperation and conflict among humans in societies.

is one of these) is a result of Western ethnocentrism.

⁴As explained above, I am talking about procreation “decisions” and not “events” because intentionality is highly prevalent, and even in case of unplanned “events”, an element of acceptance is generally present, as unwanted pregnancies can end in abortion, infanticide, abandonment or fatal neglect of the newborn.

Figure 2. A schematic representation of population growth in Western Europe. Continuous line: total population; broken line: rural population



Source: Grigg 1980:283.

Modes of Production and Reproduction

In much of world-systems literature, references to population dynamics are usually just made in passing, and have not been coherently systematized (Danna 2013b). An exception is the comparative world-systems analysis by Christopher Chase-Dunn and Thomas Hall (1997), which analyzes the demographic (and economic) constraints behind social change. Drawing from Marvin Harris' cultural materialism (more on this below), Chase-Dunn and Hall theorized a uniform dynamic based on population pressure in all world-systems. Peter Grimes (1981) and Kathryn Ward (1983, 1984, 1985) are other exceptions dedicating substantial attention to quantitative analyses of the birth rates of all periphery countries with dependent development. Grimes showed that neo-Malthusian analyses and modernization theory were less able to account for fertility rates than dependency theory. Among five models operationalizing different theories about fertility, the dependency model was more consistent with the data, with fertility being kept high by inequality and by the dependency status of the economy, which cannot take full advantage of the degree of development reached.⁵ Ward found that dependency was preventing the decrease in the birth rates typically expected with rising GNP.

Another work at the macrohistorical level is the analysis of secular cycles in agrarian societies with a demographic-structural approach (Turchin and Hall 2003, Chase-Dunn, Hall and Turchin 2007, Turchin and Nefedov 2009). A net correspondence appears between population dynamics and a “misery index” obtained from the real wages series, and Hall and Turchin (2007) showed with data on England that this correspondence could not be causal: the common cause was rather sociopolitical instability. The microhistorical level has nevertheless not yet been investigated

⁵ To the contrary, Nolan and White (1983) and Nolan (1988) perform quantitative analyses on the World Bank data that attribute more explanatory power to both the demographic transition and the ecological-evolutionary theory, rather than to world-systems analysis.

by these authors, who generally postulate a tendency of the population to grow. It is rather ironic that the only actual organic reflection on population by world-systems analysts should rest on the side of Malthus rather than Marx. But it is in Marxism and in cultural materialism that we find the most useful analyses and theories regarding population.

Karl Marx rejected a universal “law of population,” such as that proposed by Malthus, in favor of specific historical laws. In his view the mode of production remains central, and the mode of reproduction follows it. Marx described the importance of either lengthening the working hours or putting more laborers to work in order to expand the mass of surplus value. The expansion of the system, including a rise in its population through incorporation of new areas, was recognized by Rosa Luxemburg as a necessity. Friedrich Engels and August Bebel wrote about procreation at the microhistorical level, stressing the importance of children’s labor for the survival of dispossessed workers’ households, as children could enter the “Satanic mills” of the industrial revolution and work for a pay.

The most organic contribution to population theory by a Marxist author is by the economist Sydney H. Coontz. In *Population Theories and the Economic Interpretation* (1961) he elaborated a demand for labor theory that explained the reduction in fertility in England and the United States with the change in demand from unskilled to skilled labor, as capital accumulated and technology advanced. The demand for labor theory was reprised in the 1970s and 1980s by authors that Richard Franke (1981) has grouped in an anthropological paradigm he calls “mode of production and population patterns” (Mamdani 1972; White 1973; Folbre 1977; Gimenez 1977; Wasserstrom 1978; Kleinman 1980; Gregory and Piché 1981). These authors found that the population explosion phases in the neocolonial periphery were fostered by its dependency status. Also, their analysis embeds the mode of reproduction within the constraints of the mode of production. Later on, in the 1990s, the sociologists Wally Seccombe (1983, 1992, 1993) and Asoka Bandarage (1997) also integrated fertility into the mode of production, considering demographic forces as a result of the social relations of capitalism.

In the same period of the “mode of production and population patterns” paradigm, other anthropologists – Claude Meillassoux, Marvin Harris and Eric Ross – posited instead that the mode of reproduction should be analyzed independently from the mode of production. As it turned out, this was not without problems. Meillassoux (1975) considered the mode of reproduction as the equivalent of the mode of production for precapitalist societies, where control was exercised not on the means of production but on the means of subsistence and on the women, as the producers of the producers. Possibly under the influence of Lévi-Strauss, Meillassoux treated women’s submission as a constant, despite its historical variability. Harris (1979) divided the elements composing society into infrastructure, structure, and superstructure, with infrastructure consisting of both productive (technological and economic) and reproductive (demographic) forces. But when he and Eric Ross fleshed out this scheme in *Death, Sex and Fertility*, their fundamental contribution to debunking the demographic transition theory, they left this interplay open: “We are not prepared to make any categorical assertion that either mode of production or mode of reproduction is dominant over the other” (Harris and Ross 1987:2). The importance of their work lies – much more than in their description of a hypothetically independent “mode of reproduction” – in the attribution of intentionality to reproduction in human groups, be it individually conscious or not. This control over fertility and (to a certain extent) mortality allows for a generational renewal that is in line with the requirements of the social relations of production and the material forces of production. In fact in the examples presented in this book the causal arrow goes obstinately from the production mode to the reproduction.

Harris and Ross suppose that this collective rationality can also align itself unconsciously with the material requirements concerning reproduction. But it is not necessary to postulate unconscious processes and collective rationality. Rather, the limited rationality of the subject(s) of reproduction can work against the needs of the collective or of the system, and conscious choices can incur unanticipated consequences. Recognizing this, Wally Seccombe wrote that the

relationship between destruction and reproduction of the workforce, which is mediated by households, is open to contradictions: families can (in his words) unconsciously adapt to the system's requirements, but sometimes familial practices go against the needs of the system:

We would expect to find that demographic forces periodically get out of alignment with other elements of the socioeconomic system (such as its subsistence capacity and labor demand). The resulting disruptions alter the contours of the mode of production or push it towards a full-blown crisis (Secombe 1992:12).

This alternative stance is reasonable as in history there are examples of changes in the relations of production brought about by demographic forces. To name just a couple of cases: rising wages and new freedom for the serf class were the legacy of the Black Death (Aston and Philpin 1985; Heller 2011), and workers in core countries gained economic and social rights during the labor shortages and erosion of profits preceding the revolts in 1968, at a time of scarce international mobility of the factors of production.

In light of this discussion, how can we analyze the interplay of mode of production and demographic forces in the different world-systems, in order to understand procreation and population dynamics? We can start with a series of questions, which can be categorized at the macro- and micro-levels.

Accounting for Population Dynamics: Macro- and Micro-Historical Levels of Analysis

Population and procreation must be incorporated into the various levels of world-systems analysis. At the world-systemic level, we must account for population's role in mini-systems, world-empires, and world-economies. Thus, at this macrohistorical level the main research questions should be:

- 1) Are there world-systems imperatives concerning human reproduction?
- 2) Are these imperatives different for the different world-systems? and
- 3) How do the system's requirements get transmitted to households and individuals?

To answer the first two questions we must distinguish between systems aiming at expansion or at stability. If the system is stable, the generational replacement must be reached and further fertility contained. We can assume that population stability is important for mini-systems (e. g. hunter-gatherer societies) in situations of circumscription. Alternatively, if the equilibrium with the environment is in peril, the solution to population growth is the spreading of human groups to different areas, that is to say migration (see the model of the demographic behavior and geographical spreading for small populations with simple technology in Fletcher et al. 2011).

World-empires seem to be subject to the same alternation between homeostasis and migration/expansion, depending on the human and natural environment beyond their borders. A growing population poses political problems of social order: "Numbers meant strength in war and industry. They also meant people to rule and mouths to feed. The optimal size is far from clear" (Wallerstein 1974:198). The dominant classes of world-empires are likely to be wary of new technologies—including those that can ease population pressure, such as innovations in agriculture—for fear of subversion of the established social relationships (e.g., the Chinese Empire, Tokugawa Japan before 1853). Note that population pressure is not an absolute concept, but relative to resources and technology in a specified, and circumscribed, area.

The capitalist world-economy instead has generally welcomed population growth ever since mercantilist states' need for expanding populations was openly theorized. In the core areas, various

pronatalist measures were taken when birth rates decreased,⁶ as in the 1930s and in the current period. The process of incorporation into the capitalist world-economy stimulated population growth in the new colonial periphery following the shocks of the European invasions that devastated people and land. In contrast, in the semiperiphery and periphery the core's racist worries about the multiplication of Black and colored people in postcolonial countries spurred the diffusion of birth control methods, sometimes via coercive means (Akhter 1992; Duden 1992; Knieper 2000, Hodgson and Watkins 1997:486).

In addition to being shaped by imperatives of the world-system, population dynamics are affected by ecological constraints. Adequate resources are needed to support human populations, regardless of elite ambitions. Anthropologist Steven Polgar underlined the importance of the absence of class exploitation to maintain population balance with the environment – a difficult endeavor for the capitalist world-economy and for world-empires: “Population growth in the feudal stage was often forced to reach (and sometimes exceed) the limits of supporting capacity,” writes Polgar, continuing:

The pronatalist effects of colonialism are in some respects a continuation of the feudal situation. In contrast to the largely autonomous village, the peasant community is heavily affected by outside economic interests. To outsiders the "surplus" they can squeeze from the peasant's production is of much greater relevance than the long-term productivity of the land or the standard of living of the peasant family. Boserup (1965) has recognized that intensification of labor input leads to declining yields per man-day of work; but she attributes this self-defeating cycle to population pressure, failing to recognize that where external dominance is weak or absent, agricultural people are quite capable of keeping population from becoming too dense (Polgar 1975:22).

A series of questions must be answered at the microhistorical level for minisystems, world-empires and world-economies alike:

- 4) Why do people have children?
- 5) Who is the subject of procreation decisions?
- 6) How is the number of offspring chosen?

This first question might sound baffling, but its legitimacy is clarified by the third: the historical variability in the number of children per woman in different societies and social strata does not reflect arbitrary individual (or couple's or household's or others') choices, but is a social fact requiring a social explanation, maybe even in absolute terms, as suggested by James Reed:

Anthropologists studying human reproduction in premodern cultures have found that the desire for children is not an innate human drive but an acquired motive which must be reinforced by social rewards and punishments sufficient to overcome the wish to avoid the pain of childbirth and the burdens of parenthood (Reed 1983:ix).

The reasons to have sex, and to choose a particular sexual activity is an interesting field of social enquiry. Harris and Ross (1987:9) write that “homosexuality, masturbation, coitus interruptus and noncoital heterosexual techniques for achieving orgasm can all play a role in regulating fertility.” All these variations in the sexual act are seldom even mentioned in demographic literature. These techniques were clearly condemned by nationalist and pronatalist states from 1800 onward and possibly also from the very beginning of capitalism (Federici and Fortunati 1984; Federici 2004).

⁶ And the so-called neo-Malthusian movement, propagating birth control methods, was repressed: in the most progressive core countries the repression lasted until the post WWI period, in the others until later (Reed 1983, Danna 2010).

Pregnancy as a result of sex is not always a rational act, of course, but this possibility can be socially approved or sanctioned – also depending on the “laws of reproduction” in a particular time and place and on the social relations of production.

A neglected fact in demographic transition theory is that children can have an economic value, and can be conceived in response to economic opportunities (e.g. Kertzner and Hogan 1989; Schneider and Schneider 1996). Children are not necessarily valued only as “means of pleasure and hope” (Bandarage 1997:159), but they can also be used as unpaid workers. For example, children worked in factories and mines during the industrial revolution (Engels 1845; Seccombe 1993), and contemporary street children support their families with enormous sacrifices:

In the burgeoning Third World cities vast numbers of urban people are unable to find regular wage employment. For many who are forced to survive in the so-called informal sector, children are still assets. Many urban slum communities are supported largely by “street children”. In São Paulo and Bangkok, child prostitutes are often the sole supporters of families (Bandarage 1997:162).

Demographer John C. Caldwell (1982) proposed a theory in which procreation depends mainly on the direction of the intra-familial wealth flow, composed of services, goods, and money. Purely economic reasons would dictate unlimited fecundity in “familial modes of production,” while zero fecundity should be the rational choice when children are a cost. Though his theory is still tied to the model of the demographic transition as it denies population balance as a collective goal for premodern societies, Caldwell recognized that children do have value from the material point of view as a workforce, sources of political power, providers of goods and services to the more powerful members of the household, and guarantors of their survival in old age. He abandoned the concept of natural fecundity, but still reasoned as if a high number of children would always be desirable in precapitalist societies. Anthropologists found instead that children’s labor acquires a substantial value only in sedentary societies:

On the cost side, sedentarism relaxed the need to transport neonates and toddlers, while on the benefit side, children’s labor plays a more important role, especially in tasks such as bleaching, grinding, and pounding of nuts and seeds, in the procurement of molluscs and small fish and game, and in varied house- and child-care activities (...) Up until the time of the emergence of sedentary communities and their “broad spectrum” economies, to judge from recent hunter-gatherer societies, the economic role of children was slight (Harris and Ross 1987:39).

The investment in children, rational at the household level, can be counterproductive for the exploited class:

Higher reproductivity was frequently their best short-term defense against miseration, even though, in the long run, the aggregate result was catastrophic. But, even this was not solely or even primarily because population outstripped production, but because food and other resources were being expropriated by the ruling class (Harris and Ross 1987:148).

In the Mexican county of Zongolica – to name just one historical example – large families were an advantage in that they added to household income, but population growth brought about land fragmentation over time. In addition, as Nancy Folbre observed: “The creation of a large reserve army of labor means that there is considerable downward pressure on wages” (Folbre 1977:53).

Beyond the ways additional workers affect household economies, it is also important to recognize that reproduction always happens at a biological cost to mothers. This cost includes the risks of health complications after childbirth, which can be (though in most cases aren't) life-

threatening. Neither Coontz nor mainstream demographers fully account for this cost. Disregard for this biological reality in mainstream demographic theory reflects the oppression of women. Inattention to the physical costs and risks inherent in pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing (plus the tabooization of the sexual alternatives to the heterosexual coitus) is only possible in a culture based on the historical oppression of women by men. Thus, world-historical relations play a role in shaping the unequal distribution of benefits and costs of household reproduction. The household must not be considered as a black box (as too often demographers do) but – especially in a theory concerned with social justice as is world-systems analysis – its internal power relations are a very legitimate field of study. Just how are reproductive decisions taken in different types of world-systems, geo-economic areas, and social classes? By the elders of the father or the mother, or of both? By the man? By the couple together? By the woman bearing the children with her own body and at her own risk? And is the historical development of this (changeable) subject of fertility decisions connected with the position it occupies in the world-system?

Each of these six questions generates multiple research questions, whose answers will certainly vary according to time, place, social class, and possibly other variables. In this final part of the article I outline another framework to address the six questions specifically within the capitalist world-economy.

Population in the Capitalist World-Economy

Focusing now on the capitalist world-economy, I can only start addressing certain aspects of these six questions, as the world-system in which we live spans more than 500 years and has extended itself progressively over the whole planet. The first three questions are appropriate to the level of geo-economic areas and of world-economy's institutions, the last three to the household level.

1) Are there Imperatives Concerning Human Reproduction in the Capitalist World-Economy?

The main characteristic of the capitalist world system is its expansionist tendency, as the motivation for organizing economic activities is profit (D-M-D') and capital accumulation without limit. Private initiative comes to a standstill if the prospects for profit are meagre, as John Maynard Keynes recognized. Profit is obtained by appropriating the results of human labor, which therefore must be increased—also via a growing population.⁷

Since the 16th century the European population has in fact steadily grown,⁸ and migrated to conquer newfound lands, converting to intensive agriculture the prairies and forests where hunter-gatherers dwelled, or appropriating the land of other farming peoples, forcing indigenous peoples (already decimated by conquest and illnesses) to work for the benefit of core states and companies. This demand for extra labor translated into extra children:

From the demographic point of view, this stage can be divided into two substages. In the first substage, the population of the colonizing peoples grew enormously (at average annual rates of 5 to 10 per 1,000), while the population of many subject societies was decimated through imported diseases, slavery, war, and forcible removal. In the second substage, in the metropolitan nations population increase slackened, while among subject peoples it generally surged. Thus, as I will elaborate below, the Third World is obviously not "starting"

⁷ See Hornborg 2001 on the unequal exchange of labor, energy and materials between areas of the capitalist world-economy.

⁸ In a way not correlated at all with K-waves according to Grigg's (1980:281) reconstruction of the trends in European population history (see also Danna 2013a).

now demographically where Europe was in the 16th century (Polgar 1972:205).

The capitalist world-system requires a workforce and obtains it through mechanisms such as separation of the producers from the means of production, taxation, indentured labor, slavery, and other forms of violence. Population expansion results as exploited workers answer the imperatives of capitalism by multiplying the household workforce in order to attain mere survival. The number of children rises to keep up with labor requirements (Nardi 1981). The edifice of proletarian labor must rest on much larger foundations of subsistence work (Smith, Wallestein and Evers 1984, Dunaway 2014a; 2014b). The same intensifying effect on fertility comes from commercialization of agricultural products (Weil 1986) and land degradation, because more labor is required to reach the same production as before (Cleveland 1986).

Demand for extra labor also translates into slave trafficking and other more or less coercive forms of migration. Steven Bunker applied the concept of the “mode of extraction” to the labor-force with slave trafficking, but immigration of any kind represents the appropriation of labor-force at no cost to the receiving society. Today, immigration helps maintain population growth even in core countries, where native birth rates are below replacement levels, despite policies to encourage reproduction such as education and other family subsidies, paid maternity leave and employment protection, and other supports.

In the 1980s some world-systems authors who reflected on population documented parallels between Third World poverty combined with population growth in the 1970s and 1980s, and the situation in early European industrialization (Ward 1983, 1984, 1985; Schiel 1984; Ingerson 1984). The Third World was the absolute periphery of the world-economy, caught in dynamics of dependent development, while England was reaching hegemonic status as it industrialized.⁹ If the position in the world-economy is different but the labor-intensive technology used is similar, this could account for the similar population expansion.

The technology used in semi-monopolistic production in core areas in the 18th and 19th centuries was even more labor-intensive than the one actually used in peripheral mechanized production processes. The situation of the core workers at the time of England’s rise was not much different from that of periphery workers today: they were subject to the same push to have more children in order to climb out of their misery and to alleviate their incertitude about the future and old age. The benefits to core country workers of surplus extraction in the periphery started much later. Wallerstein (1979) places the start of a redistribution of surplus production to lower classes at the beginning of the B phase in 1873, when it was used to ease social tensions. The redistribution was made easier first of all by the increasing use of fossil fuel: this new energy at the disposal of core inhabitants expanded the social product. Secondly, population in England and in other core countries expanded at a lower rate: the birth rate decreased among the working class, driven by the need to invest in some education for the offspring as the demand for skilled labor increased. Another theoretical consideration that emerges from this parallel is that, with respect to household fertility, the distinction between competitive or semi-monopolistic production processes is not decisive. Neither is the distinction between working for pay and subsistence activities (children do and did work in both sectors) – only class division is.

Agro-industry plays a role in population growth, too, as it provides the necessary food, increasing short-term yields at the expense of fertility maintenance. E. A. Wrigley (2004) found that present population growth could be achieved only by moving away from an exclusively organic economy to a fossil fuel-based one, while Lloyd T. Evans acknowledged that organic agriculture has been insufficient to sustain world human population after the third billion mark (Evans 1998:226). Paradoxically, even the Green Revolution is believed to have had stimulating effects for reproduction: the need for more hand labor grew because only jobs performed by men were mechanized, counting on unrewarded women's and children's labor for the labor-intensive tasks such as weeding in the fertilized crops fields (Boserup 1985).

⁹ To be precise, population expansion started at the time of the cottage industry with its putting out system (Braun 1966; Landes 1966; Gilles, Tilly and Levine 1992).

The macrohistorical level of the contemporary capitalist world-economy consists not only of different geo-economic areas (core, semiperiphery, and periphery) but it is also made up of interactions within and among different institutions: states, the interstate system, productive firms, classes, and identity (or status) groups. Therefore other questions arise that are peculiar to this world-system: how has the fundamental push of the system towards capital accumulation been translated in terms of population expansion? What are the institutions' stakes in procreation and how do they try to exert influence on the subjects (decisors) of procreation?

The identity or status groups (nation, race, ethnic group, religion, but also gender and sexual orientation) generally take advantage of their own multiplication and try to put limits on the others' (this is true in all world-systems). In their antagonism with groups with a different identity, they have a stake in their members' reproduction for the political power given by (organized) numbers. This is true even for the sexes: the phenomenon of "missing girls" is not a contemporary Asian anomaly, but the choice of many male-dominated households and societies throughout history (Harris and Ross 1987).

States prosper by having a large population from which work, taxes, and military power can be extracted (Graeber 2010). States have an interest in population growth, but they are also concerned with political stability, which population growth can undermine. Population control policies have thus been adopted by periphery nations in response to economic incentives from the core countries and to the ideology of raising per capita income if population is kept constant (Barrett and Tsui 1999; Luke and Watkins 2002; Barrett, Kurzman and Shanahan 2010).

Mercantilist states, right from the beginning of the capitalist world-economy, encouraged population growth, and nationalist states did the same. If the welfare states have assumed a portion of the costs of reproduction it is in part because of workers' class struggle but in part because they need able-bodied men for defence or militaristic ambitions. The military preoccupation of all states is in general to maintain a large population while curbing, or at least not encouraging, other states' growth, including the "inner enemy" of the racialized portion of the working class.¹⁰

The fight by women and all workers for more rights connected to citizenship brought some victories, among them support for reproductive work. As a result, states began playing enhanced roles in education and other services. Socialization of reproductive costs is in fact losing ground with current neoliberal policies (Teepie 1995). All productive processes benefit from large dispossessed populations that reduce the cost of labor. But while they benefit from the lower costs associated with crowded labor markets, companies resist contributing to the social costs of reproduction. In their hiring policies, many discriminate against women because they are or could become mothers. Few if any willingly provide childcare or other benefits to support working parents. Some states have forced productive companies to assume some of these reproductive costs.

2) Are the Capitalist World-Economy's Imperatives Concerning Human Reproduction Different from the World-Systems Preceding It?

Some answers to this question can be found above. Here I will specifically examine what happened during the incorporation of other systems into the capitalist world-economy. European expansion and conquest since the 16th century took a deadly toll with epidemics and massacres. However exploitation of the remaining local populations for their labor-force began soon after, and birth rates soared in contrast to the precolonial period. This mechanism is clearer on islands (e. g. for the Pacific Islands, see Pirie 2000).

Complaints about the lack of labor power in the colonies were often uttered, and the colonial

¹⁰ For example, both the population control policies sponsored by the United States in the 1960s and 1970s to curb population growth in newly independent countries, and their preoccupation with the growth of Black and Hispanic minorities (Folbre 2001) descended from this logic.

administrators had the means to induce procreation, as they could raise taxes, so that the natives would have to sell their labor power for the cash needed to pay them. Meanwhile, the subsistence work had to be performed by a growing number of children. For example, in Java between 1830 and 1900 the annual population increase was 2%, attributed to the pressure exerted by the Dutch sugar industry. The anthropologist Steven Polgar wrote:

Java in the 19th century is perhaps an extreme example, but it may be taken to illuminate this general phenomenon. Governor General van den Bosch introduced in 1830 the requirement that the Javanese were either to raise crops for the government on one-fifth of their own land or work for 60 days on government land. Geertz (1963:69) feels that this "culture system" was significantly correlated with population growth [...]. The rapid growth of the Egyptian population during most of the 19th century (from 2,500,000 to 9,000,000) occurred while the country was being reoriented to international trade, but before outright British annexation (Polgar 1972:207).

Another anthropologist, Richard Franke, examined population history in West Africa, finding that population growth and patterns of migration are primarily responses to changes in the nature of the production system both in colonial and in neocolonial times. He rejects the diagnoses of "overpopulation" for West Africa: historically the problem was the opposite: "Slavery should be understood as a response to the labor shortage" (Franke 1981:371). The passage to colonial relations of production exacerbated the problem. Franke explained the correlation between low fertility and the nomadic/herding mode of production, and high fertility in the agricultural one, with the lower demand for labor in herding along with the fact that "the herders were less susceptible to the labor demands imposed by the colonialist regime" (Franke 1981:367). In West Africa:

Workers were literally kidnapped from their villages and forced to become porters. Villages which resisted French-imposed taxes or labor conscription were burned down and the inhabitants killed. Porters themselves were underfed and overworked to such an extent that they died in large numbers. [...] But, to the effects of massive population loss and increased demand for labor by the colonial government, was added yet another policy destined to generate labor shortages: the forced migration of thousands of West African workers to plantation sites where their labor could be more efficiently exploited for cash-crop production (Franke 1981:375-6).

Coquery-Vidrovitch and Henri Moniot write similar words about Africa in general, absolving the Portuguese domination from later atrocities:

The distant past does not seem to testify scourges analogous to those that marked the discovery of the American continent, because Portuguese penetration in Africa was less extensive and at the same time, generally, more peaceful. If a demographic scarcity was present, it came later, starting at the end of the 17th century, being provoked indeed by the slave trade, then by wars of conquest: big famines and epidemics appeared mainly with the recent devastation born from colonial clashes. They caused populations to fall by at least a third between 1890 and 1925 in the regions that we studied.¹¹ And the problem is that they developed among peoples already weakened and on a declining path (Coquery-Vidrovitch and Moniot 1977:239, author translation).

¹¹ Reference to Coquery-Vidrovitch, Catherine. *Le Congo au temps des grandes compagnies concessionnaires, 1898-1930*. Paris, Mouton, 1972:494-503.

There are contemporary testimonies of the altered population dynamics:

Early nineteenth-century travellers, used to the high fertility rates of Britain, stressed the relatively low fertility of African societies. However, by the late 19th century, colonial officers who were accustomed to falling marital fertility in western Europe, began to emphasize the high-fertility societies they came across in East Africa. [...] Colonial officers in the 1920s and 1930s took the view that population in Tanzania generally had been falling since before 1885 up to 1920 (Lockwood 1998:25 and 27).

Thus, what happened to incorporated areas during colonization was not the first phase of the demographic transition with the spreading of rational control first on mortality and then on fertility, but a violent extraction by the capitalist world-economy of indigenous labor. This extraction was at first imposed on the working class of core countries, as they expanded their hegemonic influence in the early phases of the capitalist world-economy, and then moved towards the periphery. When the external areas are incorporated, their birth rate grows, mortality declines, and population soars. Everything changed in the relation between mortality and fertility. What was previously mainly a direct relationship (high birth rates provoked high mortality because of the need to keep the population balanced), became inverted under capitalism: the more intense the mortality, the more fertility had to make up for loss of workers (Murdoch 1980). Agriculture gets intensified and more labor is applied to obtain cheap products for the core workers and surplus for the ruling class.

World-systems analysts such as Michael Hout (1980), Peter Grimes (1981), Kathryn B. Ward (1983, 1984, 1985), Bruce London (1988), John G. Patterson and Nanda R. Shrestha (1988), found that the state of dependent development was heading away from the decreasing trend in births that core countries had experienced at the same income level. But Ward and others, also in the “mode of production and population patterns,” forecasted a continuously high birth rate in dependent countries, while it started decreasing after 1975-1980 even in the group of least developed countries (United Nations Population Division 2012). This is another aspect of population dynamics in need of interpretation and explanation.

Finally, technological progress—also driven by the social relations of production—structured the environment in a way that rewarded competition, and this encouraged population growth (Hayden 1986). Cooperative vs. competitive strategies in social life are effective in different environments. Cooperation emerges in human groups adapting to scarce and fluctuating resources and requires controlled reproduction. But in environments characterized by extreme scarcity or, *vice versa*, by extreme abundance and constancy of resources, competition emerges and reproduction is unbound. The use of fossil fuels is therefore very relevant to contemporary population dynamics:

Perhaps the most dramatic and pervasive example of increasing resources, however, took place during the Industrial Revolution, which opened up truly enormous and entirely untapped new reserves of energy resources, consisting of fossil fuels, water power, and electricity (Hayden 1986:186).

3) How Do the Capitalist World-Economy’s Requirements Get Transmitted to Households and Individuals?

The capitalist system’s imperative of population growth is translated into incentives or imperatives that affect household choices. Some of these material and even violent means of influence have been discussed above. There is a well-known body of historical literature addressing the cultural means of influence, the most important for the capitalist world-economy being the reproductive imperative of Christianity. Religious teachings and authorities still encourage births. Compulsory heterosexuality was spread from core areas to the periphery, and procreation defined as a public

interest, with pervasive restrictions on contraception and abortion (Handwerker 1990; Hartman 1995). Federici (2004) and Federici and Fortunati (1984) consider also the phenomenon of the witch hunt to have been spurred on by the need for an increased labor force, because the old women persecuted as witches were in reality the depository of the knowledge about how to regulate births and deaths. They were targeted by state forces wanting to obtain a surge in population numbers.

When oligopolies in the core started relying on higher labor skills for their production, capitalists directly influenced lawmakers to finance public compulsory education (Green 1990). Working class families remained wary of public education, as they wanted to avoid their children being exposed to its religious and ideological burdens in favor of the capitalist order (Secombe 1993).

Joan Smith and Immanuel Wallerstein (1992) edited a historical analysis of households belonging to different classes in the different regions of the world-system. The study revealed the strategic ways households used unpaid labor (including that of children) and adapted their composition in response to the different phases of the world-economy.

4) Why Do People Have Children in the Capitalist World-Economy?

There are many facets to all the six questions, but particularly to this one. Here I will concentrate on the issue of procreation among the poor. While for the upper classes children mainly represent the continuity of the household, for the lower classes they are an investment.¹² When children represent a net cost, the pleasure of procreating and taking care of one's offspring can be decisive, but when they are a net economic gain, procreation could be the only way to improve the household's situation above survival level—especially for the poorest households. At least since Malthus, the discussion about the causal direction of the observed relation between poverty and fertility has been charged with political implications. In the correlation between a high number of children and poverty, the causal arrow can be set in two ways: poverty makes people multiply carelessly using up the means of subsistence or—in circumstances of an expansive economy—the poor have a large number of children because the progeny will soon contribute to the household's functioning, from a very tender age. Malthus and Malthusians considered the multiplication of the poor irrational, while Marx and other radical thinkers saw it as the only investment that destitute classes could make, as it is signaled by the label “proletarian” which derives from the Latin “proles,” or offspring. The two conflicting interpretations still coexist: Daniel Chirot with Thomas Hall (1982) used population growth (which implies a diminution of GNP per capita) as a mechanism that better explains poverty in periphery countries than dependency theory, while William H. Murdoch concluded in his review that: “Rapid population growth and inadequate food supply are but the symptoms of poverty” (1980:307).

In fact, the first poor countries to reduce their population growth rates to less than 2% per year were China, Sri Lanka, Colombia, Chile, Burma, Cuba, and the Indian state of Kerala. As Frances Moore Lappé and Rachel Schurman (1990) observed, these countries¹³ shared low levels of economic growth, per capita income, industrialization, and urbanization (urban population is less prolific than the rural), but also effective redistributive policies. Two contrasting mechanisms could be at work (prior to the introduction in China in 1978 of the one-child policy): inequality reduction, as inequality had been found to be significant in maintaining high birth rates,¹⁴ or basic needs satisfaction. A higher educational level especially for women was also influential at least in some of these countries.

¹² Tilly (1978:33) estimated the class partition of European population increase from 1500 to 1900, finding that landlords, owners and managers of producing units doubled their mass, but all others increased by higher factors.

¹³ Apart from Burma, set aside for lack of reliable information.

¹⁴ See Repetto (1979), though Menard (1986) criticizes these result, finding his methodology insufficient, and pointing out that women's education is much more significant for fertility reduction.

Bandarage leans towards basic needs satisfaction as the main mechanism for birth rate reduction:

Fertility declines require alleviation of poverty and improvements in the living conditions of the poor, especially women. Where children's labor is not essential for family survival, where women and children have food and nutrition, education, health care and gainful employment, they are more likely to accept birth control and voluntarily lower their fertility (Bandarage 1997:174).

In fact birth control policies started to be effective only when at least some of these preconditions were satisfied (Bryant 2007). The villagers for whom Mahmood Mamdani (1972) had discovered a lack of motivation for fertility control, some years later started using enthusiastically the very devices that they had thrown away right after receiving them (Egerö and Hammar skjöld 1994).

Another interesting question is if and how population dynamics are connected with the growing inequality trend, because a component of this trend could derive from the sheer growth in the numbers of the dispossessed class. The secular trend towards proletarianization theoretically posited by world-systems analysis seems to be actually inverted by the absolute growth of rural population, in periphery and semiperiphery countries—even though urban population is growing in relative terms.

Since upward mobility is generally desired by households, when does the economic motive to have children stop? It does so when education becomes compulsory, raising the cost of children, and when women begin to have a say in procreation (Basu 1992). Productive processes that use more advanced technology need a specifically and formally educated labor force. The diffusion of mass schooling expresses both this need and the households' aspiration to social mobility through access to higher education for their children, where and when personal connections have yielded (to a greater or lesser extent) to formal qualifications in finding employment (Handwerker 1986b). In bureaucratized societies, as the wealth flow theory authors categorize them, the advantages of investing in children's formal education bear the consequence that families can afford fewer of them—even if some of those children, especially girls, are excluded from education (Handwerker 1986a). Even in the field of the unified growth theory, which applies Malthusian concepts, the timing of laws against child labor and decreasing birth rates coincides with industries' demand for more highly-skilled labor (Doepke and Zilibotti 2005, Galor 2011). Mainstream economists also accept the theory of demand for labor.

This dynamic seems to be at work in poor countries today: the universal reduction in birth rates is related to growing levels of education and increased opportunities for jobs in non-agricultural sectors. Women's positions are also largely improving, with a heightened capacity to set limits to their engagement in childbearing and rearing. This process seems irreversible: extensive poverty and the cut of nearly all welfare state provisions in post-socialist Eastern Europe have not been conducive to high birth rates. In fact, quite the contrary, as people could ill afford expenses for children in a proletarianized context.

5) Who Is the Subject of Procreation Decisions in the Capitalist World-Economy?

The subject of procreation decisions were the male heads of household, both where the family was extended or nuclear. This exclusive appropriation of offspring was legitimated even by state laws in the case of divorce. When women entered the paid labor force in great numbers and organized themselves politically they managed to change all laws and customs and obtained the right to continue their relationship with their offspring.

Women can no longer be ignored as decision makers in procreation. Theories that in the past excluded them from the analysis of procreation, considering the procreative power of women as a

“natural resource” bearing no costs (Folbre 2009), were perhaps justified by the fact that women were not very influential in decision-making. As capitalism advanced and absorbed and commodified women’s work, their economic and political power grew.

6) How Is the Number of Offspring Chosen in the Capitalist World-Economy?

According to Caldwell’s intergenerational wealth flows theory, economic rationality dictates either “As many as possible” or “None” on the two sides of the divide between children as an economic advantage or children as a cost. Economist Mohammed Sharif (2007), observing conditions in contemporary Bangladesh, found that landless laborers have high fertility while landholders’ households fertility is related to the size of their land holdings, i.e., proportional to their need for labor to work their land. Landlords have low fertility, as their children do not work and represent a net cost. The desire to have children for non-economic motives, including the pleasure in having kids, femininity or virility confirmation, simply conforming to social norms (Watkins and Danzi 1995; Behrman, Kohler and Watkins 2002), remains the main force behind procreation when children represent a cost. But other material factors can be recognized, going in opposite directions: on one hand the political force acquired with a large progeny, and on the other hand the preservation of the physical well-being of mothers who have fewer children.

Conclusion: The Capitalist World-Economy’s Population Parabola

The focus of the discipline of demography on the periodization and the causes and consequences of the “demographic transition” is misplaced. The concept of a demographic transition leads social scientists focus mainly on the causes of fertility reduction. In fact, many authors only analyze the decrease in fertility (that they usually call “decline,” in a pejorative way). The real questions should be instead why in the capitalist world-economy did population start to grow everywhere in an apparently uncontrollable way, and why at a later stage did the number of children per woman go down in successive waves, from the core to the periphery countries (United Nations Population Division 2012). The general principle to answer these questions is that the capitalist world-economy pushes for unlimited work force growth. Women produced the labor force for free, and children were beneficial for households in semiproletarian as well as proletarian conditions. But this situation was upset by the establishment of compulsory children’s education, the change in demand for labor changed from unskilled to skilled, and by an increase in women’s political power alongside their proletarianization. All these developments are slowing down population growth so that a vertex of the population parabola can be foreseen around 2045 (United Nations Population Division 2012), *ceteris paribus* of course.

A transitional phase of the world-economy is foreseen because of its asymptotic secular trends – for Wallerstein (1998) the exhaustion of cheap labor with decreasing numbers of semiproletarian households and continually improving political organization of proletarians; the rising tax bill for firms; the environmental limits – to which another asymptotic trend in terms of population dynamics must be added. The end and then inversion of the trend of “population accumulation” will also render the mechanism for capital accumulation shaky. On this forthcoming descending arc of the population parabola one of the conditions for capital accumulation will not be fulfilled: an increasing workforce. As the Marxian analysis foresaw, the system could compensate with a lengthening of the working hours both for the individual workers and collectively with the rise in eligible age for pensions (or their abolition!), but this is no guarantee that it will suffice to restore the expansion of the workforce needed for capital accumulation and growth.

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Towards a Gendered Agro-Commodity Approach

Primrose Nakazibwe

Mbarara University of Science and Technology

primrosenk@gmail.com

Wim Pelupessy

Tilburg University

wimpelupessy@fastmail.nl

Abstract

Commodity or value chains are the dominant means to channel agro-food products from cultivators to consumers. Direct open markets are either non-existent or insignificant. These chains are also the main mechanisms for integrating underprivileged groups into the world economy. Why do global value chains generate sorrow for many and joy for a few, and why are these outcomes heavily gender biased? To look for answers this article critically reviews the post-2000 and earlier gender literature by proponents and opponents of the mainstream value chain approach. The purpose is to provide a methodological contribution on the integration of gender into the commodity chain approach. Most studies have focused on the economic effects of chain dynamics on women in agricultural product and labor markets. Some have extended this reasoning with social and cultural effects. Despite these advances, analytical gaps still exist as most existing research has concentrated on the agricultural nodes of modern, high value chains and lacks a gendered conceptual foundation. Scarce attention has been given to traditional staple crops, non-agricultural nodes, and feedback effects of gender relations on the chain. Our results indicate that an appropriate GCC approach should also consider the gendered impacts of the interaction between the governance structure and the institutional embeddedness, as well as the consequences of intra-household division of resources and labor in all stages of the chain. These two conceptual complements will be needed to explain the opportunities and constraints to improve gender equity in traditional and modern agro-commodity chains.

Keywords: Agro-Commodity Chains, Gender, Governance, Institutional Embeddedness, Intra-Household Relations

The global commodity chain (GCC) approach is derived from the world system perspective (Wallerstein 2004; Bair 2009) and research in this tradition has largely concentrated on the relationships between the core and periphery. Relatively little attention has been paid to the social dimensions within these areas. The approach “promotes a nuanced analysis of world-economic spatial inequalities in terms of differential access to markets and resources” (Gereffi, Korzeniewicz and Korzeniewicz 1994:2). It addresses questions about what products countries import and export in relation to complex institutions like WTO rules, import barriers and others. In a historical study on rubber, Fernandes (2010) further noted that attention had been mainly paid to the macro dimension, falling short on human relations at the micro level. This is why GCC dynamics have been identified by four basic dimensions, which include the input-output, territorial and governance structures, together with the institutional embeddedness (Rammohan and Sundaresan 2003; Unni and Scaria 2009).

Global commodity chains are considered the principal mechanism integrating underprivileged groups into the world economy as stepping stone towards development (see Webber and Labaste 2010) for positive experiences in African agricultural chains). Therefore this article will concentrate on the gender dimension of global chain dynamics and will refer only to broader gender issues—such as those addressed in women and development work by Ester Boserup, Maria Mies and Sylvia Chant--when necessary. Quite a number of studies have researched the consequences of women participation in global commodity chains. However few have included a coherent gendered analysis, for agro-commodity chains (Allen and Sachs 2007; Maertens and Swinnen 2009; Blandon, Hanson and Cranfield 2009). Most are concentrated on non-traditional and traditional export commodities like fruit, vegetables, flowers, coffee and cacao (Webber and Labaste 2010). The studies focus on the agricultural stage only with less attention to other nodes of the chains.

This article offers a gendered agro-commodity approach that we believe provides a more complete and realistic vision on the functioning and dynamics of the chain. Our purpose is to provide a methodological contribution to the GCC approach.

Commodity chains provide more than just commodities and their value generation; this process affects individual and collective identities of actors, linking the material with the cultural (Ramamurthy 2004). In most commodity chain analyses, insufficient attention is paid to daily human and ecological circumstances (Dunaway 2001; 2014). According to ILO statistics, 66 million workers were assembling (agro-)industrial products for global markets in 2006. This global assembly line is often accompanied by the feminization of manufacturing (Bair 2010). This is done mostly under conditions of long working-hours, low wages, health risks, sexual harassment and union under-representation (Pyle 2001; Pyle and Ward 2003; Palpacuer 2008). Lack of gender desegregation makes it difficult to examine how men and women are affected differently so that gendered inequalities can be addressed. In agro-commodity chains as diverse as those of Indian tea, Colombian roses and Guatemalan geraniums, working and living conditions of women are very vulnerable to changes in international business strategies and public policies (Cabezas, Reese and Waller 2007). Focusing only on the nature of the commodity as it goes through the chain does not give an exhaustive view of who benefits and who loses from transactions along the chain. Specific attributes of a chain are shaped by the different societies and communities through which it traverses (Rammohan and Sundaresan 2003). It is further noted that the relations of materials and people in a commodity chain are affected by their social milieu of class, caste, and gender (Ramamurthy 2011). The commodity chain concept is a very useful tool for integrating women and households into world-systems analysis (Dunaway

2001; 2013). One has to emphasize that gender relations affect and are affected by the ways in which value chains function (Bammann 2007). There is a need to disentangle the gender roles in what Maria Mies (2007) has named the formal and informal underground of the global capitalist accumulation model and their importance for global neoliberal policies (Shepherd and Ferguson 2011).

It is against this background that our study will reflect on what can be learned from post-2000 gender-related studies of agro-commodity chains, and will discuss if they have been able to focus on gender conceptually. The advances in this area are undoubtedly based on research prior to the present century. Nevertheless we will not extend very much into the past, to be able to give due attention to the latest developments of studies on gender in agro-commodity chains and on the evolution of reasoning by authors over time. The credits for earlier work will be there when needed. The other objectives of the article are to draw attention to analytical gaps and contradictory interpretations that still exist and to understand how the global commodity chain approach should be complemented to give it a gender sensitive conceptual foundation. From a Sub-Saharan Africa perspective, the major role of women in both productive and care activities should be taken into account. We begin by considering how the selected studies on global agro-commodity chains have included gender in their work. We then discuss the analytical and conceptual gaps in these studies that impede understanding of gender relations in agro-commodity chains. After this the gendered aspects of the interactions between the governance structures and the institutional frameworks of agro-commodity chains are examined. We consider where there are opportunities and challenges for improving the returns to weak participants. We make a case for expanding attention to the intra-household division of labor and resources. This is necessary because many agriculture-based chains in Sub-Sahara Africa involve a majority of women as growers and workers. Prescriptions for structuring a gendered agro-commodity approach conclude this article.

Lessons from Previous Studies

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles and behaviours of men and women, which changes with time and space. It is a relational concept, which varies with socio-political and cultural differentiation (Chant and Pedwell 2008). Some other aspects such as ethnicity, age and religion may have importance for Sub-Sahara Africa, but will be treated only indirectly as we maintain our focus on the gender dimension.

The concept of agro-commodity chain has been applied in studies of many industrial and agricultural products. Immanuel Wallerstein defined a commodity chain as “a network of labour and production processes whose end result is a finished commodity” (Hopkins and Wallerstein 1994:17). It is interesting to refer also to Rammohan and Sundaresan (2003), who call it a commodity web, which is a network of labor and material processes that results in an end product. The terms commodity chains, value chains and commodity web will be applied interchangeably, for they all have the same meaning as defined above. A sample of 11 theoretical and 25 applied post-2000 articles on commodity chains that address gender is used¹ ([see appendix](#) for a list of articles and classifications). Below we report on how these earlier studies have combined gender with the agro-commodity approach.

¹Our selection includes the most representative articles on global commodity chains by authors indicating an explicit gender orientation. We have also sought to include articles reflecting the most recent research advances in this area.

Representative efforts to include gender explicitly in agro-commodity chain research were selected, mostly but not exclusively from experiences in Sub-Saharan Africa. Relevant theoretical and historical literature from other continents was also included. A noteworthy empirical article of York and Ergas (2011) demonstrated the general presence of association between women's status within countries and the structural position of these in the world-system. Another example is Barrientos, Dolan and Tallontire (2003), where the gender sensitive codes of conduct in the African export horticultural sector is explored by combining the global value chain and gendered economy approaches. Nevertheless, many authors still continue to ignore the gender dynamics, overlooking the fact that commodity chains are embedded in households whose survival depends very much on the work of women (Dunaway 2001; 2013). As Dunaway (2014:64) observed, there is a "glaring absence of women from commodity chains."

The selected post-2000 publications on gender in agro-commodity chains have been categorized according to their main orientation as theoretical (11), historical (3), poverty (10) and codes of conduct (6) and commercial (6). Attention has been paid to the methodological focus and the presence of specific gender, household and upgrading aspects. Practically all the studies refer to high value agro-commodities and the outcomes for small farmers. Studies by Rammohan and Sundaresan (2003:903) and Mayoux and Mackie (2007) pay explicit attention to the social embeddedness of the chains, which Rammohan and Sundaresan refer to as "mapping the social linkages of production and movement of commodities."

The research on modern high value crops focuses on globalization trends and how poor farmers and workers may benefit. For instance, Dolan and Sutherland (2003) and other commercialization and codes of conduct studies share the view with Swinnen and Vandeplass (2009) that high value chains link many poor workers in developing countries—including increasing numbers of women—with rich consumers in the developed ones. This gives opportunities to spread the gains from globalization to the general population, but negative effects are also possible.

The majority of the studies that explore a gender dimension have considered women as small producers or (family) workers, who may be exploited or excluded in many chains. The feminist commodity chain approach in Ramamurthy (2004) explains this by the power division and its impact on both men and women's involvement. A more explicit and complete methodological framework on how to integrate gender into agro-commodity chains research is needed.

Intra-household dynamics and/or consumption are addressed in less than a third of the studies in our sample (Dunaway 2001 and 2012; Maertens and Swinnen 2009; Ramamurthy 2004; Greenberg et al. 2012; Allen and Sachs 2007; Farnworth and Hutchings 2009; Bolwig and Odeke 2007; Dolan and Sutherland 2003). Nevertheless, intra-household issues can explain gender differences in who will participate in the labor market and when and who controls the income generated from production and labor contracts. Little attention is paid to what really goes on in the households that provide the primary labor force and resources for agro-commodity chains (Mies 2007; Dunaway 2001; 2013). Consumption patterns of households that produce for the markets in different nodes of the chains need to be known to consider the impact on nutrition levels within families, which may affect their labor supply. This omission is possible for most modern value chains, where only 'free' labor is contracted. Gender also plays a dominant role in ultimate consumption decisions, which have a considerable impact on the total value creation and opportunities for primary producers in agro-commodity chains (Ramamurthy 2004; Pelupessy and Van Kempen 2005; Allen and Sachs 2007).

Only seven of the selected studies consider possible remedies to address gender inequities in agro-commodity chains. Policy interventions to provide higher returns to (women) producers in the value chain, may not effectively reach them.

Two Analytical Models

Two of the theoretical studies in the sample are indicative for different conceptual frameworks on the role of gender in value chains. First, the gender economic approach of Maertens and Swinnen (2009) identifies two basic economic market mechanisms through which the dynamics of the chain may influence rural households and women. The operations in product and labor markets give women two possibilities of benefiting from modern chains. This is the result of either the sale of cash crops as smallholders to trading and processing firms, or the employment as workers by big commercial estates. Examples are the cut flower, horticulture, coffee and cacao chains in the region (Maertens et al. 2012; Bolwig and Odeke 2007; Mayoux and Mackie 2007; Dolan, Opondo and Smith 2002). This is mainly based on field research in Sub-Saharan Africa, which provides a comprehensive view on women's possibilities for getting involved in and taking advantage of export supply chains with positive effects for their households.

These outcomes contradict other cases of women's participation in global agro-commodity chains, which are linked to poverty, exclusion and worsening living and working conditions (Barrientos et al. 2003; Quisumbing and Pandolfelli 2010; Ramohan and Sundaresan 2003). Mixed or conditional results for women's well-being are reported in Cabezas et al. (2007), Dolan and Sutherland (2003), Barrientos and Smith (2007) and Greenberg et al. (2012).

Global chain dynamics have far-reaching social consequences which influence gender relationships (Palpacuer 2008; Bair 2010). Theoretical reasoning on how these relationships and the status of women and households affect and are affected by global production and trade processes can be found in Dunaway (2001; 2011; 2013). She elaborated on earlier conceptual work of Mies (1986; 2007), arguing that low wages, flexible and unpaid (family) labor and reproduction tasks of women are in fact the foundations of modern agro-export chains (see also Barrientos 2001). The persistent presence of semi-proletarianized households is another subsidy to the globalized system of surplus generation (Dunaway 2013). The shift of production costs to rural households in the third world and disruption of their structure are other mechanisms that affect women negatively (Dunaway 2011; 2014).

A second model appears in Ramamurthy (2004) who used a feminist commodity chain analysis to understand how global production generates individual and collective identities and why other non-economic aspects are essential in the process of capital accumulation. Ramamurthy (2010) generalized the argument by relating the feminization of (agricultural) labor to the reconfiguration of global and domestic capital, considering a major role for culture and social reproduction. See also Deere (2005) for a good overview of the feminization of agriculture in Latin America under neo-liberal restructuring of the economies. According to Ramamurthy, households and the way they produce and demand commodities become important for the international organization of production. Women's labor should therefore be taken into account, whether under local and subsistence conditions or within international commercialized production and consumption frameworks. Because women are involved in different stages of agro-commodity chains, this feminist analysis will be supportive for development policies (Chant 2008). About a quarter of the selected studies had added cultural, social, intra-household and other aspects to the economic ones (Rammohan and Sundaresan 2003; Allen and Sachs

2007; Quisumbing and Pandolfelli 2010; Barrientos et al. 2003; Bolwig and Odeke 2007; Ramamurthy 2010; 2011). Ramamurthy gives examples of the decisive weight of cultural factors above economic ones in South India for the case of hybridization of genetically manipulated cottonseed. She observed the continuation of caste-based smallholding in this global chain, despite the presence of more rewarding wage labor alternatives. The general framework in Allen and Sachs (2007) with the intersection of the material, socio-cultural and corporeal to explain gender relationships in the food system goes in the same direction.

Other studies have turned their focus on participation and empowerment of the poor in agro-commodity chains, with insufficient attention on gender specification in their discussions (Blandon et al. 2009; Ponte 2008a; Laven 2009). Here the question is how poor men and women can strengthen their abilities and capacities to manage parts of a chain or chains in which they are involved. Membership in farmer organizations may have importance, but variables such as improved competences, resources, and technology can also count.

Most efforts to integrate the concept of gender in commodity chain studies resemble that of Maertens and Swinnen (2009). They focus on the economic outcomes of product and labor markets for the directly participating women, following the outstanding empirical research of Boserup (1970). Even the manuals for applications and evaluations of gender mainstreaming in the chain approach prioritize economic outcomes and other market related issues (Riisgaard 2010; Mayoux and Mackie 2007; Nichols, Manfre and Rubin 2009). Several studies address the conditions of marginalized workers in horticulture export sectors from a gender perspective and try to establish their impact in developing countries (Dolan and Sutherland 2003; Barrientos et.al. 2005). The discussion looks at how women are disadvantaged in rural labor markets and identifies cultural, social and religious norms as some of the reasons that prevent them from taking the benefits of off-farm opportunities and work outside the home and family farms.

Barrientos (2001) confirms that a complete comprehension of the dynamics of global buyer-driven value chains needs a gender approach. This can be useful for designing value chain interventions, and changes in reporting, monitoring and evaluation (Riisgaard, Escobar and Ponte 2010). Powerful agents tend to benefit from unequal gender relations in and outside (flexible) labor and produce markets. Dunaway (2011) has provided a very useful conceptual framework to explain this. Barrientos et al. (2003) elaborated a method to assess gender sensitivity of codes of conduct in horticulture, where participation in market and household care activities are considered simultaneously. Increasing participation of women in value chains will also influence household gender relations. A general theoretical macro framework in a post Keynesian vein is provided in Todorova (2006). Nevertheless, it is the theoretical work of Ramamurthy (2004; 2010; 2011) in India that opened up and explored the possibilities that non-economic socio-cultural factors may best account for gendered behaviour in global commodity chains. This could be a breakthrough for the analysis of gender in chains emanating from peripheral countries or regions.

Gender in Agro-Commodity Chains

To understand the benefits, contributions, burdens and participation of both men and women in commodity chains, one should consider the changes in the gender division of labor and societal arrangements and how these have particularly impacted the activities streaming from primary production processes through to final consumption (Deere 2005). A gendered analysis will be

useful to explain the interaction between modern global processes of production and trade and traditional gendered social relations that varies with geographic location (Carr 2008).

Women have been involved in the production and trade of both traditional and modern crops, and are sustaining many of the export commodity chains at considerable labor disadvantages, risks and insecurities (Cabezas et al. 2007). Trade liberalization has created (underpaid and unpaid) jobs for millions of women especially in the labor-intensive stages of commodity chains. Mainstream analyses have neglected this burden and few have considered its significance for the contribution of women to the generation of surplus.

For Sub-Saharan Africa, gendered studies of value chains have been carried out for modern cash crops. These crops seem to support gender equality mainly because of wage payments in the labor markets and less by the increasing contract-farming earnings of smallholders (Maertens and Swinnen 2009 and Maertens, Minten and Swinnen 2012). A literature review on contract farming in Sub-Saharan countries by Schneider and Gugerty (2010) attributed its disadvantage to women's restricted access to land and other productive means. However, there may be possibilities for empowering women in modern commodity chains. Demands in this sector for both skilled and unskilled labor, as well as wage and non-wage family workers may enhance the empowerment of women in the cases of Sub-Saharan Africa and Mesoamerica (Farnworth and Hutchings 2009; Lyon et al. 2010). Business codes of conduct do not address employment conditions, of women as the majority of the workforce in the Kenyan and Zambian cut flower, South African fruit and Zambian vegetables chains (Barrientos et al. 2003).

Generally a focus on labor and product markets will lead to positive evaluations of women's participation, which can be observed by the adherents of the pro-poor value chains approach. However, there are also researchers like Dunaway who are sceptical about these outcomes. Those who concentrate on cultural impacts, like Ramamurthy and others mentioned in this article, have mostly a negative assessment. But there is also the critical cultural study of Rammohan and Sundaresan (2003) which considers the labor of women in coir chains with technological innovation in Kerala (South India) as a breakthrough in regard to caste restrictions. This may be valid for the few women with office jobs, but the price may be too high for most women in the chain with all-day heavy manual work.

In what follows we discuss two important drawbacks found in the literature in regard to gender equity. One corresponds to women's participation in labor markets and the other, in upgrading practices in product markets of the chain.

Discrimination in the Labor Market

According to Maertens and Swinnen (2009), feminization and gender discrimination in labor markets have been analysed for urban areas and manufacturing sectors, while knowledge on rural areas is very limited. Yet rural women face many challenges that directly impact their ability to enjoy the benefits of their work in commodity chains.

There are considerable risks for women compared to men in the agro-export commodity chains in developing countries. Women, whether working as waged or non-waged laborers, have experienced disadvantages ranging from more casual work, less pay and worse working conditions than men to physical and sexual exploitation (Greenberg et al. 2012). In global chains sexual harassment is a common abuse of power. Women faced with this kind of exploitation may prefer not to take up these jobs, but are often obliged to accept them as a consequence of neo-liberal restructuring strategies (Pyle 2001; Deere 2005).

Different studies have shown that women often work at the bottom of fruit, flower and horticulture chains as pickers, sorters, graders and packers while higher paid personnel such as supervisors and technicians tend to be men (Oxfam 2004; English 2007). The common explanation is that women are perceived as low-skilled with limited training and know-how. Downstream consumers and laborers at core nodes may thus be seen as exploiting upstream households and women (Dunaway 2001). Palpacuer (2008) also observed that upstream workers are typically the most deprived social groups, and millions of young women execute manual work under oppressive and precarious conditions. Hence, women tend to be more disadvantaged than men in labor markets of both low and high quality wine chains from South Africa (Greenberg et al. 2012).

The trend of profitable organic production has had mixed effects on women. A lack of capital and other factors of production have limited women's production of organic commodities to small scales, mainly for home consumption rather than for the market. The new global drive to produce commercial organic foods in developing countries has created new opportunities for women workers. Women carry out most of the additional farming and processing work needed to meet the stricter organic certification, quality and farm management requirements of the organic exporter. This has increased the total burden on women and reduced the time available for earning other incomes (Gibbon et al. 2008). Nevertheless, household food security may still be improved by women's integration in organic export value chains, providing additional cash income to buy food from the market. Drawing from the research on Uganda's coffee production, Mayoux (2009) added that in spite of the big share of women's work in organic and fair trade production; men have the control of its income. The corresponding codes of conduct could not neutralize these effects because they are lacking sufficient gender sensitivity (Barrientos et al. 2003). Patriarchy not only gives men control of resources, but it also often allows them to control women's labor. A gendered analysis should systematically identify the challenges and opportunities for women to gain more from their work.

Upgrading of Women as Producers

Even when producing for the market, rural women may not be able to get a larger share of the surplus they produce due to social and economic discrimination. Upgrading has been identified as one of the ways in which poor and marginalized producers—of which often women constitute the majority—can benefit from commodity chains. There are various types of upgrading which include product, process, functional and intersectoral upgrading (Humphrey and Schmitz 2001). Value chain interventions aim to improve the contribution to national economic growth, but also to reduce poverty by assuring that workers and underprivileged producers are the beneficiaries. Through this, small farmers in developing countries may get an opportunity to strengthen their business and become competitive in the global market.

However, power relations play an important role in determining what opportunities are available for upgrading and to whom, which may be detrimental for women in developing countries (Farnworth and Hutchings 2009; Mayoux and Mackie 2007). They may have fewer opportunities for upgrading options due to their positions in both the household and business. Even where governments or others outside the chain, or lead firms within, support upgrading, women may have limited possibilities to access this support due to socio-economic barriers like the lack of capital and credit collateral (Quisumbing and Pandolfelli 2010). This also means that the results from the upgrading process will often be unequally distributed. Women are likely to

receive little or nothing in conditions where their contribution has minor or no recognition at all. This may result in a search for other income generating activities of small scale and low income yields. Women's limited access to credit and other production means makes their conditions worse since they may not be in position to raise enough resources for even very small-scale businesses. In agro-commodity chains, this means that women may not be able to opt for the modern high-yielding varieties with more commercial opportunities and instead must concentrate on the traditional less profitable crops.

In conclusion, women's participation as farmers or laborers in agro-commodity chains remains a challenge. They are frequently stuck at the bottom of labor markets working in precarious and low-paying positions, often facing poor working conditions and overwork in addition to sexual abuse. Amidst these challenges, women must also negotiate their care work within the households. They may not be in a strong enough position to share the care-giving responsibilities and may end up continuing to do most of the unpaid housework.

The Analytical Gaps

The literature that explicitly documents the impacts of commodity chains on gender or women's empowerment has some analytical gaps. The selected studies could be classified as either gender economic, feminist commodity chain, or a mix of these approaches. Most of the works have attempted to consider the participation of women in the chains, but they frequently fail to address whether this will lead to a durable form of empowerment that allows women to make meaningful decisions and socio-economic choices. A central objective of many studies has been the reduction or elimination of gender inequality and poverty. Nevertheless, effects on decision-making and differentiation among women should also be taken into account. For these reasons commodity chain research should not only focus on the material aspects of the product itself, but also on the socio-cultural conditions under which global production and trade are taking place. Both gender economic and feminist commodity chain analyses have useful elements to advance this goal.

Gender Inequality

A variety of value chain (mini-) manuals with a specific gender focus exists. Some have developed action-oriented methods such as the Gender Action Learning System (GALS), the Integrating Gender Issues in Agricultural Value Chains (INGIA-VC) and the Gender Equitable Value Chain Action Learning (GEVCAL) (see respectively Nichols et al. 2009; Mayoux 2009 and Mayoux and Mackie 2007). These manuals aim to create opportunities for equity and empowerment of women in agro-commodity chains. It is assumed that these goals may be obtained as a win-win outcome of value chains for both men and women (Riisgaard et al. 2010). The application of e.g. GALS should catalyze a process of community-led change in which both men and women benefit from participating in planning aimed at improving living conditions. This method was applied on 1500 growers in the Uganda coffee value chain by the elaboration of specific business and marketing plans from which women could gain more support from men in the community (Mayoux 2009). However, this approach is more an operational device than a coherent analytical or conceptual methodology. More empirical studies are needed to substantiate their practical effectiveness in reducing gender inequality and providing long-run positive outcomes. A majority of the existing guides for promoting gender equity are oriented

towards the generation of economic benefits for women, while scarce attention is given to socio-cultural factors.

Some researchers have made distinctions between men's and women's production or cropping systems in agricultural chains following the seminal work of Boserup (1970) on male and female farming systems. For example, Golan and Lay (2008) noted that female-owned and managed plots of coffee in Uganda exhibit substantially lower yields because they are less intensively farmed. For cash crops as cacao in Ghana, lack of access to modern agricultural inputs, equipment and credits are often the underlying reasons for lower yields of women's plots (Vargas and Vigneri 2011). Women's farms are hoe- and hand-oriented and their small size prevents the use of tractors even when there is such a possibility. The small size of the farm may be attributed to cultural and legal frameworks in Sub-Sahara Africa, which have for so long restricted women's rights to own large extensions of land (Joireman 2008; Daley 2010). Hence women use the small plots of land around the homestead to grow crops that men would otherwise not produce, due to the lack of profitability or their status as women's crops. Because of low productivity of their farms, Ugandese women usually produce for domestic consumption and men produce for the market in Uganda. Moreover, where women's subsistence production has become part of commercial chains as for example exportable fruits and vegetables, their traditional control mechanisms on the land may be lost by the formalization of (Western style) property rights (Howard and Nabanoga 2007; Meinzen and Mwangi 2008).

Studies on gender in agro-commodity chains have often fallen short of explicit consideration of the different adversities for the poor. The participation of poor women may not only affect their income opportunities, but also expose them to risks. Poor farmers sometimes referred to as small farmers in the literature, are often not taken into account in the high value "supermarket driven horticulture marketing and trade" (Minten, Randrianarison and Swinnen 2005). Frequently they are not able to comply with the requirements of contract agriculture or the terms of preferred supplier of big retailers in these chains.

Expenditure and income distribution in agro-commodity chains are other areas where relatively little attention has been put in gender research focused on decision-making capacities in value chains. This aspect would involve asking questions like who earns what from the sales of agro-commodities at the household level and why? Who spends this income and on what? And does the income distribution and spending bring any indication of equality or family well-being improvement? Together with the access to land and other productive resources, income and wealth differences are important constraints for equitable gendered decision-making (Nichols et al. 2009; Vargas and Vigneri 2011) All these issues need to be understood in order to make meaningful conclusions about whether participation in agro-commodity chains has positive or negative impacts on gender relations and family welfare. The small number of publications available on these issues indicates that women exert little or no control on the revenues from export crops, due to the ruling customs and practices in the household and the community. Men make independent decisions regarding the expenditure of the money raised from the sale of the agro-commodities. A study carried out in the Kapchorwa district (Uganda) indicated, "the husband buys what he thinks is needed in the household and spends the rest as he wants" (Bolwig and Odeke 2007:37). Spending for food is not a typical priority, and women often have to quarrel for money for food. The explanation for this is also rooted in the traditional norms and habits that only women have the responsibility of care giving in families where it's her duty to make sure that all the needs, including food, are met. Social and cultural barriers are frequently

underlying the economic ones that curtail the decision-making capacities of rural women in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Differentiation of Women

Most post-2000 literature still focuses on women as one category and hence makes conclusions about them as a single homogeneous group. Women are viewed as raw material producers who don't benefit fully from commercialized agro-production. This also means that women are generally engaged in food production at or near home and when they move out to produce for the market, the benefits frequently do not accrue to them. However, women as a group are not homogeneous and hence treating them as a single category has overshadowed their different contributions, abilities, struggles and challenges (McCune 2006 with comments on Boserup 1970). Female farmers may have problems with access to land, capital, credit and knowledge, but women farm laborers may be even more disadvantaged. This is quite different from the conclusions reached by Maertens and Swinnen (2009), who have concentrated on monetary outcomes of the markets for either smallholders or farm workers. Therefore, there is a need for further research to look at the different categories of women all through the various nodes in the chain so that correct conclusions can be made for each category (Carr 2008). This will improve the identification of women's diverse contributions in agro-commodity chains.

Research has not paid sufficient attention to the impact of increased women's participation in agro-commodity chains on household food production and nutrition. According to the study done by Lastarria (2006), the findings from South Africa indicated that female farmers' increased participation in commercial activities reduced their ability to provide enough food for their households. As more women get involved in agro-commodity chains this may impact the nutritional levels of household members negatively, since women are the traditional food providers of the family. However, as mentioned before, more money income may also give them the means to buy food from the market.

The existing literature on gender in agro-commodity chains lacks analytical treatment of inequalities in traditional low-value chains, decision-making on household expenditures, differences among women, and the impact of women's engagement in commercial agriculture on household nutrition. Bhargava (1997) modelled nutritional status and time allocation at subsistence level of households in Rwanda. Traditional chains are more frequent in Africa and cultural differentiations are playing a bigger role in these cases. More research needs to be done to show how women could increase their empowerment in agro-commodity chains, especially in developing countries where the traditional and current conditions differ considerably from the developed world.

To fill the existing gaps of the two main gender economic and feminist commodity chain approaches and improve their explanatory power, two additional methodological components will be proposed. It is not enough to give only a description of the material and cultural conditions and consequences of the operations of women in the different nodes of a commodity chain. Further integration of gender and commodity chain approaches is required to reach a more complete view on their development. This will enhance the gender sensitiveness of the tools to study the dynamics of global agro-commodity chains in Sub-Sahara Africa. It improves the possibility to include the mutual interaction of gender and commodity chain aspects in the analysis. Frequently the impacts of chain dynamics on gender relations are considered in a unilateral way only, while feedback effects may even be more important. A first addition is the

consideration of gender bias in the interaction between chain governance and institutional embeddedness; and second is the integration of intra-household dynamics in chain analytics. The interaction may affect gender inequalities and differences among women in the chain, while household relations have considerable effects on the decisions of both producers and ultimate consumers in the different nodes of the chains. Both the referred interaction and household dynamics are also hardly discussed in mainstream commodity chain studies.

Chain Governance and Institutional Framework

In every chain—whether industrial or agrarian—the question of who holds the power and decision making authority derives from the nature of its governance structure. Governance is a process by which lead firms or lead forces (frequently big corporations) control and organize the division of labor, resources and allocation of surpluses and profits along a value chain (Gereffi et al. 1994; Bolwig et al. 2008; *Economy & Society* 2008). To ensure particular product specifications and the exchange of information, lead firms will frequently apply coordination mechanisms, which are often employed between suppliers in developing countries and buyers in developed countries (Muradian and Pelupessy 2005).

Many general chain studies have been focused on governance because it delineates the prospects of firms and farms in developing countries to engage in global production, trade and the generation of value along the chain. The partition of costs and benefits should be studied from a gendered point of view. Because this refers to socially constructed roles and behaviours, it will be necessary to consider the social-political and institutional embeddedness of the chain, which frequently will be gender related. The interaction among governance structure, power relations and institutional context has been rarely discussed. An exception is Quark (2014), who analyzes this at a macro level. However, for gender bias, the micro outcomes are relevant. Even the critical gender economic and feminist commodity chain studies have given scarce attention to the role and impact of the chain governance and the interaction with the institutional context. The presence of female CEOs in lead firms is as unrelated to gender equity chain outcomes, as the elections of the prime ministers Sheikh Hasina in the national context of Bangladesh and Margareth Thatcher in the UK. Lead firms might continue to utilize society and household traditions of women subordination to benefit from casual and cheap labor.

Most of the commercial agro-commodity chains of today are or tend to be buyer-driven, while the traditional ones may sometimes be producer-driven. In the first mentioned, downstream's agents or lead firms concentrate the authority and power relationships that can affect the gender position of participants.

The institutional framework includes the policies, arrangements and regulations of governments and other agents in the society outside the chain that may affect its outcomes. The state and non-state institutions aim at regulating or deregulating production, distribution and consumption at local, national and supra-national levels. Examples are the European Union and globally the World Trade Organization, international environmental NGOs and the International Union of Food Workers (Muradian and Pelupessy 2005; Pelupessy 2007). These formal rules can all have intentional or unintentional gender effects, which could be positive or negative for equality. The framework also includes informal traditional, religious or customary laws and rules, which may be gender-biased. Traditions, customary law and (world) religions may hamper the access of women to property rights, capital ownership, and employment and stimulate gender inequitable attitudes in general (Joireman 2008; Seguino 2010). Nevertheless there are also

experiences where traditions are useful to reduce the disparities of formal regulations, like the cases of witchcraft in Kenyan contract horticulture (Dolan 2002), the customary gender rights on trees and crops of the Buganda in Uganda (Howard and Nabanoga 2007) and the historical women dominance of shea nut chains in Ghana (Wardell and Fold 2013).

Therefore commodity chains should not be seen as closed systems, but as embedded in larger socio-political, institutional and household frameworks, as also brought forward by Ramamurthy. Chain participants receive external inputs as knowledge and information from ministries and research institutes, and influences by pressure groups like trade unions and NGOs with environmental and social concerns. Formal and informal social-cultural rules of the game as established by family, community and class relationships, should be given due consideration (Carr 2008). These institutional aspects are important because they either provide or block access to upgrading opportunities. The impact of lead firms, which determines the final generation and distribution of income throughout the chain, will only become effective through the interaction with the institutional context. This may bring about socially progressive results for the developing country concerned, but could also have a regressive character. In agro-commodity chains the introduction of environmentally friendly regulations belongs to the first category, while that of discriminatory labor rules is of the second type.

Gender inequity is one of the social concerns that chain intervention must address. Many studies on commodity chains have not been able to identify how women and men have been affected or impacted differently by its governance. The socio-political surrounding provides opportunities to participate successfully in commodity chains, through policies that are gender sensitive.

In a study on agrarian reform in the Philippine banana chain, it became clear that the governance by a few multinational trading-companies obstructed the upgrading opportunities of (female) smallholders (De los Reyes and Pelupessy 2009). This outcome gives policy makers the understanding of the intervention needed to improve the situation.

As mentioned, there are many formal and informal institutional factors that deprive women of a decent share in the possible beneficial effects of the actions of lead firms and outside institutions of in agro-commodity chains.

Standardization and certification are part of the commodity chain coordination mechanisms used to establish technical characteristics of a product, specific processing and producing methods, quality traits and safety needs. These may be the results of coordination with actors within or from outside the chain, which could be mandatory, voluntary or private. Whichever form it takes, many public and private regulatory bodies do not explicitly consider gender discrimination (Barrientos et al. 2003; Luetchford 2008). This has been shown by research on codes of conduct where women have been left out of organic export schemes in Africa (Bolwig et al. 2008). Standardization favours more men than women in developing countries, despite the ILO Convention 111, which prohibits gender discrimination in generic standards (Lyon et al. 2010). Men are the ones who benefit directly from training and price premiums given to those meeting the new conditions.

In this section we have shown how both chain governance actions and institutional embeddedness might be gender-biased at macro and micro levels. This implies that special attention must be given to the outcome of this interaction for women. In a gendered commodity chain approach it is necessary to examine if and why control and coordination mechanisms of lead firms enhance the gender equality or inequality characteristics of communities rules in which they are embedded.

Intra-Household Dynamics

The definition of a household as income-pooling unit for reproduction is not adequate for many developing countries (Dunaway 2001). Households are defined here beyond income and reproduction, while other social and cultural aspects also count. It is better to consider households simply as resources pooling units for all purposes, which include all contributions that are made by both men and women. These cannot be measured in monetary terms alone and serve for both their material and immaterial well-being. Men and women are not just producers and consumers in commodity chains. They are units of labor supply, production, decision-making, resource allocation, and act sometimes as small businesses that produce commodities for the market. Dolan and Sutherland (2003) note that local dynamics of household and family arrange the participation in the horticulture value chain of Kenya. Semi-proletarian households cover a multi-layered invisible economy that warrants the emergence and development of global commodity chains (Mies 2007; Dunaway 2011). The norms and rules of households determine women's and men's time availability and capacity to negotiate in both paid and unpaid work, to control income from this work and decide if the employment benefits them. All these different roles are key in the agro-commodity chains dynamics in African countries where production, resource allocation and decision making for markets are made at the household level. However, there has been little research on the interactions between agro-commodity chains and household dynamics, specifically on the pivotal role of females. Sometimes households appear in chain studies, but basically to indicate the economic effects of chain dynamics, without explicit consideration of their feedback to the different nodes (Bolwig and Odeke 2007; Maertens and Swinnen 2009; Vargas and Vigneri 2011). This is an important drawback since all nodes of agro-food chains are embedded in household dynamics.

In this section we consider the role of the gender power distribution, the influence of household dynamics on chains and the effects of the allocation of chores and care duties. Women are not only often excluded by decision makers, but gender inequalities may in fact increase with policy interventions, further exacerbating gender disparities in power relations (Mayoux 2009). To understand how the impacts of chains are transmitted into the lives of each household member, a first important question is whether there are gender biases in farm-firm contract agriculture or rural labor markets (see above). Frequently the impact of households as a key institution in the global organization of production has not been recognized (Dunaway 2001; 2011; 2014). Intra-household processes should also be taken into account to assess the gendered impact of trade reforms in global commodity chains.

A unitary household model has often been used to study its dynamics, which assumes that households behave homogeneously, maximizing a single uniform welfare function. Within the household all resources (land, labor, and capital) and consequently, all production and incomes from factor applications are pooled (Golan and Lay 2008). Nevertheless, in most developing countries, women may pool labor, but are often lacking access to land and capital, which restricts their participation in commodity chains. Therefore, most decisions regarding the production and the distribution of yields are left to the male head of the household, hence making it difficult for women to share the benefits proportionally.

Njuki et al. (2006) found that in Uganda and Malawi women are in charge of the purchase, slaughter and sale of small livestock and its revenues. However, they are mostly excluded from decisions about the family's land, larger livestock, commercial crops (except for home grown

vegetables sold in local markets), and extractive products such as timber and bricks. For commercial products, men as assumed head of the household might take over many production and expenditure decisions (Mayoux 2009). In many developing countries this kind of household relationship literally means that women are left out of the commodity chains of modern commercial crops. Men frequently allocate land and other means of production to high income-generating commodities sold in official markets. However, the experience in Sub-Saharan Africa is in some cases quite different, because women do almost all the cultivation work and sometimes even make decisions about what to produce and how to trade, as in the cases of groundnuts in Cameroon and shea nuts in Ghana (Elad and Houston 2002; Wardell and Fold 2013). All productions and trade nodes of subsistence and commercial shea chains of Ghana and other SSA countries have been operated and governed by women since pre-colonial times. However, modernisation policies and new technologies may change this, with negative effects on women's livelihoods and environments.

The historically female and ecologically friendly managed shea chains in 19 SSA countries are operated by more than two million women. Their gender equity potential has not drawn much attention in the feminist literature, which can be attributed to a generalized development stages vision as e.g. outlined in Boserup (1996). The bargaining power in the household depends more on cultural, relational and opportunistic factors rather than only the economically rational ones, as manifested by research in Eastern Uganda (Iversen et al. 2011). The importance of cultural factors to understand intra-household processes had also been shown for other continents (see Ramamurthy 2010 for India; for Chile by Cuesta 2006 and Contreras and Plaza 2010).

Decision-making at the household level determines the level and conditions of participation of members of the household in commodity chains as shown for Rwanda (Vargas and Vigneri 2011). In most cases, men make the decisions regarding these questions. In Mesoamerica there is evidence that despite the fact that women devote a large share of their labor to coffee production, they often have little say in agricultural decision-making (Lyon et al. 2010). This leads to unequal sharing of resources at household level. Women and girls typically contribute more labor to household survival than men, but receive an unequal part of the total resources (Dunaway 2001; Vargas and Vigneri 2011). In this way polygamy in Sub-Saharan Africa is considered as only economically profitable to men by the prevailing opinion following Boserup (1970). However, some African anthropologists argue that the system provides greater flexibility and autonomy in decision making to the wives, living in separate houses, which give them advantages (McCune 2006).

It will be clear that household dynamics should be put into consideration when designing intervention programs to include men and women in commodity chains. When the impacts of power relations and balances in the household are not taken into account, the results of interventions may differ from the desired goals. Ignoring these dynamics will lead to negative outcomes for women. An example is an aquaculture program in Bangladesh where intra-household dynamics were disregarded. As a result, women were minimally involved, and the project designed to benefit them was never accomplished (Riisgaard et al. 2010). Understanding intra-household dynamics in commodity chains would prevent interventions from creating or enhancing unequal opportunities in male-dominated societies.

Women's empowerment within households is one of the means to ensure that they can fairly benefit from agro-commodity chains. The empowerment in an organic food-growing project in Uganda increased the agricultural food output and improved the rural levels of nutrition (Bolwig and Odeke 2007). This had a direct effect on decision making within households, which includes

the allocation of time and food, as shown for Rwanda (Bhargave 1997). The added decision-making power in turn increases the self-esteem and enhances the status of women within the family and community. This means that women's empowerment in agro-commodity chains would lead to improved status within the family and vice versa. This is also assumed to provide women with the necessary abilities to make meaningful choices about whether to produce for the market or the household.

Understanding care responsibilities is another important feature in the analysis of household dynamics related to agro-commodity chains. These responsibilities are in most cases attached to women within households; hence obligations and performances of chores and care work are experienced differently by men and women (Lewis and Giullari 2005). In most households, and especially in poor ones, women do all the care activities, and this has an impact on their available time, potential participation, nutrition, productivity and ability to upgrade in chains. According to Tarkowska (2002), women in Poland traditionally do most of the domestic and parenting work, even when they are more involved in out of home paid work. This is attributed to social and cultural expectations and traditions. However, these care activities sometimes act as a blockade to participation in those chain nodes that would demand more of their time and energy. The significance of the care economy should be considered in order to understand the ways in which women could get more involved in agro-commodity chains. Especially in semi-proletarian households, women's work is not remunerated or valued otherwise. Little or no recognition makes it difficult for them to improve their position and enjoy the monetary and other benefits that come with it. This unrecognized work effectively subsidizes other non-agricultural nodes within many agro-commodity chains (Dunaway 2014). Numerous unpaid or underpaid family workers in the harvest of fresh fruit and vegetables as well as women's household work, make low export prices feasible. In sum, a gender perspective is necessary to analyze the position of households in commodity chains in the attempt to alleviate poverty. This is because women tend to be over-represented in poor groups, have greater domestic responsibilities than men, are often underpaid and tend to direct their earnings towards improving household welfare (Carr 2004; Simister 2009). The outcomes of intra-household bargaining will also influence the participation potential of women and men in agro-commodity chains.

Conclusion

The identification of winners and losers of globalization processes is one of the greatest virtues of the global commodity chain approach. Therefore it can be a good instrument to assess the impacts of these processes on gender equity. The fact that agro-commodity chains give women (potential) access to labor and produce markets is for many authors reason to qualify them as winners. But others may emphasize its adverse conditions and the meagre results for empowerment. The consideration of socio-cultural aspects may lead to worse assessments of commodity chain impacts. Underprivileged groups themselves could provide a more complete specification of the assessment criteria.

However, winners may also be found in the non-agricultural and other non labor-intensive stages of the chains. The lack of an appropriate gender approach has been a major shortcoming in many analyses of agricultural based chains. This is important to explain both social outcomes and gender dependence of chain dynamics. Our study provides insights into steps to be taken towards an integrated gendered agro-commodity chain approach. Our analysis of a selection of representative post-2000 studies on gender in value chains and earlier references indicate that

despite significant advances, there are still important analytical gaps to reach this goal. Most agro-commodity chain studies that included gender analytics explicitly have referred to high value commercial crops concentrated on horticulture and some traditional export commodities. Few have explored the chains of traditional less commercial staples like maize and millet, which are of great importance to the nutritional conditions of rural households, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. In the tradition of Boserup and others, about three-fourths of our sample has focused exclusively on economic effects of chain dynamics on the position of women in product and labor markets. The latter seems to provide more benefits to women, but other empirical studies question this outcome. Only one-fourth of the publications extended the economic reasoning with socio-cultural aspects looking at the well-being of women in a broader sense. In the post-2000 period the market-oriented gender economic and socio-cultural feminist commodity chain approaches were developed based on earlier works on the role of women in global production. A necessary first step to reduce the analytical gaps would be the combination of the main aspects of both approaches to assess its explanatory potential. However, only a limited number of publications has included the feedback effects of gender on chain dynamics, mostly as consequences of feminization of the agriculture node, labor force and poverty evolution.

Governance in commodity chains has been viewed by many as a concept of power and authority, concentrated on lead firms and subordinated producers without explicit consideration of the gender dimension. The discussion of institutions has centred on the contextual impact on firms in global chains and regulation of the movement of commodities. Gender relations in the socio-political and institutional realm of commodity chains remain often an unknown feature. There is a need for a more explicit gender-oriented analysis in this field, more specifically in developing countries where gender disparities are still posing many development challenges. This may be a result of continued beliefs in and strong attachment to traditional values in communities and within households. Nevertheless, the modernization of political and economic structures will not always bring improvements to this situation. The insertion in value chains may reduce women's traditional rights of access to resources. It can also diminish the opportunities to make meaningful decisions and take advantage of the benefits from markets or other trading channels. Our review of the research showed that the development of modern agro-commodity chains have mixed effects on gender equity.

The interaction of governance structures and institutional embeddedness may have important consequences for the gender division of labor, leading not only to the feminization of agriculture but also that of other labor intensive nodes in the value chain. The consideration of gender biases in the interaction is a second step to integrate gender and agro-commodity chain approaches. The integration of intra-household dynamics in commodity chain analysis is the third step to be taken in the achievement of a final outcome. This is essential to explain the consequences of feedback effects on the dynamics of agro-commodity chains. These effects and the mentioned interaction make equity outcomes uncertain. The addition of the interaction between governance and institutional context, as well as intra-household dynamics can be seen as our main contribution to the design of a gender sensitive agro-commodity approach.

The three steps together will help us better assess the flows of resources, the distribution of costs and benefits, and the impacts of socio-cultural processes along commodity chains. Both men and women have unique knowledge of production, processing, trade and consumption of different agro-commodities. To validate this three-step methodology, comparative empirical research is needed of both traditional and modern chains. A gendered approach is required not only from an equal rights perspective, but also to improve the effectiveness of interventions,

taking advantage of the considerable knowledge of both men and women and their respective cultural backgrounds to assure a positive impact on their well-being.

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Appendix. Towards a Gendered Agro-Commodity Approach: Selected post-2000 Studies on Gender in Agro-Commodity Chains

Characteristics	Authors	Focus of study	Gender analytics	Household focus	Upgrading options	Suggested way forward/Conclusions
Historical	Ramamurthy (2000)	Feminist agro-food systems research in cotton chains in Asia	Yes	no	no	Commodity chain analysis in historical perspective explains working conditions of women in different social formations, acknowledges winners and losers and new possibilities for women.
	Rammohan and Sundaresan (2003)	Socially embedded coir yarn value chain in India	yes	no	yes	Social linkages of production and trade should be mapped out. Upgrading has not only economic significance, but also for living and working conditions of poor workers and women.
	Dunaway (2013)	Semi-proletarianizing of households in commodity chains	Yes	yes	no	A historical approach explains the persistence of semi-proletarian households as condition for human capital reproduction and capitalist surplus extraction.
Theoretical/ Methodological	Dunaway (2001 and 2011)	Engendering the concept of commodity chains	Yes	yes	no	In a world system framework women and households hidden inputs should be introduced to make analyses more effective and to prevent policy errors.
	Barrientos (2001)	Female flexibility to run value chain of export horticulture in South Africa	Yes	no	no	A gender analysis of flexible employment is needed to understand the dynamics of global buyer-driven value chains.
	Bair (2005 and 2010)	Organisation of transnational production in Asia and Mexico	Yes	no	no	GCC research should encompass regulations, market institutions and social differences of capitalism to explain the gendered global assembly lines.
	Maertens en Swinnen (2009 and Maertens et al. 2012)	Product and labour market linkages in horticulture chains of SSA	Yes	no	yes	Large scale cash crops give more direct and indirect benefits to rural poor and especially women through employment and agro-industries, compared to high-value smallholder contract farming.

Selected post-2000 Studies on Gender in Agro-Commodity Chains

Characteristics	Authors	Focus of study	Gender analytics	Household focus	Upgrading options	Suggested way forward/Conclusions
Theoretical/ Methodological	Palpacuer (2008)	Governance in global commodity chains	no	no	no	Increasing shareholder rents are appropriated at the top of GCCs, while working conditions worsen in the North and South for women as majority of the productive workforce at the base of the chains.
	Ramamurthy (2004 and 2010)	Feminist commodity chain analysis of cotton seed and garment chains in India	Yes	yes	no	This analysis pays attention to the uneven impacts of globalisation on every day life, interarticulation of the material and cultural, major role of culture in social reproduction of labour and capital.
	Allen and Sachs (2007)	Women and food chains	Yes	yes	no	Women are responsible for food and related work despite lack of power. Gender relationships in food systems can be understood through intersection of the material, socio-cultural and corporeal.
Poverty related	Bolwig et al. (2008)	Integrating poverty, gender and environment concerns in value chain analysis in SSA (method)	Yes	no	yes	Rewards and risks throughout the chain have all gender dimensions. Integration of vertical and horizontal chain dynamics has effects on poverty, labour, environment and gender issues. Coordination in upstream parts makes upgrading of weak actors possible.
	Riisgaard et al. (2010)	Gender and value chain evaluation (method)	Yes	no	yes	Gender analysis should accompany that of value chain, to design intervention, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
	Coles and Mitchel (2011)	Value chain analysis and gender inequities in markets (method)	yes	no	yes	Benefits for women in agricultural value chains depend on control of productive resources and households decisions.

Selected post-2000 Studies on Gender in Agro-Commodity Chains

Characteristics	Authors	Focus of study	Gender analytics	Household focus	Upgrading options	Suggested way forward/Conclusions
Poverty related	Carr and Chen (2004)	Globalisation, social exclusion and work	yes	no	no	Dominant chain players determine inclusion or exclusion through market and policies.
	English (2007)	Women rights in African horticulture	yes	no	no	Implementation of workers rights differs across countries. Cultural and behavioural constraints are most problematic.
	King (2008)	Gender dimensions of globalization	yes	no	no	Globalization has both positive and negative effects through export expansion, production dispersion, outsourcing and off-shoring. Gender inequality could reduce, especially in lower chain segments where women are concentrated. But these jobs are often informal, unprotected, casual and low-paid.
	Quisumbing and Pandolfelli (2010)	Access to productive resources in value chains of female poor farmers in SSA	yes	no	no	Interventions are significant for female farmers' access to productive resources and for improving food security. Shifting economic, political and cultural forces can create opportunities for women.
	Bolzani et al. (2010)	Gender inequality in traditional and modern agri-food value chains in SSA	yes	no	no	Appropriate policies should improve women's returns in traditional and reduce inequalities and entry barriers in modern chains.
	Ramamurthy (2011)	Global cottonseed commodity chain and small farmers in India	no	no	yes	Caste interpretations of value and meaning in cottonseed production are dominant for Dalit smallholders. Economic rationale weights less.

Selected post-2000 Studies on Gender in Agro-Commodity Chains

Characteristics	Authors	Focus of study	Gender analytics	Household focus	Upgrading options	Suggested way forward/Conclusions
Poverty related	Greenberg et al. (2012)	Comparative gendered value chain analysis for branded and bulk wines from South Africa to Sweden	yes	yes	no	Women have worse working conditions than men in both chains despite improvements in the modern chain. They are concentrated in low paid casual jobs in areas difficult to reach by policy or codes of conduct. Resources to improve this could be allocated from Swedish tax income, which amounts to 70% of generated surplus of the two chains.
Codes of conduct	Dolan et al. (2002)	Gender, rights and participation in Kenya's cut flower sector	yes	no	no	Positive changes in employment practices as result of Kenyan producer's initiatives to raise social and environment standards of their own and overseas buyer codes. However, occupational and gender related concerns have remained.
	Barrientos et al. (2003)	Gender sensitivity of export horticulture codes in SSA	yes	no	no	Gender sensitivity of codes needs to be improved if they are to address employment conditions of informal and especially women workers.
	Tallontire et al. (2005)	Ethical trade in SSA horticulture	yes	no	no	Negative implications of flexible employment strategies. Codes of conduct give no better outcomes for women and informal workers due to insufficient reach of these codes.
	Barrientos and Smith (2007)	Assessing codes of labour practice in global fruits production systems of South Africa	yes	no	no	Tensions between corporate and civil society actors have had a positive impact on standards, but with limited effects because of consequences of commercial practices and embedded social relations.

Selected post-2000 Studies on Gender in Agro-Commodity Chains

Characteristics	Authors	Focus of study	Gender analytics	Household focus	Upgrading options	Suggested way forward/Conclusions
Codes of conduct	Bolwig and Odeke (2007)	Food security effects of certified organic exports of Uganda	yes	no	no	Conversion to organic export production has not reduced food security but improved it by raising incomes so that households could buy more and better quality food from market.
	Farnworth and Hutchings (2009)	Efectiveness of women in organic agriculture of SSA	yes	no	yes	Gender relationships are important in the organization of farm work, which includes asset distribution (land and labour), management of inputs (seeds and machinery) and decision-making. Organic farming may raise women's empowerment.
Commercial	Dolan and Sutherland (2003)	Gender in the export horticulture value chain from Kenya	yes	yes	no	Production and trade nodes of this buyer-driven chain are reliant on female labour. Labour market is gender differentiated. Significant job creation has positive impact on living conditions of workers.
	Mayoux and Mackie (2007)	Mainstreaming gender analysis in value chain development in SSA	yes	no	no	Guide to identify gender opportunities and constraints of impacts on households and the community. Therefore their needs and interests must be an integral part of development policy.
	Nichols et al. (2009 and 2010)	Gender equitable opportunities in agricultural value chains in SSA	yes	no	no	Gender equality fosters growth. Women's earnings benefit the other family members.
	Farnworth (2011)	Gender-aware value chain development	yes	no	no	Treating gender inequality is needed. This will enhance the role of value chains as agents of sustainable social change.
	Vargas and Vigneri (2011)	Gender sensitivity in cash crop supply chains from SSA	yes	no	no	Impact of gender constraints on production and marketing. Inequality of access to resources is the main reason for these.

A World-Ecological Perspective on Socio-Ecological Transformation in the Appalachian Coal Industry

Ben Marley¹

Binghamton University

bmarley1@binghamton.edu

Samantha Fox

Binghamton University

sfox2@binghamton.edu

Abstract

This article discusses the exhaustion of socio-ecological relations in the coalfields of West Virginia. We use the term socio-ecological to signify “the interwoven character and the indispensable unity of social and natural life” (Araghi 2009: 115). In particular we use classic literatures on labor history in the coalfields of central Appalachia and contemporary studies of mountaintop removal to think about phases of socio-ecological relations of the coal industry. We argue for the interrelationality of the social and the ecological in place of conventional eco-Marxist approaches which treat these as relatively independent units. This enables us to situate nature as an active component of capitalist developmental processes. We argue that the exhaustion of socio-ecological relations in the coalfields of West Virginia is an outcome of material practices within the phase of extraction using mountaintop removal, historical changes in the conditions of production in the coalfields, and of new forms of competition from other regions and energy sources. We find that the relative exhaustion of central Appalachian coal is tempered by favorable international markets and a specialization in metallurgical coal.

Keywords: world-ecology, energy, capitalist development, Appalachia, nature

West Virginia has historically been tied to the world-economy through the extraction of coal, which has fed steel mills and provided energy that powers the electricity grid throughout the United States. West Virginia’s coal dependency has provided jobs and been at the center of struggles for rights among miners, their families and communities. The history of miners’ struggles over labor conditions both inside the mines and in coal communities dominates intellectual inquiry into central Appalachia more broadly. A relatively recent shift to mountaintop removal coal mining has replaced this narrative with one of environmental degradation (e.g. Scott 2010; McNeil 2012). This article seeks to bridge these fields of scholarly

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inquiry. It situates the most recent phase of coal extraction as a reworking of the relation among human and extra-human natures, while accounting for the diversity of human natures in the dynamics between miners and coal companies. As one phase of extraction gives way to another, local and regional socio-ecological relations in the coalfields are reorganized to reflect conditions of the world-economy. We use the term socio-ecological to signify “the interwoven character and the indispensable unity of social and natural life” (Araghi 2009: 115). We argue that the exhaustion of socio-ecological relations in the coalfields of West Virginia is an outcome of material practices within the phase of extraction using mountaintop removal, historical changes in the conditions of production in the coalfields, and of competing regions and energies. The exhaustion of socio-ecological relations is a crisis that arises when the conditions that once freed capital from its constraints become a limit on profitability and prevents an industry from keeping pace with the expansion of the world-economy. We find that the relative exhaustion of central Appalachian coal, favorable international markets and specialization in metallurgical coal have tempered exhaustion in West Virginia and central Appalachia more broadly.

Using exhaustion as a framework for analyzing the coalfields of West Virginia moves beyond causal models of environmental degradation and promotes a relational approach that highlights the inseparable aspects of society and ecology, the socio-ecological relations, that together form the organization of capitalism in a place, such as central Appalachia. Current scholarship fails to address exhaustion in a way that progresses conversations in the overlapping fields of political ecology and environmental sociology. Fields that address the environment from the social sciences are limited by frameworks rooted in the dualism of nature and society as distinct entities. Exhaustion for these scholars is an absolute exhaustion, characterized by a definite lack of a resource. Rather, we use ecological Marxism and world-systems studies to address exhaustion as relative and dialectical, where a resource exists but the profitability of extraction is constrained by socio-ecological conditions. Eco-Marxist interpretations of exhaustion tend to remain within the fixed boxes of nature and society, where capitalism causes exhaustion through environmental degradation and hinders the ability of social reproduction wherever it manifests. Recent efforts by world-systems scholars have integrated eco-Marxist ideas within a relational field that integrates nature and society as interpenetrating, where one cannot be spoken of coherently without addressing the other. Here, exhaustion signifies the declining profitability and increasing instability of organizational structures in relation to the world-economy (Arrighi 1994; Moore 2011a; 2011b).

With the vast majority of scholarship on environmental degradation deeply committed to a causal mode of explanation, the qualitative attributes of how processes of degradation occur in relation to the development of capitalism are overlooked. This fails to help us understand the geographic displacement of regions by new ones and the way regions remain linked to the world-economy even as new frontiers come into production. Eco-Marxists have been successful in moving conversations on environmental issues forward and their scholarship critically engages with ecology and systems thinking (Smith 1984; O’Connor 1998; Foster 1999, 2000; Bell and York 2010). Eco-Marxism incorporates ecological thinking into the dialectical relations of

capitalism, beyond the analysis of capital and labor. This relational thinking has challenged scholars such that world-systems studies have recently critiqued the dualism of eco-Marxist's tendency to situate nature as distinct from society, beyond nature as source and sink (Moore 2011a, 2011b). In these analyses, ecology is not something formative and influential to the contours of capitalist development. This article contributes to a developing and paradigm shifting world-ecological perspective.

Below we sketch out the contours of eco-Marxism before outlining our interpretation of world-ecology. We then go on to discuss exhaustion in the coalfields of West Virginia as a situated place in the world-ecology. In addressing the relative exhaustion of coal production in West Virginia, we are concerned with how socio-ecological conditions in West Virginia influence and are influenced by world-ecological conditions of capitalist development. We are specifically interested in: *how are human and extra-human natures interwoven in West Virginia's coalfields? How have socio-ecological relations changed over time? What do the socio-ecological relations tell us about the form of capitalism in this place? What are the important elements of exhaustion of the socio-ecological project in West Virginia?*

Literature Review: Transcending the Binary of Nature and Society

Working in the classroom, it is evident that many students think capitalism or society as distinct from nature. Even scholars that recognize that these spheres are intimately related situate them in distinct ontological spheres (Foster, Clark, and York 2010; Peet, Robbins, and Watts 2011). When pressed to think otherwise, almost all would agree that society exists within nature but once we begin to analyze environmental issues we implicitly fall back into the thinking that society is independent of nature and can be controlled. One need only look to United Nations Development Program (UNDP) meetings, government management of environment, and grassroots organizations working to create sustainability. The problem with the Cartesian model that creates a dualism of nature and society is that it limits what questions can be asked and what can be known while reproducing an ontological understanding of society and nature as distinctive spheres.

The dualism of nature and society is an abstraction associated with capitalist modernity and extends into various spheres, all of which relate to human control over production and therefore use industrial activity as a frame for understanding environmental degradation. The technological innovations of an expanding capitalist system increase labor productivity as machines replace workers and output expands. This process increases the rate at which natural resources are used, leading to geographically extensive extraction. This process is known as the treadmill of production, and the profit motive is its *raison d'être* (Schnaiberg 1980). The treadmill of production leads to the constant necessity to seek out new and different resources, generating a mobile commodity frontier. The idea of a mobile frontier is relevant to world-ecological understandings of the socio-ecological exhaustion of the coalfields. However, the treadmill of production is situated as a binary where capitalist processes yield environmental

degradation. Nature becomes something that is used, as a source of resource extraction to be used as input into capitalist production. While the resources extracted from nature are productions of nature, the landscape is a production of nature itself, as an outcome of capitalist processes (Smith 1984). Smith internalized the expanding use of natural resources in the treadmill of production by internalizing this relation of capitalist production processes. The drive for endless accumulation produces a form of nature that reflects the domination of exchange value over use value. Economic “efficiency” is elevated above social and ecological “efficiencies”, meaning concerns with the production of capital take precedence over the re/production of life. While material life is filled with produced natures, the result of human activity, the biogeophysical aspect of nature is also a production that must be taken into consideration (Bunker 1985). The biogeophysical aspects of ecology are productions of geological time that determine the location and quality of natural resources. This in turn situates the temporalities of capitalism and ecology at different rates. Our long term project is to understand how these temporalities coincide in order to gain a better comprehension of capitalism as *world-ecology*, or as a way of organizing nature.

Eco-Marxist literatures generally look to the internal relations of capitalist production processes in analyzing capitalism. Nature for eco-Marxists is something acted upon and used by capital, but it is not recognized as an integrated ecological system with its own internal logic, spatiality and temporality. Rather, nature tends to be viewed as passive and relatively unchanging. World-systems scholars and others working in the eco-Marxist tradition, such as O’Connor (1998), have argued that the degradation of the conditions of production (labor power, built environment, and natural environment) limits the possibilities for expanded accumulation. In O’Connor’s (1998) second contradiction of capitalism, degradation is framed within the internal relations of capital such that the limits to capital are capital itself. O’Connor argues that as the conditions of production are degraded an ecological crisis emerges which in turn generates economic crisis (1998: 183). This dualism repeats itself as an economic crisis causes an environmental one. The dialectical process O’Connor (1998) identifies begins to recognize the relationality between society and nature while reifying these as two distinct spheres of life.

Later interventions by eco-Marxists have fruitfully formulated the concept of metabolic rift, taken from Marx’s conception of social metabolism (Foster 1999, 2000). The metabolic rift is illustrated through Marx’s discussion of the division of labor between town and country. The country sends nutrients and resources to the towns, while towns accumulate waste in nature and the wealth derived from the usage of the countryside’s energy and resources. The organization of society under capitalism breaks down this social metabolism and treat ecosystemic cycles as linear histories. Again we see the axiom of social systems disrupting natural systems. Humans are said to create the rift, illustrating the dualism of society and nature. But humans are part of nature! Further, non-human natures contribute to the production of nature and actively make environments (through climate, geology, biophysical environments). We can no longer view nature as “a passive substance upon which humanity leaves its footprint. Rather, it becomes an inclusive and active bundle of relations formed and reformed through the historically and

geographically-specific movements of humans with the rest of nature” (Moore 2011b: 119). This idea is frequently absent from left ecology.² The domination of nature by humans is firmly rooted in the epistemology of capitalism, where humans manage nature. Only recently has a developing perspective on world-ecology (as a recent innovation in world-systems) begun to emerge challenging this seemingly axiomatic knowledge.

Recent scholarship by Jason Moore has challenged the Cartesian dualism that situates society and nature in distinct ontological spheres in the study of capitalism. Moore’s world-ecology perspective posits that instead of capitalism acting on nature, capitalism develops *within* and *through* nature. This signifies that there is a dialectical relation of the accumulation of capital and the production of nature forming the *capitalist world-ecology* (Moore 2011a). The dualism of nature and society is an outcome of this relation rather than a point of departure for analysis (Moore 2009). To begin analysis from the point of dialectical unity, we look to the messy bundles of human and extra-human nature that constitute the relations of “a symbolic and material matrix, co-created through the activities of humans with the rest of nature” (Moore 2009: 348). The ontological formation of society-in-nature differs from traditional formulations that posit society acting upon nature. Nature and society then should not be conceptualized as discreet categories of sociological analysis. They are interrelated and reproduced from the scale of the body to the scale of the world-economy where the logic of capital becomes the principle organizing force of this ontological unity (or *oikeios* to use Moore’s term) (Moore 2011b). The significance of a unified analysis of nature and society is that it eschews academic attempts at resolving ecological crises within the logic of the capitalist system. Reforms to the capitalist system are not possible within a system premised on accumulation for accumulations sake.

The world-ecology perspective opens possibilities for understanding the production of nature as part of the historical development of capitalism. The production of nature and accumulation are dialectically bound through relations of human and extra-human natures such as the geological production of nature in terms of biogeophysical properties of natural resources that contribute to capital accumulation. The exhaustion of socio-ecological conditions in the organization of human and extra-human relations periodically challenges capital to reorganize relations in an effort to jumpstart accumulation. This involves the geographical movement of commodity frontiers as well as the introduction of new management practices and scientific-technological innovations (Moore 2009, 2011a, 2011b). We organize this paper around the socio-ecological relations of coal production in West Virginia and the periodic exhaustion of the organizational structures and conditions of production. We specifically focus on the period of mountaintop removal coal mining that emerged in the 1980s and the conditions of the world-ecology that have recently signaled the exhaustion of this ecological regime in central Appalachia.

² Non-western scholars have been vocal about the holistic relation of ecology and economy and have argued for an alternative epistemology. Such important scholars include Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Vandana Shiva, and Ariel Salleh among others.

Methods

This study was conducted over six weeks in the summer of 2012 in southern West Virginia. Twenty in-depth interviews were conducted with coal miners, community members, and environmentalists on the practice of mountaintop removal coal mining and the economic changes occurring in southern West Virginia since the 1970s. Interviews were collected using the snowball sampling method. While interviews were crucial to the development of this research, they only partially inform a general understanding of this study. Information was also collected from local historical sites, museums and curators on the history of coal mining as well as the blog *Coal Tattoo* written by Ken Ward. *Coal Tattoo* was an invaluable resource that linked statistical data to the real life experiences of West Virginians.

A history of activism by West Virginia's citizens has been significant to the contours of coal operations in the state. Participant observation during an activist training conference and subsequent direct action protest were informative on the strategies local populations are currently using to fight for the land and people of West Virginia. Beyond the conference, one of the authors worked with two families on their farms and attended community gatherings. Participant observation illuminated the everyday practices of local peoples and helped gain an understanding of the economic challenges facing communities.

We use southern West Virginia as a representation of central Appalachia because it produces the largest quantity of coal among the central Appalachian states. In 2011, southern West Virginia produced 92,813 thousand short tons of coal. The second largest producer in central Appalachia was eastern Kentucky with 67,930 tons. The whole of central Appalachia produced 184,813 tons of coal (EIA 2011). Central Appalachia is defined by the Energy Information Administration as encompassing southern West Virginia, eastern Kentucky, and northeastern Tennessee. We use southern West Virginia as a representative of wider processes occurring in central Appalachia in comparing this coal basin to competing coal basins such as that of the Powder River Basin in Wyoming. The patterns occurring in southern West Virginia reflect broader socio-ecological processes of the region as a whole. Further, important historical events occurred in the southern West Virginia coalfields that influenced the wider region, especially the formation of the United Mine Workers of America in the early 20th century. This research was part of a larger project to examine the restructuring of the coal industry and how social movements are contributing to the development of this industry. Throughout this paper we use West Virginia, southern West Virginia, and central Appalachia interchangeably to avoid repetition.

Before proceeding, a brief methodological note is in order. Jason Moore has set out on an ambitious task of building a framework for analyzing the capitalist world-ecology by transcending Cartesian dualisms that situate nature and society as separate spheres of analysis. Moore seeks to broaden and enrich world-systems analysis by integrating ecological systems within historical social science. The analysis of capitalist world-ecology is not simply a bridge built between society and environment-nature-ecology but a rethinking of the relationship

between these two spheres which emerged from enlightenment thought. Using ecosystems as a foundation, social processes can be seen in a new light and capitalism analyzed as a configuration of human and extra-human natures. A full volume would be required to demonstrate the innumerable ways these relations manifest in the production of the coalfields and coal communities.

This article narrows the macro-scale analysis of capitalist world-ecology in order to illuminate processes on the ground in Central Appalachia and is based on field research done in West Virginia. In focusing on this region as opposed to the history of coal in the capitalist world-ecology and the production process, we have honed in on the transition in the coalfields of central Appalachia since the late nineteenth century. The capitalist world-ecology framework encompasses both the processes of the world economy and the reproductive capacities of people situated in places. We aim to transcend these spheres, articulating a limited discussion of the reproductive aspects of labor as well as the world-economic influences on production processes, including those of the coalfields and miners' participation in that process. As such, the diverse reproductive processes of coal communities (and the diverse social groups within this categorization) are largely absent from the text.

Our task in this article is two-fold. First we aim to understand changes in the coalfields from a world-ecological perspective. This requires us to look closely at labor, as coal required large quantities of labor in the late 19th century and later this labor migrated out of the coalfields in large numbers as the production process transitioned to less labor intensive production. This leads to the second task of this article which is to understand how labor participated within the world-ecology from a micro-level at the coalface to the macro-level within world-economic processes. For this reason, reproductive processes in the coal camps and contemporary conditions of reproduction largely remain outside the present analysis, even while these activities are central to understanding socio-ecological change.

The focus on transformations in the production process within a world-ecological context highlights the significance of workers situated in a place, e.g. central Appalachian coalfields. Towards this end, the productive and reproductive processes of coal miners are central. The broader goal of the paper is to understand world-ecological transformations, of which workers are only a part. Further research is needed on the reproductive capacities or informal economies of labor within the coalfields that can illuminate the resilience of these mountain peoples. This research would highlight labor's participation in the reproduction of capitalism as well as the reproduction of communities and the dynamic interactions between these spheres of action.

Nature, Society, and Resource Exhaustion

“Nature is [not] a passive substance upon which humanity leaves its footprint. Rather, it [is] an inclusive and active bundle of relations formed and re-formed through the historically and geographically-specific movements of humans with the rest of nature” (Moore 2011b: 119). Once we internalize the capitalist system within earth as an ecological system, questions once

obscured take form. This is particularly relevant to the study of spatio-temporal dynamics in the world-system. Understanding the spatio-temporal dynamics of a socio-ecological bundle of relations on the scale of the world-economy is a difficult project. We seek to make sense of these dynamics at the regional and local scale, always maintaining awareness of how these dynamics are fundamentally constituted by and constitutive of activities occurring at a broader scale. Looking at a small component of the larger world-ecology, we can see how each local history comprises part of the larger history of the capitalist world-ecology.

The biogeophysical aspects of coal are interrelated with human natures. As Marx (1978) argued, humans work on nature and nature simultaneously works on humans. While it is easy to relate the ways humans work in and through nature in terms of labor, as most scholarship does when it discusses labor conditions in the coal fields, this leaves out important elements of the ways that nature works in and through humans. In the coal industry the health and safety of miners is the primary interface through which nature works on humans. Diseases such as black lung occur after only a few years in the mine, due to constant exposure to coal dust and particulate matter. Coal mines have varying properties that influence the work environment; for example some mines are more gaseous than others (Long 1991). As time has passed, the socio-ecology of production has dispersed nature's work on humans into the generalized environment. Today black lung and other respiratory diseases are experienced in communities located near mountaintop removal sites and are not limited to miners (Burns 2007; Hendryx 2009; McCoy 2014; see Table 1).³ The following section articulates the socio-ecological relations in the coalfields of southern West Virginia through the organization and conditions of production.

West Virginia's Socio-Ecological Relations

Coal is a fundamental mineral for the world-economy, supplying the energy resource for electricity production and steel making. West Virginia is currently the second largest producer of coal among the states (EIA). Mining companies moved to central Appalachia's rich bituminous coal deposits after anthracite coal veins were exhausted in Pennsylvania in the nineteenth century (Simon 1980; see Figure 1). The resource dependency of West Virginia has been extensively studied for its labor exploitation and more recently the devastating environmental impacts of mountaintop removal. In this section of the article, we seek to integrate histories of labor exploitation within a narrative on the bundle of human and extra-human natures in this region as elements constituting and constituted by the world-economy. In order to make sense of the processes operating in West Virginia, we look at the socio-ecological organization of extraction in the coalfields with specific attention to the phase of mountaintop removal that emerged in the 1970s. We argue that the exhaustion of organizational structures of extraction requires a reorganization of socio-ecological relations in order to liberate accumulation. The scaling up of extraction exhausts socio-ecological relations of production pushing the energy frontier to new

³ Detailed maps of the human costs of mountaintop removal outlining population change, cardiovascular disease, lung cancer, and other ill effects of MTR can be found at: <http://ilovemountains.org/the-human-cost>.

sources and regions. Before addressing the more contemporary period, we discuss the geographic qualities and previous socio-ecological organization of mining in West Virginia. We begin with the labor history of coal since historically this was the predominant principle governing the relations of production and the central focus of scholarly research.

Labor and the Socio-Ecological Regime Prior to Surface Mining. West Virginia's economy was historically dominated by the coal industry. Until 1986, West Virginia was the largest producer of coal in the country (EIA). Today, West Virginia produces 17% of the coal produced in the United States (EIA 2013). However, it leads in the production of bituminous coal. This coal has been used for electricity production and steel-making. In steel production, central Appalachian coal is ideal, as it burns at and sustains higher temperatures (Goodell 2006). High quality coal seams in the oldest mountain chain in the world are located closer to the surface than in many other areas due to thousands of years of erosion. As new methods of extraction, competing regions (e.g. Powder River Basin in Wyoming), and new energies became economically viable, West Virginia's centrality in coal has declined.

Figure 1. Types of Coal

Types of Coal	Definition and Use
Anthracite	Has highest carbon content, 86-98%. Most of which is found within Pennsylvania, many deposits have been exhausted and it has largely fallen out of use.
Bituminous <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metallurgical or Coking Coal • Steam Coal 	Most plentiful and commonly used, especially for industrial purposes. Carbon content is 48-86%. Metallurgical or coking coal is used for the steel industry. Steam coal is used primarily to generate electricity
Subbituminous	Cleaner burning coal but with a low carbon content of 35-45 percent. Found mostly in Western states and Alaska.
Lignite	Has the lowest carbon content, 25-35%. Used for electricity generation.

Source: Energy Information Administration

The history of coal production in West Virginia begins with the wide-spread, large-scale underground mining of bituminous coal. This labor intensive production exploited large numbers of cheap immigrant workers who migrated into the region in the late nineteenth century (Corbin 1981; Lewis 1987; Trotter 1990). Between 1880 and 1920, the population in the southern West Virginia coalfields nearly quintupled from 93,000 to 446,000 (Lewis 1993: 300). Its geographic proximity to population centers in the east was important to industrialization in the United States, both in supplying labor to the coal industry and energy to urban centers. There was a geographic

consolidation of capital, labor, and resources that situated central Appalachia socio-ecologically within a developing world-economy organized under an emergent U.S. hegemony.

As the principal source of coal, West Virginia was central to providing the coal that generated seventy-seven percent of the United States' energy during the late 19th and early 20th century (Long 1991). The organization of production at this time occurred using a room and pillar method with two people involved in the extraction of coal. This form of production allowed miners to know the sights, sounds, and scent of the mine, the 'feel' of the mine, and was facilitated by a sufficient level of independence that permitted miners to assess risks themselves (Goodrich 1925; Dix 1988; Andrews 2008). Miners' intimate knowledge of the mountain enabled them to anticipate dangers such as damp, cave-ins, floods, and other hazards.⁴ Miners' relationship to the earth they worked with occurred through the interface of the tools of the trade, enabling them to understand the tacit qualities of the mountains they mined. While laboring for companies with production quotas, miners had the autonomy from oversight to work with nature to extract coal while maintaining their personal safety (Amsden and Brier 1977; Simon 1980; Dix 1988). This organization of production quickly changed with the mechanization of the mines in the 1930s.

The socio-ecological organization of production in the region, both underground and on the surface was dramatically altered with the emergence of mechanization in the coalfields. Mechanization emerged to increase the rate of extraction and as a means of controlling labor (Dix 1988). Inside the mines, miners no longer had control over production as mining companies replaced workers with machinery. Machines such as the undercutting machine delivered 200 picks per minute at the face of a coal seam, doing the work of tens if not hundreds of men employed by mining companies (Long 1991). The machinery eroded worker autonomy since workers were no longer owners of their own tools. Further, the noise of the machinery eliminated an important form of knowledge that kept miners safe. This period saw employment in the mines decline as production skyrocketed (Perry 1984; Maggard 1994). Later, the introduction of the continuous miner in West Virginia eliminated thousands of jobs, with employment dropping from 127,304 in 1950 to 40,513 in 1970 (U.S. Bureau of Census 1950 and 1970; cited in Lewis 1993). The socio-ecology of hand mining was exhausted as industrialization proceeded apace and mechanization facilitated high rates of extraction that removed large numbers of workers from the mines.

The reorganization of socio-ecological relations meant capital controlled more of the production process and people had less control over their labor and livelihood. Above ground, coal companies gained control over the region through a consolidation of land ownership, either directly or through land-holding companies (Morrill and Wholenberg 1971; Bradshaw 1992). "Syndicates of northeastern bankers and industrialists accumulated vast tracks of coal lands by

⁴ Damps were areas where gases and vapors would collect due to lack of ventilation in the mines. Three types of damp existed. Firedamp where methane concentrated and caught fire when mixed with five percent oxygen. Whitedamp was the least common and consists of carbonic oxide gas concentrates after a firedamp explosion or from routine blasting during mining. Blackdamp is an atmosphere deficient in oxygen and was common in the unventilated mines. See: Long 1991.

reorganizing and consolidating numerous small-holdings into fewer large ones” (Lewis 1993: 300). Small landowners sold their land for fifty cents or one dollar an acre, were the subject of legal traps, and others signed broad form deeds that allowed companies to extract “by any means desired” (Gaventa 1978; Reece 2005; Bell and York 2010). Coal companies came to own 90% of the land in four of the five counties with the most coal (Appalachian Land Ownership Taskforce 1983).

With the majority of land under the ownership of coal companies, companies were able to foster worker dependency on the mines, as subsistence agriculture was largely replaced by company-owned coal camps far from population centers that had the civic liberties afforded “ordinary urban centers” (Gaventa 1980: 86; Lewis 1993; Maggard 1994). This made workers dependent on the mine for a job as well as everyday needs: company-run stores only accepted ‘scrip’, a form of currency each mining company issued in lieu of actual money (Gaventa 1980; Bradshaw 1992). Mechanization meant the decline of real wages and exacerbated poverty through the forced use of company stores and their unique scrip in the coal towns, where prices were frequently twice as high as outside the camps (Fishback 1986; Lockard 1998; Cook 2000; Andrews 2008; Bell and York 2010). This period is marked by an organization of socio-ecological relations that places power definitively within the hands of the coal companies. This power extended over the bodies of women whose coerced sexual labor was known as *esau scrip*. This form of scrip found women reducing their family’s debt or obtaining food through sexual relations with company men, whether from the town store or mine bosses (Kline 2011). The totalizing control companies had over workers generated immense profits and fueled the industrialization of the United States that eventually manifested in its hegemony of the post-World War II world-economy (Wheeler 1976; Simon 1980; Podobnik 2006). Whether above ground or below, workers were losing control over production during this period.

Facing a loss of control over the labor process, unions emerged in the 1930s after a prolonged struggle with the state and mining companies (Gaventa 1980). Unions were a way for miners to gain partial control over their work and the negative health effects of the profession after losing their autonomy in the mines. The mechanization of the mines generated a socio-ecological rift between miners and the work they did. This rift meant a loss of autonomy and of knowledge of the mountain. The shift from underground hand mining where workers had a tacit knowledge of the mountains to mechanized extraction and the loss of that knowledge meant facing new dangers in the mines and the near total control of the coal towns. In response to these forces, workers organized. The culmination of the tensions surrounding the right to unionization manifested in the Battle for Blair Mountain in West Virginia in 1921.

The Battle for Blair Mountain was the second largest civil uprising in U.S. history, second only to the civil war (Blizzard 2004; Shogan 2004). Over 10,000 miners stood their ground against coal company mercenaries over a five day period. The Battle for Blair Mountain was one of the most important events in U.S. labor history, bringing the United Mine Workers of America’s (UMWA) fight for human rights to the coalfields. Miners were specifically concerned with the right to organize, political representation, prohibition of blacklisting, and making sure

that the check weighman (the person responsible for weighing the coal tonnage pay rate) was from the union and not the company (Dix 1977; Blizzard 2004). There was a significant decline in union organizing in the aftermath of the Battle for Blair Mountain but just over a decade later unionization gained ground. The struggle was enacted with the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act, or the New Deal, in 1933 that for the first time protected workers' rights to unionize (Bradshaw 1992).

Through the booms and busts of the 1930s to the 1960s and the great migration out of Appalachia, the union remained an important organizing mechanism for miners and communities in the socio-ecology of the coalfields. When Miners for Democracy emerged in the late 1960s, the union had been colonized by corrupt leaders answering to the coal companies. Miners for Democracy were an organized front that challenged entrenched political control over the union (Clark 1981). Miners for Democracy sought to regain control over the union, ousting corrupt leaders and replacing them with rank-and-file members of the union (Brisbin 2002). In this effort, they were successful in securing benefits for Black Lung and the diseases' management (Chomsky and Montrie 2012). Here we begin to see a struggle playing out between miners and a concern for their health on the one hand and the companies' maneuvers attempting to undermine financial responsibility to those miners. The socio-ecological dynamic revolves around the health and safety of miners and their ability to confront capitalist power.

Neoliberal Extractions and the Exhaustion of Socio-Ecological Relations in Central Appalachia

The 1970s saw the globalization of the coal industry through restructuring around global coal markets, internal consolidation and mergers that formed energy and mining conglomerates (Perry 1984; Seidman 1990; Mitchell 2011). For example, Gulf Oil Company acquired Pittsburgh and Midway Coal Company and Conoco merged with Consolidation Coal Company (Martin 1981). Historically the coal industry had been limited by transportation costs associated with this low-value bulky commodity (Pomeranz 2000; Podobnik 2006; Mitchell 2011). Newly created conglomerates consolidated to boost economies of scale in the extractive industries both in terms of price and return on investment (Perry 1984). Since the 1970s, there has been a doubling in the international trade of coal that has been facilitated by rising oil prices and the increasing the use of sea-shipment for transporting coal (Ellerman 1995). From 1960 to 1990 coal experienced its most dramatic globalization, with seaborne trade increasing from 145 billion ton-miles in 1960 to 1,849 billion ton-miles in 1990 (Ciccantell and Bunker 2002). The transformation of the coal industry through globalization meant that coal could be shipped throughout the world and was now competing internationally rather than regionally. Appalachian coal was at least partially insulated from these globalizing conditions due to its high quality metallurgical coal used in steel production. However, new strategies of extraction were essential for the industry to compete and internal conditions in Appalachia were implicated in the exhaustion of the socio-ecological

conditions of mechanized production that led to the scaling up of surface mining in the form of mountaintop removal mining.

The exhaustion of the socio-ecological relations in the coalfields was at its nadir in the 1970s. The world-economy was in crisis due to rising oil prices and stagflation (Harvey 2005). Within the coalfields, the crisis of profitability was due to challenges from miners and new regulations on the industry. These challenges led to the reorganization of coal production in central Appalachia in the form of extensive surface mining. The introduction and expansion in the use of mountaintop removal mining dramatically changed the socio-ecological relations in central Appalachia. This form of mining uses explosives to literally blow the top of a mountain away to expose coal seams, while overburden (soil and rock) is pushed into surrounding valleys (see Figure 3).⁵ Thousands of miles of streams and waterways have been buried, causing changes in watersheds that result in flooding (EPA 2005). Water, soil, and air contamination arise from the toxic chemicals used in blasting operations and the release of heavy metals naturally present in the earth.

The implementation of the United States' first environmental policies such as the National Environmental Protection Act (1970) and the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency (1970) emerged at the same time mountaintop removal was initiated in West Virginia. The unexpected effect of 1970s environmentalism was a surge in policies that inadvertently promoted the larger-scale mechanization and use of surface mining. The Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969 as well as state and federal surface mining laws imposed new requirements on underground operations such as inspections, training, and surveillance in an effort to reduce coal dust and increase ventilation (Perry 1984; Ellerman 1995). New regulations meant that coal companies had to internalize the costs associated with the health and safety consequences of underground coal mining.

Coupled with new regulations of underground mining was the federal government's channeling of funds towards the mechanization of the coal industry in the 1960s war on poverty that created the Appalachian Regional Commission (Ziliak 2012).⁶ Together these factors pushed the industry towards the large scale use of surface mining, which minimized the health and safety issues present in underground mining. The Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965 commissioned a *Study of Strip and Surface Mining in Appalachia* (Udall 1966) that justified the use of strip mining in the name of development, and dismissed its negative environmental impacts by claiming that reclamation of sites would make them viable for future uses in agriculture, industry, recreation, and commerce.⁷ Development ideology of the time saw nature as an interchangeable entity where a dynamic mountain ecosystem could be destroyed through

⁵ The typical blast on an Appalachian strip mine is ten times the 4000 pounds of ammonium nitrate (mixed with fuel oil) used in the Oklahoma City bombing (Reece 2005).

⁶ The Appalachian Regional Commission received federal funds for infrastructure development and innovations in the coal and timber industries in addition to social safety nets and early education.

⁷ Reclamation of abandoned strip mines has been partial at best. Companies are responsible for setting aside money as a bond for reclamation. In most cases, coal companies reseed newly barren landscape, in which few trees are able to regrow (Burns 2007).

the removal of soil, flora, and fauna and turned into a site for economic investment. Although the Appalachian Regional Commission study (1964) highlighted the varying degrees of environmental destruction associated with surface mining, it simplified nature into something that can be easily managed by humans and failed to see complex ecological relations that sustained life in the region.

During this period, the coal industry faced a crisis of profitability that was resolved through the help of grants and loans associated with the Appalachian Regional Commission's objective of generating sustained economic development. In the 1970s the U.S. steel industry was in decline and increasing competition from international markets that led to an overall decline in demand for coal (Yarrow 1990). These conditions pressured companies to transform the coal industry of the central Appalachia. Strategies employed by companies included mechanization, lobbying for fewer environmental and safety regulations on the industry, subleasing to smaller coal operators, and the introduction of production bonuses (Yarrow 1990). The culmination of these strategies was the introduction of mountaintop removal coal mining.

The first mountaintop removal (MTR) mine began operating at the Bullpush Mine in 1970 in West Virginia (Burns 2007). The practice became generalized in the 1980s after the passage of Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA). SMCRA effectively legalized the destruction caused by strip mining by recognizing mountaintop removal as an approved mining technique and thereby not requiring special approval for MTR operations (Montrie 2003). Further, contradictory definitions of 'fill material' in the Clean Water Act led operators to assume in their favor, that they needed a general permit rather than a more stringent one (Copeland 2013). In 2002 with pressure from the coal industry the Bush Administration redefined mining waste as 'fill' to allow the coal industry to fill in valleys and waterways with the overburden of surface mining from MTR (Devine 2004; Burns 2007; Shapiro 2010; Chomsky and Montrie 2012).

For labor, the use of mountaintop removal spelled defeat for the United Mine Workers of America. In 1984 one company, A.T. Massey, refused to sign the UMWA's national contract negotiated through the Bituminous Coal Operators' Association (BCOA). The BCOA is an institution charged with mediating relations between coal operators and miners. The UMWA and coal companies had historically both agreed to the conditions of the contract. When A.T. Massey refused to sign the contract negotiated through the BCOA, it effectively signified that they were no longer willing to work with the union. A.T. Massey then proceeded to buy out union mines in southern West Virginia only to close them and later re-open them as non-union mines (Brisbin 2002). Frequently these mines employed the same supervisors and overseers. Massey proceeded up and down the Coal River Valley of southern West Virginia buying up union mines, closing them down, and later reopening to a non-union workforce. The consequence of Massey's union-busting was the diffusion of these practices to other coal companies and a broad defeat of the union.

The union was the backbone of the communities of central Appalachia and with the breaking of the union, communities no longer had strong unified leadership to represent their

interests. Historically the workers were situated in an antagonistic relationship to companies, but during this period the union sided with the companies by supporting mountaintop removal practices in an effort to save jobs and retain the benefits of a union (Burns 2007; Chomsky and Montrie 2012). As mountaintop removal became entrenched, employment in the coalfields

Figure 2. Mountaintop Removal vs Non-Mountaintop Removal

	Life Expectancy change: 1997-2007	Deaths from Cancer per 100,000: 1999-2007	Deaths from Chronic Cardio. Disease per 100,000: 1999-2007	Poverty Rate (%): 2010	Population Change (%): 1980-2010
U.S.	1.51	165	201	15.3%	36.3%
MTR-Counties					
Boone	-1.15	220	265	19%	-19.2%
Fayette	0.5	203	246	23%	-20.4%
Lincoln	-0.46	214	272	24%	-8.5%
Logan	-0.82	239	293	22%	-27.5%
McDowell	-0.73	218	326	34%	-55.5%
Mingo	-0.6	224	306	24%	-28.3%
Clay	.44	230	218	26%	-16.8%
Raleigh	1.02	167	228	18%	-9.3%
Wyoming	-1.21	199	308	20%	-33.8%
Non-MTR Counties					
Barbour	0.58	171	257	18%	-0.5%
Brooke	-0.12	168	226	15%	-22.6%
Doddridge	0.52	173	271	21%	9.8%
Gilmer	.41	175	256	29%	3.5%
Marshall	1.16	168	241	17%	-20.4%
Monongalia	0.81	165	216	22%	27.6%
Ritchie	-0.08	175	298	20%	-8.8%
Taylor	0.89	173	256	20%	1.8%
Wood	.93	162	289	16%	-7.2%

Source: *The Human Cost of Coal* ilovemountains.org

dramatically declined. “The union work force in that area (West Virginia and Virginia) has shrunk from approximately 58,000 in 1980 to 17,200 in 1987...Employment here has been particularly hard hit, shrinking by 83 percent in the past decade” (Yarrow 1990: 39). Overall

“between 1979 and 2003 more than half the regional [Appalachian] mine workforce was ‘wiped out’” (Moody 2007: 70). Company efforts to break the union included paying non-unionized workers higher wages in a precarious moment when labor was already suffering from unstable coal markets and a move towards less labor intensive production.

The organizational structure of MTR has expanded the scale and impact of mining and dramatically altered socio-ecological relations in the coalfields. According to a 2009 study by Appalachian Voices (2009), surface mining has disrupted over 1.2 million acres of land in central and southern Appalachia. Of the nine counties in West Virginia with the most MTR activity, seven had a declining population of between 16.8 and 55.5 percent from 1980-2010 (see Figure 2). Declining employment, the depopulation of the coalfields, the breaking of the UMWA, the elimination/rewriting of important regulatory measures, and the geographic management of MTR such that highways obscure the reality of the landscape and keep the scale and impact of mining hidden from the eyes of those who might have political power are all important elements of the socio-ecological relations of MTR’s organizational structure. The geographical management of MTR means that West Virginia’s citizens living outside southern WV are not fully aware of the extent of disruption associated with MTR mining.

Figure 3. Mountaintop Removal Operation



Courtesy: ilovemountains.org

Technologies of mass extraction (see Figure 3) used in mountaintop removal mining include thousands of pounds of explosives, machinery costing over twenty-five million dollars, and massive coal trucks that transport illegally overweight loads of coal.⁸ With thirty years of mountaintop removal in central Appalachia, thick coal seams have become scarce, and the economic viability of MTR practices is in crisis. The exhaustion of this organization of production is a product of the over-productive power of the extractive technologies and the underproduction of coal through geological time. Initial windfalls from mountaintop removal where fewer than 10 miners could extract the coal from a single mountain is giving way to a paucity of mountains with sufficient coal seams to justify the use of the practice.

Widespread use of MTR reflects global conditions of production in a neoliberal period where time and space are diminishing in significance as technology and transportation networks advance. The expectation of this “annihilation of space by time” situates each region in a global network of socio-ecological relations that coerce regions into specializing in their comparative advantage commodity (Harvey 1990). In central Appalachia, coal is the commodity in which the region is comparatively advantaged. Coal reserves are being relatively exhausted as time and space contract and coal from the Powder River Basin in Wyoming challenges the supremacy of Appalachian coal. Further challenges include the emerging sector of natural gas, which is promoted as a cleaner burning substitute for coal in electricity production.

Policy provisions seeking to reduce carbon dioxide, sulfur, and mercury emissions by recent administrations have pressured the coal industry to locate new reserves that burn more cleanly. Appalachian coal has a higher sulfur content, and the industry is reluctant to spend money on emissions technology and green innovations. Thus, the Powder River Basin has emerged as a competitive region where sulfur content is lower (Bell and York 2010). A significant shift occurred with the passage of revisions to the Clean Air Act in 1990, which limited sulfur emissions from coal-fired power plants and has since boosted Powder River Basin coal demand by 6% annually (Learn 2012). Further, railroad networks were needed to bring coal from the Powder River Basin to market and several capacity expansions have brought coal as far east as Massachusetts (Goodell 2006; Union Pacific 2006). The capacity limitations of the railroads attenuated the transition away from Appalachian coal. By 2011, Wyoming coal accounted for 20% of US coal output while all of central Appalachia’s coal production accounted for only 17% (EIA 2013). Despite being sub-bituminous coal, Wyoming coal’s lower sulfur content makes it a better option for electricity production given rising environmental standards on coal-fired power plants. These favorable socio-ecological conditions make operating costs in the Powder River Basin significantly less than in central Appalachia. In Figure 4, we show operating costs for Arch Coal, demonstrating the significant cost savings of extraction in the Powder River Basin.⁹

⁸ The dragline is a 20-story machine that takes years to assemble and can move more than 110 cubic yards of earth in one scoop of the dragline’s bucket (Fox 1999; Burns 2007). Overloaded coal trucks commonly exceed 220,000 pounds with a legal limit of 120,000 pounds (Lexington Herald Leader 2005).

⁹ Arch Coal, Inc. was chosen for its clearly outlined operating costs divided according to the two regions under study in this article.

Figure 4. Operating Costs for Arch Coal

	Central Appalachia	Powder River Basin
2005	\$43.32	\$7.30
2006	\$46.10	\$8.67
2007	\$44.34	\$9.35
2008	\$50.08	\$10.28
2009	\$55.38	\$11.43

Source: Arch Coal, Inc. Annual Reports

In electricity production, Powder River Basin coal is definitively cleaner burning than coal from central Appalachia. More steam coal (the type used in electricity production) is needed overall when using sub-bituminous coal but the vast quantity of coal extracted in the Powder River Basin has led to a decline in demand for steam coal from central Appalachia (McIlmoil et al 2013). The Powder River Basin is the largest reserve of sub-bituminous coal in the United States and has thick coal seams of as much as 200 feet (EPA 2004). Further, the relatively flat landscape's surface makes Wyoming coal easier to access through large-scale surface mining and transport. The socio-ecological conditions of production in Wyoming, the largest producer of coal since 1986, make labor productivity much higher than in central Appalachia (where labor productivity has been declining). In 2011 Wyoming had only 234 underground miners, out of a total mining force of 7039 (EIA 2012). Compare this with West Virginia's larger labor force and several times smaller production capacity (see Figure 5). The flat landscape of Wyoming and railway competition contributes to lower transportation costs as compared with West Virginia's mountainous terrain and relatively high transportation costs (Goodell 2006; Baruya 2007; International Energy Agency 2011). Conditions in Wyoming thus favor the movement of production away from West Virginia and central Appalachia, providing further evidence of the relative exhaustion of central Appalachia.

Figure 5. Coal Employment and Production 2008

	Employees	Wages in millions	Underground Production*	Surface Production	Total Coal Production
West Virginia	20,454	\$1516.11	88,369	69,409	157,778
Wyoming	6843	\$529.14	3501	464,143	467,664

*thousand short tons

But central Appalachia remains integral to domestic and international coal production, reworking its location in the capitalist world-ecology. Just as anthracite's relative exhaustion in Pennsylvania in the late 19th century saw the shift in coal production to lower energy content bituminous coal in central Appalachia, high sulfur content bituminous coal of central Appalachia is being largely substituted for sub-bituminous coal from Wyoming coal for use in electricity

production. As steam coal production declines in central Appalachia, met coal (used in metallurgy) has emerged as the primary type of coal produced there. International demand for met coal, which burns evenly and maintains a high temperature needed in the production of steel, has propped up the coal industry of central Appalachia. West Virginia exported 45.5 million short tons of met coal in 2011 (McIlmoil et al 2013). This accounts for nearly a third of West Virginia's total coal production.

China's market dominance in demand for coal is significant in determining Appalachian coal prices and volumes (Kasey 2012). China imported nearly 70 million short tons of metallurgical coal in 2011 but has recently shown signs of a waning economy (Sewell 2012). As China's economy falters, market demand for steel is declining. Chinese demand for met coal was down by fifty percent in 2012. Appalachian coal prices fluctuate strongly with international prices since Appalachia competes with global suppliers (International Energy Agency 2011). As the shockwaves of China's economic downturn made their way to central Appalachia, the coal industry was forced to reorganize in order to remain globally competitive. "Understanding their [railroad's] interdependency with Appalachian coal and a strong export market, at the end of November both CSX and Norfolk Southern railroads announced they would cut rail tariffs by approximately 15 percent to help exports of metallurgical coal remain competitive" (Sewell 2012).

The exhaustion of the coalfields of central Appalachia is further marked by declining labor productivity, despite high levels of production and record low levels of employment. With rising coal prices and international demand for met coal, it is still feasible to continue using MTR in central Appalachia with declining labor productivity (McIlmoil et al 2013). However, international coal prices are stagnating as the Chinese economy falters (International Energy Agency 2011). Labor productivity peaked in central Appalachia in 2000 and has been declining since (McIlmoil et al 2013). Declining labor productivity marks the relative exhaustion of the organizational structures surrounding the most recent phase of the current ecological regime. As these organizational structures reached their limits, new socio-ecological relations governed by conditions of the world-economy have shifted the centrality of Appalachian coal, the specific type of coal produced, and geography of coal consumption.

Conclusion

We have provided a socio-ecological analysis of the webs of social and ecological relations occurring in the coalfields of the United States. Over time, the relative costs and benefits of particular modes of production are constituted by natural resources limits and other ecological constraints as well as by the social and economic factors that are extra-local in nature. There has been a correlating increase in the technological capacity of coal production as the world-economy expands. Mountaintop removal's dragline technology increased the scale of extraction in Appalachia but has recently run up against declining labor productivity. Further, competing regions and energies influenced a shift in production to regions with thicker seams of

cleaner burning coal that is easily transported across a relatively flat landscape. The biogeophysical aspects of coal production, paired with the socio-ecology of the capitalist system have pushed the coal commodity frontier towards the Powder River Basin while leaving behind a scarred landscape. The terrain of West Virginia is being leveled as metallurgical coal continues being produced for predominantly transnational markets in East Asia. We have found that while the major coal producing region of the United States has shifted, Appalachian coal's relative exhaustion has been tempered by specialization in metallurgical coal and favorable global market conditions.

While historical research on the coal fields focuses on labor and contemporary research largely focuses on environmental destruction, we have made the case for integrating the social and ecological components of coal extraction in central Appalachia by highlighting the ecological elements surrounding extractive labor historically and the global conditions surrounding the biogeophysical conditions of contemporary coal production. The interweaving of human and extra-human natures into an organizational structure of extraction eventually reached its limit, requiring a reorganization of these socio-ecological relations that would free capital for further expansion. As labor declined in the centrality of coal exploitation, the socio-ecological relations in the coalfields shifted to become more centered on globalized markets.

The viability of coal in West Virginia's future is under debate as labor productivity decreases and more effort is required to extract lower quality coal seams. We have argued that as this exhaustion occurs, the energy frontier is moving to new regions. The Powder River Basin has emerged as the predominant region of coal extraction. It has been the largest producer of coal by a factor of more than three. The significance of this shift cannot be underestimated. However, competitive energies have recently become economically viable. Natural gas is increasingly used in the production of electricity in the United States. A detailed analysis of natural gas in relation to central Appalachia is beyond the scope of this paper, and in the future will provide further breadth to the current subject of inquiry.

In focusing on the transformations in the coalfields from a world-ecological perspective, we have attempted to analyze human and extra-human natures as part of a dialectical relation. In focusing on central Appalachia, we constructed an artificial boundary around a region in order to emphasize events occurring in a place and the conditions of the world-economy so as to highlight the material processes that generate exhaustion and transformation in the energy sector more broadly. In doing so, many aspects of the socio-ecological relations of the coalfields remain outside the scope of this article. Further research on the informal economies, subsistence practices, and reproductive aspects of coal communities is needed to highlight the struggles of resistance and resilience among the peoples of the coalfields and in what ways they contribute to capitalist socio-ecological processes.

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INTRODUCTION:
REVIEW SYMPOSIUM ON VIVEK CHIBBER'S *POSTCOLONIAL THEORY AND THE SPECTER OF CAPITAL*

Ho-fung Hung

Department of Sociology
Johns Hopkins University
hofung@jhu.edu

Without any doubt, Vivek Chibber's *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* is a bomb. Through the critique of the foundational works of the Indian Subaltern Studies group, Chibber's questioning pierces right into the anti-universalism core of Subaltern Studies and the postcolonial enterprise. Focusing on the historically and empirically grounded works of Ranajit Guha and Dipesh Chakrabarty, Chibber juxtaposes their interpretation of European and Indian histories to his own interpretation, claiming that their case against Enlightenment universalism was premised on erroneous historiography.

In this symposium, I put together five commentaries on *The Specter of Capital* from diverse disciplinary and geographical perspectives, together with Chibber's response. The debate between Chibber and the defenders of postcolonialism is too important to be confined to scholars concerned about the future of postcolonialism as a fashionable paradigm in certain humanities and social science disciplines. This debate is, in fact, a continuation of the long-drawn debate between the Marxists and post-structuralists, or the modernists and the postmodernists. It is also closely connected to the future of progressive politics in the global North and South.

While Foucault and many poststructuralists accused the universal rationalism of Enlightenment in Europe of fostering many disasters and massacres in the twentieth century, Habermas (1981) asserts that the poststructuralist forfeit of universal rationalism, as well as the poststructuralist prioritization of the aesthetics and the particular, is conducive to fascist politics. It is noteworthy that Foucault, in the last years of his life, had become an admirer of Khomeini's Iranian Revolution (Afary and Anderson 2005). It is equally not surprising that many statist and ultra-nationalist intellectuals in today's China can comfortably combine the views of Foucault, Edward Said, and Carl Schmidt (as the Nazi legal theorist and the "crown jurist of the Third Reich") in their defense of Third World authoritarianism against the "Western hegemonic ideology" of bourgeois democracy.

The discussion in this symposium focuses on the historiography and theoretical issues raised by *The Specter of Capital*. The epistemological and ontological clarification in this symposium will help build a foundation for our deliberation on the political – how should public intellectuals choose between uncompromising universalism and uncompromising particularism, and if so, what kinds of universalism and particularism? Is there any virtue and possibility in looking for a middle ground? These questions are of utmost importance for those of us who see theory as not only a tool for understanding the world, but also one for changing it.

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ON THE ARTICULATION OF MARXIST AND NON-MARXIST THEORY IN COLONIAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

George Steinmetz

Department of Sociology

University of Michigan

geostein@umich.edu

Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital is an important book on a topic of major importance for all of the human and social sciences. The book's implications reach far beyond Chibber's critique of subaltern studies, which is his most obvious focus. Chibber's overarching argument is twofold: capitalism *does* universalize itself to the colonial and postcolonial world, but at the same time, capitalism *does not* permeate or encompass all other aspects of social practice. As it stands, this is already an important argument for social theory generally and not just for analysts working on former colonies like India. The crisis of what used to be called western Marxism led to two main responses among Marxists. While many simply abandoned Marxism, becoming "post-Marxist,"¹ others became "neo-orthodox," refusing to acknowledge the autonomy of any social practices from capitalism.² Chibber's position is closer to the more nuanced positions of the "regulationist" school;³ it is also compatible with a neo-historicist critical realism⁴ that combines an *ontology* of emergent causal powers with an anti-essentialist *epistemology* according to which historically varying conjunctures of causal mechanisms interact in contingent, often unpredictable ways to produce empirical events. The fact that Chibber's book's packaging suggests an all-out assault on anyone who would dare to deviate Marxist orthodoxy does not square with the actual content of the book.

Chibber's book is also framed as a critique of Subaltern colonial historiography. Here again, the book's framing does not provide an accurate sense of the directions in which Chibber's thinking takes him. Many of Chibber's specific arguments are broadly consistent with the path-breaking work of the founder of Subaltern Studies, Ranajit Guha.

Chibber's argument restated

Chibber's book is presented as a critique of postcolonial theory. This is very misleading. The leading postcolonial theorists, including Edward Said (1978, 1993), Gayatri Spivak (1988, 1998), Homi Bhabha (1994), and Leela Gandhi (2006), are barely mentioned here.⁵ Also missing are postcolonial theory's adopted predecessors, such W.E.B. Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire and Albert Memmi, or its philosophical antecedents, including Hegel, Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger. Postcolonial theory started and remains most firmly embedded in the humanities,

¹ E.g. Laclau, E. & Mouffe, C. 1985. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. Verso, London.

² E.g. Postone, M. 1993. *Time, Labor and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

³ E.g. Jessop, R. 2008. "Zur Relevanz von Luhmanns Staatstheorie und von Laclau und Mouffes Diskursanalyse für die Weiterentwicklung der marxistischen Staatstheorie" in Joachim Hirsch, John Kannakulam, and Jens Wissel, eds., *Der Staat der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*. (Frankfurt: Nomos), pp. 157-179.

⁴ On neo-historicist social epistemology see my "Charles Tilly, historicism, and the critical realist philosophy of science," *American Sociologist* 41, 4 (2010), pp. 312-336; on critical realism in this context see my "Critical Realism and Historical Sociology," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40, 1 (1998), pp. 170-186.

⁵ For an excellent overview see Gandhi (1998).

not the social sciences or history. The two main strands of postcolonial theory have focused on questions of the colonial presence within ostensibly noncolonial cultural texts and practices, on the ambivalences of colonized subjectivity and colonial forms of rule, and on the ways colonizing ideas have prepared the ground for conquest and foreign rule. None of these themes shows up in Chibber's book (Steinmetz 2006). Instead the book's exclusive focus is the Subaltern School of history, which has very different origins even if there has been a subsequent rapprochement. A more accurate title for this book would be something like *The Subaltern School of History and the Specter of Capital*.

That said, Chibber does make a highly coherent argument, one that can be restated in four main theses:

1. Capitalism universalizes itself both geospatially and within a given social formation.
2. Capitalism is entirely compatible with political despotism, labor coercion, and the production and reproduction of cultural difference and diversity.
3. Although capital may "spread[] to all corners of the world, ... this does not mean that it manages to subordinate all social relations to its particular rules of reproduction" (p. 217).
4. Although "it is surely problematic to see capital lurking behind every social phenomenon," it is no less problematic "to deny its salience when it is in fact a relevant causal agent" (p. 123).

Chibber's analysis of the Subaltern School

In addition to these general theoretical arguments, Chibber shows that there are three key arenas in which the Subaltern School claims that Indian history differs from Western history: First, they claim that the Indian bourgeoisie failed to become hegemonic; Second, they argue for a unique form of "power relations" in India; and, Third, they argue that India has a unique "political psychology." There are three main historians under discussion here: Ranajit Guha, Partha Chatterjee, and Dipesh Chakrabarty. In this section I will present these three main clusters of ideas and arguments.

I. Capital's mythical universalizing mission

The first argument, associated with R. Guha, is that capital abandoned its putative universalizing hegemonic mission in colonial and postcolonial India. Chibber counters that the bourgeoisie is not inherently liberal or modernizing and that capitalism is not the same thing as political and cultural modernization. Since the two key comparison cases for Guha, Britain and France, did not really have bourgeois revolutions of the idealized sort there is no reason we should expect India to have had them. Indeed, Chibber continues, cultural and political forms of modernization were in some respects more readily forthcoming after the relevant comparable revolution, decolonization, in India than in Western Europe,

This is a very familiar debate for a German historian. The thesis of the German *Sonderweg*, or special path to modernity, asked why Nazism came to power in Germany and not in other advanced industrial countries. The basic answer focused on the deviation of Germany's developmental path from its Western neighbors. German history was seen as having been pushed repeatedly in destructive and anti-democratic directions by a clash between economic modernity and political and cultural backwardness, and this structural disjuncture resulted from the fact that German bourgeois liberalism was underdeveloped in comparison with Britain and France. Like the Indian bourgeoisie, the German bourgeoisie was said to have failed repeatedly to take the

lead in promoting its supposed class interest in liberal democracy, in leading other classes toward that goal. Like the Indian bourgeoisie it failed to suppress the neo-feudal landed nobility, which continued to wield undue influence in politics and culture well into the twentieth century. Another feature of this condition was the so-called “feudalization of the bourgeoisie,” the spread of anti-modern cultural values such as conservative anti-capitalism, anti-urbanism, and “cultural pessimism,” and a non-hegemonic tendency to resort to state violence that is extremely reminiscent of Guha’s diagnosis of the Indian condition.⁶ Guha was relying on a version of Marxist political theory and German history that was demolished by the critics of the *Sonderweg* thesis. Chibber argues convincingly that real capitalism is compatible with a whole range of non-democratic political and cultural conditions, and that there is no normal set of accompaniments to the spread of capitalism. No historian of fascist Europe, Assad’s Syria, or contemporary China should raise an eyebrow at this claim nowadays.

II. Labor discipline, abstract labor, and cultural homogenization

Chibber argues secondly that capitalism is compatible with physical coercion at the point of production and that that it produces and reproduces cultural heterogeneity (or “concrete identities”) among its workers rather than necessarily pushing toward their homogenization. “It is rational for capitalists to dominate labor” in ways that reach far beyond the autonomic, “dull compulsion of economic relations,” as long as violence promises profits (p. 112 ,p. 123). In the West as in the East, capitalism has always relied on physical as well as symbolic domination (p. 123).⁷

Chibber also criticizes the idea that abstract labor leads to cultural homogenization, showing how some postcolonial theorists have conflated these two ideas. “Abstract labor comes clothed in concrete identities,” Chibber concludes (p. 144). Capitalism therefore does not have to dissolve social difference. Even deskilling is not inevitable (*pace* Braverman 1974): new technologies continually generate new skills, even as old industries may suffer from deskilling.

III. History I and History II

My favorite section of the book is the discussion of Chakrabarty’s (2000) *Provincializing Europe* and its critique of Chakrabarty’s concepts of History 1 and History 2. History 1 is the history of modern capital, while History 2 consists of all of the multiple, incommensurable histories that develop according to their own specific logics. Chakrabarty’s implication is that Marxism would collapse all of the multiple histories of different practices into Capital, even though this is true of only the most totalizing, reductionist forms of Marxism. As Chibber notes, “it is surely problematic to see capital lurking behind every social phenomenon” (p. 123). Chibber argues that the “continued salience of archaic power relations, the resort to traditional symbols, the resilience of caste and kin-based political relations, and so forth--all this can be

⁶ David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). Lukács (1973: 41) claimed that the German bourgeoisie from the sixteenth-century onward was “characterized by a servility, pettiness, baseness, and miserabilism” which distinguished it from other European bourgeoisies. See George Steinmetz, “German Exceptionalism and the Origins of Nazism: The Career of a Concept,” in Ian Kershaw and Moshe Lewin, eds., *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 251-284.

⁷ A similar criticism can be made of Bourdieu’s state theory, which twists the stick too far in the direction of symbolic domination. Pierre Bourdieu, *Sur l’état. Cours au Collège de France 1989-1992* (Paris: Seuil, 2012); see George Steinmetz, “État-mort, État-fort, État-empire,” *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 201 (2014), pp. 112-119.

shown to be consistent with the universalizing tendency” of capital (p. 125). When Chibber says a practice is “consistent” this does not mean it is entirely subordinated to or determined by capital.

Chibber summarizes his argument against Chakrabarty in four main points:

- (1) The sheer existence of “History 2” does not mean that capital’s universalization (as defined here) is incomplete (p. 224).
- (2) History 2 is not necessarily the main barrier to History 1, and capitalism may be modified by History 2 in ways that are not “type-transforming” (p. 226).
- (3) Instead, History 1 itself is the main barrier to History 1 (p. 230), or in Marx’s words, the “true barrier to capitalist production is capital itself” -- due to capitalism’s logics of competition and crisis. Workers will always tend to come into conflict with the logic of capital accumulation. This opposition to capitalism within capitalism itself is “the only real source of opposition to capital’s universalization” (p. 233).
- (4) There is no necessary antagonism between History 1 and 2 (p. 233). The “ensemble of social relations in any region need not be subsumed under one set of rules,” and the various practices that comprise the whole can be governed by very dissimilar logics, even as capital universalizes (p. 239).

IV. Six Critiques of Chibber

First, in what is overall an admirably clear and sharply argued book there is a key ambiguity around the question of social crisis or breakdown. If History 1 does not constitute the whole of the society, as Chibber has allowed, why can’t there be instability and breakdown in the rest of society (lumped under History 2)? Some examples of instability and breakdown include the death of states, the breakdown of law and order, warfare, terrorism, dictatorship, fascism, and the demise of entire institutions and fields. Fixated as he is on History 1 and the polemic against Subaltern Studies, Chibber doesn’t pursue his criticism of one of the weakest points in Chakrabarty’s sociology, his lumping of everything *but* capitalism into a single residual category. Marxism already had a more sophisticated sociology than this in the early 1960s, when Althusser reframed the social totality as a loose congeries of relatively autonomous levels, or ten years later when Bourdieu reframed social space in terms of the field of power and a multiplicity of relatively autonomous fields, each one irreducible to the others.⁸

Second, contingency is not the opposite of causal determinism. The idea of conjunctural contingent causality is completely compatible with the approach Chibber has sketched out. If Marxism is construed as a set of underlying powers, tendencies, and structures, then these will combine in contingent ways with one another and with additional causal mechanisms not theorized by Marxism in producing empirical events. Indeed, Marx’s own theory of economic crisis takes this form. There is nothing “fashionable” about the concept of contingency; it is an ontological fact of life in all open systems, natural and social. Repeated patterns or regularities that persist over time and generalize across space are the truly puzzling anomalies.

Third, Chibber raises the question of the limits of compatibility between History 1 and History 2, but he does not take the next step to ask which cultural and political forms might be *incompatible* with capitalism. Presumably he thinks this varies historically. But I am not sure. This topic, once a mainstay of Marxist social theory, needs to be revisited.

⁸ Bourdieu, “Séminaires sur le concept de champ, 1972-1975,” *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 200 (2013), pp. 4–37.

Fourth, the only weak part of Chibber's book concerns the topic of rationality and "political psychology." Guha claimed that the specific forms of colonial rule led to a bifurcation between cultures and repertoires of peasant mobilization and standard modern forms of politics. Chibber's main discomfort with this line of thought has mainly to do with theories of human culture and subjectivity that take seriously the idea that there are multiple forms of rationality--including irrationality--and that motivations are unconscious as well as conscious. These arguments are by no means limited to Subaltern Studies but are in fact one massive alternative pole to Chibber's rationalism in the human sciences. Indeed, sociology even in the United States has tended to lean in the opposite direction from Chibber. Marxism has made alliances with psychoanalysis for a century. There is no *inherent* connection between the idea of multiple forms of rationality or subjectivity and postcolonial theory.

I don't want to say more about this because I think this argument about rationality is not a necessary part of Chibber's arguments about the nature of capitalism. All of Chibber's arguments about the universalization of capital and its compatibility with non-modern or non-liberal forms of culture and politics are compatible with a less rigid model of culture and psychology. Chibber accuses Chatterjee of harboring a neo-Orientalist vision of the Indian peasant, but the supposed irrationalities of the Indian peasant are easily matched by comparable phenomena in Europe. After all, Freud demonstrated pervasive psychic irrationality at the heart of civilized Europe, and his analysis was proven correct not by the events of the 20th century but by current evidence in biological and neurological psychology for the existence of unconscious and irrational mental processes.⁹

In a way this argument doesn't even hinge on the existence of irrational motives but on the very existence of meaning and culture. Chibber is fighting a battle on his own terrain of sociology in the guise of a critique of postcolonial theory. But all serious versions of sociology and philosophy of social science agree that causal mechanisms or causal powers in the social sciences are inherently meaningful or invested with cultural meaning. In the social sciences we have theories of unconscious habitual action generated by something like a habitus. If we adopt instead the language of Weber we could say that there is a multiplicity of ultimate value orientations. Chibber is implicitly defending an entirely unrealistic vision of man as a rational machine.

A fifth point relates to what Chibber calls political form. Oddly, the discussion of political form focuses mainly on the labor process. There is no discussion of the political forms proper in colonial societies—states and empires. And this arena of politics in the narrower sense is one where Chatterjee's analysis has been of exemplary importance. Chibber ignores the ways in which *colonial states* preserved or created political forms such as *tribes*, Princely States, and other indirect rulers, putting limited power in the hands of colonized leaders. Mamdani (1996) argues that the system of Indirect Rule increased levels of coercion in colonial states while limiting the spread of capitalist universalism – not because of the lack of political liberalism but literally by limiting the spread of capitalist economic forms. The "compulsions of market dependence" were sometimes actively suppressed by colonial policies, from British Tanganyika

⁹ Kent C. Berridge and Piotr Winkielman, "What is an Unconscious Emotion? (The Case for Unconscious Liking)," *Cognition and Emotion* 17, 2 (2000), pp. 181-211; Kent C. Berridge, "Pleasure, Unconscious Affect and Irrational Desire," in A.S.R. Manstead, N.H. Frijda, & A.H. Fischer, eds., *Feelings and Emotions: The Amsterdam Symposium* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 43-62; and Piotr Winkielman and Kent C. Berridge, "Unconscious Emotion," *Current Directions in Psychological Sciences* 13, 3 (2004), pp. 120-123.

and Cameroon South Africa to German Polynesia.¹⁰ To put it in more concrete terms: by placing local political power in the hands of chosen tribal leaders, weren't colonial governments in fact doing something quite different from what governments were doing inside Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries? It is as if European revolutions actively propped up the most backwards sectors of the non-capitalist feudal classes. In other words it is not correct that the "continued salience of archaic power relations and so on ... can be shown to be consistent with the universalizing tendency" (p. 125) of capital in *all* times and places. Some "archaic" modes of life were preserved in ways that were antithetical to capitalism's expansion. I am not talking about capitalists using traditional ideologies to dominate their workers, but about colonial states withdrawing potential laborers from capitalist labor markets altogether – literally limiting the spread of capitalist economic forms.

Sixth, Chibber sometimes mirrors the postcolonial terminology he is rejecting. For example, for Chibber Marx is an "Enlightenment thinker" (p. 227). But Marx is more than an Enlightenment thinker. He is also a 19th century social theorist writing in the wake of Hegelian idealism and Romanticism and preserving some aspects of that very different formation. Talcott Parsons, who had studied with Alfred Weber, recognized this, writing that "Marx considered capitalism a definite and specific system of economic organization, marked off sharply in principle from its predecessor and successor in the dialectical process" (1934: 446). Reducing Marx to an Enlightenment thinker is as much of a distortion as Chakrabarty's definition of Historicism as a universalizing teleological social theory, which mirrors Popper's misleading definition. In 19th century Germany, from Savigny to Ranke, and on to Mannheim, Troeltsch, and Meinecke in the 20th, Historicism meant almost precisely the opposite of what Popper said it did, signaling an emphasis on the unique, singular, non-repeated and unprecedented—on the "historical individual," as Rickert and Weber called it.

Conclusion

Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital is a highly stimulating book that not only points out some of the analytic and theoretical deficiencies in *Subaltern History* but also presents a lucid and refreshing take on some classic Marxist issues. Chibber shows how Marx's model of capitalism's universalization can be combined with recognition of the autonomy of many realms of social life from that relentless process. The articulation of Marxism as a regional theory of capitalism with equally autonomous theories of cultural, political, social, and psychic processes is a promising path for the historical social sciences.

¹⁰ I provide evidence of efforts to limit capital's universalization in various colonial contexts in *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). The British and French colonial development policies after WWII were the result of a particular political-economic conjuncture and cannot be seen as the inevitable breakthrough of capital exerting its universalizing power. Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

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BACK TO BASICS? THE RECURRENCE OF THE SAME IN VIVEK CHIBBER'S *POSTCOLONIAL THEORY AND THE SPECTER OF CAPITAL*

Bruce Cumings

Department of History

University of Chicago

Rufus88@uchicago.edu

“Orient and Occident are chalk-lines drawn before us to fool our timidity.”

Nietzsche

I have to begin with a disclaimer: I have never been much interested in postcolonialism. Several reasons explain my inattention, and thus my ignorance: first, even though South Asian studies and East Asian studies are joined in scholarly communion (the Association for Asian Studies) and have in common a flagship journal (the *Journal of Asian Studies*), rarely do we read each other's work—indeed I know much less about South Asia than I do about, say, Latin America, not to mention Europe or the United States. An aggravating element is that so much of “Asian studies” really connotes country studies, given linguistic hurdles that scholars need to jump over to be taken seriously. Second, attempts to reinterpret East Asian history through the lenses of postcolonial theory are few and far between, probably because its most formidable capitalist and imperial power—Japan—has been an avatar of rapid state-planned, architectonic industrialization for well over a century, and both Koreas, Taiwan and China have followed suit. Third, when I did encounter postcolonial scholarship, it was often in a dense, jargon-ridden, impenetrable form (e.g. Homi Bhabha's work), suggesting to me that I might need a second life to master this literature—or maybe I should just move to a different planet. (The exception would be the clarity and brilliance of Dipesh Chakrabarty's work, which I discovered by becoming friends with him.) Last, nothing they or anyone else have written has dissuaded me from a structural perspective—from what they would call “totalizing” theory—in spite of my admiration for the work of Friedrich Nietzsche, Michel Foucault and other poststructuralists.

From the perspective of the last point, India never seemed to fit the grand narratives of modernity. A *locus classicus* for this view would be Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, which spells out three routes to modernity: the liberal, the state-led (or fascist), and the peasant revolution (or communist) route. India conforms to none of these trajectories, and so in his chapter on India, Moore homes in on the idiosyncratic to explain this exception to his rules: religion, ethnicity, caste, i.e., precisely the *difference* that appears in Chakrabarty's work. (A less kind take on this difference would be Immanuel Wallerstein's essay, “Does India Exist?”) Here was a clear goad to scholars of South Asia somehow to explain this aporia, of appearing to stand aside rather than astride the sweep of modern history. So they girded their loins and produced the Subaltern school and postcolonialism—throwing sand in the eyes of all the great modern theories. Their timing was excellent, because if we identify Barrington Moore with the '60s, Wallerstein with the '70s, and Marxism with the modern world from 1848 to 1989, a sudden opening came in the wake of “a period of massive defeats for the Left, all across the world” (Chibber 2013: 295). Or as Ron Inden put it, “Indians are, for perhaps the first time since colonization, showing sustained signs of reappropriating the capacity to represent themselves” (quoted on p. 8).

It follows that there is much for me to like in Vivek Chibber's important book. It rehabilitates a convincing structural perspective, whether in Marxist or liberal form, and unlike

Moore, provides much evidence that India is not so idiosyncratic after all. I am not in a position to judge his empirical comments on, say, Indian labor, since I have not read Chakrabarty's study of jute workers and therefore have little basis for assessing Chibber's critique. But his analysis of the English and French revolutions struck me as cogent; indeed an important theme runs through the book, namely that the bourgeoisie can be progressive and even revolutionary in seeking its own political rights, but generally resists popular or mass movements by other classes to gain the same (e.g. p. 87). He cites the important study by Stephens, Rueschemeyer, and Stephens (1992) *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, to argue that the same sequence is visible in Latin American cases of democratization (147n), and I would say the same about recent democratizations in South Korea, Taiwan, and the stark case of China—presumably a communist country where an enormous middle class is a good bit more intent on its own interests and rights than on coalescing with disenfranchised workers lacking unions, let alone with a few hundred million peasants in the countryside. Chibber is right that global capital is entirely compatible with a variety of repressive regimes.

Chibber's critique of Ranajit Guha's (1998) *Dominance without Hegemony* strikes me as similarly persuasive, at least at the level of how one defines hegemony. Hegemony for Guha means that a ruling class relies less on coercion than on consent, and thereby is able to speak "for all of society" (p. 35). Derived in part from Gramsci, the definition ignores Gramsci's actual situation: sitting in prison in an Italy overtaken by fascism and heavily reliant on coercion. Gramsci meant by hegemony something like the ether that surrounds us, the air we breathe; we do not so much consent to the way in which we are governed, rather we have imbibed certain social, political and cultural conventions more or less from birth, so that we do what we are supposed to do without having to be told, let alone coerced. This is the most formidable kind of power, and it was what Gramsci meant by hegemony. It could be true in Jeffersonian Virginia, or in North Korea. At a more mundane level, it seems clear that a bourgeoisie, whether Western or not, does not need "the active consent of subaltern groups" (p. 35) to maintain its power—although consent is clearly to be preferred.

Chibber is also right that neither Marx nor non-Stalinist Marxists ever assumed that there is a single or universal path toward modernity. He cites Trotsky's theory of uneven and combined development (p. 292), but he could just as easily have recalled Alexander Gerschenkron's non-Marxist analysis of "late" development—namely, that no two industrializations are ever the same, because of idiosyncratic differences in a given country, the timing of "insertion" into competition with previously arrived industrial powers, the opportunity to copy or apply new technologies in pre-industrial settings, and so on. In other words, Gerschenkron found it appropriate to include a host of idiosyncratic differences within his structural theory of industrialization. It is surprising, however, that alongside various golden oldies like Marx, Trotsky, Gramsci and Karl Kautsky, we do not find the names of Karl Polanyi or Immanuel Wallerstein anywhere in this book. This seems to be because Chibber is wedded to a Marxist stance that class struggle is the motive force in history, rather than the circulationist theory found in Polanyi and Wallerstein, namely that capitalism is a system of production for profit in a world market, gaining its initial momentum in the long sixteenth century.

Perhaps the nonappearance of Polanyi and Wallerstein has something to do with another absence: Chibber's book has nary a single mention of the country known as China, yet China's recent experience of hell-bent-for-leather capitalist development is our clearest case of the palpable recurrence of the same—a Chinese version if not of the universalities of capitalism, then at minimum a variant of the state-led industrialization operating in Northeast Asia for at

least 80 years, migrating from Japan to Korea to Taiwan and thence to China. It would be very hard to transfer postcolonial arguments about culture, difference, and idiosyncrasy to any of these countries, and Chibber's critique of the Subaltern understanding of the historical role of the bourgeoisie seems particularly compelling, because in Northeast Asia this class has been brought into being under state auspices (as has the proletariat). And, of course, it is not at all difficult to imagine Marx grinning broadly as global capitalism "batters down all Chinese walls" (from the *Manifesto*, of course).

The reason for China's absence, I would guess, is that its trajectory since 1980 cannot be explained by a theory of class conflict. Chakrabarty's judgment that "there was no class in South Asia comparable to the European bourgeoisie" (quoted on p. 13) is equally true of China. Instead the critical moment came in 1978-79, as China's reform program and its insertion into the world economy (connoted as "opening") coincided with the establishment of Sino-American diplomatic relations; here was the clearest possible example of the hegemonic power welcoming a pariah state back into the fold, on the assumption that the world would shake China for many decades to come, not that China would shake the world; sooner or later it would be captured by the gravity of capitalism.¹

Without belaboring the point, China's experience over the past three decades is entirely compatible with a circulationist conception. I know from many encounters that Wallerstein's theories are considered entirely passé by many prominent social scientists (not to mention being roundly loathed by postcolonial scholars), but I recall sitting on a panel at the 1984 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, as Wallerstein confidently predicted the demise of Soviet and East European socialism, and a subsequent dependency on unified Germany as the central economic power of Europe. I don't recall that he said anything about China, perhaps because he was also enthralled at the time with the idea that Japan would be the avatar of a 21st century world system centered on the Pacific. He wasn't alone in the latter (failed) prediction, but he was quite alone in his (prescient) projections for central and eastern Europe.

Vivek's book has at its base a rigorous theory, one that I largely agree with, but also a kind of diabolical logic: the Subaltern scholars compare the Indian bourgeoisie to an idealized version of the European bourgeoisie; ergo they are Eurocentric in spite of themselves. If Guha's "heroic bourgeoisie" is a bit hard to swallow, can we also say that Chakrabarty's (2000) *Provincializing Europe* is similarly blinkered and uncomprehending about European history while simultaneously "*relentlessly promot[ing] Eurocentrism*" (p. 291)? It would never have occurred to me to say that; instead Chakrabarty's goal is (in Chibber's own words, p. 108) to encourage theories that are "attuned to Indian realities and freed of European assumptions," a new set of categories appropriate to Asian settings. Chakrabarty's sensibility is close to Nietzsche's acerbic reference to "ancient Asia and its protruding little peninsula Europe, which wants by all means to signify as against Asia the 'progress of man'" (2002: 48). That is, Asians not only are subjected to centuries of colonialism, they also have to sit by and listen to a "hyperreal" construct—namely endless justifications not only for European progress (and dominance), but also for their own subjugation and inferiority, with their only way out being an imitative approximation of modernity that can never quite match the European example. This dilemma could hardly be greater; one sees it in the world-historical moment of Japan's attempt to strike directly at the West, in wartime debates that H.D. Harootunian (2002) confronts in his masterful book *Overcome by Modernity*—what would be the meaning of a modernity that has a Japanese essence, one that could overcome the West in every sense of the word? When all is said

and done, this same problem animates the ruling ideology of North Korea (*chuch'e*)—the longest-running antagonist of American hegemony in the world.

Unfortunately Chibber's critique of postcolonialism partakes of a similar presumption, one like that of the colonizer: "one cannot adequately criticize a social phenomenon if one systematically misunderstands how it works" (p. 25). In other words the Indian bourgeoisie is not only "mediocre," as Guha says (p. 49), a pale reflection of the European example, but Guha and Chakrabarty don't understand the European version either, and instead end up not only with an inadvertent Eurocentrism, but even imbibe "the Whig theory of history" (pp. 80-81). (After reading that, somehow I expected to read that Guha and Chakrabarty also supported the invasion of Iraq and were bosom buddies of Dick Cheney.) I don't know Guha's work, but this is a preposterous caricature of Chakrabarty's scholarship.

Through a similar sleight-of-hand, Chakrabarty's insistence on *difference* and its inherent antagonism toward European universals leads him into another dead end, according to Chibber, not to mention a paradoxical reversal: he revives Orientalism—indeed, along with Partha Chatterjee he even revives "nineteenth-century colonial ideology" (p. 176); the Subalternists "promote some of the most objectionable canards that Orientalism ever produced—all in the guise of 'High Theory'" (p. 206). So does Orientalism connote a set of Western representations of Asia, always with a conscious or subconscious intent to measure its difference and its distance from progressive norms, or is it that Orientalism rears its ugly head whenever an Asian insists that his culture, society, history, etc. do not conform to a Western (liberal or Marxist) model? When Chakrabarty "wants the East to have a history of its own" (p. 212), can we call that Orientalism, or can we see in this a self-conscious determination to write history outside of a dominant Western paradigm? By the same logic, one could label Chibber an Orientalist in his insistence that there is only one, true way to understand the development of the modern world.

In the end we return to Nietzsche's aphorism from the essay "Schopenhauer as Educator": "Orient and Occident are chalk-lines drawn before us to fool our timidity" (1983: 128). Chibber's own subjectivity is betrayed by his insistence on capitalizing "East and West," as if we might easily draw a chalk-line, straight or crooked, between a department store in Tokyo or Paris, or a movie theater in Shanghai or New York. In this he is hardly alone: actually-existing Orientalism still occupies the best (Western) minds. Jurgen Habermas, a person whom you might think would know better, privileges the West as the site of the origin of his "public sphere" and its contemporary problematic, as well as its ultimate redemption. He concluded one of his books on "modernity" with this statement: "Who else but Europe could draw from its own traditions the insight, the energy, the courage of vision—everything that would be necessary to strip from the . . . premises of a blind compulsion to system maintenance and system expansion their power to shape our mentality" (1987: 367).

This is by no means an unusual emphasis for Habermas, even if it is unusually blunt; his whole work is imbued with "the claim that the modern West—for all its problems—best embodies" the values of rationality and democracy (White 1995: 9), with a now-evident, now-hidden discourse about modern German history (which I think pushes him toward the privileging of norms of political interaction that emerged in postwar West Germany, but nowhere else in German history), and an apparent utter lack of concern for the non-Western experience, except as a species of occasional counter-hegemonic practice in the "Third World." Thus he shares the same prejudices of his cherished predecessor Max Weber (Habermas is most of all a Weberian), but not Weber's passionate and intelligent comparativist project—and in a time when Weber would certainly recognize his own provincialism, were he still talking about "only in the

West....” But perhaps we better sample the original Weber, what he said then, since we don't know what he would say now:

Only the occident knows the state in the modern sense, with a professional administration, specialized officialdom, and law based on the concept of citizenship.... Only the occident knows rational law.... Furthermore, only the occident possesses science.... Finally, western civilization is further distinguished from every other by the presence of men with a rational ethic for the conduct of life (1981: 312-14).

When we read this, nothing about the postcolonial turn should be surprising; no wonder they all look for the nearest carpet to gnaw. So should we.

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**CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT, STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINT AND HUMAN AGENCY
IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: AN APPRECIATION OF VIVEK CHIBBER'S
*POSTCOLONIAL THEORY AND THE SPECTER OF CAPITAL***

Michael Schwartz

Department of Sociology

Stony Brook University

Michael.Schwartz@stonybrook.edu

Let me start by saying that my biggest fear is that *Post Colonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* will be taken at face value: as a systematic and thorough savaging of Subaltern Studies. Unfortunately, it does fit that description quite perfectly. But for me, it is so much more than that, and not even primarily a critique of the currently hegemonic perspective on postcolonial development. Instead, I see it as a modern analog to Engels' *Anti-Dühring*, which created a kind of negative immortality for Eugen Dühring, now known only through Engels' critique. As Engels said in the introduction to that text, he engaged in such a definitive critique because it "gave me... the opportunity to develop in a positive form my views on questions which are today of wide scientific or practical interest" (1972: 10).

I view Chibber's work as A parallel sort of enterprise. I think the "positive" analysis in *Postcolonial Theory*—that is, Chibber's both original and synthetic portrait of the role of class dynamics and the logic of accumulation in the evolution of the postcolonial world— is so compelling that it will become foundational for a a rich vein of new scholarship that supplants Subaltern Studies. And— because Chibber, like Engels, has chosen this dialectical format as the vehicle for developing and expressing his viewpoint—he may well confer upon Subaltern Studies a Dühring-like negative immortality. His critique is so devastating that long after the key texts of Subaltern Studies are out of print and out of mind, their ideas will be learned and even memorized by the legion of readers of *Postcolonial Theory*.

I want in this essay to call out some of the key components of this "positive" analysis and argue for its value, while calling for Chibber and the rest of us to utilize its strengths, correct its inadequacies, and fully develop its potential as a tool for understanding and challenging the negative dynamics of post-colonial capitalism.

Before leaving the *Anti-Dühring* metaphor, I want to congratulate Chibber on emulating Engels, because the brilliance of this text derives, at least to a considerable degree, from the method of exposition. Each analytic sojourn begins with perfecting the analysis contained in key texts of Subaltern Studies, then moves to a definitive criticism of the perfected argument. During this process, the criticism is leavened by a careful appreciation and absorption of the many positive contributions of postcolonial theorists, with the best elements becoming building blocks for Chibber's (finally delivered) alternate analysis.

The method works beautifully because even brief presentations of the final positive syntheses are instantly grasped and appreciated, because we are attuned—by the detailed scrutiny of the Subalternists—to the key markers that an adequate explanation must address. But this indisputably productive approach also has its problems, because it often results in a recessive under-emphasis on the dynamic elements in Chibber's perspective. This is particularly visible in the concluding chapter, where he devotes six long pages to reviewing the critique and only one short (though luminous) page to his positive analysis (pp. 286-93 vs. p. 285).

Let me illustrate what I think is the problem by tracing his analysis of the origins of structural conflict within postcolonial society (see particularly Chapter 9). After deconstructing the Subaltern Studies argument that such conflict resides and emanates from survivals of pre-existing formations, Chibber then accepts their claim that these non-capitalist formations play an important role in societal dynamics writ large, while showing that they have not been the locus of anti-capitalist resistance. In his crowning analysis—based on evidence drawn not only from the Subaltern theorists themselves, but also the rest of the post-colonial world, Chibber shows that the big conflicts—those that yield (and threaten to yield) major shifts in post-colonial trajectories—emanate from the contradictions within the sectors of postcolonial society that are most fully absorbed into the process of capital accumulation. In perfecting this negative argument, Chibber actually offers an integration of political economic theorizing around state development and the extensive literature on third world revolution, while absorbing the best elements of subaltern studies.

I want to focus on one key moment in Chibber's argument to point towards what I think is a major area that needs further attention. One of the most compelling passages in the book responds to Partha Chatterjee's analysis of the dynamics of peasant mobilization. Chibber concludes:

Chatterjee maintains that the defining element of Indian peasants' agency is their insulation from "bourgeois consciousness," from strategies that prioritize individual interests. Their self-identities issue from their membership in the community, and their basic motivations derive from their sense of obligation to this community. If this is true, however, surely it should also mitigate the internal class differentiation of the peasantry.... The emerging rich peasants acquired the land because their peers fell on hard times.... The wealthier peasants had a choice: they could assist their fellow villagers out of a sense of duty, as members of the community, without seeking personal gain; or they could take advantage of their peer's misfortune and usurp their land, their most precious resource.... For the class of jotedars to have emerged it must be the case that a section of the smallholder community chose the latter course of action. They chose to pursue their *individual interests*. In other words, these smallholders acted on precisely the "bourgeois consciousness" that Chatterjee insists they lacked (p.174).

This precise targeting of a key dynamic in the colonial world—the importation of capital accumulation into peasant society and the class differentiation that follows—allows Chibber to demonstrate that rural conflicts were not "conservative" efforts built on the (already fractured) communal solidarity, but rather expressions of the growing class divisions created by the capitalist invasions.

But, at the same time, Chibber rushes past a crucial point what I think emanates from this insight. As he states in other contexts, the old communalism was not obliterated—but instead transmuted—during this process. Such pre-capitalist formations do not disappear; they adapt into the capitalist structure, creating a kind of mutual evolution in which the outcome structure will be unique in each country, and quite different between and within regions (see pp. 132-4).

For many pre-capitalist formations, this adaptation has little consequence for the outcome dynamics, but surely this communalism—and the shape of its altered role in the capitalized

structure—is a causal vector in the resulting class dynamics. Put simply: what becomes of the communalistic ethos that Subaltern Studies valorizes? It arrives in the new formation in a variety of forms, and Chibber (and those of us who take up his argument) must offer an understanding of the dynamics that determine the outcome formation. Even more important is to codify and understand the varying structural trajectories characterizing the various outcome formations.

I want to offer one avenue of analysis regarding the afterlife of communalism in postcolonial society. From Chibber's argument, we see one regularity that occurs wherever rural capital accumulation is set in motion: the creation of self-aggrandizing rich peasants who have abandoned (much of) the communalistic ethos. But what of the poor (and soon becoming landless) peasants? It seems to me that there is considerable work to be done to understand the circumstances under which they abandon the communalistic ethos and organize against the rich peasants, and those circumstances when they continue to embrace communalism and ally themselves with the jotedars (despite their growing contradictions of interest). I am particularly taken by the contrast between, say, Vietnam and China, which had sustained insurrections of peasants against the rural elites, and the American south, where southern tenants most often joined movements led by the same rural elites who had taken their land and/or exploited their labor. For me, we are sorely in need of an analysis that will allow us to understand what sorts of absorption processes—and related dynamics—yield one or another of these modalities. In India, it would appear that both modalities have developed in different regions and different times, and careful scrutiny using Chibber's analytic tools could well unravel this critical dynamic.

The various strands in Chibber's argument are woven together, and much is lost when we disentangle them. But we need to do so anyway, because leaving them undifferentiated conceals some of the most promising yet unexplored insights. Consider, for example, Chibber's treatment of what he calls "the real engine of democratization" (p. 145). Here he begins with the Subaltern Studies assertion that parliamentary democracy (including its essential accoutrements, free speech, equal protection, etc) was an organic expression of the imperatives of capitalism ascending—and that the failure of democracy in the post-colonial world must derive from strong pre-capitalist (and axiomatically anti-democratic) forces. Partly, Chibber rebuts this argument through his savaging of the communalism assertions, but this is only the beginning link in what becomes his broader theory of when and where parliamentary democracy arises.

Herein lies another instance in which Chibber preserves elements of the Subaltern Studies analysis: he endorses the proposition that parliamentary democracy was (and is) a consequence of ascendant capitalism. But he stands their argument on its head. He definitively rebuts their assertion of bourgeois activism, and replaces it with subaltern activism.

To accomplish this inversion, Chibber challenges the Subalternists' core argument that pioneer Western capitalists actively fought for parliamentary democracy and its accompanying rights, as soon as their political power allowed it. He demonstrates instead that the rising bourgeoisie and its political allies in England and France resourcefully opposed democracy; and that the arrival of universal suffrage and the other elements of what we now call democracy were a result of sustained struggle by subaltern classes. But he preserves the connection between capitalism and democratic rights, pointing out that it was only with the rise of industrial production that the working class (in alliance with the other subaltern groupings and in opposition to the capitalists) achieved the leverage it needed to demand and win universal suffrage and the other accoutrements of democracy. He completes this tightly woven argument with a gorgeous little comment: "it was only through subaltern mobilizations that capitalism was civilized" (p. 232).

But as beautiful as this argument is, I feel it is only a start. There is so much more that needs to be done here. First and foremost, Chibber (and those of us who work with his ideas) must explain why capitalism confers the needed leverage on the subaltern classes. He makes a start by invoking Marx's founding insight that the gathering of industrial workers into close proximity, and engaged in a production process characterized by ever-increasing division of labor, was the foundation for class formation and therefore working class agency. But this is only a beginning.

Second, and perhaps closer to the analysis that Chibber provides, is answering a host of questions around class struggle. As we look from country to country (in the capitalist core or the postcolonial periphery), we find a huge variance in the degree of "democratization." This is especially clear if we shift our attention from contested elections as the *sin qua non* of "democracy" and focus instead on the full array of political, economic, and human rights that are supposed to be integral to democratic society. Once we do this, we see that there is no facile correlation between the extension of capitalist accumulation into the far corners of society and the further extension of democratic rights. Instead, there are huge and changing differences among countries with comparable levels of capitalist penetration. So we need a much more refined understanding of the dynamics of capitalist development to understand the configurations that create the capacity (and the intention) for subaltern classes to civilize capitalism.

Let me point to one set of elements that must surely be a major factor in unraveling this conundrum: racism and its categorical cousins—patriarchy, religious intolerance, ethnic discrimination, etc. In tracking the successes and failures in civilizing capitalism, we must acknowledge that racism (or any of its cousins) has been a key factor in determining the degree of leverage either available to, or accessible by, subaltern movements. But we must press beyond this proposition to understand when, where, and how the racism process operates—since here too there is great variance in its role, depending on the national or regional setting. There has been some important work on these questions that can be integrated into the Chibberian analysis. One exemplar is Richard Williams' (1990) argument that racism (or any of its cousins) is most impactful in defense of capitalist barbarism when racial categories coincide with occupational stratification, generally yielding meager citizenship rights for the racial minority and degraded rights for the "privileged" "majority."

For me this excursion into the nuts and bolts of elaborating Chibber's analysis leads back to the proposition that capitalism absorbs pre-capitalist formations while preserving and evolving many of the elements. Can we comprehend this absorption process well enough to understand how the distinct dynamics that emerge impact on the trajectory of economic development, the vulnerability of the structure to democratic reform, and the agency of subaltern masses?

Let me turn now to a third (also indelibly interconnected) element of Chibber's analysis: the structural constraints that led Global South nationalists to pursue modernization (instead of other alternatives including socialism). In contrasting his perspective with Partha Chatterjee's argument that these policies were expressions of pro-western sycophantism, he concludes: "Chatterjee's theory of nationalism fails in large measure because it denies the reality of capitalist constraints. It treats rational decisions as having been ideologically driven and, in so doing, vastly exaggerates the role of ideas and grossly undervalues the effects of actually existing structures" (p. 250).

This is yet another of Chibber's insights that emerge from his dialectical method. His assertion of structural constraint is fully persuasive because he has so meticulously demolished

Chatterjee's assertion that nationalist leaders could have pursued many different development strategies; and thus effectively rebutted his conclusion that modernization policy reflected ideological commitment. But this method of exposition has deprived us of a full treatment of nationalism as an ideology and its role in determining economic and political trajectories. While Chibber's structural argument is compelling, he is inattentive to the impact of nationalism *within* the structural constraints he so forcefully articulates. I am thinking here that in the Indian case (and many, but not all others), nationalism was instrumental in muting the class struggle or misdirecting subaltern classes away from demands that might have brought them greater citizenship rights or a greater share of the rewards of development.

And then there is the larger question about the diversities in the types and impact of nationalism in differing post-colonial settings. Vietnamese and Indian nationalism would appear to have had very different impacts on anti-colonial struggles and postcolonial development. In explaining this difference, we may well, as Jeffrey Paige (1978) has argued, look to the differing paths of capitalist development as structural determinants that produce different forms of human agency—including different forms of nationalism—and ultimately impact on different development strategies.¹

I think that Chibber points us toward a comprehensive analysis of these issues in his luminous, but all too short, recapitulation of his “positive account of how capital, power, and agency actually work.” The first two of the four basic elements of his “alternative argument” are:

The first is that the universalization of capital is real, pace the claims of the Subalternist collective. The colonies' political dynamics did not attain a fundamentally different kind of modernity than did the Europeans.' More precisely, their modernity may have been different, but not in the ways that postcolonial theory insists. Theirs is a modernity that, over time, became no less reflective of capitalist imperatives than the French or German. The second is that the universalizing drive of capital should not be assumed to homogenize power relations or the social landscape more generally. In fact, capitalism is not only consistent with great heterogeneity and hierarchy, but systematically generates them. Capitalism is perfectly compatible with a highly diverse set of political and cultural formations (p. 285).

But this also points to what might be the least developed component in Chibber's analysis: human agency. He is so occupied with debunking the cultural determinism of the Subaltern School that he does not pay enough attention to the first part of Marx's famous structural axiom, that people “make history, but not as they choose.” While Chibber is right to call out the structural dynamics of capitalism that the Subalternists attempt to sweep away, we also need a comprehensive analysis of the circumstances under which people are able to collectively choose and implement progressive social change. We need to identify and comprehend the broader nexus of dynamic forces that facilitate or constrain our efforts to construct what Perry Anderson (1980: 20) has called “a premeditated future.”

¹ Another building block toward this analysis can be found in Goodwin (2001).

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ON VIVEK CHIBBER'S *POSTCOLONIAL THEORY AND THE SPECTER OF CAPITAL*

William H. Sewell, Jr.

Department of History

University of Chicago

w-sewell@uchicago.edu

Vivek Chibber's *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* is a critique not of postcolonial theory in general, but specifically of the Subaltern Studies School, as represented by Ranajit Guha, Partha Chatterjee, and Dipesh Chakrabarty. The subalterns, of course, have focused specifically on Indian history, a subject with which I have only a passing acquaintance. This means that my comments should surely be taken with a healthy grain of salt.

I suppose I must have been asked to contribute to this symposium to say something about the famous entity called "Europe" that Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) and other postcolonial theorists have striven to deprovincialize. After all, Europe is the unavoidable "other" against which the subalterns have evaluated Indian history – unavoidable because India was conquered and ruled by Britain for nearly two centuries and because Europe, and more recently an expanded "West" that notably includes the United States, has dominated the world militarily, economically, culturally, and intellectually for the past three hundred years. Chibber, it should be said, doesn't dispute the necessity of thinking about the history of India in comparison with the West; what he disputes is the way the subalterns think about it and the conclusions they draw.

Chibber is not a sympathetic critic: indeed, he's basically hostile to culturalist theories, to postmodern literary and philosophical tropes, and to the murky Hegelian and Heideggerian language that appears in the later work of Dipesh Chakrabarty. Chibber attempts to puncture what he regards as the vague and exaggerated claims of post-colonial theorists and to defend a Marxist version of universal Enlightenment values against what he calls the subalterns' "orientalism." But Chibber doesn't waste time declaiming against the subalterns. Rather, he seriously and painstakingly subjects their arguments to a dissection that is unforgivingly rationalist. In the end, Chibber convinces me that the subalterns' major claims are pretty shaky.

The subalterns' arguments of course evolved over time. Thus Ranajit Guha's *Domination without Hegemony* (1997), a collection of essays composed in the late 1980s and early 1990s, was written from within a basically Marxist framework whereas Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* (2000) insists on Marxism's essential Eurocentrism and its consequent inability to grasp Indian historical developments. But it is remarkable that from beginning to end the "Europe" that the subalterns grapple with is represented above all by Marxism and by particular Marxist imaginings of European history. This suggests that Subaltern Studies must be understood in part as an ambivalent emanation of a disappointed Marxism, an aftermath, one supposes, of the failed Naxalite movement of the 1970s.

Chibber thinks this disappointment is misplaced, that Marxist analysis retains its utility for understanding economic, social, and political developments both in the "West" and in the developing world. The subalterns' discontents, he argues, arise from both empirical and theoretical errors.

Ranajit Guha, in *Domination without Hegemony*, argued that much of India's postcolonial misfortune can be traced to the weakness of the Indian bourgeoisie. In Guha's telling, the Indian bourgeoisie failed to live up to the heroic legacy of their European counterparts, who, in two great revolutions – in England in the 1640s and in France in 1789 –

overthrew feudalism and established liberal bourgeois states that fulfilled the universalizing drive of capitalism, both by securing the political dominance of the capitalist class and by fashioning hegemonic political orders that extended political rights to subordinate classes. By contrast, the Indian bourgeoisie, in its would-be revolutionary moment of decolonization, gained political dominance but failed to overthrow feudal relations in the countryside or to establish anything like the genuinely hegemonic political order characteristic of Europe.

I need hardly point out that this portrayal of the English and French revolutions is standard-issue orthodox Marxism—and is by now well past its “sell-by” date. The problem, as Chibber argues, is that this old orthodox Marxist account seriously misunderstands European history. Now, I have to say that Chibber’s own grasp of French and English history seems to me a bit shaky. For example, he discusses the English Civil War of the 1640s at some length but doesn’t even mention the English Revolution of 1688, which most European historians now alive would regard as having a much better claim to being something like a bourgeois revolution. And he concludes, remarkably, that the contribution of the European revolutions to “the birth of modern liberalism” was “weak”—completely ignoring, for example, such founding liberal moments as the separation of powers instituted in England in 1688 or the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen of 1789. Nevertheless, Chibber’s most important conclusions about the European experience seem to me quite correct: that the regimes put in place in the wake of the so-called bourgeois revolutions actually placed stringent limits on the political participation of popular classes and that democratization in Europe owed far more to struggles from below than to the generosity of the bourgeoisie. This, in turn, implies that the Indian bourgeoisie’s failure to embrace an egalitarian order, far from constituting a deviation from the politics of the European bourgeoisie or a failure of capitalism’s universalizing dynamic, was instead exactly what the European experience of capitalism and revolution should have led us to expect.

Chibber also strives to refute the essentially parallel argument of Dipesh Chakrabarty’s *Rethinking Working-Class History*. Chakrabarty asserts in this book (originally published in 1989) that the nature of relations between jute mill workers and capitalists in Calcutta—which were based more on personal authority, caste, and religious identities than on the anonymous labor market and class identities—demonstrates that European capitalism’s universalizing mission had stalled on Eastern shores. Chibber replies by showing that European and American capitalists have repeatedly relied on personal authority and particularist identities whenever these could produce a tractable labor force. Again, there was nothing “Eastern” about labor relations that took this form nor did they represent any failure of capitalism to universalize itself.

Chibber’s arguments in these two cases have perfectly good Marxist credentials. What he shows here and elsewhere in his book is that Marxist empirical and conceptual work on the history of capitalism is perfectly capable of making sense of Indian developments—that there is no fundamental conceptual divide between the history of “Europe” and the history of “the East.”

This, of course, puts Chibber strongly at odds with Chakrabarty’s arguments in *Provincializing Europe*, probably the most celebrated (and certainly the most difficult) work of the Subaltern school. Chibber remarks that Chakrabarty, near the beginning of this book, claims that the “Europe” used as a point of comparison for Indian history is a “hyperreal” entity—in Chakrabarty’s terms a “metanarrative figure of the imagination” that is “constructed by the tales that both imperialism and nationalism have told the colonized” (2000: 27, 40). Chibber dismisses this claim as a dodge, asserting, quite correctly, that Chakrabarty in fact constantly makes claims about divergences between the real histories of Europe and India.

However, I think that Chakrabarty's "Europe" actually is hyperreal in a somewhat different sense. It seems to me that Chakrabarty constructs a "Marxism" fused with a hyperreal "Europe" that is very much a "narrative figure of the imagination"—and then proceeds to criticize this construct. (Note that "Europe" for Chakrabarty never connotes such eminently European features as Christian fervor, or royal absolutism, or romanticism, or militarism, or Fascism—only the Enlightenment, democracy, liberalism, rationality, capitalism, and imperialism. Such a one-sided Europe is quite unrecognizable to a Europeanist.) In *Provincializing Europe* Chakrabarty, on the basis of a rather daunting reading of Marx, claims to find, but I would say constructs, a highly idealized, unified, teleological and (it must be said) undialectical history of capitalism that he labels "History 1," a capitalist history to which "the Enlightenment universals" inhere or that includes within itself "the categories of Enlightenment thought" (2000: 250, 71). Next to this he constructs another history, what he calls "History 2," that contains diverse logics of action and belonging and that is "charged with the function of constantly interrupting the totalizing thrusts of History 1" (2000: 66). It is this History 2 that especially comes into prominence in the East, where capitalism has been more recently introduced. Chakrabarty claims that historians, both Eastern and Western, have been too mesmerized by the perfect unity and self-identity of History 1 and have underplayed the disruptions and incompleteness that History 2 introduces into the history of capitalist societies.

Chibber agrees that one can reasonably distinguish a History 1 that refers to the specific and necessary dynamics of capitalist accumulation from a History 2 that is not fully interior to capital's life process. But Chibber's version of History 1 is rather stripped down: it's not identified with Europe or freighted with necessity or equated with the Enlightenment. On the other hand, it is decidedly dialectical – the capitalist core is full of contradictions that constantly threaten to disrupt any orderly process of accumulation. That is to say, it actually resembles the capitalism that we all know and love. Chibber's History 2, like Chakrabarty's, is defined as those historical forces not constituted by the core of capitalism. But Chibber insists that History 2 normally poses no particular threat to History 1. It's either perfectly compatible with capitalism, as when capitalists take advantage of differences of religion, caste, or race to divide or discipline their work forces. Or it's basically indifferent to capitalism, as when cultural practices of one sort or another go on with no noticeable influence one way or the other on capital accumulation. Aspects of History 2 can, of course, on occasion disrupt History 1, but disruptions from within the logic of History 1 are far more common and far more consequential. For Chibber, there is no reason either to shun History 1 or to exalt History 2. As you may have guessed, I prefer Chibber's version of the two histories to Chakrabarty's.

To sum up: *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* provides a careful, sustained, intelligent, and salutary critique of Subaltern Studies. Its genius is critique, however, rather than reconstruction. Chibber's rationalism, which sometimes gets very close to rational choice, is basically a solvent or a deflator. Chibber has cleared the ground and has usefully indicated the value of Marxist analytical tools. But in my opinion it will take a Marxism more infused with cultural sensitivities to reconstruct a superior history of the postcolonial world.

Let me close with a few final thoughts on the provincialization of Europe. If postcolonial historians really are serious about provincializing Europe, perhaps they should begin by recognizing that Europe is actually divided into many provinces – usually known as nation states – that have surprisingly diverse histories. The histories of politics or thought or industrialization of England, Spain, France, Hungary, Germany, Norway, and Greece are by no means the same. Differences between the histories of Portugal and England may be as great as those between the

histories of China and France. And the histories of none of these countries are identical to the history of capitalism, or the Enlightenment, or democracy. Perhaps we should try banishing the over-inflated collective noun “Europe” from our vocabularies for a few years and treat that broad peninsula at the western end of Eurasia as what it is: a collection of highly diverse provinces, not some unified totality. Chibber’s deflation of post-colonial theory should help to point us in this direction.

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MINDING APPEARANCES: THE LABOR OF REPRESENTATION IN VIVEK CHIBBER'S *POSTCOLONIAL THEORY AND THE SPECTER OF CAPITAL*

David Pedersen
Department of Anthropology
University of California-San Diego
dpedersen@ucsd.edu

“Why is labor represented by the value of its product and labor-time by the magnitude of that value?”

Karl Marx

In the Preface to his *Postcolonial Studies and the Specter of Capital*, Vivek Chibber (2013: xii) thanks Neil Brenner for the book's name, writing that “... Brenner gets the lion's share of credit for the book's title...the title is basically his.” Several scholars have questioned whether the book's primary content, a sustained critique of writings by Ranajit Guha, Partha Chatterjee and Dipesh Chakrabarty, is a fair proxy for the diverse efforts of people who identify themselves as studying or being a part of the “post-colonial.”¹ The second part of the title, “Specter of Capital,” orients my comments on the book in this essay. It is an accurate choice of terms, because Chibber's book does offer a significant argument about the critical study of appearances, which is a term directly related to the word apparition and its close cousin, specter.

Readers should recognize the word specter as a reference to the opening sentence of Karl Marx and Friederich Engel's “Manifesto of the Communist Party” published in 1848: “A specter is haunting Europe -- the specter of Communism.” Readers also will discern that a tradition of Marxism gets a lion's share of credit for informing the book's content. One of the book's primary goals is to refute the claim, attributed by Chibber to the three authors affiliated with “Subaltern Studies,” that critical study of capitalism informed by Marxism is not applicable to the postcolonial history of India. The way that the book approaches appearances directly echoes Marx's metaphorical use of specters and ghosts in his varied analyses of capitalist relations.²

There are two different connotations to “specter” that make their appearance in Chibber's book. The first is the understanding that beyond or behind a surface level of particular human sentiments, practices and habits, however dominant and durable, lies something more basic and material shared by all individuals in any context. The second perspective on appearances suggested in the book is that particular kinds of representations or mediations may actually become more material, mobile and capable of making things happen in the world. The first modality is about appearances and something behind them. The second approach is about the agency of appearances and their capacity to hide both the conditions that give rise to them and their manner of contributing to perpetuating these same conditions. This essay focuses on these

¹ See the review by Bruce Robbins of Columbia University, “Subaltern-speak,” in the journal *n+1*, issue 18, March 2013 and the on-line post by Chris Taylor of University of Chicago <http://clrjames.blogspot.com/2013/04/not-even-marxist-on-vivek-chibbers.html>.

² On the significance of “specters” with respect to both the figure of Marx and his work, see Jacques Derrida's (1995) *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the work of Mourning and the New International*, delivered in 1993 as the plenary address for a conference at the University of California-Riverside's Center for Ideas and Society. Nine critical commentaries on the book and Derrida's response to them are collected in *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Jacques Derrida's Specters of Marx*, edited by the late Michael Sprinker (2008).

two understandings of appearances and the way that the book's manner of minding them is integral to its critical analysis. I am less concerned with choosing a side in the academic debate to which the book substantially contributes than to use its appearance as an opportunity to push forward discussion about how better to render fully "explanatory critiques" of capitalist relations anywhere on the planet.³

India and Europe

Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital is organized as an analytical critique of the writings of Ranajit Guha, Partha Chatterjee and Dipesh Chakrabarty, among the most prominent scholars associated with the Subaltern Studies collective. Chibber focuses on their work and identifies a constellation of arguments that stipulate several key divergences between Indian and European modernity. Chibber distills three themes, pointing out that the authors participate in an aggregate project of arguing for a radical Indian difference regarding: 1) the character of its bourgeoisie; 2) the relative role of distinctly capitalist power relations; and, 3) what Chibber calls the "political psychology" of Indian subaltern actors. Chibber lays out what he understands as the necessary preconditions required for sustaining all the arguments that buttress the claim of a radical India-European divergence along the three thematic axes. He effectively tests to see if these conditions are, in fact, manifest in the evidence and logically plausible. Chapter by chapter, he endeavors to show how the evidentiary premises of the arguments in favor of the three distinctions cannot be sustained.

Chibber also specifies an alternative interpretation and approach meant to overcome the stark India/European divide, allowing for variation within what is understood as a unitary capitalism, marked by two fundamental tendencies. The first is that capitalists tend to spread and deepen their activities as a feature of their recognition of the requirements of the system in which they participate. The second is that workers, as they experience forms of exploitation through the actions of capitalists, will be inclined to resist this process, motivated by recognition of direct threats to their material or bodily well-being. Chibber calls these "Enlightenment" universal tendencies and he wishes to defend them against the claim by Subaltern Studies authors that they are not applicable to Indian history. In this defense lies the book's first critical approach to appearances.

Ghostbuster

Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital carries a definition of one domain of social life that is understood as separate and distinct from an underlying and more basic reality. In the author's terms, all of these surface aspects or features fall under the umbrella term of "political psychology." Chibber does not explain this expression, though it has a substantial scholarly pedigree, including its early appearance in the German ethnologist Adolph Bastian's 1860 book, *Man in History* (Koepping 2005). Bastian's work influenced the famous British anthropologist, Edward B. Tylor and also directly shaped the scholarship of Franz Boas, known as the founder of US anthropology (Stocking 1984: 14).⁴ It also is associated with the work of U.S. political scientist Harold Lasswell during the 1930s and 1940s (Ascher and Barbara Hirschfelder-Ascher

³ I borrow this term from Roy Bhaskar (1986) as way to refer to the combined task of explaining the workings of capitalism and the falsity of its necessary self-representation.

⁴ Bastian was Boas's senior advisor at the Ethnographic Museum in Berlin.

2003): Chibber deploys political psychology as a general hypernym for what he identifies elsewhere in the text as consciousness, culture, identity, ideology and religion.⁵

Chibber invokes all five of these concepts especially in chapters 6-8, making this part of the book the most concentrated critical examination of how the Subaltern Studies authors treat the content of what Chibber has called “political psychology.” He summarizes his interpretation of the Subaltern Studies position in the fourth paragraph of chapter seven: “They deny that agents share a common set of needs or interests across cultural boundaries, arguing instead that the peasants and industrial workers in the East have a wholly different psychology from those in the West” (p. 153). In chapter six, Chibber focuses on Partha Chatterjee’s work, which he summarizes as organized around the central claim that “communal norms, not individual interests, were the fount of rural politics” in India (p. 154).

Chibber’s critique rests on examining Guha’s *Elementary Forms*, which Chatterjee had drawn upon, as well as Chatterjee’s own research on peasants in Bengal and identifying instances where peasants seemed to act according to individual interests rather than shared cultural norms. He focuses on Chatterjee’s identification of internal differentiation between a relatively wealthy small-holding fraction, *jotedars*, who employed workers, obtained rents from tenant farmers and earned income from lending operations, and the majority of peasants who were primarily subsistence farmers. Chibber argues that this apparent diversity refutes Chatterjee’s claim that a singular peasant communal ideology dominated Bengali peasant life, fully masking the relative exploitation carried out by *jotedars*.

In chapter eight, Chibber continues this line of analysis, tracing the relationship between collective norms and individual interests through consideration of Dipesh Chakrabarty’s book, *Rethinking Working Class History: Bengal 1890-1940*. According to Chibber, Chakrabarty “purports to have discovered that subordinate groups are not motivated by a defense of their interests; instead, they are driven by their valuation of community, honor, religion, and other normative ends.” Chibber argues against Chakrabarty’s claim that Jute workers “remained prisoners of a precapitalist culture” (p. 185 in Chibber) by pointing out that “when migrants came to the city, they constructed new communities when they became involved in trade unions or forged new social solidarities with migrants from other parts of the country. They showed themselves capable of forming a different cultural sensibility – organized around a more secular and economic axis – than the one into which they had been socialized” (p. 196).

In the second part of the chapter, Chibber defends what he calls “a stripped-down, minimal account of rationality” (p. 199), which he defines as ultimately founded on the “the need to ward off direct bodily harm by others and the need for a livelihood” (p. 197). These two basic needs may be translated into cultural codes in any context and in turn cognized or reflected upon, but they also remain relatively exterior to any culture as basic material prerequisites for human life. According to Chibber, both the Jute Mill workers and Bengali peasants “made choices, to be sure, but what all these choices had in common was that they were in defense of their physical security. The concern for basic well-being thus constituted the grounds on which the choices were made” (p. 198). In this, Chibber asserts that “culture does not go ‘all the way down’ (p. 200) so as to conceal the real interest of human physical well-being.

For Chibber, political psychology is the particular form in which all that both threatens and contributes to bodily well-being makes its appearance. In contrast to Chatterjee and

⁵ In a presentation on Chibber’s book later published in *Economic and Political Weekly* (Sept. 14, 2013), Partha Chatterjee suggested that “political psychology” was not an appropriate category, because it had never been used by the Subaltern Studies authors, particularly Ranajit Guha.

Chakrabarty who greatly emphasize the relative sovereignty, agentive capacity and dominance of such appearances among Indian subaltern classes, Chibber insists that this basic need to survive ultimately will in his words “cut through” the apparent blanket of any particular culture as if it were no more than a ghost costume. In this, Chibber decidedly is a ghostbuster.

The Appearance of Labor

There is a second manner of minding appearances that is implicit in Chibber’s book and it is the understanding that particular representational patterns or mediations are specific to capitalism and, rather than as the content of a finite and discrete political psychology, are quite real and capable of shaping reality “all the way down” independent of any individual. This understanding of appearances as agentive abstractions is not directly claimed or argued by Chibber, nor is it captured by an overall term like political psychology. However, it can be gleaned from Chibber’s discussion of Marx’s concept of abstract labor and his critique of how Dipesh Chakrabarty has interpreted the concept.

Consistent with his overarching criticism of the Subaltern Studies project, Chibber focuses on how Chakrabarty’s recent work, especially *Provincializing Europe*, is predicated on finding radical social difference in India that defies assumptions about capitalism based on its European history. Chibber equates what he identifies as the Subaltern Studies authors’ aversion to abstract or general categories that suppress such radical difference with a particular understanding of Marx’s notion of abstract labor. Chibber is correct to criticize Lowe and Lloyd (1997) for their misunderstanding of the category.⁶ However, in Chakrabarty’s case, aversion to abstract categories in general is not the same as an aversion to the specific Marxian category, abstract labor. This can be better appreciated by considering a passage written by Chakrabarty that appeared as the second chapter in a book titled *Marxism Beyond Marxism*, edited by Sari Makdisi, Cesare Casarino and Rebecca Karl. Chakrabarty’s essay was titled “Marx after Marxism: History, Subalternity, and Difference.”

In this essay he reflected on *Rethinking Working-Class History* and admitted that he had misinterpreted the distinction between “real” and “abstract” labor in Marx, assuming that real labor referred to the specific efforts of an actual person:

...[M]y larger failure lay in my inability to see that if one read the “real” as socially/culturally produced... other possibilities open up; among them the one of writing “difference” back into Marx. For the “real” then, in this reading would refer to different kinds of “social” and hence to different orders of temporality.... The transition from “real” to “abstract” is thus also a question of transition/translation from many and possibly incommensurable temporalities to the homogeneous time of abstract labor, the transition from non-history to history (1995: 60).

⁶ Chibber cites an essay that I co-authored on the relevance of Marx’s value-theoretic inquiries for the anthropological study of capitalism. He includes our piece along with others who he claims make the error of interpreting “abstract” labor as referring to the empirical homogeneity of actual laboring people. However, our only reference to “homogeneous” was the same as Chibber’s on page 135 in his book where he draws on the famous quote from Capital Vol. 1 on the oddity of the objectification of abstract labor that is specific to capitalism: “Let us look at the residue of the products of labor... they are merely congealed quantities of homogeneous labor...” In the Introduction to my book *American Value, Migrants, Money and Meaning in El Salvador and the United States*, I make the same critique of Lowe and Lloyd as Chibber.

Chakrabarty continues, explaining his recognition that “the category of ‘real’ labor, therefore, has the capacity to refer to that which cannot be enclosed by the sign....” This gesture to Saussure’s semiology and Derrida’s critique of it helps explain why Chakrabarty later used the distinction between History 1 and 2. Because he approached the capitalist commodity as a discrete Saussurian sign, a relationship between idea and utterance or structure and instantiation, Chakrabarty totally abandoned the quality of relational dynamism and interaction inherent in Marx’s analysis of capitalist value determination. Chakrabarty’s History 1 and 2 is as much about structuralism and its critique by Derrida as it is about Indian subaltern history. Remarkably, the anti-foundationalist critique of Saussure’s sign logic has helped provide a foundation for establishing Subaltern Studies as a widespread project of critiquing capitalism and its imperial effects from the solid foundation of a locus assumed to be exterior to it.

In his critique of Chakrabarty, Chibber argues that “abstract” is one quality or dimension of “concrete” labor and that this abstract quality is what matters, or comes to be dominant within capitalism, because of the market demands faced by capitalists. Concrete or “real” as in Chakrabarty’s admission above may be understood as the wholeness of labor from which the abstract dimension or quality is accentuated and made to count in capitalism. In this sense, Chibber’s critique rests on an implicit recognition that there is a dominant appearance to labor within capitalism and that this form and its maintenance is necessary for capitalism. Chibber explains that this is well understood from Marx’s inquiries and as such it provides the foundation for his critique of Chakrabarty’s distinction between History 1 and 2.

Labor of Representation

Chibber’s argument is correct as far as it goes, but explaining abstract labor as a result of capitalists’ profit drive or market logic is only part of the story. It also requires all that yields the regular sale of labor power as a commodity, its use as labor and its congealing in the tools and techniques of such labor. And most crucially, it requires the establishment of money as a universal equivalent. All this is an exceedingly complex social and historical configuration that contains a manner of representation that is necessary for its continuation. These appearances are real in the sense that they cannot be reduced to individual actors or orientations.

In Volume One of *Capital*, Marx poses a question about capitalism as representational proclivity by asking “why this content has assumed that particular form, that is to say why labor is expressed in value, and why the measurement of labor by its duration is expressed in the magnitude of the value of the product.” The statement suggests that what is at stake in capitalism is an ensemble of representational tendencies that have become generalized, even naturalized. This is not Saussure or Derrida, but instead is the more basic recognition that capitalism entails certain systemic processes of abstraction and representation, which are continuous and unfinished processes. To grasp this means to use abstract as a verb as well as its own product, the noun form, abstraction. Determination is the aggregate social process of abstraction in that it happens independently of what any individual thinks about it. Overall, something is pulling out qualities and dimensions of something else so as to convey something else, a quality of meaning. It is the move from the possible to the actual to the general. Why does the human capacity to work upon the world take the form it does in capitalism? Why is an undefined human capacity shaped in a particular way and not others? Following this perspective, capitalism is inherently about appearances, but these do not exist in relation to their content like a dependent variable in relation to an independent one. Value as the objectification of the most abstract aspects of labor-power is the representational tendency that is specific to capitalism. Besides abstract and

concrete, Marx also introduced private and social as two other qualities of labor under any historical conditions. Taken together they comprise all that could go into any product of human labor under any conditions, including labor power itself. This is the infinite whole from which, within capitalist relations, the abstract dimension is pulled out and represented or objectified in the commodity through its money price.

As I have intimated, it now is possible to see that the Subaltern Studies project reflected in part an academic debate over structuralism and poststructuralism. Marx's approach to value determination and his understanding of representation defies both the structuralist and poststructuralist traditions. Rather than code and instantiation or infinite instantiations, it is inquiry into the historical establishment of a specific three-way representational tendency involving labor, value and labor's product and another 3-way configuration among labor-time, value and magnitude or measure. In inquiring into capitalism, Marx asked how and why these arrangements came into being and were sustained.

The current crossroads in the discussion sparked by Subaltern Studies and critiques like Chibber's is that both seem to require a foundation from which to critique capitalism. It is History 2 for Chakrabarty and it is the defense of individual interests based on ensuring human bodily well-being for Chibber. The Subaltern Studies position has been attractive over the past two decades and it joins a classic tradition in anthropology of seeking after cultures or cultural formations that provide fully formed alternatives to "western" modernity.⁷ (Subaltern studies scholars have explicitly remarked on the influence of British and French anthropology on their work.) An individual interest in the protection of bodily well-being may be a limit to culture or political psychology but it also is what capitalism necessarily draws upon to "universalize." It is the basis of most human medical research and the incredible translation of such science into widely consumed capitalist commodities. Protection of bodily well-being is as much the basis of capitalism as the grounds of its critique. In this, it doesn't offer a limit to any representational system nor the positive content of a horizon beyond it.

The challenge is to occupy a different kind of ground for critique that does not rely on concepts like the non-west or biology. We similarly would do well to dispense with the academic categories of economics, politics and culture—the different disciplines that substantiate their (false) separation into discrete domains, each with their own equilibrium-seeking logics of supply and demand, checks and balances, and words and ideas.

If we recall Marx's early recognition that what people *are* anywhere and anywhen is greatly defined by what they produce – "making something more from nothing but..." and also how this is organized and accomplished, then the foundation of critique, including living struggles, is all that is not yet available or possible in the current form and organization of productive life on the planet. This is as much "cultural" or "psychological" as biological and material.

⁷ There are at least two compelling critiques of this project written by anthropologists: Fernando Coronil's (1996) "Beyond Occidentalism" and Michel Rolph Trioullout's (1991) *The Savage Slot*.

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CONFRONTING POSTCOLONIAL THEORY—A RESPONSE TO CRITICS

Vivek Chibber

Department of Sociology

New York University

vivek.chibber@nyu.edu

Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital was written as both an intervention and a contribution to theory. It was intended to offer an assessment of one of the most influential theoretical frameworks in the humanities and social sciences since the 1990's, and a response to their criticisms of received frameworks. George Steinmetz wonders why I chose to focus so strenuously on Subaltern Studies as the stand-in for the larger theoretical corpus. He observes correctly that there are many other prominent theorists associated with Postcolonial theory (hereafter PCT), such as Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha and others. The reason is that it is the historians and anthropologists in the field who have moved beyond a theory of postcolonial culture, and developed something close to a sociology of modern capitalist forms, as well as a theory of why capitalist modernization has proceeded in the way that it has. And among these more sociologically minded theorists, there is no doubt that Subaltern Studies has wielded an influence that is deeper and wider than any other current within the field. Its most prominent members have generated not only an empirically, historically based argument about the course of modern capitalism in the colonial world, but one that is remarkably coherent and consistently developed over time. As I explain in the Introduction to the book, it is not my view by any means that Subaltern Studies covers the gamut of arguments or concepts in postcolonial studies. But it is representative of many of the central ideas that are associated with PCT; it is extremely influential; and its internal consistency makes it not just representative, but the most attractive and plausible denizen of this body of work.¹

PCT claims to show that the theories and categories associated with the most influential frameworks of the twentieth century – liberal political theory and Marxist theory -- cannot apprehend the actual course of economic and political development in the colonial world. Both approaches are rejected because of their supposed determinism and teleology, which blind them to the specificity of the colonial and postcolonial world. Postcolonial theorists reject what they take to be an illicit universalism in these frameworks, a prejudice that categories and predictions coming out of the European experience must be equally relevant to the specific experience of the Global South. Because it is flawed, this universalism turns out to generate a pronounced Eurocentric bias in both liberal and Marxist theory. And this, in turn, only perpetuates the political and economic dominance of the West over the East. Or so they claim. This rejection of Eurocentrism forms the basis of their normative critique of Western domination, and in more recent work, of the heavy hand of universalizing theories more generally.

There is a great deal at stake here. If the arguments coming from Subaltern Studies are correct, then we are obligated to overhaul much of what is currently practiced in the social sciences and humanities, roll up our sleeves, and craft entirely new frameworks for understanding the evolution of much of the world. Even more, the foundational basis of our criticism of modern capitalism has to be rejected and new political theories have to be crafted

¹ I offer a more elaborate explanation for my decision to focus on Subaltern Studies in "Making sense of postcolonial theory – a response to Gayatri Spivak," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Fall 2014, which I do not want to repeat here.

that have no truck with Enlightenment universals. It is therefore a little surprising to see how little effort there has been toward a serious assessment of the actual evidence that PCT adduces in support of its claims about the actual differences between East and West, the shortcomings of the received frameworks, the real drivers of historical trajectories, the fount of social agency, etc. So the first challenge I undertook in *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* (hereafter *PTSC*) was to assess these arguments on their own grounds. And by this I mean, to reconstruct them, to tease out their implications, and then to see if they stood up to empirical and logical scrutiny.

My verdict in the book is that the arguments developed by PCT and Subaltern Studies fail on both theoretical and normative grounds. With regard to theory, PCT fails in its Subalternist version because it cannot adequately explain the patterns of historical development in the advanced and late developing parts of the capitalist world. It insists that the defining characteristic of the Global South is its deep and abiding structural differentiation from the advanced capitalist world, a difference so deep, so fundamental that it requires an entirely different set of categories. I examine these claims and argue that none of the arguments adduced in their favor withstand scrutiny. There are differences between the two parts of the world, of course; but they are not of a kind that resists analysis through the inherited explanatory frameworks. I conclude that the Subaltern critique of Enlightenment theories is baseless. Furthermore, I argue that the arguments made by Subalternists for the specificity of the East are not only questionable on empirical grounds, but that they also cannot provide the basis for political critique. This is because, their rhetoric notwithstanding, they end up reviving and refurbishing some of the most objectionable Orientalist canards about the East. So, far from providing a means of overturning Eurocentrism, Subaltern Studies gives it a new lease on life – for Eurocentrism is just the dual of Orientalism.

The Universalization of Capital

Well, these are my conclusions. What are the bases on which I defend them? We start with an assessment of the Subalternist argument against the universalizing categories of Enlightenment thought, chief among which are the ones central to Marxist and liberal social theory – categories like capitalism, universal rights, class, citizenship, etc. PCT and theorists from Subaltern Studies argue that the relevance of these categories is highly dubious outside the West. The reason for this is that they presume that the social milieu that they are examining has been transformed in some relevant way by capitalism – in other words, their use presupposes a properly universalizing capitalism. But – and this is the key – capitalism failed to universalize once it left European shores. It is not that the transformation that it is supposed to bring about is yet incomplete. It is, rather, that capital mutates in such a way that it *cannot* universalize. Dipesh Chakrabarty is especially emphatic on this point. Subalternists deny that it is just a matter of waiting until the social transformations associated with capitalism are complete. Their view is that capitalism cannot universalize, and this is why the categories of the Enlightenment are irredeemably flawed when they are put to use in the East.

So what accounts for the necessity of capital's failed universalization? There are two arguments that Subalternists make in this regard, one developed by Ranajit Guha and the other by Dipesh Chakrabarty. For Guha, the key lies in a deep historical failing in the colonial and postcolonial bourgeoisie, namely, that it failed in its duty to "speak for all the nation", to create a liberal political culture in which political rule was based on the consent of the masses. He contrasts this with the experience of the West, in which capital created a culture of rights and

liberality, in which rulers treated the ruled as formal equals even while they exploited them. The pivotal events in which capital advanced this agenda were the great bourgeois revolutions of 1640 in England and 1789 in France. But in India, in its “bourgeois revolution”, i.e. the Independence movement, Indian capital forswore any such mission. Instead of overthrowing the ancient regime, it accommodated to it and instead of embracing its mission to speak for all the nation, it chose only a pursuit of its narrow economic interests. Hence, capital’s rule in the East turned out to be based on outright domination rather than on hegemony, whereas in the West, the poles were reversed – capital ruled hegemonically, and coercion played a subordinate role. The different character of the bourgeoisie in the two instances created radically different political maternities.

Dipsesh Chakrabarty accepts Guha’s historical sociology, but adds to it another dimension, which provided independent grounds for the denial of capital’s universalization. He begins with the observation that capital strives to subordinate all social relations to its own logic. But, he says, this compulsion is not equally successful across the board. There are some practices that do become absorbed by capital. Chakrabarty calls these practices “History1.” But then there are others that, even while they are influenced by capital, still manage to retain their integrity and resist total subordination. These Chakrabarty calls “History2.” Chakrabarty then adds the proviso that for capital to have successfully universalized, it must be the case that History1 obliterates History2. But of course, he observes, History2 can never be extinguished. No social formation loses all traces of its local culture, local institutions, etc. He then concludes that, since History2 can never be extinguished, since some social practices resist the “totalizing” drive of capital, we must acknowledge that capital never in fact succeeds in its universalizing drive. And since it does not successfully universalize, the universalizing categories of the Enlightenment, which presume that History1 has in fact won out, only serve to obscure the real nature of post-colonial societies. They fail to appreciate its heterogeneity, they wipe all traces of social differences, and impose on this rich diversity the homogenizing categories of Western thought.

In assessing these arguments in *PTSC*, I take a conservative approach. I grant to the Subalternists their premise – which is by no means obviously correct – that for Enlightenment categories to have relevance, capital must be shown to retain its universalizing drive. As it happens, I believe that the premise can be easily rejected, but I keep to it in order to make the Subalternist case as strong as possible. So let us assume that it has warrant. Can we agree with the claim that capital cannot universalize once it leaves Western shores? I argue that neither argument for capital’s abandonment of its universalizing drive can be defended.

Guha’s argument for there being a historic break between the political projects of the bourgeoisie in the West and in the East flows from a highly mythologized story about the great Bourgeois revolutions, one that was rejected decades ago by historians. I show this in great detail in Chapters Three and Four in *PTSC*. All the critics in this forum accept both my reconstruction of Guha as well as my criticism of him. But William Sewell worries that while my basic argument regarding the so-called bourgeois revolutions is convincing, I am not sufficiently attentive to some of the real shifts that they did facilitate, and he brings up, as an example, the importance of 1688 for the separation of powers in the English state and that of 1789 for ideas such as the Rights of Man. But Sewell is reading my argument in an unduly narrow fashion. My argument for the importance of the English and French revolutions is meant to assess whether they performed the functions assigned to them by Guha, and for him, their achievement is very specific – they were instances in which capital fought for, and successfully created a political

culture based on the inclusion of the laboring classes, in which their participation in the political process was not only allowed but welcomed by the new ruling class. My downgrading of the revolutions achievements should be read against the claims that I am assessing. I do not deny their significance altogether. It is not that I am unaware of the shift toward a constitutional monarchy in England or the promulgation of the Rights of Man in France. My argument is two-fold – that the shifts that did occur were nowhere near what is needed to validate Guha’s argument, and second, that in so far as there was a movement toward greater inclusiveness, it was not because of the universalizing mission of capital, but because of pressure from the laboring classes. Sewell is correct in his claim about the Revolution’s legacy for the issues he raises, but his observation is quite consistent with my argument.

I am pleased to see that all of the critics also largely agree with my rejection of Chakrabarty’s argument, though they raise some related issues that are quite interesting. Chakrabarty sets up a test for the universalizing process that is absurdly stringent, one that, to my knowledge, no social theorist has ever countenanced. I argue against Chakrabarty that capital’s universalization does not at all require that capital absorb History2 into its logic. For that to be the test, it would require that every social practice, every aspect of culture, ideology and social institutions become reflections of capitalist imperatives. The mind boggles at the thought. A more reasonable litmus is that capital merely has to ensure the subordination of *economic* practices to its logic, moving against the autonomy of cultural and social practices only if they interfere with or undermine the economic. Chakrabarty only allows two possibilities in his universe – practices either directly support capitalism or they are a threat to it. But it is entirely possible that practices can be outside the orbit of commodity production and be neutral toward it – a possibility that he does not consider. But if this is so, then there is no necessary conflict between History1 and History2, and the non-incorporation of History2 is not evidence at capital’s failure to implant itself. Furthermore, Chakrabarty is mistaken in locating the sources of instability to capitalism in History2. I argue that the most important sources of instability are in fact exemplars of History1 – centrally, problems within the accumulation process itself, which lead to economic breakdown, and laborers’ defense of their material interests, which are universal in scope.

George Steinmetz raises a very pertinent issue when he wonders if my arguments for History1 as the main source of instability are too hasty in pushing aside the importance of History2. He observes, correctly, that I put a great deal of weight on my claim that capitalism can subsist in happy coexistence with practices and institutions in History2, and hence, that an affirmation of its universalizing drive need not blind us to the fact of historical diversity. But, Steinmetz suggests, is it not possible that there might be plenty of instances in which elements of local cultures or practices, in places where capitalism is taking root, might in fact be inimical to its reproduction? If so, should we not take seriously the corrosive powers of History2 for the universalizing tendency of capitalism? I entirely agree with Steinmetz on this, and in fact, I point out in *PTSC* that History2 can block or destabilize capitalist reproduction (pp. 228-229). My argument is not that History2 can never be a source of disruption; it is that whether or not it is so is a highly contingent matter, whereas there are elements of History1 that are systematically in tension with the stability of capitalism. I argue for the asymmetry between the two as sources of instability within capitalism, not for the irrelevance of History2 (p. 229).

Steinmetz also proposes, in a related argument, that I could have tried for a more ramified conception of political forms, presumably in Chapter Five where I discuss the kinds of power relations that are consistent with capitalism. He regrets that I confine my discussion to the labor

process, to the detriment of any consideration of the state or other political institutions. If I had done so, he continues, I might have considered how there have been instances in which colonial states blocked the spread of capitalist relations – not liberalism, but the production relations of capitalism itself. This would be an instance of the actual blockage of the universalizing tendency, even on my definition of the term. Steinmetz is again quite right. In the history of colonialism, there have in fact been plenty of instances in which states impeded the growth of capitalism by giving support to traditional social relations. But my ambition was not to insist that capitalism has taken root in every corner of the globe, or to present colonialism as an engine for capitalism's growth, as Bill Warren (1980) did famously in his work a generation ago. As I say in *PTSC*, whether or not capitalism has in fact taken root in a colonial setting is an empirical matter (see pp. 125 fn.39, 144-45, 145 fn. 31); it did so unevenly, sometimes very slowly, sometimes rapidly, and sometimes it was not until the postcolonial era that it spread. There are even regions where its development continues to be episodic and weak. My argument was that even where such developments occur, they cannot provide support for the Subalternist argument, which are not that capital's universalization might be blocked here and there, but that it either loses its very capacity for universalization (Guha) or never had it in the first place (Chakrabarty), since it is necessarily blocked by History². To put it more precisely, Steinmetz suggests the possibility of a causal property's *realization* being blocked, while the Subalternists argue for that property being *shed* altogether. *PTSC* is ranged against the latter argument, and happily acknowledges the possibility of the former.

The Other Universalism

So, one kind of universalizing process that is defended in *PTSC* is the spread of capitalism around the globe. A second one that occupies a prominent place in the book is the fact of some universal basic needs among human beings, and from that I derive the possibility of real interests that bind together members of a class. In *PTSC*, I show that Partha Chatterjee and Dipesh Chakrabarty deny both the motivational force of basic needs, as well as the salience of individual interests for non-Western actors. They do not reject the very idea of real need and interests – they just think that Eastern minds are not motivated by them. I show both that their arguments against the salience of interests are mistaken, and indeed, that the empirical research of Subalternist historians – including and especially Chatterjee and Chakrabarty – itself demonstrates that non-Western actors are every bit as aware of their objective interests as are western ones. All of the critics seem basically sympathetic to my argument, though Steinmetz and Sewell both express some skepticism toward my positive account of practical reason, Sewell worrying that it amounts to a version of rational choice theory, and Steinmetz seems to think that my view amounts to a denial, or at least a denigration, of the fact that all action is meaning-oriented.

Does my argument amount to a version of rational choice theory? I proposed in *PTSC* that it does not, in large measure because I reject a maximizing model of rationality. But perhaps Sewell is right that this does not merit casting it out of the family of rational choice. In the end, the label matters less than the plausibility of the core arguments. Steinmetz's concerns are more germane here, since they question the viability of my arguments. But he is mistaken if he thinks that my view calls for meaning-free action. The affirmation of rationality does not require that social agents perform their actions outside the meaning universe that they occupy. I go to some lengths in *PTSC* to make this clear (pp. 183-200, esp. 193-196). What it rejects is the idea that the acculturation of social actors can be such as to make them oblivious of their basic needs; I suggest that the pursuit of these needs does not exist outside of culture, but that, because they act

as such a powerful motivational force, cultures have to create codes and conventions that respect and acknowledge them. I cannot develop this point here, for lack of space, but I refer readers to the discussion in *PTSC*, Chapter 8, Sections 3 and 4. My point here is that Steinmetz seems to have misunderstood my argument, and imputed to me a view that I explicitly reject. Now, it could be that I am mistaken in believing that it is possible to uphold the reality of interests, while also allowing that all action is meaningful in orientation. So perhaps it is the case that arguing for basic needs and objective interests requires that we take actors to be asocial or outside of culture. But I do not believe that this is so, and in my view, sociological theory, as it is practiced today, is burdened by a quite profound confusion around this issue.

The needs that I affirm in *PTSC* play a central role in any viable social theory. As Doug Pederson correctly observes, it is on their basis that we can explain the ubiquity of resistance to social domination – especially resistance to wage labor; but, Pederson continues, even the very spread of capitalism is hard to explain except by reference to actors' real needs. It is hard to see why laborers in every part of the world, every culture, in every setting where they are expropriated, end up offering their labor power for sale, if it is not because of their desire to uphold their physical wellbeing. And it is equally hard to see why the wage contract breeds resistance and conflict in every part of the world, if it is not because those same laborers try to defend their autonomy and their well-being against the deprivations of their employers.

Now Michael Schwartz is certainly correct in his observation that while I stress the importance of universal needs and interests, it remains insufficiently developed in the book. The main problem is that while I maintain their ubiquity as sources of motivation, I do not give much of an explanation for why their actuation or efficacy is so uneven. My failure on this score is partly because of space limits – there is only so much a book can do. But it is also for two other reasons. The first is that, as a work of critique, the book will tend to operate on the same level of generality as the theories that it interrogates. Since the basic Subalternist argument is for a denial of individual interests, I naturally strive to demonstrate their salience as a basic social fact. I pay less attention to the variations in their realization. But the second reason is that there is a veritable ocean of social science research that does just this, and Schwartz's scholarship is a great example of some of the best work that assumes rationality on the part of actors and then explains the variations that he points to. My goal in the book was to suggest that this enormous body of work is not vulnerable to the criticisms that PCT makes of it – that it gives short shrift to culture and to agency, that it is parochial, that it denigrates social differences, that it homogenizes the social landscape, etc. And having shown that these criticisms are unfounded, *PTSC* suggested that we can go back to this work to continue the project of understanding the real sources of social contestation, since PCT does not offer much in this direction.

Conclusion

So what *PTSC* argues, in the end, is that Subaltern Studies fails in the case that it makes against the universalizing categories of the Enlightenment, which includes liberal and Marxist theory. This is important, because as I suggest early on in this essay, the Subalternists have made the best and most careful of all the arguments in the postcolonial arsenal. It is important to note what the implications are. Bruce Cumings objects to my characterization of their arguments, in particular to those of Chakrabarty, as Orientalist. He wonders what is wrong with Chakrabarty's ambition to generate a framework that is "attuned to Indian realities and freed of European assumptions." But my criticism is not directed toward Chakrabarty's ambition, since it is one that I entirely endorse. What makes Chakrabarty's arguments Orientalist is not their stated goal,

but their *content*. Insisting that non-Western people do not have a bounded conception of the self, that they are only motivated by obligations to larger groups, that their consciousness is fundamentally religious, while Westerners are basically secular, that the reliance on Reason is a Western convention, that rationality and objectivity are Western – these are the claims that Chakrabarty and his colleagues make, and it is on the basis of these ideas that I characterize them as Orientalist.

It is gratifying to see the response that *PTSC* has generated in so short a span, even though much of it has been hysterical, as I predicted in my concluding chapter. The reason is not hard to fathom – as Ho-fung Hung points out in his introduction, there is a great deal at stake in this debate, not just intellectually, but also politically. PCT has emerged and flourished at a time of general retreat for progressive forces, perhaps more so than any other time in the modern era. For the generation of students and activists just coming of age, the only form of critical or radical theory they have ever encountered is some version of PCT or its cousins. Many of the ideas associated with progressive movements of the past century – of universal emancipation, egalitarianism, class organizing, internationalism – now seem quaint to them, if not odious. These are the ideas I try to defend and revive in *PTSC*. Perhaps Michael Schwartz is right that, in the not too distant future, the theories associated with PCT will seem as little more than a bizarre interlude, a temporary descent into self-absorbed tomfoolery by intellectuals. But here today, it is apparent that these currents, however odious their ideas may be, wield tremendous influence in the intellectual landscape. One can only hope that Schwartz is right and that it will soon be behind us.

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Book Reviews

Ben Selwyn. *The Global Development Crisis*. 2014. Malden, MA: Polity. 224 pages, ISBN 978-0745660158 Paper (\$24.95).

In his 1930 essay “Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren,” Lord Keynes declared, “for at least another hundred years we must pretend to ourselves and to everyone that fair is foul and foul is fair; for foul is useful and fair is not.” Only then could the gods of “avarice and usury ... lead us out of the tunnel of economic necessity into the daylight.” Sacrificing the present for the future was at the heart of the social democratic compact. Workloads would be reduced from shared productivity gains. Capitalists’ animal spirits would be deftly managed by government lion-tamers. Fishing in the afternoon and reading Plato in the evening seemed to loom on the horizon for working classes, as long as they were patient and prudent in their demands.

In his 1952 collection *Ten Great Economists*, Joseph Schumpeter was unimpressed by Keynes’ theoretical cutlery: “A fruit knife is an excellent instrument for peeling a pear. He who uses it in order to attack a steak has only himself to blame for unsatisfactory results.” Keynes hadn’t written a *general* theory at all, Schumpeter observed, just a theory of the British economy. Actually existing capitalism did not remain within the lines airily drawn by methodological nationalism. As Perry Anderson pointed out, “The idea of capitalism in one country, taken literally, is only a bit more plausible than that of socialism [in one country].” Grandchildren of Keynes’ generation watched the global reach of capitalism shred, not fulfill, the social democratic compact.

Like Schumpeter’s collection, Ben Selwyn’s *The Global Development Crisis* focuses on a set of pioneering economists and social thinkers in order to put forth a series of theoretical propositions about the world economy. Compiling and updating recently published articles, the welcome result is a Marxian analysis of historical capitalism more syncretic than dogmatic. Selwyn is an insightful and prolific scholar. He is not looking for the pear peeler but for the steak knife. Where does he find it?

Selwyn begins by mapping out the unequal structures of the world economy. He highlights the inherent conflicts within processes of capital accumulation and class formation. The book relies on the concept of exploitation as the “pre-condition and basis of the capital-labor relation,” operating through the extraction of surplus value through waged labor (p. 5). Selwyn argues capitalist exploitation takes place in multiple social arenas: the workplace, labor market, household, cultural/racial formations, and nature. This seems like conceptual stretching, and makes for a bit of trouble later on; Selwyn admits he mostly pays attention to the first two areas in the book (p. 15). Yet the underlying point is to show the weakness of “residualist” theories which assume solutions to global poverty and underdevelopment can be sought in more economic growth and market inclusion. “Relational” theories investigate how relative and absolute poverty are produced in conjunction with capital accumulation and wealth. To shape his analysis, Selwyn turns to thinkers outside of the straitjacketed neoclassical tradition which Albert Hirschman once labeled “monoeconomics”: List, Marx, Gerschenkron, Trotsky, Schumpeter, Polanyi, and Sen.

Friedrich List, based on his experiences in the early 18th century United States, theorized the “infant industry” approach to state-led development. The laissez-faire cosmopolitanism espoused by British political economy did not ensure catching up to the imperial hegemon but rather guaranteed peripheral impoverishment by kicking away the development ladder. States

needed to shelter nascent manufacturing, promote educational-technical cadres, and collate together a national market economy through infrastructural projects. List is thus the father of what Selwyn calls the “Statist Political Economy” approach to development studies: here we find Alice Amsden, Robert Wade, Ha-Joon Chang, Atul Kohli, and Peter Evans. This school was the loudest critic of neoliberal proclamations that a country could simply trade its way out of poverty. Drawing from Marx’s own writings on List, however, Selwyn teases out two contradictions in the Statist school. Where successful, state-led development relied on heightened repression and exploitation of local workers. Indeed, in his 466-page tome, Kohli (2004) essentially admits that fascism is the best way of fostering industrialization in poorer countries (he relegates the starkness of the comparison to footnotes). Selwyn also points out that List’s unabashed advice for German state-builders was protection at home and military imperialism abroad. These were structurally linked in practice. Thus contemporary state theorists whitewash both the historical record and the theoretical implications of List’s thought. They may hope for a social democratic model, but their own cases show that state-led development, from Stalinist industrialization to East Asian tigers, regards workers as no more than “fuel for the accumulation of capital” (p. 51).

Marx would be a logical source for moving beyond such contradictions, but which Marx? Largely devoid of tiresome Marxology, Selwyn continues in the tradition of Andre Gunder Frank and Giovanni Arrighi by reconstructing Marx as theorist of a global, uneven, contingent, and historically non-linear capitalist system. It is time to take down the barricades from such non-debates as Robert Brenner vs. Immanuel Wallerstein, Selwyn shows, and instead synthesize the 1970s transition debates into a useful theoretical apparatus. Selwyn also constructs a handy typology on the developmental impact of class struggle from Marx’s writings: workers in colonial frontier zones escaping the reach of states and capitalists (the Australian hinterlands); communal peasant organizations resisting the penetration of capitalism (the Russian *mir*); emergent workers’ structural and associational bargaining power forcing the improvement of livelihoods under capitalism (English trade unionism); and the creation of political-economic institutions which undermine capitalism (the 1871 Paris Commune). This is the kernel of a “labor-centered perspective,” which Selwyn argues should replace our current development theories.

Leon Trotsky and Alexander Gerschenkron take us a step further. They both show how state attempts to catch-up in the world economy reshape domestic class relations, which, in turn, can effect and even undercut state efforts. Gerschenkron went beyond List by identifying why particular advantages of backwardness for poorer countries are not replicable over multiple iterations. New institutional innovations, which cannot be predicted beforehand, create the pathways for each generation of late developers. This is the theoretical insight from Gerschenkron’s analysis of German banking vs. Russian statism: each successful case of catch-up development forces changes in the global political economy, resulting in “continual divergence from earlier cases of industrialization” (p. 85). The process makes the Statist school’s advice to repeat late developer examples of the past, Selwyn suggests, mostly irrelevant for policy in poorer countries. Gerschenkron partly developed his thought by reading Trotsky, whose notion of “uneven and combined development” has been resurrected by International Relations scholars such as Justin Rosenberg. Peripheral countries like Russia benefitted from the advantages of backwardness, Trotsky claimed. Yet by rapidly integrating into world economic relations under the “whip of external necessity,” the result was not a mirror of earlier developmental paths. Rather, a combination of new and old forms of social organization ensued. This would likely produce new forms of social conflict as well. High levels of capitalist

exploitation and state repression in late developers made for more explosive cross-class mobilization in response from below. Changes in global political economy after rounds of successful late development also meant that the *disadvantages* of backwardness would multiply. Unmentioned by Selwyn, this is Peter Evans' well-known argument in *Embedded Autonomy*: that state-led development produces its own gravediggers via "the social constituencies that it helps bring into being" (1995: 229). (Given that Evans evokes Marx to make his point, Selwyn is perhaps a bit uncharitable towards the Statist school.)

Selwyn then weaves together Joseph Schumpeter and Marx in a commodity chain perspective of global economic dynamics. Innovations by leading economic sectors not only result from firm-level competition and entrepreneurial search for super-profits, but also from labor struggles along the production nodes of commodity chains. Technological changes and their resultant rents are spatially clustered within wealthy countries. Organizations such as the WTO buttress the borders of an "upgrading club" to which only Northern states can belong. Meanwhile, the spatial disaggregation of production allows transnational corporations to subcontract out high levels of labor exploitation to poorer states. Selwyn is firmly in world-systems territory here, summarizing work by Arrighi, Beverly Silver, and Denis O'Hearn. To tease out Selwyn's point further, one can characterize his argument as such: capitalist creative destruction does not produce an irrevocable race to the bottom or convergence towards a flat world, but rather a global process of uneven and combined development which generates social conflict in new and unexpected locations.

Two chapters devoted to Karl Polanyi and Amartya Sen are impressive but less satisfying. They repeat well-known assessments of these authors' work. Polanyi's conception of an organic double movement against commodification and market society ignores the power dynamics of capitalist social relations. Sen's call for human development along multiple axes beyond economic growth is laudable, yet his benign view of market inclusion is more "residualist" than "relational." Selwyn's critique of both: it's the exploitation, stupid!

Here lies the problem. In placing various mechanisms of domination and exclusion into the conceptual kitchen sink of exploitation, Selwyn is a bit of a residualist himself. Theorists such as Arrighi (also drawing from Marx) identified relational yet separate processes of exploitation and exclusion as mutually constitutive mechanisms of global capitalist dynamics. We cannot explain the one without the other. To lump it all together under a bridging concept of exploitation may be satisfying for critics of capitalism, but it also can be analytically confusing and politically frustrating. Yet by noting how labor struggle is a constitutive element of historical capitalism, Selwyn is pushing in the right direction. His theoretical cutlery is far sharper than the current wave of left-leaning handwringing which sees a blob-like neoliberalism behind every form of social change. By taking these essays into consideration, perhaps our grandchildren will not, to paraphrase Keynes, become enslaved by some defunct economists.

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Kevan Harris

Department of Sociology and Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies, Princeton University

kevanh@princeton.edu

Nicole Constable. *Born Out of Place: Migrant Mothers and the Politics of International Labor*. 2014. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. 259 pages, ISBN 978-0520282025 Paper (\$29.95)

In *Born Out of Place*, Nicole Constable sets out to write about “babies born of migrant worker mothers abroad” (p. xii) and the experiences of migrant mothers living and working in Hong Kong. The contradictions are numerous for these families: temporary migrant workers suddenly tied to a foreign country, domestic workers disciplined privately by their employers and again publicly for their sexuality, currents of opinion from their home societies and the families left behind which at once celebrate migrant women’s contributions yet chastise their babies born abroad. These paradoxical narratives make for a captivating read, as Constable pairs her analysis with rich ethnographic evidence that delves deeply into the intimate and difficult details of the lives of children “born out of place” to their migrant mothers. The book is a fascinating exploration into migrant motherhood from a vantage point that has yet to be studied and theorized—that is, the experience of migrant women who have children during their migratory experience.

Constable situates the experience of migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong who have children while working and living abroad in the problems of contemporary neoliberal migration schemes. She opens her study with a critical analysis of the policies, institutions and cultural logics that have profited from feminized migrant labor, both in the Global North and the Global South. In her succinct and valuable preface, Constable delineates the three main arguments she aims to tackle in her book. The first is that migrant workers are rarely seen as anything but laboring bodies whose services are available for the consumption of their employers. They are shipped out from home countries and received by host ones who accept them as workers only. This restricted conception of migrant women workers makes the possibility of interpreting their lives in a holistic and humanized way impossible. Therefore when migrant women workers have babies or relationships, they are deemed failed workers or immoral women.

Gender is a central analytic in producing the tension between “good migrants” and “good mothers” as it shapes the stigmatized idea of single migrant motherhood. In chapters four and five, Constable writes in-depth profiles of the women and men, the parents of the babies born in Hong Kong, showing how gendered ideas about marriage and motherhood ultimately conflict with the reality of migrant parents’ lives. In chapters six and seven, Constable explores the legal advantages and disadvantages of migrant mothers whose babies are born in Hong Kong. She

discusses the lived experiences of these women and their children on a continuum she calls the “Migratory Status of Mothers,” whereby they experience more or less privileged or precarious statuses which shape their chances to work, stay, or claim legal status for their children. For migrant women who are legally married or have legal work status, Constable argues that patriarchal constraints of “good” motherhood and womanhood nevertheless circumscribe the lives of these relatively “privileged” women. On the other hand, migrant women who occupy precarious positions on the spectrum have few options, such as seeking asylum or filing torture claims and overstaying, that often put them in vulnerable positions legally. Yet the gendered policies cannot keep migrant women from staying in Hong Kong, as it is often the best decision for their babies in terms of generating income, combatting stigma, or staying together as a family. The ability to be a good migrant worker and a good mother is in opposition, thereby supporting Constable’s first argument that women workers are only seen as workers, no more, no less.

The book’s second intervention argues that the efficacy of temporary immigration policies that are supposed to monitor and regulate the provisional stays of migrant women workers in Hong Kong have an opposite effect. In fact, migrant mothers often overstay or use legal avenues to stay in Hong Kong precisely because they are pregnant or have children, thus clashing with the policies’ original intentions. A strong substantiation of her second argument is Constable’s framing of migrant women workers and their children’s lives as articulated through juridical modes. The contradiction in juridical terms here is quite interesting, as the law that is supposed to control and discipline the migrant population also provides migrants the opportunity to circumvent it. In chapter three, Constable describes the legal disciplinary measures, both in Hong Kong and migrant women’s home states of Indonesia and the Philippines, which make it impossible for migrant women to fulfill their duties as domestic workers when they give birth to their babies abroad. Hong Kong laws, such as the “two-week rule” that requires migrant domestic workers to depart fourteen days after termination or the process of filing a labor claim, disqualify women to work legally during times of unemployment, leaving them unable to support their new babies and families at home. Building on her first argument, she shows how the narrow conception of migrant women as strictly workers, and the failure to take into consideration their identities as mothers, merge with the juridical treatment of migrants via immigration policies and legal institutions that then push many women to overstay and work illegally.

The third major argument that Constable makes takes on a transnational examination of the stigma and pressures that migrant women face from family members in their homelands. In what she calls, the “migratory cycle of atonement,” Constable argues that serial migration becomes the only recourse for migrant women because of the shame and stress they face from their families upon return with their babies. Migration and remittances become the saving grace for many single migrant mothers. Constable introduces the concept of “cruel optimism” in the first chapter, borrowing from Lauren Berlant (2011), to discuss the potential and promise of child-rearing in the context of such steep inequality for migrant women. “Cruel optimism” is a helpful concept, as it encapsulates both the hopeful potential migrant women experience as they welcome their babies to the world, and also the difficult context under which migrant women workers make decisions that are often detrimental for them and their children. Chapter eight probes more into the paradox of gender and provides a convincing explanation of why migrant women often choose the solution of cyclical migration to atone for their babies born abroad.

Constable is successful in using these three arguments to demonstrate the chronic problems with temporary migration and the affixed issues of citizenship and belonging. With great care, she blends the theoretical contributions and lived details of migrant mothers and their

babies “born out of place,” arguing that gendered labor demands and the neoliberal response vis-à-vis temporary immigration policies promote a dehumanized and limited perspective on migrant workers, the value of their work, their lives, and the lives they bring into this world. Constable introduces these three arguments early, thereby allowing readers to quickly identify that neoliberal immigration policies are flawed. She then goes on, in the face of that critique, to offer an important portrait of migrant workers as whole people, humanized and multi-faceted, caring and fickle.

Another strength of the book is in the second chapter where Constable describes two trends in the research on migrant domestic workers as either a view from above—an analysis of macro, structural constraints on migration and labor—or a view from below—work on micro interactions and thick descriptions of how migrant women make meanings of their lives. She positions herself somewhere in the middle of these currents. As the book progresses, Constable writes a fair analysis of laws and policies as well as providing lengthy stories of the participants in her study, thus giving the reader a glimpse into how individuals negotiate and work within structures. In this chapter, Constable reports on her knotty positionality as a researcher that is not a “detached observer.” Through her participant observation and immersion in her participants’ lives, she describes the complicated ways her research process was intertwined in the even more complicated lives and needs of migrant mothers and their babies. It is refreshing to see a scholar take seriously how ethnography can be a way to understand the banal but also admit that it is challenging and problematic. The methodology piece of the book honestly reveals that the dynamics of research are often extractive, even if researchers are always trying to figure out how to “give back.” Overall, Constable is successful in fulfilling her stated objective to contribute to the literature through using a middle ground approach in analyzing the juridical modes that define the lives of migrant mothers and their babies. Moreover, she also admirably expresses the hope that her work can contribute to a social justice struggle to make these families’ lives visible.

Some issues that remain are the absence of the discussion of children that were born to their mothers before migration and the status of their transnational relationships to them. Additionally, there were many stories of violence in the ethnographic examples of migrant mothers, and giving context about the patriarchal logics of migrant masculinity in what R.W. Connell calls the “world gender order” could have been beneficial to situate how migrant femininity and masculinity are produced together. In the main, Constable’s book will be useful for those who are interested in exploring the literature on global sociology, immigration, gender, domestic workers, and ethnography.

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Valerie Francisco, Ph.D.

Department of Sociology and Social Work, University of Portland

Francisco@up.edu

Cynthia Enloe. *Seriously! Investigating Crashes and Crises as if Women Mattered*. 2013. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. 248 pages, ISBN 978-0520275379 Paper (\$29.95).

Most academics and activists who focus on questions of gender are well aware of the adverse effects of particular development policies or programs on women, most of which assume that women are victims whose interests and needs are peripheral to policy planning or implementation. When women are included, it is generally only in programs designed and implemented for their direct participation. A number of critical feminist analyses of policy processes, however, recognize that women are integral to all social, economic, and political practices, whether they are direct beneficiaries or not, and challenge the presumption of gender-neutral policies and interventions. Among this latter group, Cynthia Enloe, in *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Sense of International Politics* (first published in 1989 and reissued in 2000), was among an early group of scholars who challenged the notion of gender neutrality and argued, instead, that women are constitutive of all social processes. As a prolific writer whose contributions have been central to discussions across the social sciences for more than twenty-five years, Enloe recognizes that despite years of struggle, women's interests and concerns continue to be excluded in policy planning and in aid and development program implementation. Offering a political economy of gender, her recent contribution, *Seriously! Investigating Crashes and Crises as if Women Mattered*, confirms the need to treat women's, interests, place, and experiences seriously. This most recent contribution leads one to ask what has transpired in the intervening 25 years since she first raised this issue that requires reconfirmation of what, by many accounts, should by this time, be obvious to activists and academics alike. What does *Seriously!* offer as a counterpoint to those for whom women continue to be an afterthought in policy and program implementation and in analyses of crises that characterize the current conjuncture?

To respond to the question of why there is a need to reconfirm the importance of gender difference and patterns of women's exclusion, it is necessary to reflect on the consequences of the sustained attack on women's rights in the U.S. and on what this regressive turn might mean for current undergraduates who are an important audience for *Seriously!*. I am especially attentive to this constituency since, as director of a feminist, gender, and sexualities studies program, I have been directly engaged with students who have varied responses to the study of gender or feminism. It is immediately clear, for instance, that some students take for granted the hard fought struggles of an earlier generation to gain reproductive choice or challenge institutional discrimination. Others presume, without much historical reflection, that understanding gender relations, or the differential effects of policy or program reforms on women and men, is neither a relevant nor significant concern. For these students, Enloe's persistent refrain—we must take women seriously—acknowledges and addresses these presumptions and the ongoing need for their repetition and elaboration. The important contribution of *Seriously!* is to offer the current generation of students suggestive examples for how and why women matter in analyses and interpretations of various policy and program interventions and the significance of movements from below in demanding such recognition.

Seriously! is divided into nine chapters that highlight Enloe's creativity as a feminist political scientist of international relations. The narrative is methodologically innovative, engaging a comparative historical lens that draws on her early experience in Malaysia. She opens with personal reflections on her early career decision not to focus on women and what this

experience, and being a young and lone woman faculty member in a political science department, has meant for her scholarship and activism. For students and activist neophytes, these experiences emphasize the criticality of historically grounded personal biography in understanding processes of social change and the role of campus and community activism in its realization. Two case studies animate the text, one, the Dominique Strauss-Khan (DSK) Affair and the banking crash of 2008, and a second, the contemporary recession. Through these accounts, Enloe brings to bear an understanding of contemporary crashes and crises that have usually been examined as if gender didn't matter—where the term “men” refers to people, not men, and women are nowhere in sight, except when they are the specific focus of research or victims of these happenings.

Examining the “DSK” affair and the financial crisis in Europe and the U.S., Enloe skillfully employs case studies and debate to highlight macro-level processes and relations. In the DSK affair, for example, she showcases what we can learn when recognizing that people, but importantly organizations, too, produce cultural valuations that shape and valorize acceptable behavior and legitimate particular policy formulations. Workplace culture is thus important for understanding the relations of production in organizational settings and the shift from prizing thrift and solidarity, reminiscent of a bygone era, to the “shameless indulgence in luxurious consumption out of the reach of most of their fellow citizens” (p. 79). As importantly, Enloe reveals how in order to fulfill the IMF's loan requirements, national governments seek to maximize local citizens' unpaid and low-paid labor, reduce the number of public employees, and cut back on publically-funded social services. These structural adjustment requirements not only affect women and men differently, but they also depend on women's labor for their fulfillment. Thus, by following Enloe's admonition to take women seriously, we not only recognize the differential effects of policy-level practices on different constituencies but also come to appreciate how women's labor is mobilized and deployed in this new macro-social environment. Here, it may be appropriate to note that while many readers of the *JWSR* recognize the differential class or race effects of policy reform, they often fail to address the gendered effects of these same reforms.

Enloe's second critical contribution is her understanding of women during periods of recession. Like their counterparts in aid-dependent economies forced to respond to the demands of the International Monetary Fund, reductions in government jobs and cutbacks of social services disproportionately affect women. Enloe uses this finding, and the efforts of the Women's Scholars Forum, a feminist scholars network whose focus is on U.S. federal policy recommendations where women matter, to argue against homogenizing categories. She emphasizes, instead, the criticality of stimulus plans that are cognizant of their impact on different constituencies. Enloe alerts her readers to the worrisome fact that economic anxiety can, and often does, enable misogyny, especially when gender differences are ignored.

Subsequent chapters include a conversation with Cynthia Cockburn, a fellow activist scholar working at the intersection of gender and peace and conflict studies. Here, Enloe reveals the significance of their transnational experience for understanding ongoing efforts to militarize daily life in ways that force women's complicity. In a conversation with Nadine Puechguirbal, another peace studies political scientist who has worked with the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross in Haiti, Enloe reveals the costs of ignoring women in development planning made evident when donors prioritize institutional efficiencies, rather than the needs of families for food and resources. Highlighting how ignorance about women and gender relations results in failed promises and ineffective programs, these chapters promise to

aid students in understanding relations among development policy, planning, and intervention, and the costs of ignoring women as agents of their lives, their families, and their communities.

The strategic question—when and how should women feature in processes of change—centers Enloe’s “dinner party” discussion in the final chapter. Like its counterpart in the revolutionary Sandinista movement of the 1980s, Enloe argues that gender issues continue to be viewed as subordinate to other forms of economic and social insecurity and in political programs for change. At the dinner party discussion of the post “Arab Spring” uprisings, various women note that “women’s issues and women’s participation get pushed aside” as male compatriots affirm that they “have to get down to the serious business of constructing a new political system” (p. 166). Also telling in the strategic relationship between *real politiks* and women’s concerns is the idea held by some that “the oppression of women is good for political order” (p. 138). This relation, between gender violence and political order, often implicitly assumed, undergirds policy dialogue and helps to explain the resistance of so many governments to activists who fight against various forms of violence against women, e.g., domestic violence, date, marital, and wartime rape, and sex trafficking.

While these critical themes in *Seriously!* contribute significantly to asserting that gender differences, micro-dynamics of everyday life, transnational intersections, and institutional politics matter in shaping policy prescriptions and implementation, a critical engagement with the particularities of neoliberalism or the specific character of the current global crisis would have been welcome. In what ways, for example, does the current crisis alter patterns of social inclusion and exclusion in the body politic? How might greater attention to diversity among women explain patriarchal relations and forms of gendered violence? Also important is the recognition that, like many of the programs that were the product of struggles since the 1970s, feminist and gender studies programs have been at the cutting edge of theory, interdisciplinarity, methodological inventiveness, and foci that explore the everyday worlds of people as well as global processes and transnational relations. Important as well would have been the inclusion of feminist or queer theory critique, rather than a primary focus on gender, which has the effect of treating gender as a dichotomous variable. Omissions of these themes means that while Enloe ably attends to the ways in which gender-neutral arguments ignore women and demasculinize men, her analytic remains within a mainstream political science framework that ignores sexuality and gives scant attention to race and class differences. Thus, while providing the important, and necessary, reminder to take women seriously, Enloe unfortunately misses the opportunity to incorporate insights learned over the past 25 years to offer what she acknowledges as a “feminist-informed gender analysis” (p. 184). Such an analysis would challenge generalized understandings of patriarchy, the contradictions associated with treating women as a homogeneous social category, and the theoretical contributions that have emerged from queer and postcolonial studies over the past thirty years.

Shelley Feldman

Department of Development Sociology, Cornell University

rf12@cornell.edu

David West. 2013. *Social Movements in Global Politics*. Malden, MA: Polity. 251 Pages, ISBN 978-0745649603 Paper (\$24.95).

Social movement scholarship is often plagued with binary accounts that present movements and movement outcomes through a lens of either totalizing optimism or postmodern skepticism. David West's book, *Social Movements in Global Politics*, suffers from neither of these problems. As West reminds us throughout his work, "[b]oth optimism and pessimism are inappropriate reactions to our current situation because the future depends on what we now collectively decide to do" (p. 225). West formulates an activist conception of politics and analyzes the relationship between social movements and political institutions in order to illustrate the power of individual and collective action. West's book seamlessly blends a diverse array of sources, from political philosophy to social movement scholarship to critical theory, in order to highlight the often contradictory ways in which global politics and social movements interact to alter not only the identities of global actors, but the very trajectory of political institutions and world historical forces.

Part I of West's Book, appropriately titled "Foundations," differentiates between institutional and extra-institutional forms of politics. For West, narrowing the focus to institutional politics obscures both the role and the impact of social movements in shaping history. In order to illustrate the numerous ways that social movements have contributed to the creation of contemporary politics, West discusses the important role that extra-institutional politics played in shaping the modern nation-state in Europe and in the creation of the working class in the wake of the industrial revolution. Through his historical sketch, West tackles topics such as the Reformation, the French Revolution, and the bourgeois social movements that arose in response to the broadening and deepening of capitalism. West demonstrates how social movements, especially movements that neglected parliamentary and revolutionary routes to socialism, have been "hidden from history" in an effort to discourage extra-institutional forms of politics (p. 44). West also sets the stage for the emergence of "new" social movements in the late 1960s that placed less emphasis on economic issues and the importance of state capture as a means to ameliorate injustice.

Part II "Social Movements in Contemporary Politics" explores the rich array of social movements that emerged after WWII, especially the array of movements that privileged issues of race, gender, sexuality, nuclear disarmament and the environment over class issues. West provides brief overviews of the Civil Rights Movement, the counter culture of the 1960s, student radicalism, and the opposition to the Vietnam War before detailing the events of May 1968 in France and, subsequently, the death of the Old Left. Following the 1968 events, West describes how social movements changed on two related levels: "at the level of theory and ideology; and at the practical level of social movements and political events" (p. 70). At the level of theory and ideology, movement actors became increasingly disillusioned with Marxist notions of class conflict and the centrality of proletarian revolution. Activists began to believe that social transformation could only occur by mustering broad coalitions of actors and complementing economic change with cultural alterations of society. Relatedly, movement actors were placing less stock in the role of institutionalized politics, the labor movement, and the need for rigid organization. At the level of social movements and political events, the 1968 events spurred on a wave of movements such as second-wave feminism, sexual liberation movements, gay liberation, and Black Power.

West emphasizes the role of identity in politicizing both social movement actors and issues previously excluded from the realm of institutional politics. For West, identity politics help to undermine oppression by empowering actors to recognize their own positions of inequality and, as a result, to become liberated from them. The strategy that actors employ to overcome oppression is not only “worthwhile in its own right, it will also help to dislodge institutional and economic forms of subordination as well” (p. 83). The danger of identity politics, however, is that an explicit focus on identity may obscure the role that structural forces play in creating the conditions of oppression in the first place. As West reminds us, “identity politics supplements and enriches, but does not replace other political-legal and economic dimensions of struggle” (p. 77). A further problematic aspect of identity politics, for West, is the potential for social movements centered on issues of identity to fragment as a result of both the transient natures of identities as well as the separatist nature inherent in identity-based movements.

As West’s account makes clear, it appears unlikely that we will see a complete revival of labor and materialist social movements. Likewise, although the rise of identity politics has resulted in a plethora of new social movements, the negative aspects of identity politics lead us to question some of the outcomes that such movements have generated. Exploring how autonomous global social movements may coalesce, West posits two potential avenues: the politics of survival and the new politics of exploitation. For West, the politics of survival consists of an amalgamation of the peace, environmental, and green movements. The politics of survival is concerned with traditional questions of contemporary environmentalism—drawn from an array of accounts such as deep ecology, humanistic ecology, eco-capitalism and eco-socialism—as well as a range of issues that are characteristic of new social movements. According to West, the politics of survival combines ecological activism with “commitments to gender equality, the rights of gays, lesbian and other sexual minorities, social equality, participatory or ‘grassroots’ democracy, international justice, nuclear disarmament and peace” (p. 103). The new politics of exploitation, for West, is an outgrowth of corporate-led neoliberal globalization, which exacerbates inequalities of wealth and power and has led to a downward spiraling of labor and environmental standards across the globe. Like the politics of survival, West illustrates how the new politics of exploitation borrows certain aspects from the ideology and practice of revolutionary socialism and social democracy, but differs from earlier movements in its “self-conscious emphasis on extra-institutional activism within civil society, which it has inherited from earlier waves of activism, including those of the new social movements” (p. 129). Here, West differentiates between spatial globalization and economic globalization and, by extension, the differences espoused by anti-globalization activists and alter-globalization activists. Of course, there are no obvious or automatic solutions to global environmental degradation and the proliferation of neoliberal globalization, but West argues that an adequate response to both requires an energetic global civil society that represents a plurality of issues, that spans the gap between institutional and extra-institutional forms of politics, and that incorporates the ideology and actions of social movements, both new and old.

The final section “Theories of Social Movements” traces the origins and evolution of theoretical accounts of movements and movement politics before offering a critical evaluation and reappraisal of movement theories and positing a new research approach. West traces the development of social movement thought from its earliest period when collective behavior was considered irrational, through to the emergence of resource mobilization, framing, and new social movement approaches. While not as exhaustive as similar accounts (e.g. Piven and

Cloward 1977; McAdam 1982) his summary is succinct enough to explain the “normative shift” that took place in the social sciences with “attempts to explain the distinctive rationality of collective *action* as demonstrated by successful social movements” (p. 153, emphasis in original). Even after the normative shift occurred, however, West argues that social movement scholarship was dominated by “formal approaches” which “focus on those features of extra-institutional politics that distinguish social movements generally from institutionalized and organized forms of politics” (p. 172). The problem, for West, is that formal approaches are unable to live up to their lofty expectations of explanatory models, as they are overly concerned with conceptualizing more and more nuanced features of social movements.

In an effort to strike a path forward, West concludes his book by suggesting some foundational principles for a critical theory of social movements. West’s recommendations in this regard attempt to toe the line between “dogmatic” theories of society and “unhelpful postmodern scepticism” (p. 201). In the tradition of the Frankfurt School, West sees a critical theory of social movements as one that renounces totalizing accounts of society and blueprints for social movement action. Instead, the critical theorist “should be committed to acknowledging multiple perspectives, experiences and voices. Theory should provide a ‘political toolbox’ for social movements” (p. 203). In this sense, however, a critical theory should not necessarily seek to provide tools to already politicized actors but, instead, should allow individuals to recognize the emancipatory potential of their own actions. Although a critical theory of social movements should reject totalizing accounts of society and recognize the plurality of voices and experiences, West argues that “we have no choice but strive for some kind of agreement around normative framework and knowledge of reality” (p. 217). West closes with “a few speculative and sketchy remarks” on what a common framework might look like. West’s argument is grounded in his earlier discussions of the concept of nature and green ideology. He readily admits, however, that environmental ideas and green ideology are results of historical factors, and, as such, there is no reason to expect that a normative concept of nature can provide a basis for contemporary social movements. That said, West does see the concept of nature as compatible with a diverse array of movement goals and one that can successfully incorporate both new social movements and classical materialist and economic concerns.

If there is a blind spot in West’s analysis, it is his failure to incorporate any discussion of the World Social Forum (WSF) into his empirical account. In his analysis of the problems associated with the current path of neoliberal globalization and the potential ameliorative effects of social movements, West argues that “[a]n adequate response to corporate globalization requires...a more active, expansive and powerful global civil society.” The omission of the WSF, therefore, is surprising, not only because the WSF represents perhaps the most burgeoning global civil society, but, as Smith and Wiest (2012) have argued, it is one of the most important political developments of the new millennium. Given the focus of his book on social movements and global politics, he misses an excellent opportunity to apply his critical theory of social movements to a global coalition of autonomous movement actors. West’s neglect of the WSF is even more mystifying given his affinity for using the WSF’s slogan “another world is possible,” and the fact that he describes in lucid detail numerous antecedents of the WSF and the changing global processes that, in substantive ways, informed the WSF’s formation and organizational structure.

Another criticism of the text is that, in some ways, West fails to apply the research approach he lays out in his concluding chapter to the movements that he summarizes earlier in the text. For example, West’s discussions of the Civil Rights and feminist movements are

largely orthodox accounts that extoll the benefits of these movements without critically evaluating the gains made. It would have been interesting to see West engage with the existing critical theories of these movements, such as Bell's (1992) reassessment of the Civil Rights movement or Fraser's (2013) critique of second wave feminism, in order to illustrate how a critical theory of social movements is useful not only for orienting the study of future movements, but also for reconsidering movements of the past. The book also suffers from some degree of Western bias. This is not to say that West ignores movements and politics that occur in peripheral and semi-peripheral states, but that he goes into substantive detail describing movements in core countries while providing only cursory reference to movements and politics in the Global South.

These criticisms notwithstanding, West has written an excellent book. *Social Movements in Global Politics* is accessible enough to function as an introductory text to social movements, yet remains rich with West's interpretation of the nuances of political philosophy, global politics, and critical theory. West concludes each chapter with assessments and critiques that present readers with a plurality of views, and his extensive bibliography and recommendations for further reading illuminate a robust literature. West's book is an invaluable addition to social movement scholarship, and his formulation of a critical theory of social movements will provoke discussion for years to come.

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Zachary McKenney
Department of Sociology, University of Tennessee-Knoxville
zmckenne@utk.edu

Kojin Karatani. 2014. *The Structure of World History: From Modes of Production to Modes of Exchange*. (Trans. by Michael K. Bourdaghs). Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 352 pages, ISBN 978-0822356769 Paper (\$22.98).

The lived experience of twenty-first century globalization urges academics to provide a more cosmopolitan view of the long-term history of humanity. Scholars have embraced this challenge in different ways. The universalist approach of ‘big history’ looks all the way back to the Big Bang, seeking to integrate human knowledge across natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities. Comparatively particularistic histories trace the global movement of specific ideas, objects, diseases, human populations and individuals that have moved across borders and continents. Both these framings of global history challenge old narratives of the ‘rise of the west,’ comparisons of ‘world civilizations,’ and histories of ‘independent’ nation-states. They avoid compartmentalized contrasts between us and them, the west and the rest, the developed and underdeveloped. This new consciousness seeks to envision world history as connected, criss-crossed, and entangled. This is not an easy task. Many of these efforts have been accused of being reductionist, selective, eclectic or teleological.

Karatani’s *The Structure of World History* avoids those pitfalls by approaching world history through a carefully selected set of working concepts. Originally published in Japanese in 2010, this is the fifth of Karatani’s books to be introduced to the Anglophone world. Trained as a literary critic, Karatani earned wider notice beyond Japan with the translation of his *Transcritique: On Kant and Marx*. In that book, he articulated a theoretical model that recognizes Capital, Nation and State as a trinity (i.e. Borromean knot), rejecting the image of Capital as base with Nation and State as mere superstructure. In his more recent book, he extends on this insight through a discussion of world history, shifting from Marx’s concept of ‘mode of production’ to that of a broader ‘mode of exchange.’ The concept of ‘exchange’ in his model is defined as intercourse or traffic (Germany: *Verkehr*) in a general sense. Marx uses this term frequently in *The German Ideology* to describe various kinds of exchange relations within and between communities, such as sharing, trade and war. In that text, Marx lays out his ontological theory of history, namely that the very existence of humanity is based on humans’ exchanges with nature (metabolism, *Stoffwechsel*) and with other humans (intercourse, *Verkehr*). Drawing from this early work, Karatani invites us to move beyond Marx’s *Capital*, which dealt only with this one form of intercourse as defined by commodity exchange. Karatani proposes four major types of exchange: reciprocity (Mode A), plunder-redistribution (Mode B), commodity exchange (Mode C), and association (Mode D). These modes of exchange can be differentiated as either reciprocal or non-reciprocal, and as either free or unfree (see the table below). Only the first three modes have predominated in particular periods of human history thus far. For Karatani, the last one is proposed as a “regulative idea.”

	Non-Reciprocal	Reciprocal
Unfree	B: plunder-redistribution [world-empire]	A: reciprocity / gift-return [mini-system]
Free	C: commodity exchange [world-economy]	D: Association [X]

In many ways, these modes of exchange correspond to Polanyi's forms of integration, i.e. reciprocity, redistribution, money-making and house-holding. This book is clearly informed by Polanyi's work, and a related body of archaeological and anthropological studies. However, Karatani's modes of exchange differ from the theoretical typology of human economies that Polanyi puts forth as alternatives to the self-regulating market. Without burdening himself with the critique of capitalism, Karatani substantiates these forms on their own terms. He explains these social formations with lucid theoretical reasoning, and draws from a broad historical and geographical canvas to illustrate them.

In this model, the concept of reciprocity in Mode A is more than just a simple idea of gifting and counter-gifting out of goodwill. Drawing from Sahlins, Karatani emphasizes that gifting, potlatch and blood vendetta are forms of reciprocity that prevail in clan-based societies. These mechanisms all have a similar levelling effect, preventing the concentration of power and the institution of a hierarchical state. Karatani characterizes this mode of exchange as reciprocal but also unfree, since individuals and sub-groups are bound by communal obligations. In cases where distinct communities are tied together through fictive brotherhood or confederation, he draws from world-system analysis and relates this mode of exchange to the concept of 'mini-systems.'

Mode B or plunder-redistribution is characterized by non-reciprocal and unfree relations of vertical exchange. Drawing from Hobbes, Karatani argues that the institution of the hierarchical state emerges through the conquest of sedentary communities by an external power, i.e. when the act of pillage is further institutionalized into a permanent plunder. This mode of exchange reaches its most advanced form when intermediate powers (e.g. feudal lords or priests) are marginalized through the centralization of imperial power. Such bureaucratic and despotic power was realized historically in many 'Asiatic' states or 'world-empires' (e.g. Egypt, Russia, Mesopotamia, China, India). This did not arise in Greece and Rome where city-states and sedentary communities continued to share power without formal centralization. Drawing from Wittfogel's triad of core, sub-margin and margin, Karatani argues that the formation of feudalism in Europe and Japan can be explained by the geopolitical position of these regions at the sub-margin of world-empires.

The despotic power of world empires constrained the development of mode C, i.e. the exchange of commodities through money. For Karatani, the root form of Mode C (i.e. trade and markets) has existed alongside the other two modes throughout human history. Many archaeological studies have shown that either barter trade or trade with specified monetary objects was a common practice between two communities, in particular on the edges of world-empires. In fact, empire-states often depended on market mechanisms to facilitate the process of redistribution within vast imperial territories. Minting sovereign coins and promoting their circulation through taxation makes it easier for the state to mobilize provisions and materiel. This is not yet a full expression of Mode C, as it remains fully subsumed to the empire-state.

Mode C advances further only in the sub-margins of world-empire. Where state monopoly and redistribution power is weak, trade competition and war-making are more prevalent. Europe, where maritime city-states remained partly autonomous from Roman rule, proved an especially suitable environment for Mode C. The emergence of absolutism, an alliance between the despotic state and merchant capital, represents the historical reconciliation of Mode B and Mode C. Their cooperation eventually transformed world history by drawing from the abundant resources of the Americas. The global circulation of precious metals as world-money

eventually unified the global regimes of value, making possible a singular world-economy composed of sovereign nation-states.

This full penetration of a money economy ultimately marginalizes both Mode A and Mode B, by freeing individuals from communal obligations and allowing the rise of a bourgeoisie able to resist arbitrary plunder by the state. In this way, Karatani argues that Mode C is ‘freed’ from communal obligations and state despotism. However, the unlimited accumulation of money, in contrast to limited accession of social status in Mode A, creates an unprecedented class society constituted by the non-reciprocal relation between money owners and commodity owners. Mode C therefore represents the age of capital as we know it.

Lastly, without concrete historical references, it is difficult to imagine the embodiment of Mode D, which is both reciprocal and free. Karatani refers to this potential form of associationalism simply as “X”, a regulative idea—rather than as a political blueprint of the kind that inspired communist revolutions from the second half of 19th century. To him, a world beyond capitalism would be a world in which the reciprocity of Mode A is reconstituted in a higher dimension (i.e. the return of the repressed) retaining individual freedom. According to Karatani, a closely related form of intercourse emerged among nomadic hunter-gatherer peoples before the sedentary revolution, when pooling and the sharing of captured spoils was the dominant mode of exchange. The sparse density of human population allowed members of nomadic groups the freedom to exit the community and avoid communal obligations or hierarchical state plunder. As these societies relied heavily on the abundance of nature, magic and animistic religions played crucial roles in regulating the exchange between human and nature. Speculating on a future expression of Mode D, Karatani looks to the potential role of world religion as a means of realizing Kant’s universal moral principle, i.e. for each man to treat every other man as an end in himself, not as a means to an end.

Overall, Karatani not only provides a solid theoretical account of each mode of exchange, but also suggests a structure of world history. The social formations of different historical periods and geographies involve specific articulations of these modes of exchange. By constructing a simple but powerful multivalent model, he provides an alternative to existing theoretical explanations of the origin of the modern capitalist world. He transcends the dispute between Eurocentric and Sino-centric approaches widely debated since the publication of Pomeranz’s (2001) *The Great Divergence*. In place of a singular conception of development, Karatani envisions a truly world-historical perspective. Moreover, his unique approach to world history demonstrates the value of establishing a more constructive dialogue between philosophy, anthropology, sociology, economics and historical studies. I would suggest that we can carry his integrated approach further in two ways. On the one hand, we should examine the validity of this theoretical model through further empirical studies. On the other, we should continue to develop a more concrete vision of Mode D by exercising our sociological imagination in reference to the constitutive elements of Mode A (e.g. patriarchy, patrimony, clan, caste, house-holding). Karatani allows us to rethink these concepts, not as mere pre-modern vestiges, but as a basis for analyzing the substantive possibilities of Mode D.

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Yamoi Pham
Department of Sociology, Binghamton University
ypham1@binghamton.edu