



Editors' Introduction

Jackie Smith

Jennifer Bair

Scott Byrd

Caitlin Schroering

We are pleased to bring you another rich and provocative issue of the *Journal of World-Systems Research*. This issue features a special guest edited collection of articles that grew from the 39th annual Political Economy of the World-System conference, which took place in Berlin in the spring of 2015. Along with our regular articles, these papers highlight the fluidity and arbitrariness of boundaries, exploring how the boundaries and categories that inform our thinking and practice are shaped by world-historical power relations.

World-systems approaches encourage readers to consider the political moment that defines the context of both writers and readers, and thus it is instructive to consider the papers in this issue in light of the unfolding U.S. presidential election—arguably one of the most bizarre, at least in recent history. This spectacle clearly reflects the larger world-systemic processes of hegemonic competition and change, as we witness the ungraceful decline of U.S. power and attempted efforts in Europe to maintain sufficient unity to compete in a changing geopolitical context. Such times may create unique opportunities for contestation over basic meanings and identities, and we think the papers in this volume resonate with this notion.

Our guest issue editors will introduce the papers in that section, but we want to point out how our regular articles demonstrate the fluidity of boundaries—both conceptual and practical—and what such fluidity says about changing power relations. Tanya Gholash-Boza provides an extended



New articles in this journal are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 United States License.



This journal is published by the [University Library System](#), [University of Pittsburgh](#) as part of its [D-Scribe Digital Publishing Program](#) and is cosponsored by the [University of Pittsburgh Press](#).

analysis of themes she engaged in our winter issue's [symposium on race in the capitalist world-system](#). Her article explores the ways U.S. immigration and criminal justice systems perpetuate gendered and racial discrimination and exclusion. Irene Pang considers how microfinance, a project first initiated by subaltern groups and their allies, plays out as it is appropriated by elite actors, including the World Bank. Her analysis of women in Ghana's informal economy demonstrates how microfinance schemes fail to address the needs of the most vulnerable groups, the very groups such programs are supposed to serve. Finally, Nick Kardulias and Emily Butcher revisit a theme from last summer's special issue on [world-systems biographies](#), considering the case of the (in?)famous Blackbeard. A key theme here is the arbitrariness of the definitions of "pirate" versus "privateer," and how changing competition among state actors determines whether a given individual or action is seen as legitimate or not.

Our book review section features five reviews, including two that address the issue of global fisheries: *The Tragedy of the Commodity: Oceans, Fisheries, and Aquaculture* by Stefano B. Longo, Rebecca Clausen, and Brett Clark (reviewed by John Phyne) and *Beyond the Tragedy in Global Fisheries* by D.G. Webster (reviewed by Derek Lee). This section also includes Kathleen Schwartzman's review of Seán Ó Riain's *The Rise and Fall of Ireland's Celtic Tiger*, and Aaron Major's review of Sidney Tarrow's *War, States, & Contention: A Comparative Historical Study*. Rounding out this section is David Feldman's discussion of a new compilation edited by Jeb Sprague: *Globalization and Transnational Capitalism in Asia and Oceania*.

We also want to let JWSR readers know that our next (winter/spring 2017) issue will feature a review symposium of Jamie McCallum's book, *Global Unions, Local Power: The New Spirit of Transnational Labor Organizing*, which received the Distinguished Scholarly Book Award from the Labor and Labor Movements Section of the American Sociological Association. This symposium will be in addition to our regular complement of book reviews. A final reminder regarding our book review section: if you know of foreign-language books that you believe would be of interest to JWSR's readership, or if you would like to offer your services to review books in a foreign language, please contact our book review editor, Jennifer Bair.

Finally, in the closing essay of our special issue, Andrea Komlosy discusses the idea of economic subsidiarity as one possible alternative to the U.S.-led capitalist world-system. We want to point out to our readers that Open Access publishing is one such model of economic subsidiarity, and it challenges the extreme corporate concentration in the media/communications industry. The *Journal of World-Systems Research* remains one of the leading open access peer reviewed scholarly journals, and we are working to create a sustainable structure for the journal while supporting the Open Access movement more broadly. We invite readers to support the journal with financial contributions (see the "donate" link on our website) or by assisting with copyediting or translating (email jwsr@pitt.edu to volunteer). We also remind you that [Open Access Week](#)

2016 is October 24-30th. Please take some time to recognize the week by increasing your own understanding of the importance of open access publishing, helping colleagues and students learn about this vital movement, promoting the work of journals like the *Journal of World-Systems Research*, taking the [open access pledge](#), or by attending or organizing an event on your campus. In its current form, the information economy leads to the increased enclosure of the knowledge commons, and [scholars and readers play a critical role](#) in helping keep access to information open and free. As one of the very first open access scholarly journals, *JWSR* is committed to helping our readers be part of the movement to keep our research free and open to readers.