



Moving toward Theory for the 21st Century: The Centrality of Nonwestern Semiperipheries to World Ethnic/Racial Inequality

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Abstract

While there has been much attention to the economic, political, and transformative potential of the semiperiphery, scholars have failed to explore the ways in which this zone of the world-system causes, contributes to, and exacerbates world ethnic/racial inequality. By 2015, a majority of the world's population is concentrated in 41 nonwestern semiperipheries that generate 40 percent of the world Gross Domestic Product. For those reasons, this essay decenters analysis of global ethnic/racial inequality by bringing the nonwestern semiperiphery to the foreground. Part I examines the ascent of nonwestern semiperipheries over the last half century, calling into question the popular "global apartheid model" which posits "white supremacy" as the singular cause of global ethnic/racial inequality. In Part II, we conceptualize, and present empirical data to support, ten conjunctures between the nonwestern semiperipheries and world ethnic/racial inequality. Part III offers a "theoretical retrenchment" in which we call for new approaches that bring the nonwestern semiperiphery to the foreground of theory and research about global ethnic/racial inequality. We argue that future theory building must pay particular attention to the rise of the Asian semiperiphery where two-fifths of world population is concentrated. Drawing upon previous world-systems research, we aggregate and update lists of countries in the core, semiperiphery and periphery in 1960, 1980 and 2015.

Keywords: semiperiphery, transnational capitalist class, nonwestern state, ethnicity, race, global apartheid, global inequality



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We must stand on the ground of what I shall call the unexcluded middle. . . if we are to arrive at a meaningful understanding of reality (Immanuel Wallerstein 2004b: 77).

Something is different from what has existed over the last five centuries. Peoples peripheralized by capitalist world expansion, who seemed for a long time to accept their fate, have over the past 50 years not been accepting it any longer and will accept it less and less in the future (Samir Amin 1996: 12).

Despite ongoing debate about definition and operationalization of the concept (Peschard 2005), the *semiperiphery* remains central to world-systems analysis and to globalization studies. Many scholars (e.g., Chase-Dunn 1989, Terlouw 2002, Peschard 2005, Worth and Moore 2009, Radice 2009, Becker 2013) argue that the semiperiphery has had broader interdisciplinary impact on scholarship than any other world-systems concept. From the vantage point of the world-systems perspective in which this concept was born, the semiperiphery is a “permanent feature of the world-system that can be clearly marked out from core and peripheral positions” (Arrighi 1985: 245). From the standpoint of scholars of globalization, there is clearly a middle tier of countries that is challenging the core in what they perceive to be new directions in the early 21st century (Worth and Moore 2009). Recently, much attention has been directed toward refining the concept. Since 2000, fourteen books that focus on the semiperiphery have been published in English, and 45 others list “semiperiphery” as a keyword. One European press has created a new book series to focus on “globalization and the semiperiphery.” The term semiperiphery appears in at least twelve academic specialty handbooks outside the world-system perspective (e.g., international relations, political science, development, migration). Since 2000, journal articles about the semiperiphery have been published at four times the level at which the concept was explored in the 1980s, soon after the concept was introduced.¹ The accumulated body of literature would grow exponentially if we included the relevant literature generated by international development agencies and activist organizations and those academic books and articles that embrace the idea but employ different terms (e.g. BRICS, emerging economies).

Despite increasing scholarly interest, there is a glaring gap in the literature about the semiperiphery. While there has been much attention to the economic, political, and transformative potential of this zone of the world-system, scholars have failed to explore the ways in which

¹ Between 1980-1989, there were seven journal articles, compared to 27 since 2000. We acquired this information through searches of the SocINDEX and the Social Science Citation Index in our university library database.

semiperipheries cause, contribute to, and exacerbate world ethnic/racial inequality.² At the turn of the 21st century, nonwestern semiperipheries host three-fifths of world population (see Table 1) and most of the world's diverse array of ethnic groups.³ As a consequence, the numbers of peoples impacted by ethnic/racial inequality, exploitation and conflict in these semiperipheries far exceeds the incidence of ethnic/racial discrimination in either the core or the periphery. Moreover, there is a higher incidence of ethnic conflict and public protest in semiperipheries than in either of the other two zones of the world-system (Chase-Dunn 1990, Alfatooni and Allen 1991, Olzak 1998, Dunaway 2003). Despite the attention that investment firms and publications (e.g., Forbes, Hurun Research Institute) pay to the increasing ethnic diversity of the world's richest capitalists, scholars have not examined the degree to which nonwesterners have joined the transnational capitalist class since 1995.

For those reasons, we seek to *decenter* analysis of global ethnic/racial inequality by bringing the nonwestern semiperiphery to the foreground. By 2015, a majority of the world's population is concentrated in 41 nonwestern semiperipheries (see Table 5) that generate more than 40 percent of the world Gross Domestic Product. Part I examines the ascent of nonwestern semiperipheries over the last half century, calling into question the popular “global apartheid model” which posits “white supremacy” as the cause of global ethnic/racial inequality. In Part II, we conceptualize—and present empirical data to support— ten conjunctures between the nonwestern semiperipheries and world ethnic/racial inequality. Part III offers a “theoretical retrenchment” in which we call for new approaches that bring the nonwestern semiperiphery to the foreground of theory and research about global ethnic/racial inequality. We argue that future theory building must pay particular attention to the rise of the Asian semiperiphery where two-fifths of world population is concentrated. Throughout the essay, we employ the shortened term ethnic/racial to mean “ethnic and/or racial.” We list “ethnic” first to reflect the reality that ethnic groups far outnumber racial identities in the world's societies (Wimmer 2013, Morning 2010, see also Table 10).⁴ Drawing upon previous world-systems research, we aggregate and update lists of countries in the core, semiperiphery and periphery in 1960, 1980 and 2015.

² For instance, analyses of the BRICS have multiplied (e.g., Becker 2013, Lo and Hiscock 2014, Bond and Garcia 2015, Kiely 2015, Struenkel 2015). With the exception of limited attention to China, those studies ignore ethnic/racial exploitation and conflict.

³ Contrary to the claims of Lee (2009), world-systems analysts have been placing a majority of the world's population in the semiperiphery since 1980 (see Table 1).

⁴ We agree with Bonilla-Silva (1999: 900-902) that “racial and ethnic categories as social constructions are remarkably similar. . . . Yet even though constructs exhibit similarities, one is not necessarily warranted in regarding them as being the same. . . or, more significantly, in assuming that they produce the same social effects. . . . Race and ethnicity are different in that they are produced by different histories.”

Table 1. Ascent of the Semiperipheries, 1960-2015

World-System Zone/Geographical Area	1960 Countries	1960 % World Pop.	1980 Countries	1980 % World Pop.	2015 Countries	2015 % World Pop.
CORE		9.32		12.14		10.73
WESTERN SEMIPERIPHERY	Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain	5.89	Greece, Ireland, New Zealand, Portugal	0.05	Cyprus, Greece, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal	0.30
NONWESTERN SEMIPERIPHERY		22.80		57.46		60.43
Asia (East, South & Southeast)	Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Taiwan	8.23	China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand	41.03	China, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, China SAR: Taiwan	43.48
Socialist/Post-Socialist Eastern Europe	Hungary, USSR, Yugoslavia	7.26	Hungary, Romania, USSR	6.76	Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Kazakstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia	3.25
Latin America	Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Panama, Venezuela	3.31	Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Venezuela	5.74	Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, Uruguay, Venezuela	6.57
Middle East & North Africa	Egypt, Israel, Morocco, Turkey	2.13	Israel, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates	1.66	Algeria, Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates	3.47
Subsaharan Africa	Nigeria, South Africa	1.80	Nigeria, South Africa	2.20	Nigeria, South Africa	3.65
Caribbean	Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago	0.07	Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago	0.07	Bahamas	0.01
PERIPHERY		61.99		30.35		28.54

Sources and Notes: 1960 and 1980 country lists from Arrighi and Drangel (1986) and Mahutga and Smith (2011). For 1980, we added a few high income oil exporters to the semiperiphery. For 2015 sources and methods, see Table 5. We employ the United Nations (2015) geographical delineations of European subregions.

Part I. Ascent of the Nonwestern Semiperipheries

World-systems thinkers emphasize the trimodal structure of the capitalist world-system (Wallerstein 1974a, 1980b, 1989, 1990, Arrighi 1985, 1990, Chase-Dunn 1989, Martin 1990), arguing that the semiperiphery is distinguished by “important structural differences” that set it apart from core and periphery (Wallerstein 1979: 179).⁵ A semiperipheral country “looks in two different directions” (Worth and Moore 2009). “In part they act as a peripheral zone for core countries and in part they act as a core country for some peripheral areas” (Wallerstein 1976: 463). Historically, there has been “a cyclical rhythm marked by the rise and fall of hegemonic powers” and the rise and fall of nation-states (as well as regions within states) across the tiers of the world-system (Wallerstein 2000: 253-63).⁶ For that reason, Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997: 79) contend that semiperipheral areas are likely to generate new institutional forms that transform system structures and modes of accumulation. These changes often lead to the upward mobility of these same semiperipheral actors in the core/periphery hierarchy. We will see that the semiperiphery is fertile ground for social, organizational, and technical innovation and has an advantageous location for the establishment of new centers of power. That is why the structural position of the semiperiphery has such evolutionary significance.

With respect to 21st century semiperipheries, Chase-Dunn (2013:6) contends that “the emerging powers are increasingly banding together and promulgating policies that challenge the hegemony of the United States and the institutions that have been produced by the European and Asian core.” For that reason, he insists, these “semiperipheral challengers are not just reproducing the existing global hierarchy.”

The Emergence of Nonwestern Semiperipheries, 1960-2015

In the last decade of the Cold War, twenty-two (22) high income countries accounted for about 15 percent of the world’s population, and those countries exhibited 53 times the GDP per capita (hereafter GDPpc) of 40 low income countries where 30 percent of the world’s population was situated. However, the inequitable distribution of world economic resources was far more complicated than this rich/poor dualism makes it appear, as shown in three trends that we can derive from Table 2. First, 15 of the richest countries were western while seven were in the Third World. The second trend involves the economic status of European countries, for they did not all

⁵ In his early work, Wallerstein (1979: 23) insisted that the political role of the semiperiphery is far more important than the economic. His contention was that the semiperiphery functioned to sustain political stability between core and periphery. In the early 21st century, industrialization of the semiperiphery, semiperipheral economic growth rates that exceed the core, and the “globalization agendas” of several semiperipheries challenge Wallerstein’s early thinking.

⁶ In the second half of the 20th century, several peripheries rose to semiperipheral status while Portugal and Spain slid downward from the core to become semiperipheries (Terlouw 2002). Significantly, Japan rose to the core.

rank among the most affluent. Indeed, sixteen European countries ranked as middle-income, far less affluent than seven Third World high income countries. The GDPpc of the high income European countries was three times greater than that of seven European middle income countries (United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, Greece). Furthermore, seven Third World high income countries exhibited a GDPpc that was 2.8 times greater than that of these European countries. Surprisingly, those Third World countries had a GDPpc that was 2.3 times greater than that of the United Kingdom. Nine Socialist East European countries had a GDPpc that was less than one-quarter of the GDPpc of the high income countries. Third, the world-economy was undergoing significant restructuring in 1980, so the Third World was not unified around a “world pole of poverty” (Kohler 1978). Instead, nearly half of world population fell into the racially/ethnically diverse middle-income stratum that included seven Western, nine East European Socialist, and 47 Third World countries. Between 1960 and 1980, several Third World countries rose from the poorest stratum to the middle level, but they achieved only 11 percent of the GDPpc of the high income countries.

It was from the stratum of Third World economies that new *semiperipheries* emerged. In the 1970s and 1980s, scholars within and outside the world-systems perspective pointed presciently to emergent economic divisions within the Third World (cf. Frobel, Heinrichs and Kreye 1977, Bornschier et al. 1978, Evans 1979, Evans and Timberlake 1980, Balassa 1981, Barrett and Whyte 1982, Foxley 1983, Deyo 1987). Three changing trends were noted. First, growth in the share of world trade in manufactured goods from the Third World occurred at the expense of the western and Socialist economies. Second, the Southeast Asian NICs (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan) played the predominant role in this Third World industrial expansion (McMichael 1982). Third, there was improvement in Third World GDPpc relative to the high income countries between 1960 and 1980 (Arrighi and Drangel 1986). As Table 2 shows, middle-income Third World countries exhibited an average GDPpc that was six times greater than that of the low income stratum. “Even excluding China, the global South’s share of world manufacturing value added rose from 10.7 percent in 1975 to 17.0 percent in 1978, and its share of world manufactured exports grew even faster, rising from 7.5 percent in 1975 to 23.3 percent in 1998” (Arrighi 2007: 132). The greatest change occurred in parts of Asia, including the ascent of China and India (Palat 2009: 40). While the western core and Japan experienced deindustrialization, the long downturn of 1973-93, and a declining share of world exports, China and the Asian NICs (Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea) rose from the periphery in the two decades before 1980 (Arrighi 2007: 132-38). Suggesting that Asia may be the future “principal region of capitalist accumulation,” Samir Amin (1996: 11-12) contends that “it is highly probable that the positions of these Asian countries in the world-system will be reinforced”— even though “the development of China threatens all global equilibria.”

Table 2. The Three Worlds of the Cold War: Ranking of Countries by Income Level and GDP Per Capita, 1980

<i>Part A. High Income Countries Ranked by GDP Per Capita</i>		
Country Descriptions	GDP Per Capita	% World Population
<i>7 Third World Countries</i> 4 Richest Countries of the world: 3 Middle East/North Africa (Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Qatar) & 1 Asian (Brunei)	33,907 42,554	2.9
1 Asian: Japan 2 Middle East/North Africa (Saudi Arabia, Libya)	26,774 20,998	
<i>15 Western Countries</i> Switzerland, Finland, Sweden, Luxembourg, Austria, Denmark, United States, Germany, Norway, Canada, Belgium, Netherlands, France, Australia, Iceland	37,779	12.2
22 Countries	35,843	15.1
<i>Part B. Middle Income Countries Ranked by GDP Per Capita</i>		
Country Descriptions	GDP Per Capita	% World Population
<i>7 Western Countries</i> United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, Greece, Portugal, Spain	12,225	15.3
<i>9 Second World Socialist Eastern Europe</i> USSR, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Germany West, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia	8,621	8.8
<i>47 Third World Countries</i> 11 Asian (including China, Singapore) 21 Latin America & Caribbean 12 Middle East & North Africa 2 Sub-Saharan Africa	3,912 4,001 3,987 3,889 2,994	25.1
63 Countries	7,346	49.2
<i>Part C. Low Income Countries Ranked by GDP Per Capita</i>		
Country Descriptions	GDP Per Capita	% World Population
<i>40 Third World Countries</i> 1 Caribbean 27 Sub-Saharan Africa 12 Asia ((including India)	676 624 547 748	30.4

Sources and Notes: Analysis of World Bank databases. For comparability over time, \$US GDP per capita have been converted to 2015 values. For a more detailed country list, see Appendix B.

In 2015, fifty-three (53) countries that account for 16 percent of world population rank as high-income in 2015. Their GDPpc is 23 times greater than that of the 79 countries (nearly half of

world population) that the World Bank ranked as lower-middle or low income (see Appendix 1, Table 3A). While “command over economic resources” (Arrighi and Drangel 1986) is disproportionately concentrated in affluent societies, the world’s richest countries are not all European. Instead, the high income countries now include 31 European countries (23 “western” and 8 former Socialist), 22 nonwestern countries, and 3 nonwestern autonomous zones.

Table 3. Ranking of Countries by Income Level and GDP Per Capita, 2015

<i>Part A. High Income Countries Ranked by GDP Per Capita</i>		
Country Descriptions	GDP Per Capita	% World Population
23 Western Countries: Western/Northern/Southern Europe, US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand	42,228	11.1
8 Post-Socialist Eastern European Countries (former “Second World”)	26,300	2.1
22 Nonwestern Countries: & 3 Autonomous Zones	38,189	3.0
16 Countries: with GNI per capita above \$30,000: 3 Asia (Japan, Singapore, South Korea); 5 Caribbean, 8 Middle East/North Africa	51,898	
3 Autonomous Zones with GNI per capita above \$30,000 (Bermuda, China SARs–Hong Kong, Macau)	74,356	
3 Countries: with GNI per capita of \$12,475 to \$29,999: 2 South America (Chile, Uruguay) and 1 Subsaharan Africa (Seychelles)	23,111	
53 Countries	39,987	16.2
<i>Part B. Upper Middle Income Countries Ranked by GDP Per Capita</i>		
Country Descriptions	GDP Per Capita	% World Population
38 Former Third World Countries: 11 South America, 6 Middle East/North Africa, 4 Asia, 8 Subsaharan Africa, 5 Caribbean, 4 Oceania [includes Brazil, China, South Africa]	9,376	
13 Post-Socialist Eastern European Countries [includes Russia]	6,314	
51 Countries	7,833	35.3
<i>Part C. Lower Middle & Low Income Countries Ranked by GDP Per Capita</i>		
51 Lower Middle Income Countries	1,988	39.8
7 Post-Socialist Eastern European Countries	2,151	
44 Former Third World Countries: 3 South America, 4 Middle East/North Africa, 14 Asia, 12 Subsaharan Africa, 4 Central America, 7 Oceania	1,827	
28 Low Income Countries 25 Subsaharan Africa, 2 Asia (Nepal, Afghanistan), 1 Caribbean (Haiti)	616	8.7

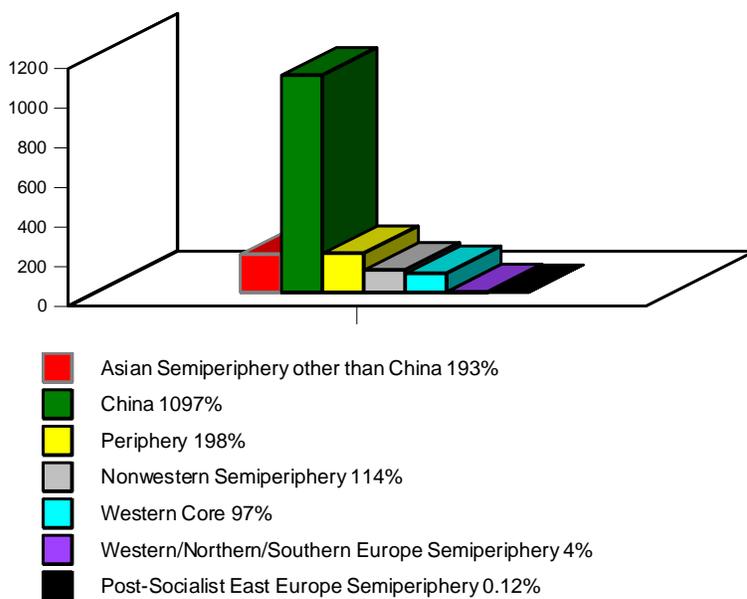
Sources: The list of countries by income group and GDP per capita rankings were acquired from World Bankdatabases. We employ the United Nations (2015) geographical delineations of European subregions.

Moreover, the richest countries are not western. Hong Kong, Macao, and Bermuda (autonomous territories of China and the United Kingdom) exhibit the highest GDPpc in the world, at 1.8 times that of the high income western countries and 1.4 times that of the United States. The GDPpc of sixteen countries of Asia, the Caribbean and the Middle East/North Africa is 1.2 times greater than that of the western countries and 95 percent of that of the United States.

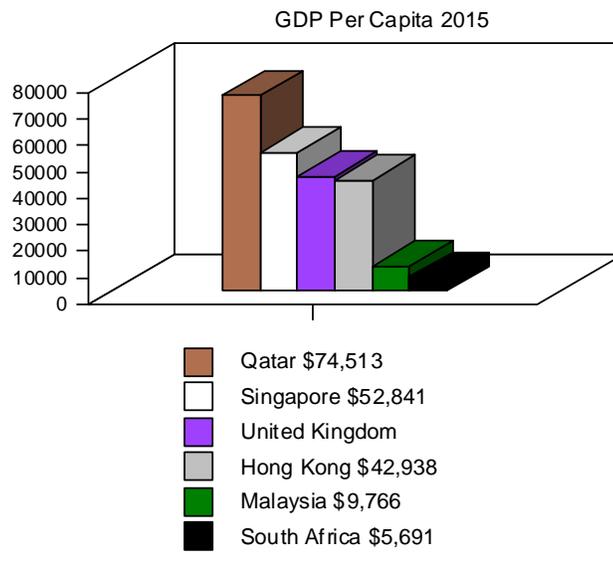
During the last decade of the Cold War, East European Socialist countries had a GDPpc that was less than one-quarter of that of the high income countries (see Appendix 1, Table 2A), so it was economically and politically more similar to middle-income “Third World” countries than to the “white West.” By 2015, sixty (60) former Third World countries had surpassed the 21 Post-Socialist East European countries in GDPpc (see Table 3, Appendix 1, Table 3A). While eight of these East European countries rose from their 1980 middle income status to join the high income countries in 2015, thirteen (including Russia) stagnated at their 1980 upper middle income ranks while seven declined to lower-middle income status, attaining a GDPpc that was only slightly better than 44 former Third World countries. As Figure 1 shows, post-Socialist Eastern Europe exhibited the lowest growth in GDPpc (0.1 percent) in the world. The growth rate for the periphery was 1,980 times higher, China nearly 11,000 time greater than the GDPpc attained by post-Socialist Europe.

Figure 1. Semiperipheral Challenges to the Core, 1980-2015

Part A: Percentage Growth in GDP Per Capita, 1980-2015



Part B. United Kingdom Compared to Seven Former Colonies that Are in the 21st Century Nonwestern Semiperiphery



Sources and Notes for Parts A and B: For 1980 country lists, see Table 1. Analysis of GDP per capita using World Bank databases. For comparability over time, GDP per capita \$US have been converted to 2015 values. We employ the United Nations (2015) geographical delineations of European subregions.

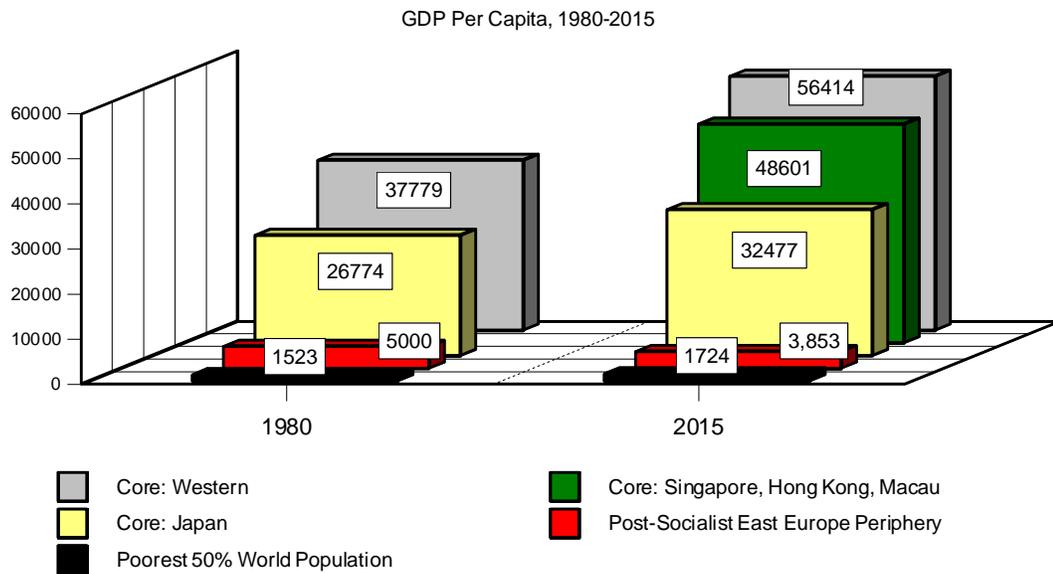
What, then, happened to the former “Third World” between 1980 and the early 21st century? In 2015, three-quarters of the world’s people resided in middle-income countries, reflecting a shift of a majority of former Third World population away from the “world pole of poverty” (Kohler 1978). The ascent of China to upper-middle-income status and of India to lower-middle-income ranking accounts for a majority of the population that shifted out of the poorest stratum. While the GDPpc growth rates of the rich western countries stagnated or grew very little, these rates have expanded for many nonwestern countries. Between 1980 and 2015, the western core and European semiperipheries exhibited much lower GDPpc growth rates than nonwestern zones (see Figure 1). In world-systems terms, more of the share of the world wealth that once accumulated in the core and in the European semiperiphery is now being appropriated by nonwestern semiperipheries, as is evidenced by the growing number of nonwestern billionaires and corporations outside the richest white western countries (see Tables 6 and 7).

Since the size of the population in the lowest income countries shrunk from 62 percent in 1960 to less than 29 percent in 2015 (see Table 1), the World Bank argues that this is evidence that the low income countries are “catching up” (Burkett and Hart-Landsberg 2003). World-systems analysts disagree. According to Wallerstein (2003a: 72, 124), “the endless accumulation of capitalism meant the incessant widening of the real gap” over the history of the modern world-system. In the early 21st century, “the real gap between the bottom and the top is not merely

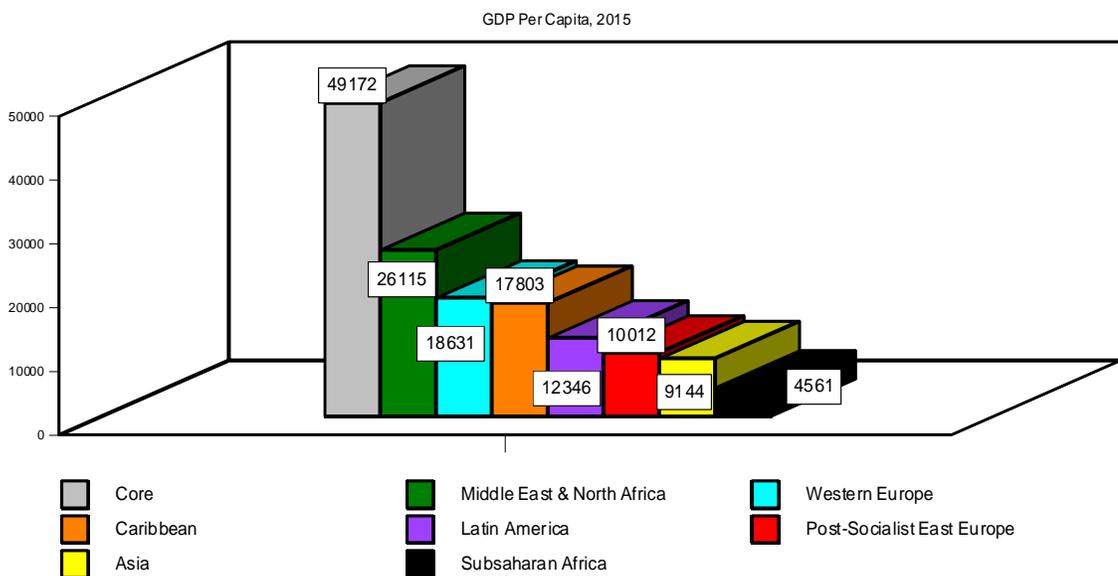
immense but growing.” Figure 2 (Part A) shows that this economic gap expanded significantly between 1980 and 2015. By 2015, the western core GDP per capita was nearly 33 times greater than that of the poorest half of world population. Over this time period, GDPpc grew 97 percent in the core, but only 13 percent in the poorest tier of countries.

Figure 2. Inequality between Core, Semiperiphery and Periphery, 2015

Part A. The Widening Gap between Core & Countries at the Economic Bottom, 1980 to 2015



Part B. Inequality between Core and Semiperipheral Regions



Challenging the Global Apartheid Model

At the 1900 annual meeting of the Negro Academy, W. E. B du Bois (2015) identified “the world problem of the 20th century” to be a global color line dividing “advanced white nations” from “the undeveloped or half-developed nations of mankind who happen to be yellow, brown or black.” Half a century later, pioneering British race scholar Anthony Richmond (1955: 11) echoed this theme. “The so-called ‘colour problem’ in the world today,” he argued, “resolves itself into one fundamental question: How will the economically and politically dominant 700 million people who call themselves ‘white’ respond to the pressing demands. . . from the 1700 millions who are called ‘coloured?’” Polar binaries have routinely been coined to analyze the intersections of global capitalism and ethnic/racial inequality, including the West versus the Rest (Said 1994), the North/South divide (Therien 2010), European colonizer versus non-European colonized (e.g., Memmi 1965, Spivak 1988, Grosfoguel 2006), or centeredness versus alterity (e.g., Grillo 2007). Narrow *dualisms with color inferences* are commonly applied, such as “European modernity versus dark coloniality” (Mignolo 2011, Hall 1992).

To call attention to world inequality in the 1970s, Gernot Kohler (1978: 264-66, 1995) argued that the world-system is organized as *global apartheid*, a “structure of world society” in which “a minority of whites occupies the pole of affluence while a majority composed of other races occupies the pole of poverty.” Since that time, these ideas have achieved the status of conventional wisdom through widespread usage among academics, textbook writers, activists, politicians and international development organizations.⁷ Two world-systems foundational fathers have employed global apartheid (Amin 2004) or global color line (Wallerstein 2003a) arguments.⁸ Indeed, many of our world-systems colleagues have told us that they were taught these notions in college and/or have taught them to their students. This worldwide division is posited as “the racial categorization of some people as ‘white’ and superior, while others are categorized as ‘not white’ and as eminently different and inferior” (Vera and Feagin 2007: 1, 5). Grosfoguel (2008: 6-7, 9) conceptualizes this global divide as “the ‘colonial’ axis between Europeans/Euro-Americans and non-Europeans.” Howard Winant (1997) describes global capitalism as a “modern world racial system” that is grounded in a “centuries old pattern of white supremacy” which both “denigrates the other and elevates whiteness.” By relegating most of the world’s population to inferior statuses, white westerners “appropriated racial difference in the service of inequality.” Thus, he contends, “the global hierarchy of Europe and its others became a *racial fact*” (Winant 2001: 297-98).⁹

⁷ For a survey of the *global apartheid* and *global color line* literature, see Appendix A, available under “Supplementary Files.”

⁸ Wallerstein has used the notion of *global color line* throughout his writing career; see Wallerstein (1972, 1979: 179-81, 184-200, 1983: 79, 2011: 58) and Balibar and Wallerstein (1991: 80).

⁹ Other race scholars who employ similar notions include da Silva (2007) and Emirbayer and Desmond (2015).

The global apartheid model predicts a *fixed racial axis for the world-economy* that is not supported by 1980 and 2015 economic statistics (see Tables 2, 2A and 3, 3A). There are three explanations for the conceptual failure of the global racial dualism. First, this thesis essentializes and reduces the world's diverse people into two lumps that conceal massive ethnic/racial complexity. Howard Winant (2001: 4) explains that

From the standpoint of racial theory, the categorization. . . of Europe and its modern 'others' has decided limitations. In its fundamental bipolarity it neglects the highly divergent patterns of historical encounter among various peoples and indeed continents. . . . How inadequate these classifications seem in world-historical perspective!. . . . Indeed, there were many European identities as well as the myriad of "others." There were many localized racial systems too. . . . All these peoples, all these concepts, would ultimately be employed in the complex project of knitting together the modern world; all would be inescapably involved in fracturing world society.

In order to construct two homogeneous categories for analysis, scholars must ignore serious "anomalies" that do not fit neatly into their artificial color boundaries. When he posited the global apartheid thesis, Kohler (1978) arbitrarily colored Socialist East Europe, Japan and all the nonwestern high income countries "white," in order to equate "affluence" with "whiteness." At the origin of the global apartheid/color line models during the Cold War, Japan was reduced to "white" status, simply because it was politically aligned with "the West" (Kohler 1978). This extreme degree of race essentialism was a demeaning and insulting misrepresentation of the high-income Muslim countries that were politically *nonaligned* and of the Socialist Europeans who stood in opposition to "the West." In 2015, the ethnic and political divisions between the affluent nonwestern countries (see Table 3) and the western countries are even sharper. Because of these kinds of forced reductions, the global racial dualism is itself a racialized sociopolitical construct. When knowledge production "den[ies] all autonomy to those so named and imagined," David Goldberg (1994: 12, 32) warns, the affected people are denied "power, control, authority and domination" over the ideas that supposedly explain the inequalities they experience. In this way, externally-dominated "social science of the Other" determines "the limits of knowledge about the Other," for "the Other" is only known and understood in terms constructed by "the racialised social science."

The second error lies in making quantum leap generalizations from limited statistical data. The global apartheid model forces "racial colors" onto an argument about world wealth concentration and poverty. Despite its anti-racist rhetoric, the GDPpc data employed by the global

apartheid model (Kohler 1978, 1995) offer no basis for analyzing the *causes* of ethnic/racial inequality. The model seems to suggest that, if wealth were equitably distributed, ethnic/racial inequality would disappear. This is a spurious connection between two forms of inequality. Obviously, greater wealth accumulation has not been accompanied by an end to ethnic/racial oppression in the core, nor has ascent to semiperipheral status led to less ethnic/racial exploitation in nonwestern societies. For instance, the transition in South Africa from a white supremacist government to a Black African government has not led to a dismantling of exploitation and segregation of the nonwhite majority. Rather than whites, a Black elite now actively oppressing Black South Africans (Bond 2014b). Alongside the ascent of the semiperipheries, wealth/income inequality *within all countries* worsened to a greater degree than the gap between the core and the poorest half of the world's population (Palat 2009), expanding to a level in many countries—including the United States—that is equal to or greater than the global gap.

In 1980 when the global apartheid thesis was becoming popular with scholars and activists, there was no simple world dichotomy between “white affluence” and “colored poverty/stagnation” (see Table 2, 2A). Instead, the richest countries in the world were nonwestern, and Japan had risen to core status. If “the relative socio-economic standing of ethno-racial groups is determined by the will of the dominant white group” (Wimmer 2015: 2196), as global apartheid posits, why did “white supremacy” not operate to prevent “nonwhite” interlopers from accumulating wealth between 1980 and 2015 that this racial dualism reserves to “western” countries? (see Tables 2, 2A and 3, 3A). Clearly, “white” skin color did not ensure Socialist Europe a degree of control over world economic resources that was equivalent to the high income countries in 1980 or in 2015 (see Tables 2, 2A and 3, 3A), nor did “whiteness” guarantee that their GDPpc would grow to the same degree as “nonwhite” sectors of the world (see Figure 1). Why did “coloredness” not prevent seven Third World countries from achieving GDPpc that was 2.3 times greater than that of the United Kingdom in 1980? (see Table 2A).

If the global apartheid thesis were accurate, the historical trends presented in Table 4 would never have occurred. In both 1980 and 2015, all eighteen “white” western countries were outranked in GDPpc by countries that fell South of the global color line. In stark contrast to the racial polarization thesis, the World Bank ranked sixteen of the “white western” countries lower in 2015 than in 1980. These shifts in rankings are grounded in the differential economic growth rates of the white and nonwhite countries. While white countries stagnated or had minimal growth in GDPpc between 2000 and 2010, many nonwhite countries, even among the low-income countries, exceeded the growth rates of the white countries (see Figure 1). Between 1980 and 2015, Germany fell from 6th to 24th, the United Kingdom from 18th to 27th, and Italy from 20th to 35th. Ranked number five in 1980, the United States dropped to number fourteen in 2015, outranked by five countries that are supposed to be constrained by their “lack of whiteness.” Indeed, the very

European countries that once colonized so much of the world are being challenged by some of their former colonies in ways that defy racial dualistic contentions. If the global apartheid thesis were correct, the United Kingdom should not have ranked 27th in 2015 while its former colony, Singapore, ranked 8th in GDPpc.

Table 4. Semiperipheral Challenges to the Western Core between 1980 and 2015

Western Core Country in 2000	Country Rank by GDP per capita in 1980	Country Rank by GDP per capita in 2015	No. Nonwestern Non-Core Countries Ranked Higher in 1980	No. Western Non-Core Countries Ranked Higher in 2015
Switzerland	2	7	2	3
Sweden	3	13	3	5
Denmark	4	12	3	5
United States	5	14	3	5
Germany	6	24	6	7
Norway	7	4	1	2
Canada	8	20	6	6
Belgium	9	25	6	7
Netherlands	10	18	5	6
France	11	31	9	7
Australia	12	11	3	5
Austria	15	21	6	6
Finland	17	23	6	6
United Kingdom	18	27	6	7
New Zealand	19	32	9	7
Italy	20	35	10	7
Ireland	21	22	6	5
Spain	23	36	10	7
Portugal	30	43	15	8

Sources: The list of core countries is derived from (Chase-Dunn, Kawano and Brewer (2000). 2015 Country rankings by GDP per capita were acquired by analyzing country data at World Bank databases, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD> GDP per capita rankings for countries are from World Bank (1981) and databases.

Exploitation and Inequality across the Trimodal Structure of the World-System

Table 5 allows us to examine worldwide inequality with greater complexity. We are quite aware that one could narrowly apply these statistics to support the global apartheid thesis. Indeed, the GDPpc of the western core is thirty (3) times greater than that of the periphery. In order to rank this dualism as the only fact of significance, however, one must close her/his eyes to the multiple layers of diversity and inequality across the trimodal structure of the world-system. The first indicator that leaps out is the ethnic/racial diversity that is characteristic of each major tier of the world-system. There is no worldwide dualism like the global apartheid thesis claims, for each tier includes countries that the global apartheid thesis labels “whites” and “nonwhites.” Second, “whites” are not all aggregated around Kohler’s (1978, 1995) “pole of affluence.” In contrast to Winant’s thesis about capitalism as the pursuit of “white supremacy,” there is wide inequality between the Euroamerican core and “white” countries of semiperiphery and periphery.

The European semiperiphery—which includes Portugal, a former colonizing power—has a GDPpc that is only one-third of that of the western core and two-fifths of that of the Asian core. Second, the western core has a GDPpc that is 5.6 times greater than that of the Post-Socialist Eastern European semiperiphery. Now look again at Figure 2. Note that the periphery in 2015 includes thirteen Post-Socialist countries. The GDPpc of the “white” western core is nearly five times greater than that of this subregion which the global apartheid model reduces into its homogeneous group of “white” dominators. Look a little closer, and compare this subregion to the rest of the periphery. In comparison to the nonwestern peripheries, the Post-Socialist peripheries lost far more economic ground between 1980 and 2015. While the GDPpc of the poorest half of the world’s population experienced a 13 percent increase in GDPpc, the Post-Socialist GDPpc declined 23 percent. There are also sharp gaps between these “white” European subregions and the Asian core. It is important to note that predominantly “white” countries have routinely populated the periphery over the history of the modern world-system.

Indeed, most of the countries of the core—including the current world hegemon—were once in the periphery, as were the countries of Eastern Europe (Braudel 1972, Wallerstein 1974a, 1980b). Table 5 also reveals multiple levels of inequality. Clearly, there are wide gaps between the western core (as well as the Asian core) and the semiperipheral regions—both “white” and “nonwhite” (see Table 5 and Figure 2). However, regional inequalities are now greater than the gaps between core and semiperipheral regions. Within these regions, inequality between the richest country and peripheries is greater than the inequality between the world core and semiperipheral regions (see Figure 3A). In Asia, for example, South Korea, the richest semiperiphery, has a GDPpc that is 18 times greater than India, the region’s poorest semiperiphery, and 37 times greater than Nepal, the poorest periphery—economic divides that are far wider than the gap between the

Table 5. The Economic Divides across the Three Tiers of the Modern World-System, 2015

World-System Zone & Geographical Zone	Countries	GDP Per Capita \$US
CORE		49,172
Western	Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States	56,414
Asian Countries & Zones	Japan, Singapore, China SARs: Hong Kong, Macao	42,572
SEMIPERIPHERY, WESTERN/NORTHERN/SOUTHERN EUROPE	Cyprus, Greece, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal	18,631
SEMIPERIPHERY, NONWESTERN		10,506
Post-Socialist Eastern Europe	Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Kazakstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia	10,012
Latin America	Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, Uruguay, Venezuela	12,346
Asia (East, South & Southeast)	China, India, Indonesia, Korea, Rep. of, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Chinese SAR: Taiwan	9,144
Middle East & North Africa	Algeria, Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates	26,115
Subsaharan Africa	Nigeria, South Africa	4,561
Caribbean	Bahamas	22,897
PERIPHERY		1,683
Subsaharan Africa	Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Demo. Rep. of, Congo, Rep. of, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe	1,251
Asia (East, South & Southeast)	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, North Korea, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Vietnam	1,691
Middle East/North Africa	Bahrain, Brunei, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Libya, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Yemen	3,429
Post-Socialist Eastern Europe	Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyz Republic, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine	3,853
Latin America	Belize, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname	3,681
Caribbean	Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago	6,369
Oceania	Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu	3,025

Table 5 Sources and notes ¹⁰

western core and the Asian semiperipheral region (see Figure 2, 2A and Table 5¹⁰). Tiny Nepal is exploited by neighboring semiperipheries for its raw materials, including rolled iron, tin, wool, cotton, leather and fur skins. It has a large trade imbalance with India, China and South Korea from which it imports petroleum, machinery and manufactured goods. The pattern of regional inequality is similar for all the other semiperipheral regions.

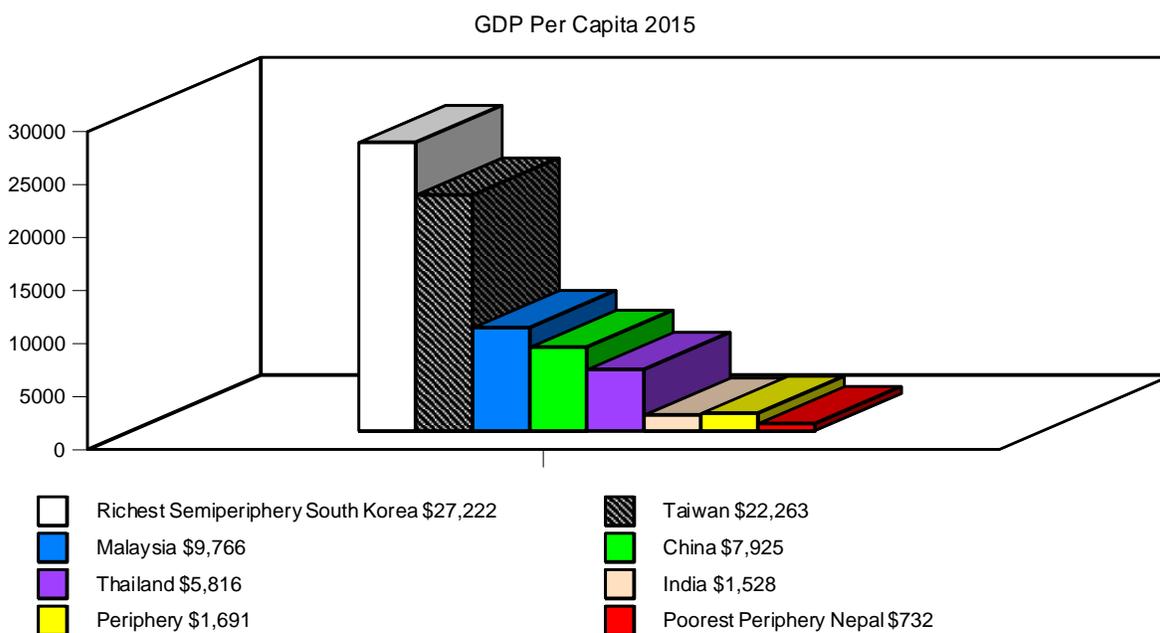
While we cannot hypothesize from these statistics about ethnic/racial *causation*, we can see a clear pattern that globalized “white supremacy” does not account for all these inequalities. From a world-systems perspective, there is multi-directional surplus drain and economic exploitation. Indeed, the periphery struggles against two massive levels of exploitation. While there is core appropriation of surplus from the whole world-economy, “the middle stratum is both *exploited* and *exploiter*,” allowing “the new semiperipheral areas to enjoy a larger share of the world surplus.” Thus, the economic gaps widen between core and periphery and between semiperiphery and periphery (see Table 5 and Figure 2). “Both the continued expansion of the core. . . and the new strength of the semiperiphery has led to a further weakening of the political and economic positions of the peripheral areas” (Wallerstein 1974b: 402, 407, 411).

One way to measure semiperipheral status is in terms of the “relative appropriation of the total surplus generated in the commodity chains that constitute the material basis of the capitalist world-economy. . . . At the global level, there is a division of labour between activities that generate high shares of the value-chain surplus. . . and those left with low shares” (Radice 2009: 29, 34). The wealth accumulated from commodity production and export does not accumulate solely in the core of the world-system, for the semiperiphery collects a share. The worldwide process of “expropriation of surplus value” is a structural relationship in which “the *middle tier* both participates in the exploitation of the *lower tier* and is exploited by the *upper tier*” (Geschwender

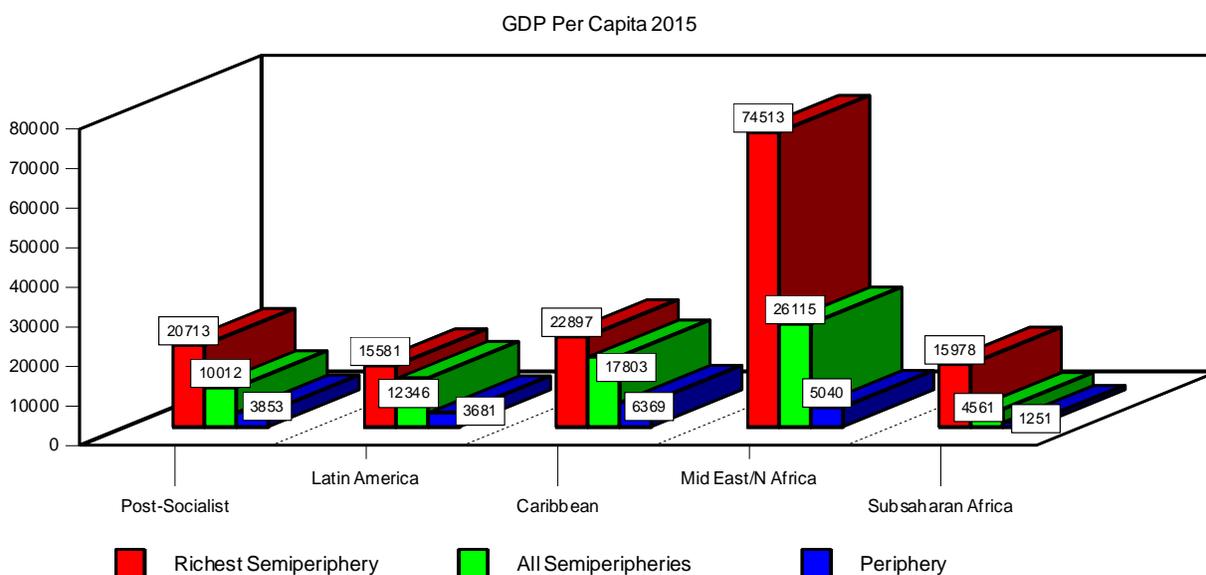
¹⁰ **Table 5 Sources and Notes:** For 2015 country assignments, we started with existing lists of Mahutga and Smith (1985), Arrighi & Drangel (1986), Babones & Zhang (2008), Kentor (2008), Chase-Dunn, Kawano and Brewer (2000), and Mahutga (2014). We resolved discrepancies and omissions across those lists by conducting our own research into post-2000 World Bank and IMF databases, trade databases, as well as recent scholarly works about specific countries. Based on post-2000 data and research (especially world ranking of country GDP per capita, corporations, billionaires, and exports), we made a few changes to the previous lists. We also added countries that were omitted in previous lists. Over the last decade or so, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, and Morocco have declined from semiperipheral status while several other countries have ascended. We calculated GDP per capita by aggregating the Gross Domestic Product of countries in each geographical region, then dividing by the aggregated regional populations. We employ the United Nations (2015) geographical delineations of European subregions. We categorize *Israel* as “nonwestern” in a way that reflects the concerns of the citizens of this country. According to Israel’s 2015 Census, more than 90 percent of its Jews identify themselves as originating from Russia, Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa; less than 5 percent are from Western/Northern/Southern Europe and the United States. In other words, Israeli Jews identify themselves as being “ethnically other” from Western/Northern/Southern European. Moreover, there is current opposition from Israeli and Palestinian intellectuals about the use of white/nonwhite labels to analyze their conflict. For the controversy over labeling Israel “white,” see <http://www.thecrimson.com/column/dining-on-sacred-cow/article/2012/11/16/Lispon-Israel-race/>.

Figure 3. Inequality between Tiers of the World-System, 2015

Part A. Inequality within the Asian Subregion



Part B. Inequality within Nonwestern Regional Tiers of the World-System



Sources and Notes: For sources and country lists, see Table 5.

and Levine 1994: 80). Indeed, semiperipheries construct unequal exchanges with peripheral areas (and with weaker semiperipheries) which supply extractive and agricultural exports produced by very cheap labor (Marini 1972, Worth and Moore 2009: 122).

We are certainly not arguing that there is no ethnicization or racism structured into the dynamics of the world-system (cf. Wallerstein 2003a). What we are arguing is that there are multiple levels of ethnic/racial exploitation across the trimodal structure of the world-system, not just the unidirectional “white versus colored” inequality depicted by the global apartheid model. Moreover, analysis of GDPpc cannot reveal ethnic/racial *causes* of economic inequality; it simply demonstrates that. We must look elsewhere to formulate that knowledge. In the next section, we will examine the prominent role of the nonwestern semiperipheries in structuring ethnic/racial exploitation and inequality.

Part II. Centrality of the Nonwestern Semiperiphery to World Ethnic/Racial Inequality

At the end of the 20th century, the eighteenth annual Political Economy of the World-System conference focused on the worldwide economic restructuring that would require conceptual rethinking in the 21st century. Conference coordinators József Böröcz and David Smith observed that:

The unchallenged hegemony of the United States has given way to a multicentric world-economy in which both economic and geo-political leadership appear to be up for grabs. Meanwhile, a new international division of labor has emerged in the last two decades in which an increasing proportion of global manufacturing is done in the semiperiphery (Smith and Böröcz 1995: 1).

Scholars outside the world-system perspective now focus on “unprecedented characteristics” of semiperipheral economic growth and political challenges to the core (Worth and Moore 2009). While they emphasize the centrality of the semiperiphery in world hegemonic rivalry and in the struggle for world-systemic change, scholars have ignored the determinative roles that semiperipheries play in the structuring and maintenance of ethnic/racial inequality in the 21st century world-system. In that conceptual void, scholarship has not moved beyond the global racial dualism that pinpoints “whites” as the only perpetrators of ethnic/racial inequality. In the following sections, we will push beyond the Eurocentrism of the global apartheid thesis to delineate ten ways in which nonwestern semiperipheries will increasingly cause and/or exacerbate most of the world’s ethnic/racial inequality in the 21st century.

Semiperipheralization of the Transnational Capitalist Class

From its beginning, the modern world-system has been dominated by multi-ethnic capitalist classes that included compradors and managerial cadres drawn from every ethnic/racial group in all its exploited territories (Wallerstein 2000: 88-89). Despite western economic predominance in the early 21st century, there are now “multiple poles of intensive accumulation” outside the West, and transnational capitalists represent every ethnic/racial group in the world (Robinson 2014: 64). Despite that global shift, most analyses of the transnational capitalist class continue to focus on Western Europe and the United States.¹¹ On the one hand, a majority of those analyses examine core capitalists and their ties to other core capitalists (e.g., Sklair 2000, Carroll 2010, Pijl 2012), with minimal attention to the cadres of lower level capitalists and compradors who actually implement capitalist projects. On the other hand, previous publications do not examine racial and ethnic diversity in the transnational capitalist class.

When describing early 21st century multinational corporations, *The Economist* (2008) points out that “global business investment now flows increasingly from South to North and South to South, as emerging economies invest in the rich world and in less developed countries.” Indeed, nonwestern firms now account for one-third of world FDI flows (*The Economist* 2011). Clearly, these nonwestern capitalists share the economic interests of core capitalists. Indeed, nonwestern capitalists “are as much committed to control and repression of the global working class [in all its ethnic/racial diversity] as are their Northern counterparts” (Robinson 2015: 18). Even though their interests are a function of the operations of the world-economy,” transnational capitalists “seek to enhance their interests” by controlling or influencing their national governments. Thus, they “utilize state machineries to strengthen their position in the market vis-a-vis competitors and to protect them vis-a-vis the working classes.” Moreover, states often grant them “monopoly privileges” (Wallerstein 1980a: 33-35). Compradors are those capitalists and state elites who do the frontline ethnic/racial exploitation within their own societies for their transnational class. One task of these cadres is to make production possible by draining both visible and hidden economic surpluses from ethnic communities (Clelland 2014). Through support from state elites, nonwestern capitalists super-exploit ethnic minorities in order to cement their positions in transnational capitalism (Clelland 2015).

¹¹ Our search for journal articles in two library databases identified 79 articles about the transnational capitalist class. Among those articles, 14 writers offered empirical case studies in nonwestern contexts. In addition, we reviewed the books of the four major theorists: William Robinson (e.g., 2003, 2014), Kees van der Pijl (e.g., 2012), William Carroll (e.g., 2010), and Leslie Sklair (e.g., 2000). The works of Pijl, Sklair and Carroll are primarily developed from the standpoint of the western core while Robinson’s work offers more details about nonwestern contexts. It is striking that there has not been any analysis of Japanese capitalists (except Carroll’s claims that they have not been integrated into the Atlantic transnational capitalist class).

Table 6. The World's Largest 2,000 Corporations, 2014 to 2016

Part A. Western Corporations

Region of the World-System	2014 No. Corporations	2014 % Total	2016 No. Corporations	2016 % Total	Increase or (Decline)
<i>Core:</i> United States, Western/Northern/Southern Europe, Canada, Australia	1,085	54.2	1,049	52.5	(36)
<i>Semiperiphery:</i> Western/Northern/Southern Europe	16	0.8	11	0.5	(5)
	1,101	55.0	1,060	53.0	(41)

Part B. Nonwestern Corporations

Region of the World-System	2014 No. Corporations	2014 % Total	2016 No. Corporations	2016 % Total	Increase or (Decline)
<i>Core:</i> Japan & Singapore	230	11.5	236	11.8	6
<i>Semiperiphery</i>	669	33.5	704	35.2	35
China	232	11.6	296	14.8	64
Asia other than China	222	11.1	209	10.4	(13)
Latin America	84	4.2	61	3.1	(24)
Middle East/North Africa	69	3.5	80	4.0	11
Post-Socialist Eastern Europe	44	2.2	40	2.0	(4)
Subsaharan Africa	18	0.9	18	0.9	0
Total	899	45.0	940	47.0	41

Part C. The World's Fifty Richest Corporations, 2016

Region of the World-System	No. Corporations	Total Revenue in \$Billions	% Revenue of 50 Richest
<i>Core:</i> United States	21	3,624	41.3
<i>Core:</i> Western other than USA	11	1,822	20.7
<i>Core:</i> Japan & Singapore	3	478	5.5
<i>Nonwestern Semiperiphery:</i> China	11	1,934	22.1
<i>Nonwestern Semiperiphery:</i> South Korea	3	601	6.9
<i>Nonwestern Semiperiphery:</i> Saudi Arabia	1	311	3.5
Totals	50	8,770	100.0

Source: Analysis of Forbes (2014, 2016). We employ the United Nations (2015) geographical delineations of European subregions.

One indicator of the emerging role of semiperipheries is the change over time in the ethnic/racial composition of the transnational capitalist class. Between the 1950s and 1980, decline in American economic hegemony was evidenced by a sharp drop in the number of U.S. corporations that were ranked among the world's 500 largest transnational corporations. In 1956, U.S. corporations accounted for 84 percent of the Global 500 list. By 1980, more than half the list consisted of nonwestern corporations (Bergesen and Sahoo 1985: 597). By 1998, there were almost as many large transnational corporations in Japan and twelve nonwestern semiperipheries as there were in the United States (Bergesen and Sonnett 2001). Over the last two decades, the number of nonwestern semiperipheries with large corporations increased 150 percent, indicating that the ethnic diversity of corporate ownership is widening globally. Table 6 shows the growing semiperipheral presence in the world's transnational capitalist class in the early 21st century, as evidenced in the list of the largest 2,000 transnational corporations in the world. By 2016, nearly half the world's largest corporations were based outside the western core countries, 35 percent of them in semiperipheries. Over the last two years, 41 western corporations were displaced from the "Global 2000" by 41 nonwestern firms, most of them based in China. Furthermore, eighteen of the world's fifty richest corporations were based in nonwestern semiperipheries in 2016.

There is another empirical indicator of the growing ethnic/racial diversity of the world's transnational capitalist class. Since 2000, the number of wealthy billionaires has expanded faster in semiperipheries than in the core (Morison et al. 2013). The Hurun Research Institute identifies all the world's billionaires by country and pinpoints their wealth, industrial or business category, and corporate ties. Table 7 aggregates the 2016 "Hurun Global Rich List" by the world-system status and region of the world's countries, showing that 53 percent of the world's wealthiest capitalists are now nonwesterners. Indeed, there were slightly more billionaires in nonwestern semiperipheries than in the western core. For the first time, semiperipheral China (568) surpassed the United States (535) in number of billionaires. Brazil had more billionaires than France, Canada or Australia while South Korea and Turkey had more billionaires than Australia or Italy. Furthermore, 41 percent of world billionaire wealth is in the hands of nonwestern capitalists, the majority situated in semiperipheries. More than one-quarter of this wealth is concentrated in seven Asian semiperipheral countries. Nearly one-third of billionaire wealth is held by 113 capitalists who have accumulated more than \$10 billion. While 75 of the world's most wealthy are in the western core, 38 reside in fifteen nonwestern semiperipheries. Among these double-digit billionaires, a nonwestern capitalist has accumulated 36 cents to every dollar held by a western capitalist (see Appendix D).

There are five empirical indicators that nonwestern semiperipheral capitalists are key actors in the globalized economic processes that are likely to lead to global ethnic/racial inequality. In 2015, the number of semiperipheral capitalists in *Forbes* list of the world's seventy "most

powerful” billionaires (defined as a combination of economic wealth and significant political influence) exceeded the number of U.S. capitalists who made that ranking. There were 31 nonwestern semiperipheral elites compared to 27 in the US, ten in Europe and four in Japan.¹² Oxfam (2016) reports that, in 2015, the accumulated wealth of the world’s 62 richest billionaires was equal to the total income for the poorer 3.6 billion (49.9 percent) of the global population. What Oxfam did not report is that *eighteen (29 percent) of these wealthiest 62 transnational capitalists were citizens of nonwestern semiperipheries*.¹³ Second, nonwestern semiperipheral capitalists are more transnationalized than western core capitalists. In 2015, Asian semiperipheral capitalists were 1.3 times more likely than western core capitalists to invest financially or to operate businesses *outside* their home countries. Similarly, Latin American, African and Middle Eastern capitalists were 1.2 times more likely than their western equivalents to invest or conduct business transnationally. Third, the concentration of world wealth into the hands of the wealthiest capitalists doubled between 2009 and 2015, and most of that growth occurred in nonwestern semiperipheries. Between 1996 and 2015, the numbers and assets of the wealthiest western core capitalists slowed, but Asian semiperipheries expanded their share of wealth concentration 8.8 percent annually. By 2015, 34 percent of the world’s wealthiest capitalists are situated in Asian, Latin American, Middle Eastern and African semiperipheries.¹⁴

Fourth, semiperipheral transnational corporations “work with their states to set rules of the game in trade, investment, and finance. . . . At the heart of the process are the concepts monopoly power and state power” (Radice 2009: 34). Often with state support, these semiperipheral billionaires have accrued their economic and political power through super-exploitation of ethnic minorities. Within their own countries, these semiperipheral transnational capitalists have benefitted greatly from economic deregulation by states (Palat 2009), from state-sanctioned *accumulation by dispossession* (Harvey 2004) or from *accumulation through encroachment* (Patnaik 2005) into the territories of ethnic minorities within their own societies. Fifth, nonwestern corporations, billionaires, and state elites form the fractions of the transnational capitalist classes in their own countries. Because they service other transnational capitalists, they are complicit in creating and sustaining the inequalities of the world-system (Amin 2011). Since the prosperity of these elites is tied closely to exports to high-income markets, they have no motivation to challenge the current processes of the world-system that structure both their wealth accumulation and global ethnic/racial exploitation (Palat 2009).

¹² Analysis of Forbes (2015).

¹³ Analysis of Hurun Research Institute (2015).

¹⁴ Analysis of “World Wealth Report 2016,” www.worldwealthreport.com.

Table 7. Wealth Concentration into the Hands of Billionaires, 2016**Part A. Western Billionaires**

Sector of the World-System	No. Billionaires	\$US Billions	% World Billionaire Wealth
<i>Western Core</i> (USA, Canada, Western/Northern/Southern Europe, Australia, New Zealand)	981	4,092.0	58.88
<i>Western/Northern/Southern Europe Semiperiphery</i> (Cyprus, Greece, Portugal)	6	10.7	0.15
Totals	987	4,102.7	59.03

Part B. Nonwestern Billionaires

Sector of the World-System	No. Billionaires	\$US Billions	% World Billionaire Wealth
<i>Asian Core</i> : Japan & Singapore	72	168.9	2.43
<i>Semiperiphery Asia</i> (China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, South Korea, Thailand)	689	1,784.8	25.68
<i>Semiperiphery Middle East & North Africa</i> (Algeria, Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates)	90	165.1	2.38
<i>Semiperiphery Post-Socialist Eastern Europe</i> (Czech Republic, Kazakstan, Poland, Romania, Russia)	109	244.5	3.52
<i>Semiperiphery Latin America</i> (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Venezuela)	86	340.6	4.90
<i>Semiperiphery Subsaharan Africa</i> (Nigeria, South Africa)	11	34.3	0.49
<i>Semiperiphery Caribbean</i> (Bahamas)	2	3.6	0.05
Total Nonwestern Semiperiphery	987	2,572.9	37.02
<i>Periphery Asia</i> (Nepal, Vietnam)	3	1.6	0.02
<i>Periphery Middle East & North Africa</i> (Brunei, Egypt, Morocco)	14	44.1	0.63
<i>Periphery Post-Socialist Eastern Europe</i> (Geogia, Ukraine)	9	27.4	0.40
<i>Periphery Latin America</i> (Colombia, Peru)	11	20.1	0.29
<i>Periphery Subsaharan Africa</i> (Angola, Kenya, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda)	5	12.3	0.18
Total Nonwestern Periphery	42	105.5	1.52
Nonwestern Totals	1,101	2,847.3	41.0
World Totals	2,088	6,950.0	100.00

Source and Notes: Analysis of Hurun Institute (2016). The Chinese SARs (Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan) are counted with China. We employ the United Nations (2015) geographical delineations of European subregions.

Semiperipheral Exploitation through Global Commodity Chains

We are convinced that the greatest degree of ethnic/racial inequality now lies within semiperipheral countries where there are extreme schisms of economic, political, and lifestyle inequality among the ethnic groups represented among the elites, the middle classes, and the poor. While scholars do not typically think this way, we have previously conceived global commodity chains to be *chains of exploitation*, grounded in stratified inequalities along racial, ethnic, class and gender lines (Clelland 2014, 2015; Dunaway 2012, 2014). In short, these are the significant mechanisms through which capitalists structure and maintain ethnic/racial inequalities around the world, and they consist of thousands of sites at which battles against inequality must be waged if we are to effect worldwide change. Within every semiperiphery, capitalists, their compradors, and the expanding middle classes benefit dramatically while ethnic/racial minorities are exploited to provide cheap ecological resources and low paid/unpaid labor while being excluded from the benefits (Harvey 2004, Clelland 2015). While global commodity chains provide privileges (e.g., cheap goods, health technology) to many households in all three tiers of the world-system, the greatest expansion of middle class consumption is occurring in nonwestern semiperipheries.¹⁵ Within those semiperipheries, the more affluent lifestyle of urban elites and middle classes are sustained off the lands and labors of marginalized rural ethnic/racial groups and the cheap goods and services of minorities trapped in the urban informal sector.

Semiperipheral exploitation of ethno-territories. As we enter the 21st century, nonwestern semiperipheries are engaging in contradictory nation-building and globalization agendas. In order to recruit FDI, build new development infrastructure and reorient their economies toward export, semiperipheries engage in practices toward ethnic minorities and communities that work against stable nation-states. Behaving like the western core, semiperipheries treat ethnic communities as “internal peripheries” in order to exploit their lands and natural resources (e.g., Sturgeon et al. 2006). The strategies of marginalization, oppression and exploitation employed by semiperipheral states stimulate resistance, ensuring the persistence of and greater solidarity within ethnic groups, generating more cross-ethnic coalition building, and drawing international attention to their human rights violations (Dunaway 2003). Several semiperipheries have exhibited higher growth rates than the core since the 1980s (Korzeniewicz and Moran 2009: 64-68; Appendix C), and they have sustained that growth through displacement of vulnerable ethnic communities (Harvey 2004) in order to grab lands for new capitalist enterprises or to extract ecological resources (Bryceson, Kay and Mooj 2000; Pearce 2012). Many U.S. scholars emphasize *racial exclusion* from opportunity structures (e.g., Goldberg 1994), but

¹⁵ While the core middle class is contracting, semiperipheral middle classes are ballooning in size and wealth accumulation.

semiperipheries force *inclusion* of ethnic groups. In many nonwestern societies, much of the damage of ethnic policies is not in keeping minorities *out* but in forcing them *in* (through strategies such as land grabbing), even when they resist being incorporated into national development agendas as providers of natural resources. Of the 409 ethnic conflicts studied by the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (2016), nearly three-quarters were related to ethnic group control over lands. Struggles to secede from nation-states accounted for 108, another 87 were conflicts to gain local autonomy from state plans, and 98 were group actions to reclaim control over natural resources.

Two preferred development strategies of semiperipheries are state marketing of ecological resources (most lying within ethnic communities) and the creation of Special Economic Zones with tax incentives for foreign investors to redevelop ethnic territories (Worth and Moore 2009: 109). On the one hand, semiperipheries (e.g., China, Israel, Russia) often attempt to fractionalize ethnic communities by sponsoring settler enclaves within their territories (e.g., Falah 2005; Human Rights Watch 2007). On the other hand, forced displacements have been concentrated in the world's semiperipheries since 2000, as states have reallocated the lands of ethnic minorities for export production or public infrastructure.¹⁶ Between 2010 and 2015, most of the ethnic conflict in semiperipheries centered around encroachments on and ecological degradation of ethnic lands and communities (e.g., Obi 2010).¹⁷ In China alone, two-thirds of the 205,000 public protests in 2014 were centered around resistance against displacement from ethnic lands (Gobel and Ong 2015).

Semiperipheral exploitation of minority laborers. The “new international division of labor” that resulted from the transfer of core manufacturing to the semiperiphery was an historical shift in the structure of the world-system (Robinson 2004). According to Gerard Strange (2015: 48-49), the 21st century semiperiphery is most accurately defined by “the emergence of a significant and growing manufacturing capacity aimed primarily at export” in contexts in which there is a “massive reserve army and highly authoritarian labour regimes in which free labour organisation is not tolerated.” While the majority of the world working class now lies within the semiperiphery, the emergence and expansion of the industrialized export-oriented semiperiphery has been accompanied by the *semi*-proletarianization of ethnic/racial communities.¹⁸ Semiperipheries have achieved their economic development through national agendas that target and exploit their own ethnic/racial minorities (e.g., Boele, Fabig and Wheeler 2001) and those

¹⁶ Analysis of UNHCR (2012, map, p. 2), UNHCR (2013: Table 1), the Minorities at Risk Project database, and Walker (2013).

¹⁷ Analysis of UNHCR (2012, map, p. 2), UNHCR (2013: Table 1), and Walker (2013).

¹⁸ For a fuller explication of the concept of semiproletarianization, see Dunaway (2012).

within peripheries (e.g., Yates 2012). However, most of those workers have been marginalized from *waged* labor. Despite the industrialization of the semiperipheries, there are still far fewer workers in factories than in the unstable, informal sector and/or embedded in precarious subcontracting arrangements (Charmes 2012, Dunaway 2014). Bonded labor and labor trafficking are not uncommon in the semiperipheries (Charmes 2012, Kara 2012), and women, especially minority and indigenous females, are concentrated in the most precarious, lowest-paying jobs (Dunaway 2014).

Moreover, most semiperipheries still have large rural populations that face higher rates of unemployment and poverty (Bryceson, Kay and Mooj 2000). Semiperipheral agriculture and industrialization are grounded in intense exploitation of rural ethnic minorities and urban transnational migrants through segmented labor markets that structure differential access to job opportunities and inequitable wage scales or subcontracting fees (e.g., Dedeoglu 2014). Much like the western core, semiperipheral states construct legal definitions of ethnic minorities in order to target them for marginalization and exploitation by both domestic and foreign-controlled industries and extractive development agendas (e.g., Li 2010). Worldwide, “people’s livelihoods have become more volatile and precarious,” (Krishna 2009: 67), but the risk of impoverishment has increased most in semiperipheries with large concentrations of ethnic minorities in rural communities (Bryceson, Kay and Mooj 2000).

Hidden exploitation of ethnic households. To maximize profits and remain globally competitive, semiperipheral capitalists must exploit as many “costless” social and natural conditions as possible. These *externalized costs* are unseen and unpaid bills that are embedded in every commodity chain. Through their domestic development projects and their FDI in other countries, semiperipheries intervene in ethnic communities and households in ways that minimize production costs by allowing extensive use of conditions external to the production process (Dunaway 2012, Clelland 2014, 2015). Thus, capitalists shift to those groups, their ecosystems, their cultures, and their human laborers most of the real costs of commodity production, such as community and cultural displacement, land grabbing, ecological degradation, threats to livelihoods and health, debt bondage, and extreme forms of labor exploitation, (e.g., Kara 2012, Ferolin 2014). In many contexts, local ethnic groups are dispossessed and excluded from participation in economic development while distant communities and elites accrue the bulk of wealth accumulation (Harvey 2004). We are convinced that it is not possible to battle ethnic/racial inequality by attacking only the oppression that is highly visible, the level at which most theories are constructed and most analyses are conducted. For affected ethnic communities, the externalized, hidden costs are likely to be more significant in perpetuating inequality than the indicators that lie on the visible surface. Indeed, these hidden costs impact these groups well into

the future (a) by removing the ecological resources and wealth surpluses that are needed to sustain healthy communities, and (b) by laying the bases for cross-generational impoverishment.

Transnationalized Semiperipheral States and Ethnic/Racial Conflict

Over the last three decades, scholars have called for “bringing in the agency of the state” in analyses of nonwestern countries (Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol 1985, Bayart 1993) and for moving beyond the tendency of western academics, activists and international development agencies to paint nonwestern states as powerless victims (Brown and Harman 2013, Corkin 2013, Mohan and Lampert 2013, Gadzala 2015). With few exceptions (e.g., Martin 1990), however, those analyses ignore the roles of those states in generating and complicating ethnic/racial inequalities. With respect to the semiperiphery, this oversight is glaring for two reasons. First, analysis of ethnic groups in every country of the world between 1946 and 2010 demonstrates that there is “an unequivocal relationship between the degree of access to state power and the likelihood of armed rebellion” (Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010: 114).¹⁹ Second, semiperipheral states play more prominent roles in development than do states in the core or periphery (Worth and Moore 2009: 122). For that reason, semiperipheral states are more highly *transnationalized* than either core or peripheral states:

As transnational capitalists operate in numerous countries they turn to local (national) states of the countries in which they operate. Just as in previous epochs, they require that these local (national) states provide the conditions for accumulation within their respective territories, including disciplining labor. Reciprocally, local managers of the national capitalist state are compelled, just as they were in the past, by the structural power of the capitalist system. The legitimacy of these states and the reproduction of the status of state elites as privileged strata depend on their ability to attract and retain now-globalized accumulation to the territories over which they exercise political authority. Competition among national states to attract transnationally mobile capital becomes functional to global capital and to its ability to exercise a structural power over the direct power of states (Robinson 2014: 8).

Accumulated research points to four conjunctures between transnationalized semiperipheral states and ethnic/racial inequality. First, semiperipheral states that are dependent on FDI are most likely to be authoritarian and to engage in political exclusion of ethnic minorities (Timberlake and

¹⁹ See the Ethnic Power Relations data set, www.epr.ucla.edu/.

Williams 1984). Second, new development agendas in semiperipheries trigger fierce competition over control of the state between urban middle classes and disenfranchised rural minorities (Chase-Dunn 1989: 124-25). “Excluded groups across all income levels are three times more likely to initiate conflict against the state as compared with included groups that enjoy representation at the center” (Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010: 106). Third, semiperipheral states (and their auxiliary elites) engineer and manipulate much of the ethnic/racial oppression within their own societies, and they engage in conflicts with adjacent countries. Finally, many— if not most— of the actors who codify and structure marginalization of ethnic/racial minorities are now semiperipheral states that employ military force to exploit and dispossess ethnic minorities.²⁰

We cannot understand global ethnic/racial inequality if we fail to examine the contradictions between semiperipheral *nationalism* and ethnic/racial diversity. Like all national governments, every semiperipheral state is constructed as a “fictive ethnicity” grounded in “a historical system of complementary exclusions and dominations” (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991: 37, 49, 62). An uneasy homogeneity is constructed through the equation of the dominant ethnic identity with the core of the nation and the location of subordinated ethnic identities at its peripheries (Hall 2001). Struggles for national identity and control are negotiated by the state through domination over ethnicized subjects. Amin (1982: 176-77) describes the conflict between ethnic fragmentation and nation-building as a “national movement without a nation.” Indeed, nation-building and its development nationalism trigger *ethnogenesis* in opposition to dominant state elites (McNeill 1986). Consequently, states structure within their bounds “territorialized ethnic communities” that are likely to be continually in conflict with nationalism (Alonso 1994: 395).

Though required for hegemony over a population, “national interests” and ethnic/racial dominance are never fully paramount (Lawson 1990). Juxtaposed against the possibility of the hegemonic and homogeneous nation are “recurring revivals” of ethnic identity and struggles over territory (Gurr 1994, Chee-beng 1997). Moreover, indigenous groups often struggle for autonomy from states that seek to dispossess them in order to exploit their lands and natural resources for capitalist development agendas (Hall and Fenelon 2009). Indeed, the “cannibalizing dialectic” between tendencies toward national hegemony and ethnic heterogeneity forms the dilemma of the semiperipheral state (Appadurai 1990: 2).²¹

The Minorities at Risk Project identifies 283 groups that face threats of ethnic conflict. A majority of these peoples are at risk from their own states, and most of these groups fall within

²⁰ Analysis of Minority Rights Group International (2016)

²¹ For a more extensive discussion of the conflicts between nation-building and ethnic diversity, see Dunaway (2003) and Jalata (2004).

semiperipheries or the semiperipheralized areas of peripheries.²² Nonwestern semiperipheries now engage in transnational development projects, investments, loans, extractive exploitation, and land grabbing (Martin 2008, Bond 2012, Misoczky and Imasato 2014). Subordination and domination are quite often legally constructed to separate those who advocate national agendas of “civilization,” “progress” and “development” from those who are stigmatized as “backward” and “lacking in modernity.” Moreover, states codify definitions of ethnic groups and territories, and they generate a “mythical nationalism” to justify oppression and exploitation of those minorities (Abdel-Malek 1982: vol. 1). More often than not, there is an economic basis for this political and cultural oppression. In many countries, dominant elites treat ethnic communities as external peripheries or colonies in order to incorporate into global value chains their ecological resources and cheap labor (Bryceson, Kay and Mooj 2000, Pearce 2000; Clelland 2014). Semiperipheries are often criticized for exhibiting neo-colonialism (Bond 2012) and for replicating the worst patterns of past European exploitation of nonwestern ethnic groups (Wallerstein 2015: 272).

In 2015, every nonwestern semiperipheral state displaced ethnic populations from lands and communities to implement FDI-driven development or infrastructure projects (for examples, see Table 8). Most of these states routinely targeted ethnic communities for displacement and redevelopment, including evictions for the creation of Special Economic Zones to attract foreign enterprises. While extractive industries and infrastructure projects (especially dams and railroads) displaced more ethnic communities than any other development agenda, Asian and Latin American states removed thousands of ethnic peasants to make way for large FDI-backed plantations or ranches. Furthermore, every nonwestern semiperipheral state has laws or public policies that legitimate discriminatory practices toward ethnic minorities (for examples, see Appendix, Table 8A). Most semiperipheral states implement policies to constrain transnational and internal migration, often using inflammatory public propaganda, military police roundups and tight border policing. For example, China pressured ethnic minorities to assimilate into the rural-to-urban labor migration to its industrial centers, and the state took action to forcibly repatriate minority group members who migrated outside the country. Most significantly, two-thirds of these states engaged in ongoing armed conflict with ethnic communities that protested publicly for autonomous control of their lands that were threatened by state-backed redevelopment. As Table 8A (Appendix) shows, with few exceptions, these states criminalized ethnic activists, and military or police killings of resistance movement leaders occurred in about half these states.

²² Analysis of Minorities at Risk Project database. The Minorities at Risk Project defines “ethnic conflict” as (a) groups that are politically and/or collectively resisting state policies, (b) groups at risk of or that have been victimized by serious state repression, (c) groups that engage in activism to be autonomous from states, and (d) violent or nonviolent collective conflict between groups, and (e) groups that engage in separatist movements.

Table 8. State Actions against Ethnic Minorities in Selected Semiperipheries, 2015

Semiperiphery	State's reaction to ethnic protest for autonomous communities	Targeting Mechanisms Employed by States or State Elites
Brazil	ignored by Executive Branch & Congress	threats to indigenous lands & communities from state-supported large ranch projects, extractive industries, & infrastructure projects; criminalization of indigenous leaders; extremely inadequate public services & roads
China	ongoing armed conflict	land displacement & destruction of ethnic communities through development projects; imprisonment of ethnic activists; religious repression; pressures on ethnic groups to assimilate into labor migration for industrial centers; threats to ethnic languages; loss of grazing lands to state-led urbanization; replacement of traditional housing & villages with state facilities
India	ongoing armed conflict	extensive land displacement for development projects & extractive industries; destruction of ethnic communities, farms & fisheries
Indonesia	contained armed conflict	religious persecution; killing of ethnic & human rights activists; restrictions on freedom of speech & assembly; forcible conversion of minority children to Islam; forced labor migration to less populous areas of the country; land grabbing for palm oil plantations & extractive industries (timber, minerals, oil); forced evictions from indigenous communities
Russian Federation	ongoing armed conflict	state restrictions on freedom of religion & speech; marginalization of indigenous peoples; imprisonment of minority activists; land displacement for resource extraction; infrastructure construction on religious sites
South Africa	failure to legally protect & reinstate lands to indigenous groups	targeting & deportation of African transnational migrants; deportation of 2,000 refugees; infringements on land rights of indigenous groups; land displacement for development projects & infrastructure; Muslim marriages not legally protected; uncertain land rights of Muslim women
Thailand	ongoing armed conflict	Thai language requirements in schools; pressures for adoption of state religion (Buddhism); state violence toward Muslims, including torture, harassment & killings by soldiers; land displacement for palm oil plantations; destruction of ethnic communities, farms, housing & livelihoods; imprisonment of minority activists; state camps traffic Burmese Muslims to other countries
Turkey	ongoing armed conflict	ethnic communities targeted for redevelopment; forced displacement of ethnic shops; evictions & resettlement for dam construction; minority exclusion from public services; raids on settlements; imprisonment of minority activists; segmented labor market with lower wages for minorities

Source: Analysis of Minority Rights Group International (2016).

Large-scale involuntary migration *within* societies has been identified by the World Economic Forum (2016) to be the global risk that impacts the greatest number of people worldwide. For every refugee who gains the attention of the world by crossing a national boundary, there are three to ten uncounted *invisible* victims within their own countries (see Table 9). In 2015,

one of every 89 citizens in nonwestern semiperipheries was internally displaced when more than 40 million people were impacted by domestic repression or exploitation of ethnic groups. Nearly 13 million—or one of every 194—was displaced by ethnic violence (e.g., 6.3 million Colombians, 2.1 million Nigerians, 612,000 Indians).²³ Another 15 million were displaced from their ethnic communities by development projects. On average, fewer than one-fifth of these uprooted people are resettled in situations parallel to their pre-displacement lives, so a majority face deepening poverty and ethnic marginalization (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2016: 60-62). Every year since 1990, the incidence of ethnic/indigenous displacement has risen as semiperipheries seek out cheap natural resources and build large infrastructure projects to support national agendas of economic growth and competition for global status (Stanley 2002, Terminski 2015). Ethnic groups and indigenous peoples account for a majority of those displaced by development projects, and thousands of entire indigenous/ethnic communities have been eliminated (Stanley 2002).²⁴ These are not brief historical anomalies that are likely to disappear any time soon, and the national and international costs are monumental (Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research 2016).

The Global Migration Crisis

In the early 21st century, one of the worst ethnic/racial inequalities of the world-system lies in how the core countries manage the crisis-level flows of refugees. While western and Japanese media and politicians fuel public fears that their countries are being inundated by these foreigners, the core externalizes this human burden to countries with fewer economic resources to bear the costs. In 2014, low-income peripheries hosted 48 percent of the world's refugees while the western core granted asylum to only 9 percent. Peripheral countries that averaged 3.4 percent of the GDPpc of the core (see Table 5) approved 5.2 times more asylum claims than the 21 core countries. More significantly, 25 percent of the refugees were accepted by least-developed countries. With a GDPpc of less than 2 percent of that of the core, these poorest countries granted asylum to 2.7 persons to every refugee hosted by the world's richest countries. Nonwestern semiperipheries accepted 43 percent, and refugees were most heavily concentrated in the Middle East/North African semiperipheries where states acted affirmatively to accept Muslims who have been less welcome in the western core. Indeed, these semiperipheries granted asylum to 5.5 refugees to every

²³ Analysis of Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2016: 96-98). We cross-matched the semiperiphery list in Table 2 with the list of countries in which citizens were displaced (International Displacement Monitoring Centre 2016).

²⁴ For example, Argentina, Brazil, China, India and Russia displaced 4,287,100 for dam projects since 1990, and ethnic minorities accounted for more than 60 percent of the displacees (Terminski 2015). More than 1,200 entire indigenous/ethnic communities were eliminated in those countries (Stanley 2002).

Table 9. Refugee and Transnational Migration Trends, 2014-2015

Part A. Inequality in the Management of the World Refugee Crisis, 2014

Countries of:	No. Refugees Granted Asylum	% World Total	Ratio of Refugees to GDPpc
Western & Asian Core	1,600,270	9.1	32.5
Western/Northern/Southern Europe Semiperiphery	22,323	0.1	1.2
<i>Nonwestern Semiperipheries of:</i>	7,554,526	43.1	
Middle East & North Africa	6,742,887	38.5	258.2
Asia	379,904	2.2	41.6
Post-Socialist Eastern Europe	274,279	1.6	27.4
Subsaharan Africa	112,192	0.6	246.0
Latin America & Caribbean	45,264	0.2	3.7
<i>Nonwestern Periphery</i>	8,354,491	47.7	4,964.1
Least-developed, lowest-income countries	4,400,477	25.1	6,377.5
World Total	17,531,780	100.0	

Part B. Transnational Migration Flows into Nonwestern Semiperipheries, 2015

Nonwestern Semiperiphery	Millions of In-Migrants	% All Migrants to Nonwestern Countries	Nonwestern Semiperiphery	Millions of In-Migrants	% All Migrants to Nonwestern Countries
Russia	11.64	11.3	Malaysia	2.51	2.4
Saudi Arabia	10.19	9.9	Argentina	2.09	2.0
United Arab Emirates	8.09	7.8	Israel	2.01	1.9
India	5.24	5.1	Lebanon	1.99	1.9
Thailand	3.91	3.8	Oman	1.85	1.8
Kazakistan	3.55	3.4	Qatar	1.69	1.6
South Africa	3.14	3.0	Venezuela	1.41	1.4
Jordan	3.11	3.0	South Korea	1.33	1.3
Turkey	2.97	2.9	Mexico	1.19	1.1
Kuwait	2.87	2.8	China	0.98	0.9
Iran	2.73	2.6	Brazil	0.71	0.7

Sources and Notes: Part A is derived from analysis of <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SM.POP.REFG>. We followed United Nations methodology (see UNHCR 2015) to calculate ratios of refugees to GDPpc. We employ the United Nations (2015) geographical delineations of European subregions.

one accepted by the western core. At less than half the GDPpc of the western core, Turkey, Lebanon, Iran and Jordan granted asylum to 1.4 refugees to every one accepted by 19 countries of the western core.²⁵

To assess the degree to which the world refugee crisis is being handled with economic equity, the United Nations (2016), calculates the ratio of refugees to the GDPpc of receiving countries. To explore the ethnic/racial inequality in the management of the world refugee crisis by the world “interstate system” (Wallerstein 1980a: 80-81), we employed that recommended methodology in Table 9, Part A. Just as the semiperiphery and periphery are exploited economically, the core also drains them of resources to resolve a refugee crisis exacerbated by its military imperialism. In 2014, more than half of the world’s refugees were stateless due to instability that has resulted from the long-term effects of core military actions in the Middle East and Afghanistan.²⁶ In effect, the western core externalizes to the world’s semiperipheries and peripheries the majority of the cost of the refugee crisis that its imperialism has generated. Thus, the ratio of refugees to GDPpc in Middle Eastern semiperipheries is 7.9 times greater than the economic share of the western core (see Table 9). Similarly, Sub-Saharan African semiperipheries bear 7.6 times the economic pressure that the western core absorbs from the refugee crisis. However, the world’s peripheries grant asylum to 4,964 refugees to every dollar of their GDPpc. Shockingly, however, the worst inequity falls on the world’s poorest countries where the ratio of refugees to GDPpc is 6,377, that is nearly 200 times the economic share born by the western core. On the one hand, a majority of the world’s refugees are being welcomed by countries with unemployment rates that are three to eight times worse than in the western core countries. On the other hand, at least half the world’s refugees are being hosted by countries in which a majority of the population lives on less than \$2 per day.

Nonwestern semiperipheries also host a large proportion of the world’s *voluntary transnational migrants*.²⁷ Figure 4 pinpoints four trends between 1990 and 2015 that call into question the “unidirectional South to western core flow” that is typically emphasized by western media, politicians and scholarly accounts.

First, in raw numbers, the destinations for 58 percent of transnational migrants were western core countries in 2015 (United Nations 2016: 1). However, a quite different trend emerges when migration patterns are disaggregated. When we isolate those who moved *between* western

²⁵ Analysis of World Bank, “Refugee Population by Country or Territory of Asylum, 2014,” <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SM.POP.REFG>. For more statistical detail about refugees, see Appendix B.

²⁶ Analysis of top ten countries of origin of refugees, 2014, <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/getfacts/statistics/intl/countries-origin-refugees-unhcrs-mandate-top-ten-2014/>. Also www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa_in_figures_2015.pdf.

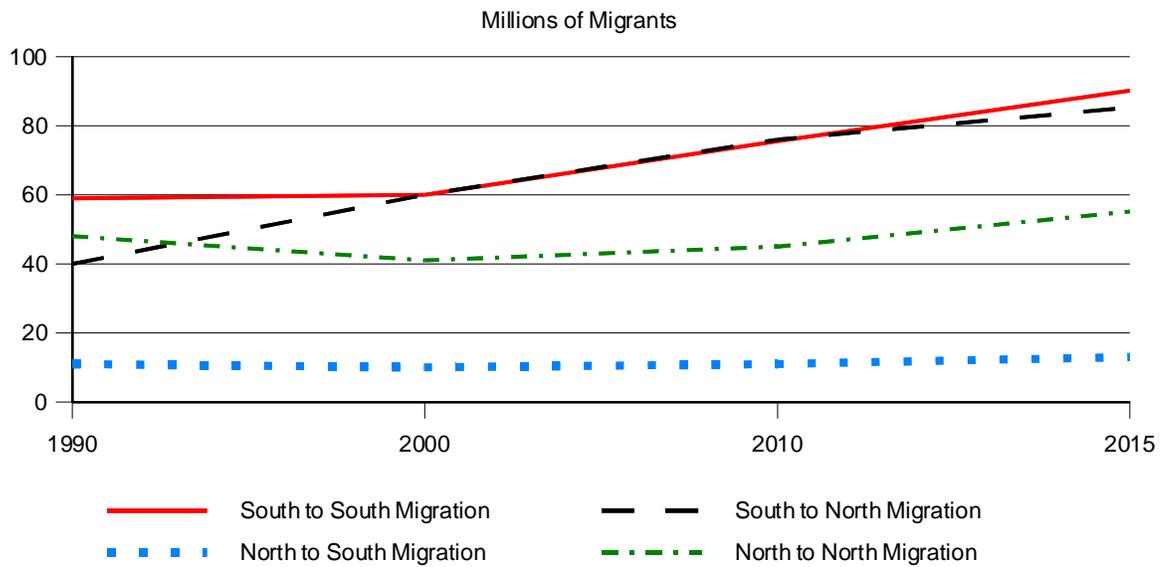
²⁷ We follow the United Nations legal distinction between refugee and migrant. See www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-viewpoint-refugee-migrant-right.html

countries, we discover that those migrants accounted for one-third to one-half of the foreigners in western countries between 1990 and 2015. Second, between 1990 and 2015, the flow of migrants *into* nonwestern countries was equivalent to or greater than the flows of nonwestern migrants into western destinations. In 1990 and 2015, the flows of migrants between nonwestern countries actually exceeded the flow of nonwesterners into western countries. Third, if we combine western migrants with nonwestern migrants, we see that the flow of migrants *into* nonwestern destinations consistently exceeded the South to North flows between 1990 and 2015. Fourth, while 87 percent of the foreigners who arrived in nonwestern locations originated from other nonwestern countries, 13 percent of them were westerners.

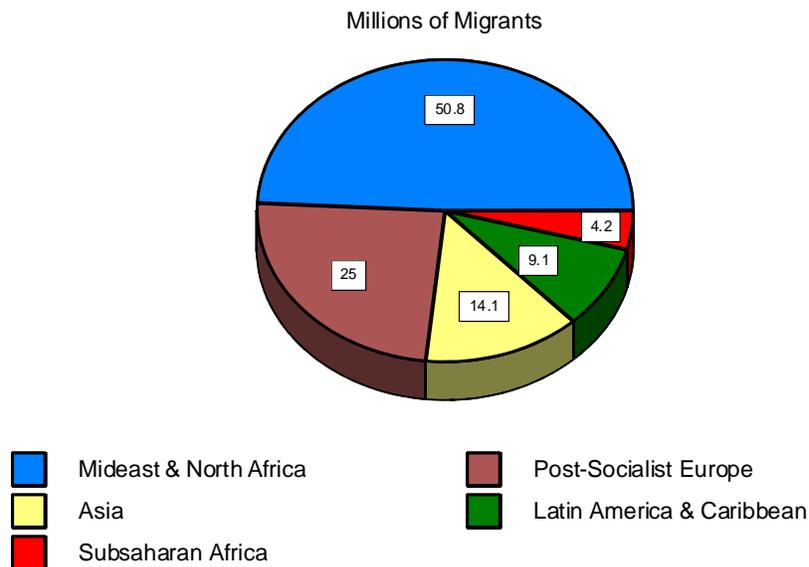
More than 85 million nonwesterners moved to the western core in 2015, but 103.2 million migrants were destined for nonwestern countries. In other words, there were 1.2 migrants to a nonwestern destination for every one who left a nonwestern society for the western core. Of those headed to nonwestern destinations, 49 percent preferred the Middle East, nearly a quarter arrived in Post-Socialist Europe, nearly 9 percent went to Latin America, and 4 percent arrived in Subsaharan Africa (see Figure 4, Part B). As Table 9, Part B shows, nearly three-quarters of these transnational migrants were concentrated into 22 nonwestern semiperipheries. Reflecting the centrality of transnational *labor* migration, 29 percent of the migrants targeted six Middle Eastern semiperipheries that are heavily dependent on foreign workers. More than 15 percent moved to two Post-Socialist semiperipheries, Russia and Kazakstan, primarily to seek work. About 3 percent went to Subsaharan Africa primarily destined for South Africa, a majority from peripheries within this region.

Four categories of economic migrants account for a majority of those who relocate to nonwestern semiperipheries. Peripheral males transnationalize themselves to become low-paid “contract laborers” for semiperipheral industries, plantations, ocean transport vessels and mobile ocean canning factories (Migration Policy Institute 2013, International Organization for Migration 2014). Second, the “international division of reproductive labor” operates to transfer female domestic servants from low income countries to nonwestern semiperipheries like Malaysia and Saudi Arabia (Yeates 2013). Some nonwestern semiperipheries are heavily dependent on foreign laborers (e.g., Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates). In the Czech Republic, companies recruit foreign workers despite domestic unemployment of more than 390,000. Other nonwestern semiperipheries are regional magnets for foreign workers. For example, there are 10 to 12 million foreign workers in Russia, a majority of them illegally. Similarly, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, China, India, Kazakstan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, and Venezuela attract hundreds of thousands of foreign contract laborers, as well as illegal migrants. The third category consists of “entrepreneurial migrants” while the fourth category

Figure 4. Transnational Migration Flows in the 21st Century World-System
 Part A. Transnational Migration Flows, 1990 to 2015



Part B. The Nonwestern Destinations of Transnational Migrants, 2015



Source: Analysis of United Nations (2016)

derives from semiperipheral “brain drain” of doctors, educators, nurses, engineers and other professionals from peripheries and poorer semiperipheries. For example, Brazil has drained more than 5,000 doctors from Cuba while South Africa and Nigeria have attracted thousands of Chinese small businesses.²⁸ Despite the importance of worker remittances to the GDP of sending countries, those exporting countries do little to screen labor conditions or to protect the human rights of workers.²⁹ Nearly three hundred foreign workers are on death rows in nonwestern semiperipheries, some of them convicted of crimes such as witchcraft or self-defense against employer rape (*The Guardian*, 1 January 2013, *Time*, 12 May 2016, Amnesty International website, 9 November 2015). In 2016, Saudi Arabia laid off thousands of foreign workers after oil prices dropped, stranding them without sufficient assets to return home (*New York Times*, August 1, 2016).

Many scholars (e.g., Richmond 1995, Sharma 2007) accuse western countries of structuring anti-immigration policies and point to white backlash against “racial minorities and immigrants of color” (Bonilla-Silva 2015: 202-203). However, semiperipheries are as enmeshed in as much conflict over transnational migrants as western states. Western scholars are so preoccupied with how the European Union and the United States are “closing borders” that they ignore actions by semiperipheral states (e.g., Mexico, South Africa, India, Brazil) to prevent the influx of transnational laborers from adjacent peripheries. Enclaves of foreign workers are highly visible in nonwestern semiperipheries, many of which have high unemployment rates and rising levels of small business closings. In reaction to public pressure about these problems, several countries have established strict quotas on the number of foreign workers (e.g., Gabon, Kazakstan, Malaysia, South Africa), some putting in place strong punishment for employers (e.g., public whippings in Malaysia) who exceed the limits. Indeed, semiperipheral states are just as involved in regulating migration flows and restricting citizenship rights as western core countries. Reactionary politics and human rights violations toward “foreign aliens” are routinely documented in nonwestern semiperipheries.³⁰ Moreover, the United Nations World Value Survey (1981-2014) indicates that there is even greater ethnic/racial intolerance of immigrants in some of these nonwestern semiperipheries than in the western core.³¹ For example, the European Court of Human Rights found Russia guilty in 2014 of arresting, detaining and expelling Georgia nationals (Scott 2016). In reaction to public opposition to transnational migrants, South Africa instituted Operation Fiela

²⁸ Analysis of United Nations (2016).

²⁹ For remittances as share of GDP, see <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS>. See, for example, www.hrw.org/reports/2004/saudi0704/1.htm regarding treatment of transnational workers in Saudi Arabia.

³⁰ For information about ethnic tensions around migrant flows across national borders, see case studies at the websites of the Migration Policy Institute (www.migrationpolicy.org) and Citizenship Rights in Africa Initiative (<http://citizenshiprightsinafrica.org>).

³¹ Analysis of World Value Survey databases, <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>. For a map of the world’s most and least tolerant countries, see Fisher (2013).

to deport thousands of illegal migrants from Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, and Congo. Thailand has operated state camps to aggregate and export Burmese migrants to other countries (Minority Rights Group International 2016).

However, western conceptualizations of these nonwestern policies conceal more than they explain. While western scholars often employ the terms *xenophobia* and *racialization*, these are inadequate approaches to explain why nonwestern semiperipheries react to refugees and transnational migrants in very different ways. While Latin American semiperipheries have absorbed few refugees and migrants, every other semiperipheral subregion—especially the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa—has accepted both categories at levels that place far greater pressures on their GDP per capita and on competition for jobs than is true in the core (see Table 8). On the one hand, it is clear that western academic preoccupation with the *positive* impacts of migration in rich countries leaves us ill-equipped to explore societies that are faced with high levels of unemployment, poverty and political instability that do not characterize the core. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the local negative costs of refugees and migrants are enormous. “For every two refugees, one local is pushed out of the home labor market” (Hatton and Williamson 2008: 258). On the African continent, South Africa has inequitably borne the brunt of both refugees and economic migrants for more than a decade, at the same time that the state is confronted by the world’s worst income inequality and unemployment of nearly one-third of its workers. On the other hand, several sociopolitical and economic factors are interwoven with public ethnic/racial prejudice (or acceptance) toward migrants.³² Even when semiperipheries have open borders toward foreign workers (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Kazakstan), domestic ethnic minorities and women’s groups call for state policies to subsidize training of local workers who are marginalized in the labor market. In the Middle East, for example, women are excluded from the labor force while states encourage the recruitment of foreign female servants, nurses and teachers. In some instances, states extend forms of assistance and subsidy to refugees and migrants that they do not make available to internal ethnic minorities or poor women. In those instances, public resistance is aimed more at changing state policies than at the migrants themselves (e.g., Uganda).³³

³² Consider Hungary, for example. In comparison to European core countries, Hungary has born an inequitable economic load in order to comply with EU migrant/refugee quotas. As a result, the 2016 referendum about whether the country would continue to comply with EU policy about migrants was overshadowed by polarized views about whether the country should withdraw from the European Union. However, the extremely low voter turnout indicates that there is NOT widespread xenophobia among the general public (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hungarian_migrant_quota_referendum,_2016).

³³ For more case histories, see Minority Rights Group International (2016), UNHCR (2016) Migration Policy Institute (www.migrationpolicy.org), Citizenship Rights in Africa Initiative (<http://citizenshiprightsinafrica.org>).

The Subimperialism of Semiperipheries

In their rivalry to ascend to core level or to prevent decline into the periphery, semiperipheries engage in *subimperialism*, i.e., they behave like the core in their economic and political relationships with peripheries and other semiperipheries (Chase-Dunn 1989: 210).

Semiperipheries are exploited by the core, but they, in turn, exploit poorer countries. A “subimperial” state exerts “a regional hegemony akin to the global dominance of an imperial power but at a subsystemic level.” Consequently, subimperialism often “produces ethnic opposition within local spheres, both within the semiperipheral state itself and within the wider regional periphery” (Shaw 1979: 348-51). Semiperipheries often act in the interests of the core, sometimes putting them in ethnic conflict with other semiperipheries or peripheries. For instance, the BRICs are far less likely to bring about systemic change than they are to “play a ‘subimperialist’ role to neoliberal regime maintenance” (Bond 2014a: 1). When they act in a subimperialist fashion, semiperipheries employ strategies that target, marginalize and oppress ethnic minorities in other countries (e.g., Martin 2008, Bond 2012, Misoczky and Imasato 2014). Nel and Taylor (2013: 1096) observe that “evidence is mounting that the traditional fault-lines of North-South interaction are being replicated in the burgeoning trade between Southern states. . . . Worsening wage inequality levels in some middle-income developing states are the result more of South-South trade than the effect of North-South interaction.” As part of their rivalry for greater status in the world-system hierarchy, semiperipheries are widening their FDI in peripheral countries, e.g., the development agendas in Sub-Saharan Africa of China and the other BRICS (Brautigam 2009, Carmody 2013, Bond and Garcia 2015: 15-68, Robinson 2015). One of the clearest patterns of semiperipheral subimperialism is the trend in transnational land grabbing. Between 2000 and 2016, two-thirds of the largest transnational land grabs were undertaken by corporations based in six semiperipheries. Capitalists based in Malaysia, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, India, China and Argentina grabbed nearly 11 million hectares in peripheral countries, capturing nearly 2 hectares to every one secured by core corporations in the United States, England and Netherlands.³⁴ Increasingly, there are strong causative linkages between transnational land grabbing and nonwestern ethnic conflict. Analyzing 133 countries, Krieger and Meirrecks (2016) found that the negative socio-economic and demographic consequences of large-scale land acquisitions “outweigh its potential benefits, consequently influencing the opportunity costs of ethnic conflict in ways that make ethnic tensions more likely.”

There has been a great deal of scholarly, NGO, and journalistic coverage of the confrontations between semiperipheral development projects and negatively impacted ethnic communities of Latin America, Asia and Africa (e.g., Bryceson, Kay and Mooj 2000; Human Rights Watch 2007;

³⁴ Analysis of Nolte, Chamberlain and Giger (2016: 18, 23).

Michel and Beuret 2009; Pearce 2012). Furthermore, ethnic conflicts are exacerbated by semiperipheral arms trading and transnational interference. Some semiperipheries are significant exporters of arms (e.g., Russia, South Africa, China) to other semiperipheries (e.g., Israel) and to peripheries (e.g., Sudan, Yemen) where ethnic conflict is occurring (Holtom et al. 2013). As we saw in 2016 news coverage of conflict in Yemen, South Sudan, and Syria, some semiperipheries align themselves with partisans in ethnic conflict in other countries, either through hidden support of repressive states (e.g., China, Saudi Arabia), arms trafficking (e.g., South Africa, China, Russia), or direct participation in warfare (e.g., Russia).

Semiperipheral Resistance toward the Core

World-systems analysts argue that the United States is in hegemonic decline, making this an historical period in which semiperipheral competition is intense (Arrighi and Silver 1999; Bornschier and Chase-Dunn 1999; Wallerstein 2003b). “The history of hegemonic successions shows that the slipping economic dominance of a hegemonic state weakens international order and opens the door to competition from other states” (Bergesen and Sonnett 2001: 1606). Wallerstein (2004a: 42) points to the “new reality” of semiperipheral and peripheral challenges to the world hegemon.

It is no longer true that the U.S. unilaterally defines the rules of the geopolitical game, nor is it true that it gets its way most of the time simply by political pressure, or even gets its way most of the time. . . . The last time the U.S. snapped its fingers and got its way was on September 11, 1973, when it engineered a coup in Chile and put Pinochet in power. On September 11, 2001, it was Bin Laden who snapped his fingers, and the U.S. people and government are still reeling from the blow.

Semiperipheries have received “unprecedented visibility” (Boatca 2006: 343) as they seek to preserve their “exclusive identities, rather than simply ‘servicing’ the core” (Worth and Moore 2009: 150). For example, Turkey, Russia, China, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt defied U.S. geopolitical stances in the Middle East and North Africa in 2015 and 2016.

Ethnic Resistance within Semiperipheries

Worldwide since 1995, half or more of ethnic mobilizations have emerged as resistance against capitalist economic agendas, but semiperipheral states bore the brunt of local opposition (Dunaway 2003). What are the world-systemic causes of ethnic/racial resistance in the semiperiphery? There is growing evidence that “the diffusion of a world system culture of human rights” (Olzak and Tsutsui 1998: 714) is leading to increased ethnic resistance (Dunaway 2003). Universal human rights and multiculturalism have reinforced the tendencies toward ethnic identity formation and

persistence in semiperipheral countries. While strengthening world capitalist agendas, the recent core ideological focus on multiculturalism has empowered ethnic minorities in the nonwestern semiperipheries to resist policies of their own governments (Friedman 1997: 83-85). To exacerbate those trends, there has been “a qualitative shift in political structures” that results from “the geometric rise in the number of international organizations . . . that form alliances with subnational ethnic groups” (Boswell and Stevis 1997:3-4). Two human rights resistance strategies threaten state sovereignty: (a) *subnational* political alignment around ethnic identities and (b) *supranational* alliances with international organizations and movements. Many ethnic movements play on the sympathies of distant international audiences they hope will move to weaken the position of their states (Dunaway 2003; Karatasli and Kumral 2017). Dialectically, the semiperipheral state is simultaneously pressured by contradictory universal ideologies and policies. While the universal economic ideology prioritizes economic growth strategies, semiperipheral repression of ethnic opposition to those development goals will attract world criticism and the emergence of “a global moral community” against such public actions (Baruah 1994).

Clearly, the economic changes that lead to ascent or decline of a semiperiphery in the world-system hierarchy “expand opportunities for social insurgency,” creating new political openings for ethnic/racial minorities to solidify and to increase their social visibility and political leverage (Anderson-Sherman and McAdam 1982: 168). Transnationalized semiperipheral states are caught in contradictory *universal* economic, political and human rights mandates. First, there is a structural contradiction between the world-system need for relatively strong states (Wallerstein 1980a) and the universalization of *democracy*. Tendencies toward homogenizing nationalism and centralized control over territories—the prerequisites to be a strong state in the world-system—are not democratic, and they have triggered resistance from ethnic minorities (Dunaway 2003). Consequently, the semiperipheral state is ensnared in a paradox in which “too much centralization causes rebellion, and too little centralization would cause fragmentation” (Yavuz 2001: 21). To complicate matters, democraticization agendas create new *structures of political opportunity* (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996). Because counter-hegemonic resistance is deterred in circumstances of extreme state repression, ethnic mobilization increases as semiperipheral states democratize. Why? Ethnic minorities have resisted newly democratic states when they have been previously repressed by or fear they will be oppressed by new ruling elites (Olzak and Tsutsui 1998). Universalization of human rights for indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities poses a second world-systemic contradiction for semiperipheral states. On the one hand, semiperipheral governments follow the core model in which “eminent domain in the public interest” is the legitimate means of extinguishing ethnic autonomy over lands with valuable ecological resources.

On the other hand, those same governments are expected to recognize the universal human right of ethnic minorities to self-determination (Svoksy and Cuffe 2015).

Many scholars point to the semiperiphery as the locus of significant future systemic change, but none of them addresses the reality that semiperipheries are not moving any further toward eliminating ethnic/racial inequality than the core or the periphery. For example, Chase-Dunn and Lerro (2014: 58) argue that “some of the most potent efforts to democratize global capitalism will come out of movements and democratic socialist regimes that emerge in semiperipheral countries.” Despite their optimism, neither democratic nor socialist countries have eliminated ethnic/racial inequality and exploitation historically (Olzak and Tsutsui 1998; Yavuz 2001). Furthermore, semiperipheral ethnic minorities have been excluded from “democratizing” states just as they were marginalized from the previous regimes (e.g., Noonan 1995; Kadouf 2001; Nettles 2007). Indeed, many democratizing states have continued to marginalize and repress ethnic minorities and indigenous people (e.g., Gurowitz 2000; Kadouf 2001; Munoz 2006; Nam 2006; Krøvel 2011). Phoebe Moore and Charles Dannreuther (2009: 138-39) are convinced that the semiperiphery

is not going to accept its position as a mouthpiece for the core, nor as a purgatory for the periphery. It is no longer a circumvention of resistance, but *is* resistance, as it becomes increasingly powerful transnationally. . . . Today, the semi-periphery challenges the system itself. . . . The new transformative semi-periphery is not interested in simply ‘developing’ according to the pre-ordained sets of institutional structures to then achieve ‘core’ status amongst battling hegemons. Rather, its potential today is its ability to challenge and perhaps alter the entire system.

Even if their optimism were well-founded, we certainly cannot assume that systemic economic or political change will lead to the elimination of ethnic/racial inequality because social equality is not at the heart of semiperipheral rivalry for economic growth. Unfortunately, the accumulating evidence is leaning the direction of indicating that the early 21st century semiperiphery is characterized by greater ethnic/racial inequality and exploitation than the core. While semiperipheries may have an historically unparalleled degree of bargaining leverage against core states (e.g., Li 2005), that semiperipheral resistance has not prioritized improving the status of ethnic/racial minorities.

Part III. Theoretical Retrenchment: Moving Toward Theory for the Excluded Middle

We have reached a point in the history of the modern world-system that requires “theoretical retrenchment” from the vantage point of the world’s “excluded middle.” We argue that 21st century theory must *decenter* analysis of global ethnic/racial inequality by bringing the nonwestern

semiperiphery to the foreground. We have examined the ways in which nonwestern semiperipheries are having a more significant impact on global ethnic/racial inequality than either core or periphery.³⁵ Since 1980, three-fifths of world population has been concentrated in nonwestern semiperipheries (see Table 1), and those countries account for a majority of the world's diverse array of ethnic/racial groups. Consequently, nonwestern semiperipheries are the loci of an overwhelming majority of the world's annual tally of state repression of and violence toward ethnic/racial minorities, state displacement of ethnic communities for development projects, and ethnic/racial resistance and activism. To complicate matters, nonwestern semiperipheries now host a high proportion of the world's refugees and transnational migrants, and anti-immigrant biases are intensifying in those societies.

From a political economy perspective, the transnational capitalist class is no longer as strongly dominated by the core as it was in the 20th century, because nonwestern semiperipheral capitalists and corporations are now entering those ranks in record numbers (see Tables 3, 3A and 4). These countries are growing economically at higher rates than core countries (Mahutga and Smith 2011), and they are achieving that growth through intense exploitation and dispossession of ethnic/racial minorities. While they are draining away record levels of wealth accumulation that once went to the core, those countries are characterized by concentration of wealth and income into the hands of a few ethnic/racial groups to degrees that exceed core or peripheral trends. Moreover, the territories and laborers targeted for deeper incorporation into the world-economy are disproportionately concentrated in the homelands of semiperipheral ethnic/racial minorities.

Seeing beyond White Racists and Colonists

As we face an unstable 21st century and the semiperipheral challenges to the core that it will bring, we will not be able to explain much— even to ask effective research questions— if we stay focused on “western white supremacy” as the universal dilemma to be examined. “Race essentialist positions that hold only whites accountable for racial oppression are overly simplified, miss the complexity of the issues involved, and encourage a focus on one set of villains,” contends Radha Jhappan (1996: 34). While homogenizing all whites as the singular perpetrators in “the international hierarchy of oppression,” such arguments fail to analyze the oppressions that result from sharp differentials in the economic and political power of two key groups of actors in the world-system: the transnational capitalist class and nonwestern states. But is there such a thing as a widespread identity of western “whiteness?” Indeed, “international white solidarity” is neither a

³⁵ “The trend in the 2000s has been that overall inequality between advanced economies and emerging economies is narrowing while inequality in emerging economies is increasing” (Pieterse 2011: 26, cf. also Arrighi, Silver and Brewer 2003). For instance, China's GINI coefficient increased from 30 to 50 between 1980 and 2010 (Xie and Zhou 2014).

geopolitical identity nor a transnational reality across very different European nationalisms (Bonnet 2004). Europe is itself too ethnically/racially fragmented to be unified around any ethnic or racial identity, including “shared whiteness.” Gerard Delanty (1995: 3) argues that

What we call Europe is, in fact, a historically fabricated reality of ever-changing forms and dynamics. Most of Europe is only retroactively European and has been invented in the image of distorted modernity. . . . European identity. . . is a doubtful construct, given the apparent irresolvable conflict of national cultures and oppositional collective identities.

Second, the white/nonwhite dichotomy that predominates in the western race paradigm offers little explanatory traction in a majority of the world’s countries where such “color” categories are not employed as the markers of difference or inequality. Indeed, western scholars conceal far more than they explicate when they arbitrarily apply the white/nonwhite dualism to societies where people do not employ such concepts to justify discrimination or exploitation.³⁶

Research by the United Nations (2003) indicates that the commonly used terminology of western race scholarship rarely appears in the census data collected by a majority of the world’s countries. Two-thirds of national censuses ask questions about ethnicity or race, and a majority of those censuses employ identity categories that involve neither race nor color. Only 15 percent of national censuses employ *race* as a category while less than 2 percent employ *color* designations; and most of those countries are situated in the Americas.³⁷ In comparison, a majority of national censuses enumerate their populations by ethnic group, nationality, cultural, religious or linguistic group or indigenous status. While these census categories are sometimes a reflection of nation-building myths and agendas set by elites, they are more often the outcome (a) of the changing sociopolitical construction of groups that do not identify themselves in terms of color or race and (b) of pressures on states from international development agencies, NGOs and courts to account for vulnerable minorities (Lucassen 2005, Morning 2010). Despite the popularity of *white* as a pivotal identity group among American and British scholars, that category is rarely employed in

³⁶ Such ethnocentric errors are not rare. For instance, Roman (2002) conceptualizes Russian biases against non-Russians as “making Caucasians Black.” There is growing controversy about scholarship that casts the Israel/Palestine conflict in white/black terms; see <http://www.thecrimson.com/column/dining-on-sacred-cow/article/2012/11/16/Lispon-Israel-race/> and <http://mondoweiss.net/2016/08/palestinian-struggle-supremacy/>.

³⁷ In her analysis of the United Nations database about national census taking methods, sociologist Ann Morning (2010: 32-33) observes that “the United States is one of a small number of nations to enumerate by *race*. . . . The United States is virtually alone in treating “race” and “ethnicity” as different types of identity. . . . One unintended effect of this practice may be to reinforce essentialist biological understandings of *race*, since it is presented as distinct from culturally-delineated and socially-produced ethnicity.”

national census taking methods. Indeed, only six national censuses enumerate the number of “whites” among citizens: Brazil, Haiti, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States and Zimbabwe (see Table 10). Even in the Americas people outside the United States are far more likely to identify themselves with a specific *European nationality* or as *mestizos*, *mulattoes* or *creoles* (with mixed European/indigenous or European/African heritage) than as *white*.

Table 10. Ethnic/Racial Identifiers Employed in National Censuses

Subregion of the World-System	Ethnic/Racial Identifiers that are most often employed	Is “white” an ethnic/racial identifier?
Western/ Northern/Southern Europe	Historical ethnic groups, ethnolinguistic groups, foreign nationalities	Only the United Kingdom employs <i>white</i> . Moreover, “color” is not integral to expressions of bias toward immigrants except in the UK (Lucassen 2005).
Post-Socialist Eastern Europe	Historical ethnic groups	None
Middle East/North Africa	Historical ethnic or ethnoreligious groups, foreign nationalities	None
Subsaharan Africa	Historical ethnic or ethnoreligious groups, foreign nationalities. Mestizo categories are reported in some countries (e.g., Angola)	Only South Africa and Zimbabwe employ <i>white</i> . Others employ specific European nationalities.
Asia	Historical ethnic groups, ethnolinguistic groups, foreign nationalities. Indigenous peoples distinguished. India & China do not collect ethnic or racial data in national censuses, but do collect population data for officially recognized ethnic minorities.	None
Latin America & the Caribbean	<i>European nationalities</i> more often used than <i>white</i> . Indigenous peoples distinguished in most countries. <i>Mestizo</i> (mixed European and indigenous) and <i>Creole</i> or <i>Mulatto</i> (mixed European and African) are Census categories in most countries. Argentina does not collect Census data about ethnicity or race, but its 2010 Census attempted to identify people of indigenous or African heritage for the first time. Chile’s census reports only the numbers of <i>indigenous</i> or <i>non-indigenous</i> .	Brazil and Haiti are the only countries that employ <i>white</i> . Several other countries report those of <i>European</i> heritage or identify specific European nationalities (e.g., Uruguay). No recent Argentine census has included questions about ethnicity, but numerous studies show that a majority of Argentinians identify themselves as <i>European</i> in heritage (a category that allows concealment of <i>Mestizo</i> or <i>Creole</i> lineage).
North America	Ethnic/racial group, nationality identify, or indigenous people designators. In Mexico, <i>mestizo</i> is the most popular self-identification.	US is the only country to employ <i>white</i> as a Census category. Canada employs ethnic groups, nationalities and indigenous groups.

Source: Analysis of country data in United Nations Statistical Division (2003), Morning (2010), and the website of the United Nations Population Division. Lucassen (2005) was helpful in analyzing Europe. For Uruguay, see http://www.ine.gub.uy/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=0d5d2e5d-898c-49f6-8465-c3a5b606a284&groupId=10181.

Moreover, we need to broaden our sights beyond the racial dualism of “European modernity versus dark coloniality” (Mignolo 2011). On the one hand, this global racial dualism requires us to deny that many Europeans were historically colonized and victimized by the same forms of ethnic/racial oppression that a few European countries inflicted on the Americas and nonwestern territories.³⁸ In the early 21st century, the European core and semiperiphery are closing their borders against Eastern Europeans, and animosities toward some European ethnic minorities are as nasty as those toward nonwestern migrants (Boatca 2006; Beatty, Deckard and Coakley 2016). Yet these oppressed Europeans are silenced victims in an approach that focuses narrowly on “the ‘colonial’” axis between Europeans/Euro-Americans and non-Europeans” (Grosfoguel 2008: 6-7). On the other hand, this dualistic model forces us to treat as historically inconsequential the imperialistic histories of nonwestern colonizers. Well into the 20th century, the combined reach of the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire, China’s Qing Dynasty, the Japanese Empire and the Soviet Union encompassed most of 21st century Asia, the Middle East/North Africa region, Post-Socialist Eastern Europe, most of the countries that comprise Oceania, parts of Western Europe, and five Pacific coast states of the United States.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, Russia, China, Japan and Vietnam captured large territories, exterminated thousands, and resettled lands (Elkins and Pederson 2005). In the 21st century, at least half the world’s population bears legacies of (and animosities toward) those ethnic/racial oppressions. Since the fall of the USSR, for example, 25 million Russians reside in non-Russian countries without clear citizenship rights (Delanty 1995), and their presence is the basis for ethnic conflicts and political power struggles in countries like Ukraine. To complicate matters, there are indicators of new forms of colonialism that are not addressed by the European/non-European dualism. Questions are being raised about the degree to which China and the fastest-growing nonwestern semiperipheries are constructing new relationships of dependent neo-colonialism through their development activities in nonwestern peripheries and weaker semiperipheries (Gallagher and Porzencanski 2010, Carmody 2011, 2013, Kurecic and Bandov 2011, Mbaye 2011, Nel and Taylor 2013, Bond and Garcia 2015, Garcia 2016). Furthermore, nonwestern states are now routinely engaging in tactics of *regional subimperialism* and *internal colonialism* to capture the lands and territories of ethnic minorities to fuel their economic growth (for examples, see Table 9).

³⁸ Every European country was itself the historical product of conquests of resistant peoples, and there are still numerous ethnic minorities throughout Europe. Moreover, Eastern Europeans have endured multiple historical eras of imperialism and settler colonialism (e.g., the Austrian Empire, the Hapsburg Empire, the British Empire, the Russian Empire, the German Nazis, the Ottoman Empire, the Soviet Union). Wolff (1994) calls attention to white/white enslavement of Eastern European peasants (Marshall 1772, Richardson 1784) at the same time that African enslavement was occurring in the New World.

Overcoming Western Biases in Knowledge Production

Despite the tendency of many western scholars to universalize the western race paradigm to the entire world-system, these global trends make it clear that its applicability is limited racial and color designators. Manuela Boatca (2006: 328) observes that “the intellectual division of labor. . . places theory, together with civilization and culture, in the core.” Because of universalization of western knowledge to the entire world, semiperipheries and peripheries are trapped in “the status of ‘silenced societies’ in terms of production of knowledge,” including theory construction about the processes through which peoples are otherized and exploited. As a result, analyses of global race/ethnicity are an extension of the predominant “Atlanto-centric race paradigm” (Wimmer 2015) that explains nonwestern dynamics by superimposing western race categories and binaries. In this paradigm, “the category of the Other is ahistorical and takes little account of the specificities of time and place in the creation of the discourse of race,” argues Kenan Malik (2000: 158). Since we are not the first to address this problem, we call your attention to the ideas of six colleagues. While the world is “pluri-epistemic,” argues Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014), western paradigms have practiced “epistemicide against non-Western knowledge construction.” According to Ramon Grosfoguel (2014: 125-26),

Epistemic racism is the inferiorization of non-Western epistemologies and cosmologies to privilege Western epistemology as the superior form of knowledge and as the only source to define human rights. . . . Non-Western epistemologies that define human rights and human dignity in different forms from the West are simply excluded from the discussion. Eurocentric fundamentalism is the ‘sacralization’ of the Western tradition of thought and the inferiorization of non-Western epistemologies and cosmologies. . . . The invisibility and even extermination of other epistemologies is at the root of Eurocentric fundamentalism.

For these reasons and others, we agree with Howard Winant (2001: 15) that analysis at the global level requires us to “reject the division of the world between ‘the West and the rest.’” However, that step alone is not sufficient, for it will not address the western domination of knowledge production, the epistemic racism or the racialization of social science that concern Boatca (2006), Santos (2014), Grosfoguel (2014), and Wimmer (2015). In order to confront those problems, we need to undertake two further steps. First, we need to stop imposing on “the rest” theoretical explanations that are derived from the colonial history and contemporary identity politics of “the West.” We concur with Andreas Wimmer (2015: 2201) that “a truly global analysis. . . needs to go beyond an Atlanto-centric view, take other patterns of domination and exploitation

not associated with race into account, and critically assess their respective roles in the generation and transformation of hierarchies of exclusion.” In similar fashion, Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot (2003: 35-36, 72) raises concern about the careless deployment of concepts he terms “North Atlantic universals.” Because they are grounded in “a historically limited experience” in terms of time and specific societies, these concepts are “as difficult to conceptualize as they are seductive to use.” Even though race is universally applied by many scholars, he points out that “there is more conceptual confusion about race [at the beginning of the 21st century] than there was at the beginning of the last century.”³⁹ When it is applied outside the societies in which it was created, race “disguises and misconstrues the many Others” it claims to represent, and it erases “the Other’s historical specificity.” For example he observes, people did not become “black” in France or England the same way they did in the United States.

Second, we need to stop filtering and packaging nonwestern contexts through the lens of western race categories that ignore many layers of complex underlying causes that are not captured by those concepts. Manuela Boatca (2015: 231) makes this point far more powerfully than we have.

What is needed is an adequate un-erasure of the history and experience of non-White and non-European populations as well as non-European regions from social scientific theory-building. The unerasure of the non-European from mainstream social theory would not only reveal a far more entangled history of multiple Europes than the one we are accustomed to reading, but would also result in global instead of universal sociology. Instead of overgeneralising from the particular history of its own geopolitical location, a global sociology which has moved beyond Occidentalism would be able to account for the continuum of power linking geopolitical locations.

Looking toward the Future

To emphasize Boatca’s point, we call your attention to an omission that we must “un-erase” in order to move toward theory that is more inclusive of nonwestern semiperipheries. We must come to grips with the rise of the Asian semiperiphery where 42 percent of world population is now concentrated (see Table 1, 1A). In these societies, race is almost never a cultural or socio-legal

³⁹ Trouillot (2003: 105-106) points out that there is little agreement on the definition of race and “the absence of a conceptual core.” Omi and Winant (2013: 963) agree, pointing to “the “wobbly social scientific status of the race concept.”

marker of group differentiation or stigma, and “white supremacy” obviously does not underpin nationalism. Indeed, the word “race” does not exist in a majority of the multiple dialects of the Asian semiperipheries. To claim that these societies are “in denial” because they do not delineate by race is an extreme form of western intellectual arrogance about knowledge production.⁴⁰ On the one hand, we need to employ the local indicators that are employed to marginalize groups and move beyond the lazy imposition of western categories. On the other hand, the theoretical problem is made more complex since the large Asian semiperipheries are widening their development activities all over the world. For example, arbitrary applications of western race theory that couches “whites” as the dominators are of little utility if we want to research the complex causes of anti-Chinese sentiments from very different ethnic/racial contexts, including Vietnamese fishers, Nigerian villagers, indigenous Chileans, unemployed Czechs, or low-paid white Americans in Chinese-owned factories.

Howard Winant (2001: 215) makes clear the scope of the task that faces us, for we must conceptualize at “a planetary level.”

At the dawn of the new millennium, there is a pressing need for a new *global* approach to race. . . . Adequately to understand the importance of race—historical and contemporary—requires us to reconsider many of our ideas and assumptions about modernity, development, labor, democracy, identity, culture, and indeed, our concepts of social action and agency. Taken as a whole, these are the coordinates of all social theory. We need a new, racially more adequate, theoretical compass if we want to navigate properly in the twenty-first-century world.

While we concur with Winant’s call for change, we contend that we need to move beyond this kind of unilateral focus on the western concept *race*. Moving the direction of new theory that is only “*racially* more adequate” will not solve the problems of epistemic racism (Santos 2014; Grosfoguel 2014), racialized social science (Goldberg 1994) or Eurocentric erasures (Boatca 2015). Indeed, pursuit of new theory that is only “*racially* more adequate” (Winant 2001: 15) will keep us trapped in western “disciplinary straightjackets” (Coates 2002: 7) that:

1. will “leave unscathed the [nonwestern] systems, structures, and processes that continually produce ethnic and racial oppression(s)” [our one-word paraphrase of Coates 2002: 7];

⁴⁰ Regarding Japan and China, for example, see Mushakoji (2015), Onuki (2015) and He (2017).

2. will continue to privilege race over ethnicity and other nonwestern markers of differentiation. We agree with Wimmer (2015: 2198-2202) that race is not “the dominant form of ethnic-racial classification around the world. . . . Ethnic forms of categorization are more frequent than racial ones in the world as a whole” (cf. also Morning 2010).
3. will deter cutting edge explorations by junior scholars who are likely to encounter the kind of rancorous scholarly gatekeeping (Kuhn 2012) to protect the “paradigm of race-centrism” (Wimmer 2015) that we two senior scholars triggered from pre-publication reviewers; and
4. will continue to silence or to erase alternate epistemologies from nonwestern intellectuals and activists who might foster different lines of theory and praxis.

Shall we continue to tilt, Don Quixote style, at the ethereal windmill of *globalized white supremacy*, which offers momentary catharsis through rhetoric of outrage, but ultimately offers no viable path toward effective theory or praxis? Are we willing to put aside the academic drive to universalize and to “overgeneralise” the western paradigm of race-centrism (Wimmer 2015) in order to move toward a “*global sociology which moves beyond Occidentalism*” (Boatca 2015: 231)? Can we find the courage to ignore the paradigm gatekeepers (Kuhn 2012) in order to “unthink” (Wallerstein 1991) our racialized social science (Goldberg 1994) and to effect “the unerasure of the non-European” (Boatca 2015) in our theory construction? It is only through such a difficult intellectual and activist process that we will be able to reveal—and to combat—the multiplicity of locations at which 21st century semiperipheral states, elites and transnational capitalist classes are inventing patterns of exploitation and marginalization that are concealed by western race dualisms, like the global apartheid model.

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