

# JOURNAL OF WORLD-SYSTEMS RESEARCH

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## Editors' Introduction

**Jackie Smith**

**Jennifer Bair**

**Scott Byrd**

**George Weddington**

We are pleased to offer this especially rich and timely issue of the *Journal of World-Systems Research*. Readers will find not only a special symposium on Race in the Capitalist World-System, compiled by William I. Robinson, but also a special collection of papers on Ireland in the World-System edited by Aidan Beatty, Maurice Coakley, and Sharae Deckard. The juxtaposition of these sections highlight the ways Ireland has served as a “testing ground” for techniques of capitalist exploitation of people and the natural environment, shaping the development of racist ideologies and practices in the world-system. As the media headlines feature daily reports of racial tensions and protests in numerous countries, and as xenophobic, Islamophobic, and racist discourses permeate electoral campaigns in the United States and other core countries, it is critical for us all to reflect on how the organization and operation of the global political economy contributes to these trends. In addition, as political leaders grapple with how to manage the deepening global financial and ecological crises, it is very instructive, as our special issue editors point out, to offer a “radical reappraisal” of Ireland’s economic development.

Contributors to the symposium and to our special issue on Ireland add a great deal to efforts to better understand the processes that reproduce all forms of racism and other exclusions, and their work points in the direction of much-needed strategies for re-structuring human relations and the world-system more broadly. Moreover, the articles in our special issue on Ireland in the World-System demonstrate how focused attention on a particular world region can illuminate broader



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processes related to the world-system's operation, enhancing our understandings of its impacts in other parts of the world.

Continuing the theme of how racial hierarchies drive the capitalist world-system, our regular research articles feature a contribution from Jonathan Leitner, who offers a rich historical perspective on the emergence of capitalism in the northeastern United States. His analysis documents how geographic conditions and proximity to New York City created labor mobility that empowered tenants, and how this, along with the region's ability to trade with regions depending slavery and other more exploitative labor relations, contributed to the region's core emergence. Nicolas Grinberg then offers us a perspective on global commodity chains that draws insights from the New International Division of Labor theory. His analysis of the global semiconductors industry illustrates how the operation of global hierarchies contribute to capitalist accumulation.

Our book review section features a special symposium on food and food politics in the world-system. This themed section includes reviews of six books: Jennifer Clapp's *Food* (reviewed by Jill Harrison); Alana Mann's *Global Activism in Food Politics: Power Shift* (reviewd by Philip McMichael); Stefan Ouma's *Assembling Export Markets: The Making and Unmaking of Global Food Connections in West Africa* (reviewed by Andre Nickow); Nora McKeon's *Food Security Governance: Empowering Communities, Regulating Corporations* (reviewed by Laura Raynolds); Lambek, Claeys, Wong and Brilmayer's edited volume, *Rethinking Food Systems Structural Challenges, New Strategies and the Law* (reviewed by Tomaso Ferrando), and Philip McMichael's *Food Regimes and Agrarian Questions* (reviewed by Gerardo Otero).

We hope you enjoy this issue, which reflects the work not only of the authors and our editorial teams, but also our reviewers, whose invaluable contributions to the journal are greatly appreciated. As we close, we remind you that the *Journal of World-Systems Research* is an open access journal, which makes us part of a [global movement to protect and preserve](#) what is known as the knowledge commons. We encourage readers to support open access publishing through financial support, by serving on editorial boards, conducting reviews, and publishing your work in open access journals like ours. For more information see the Public Library of Science's (PLOS) "[The Case for Open Access](#)." We encourage readers to support this journal, and you can do so by making a donation (see [www.jwsr.org](http://www.jwsr.org)), or by volunteering to help as a reviewer, copyeditor, or translator. If you're interested in volunteering, please send an email to: [jwsr@pitt.edu](mailto:jwsr@pitt.edu). Also, given the international scope of our audience, we would like to include reviews of non-English language books in future issues. If you know of any foreign-language books that you think would be of interest to JWSR readers, or would like to offer your services to review books in a foreign language, please contact us at [jwsr@pitt.edu](mailto:jwsr@pitt.edu).



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## Introduction: Globalization and Race in World Capitalism

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### Abstract

Scholars of world-systems and global political economy have wrestled for decades with the genesis of 'race' as a social construct and its historical significance for the system of world capitalism. Transformations in the world capitalist system pose a new challenge to Western theories of race. Older colonial structures may be giving way in the face of capitalist globalization. Racial or ethnic dimensions of the relations of exploitation in the capitalist world-system need to be reconceptualized. This symposium aims to generate debate and interchange among scholars on such a reconceptualization and to contribute to real world struggles against racial inequities.

**Keywords:** Race and Capitalism, Race and Globalization, Racism



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Scholars of world-systems and global political economy have wrestled for decades with the genesis of “race” as a social construct and its historical significance for the system of world capitalism.<sup>1</sup> Though much neglected in recent years with the rise of identitarian theories that give little weight to political economy, Oliver C. Cox’s 1948 work *Caste, Class, and Race*, remains a classical study. Despite its well-known limitations (especially its discussion on caste), it has not, in my view, been surpassed as a foundation text on the matter. Cox grounded his analysis of race in the imperative of an outwardly expanding capitalist system to recruit cheap labor for world accumulation to which was subordinate the need to rationalize and legitimate the racial systems put into place through European colonialism. It is worthwhile to reproduce Cox’s central argument:

Our hypothesis is that racial exploitation and race prejudice developed among Europeans with the rise of capitalism and nationalism, and that because of the world-wide ramifications of capitalism, all racial antagonism can be traced to the policies and attitudes of the leading capitalist people, the white people of Europe and North America.... If we should put our finger upon the year which marked the beginning of modern race relations we should select 1493-94. This is the time when total disregard for the human rights and physical power of the non-Christian peoples of the world, the colored peoples, was officially assumed by the first two great colonizing European nations. Sometimes probably because of its very obviousness, it is not realized that the slave trade was simply a way of recruiting labor for the purpose of exploiting the great natural resources of America. This trade did not develop because Indians and Negros were red or black, or because the cranial capacity averaged a certain number of cubic centimeters; but simply because they were the best workers to be found for the heavy labor in the mines and plantations across the Atlantic. Although this peculiar kind of exploitation was then in its incipiency, it had already achieved its significant characteristics. As it developed and took definite capitalistic form, we could follow the white man around the world and see him repeat the process among practically every people of color. But the fact

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<sup>1</sup> This assumes that the very term and concept of “race” is unproblematic. I make no such assumption. As well, there is the problem that ethnicity tends to become conflated with race. But these are discussions for elsewhere.

of crucial significance is that racial exploitation is merely one aspect of the problem of the proletarianization of labor, regardless of the color of the laborer. Hence racial antagonism is essentially political-class conflict (Cox, 1959 [1948], 321, 331-333).

In the 1960s and 1970s – a time of decolonization and militant mass struggles around the world – scholars engaged in heated and unresolved debates on the matrix of race, class, and capitalism. Subsequently, social scientists who study race would argue that race cannot be reduced to or subsumed into class; others would go so far as to explain race as an immanent category. Depending on one's views, the classical Coxian perspective has been enriched or challenged by post-structural approaches, ethno-national (or ethno-cultural) analyses, racial formation, critical race, and ethnicity theories, and the “coloniality of power” paradigm, among others. These approaches attribute differentiated weight to political economy in the explanation of race relative to ideational, cultural and psychological dimensions. Two paradigms predominate in the sociological literature on race and racism in the United States, the assimilationist paradigm and racial formation theory. Both emphasize the ideological and cultural construction of race and/or the formation of racial meaning and identity over the historical-structural roots of race and its material impacts. In Europe Barth’s ethnicity theory has had a major impact. The works of Stuart Hall, who famously stated that “race is the modality that class is lived,” have had a major impact on both sides of the Atlantic and beyond, on thinking about race and its relationship to political economy, power and culture.

Now, however, transformations in the world capitalist system pose a new challenge to Western theories of race. Older colonial structures may be giving way in the face of capitalist globalization, the decline of U.S. (and more generally Western) hegemony accompanied by the downward mobility of the once privileged white ethnic sectors of the Western working class, the rise of China and India, the BRICS, and a transnational capitalist class in the Global South. Chinese capitalists now employ thousands of Ecuadorans and Africans, among others, in mines and on plantations in South America and sub-Saharan Africa, in labor relations that are hard not to characterize as racialized and racist (that is, if we use the language of Western race theories). The same holds for some 300, 000 Filipina maids and other care givers who labor for Hong Kong households under conditions that often appear as racialized bondage, or for South Asian workers in the Gulf countries and Nicaraguans working in Costa Rica under such conditions, among many such examples. Directly counter to the arguments of much Western race theory, Chinese, Mexican, and Indian capitalists now own U.S. and European corporations that exploit poor white people.

Consequently, it is clear that the racial or ethnic dimensions of the relations of exploitation in the capitalist world-system need to be reconceptualized. As we give pause to such a reconceptualization, it is worth asking several questions. Should social scientists continue to ground their study of race in its Western/colonial historical origins in the accumulation of capital on a world scale? Or do they need to reorient their analyses to integrate 21<sup>st</sup> century restructuring of the world economy in ways that challenge Western race theories? We need also to ask, at what expense do world-systems scholars continue, for the most part, to neglect race and ethnicity – analytically, theoretically and politically – as critical categories?

Although much has changed in the past half century, it is again a time of militant mass struggles. Our analytical and theoretical understanding of race and global capitalism are ever more urgent to an informed politics as both the deadly embrace of racism and struggles against racial oppression and exploitation intensify. In the United States a neo-fascist presidential candidate calls for the mass deportation of 12 million, largely Latino/a undocumented immigrants and sealing off U.S. borders to Muslims at the same time as the Black Lives Matter movement leads a renewed wave of mass popular struggle. In Central and South America, indigenous communities, under siege by mining, logging and agricultural interests, have launched one uprising after another in defense of their land and autonomy. In the Middle East, Palestinians appeared to be initiating a third intifada while nearly half of the Jewish population of Israel has expressed support for a policy of ethnic cleansing and the establishment of an apartheid state. Mass atrocities against vulnerable minorities are reported everywhere. The specter of genocide looms over some groups, such as the Rohingya in Myanmar. Clearly, the matter of praxis is anything but a mundane academic exercise.

This symposium grew out of a panel on race and ethnicity in the capitalist world-system at the 2015 annual congress of the American Sociological Association. It brings together five commentaries and a concluding reflection from a variety of empirical, theoretical and paradigmatic vantage points. Yet all of them point to the need for new ways to explore the relationship of race to the capitalist world-system, and/or to examine the capitalist world-system in terms of the racial and racist organizations of its social relations.

Ramon Grosfoguel argues in his contribution that “racism is a global hierarchy of superiority and inferiority” that “can be marked by color, ethnicity, language, culture and/or religion.” He calls for moving beyond “color racism as the exclusive or universal definition of racism.” For Grosfoguel, racism demarcates groups into “human” and “subhuman.” Those “classified above the line of the human are recognized socially in their humanity as human beings and, thus, enjoy access to rights (human rights, civil rights, women rights and/or labor rights), material resources, and social recognition to their subjectivities, identities,

epistemologies and spiritualities. The people below the line of the human are considered subhuman or non-human; that is, their humanity is questioned and, as such, negated.”

Wilma Dunaway and Don Clelland criticize a global apartheid model in which “all the world’s peoples are homogenized under two broad categories that treat all whites as though they enjoy the same degree of supremacy and all dark others as though there are no ethnic or class differences among them.” Rising semiperipheral countries, they say, “are crucial to the study of race and ethnicity in the modern world-system.” In these countries “reactionary politics, xenophobia and discrimination against ‘foreign aliens’ are routinely documented” although the capitalists of these countries increasingly act globally yet are “neither ‘core’ nor ‘white’ in the sense of the global apartheid model, but they do share the pro-capitalist class interests of core capitalists.”

Tanya Golash-Bosa turns her attention to recent mass deportations in the United States. The rise of a “politics of fear” in the aftermath of the 9/11/2001 attacks, the global financial crisis, and the opportunities that deportation create for corporate profit-making provided a toxic mix for the deportation of three million mostly men from Latin America and the Caribbean. Mass deportation, she says “reinforces the racialized dimensions of the international division of labor that Grosfoguel emphasizes.” She argues, contra Dunaway and Clelland, that “mass deportation is crucial to the maintenance of global apartheid – a system where (mostly white) affluent citizens of the world are free to travel where they like whereas the (mostly non-white) poor are forced to make do in places where there are fewer resources.”

For his part, James Fenelon traces the race-based genocide that “accompanied every phase of world capitalism,” from the mercantile through to the industrial and now the neo-liberal eras of capitalism. He concludes that we should “expand analyses so as to account for the macro-construction of race and systemic racism, often genocidal, within the *longue duree* of the modern world-system.” In her fascinating if deeply troubling look at the global cruise ship industry, Francisca Oyogoa shows how the labor force in the industry is organized along racial and ethnic lines as a reflection of the larger racial and ethnic hierarchies in the world-system. “In both practice and discourse, cruise ships replicate patterns of racialized servility and hierarchies of color which date back to colonialism,” she notes. “Specifically, white men from core countries are at the top of the workplace hierarchy and are racialized as possessing the qualities necessary for leadership and dominance over others.” In turn, “workers from peripheral nations, especially South East Asian men, are racialized as naturally suited for servility.”

Finally, Bill Fletcher, Jr. comments on the five essays. “The challenge of addressing the question of race revolves around appreciating that it cannot be restricted to matters of color, superiority/interiority or hierarchy,” he insists. “Race is a system created with two objectives, as

well articulated by several of the authors, which include: *one, domination and exploitation for a specific population, and, two, social control.*"

It is our hope that this forum will help foment broader debate and interchange among those who student the political economy of the world-system and those who study race and ethnicity. It is our hope as well that such debate and interchange will draw lessons from the real world life and death struggles against racial inequities and may help in turn to inform those struggles.

## About the Author

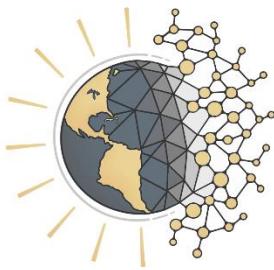
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## Disclosure Statement

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## What is Racism?

**Ramon Grosfoguel**

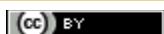
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### Abstract

*This article provides a definition of racism inspired in the work of Frantz Fanon, Boaventura de Sousa Santos and contemporary Caribbean Fanonian Philosophers. It discusses racism in relation to zone of being and zone of non-being. Racism is discussed as a dehumanization related to the materiality of domination used by the world-system in the zone of non-being (violence and dispossession) as opposed to the materiality of domination in the zone of being (regulation and emancipation). The approach shows how intersectionality of oppressions work differently for oppressed people in the zone of being as opposed to oppressed people in the zone of non-being. While in the zone of being oppressions are mitigated by racial privilege, in the zone of non-being oppressions are aggravated by racial oppression.*

**Keywords:** Racism, Racialization



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Racism is a global hierarchy of superiority and inferiority along the line of the human that have been politically, culturally and economically produced and reproduced for centuries by the institutions of the “capitalist/patriarchal western-centric/Christian-centric modern/colonial world-system” (Grosfoguel, 2011). The people classified above the line of the human are recognized socially in their humanity as human beings and, thus, enjoy access to rights (human rights, civil rights, women rights and/or labor rights), material resources, and social recognition to their subjectivities, identities, epistemologies and spiritualities. The people below the line of the human are considered subhuman or non-human; that is, their humanity is questioned and, as such, negated (Fanon 1967). In the latter case, the extension of rights, material resources and the recognition of their subjectivities, identities, spiritualities and epistemologies are denied.

This definition of racism allows us to conceive of diverse forms of racism, evading the reductionisms of many existing definitions. Depending on the different colonial histories in diverse regions of the world, the hierarchy of superiority/inferiority along the lines of the human can be constructed through diverse racial markers. Racism can be marked by color, ethnicity, language, culture and/or religion.

Although since colonial times color racism has been the dominant marker of racism in most parts of the world, it is not the only or exclusive form of racist marker. On many occasions we confuse the particular/concrete social marker of racism in one region of the world with what is taken to be as the exclusive form or universal definition of racism. This has created an enormous amount of conceptual and theoretical problems. If we collapse the particular social form/marker that racism adopts in the region or country of the world we have been socialized (for example, color racism) to make it equivalent to the universal definition of racism, then we lose sight of the diverse racist markers that are not necessarily the same in other regions of the world. The problem with taking a particular racist marker as the definition of racism, leads us to adopt the false conclusion that racism does not exist in other parts of the world if the form of marking racism in one particular region or country does not coincide with the “common sense” form of marking it in one’s own country. This example forms part of the pervasive “methodological nationalism” (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2003; Amelina et. al. 2012) that obscures the broader and world-systemic understanding of a modern/colonial problem such as racism.

Racism is a hierarchy of superiority/inferiority along the line of the human. This hierarchy can be constructed and marked in diverse ways. Westernized elites of the Third World (African, Asian or Latin American) reproduce racist practices against ethno/racial groups where, depending on the local/colonial history, those considered “inferior” below the line of the human can be defined or marked along religious, ethnic, cultural or color lines.

In the colonial history of Ireland, the British constructed their racial superiority over the Irish, not through the marker of skin color, but rather through a religious marker (Ignatiev 2008). When the colonizer and the colonized share the same skin color, the marker of superiority/inferiority along the line of the human has to be constructed with a different marker beyond color racism. What appeared at first glance to be a religious conflict between Protestants and Catholics was in fact a racial/colonial conflict.

The same can be said of Islamophobia in Europe and in the United States today (Sayyid and Vakil 2011). Muslim religious identity today constitutes one of the most prominent markers of superiority/inferiority along the line of the human. Muslims are constructed in North America and Europe today as “barbarians,” “backward,” “uncivilized,” “violent,” “terrorist,” “abusive of children, women and gay/lesbians,” “un-adaptable to European values,” etc. I said “one of the most prominent markers” because in these two regions of the world color racism continues to be of great importance and entangles itself in complex ways with religious racism. Nonetheless, while the ethnic/racial hierarchy of superiority/inferiority is marked by the color of the skin in many regions of the world, in other regions it is marked by ethnic, linguistic, religious or cultural identity.

*Racialization* occurs through the marking of *bodies*. Some bodies are racialized as superior and other bodies are racialized as inferior. The important point here is that those subjects located above the line of the human, as superior, live in what Afro-Caribbean philosophers following Fanon’s work called the “zone of being,” while subjects that live on the inferior side of the demarcating line live in the “zone of non-being” (Fanon, 1967, Gordon 2006, Wynter 2003 and Maldonado-Torres 2008).

### **Differentiated Intersectionalities/Entanglements: Zone of Being and Zone of Non-Being**

In an imperial/capitalist/colonial world-system, race constitutes the transversal dividing line that cuts across multiple power relations such as class, sexual and gender at a global scale. The “intersectionality” of race, class, sexuality and gender hierarchies, a concept developed by black feminists (Davis 1983, Crenshaw, 1991), occurs in both zones of the world that Fanon describes. However, the lived experience of the diverse oppressions and the particular way in which intersectionality is articulated is different in the zone of being as opposed to the zone of non-being. This is crucial because racism is not just a question of prejudice or stereotypes, but above all an institutional/structural hierarchy related to the materiality of domination.

On the grounds of being racialized as superior beings, there are subjects in the zone of being that live class, gender, sexual and/or national/colonial oppression. However, they do not experience racial oppression but rather racial privilege. Thus, they live all those oppressions

*mitigated* by racial privilege. As will be discussed below, this has fundamental implications for how class, gender, sexual or national/colonial oppressions are lived. Given that in the zone of non-being subjects are racialized as inferior, they live racial oppression instead of racial privilege. The intersectional entanglement between class, sexual, gender or national/colonial oppressions that exist in the zone of non-being are, therefore, qualitatively distinct from the way these oppressions are lived and articulated in the zone of being. In the zone of non-being, the multiple oppressions are *aggravated* by racial oppression. The issue that should be emphasized here is that there is a qualitative difference between how intersectional/entangled oppressions are articulated and lived in the zone of being as opposed to the zone of non-being in the “capitalist/patriarchal Western-centric/Christian-centric modern/colonial world-system” (Grosfoguel 2011).

Neither of these zones is homogenous. Both zones are heterogeneous spaces. Following Fanon (1967), we could say that within the zone of being continuous conflicts exist between what the Hegelian dialectic characterizes as the “I” and the “Other”. In the “I” and “Other” dialectic within the zone of being there are conflicts; but these are non-racial conflicts, as the oppressor “I” recognizes the humanity of the oppressed “Other”. The “I” in the imperialist/capitalist/patriarchal world-system are Western, heterosexual, masculine, metropolitan elites in the core and the Westernized, heterosexual, masculine elites in the peripheries. Internal colonialism exists as much in the center as in the periphery.

For Fanon, the Hegelian “Other” are the populations of the western metropolitan centers or the westernized subjects within the periphery whose humanity is recognized as such, but who at the same time live non-racial oppressions based on class, sexuality, gender or national/colonial dominations, under the hegemony of the imperial “I” in their respective regions or countries. The zone of being and zone of non-being are not a specific geographical places, but rather a position within racial structures of domination that operate at a global scale between centers and peripheries, but that are also manifested at a national and local scale against diverse groups considered as racially “inferior.”

Zones of being and zones of non-being exist at a global scale between Westernized centers and non-western peripheries (global coloniality). But zones of being and zones of non-being also exist not only inside of the metropolitan centers (internal racial/colonial subjects in urban zones, regions, ghettos, segregated communities, etc.), but also within the peripheries (internal colonialism). The zones of non-being within a metropolitan or peripheral country are the zones of internal colonialism. However, it is here that the critical decolonial sociology of Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2010) contributes to clarifying the racial difference between the zone of being and the zone of non-being. This is related to the question of the materiality of domination.

### Fanon's Zones and De Sousa Santos' Abyssal Line

According to de Sousa Santos (2007; 2010), modernity is characterized by an abyssal line between the inhabitants above and below the line. The abyssal line is the line that demarcates the zones where codes of law are recognized among European empires and the lawless zones where violence is the rule. The zones of law correspond to Europeans or the superior race while the lawless zones to the colonial territory. De Sousa Santos refers here to the 1494 treaty of Tordesillas between Portuguese and Spanish empires. The Treaty of Tordesillas was made to clarify the confusion created between the two empires by the newly claimed colonial territories in the New World.

If we translate the “abyssal line” as equivalent to the Fanonian “line of the human” and we consider those that live above the abyssal line are in the zone of being, while those that live below the line the zone of non-being, then we can establish a dialogue between the work of de Sousa Santos and Fanon that could enrich our understanding of modernity and the capitalist/imperial/patriarchal/racial/colonial world-system that we inhabit. The difference between the two zones is related to the materiality of domination in racial hierarchies. For de Sousa Santos (2006), the way conflicts are managed in the zone of being (above the abyssal line) is through what he calls mechanisms of regulation and emancipation.

“Regulation” refers to civil/human/women/labor rights and legal codes, relations of civility, spaces of political negotiation and action that are recognized for the oppressed “Other” in their conflict with the oppressor “I” within the zone of being. “Emancipation” refers to discourses of liberty, autonomy, and equality that form part of the discourses and institutions used for the management of conflicts in the zone of being. Due to the fact that the oppressor “I” recognizes the humanity of the oppressed “Other” in the zone of being, the latter lives class, gender, sexual and national/colonial oppressions *mitigated* by the racial privilege of having as the materiality of domination methods of “regulation” and “emancipation.” As a trend, conflicts in the zone of being are regulated through non-violent means. Violence is always an exception, used only in exceptional moments. Moments of violence exist in the zone of being, but they exist more as an exception than as a rule.

On the contrary, as de Sousa Santos (2007; 2010) affirms, in the zone of non-being—below the abyssal line—where people are dehumanized in the sense of being considered below the line of the human as non-humans/sub-humans, the methods used by the imperial/capitalist/masculine/heterosexual “I” and its institutional system for the management and administration of the conflicts, is by means of violence and by overt appropriation/dispossession. As a trend, conflicts in the zone of non-being are managed through perpetual violence, with only exceptional moments where methods of emancipation and regulation are used. This is the inversion of the way conflicts are managed in the zone of being. The racist violence and dispossession used

as materiality of domination in the zone of non-being *aggravates* the lived experience of class, gender, sexual and national/colonial oppressions.

Since the humanity of the people classified into the zone of non-being is not recognized, and given that they are treated as non-human or subhuman, that is, without norms of rights or civility, then acts of violence, rape and appropriation are permitted that would otherwise be unacceptable in the zone of being. For de Sousa Santos, both zones are constitutive of each other and form part of the project of colonial modernity. On the other hand, for Fanon, the dialectic of mutual recognition of the “I” and the “Other” that exists in the zone of being collapses in the zone of non-being where there is no recognition of the humanity of the other. The latter has important implications such as those described by de Sousa Santos.

To summarize: the conflicts in the zone of being are administered through perpetual peace with exceptional moments of war; in the zone of non-being we have perpetual war with exceptional moments of peace. The class, gender and sexual oppression lived within the zone of being and within the zone of non-being are not the same. Since conflicts with the dominant elites and ruling classes within the zone of being are non-racial, we have it that in the conflicts of class, gender and sexuality the “Other Being” shares in the privileges of the imperial codes of law and rights, the emancipation discourses of the Enlightenment and their peaceful processes of negotiation and resolution of conflicts. In contrast, since in the zone of non-being conflicts of class, gender, and sexuality are at the same time articulated with racial oppression, the conflicts are managed and administered with violent methods and constant appropriation/dispossession. Class, gender and sexual oppression as lived by the “Non-Being Other” are aggravated due to the joint articulation of such oppressions with racial oppression.

## About the Author

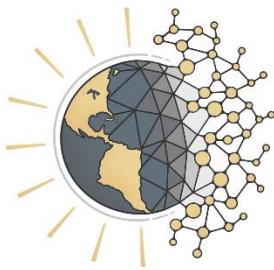
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## Challenging the Global Apartheid Model: A World-Systems Analysis

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### Abstract

*Using world-system concepts, this essay challenges the popular racial bifurcation of the world between whites and peoples of color.*

**Keywords:** Racism, Transnational Capitalism, Global Apartheid



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“The problem of the 21<sup>st</sup> century,” contends Manning Marable (2009: 1), “is the problem of *global apartheid*” because the racist logic of the white master race still exists. According to Ali Mazrui, global apartheid is driven by “pan-Europeanism” and western-controlled transnational capitalism, two processes that have intensified since the end of the Cold War (2007: 96, 98). This world bifurcation is supposedly grounded in *white supremacy* which is defined to be “a political, economic and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources. . . and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings” (Ansley 1997: 592). In other words, the capitalist world-system is conceptualized as a global divide between “whiteness” and “coloredness.”

From the perspective of world-systems analysis, the global apartheid model is deeply flawed. Indeed, this model is particularly orientalist (Said 1978) because it “herd[s] people under falsely unifying rubrics” by “invent[ing] collective identities for large numbers of individuals who are quite diverse” (Said 2003:18). The capitalist world-system is framed as “the troubled relationship between the white European world and the world of those defined by whites as the ‘dark others.’” Thus, the global apartheid model is preoccupied with the study of “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). On the one hand, all the world’s peoples are homogenized under two broad categories that treat all whites as though they enjoy the same degree of supremacy and all dark others as though there are no ethnic or class differences among them. On the other hand, European countries are not characterized by the white racial solidarity that this model suggests. Indeed, each of these countries has a history of oppressing white ethnic minorities. To complicate matters, the model lumps whites of Eastern Europe, Russia, the Middle East, Central Asia and Latin America with the peoples of color. To muddy the waters further, the wealthiest core of the modern world-system is defined as European to the exclusion of Japan, which has its own history of international imperialism and exploitation of ethnic groups.

### A False Duality that Eliminates the Middle

One of the worst flaws of the global apartheid model is its fictitious bifurcation of the capitalist world-system into a western colonizing core and a nonwestern colonized periphery. Absent from this model is an important third tier of countries, the *semiperiphery*, identified by world-systems analysts as an important intermediate position between the core and periphery. The semiperipheries are crucial to the study of race and ethnicity in the modern world-system in several ways. First, semiperipheries are exploited by the core, but they, in turn, exploit poorer countries. Indeed, 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 and Levine 1994: 80). Semiperipheral elites act in their own behalf to drain surpluses from peripheries through *subimperialism* which is “akin to the global dominance of an imperial power but at a subsytemic level” (Shaw 1979: 348-51). When they act in a subimperialist fashion, semiperipheries often employ strategies that target, marginalize and oppress ethnic minorities. The most common form of subimperialism is not the application of military force, but rather the routine operation of global value chains that exploit ethnic communities.

Second, several semiperipheries have exhibited higher growth rates than the core since the 1980s, and they often achieve that economic development through national agendas that target and exploit ethnic communities within their own countries. Semiperipheral agriculture and industrialization are grounded in intense exploitation of ethnic minorities to secure low-paid and unpaid labor for national export agendas (Clelland 2014).

Third, semiperipheries now host a majority of the world’s population and most of the world’s diverse array of ethnic groups. In addition, Southern semiperipheries are magnets for transnational migration. Twenty-five countries were the destinations for two-thirds of the world’s transnational migrants in 2013. Sixteen of those destination countries were Southern semiperipheries. Migration into the South accounts for more than 44 percent of transnational labor migrants and nearly 82 percent of refugees, and the vast majority of this migration is to Southern semiperipheries.<sup>1</sup> As a result, semiperipheral states are just as involved in regulating migration flows and restricting citizenship rights as western core countries. Reactionary politics, xenophobia and discrimination against “foreign aliens” are routinely documented in Southern semiperipheries. The United Nations World Value Survey (1981-2014) indicates that there is far greater racial/ethnic intolerance of immigrants in these Southern semiperipheries than in the western core.<sup>2</sup>

Fourth, we should state an obvious point that is usually ignored by western scholars of race/ethnicity. The numbers of peoples impacted by semiperipheral ethnic exploitation and forced displacement far exceeds the incidence of racial discrimination in western core countries. Much like the European core, semiperipheral states construct legal definitions of ethnic minorities in order to target them for marginalization and exploitation in relation to domestic and foreign development agendas. Every semiperipheral country has its own marginalized ethnic communities that are treated like internal peripheries. In 2011, forced displacements were concentrated in the

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<sup>1</sup> Analysis of International Organization of Migration (2014).

<sup>2</sup> Analysis of World Value Survey databases, <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>.

world's semiperipheries where the lands of ethnic minorities were reallocated to large export producers.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, some semiperipheries (e.g., Russia, Ukraine, and South Africa) are significant exporters of arms to areas of the world in which ethnic conflicts are occurring.

### Ethnic Complexities of the Transnational Capitalist Class

We agree with Robinson (2014: 64) that "the principal contradiction on a world scale is one of class" because the world-system is choreographed by transnationalized capitalists who seek to exploit racial and ethnic minorities to expropriate wealth, not to construct "white supremacy." Despite core economic dominance of the world-system, there are "multiple poles of intensive accumulation. . . that are magnets for transnational investors" (Robinson 2014: 64). Global business investment now flows increasingly from South to North and South to South. Indeed, Southern firms now account for one-third of world FDI flows (*The Economist* 2011). Clearly, these Southern capitalists are neither "core" nor "white" in the sense of the global apartheid model, but they do share the pro-capitalist class interests of core capitalists.

Outside the western core, those who directly exploit workers are capitalists of the same color, but not usually of the same ethnicity, as workers. These extractors of economic surplus are the elites of the semiperiphery who act in their own behalf and as compradors to foreign capital. Compradors are the capitalists and state elites who do the hard work for their transnational class. They make production possible through strategies to capture labor and resources from ethnic communities. One task of these dark capitalists is to drain economic surplus from cheap labor and from the natural resources in ethnic communities. Through support action from state elites, ethnic minorities are subject to super-exploitation. The most common form is not military imperialism, but the routine operation of commodity chains that feed off of the cheap labor and ecological resources of ethnic communities.

One indicator of the important role of semiperipheries is the changing ethnic composition of the transnational capitalist class. In 1956, the US accounted for 84 percent of the Global 500 list of the world's largest corporations. Over the last two decades, the number of Southern semiperipheries with such corporations more than doubled, indicating that the ethnic diversity within this group is widening to every region of the world. By 2014, nearly half the world's largest corporations were based in nonwestern semiperipheries.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Analysis of UNHCR (2012, map, p. 2).

<sup>4</sup> Analysis of Forbes (2014).

There is another empirical indicator we can employ to measure the growing ethnic complexity of the transnational capitalist class. Since 2000, the numbers of wealthy billionaires have expanded faster in Southern semiperipheries than in western countries or Japan. More than half the world's wealthiest capitalists reside in 51 countries that the global apartheid model places outside the white core. China, India and Russia have more billionaires than the combined total for all western core countries except the United States. Brazil has more billionaires than France, Canada, or Australia. South Korea and Turkey have more billionaires than Australia or Italy.<sup>5</sup>

Each of the nonwestern countries represented among the lists of billionaires and largest corporations has a history of incorporating and exploiting ethnic minorities. It is crucial to realize that semiperipheral capitalists and nonwestern state elites are not innocent bystanders of the globalized economic processes that sustain world inequality. Top executives of nonwestern corporations, billionaires, and many state elites form the transnational capitalist class fractions in their own countries. They service core capitalists and are complicit in creating and sustaining the inequalities of the world-system. In other words, they represent a fraction within the transnational capitalist class that is necessary to the global neoliberal project. But they are based on the "exploited" side of the global apartheid divide where this model claims such capitalists do not exist.

### Conclusion

We have challenged the stereotype of "white capitalism" by emphasizing the important roles of semiperipheries, transnational capitalists and nonwestern states in ethnic conflict, exploitation and repression. We have *not* reduced race/racism to a black/white dichotomy. Indeed, we have strongly argued against that mistake. Nor have we argued that race/racism no longer have any relevance. What we do contend is that race and racism are western concepts that are not automatically applicable everywhere in the world, most especially when the semiperiphery and nonwestern states are omitted from analysis. As we move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, semiperipheries will increasingly exploit and repress ethnic groups in ways that parallel past western colonialism.

We are not equipped with adequate theories to help us analyze those phenomena because we cannot simply pick up existing theories of race in the West and force them upon those situations. Nor can we generalize claims of racial discrimination to entire nonwestern populations, like the global apartheid model does. In every Southern country, transnational capitalists are complicit in the exploitation of ethnic territories. To make our point, we shift the conceptual frame to reflect the nonwestern realities of the world-system. In western sociology of race, those who are

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<sup>5</sup> Analysis of Hurun Research Institute (2015).

most privileged are white while peoples of color are the exploited. What theory will we use if China becomes the world hegemon and expands its exploitation of the world's racial and ethnic groups? Until we have a body of theory that can address such questions *without* ethnocentrism and orientalism, we will not be prepared to analyze race and ethnicity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world-system.

### About the Authors

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## Genocide, Race, Capitalism: Synopsis of Formation within the Modern World-system

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### Abstract

*This article reviews and synthesizes race-based slavery and genocide extant across the Americas for a half millennia of colonial capitalist development, and identifies four major phases; conquest, colonization, capitalism, and hegemonic global capitalism. Examples of genocide are presented for each phase, and differences between Catholic driven Latin America conquest and Protestant driven Anglo American genocidal domination are delineated and put into the longue durée of the modern world-system.*

**Keywords:** Racism, Race, Genocide, Capitalism



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The analysis put forth here informs an otherwise confusing or confounding description of how capitalist political-economic forces have changed the modern world, and how racial constructions are misunderstood and misrepresented without a global context.

Supremacist ideologies central to the tripartite systems of racism in the twentieth century—the Jim Crow South, the Nazis of Germany, and South African Apartheid—(Frederickson 2002) were borne in the Spanish Catholic conquest of the Caribbean, the reconstructed motherland of Hispaniola, and initial conquests of the western European war nations, within the genocide that took place in Ayiti (Haiti), (Dupuy 2014). These ideologies were reproduced and adapted to specific geo-political situations by every racist regime and produced the “civilized” superordinate dominant population, and conversely the “savage” subordinated inferiorized population (Williams 2012).

Political regimes and empires adapted and employed outright forms of genocide to construct three domination systems—conquest, colonialism, and capitalism. Genocide was a central feature (Kuper 1985) in each of these systems that created the modern world system over the same half-millennium of its development (Wallerstein 1999). Slave labor, race, genocide, and systemic racism contribute toward European enrichment during non-tributary conquest phases, followed by genocidal land-takings directly connected to developing colonialism, or Quijano’s “coloniality.”

Genocide accompanied every phase of world capitalism, including twentieth century forms that arose in Europe. Theory needs to account for the macro-construction of racism in the *longue durée* that by colonizers and states as perpetrators of genocidal conquest (Fenelon 2016). The political economy of the historic formation of racist systems is essential to understanding the social construction of race in a “New World” colonized by Old European countries (Bonilla-Silva 2015:73-87) and spanning mercantile, industrial and neoliberal eras of capitalism. Williams (2012) notes the “savage anxiety” of colonizing countries, in which conquering civilizations discounted indigenous peoples as “tribes” and denied genocide through constructs that have inferiorized the peoples conquered as needing the civilizing influence of Christians. These rationalizations were extended toward African-descent people. The market slave systems of the transatlantic “exchange” of labor and land profits that were established are the underpinnings of capitalism. Race and genocide are therefore state formulaic, applied to Native Nations in wars of extermination, and deployed in the destruction of Indian tribal sovereignty (Deloria and Wilkins 1999).

The best way to illustrate these large systems is to identify the genocide that took place through their geo-spatial and temporal development—Spanish Catholic conquest in the Caribbean for over a hundred years, English Protestant conquest in the Americas for one hundred and fifty years, United States capitalist expansion over North America for a hundred and fifty years, and

western powers' economic penetration of global markets for another hundred years (Robinson 2005).

### **Examples of Genocide and Racism over 500 Years of the Modern World-System**

Race-based slavery and genocide extant across the Americas for a half millennia of colonial capitalist development involved four major phases; conquest, colonization, capitalism, and hegemonic global capitalism.

#### **Conquest Phase Genocides in the Caribbean: Holocaust, Early Non-Formulaic Racist Systems, Wealth Extraction**

Columbus's 1493 second voyage to Hayiti launched a Holocaust of Hispaniola—enslavement and massive killings of Native peoples morphing into flat-out genocide with the death of 3 to 5 million people (depopulation rates from 94% to 99%). Columbus introduced Spanish-Catholic supremacist ideologies through invading armies of settlers and soldiers that fueled five hundred years of racist expansion and domination. The 1493 Papal Bulls designated indigenous peoples as uncivilized “pagans” and “savages” (Newcomb 2008), while the Doctrine of Discovery underwritten by Prince’s Rights to Conquest established a racial identification of Native peoples as *Indios* (Indians) regardless of the size or complexity of their societies. These supremacist ideologies became the basis of grouping peoples racially as outside “civilization” and “savages” in a “New World.”

Tenochtitlan was the capital of the Aztec empire, situated in the central valley of Mexico, with trade routes throughout the Americas, and complexity equal to the world’s most advanced urban areas. Cortez landed on the Yucatan, advanced inland, made alliances and sowed fear, slaughtering thousands of Native peoples pre-emptive to entering the Aztec capital and forcing Mochtezuma to submit. Cortez executed the emperor and looted the treasury while his troops raped Native women. The devastation unleashed by a smallpox plague that spread throughout the capital allowed Cortez to reconstruct an alliance with enemy states of the Aztecs and then to re-invade the city in a long, bloody siege. The Spanish achieved control of the capital. They razed Aztec buildings to the ground and built Mexico City over the ruins. New Spain conquered surrounding territories, searching out gold and silver mines. The conquerors put down resistance, including two hundred years of suppressing Mayans and Puebloan peoples.

The encomienda system over land and labor forced Catholics to struggle with rationalization. The mission system spread Christian ideologies, such as those espoused in the famous debates at Valladolid, in Spain, that claimed Indians only acquired souls and human rights if they were converted. The mission system thus created the Mission California Indians that were

wiped of their national origins, native language, socio-economic systems and religious understandings. Analysts see the virtual erasure of the California indigenous groups as a prime example of genocidal (Costo and Costo 1987) and racial culturicide (Fenelon and Trafzer 2014) through a form of settler colonialism (Veracini 2010) based on non-state trade and corporate structures for dominance. When armed colonial conquerors penetrated the Americas they all engaged in genocidal warfare. The English established beachheads at Jamestown and Plymouth and from there launched wars of genocide.

### **Colonization-Phase Genocides in Anglo-America: Racist Trading Houses, Recreating Colonial England**

We need to identify the different types of settler colonialism, noting English versus Spanish or French modes, each involving the imposition of state religions. The Spanish Catholic system led to missions. The English Protestant led to the genocidal elimination of Native Nations. Catholic systems thus appeared to be more fluid while Protestant systems involved doctrines of Christian pre-destination that hardened into more essentialist racist constructions in the rationalization of genocide through profiteering from the slave trade, the plantation systems, and the destruction of indigenous sovereignty. The Protestant Reformation revered profiteering and separated financing for trading companies from the state. The conquering states established legal formulas for corporations to freely conduct slave-trading and set up plantation systems that resulted in genocide. When California became a state, the government launched “extermination” campaigns that legalized the seizure of land and the whole scale murder of Indians by settler-militias (Fenelon and Trafzer 2014). Protestant rationales of God-given Manifest Destiny (combining Catholic Discovery, Protestant pre-destination and state supported militias) pushed the Mission system to genocide, eliminating California Indians at greater than 95% depopulation. The English established trading companies in North America and conducted wars to maximize profits, including the enslavement of Africans as a corporate rather than a state activity. The rise of European capitalism was predicated on vast wealth transfers that supported large banking systems of finance and insurance for shipping and industrial goods trade in an Atlantic triangular trade system that relied on slave labor systems in the Americas.

### **Capitalism Phase Genocides in the United States: Racist Citizenship Systems, Extinguishing Land Claim**

The United States laid the groundwork for the legal destruction of Indians by excluding them from citizenship. Examples of genocide include Washington's destruction of central Onondaga (peace) fire-keepers of the Haudenosaunee confederacy (five nations) and the forced removal of the Cherokee nation and the "five civilized tribes" in the southeastern United States. The Haudenosaunee confederacy (Iroquois) managed to stay intact after the "French and Indian War." During the U. S. Revolutionary War the Mohawk were pulled into the English orbit, with the Onondaga maintaining neutrality. But General-President Washington viewed the Indian confederacy as a threat, sending an army under General Sullivan to destroy it.

Less than twenty five years later, former general, U.S. President Andrew Jackson used similar tactics against the Creek, Choctaw and Cherokee to produce land wealth for his allies in the government and a common enemy on which to focus the nation's hatred. Jackson engineered Indian Removal legislation through Congress to forcefully "remove" the Cherokee and other Indian nations to a newly created Indian Country west of the Mississippi. Analysts view the resulting death rates of 30 to nearly 50 percent as genocide. Thus, citizenship or its denial, race or its social construction, and the state or its social institutions have been instrumental in creating subordinated peoples, identified through racial categories, coercively grouped, and often destroyed on a genocidal scale.

Related 19<sup>th</sup> century examples include the Louisiana Purchase, blatant genocide already mentioned in California, multiple genocidal events against various Indian nations, such as the Mankato hangings in 1862, the militia massacre at Sand Creek in 1864, and the perfect coda of Wounded Knee in 1890. These represented "freedom" for pioneers of settler-colonialists, death and destruction for Indian nations and peoples excluded from citizenship, and a new state built on genocide, none more potent than California, (Fenelon and Trafzer 2014).

### **Global Capitalism Phase Genocides: "Neo-Liberal" Empires, Othering, Extinguishing Indigeneity**

Independence movements in the colonies, to which growing corporate global capital now subject the previous colonial conditions of economic dependence and market controls, accompanied the decline and fall from hegemonic status by a vast colonial empire of the English. The same hegemonic forces that grew out of European expansion and genocide throughout the Americas and the world now turned to political-economic systems of control over the once subordinated colonies. This involved creating small elites in urban centers inevitably linked to global markets through trading and market systems centered in the previously hegemonic Euro-American systems.

Smaller systems copied these relations from the West. Military-industrial development and expanding capitalism followed the Meiji “restoration” in Japan, which employed genocidal tactics similar to those of the West in the destruction of Nanjing and labor exploitation of conquered populations in the so-called East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. The Holocaust in northern Europe, perpetrated by the German Nazi regime against Jewish people as a “race”—the most intensive and planned genocide the world has ever seen—epitomizes how high civilization and advanced industrial capitalism undertakes genocide (Fein 1979). After World War II the West reconstituted itself as champion of citizenship and freedom. It denied the many genocidal episodes against Native peoples and indigenous nations and institutionalized new forms of racist enslavement (Kuper 1985).

Wars are violent outgrowths of a forever expanding system of capitalism. It is in these wars that we see that where “neoliberalism” claims to work for democratic and free market systems as a cover for the consolidation of transnational corporate capitalist relations through international structures imposed by the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank. The wars in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzogavina, for instance, proceeded through “ethnic cleansing.” More recent genocides, such as the attempt to extinguish indigeneity in Guatemala through the pretext of “development” supported by transnational banks and corporate mining-agricultural interests, and Israel occupation against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza remind us of the earlier “settler civilization versus violent Others” constructs that shaped the capitalist world-system.

### **Concluding Observations on Genocide and Racism over 500 Years of Developing Capitalism**

Genocide and ideological racist constructions were central features in a 500-year development of capitalism through its varied phases. The history of systemic racism and legal genocide through which the western system was built call into question the entire ideological structure of contemporary neoliberalism. What we know with certainty is the two largest systems of ideologically and demographically destructive societies known to mankind – Nazi Germany as the most intensive in the Holocaust, western colonialism as the most extensive in the genocides of America Indians – have developed and maintained race, racism and genocide as state policy in the service of building world empire and global domination. The creation of race and establishment of varied patterns of racism were global and genocidal from the onset. We need to expand analyses so as to account for the macro-construction of race and systemic racism, often genocidal, within the *longue durée* of the modern world-system.

## About the Author

James Fenelon is professor of sociology and director of the Center for Indigenous Peoples Studies at California State University.

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## Cruise Ships: Continuity and Change in the World System

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### Abstract

*Cruise ships present a useful context to study contemporary developments in globalization. U.S.-owned cruise companies have managed to create the “ideal” context for contemporary corporations: very little government oversight of labor relations, an available pool of very cheap labor dispersed across the globe, lax environmental regulations, high profit margins, and corporate tax rates around 1%. A typical cruise ship leaving the U.S. contains workers from 75 to 90 nationalities. Crewmembers performing menial service work are recruited exclusively from “poor countries” in Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Crewmembers typically sign 10-month contracts stipulating 10-14 hour workdays/7 days a week without vacation or sick days. There is a striking correlation between workers’ pay/status and their countries’ position within the world system. Staff members are usually white Westerners, while crewmembers are exclusively from the global south. On cruises the legacies of imperialism and colonialism are often the basis of workers’ racialization as appropriate servants.*

**Keywords:** Cruise ships, Racialization



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The modern day cruise ship industry is representative of both change and continuity within the world system. The industry is an exemplar of a new era of globalization wherein the neoliberal agenda prevails. Specifically, cruise companies founded in the United States during the 1970s have grown into massive transnational corporations that enjoy minimal government oversight, a large pool of cheap and disposable labor dispersed across the globe, high profit margins, and minimal taxation. While these companies are largely free from state regulation, they manage to exert significant influence over the policies of governments in the core and periphery. The lack of labor organizing has also created a situation wherein companies have almost complete control over a vast labor force recruited primarily from Asia, South and Central America, the Caribbean, and parts of Eastern Europe. The nationalities represented by capital and labor originates from tens of different countries and is unique in their confinement to a singular, contained workplace. However, in both practice and discourse, cruise ships replicate patterns of racialized servility and hierarchies of color, which date back to colonialism. Specifically, white men from core countries are at the top of the workplace hierarchy and are racialized as possessing the qualities necessary for leadership and dominance over others. Workers from peripheral nations, especially South East Asian men, are racialized as naturally suited for servility.

From their origins in the early 1970s in Miami, cruise ship companies have transformed themselves from small-scale, informal, debt-ridden entities into global behemoths. The cruising industry remains one of the fastest growing sectors in the global economy. In the United States, three companies account for 80% of the market share. In 2014, cruise ships carried 23 million passengers, owned 178 ships, and employed over 200,000 employees (CLIA 2015). These transnational corporations are working together across nation-state lines. The Cruise Lines International Association works internationally to lobby governments that flag ships, host ports, supply labor, and subsidize shipbuilding. These efforts have created a very business-friendly environment for ships to operate in across the globe. For example, in 2013, Carnival Cruise Co., the industry leader, had \$15 billion in revenue, \$2.2 billion in profits, and a taxation rate of approximately 1%. The reasons for this success are multi-faceted but a key factor is the “flags of convenience” (FOC) system.

Although these companies were founded in the United States, the FOC system allows companies to choose which countries’ flag under which they fly. The “flagging” country then assumes responsibility for supervising and enforcing the ship’s compliance with their national and international regulations on ship safety and working conditions. Panama, Liberia, and the Bahamas currently account for 50% of the FOC business. These countries charge registry fees and tonnage fees, but companies are not taxed on any of the revenue they generate on ticket sales, tours, and shipboard purchases. It is no coincidence that cruise companies flag their vessels in such peripheral

nations. If they flagged ships in the United States, they would be subject to domestic labor laws and corporate taxation. Coordinated efforts on the part of the cruise industry have successfully prevented any attempts in the U.S. Congress to alter the FOC regime (Garin 2006, Chin 2008). Under the current system, the cruise companies have considerable leverage over flagging states. For example, in 2003 registry fees amounted to 17% of the Liberian government's revenue. In Panama, the industry successfully secured a change in domestic labor law: workers' mandatory day off each week is now given at the employer's discretion (Klein 2002).

Theoretically, seafaring workers have explicit rights enshrined in international law (freedom of association and collective bargaining) and they are specifically covered by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and International Maritime Organization (IMO) conventions. ILO Convention 147 (1976) explicitly states that each country that registers ships (flag state) must pass laws specifying minimum standards for employment and living conditions. This convention also states that employers must pay for travel costs associated with taking a leave. ILO Convention 180 (1996) specifies that seafarers should work no more than 72 hours in any 7-day period. Furthermore, ILO Convention 179 (1996) requires governments to closely supervise all crewing agencies, which recruit seafaring workers. Private agencies must be licensed and must not charge workers a fee to get a job. Furthermore, ILO Convention 147 gives extensive powers to port authorities to detain any vessels, which do not meet ILO labor standards. Because these flagging countries are desperate for the income generated from registry fees, they have no incentive to enforce international labor laws governing work at sea. As a result of the FOC system, cruise companies are beyond the reach of any single seafarer's union. Furthermore, unlike previous eras, there is no single nation-state that workers can lobby to have their labor rights upheld on cruise ships. This lack of meaningful labor laws has created a population of workers that are relatively powerless against capital.

The cruise industry is characterized by a regime of "labor flexibilization." A typical cruise ship contains workers from 75-90 different countries, 70% of whom work as hotel staff and are afforded no job security. Most workers are male. This global supply of labor is procured through the usage of independent crewing agencies. Crewmembers sign 8-10 month contracts that the employer can terminate for any reason. These contracts are usually vague about specific work duties and stipulate 10-12 hour workdays, 7 days a week, without vacation or sick days. Crewmembers are usually afforded half a day off each week, at the discretion of their supervisor. Crewing agencies often exploit the desperation of potential employees. "It is common practice for these agencies to charge each new recruit for their roundtrip airfare, medical examination, seafarer's book, work visa, and an administrative fee. The end result is that these workers from poor countries are often paying \$1,500-\$2,000 just to get the job" (ITWF 2002: 5). Additionally,

most cruise companies take an indemnity (approx. \$500) from each employee, which is forfeited if they break their contract. Large recruitment fees, an indemnity along with the expense of buying their own uniforms, shoes, and other supplies means that many crewmembers are working the first couple of months just to get out of debt (ITWF 2002). The company pays them meager wages. For example, laundry workers earn between \$400-600 a month. Room cleaners and wait staff can expect a monthly wage of \$50 which must be supplemented by passenger tips (ITWF 2002, Chin 2008). These very diverse workplaces are by no means egalitarian or post-racial.

There is a stark dividing social line between “staff” and “crew” employees. While their jobs do not necessarily require more education or skill, staff is paid significantly higher wages and interacts with passengers as quasi-equals. Staff employees are permitted to take advantage of the numerous amenities and services offered to passengers. Unlike their crew counterparts, staff employees can be observed eating in passenger cafeterias, relaxing in the spa, playing around in the main pool, or drinking and dancing in passenger bars and dance clubs. Crew, on the other hand, holds such jobs as room cleaners, waitstaff, bartenders, and cooks. These workers eat day old food, live in cramped quarters with no windows, and are forbidden from utilizing any passenger amenities.

The employer also seeks to divide the crewmembers along national lines in order to obviate labor solidarity. In 1981 there was a strike led by a group of 240 Honduran workers who were also siblings, cousins, and friends from home. Since that time it has been the explicit policy to hire a very heterogeneous workforce to forestall any potential labor unrest. As a senior executive from Carnival acknowledges, after 1981 “The whole [goal] was not to have a ship with 15 percent or more of one nationality” (Garin 2006).

Cruise ship employment is highly stratified along the lines of nationality and color. The main authority figures on the ship (captain and staff captain) are almost all white men from core nations. With few exceptions, Carnival’s senior officers are all Italian; Royal Carribbeans are Norwegian; Princesses are British; and Holland America’s are Dutch (Garin 2006). White women are overrepresented in “front of the house” positions (e.g. hostesses), childcare, and personal services (Chin 2008). It is important to note that the cost of labor is not the only factor influencing hiring and job placement decisions.

In a book co-authored by Bob Dickinson, the former President and CEO of Carnival, they assert that certain nationalities are predisposed to servitude. “It is more difficult to find Americans who have a flair for service hospitality. The egalitarian nature and heritage of Americans tend to work against their ability to be motivated to serve others” (Dickinson and Vladimir 2008). This begs the question, if certain people are unsuited for servility, then who is? The answer harkens back to the days of colonization.

Discourse from company management and crewing agencies demonstrates that Southeast Asians (mostly men) in particular are perceived to be the most appropriate servants. “They seem to have been born with a wonderful service culture. They always greet guests and always smile. And, *they do it so naturally...* Managers compare them with Eastern Europeans who are considered unable ‘to smile...always so rigid’” (Zhao 2002: 11, italics mine). When asked why so many Filipino men are hired for service work, a crewing agent asserts “...the attitude of the Filipinos, and positive attitudes in terms of their dedication to work. Filipinos are obedient, resilient, happy people...it runs in the blood.” Other rationales focus on cultural subservience. “You know, Filipinos are very well educated...but they are also typically culturally subservient. And that’s one of the reasons they’re so popular on cruise ships, because...they can walk around and even under sometimes oppressive conditions they know they’ve got to smile and be subservient and they do that.” In other cases, the link between the present and colonialism is made more explicitly. On Holland America for example, a large number of the workers originate from Indonesia, a former Dutch colony. Cruise industry researcher, Ross Klien, notes that the colonial relationship between the Dutch and Indonesians was replicated aboard cruise ships. Indonesian men are racialized as “naturally reverent and deferential to the Dutch bosses, not just as their employer but also as the colonial power under which previous generations grew up” (Klein, 2002: 124). Given that Southeast Asian men have been racialized as obedient and subservient, it is no surprise that they experience discrimination in their attempts to move the workplace hierarchy into positions of authority (Terry 2013).

Cruise companies also maintain considerable leverage over port cities. In the 1990s member nations of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) declared their intention to impose a head tax of ten to fifteen dollars per cruise ship passenger. These taxes were proposed to generate funds for infrastructure maintenance and upgrade in port cities. The cruise industry balked. Companies began pitting port cities against each other and threatening to withdraw business from those countries that would not capitulate to the neoliberal agenda. Eventually, the coordinated efforts among island-nations were abandoned and the cruise industry was successful in continuing to transfer costs onto the citizenry of these peripheral nations (Garin 2006).

Cruise ship companies are not bound by or to any one particular nation-state. These transnational corporations have manipulated the “flags of convenience” system to successfully evade regulation of their businesses by any singular country or institution. At the same time, they have considerable leverage over the various nations with which they deal including port cities and flagging states. This is future that the neoliberal agenda seeks to bring about for humanity, a situation wherein transnational corporations have tremendous power over pliable nation-states. It is a future where mostly brown workers are desperate and disposable.

### **Whiteness in the World System**

I agree with Dunaway and Cleland (2016) that global capitalism can not be reduced to a project of “white supremacy.” However, colorism persists. Specifically, whiteness functions as “property” in many contexts, including cruise ships. Cheryl Harris’ (1993) groundbreaking work elucidates the ways in which “white skin” provides material and status benefits for those who are allowed to claim “whiteness.” The proliferation of skin “bleaching” products across the globe underscores the extent to which whiteness (or closeness to whiteness) is highly esteemed (Glenn, 2008). In the context of cruise ships, “whiteness” does not exclude European workers from servility, however, those laborers are overrepresented in “front of the house” and more prestigious jobs. In this regard, “whiteness functions as property” for the employer as well.

Racism, in various manifestations, is used to justify nation-based hierarchies aboard the ship. Some narratives are rooted in the history of “Orientalism” which essentializes and homogenizes “Asian” bodies (Said, 1979). The history of colonization, also serves as an underpinning to naturalize the servility of brown and black bodies. I argue that we must pay attention to the extent that profit-making motives are inextricably linked to racism in the world-system and how various racializations are used to justify global inequities.

### **About the Author**

Francisca Oyoga is Assistant Professor in Sociology and African American Studies at Bard College at Simon's Rock. She is a graduate of Bowdoin College (B.A) and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst (Ph.D.). Her research focuses on the intersection of racial, ethnic, gender, and national hierarchies in the workplace. Professor Oyoga’s most current project is a book titled *“Service on the Move: Employers’ Race-Gender Ideology on Trains, Planes, and Cruises, 1867-Present.”* She is the recipient of numerous research grants and an award for excellence in teaching.

### **Disclosure Statement**

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## Racialized and Gendered Mass Deportation and the Crisis of Capitalism

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### Abstract

*By the time President Obama leaves the Oval Office there will have been 3 million deportations from the United States during his eight years in office. This sum is 50 percent more than the total number of all deportations prior to 1997, and far more than any previous U.S. president. I argue in this essay that the confluence of four factors in recent years has created the conditions for mass deportation from the United States: (1) nearly all deportees are Latin American and Caribbean men; (2) the rise of a politics of fear in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001; (3) the global financial crisis; and (4) the potential that mass deportation creates for corporate profit-making. I place this argument in the larger context of race and ethnicity in the capitalist world-system.*

**Keywords:** Race, Gender, Immigration, Deportation



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Immigrants who have lived in the United States for decades, have their children and grandchildren in that country, and who have no connections to their country of birth can be arrested in their homes, taken to a detention center, and summarily deported without legal representation or due process. This denial of basic rights and the targeting of one racialized group fit neatly into a critical race perspective on U.S. immigration policy. But, how does it fit into the larger world-historic context?

Ramon Grosfoguel (2015), among others, has argued that race is an organizing principle of the international division of labor. Some workers transgress this global hierarchy by leaving their countries of birth and coming to the United States to labor as undocumented workers, where they find themselves at the bottom of the domestic labor hierarchy. When the threat of deportation looming over these workers becomes a reality and undocumented workers are deported to their homelands, they are pushed out of the bottom of the employment hierarchy in the United States and into the labor markets in their country of birth, where their options for survival are much more limited. In this fashion, deportation reinforces the racialized international division of labor as well as the racialized hierarchy of the domestic labor market.

### **Mass Deportation, the Aftermath of 9/11, and the Great Recession**

In the post-9/11 context, a construction of the dangerous immigrant has emerged, and this construction is gendered male and racialized as a Latino criminal (Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013) or an Arab terrorist (Naber 2006). People perceived to be Arabs have been victims of hate crimes and other forms of harassment due to the conflation of Arabs and terrorists.

However, relatively few Arabs have been deported from the United States since 9/11 (Golash-Boza 2012). Instead, state policies alleged to combat terrorists have largely targeted Latinos. Mass deportation is a form of state repression based on stereotypes of “criminal aliens” that appears to disproportionately target Latino and Caribbean men. In 2008, there were 10.4 million undocumented people in the United States, 4.1 million of them were women, and 80% were from Latin America or the Caribbean (Passel and Cohn 2009). Any non-citizen can face deportation, but undocumented immigrants are most at risk for deportation. Although 20 percent of undocumented immigrants are *not* Latin Americans, these immigrants account for less than 2 percent of deportees. And, although 40 percent of undocumented immigrants are women, they make up only 11 percent of deportees. Notably, the percentage of male deportees increased from 76 in 1999 to 89 percent in 2012.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Office of Immigration Statistics provided me with removal data by sex between 1998 and 2011 and published this data for 2012.

This escalation of deportations targeting Latino men has been carried out in the name of making the United States safer—both from “criminal aliens” and from terrorists. Notably, the stated mission of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), according to its website, is “to secure the nation from the many threats we face,” and a substantial portion of the DHS budget has been dedicated to deporting Latinos who pose no obvious threat to the nation. These “controlling images” (Collins 2004) of black, Latino, and Arab men as threatening have served as discursive fodder for the implementation of state repression. If people in the United States did not live in fear of terrorism and of crime, it would be more difficult for the state to justify spending \$30 billion a year on mass deportation.

Scholars of global capitalism argue that the current crisis of capitalism is a new one—and that it was caused by the transnational capitalist class having reached its limits: nearly all corners of the globe have been incorporated into global capitalism (Robinson 2014; Sassen 2014). The financial activities of investors and speculators led to a collapse of U.S. financial markets in 2008, which was at the core of the most recent crisis of global capitalism (Robinson 2014). The escalation of mass deportation in the United States is one instance of the state’s repressive response to the crisis.

In the aftermath of the crisis, we have witnessed a shift towards more interior enforcement of immigration laws. With the slowdown in employment, fewer immigrants have attempted to enter the United States, and thus there have been fewer border apprehensions. Immigration law enforcement officers in two branches of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) carry out deportations: Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). CBP is only authorized to work up to 100 air miles from the border; most interior enforcement falls to ICE. In 2002, ICE apprehensions accounted for 10 percent of all DHS apprehensions. By 2011, that figure was nearly 50 percent. There was an abrupt rise in interior apprehensions in 2008.

This shift from 83,969 ICE apprehensions in 2007 to 319,934 ICE apprehensions in 2008 is a consequence of the implementation of the Secure Communities Program and the consequent rise in interior enforcement. The Secure Communities Program is a deportation program that mandates coordination among federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in immigration law enforcement and has been decried by immigrant rights organizations for creating fear in immigrant communities. The program’s implementation at the very height of the Great Recession in 2008 makes it a telling example of heightened state repression in a time of economic crisis.

## Who Profits?

While some have pointed to the opportunities opened up for profit making by mass deportations, it is difficult to substantiate the claim that corporate profit is the primary explanation. It is clear, however, that certain sectors bring in enormous profits from mass deportation. It is also clear that corporations have spent millions of dollars lobbying for legislation that would enhance these profits.

The Corrections Corporation of America (CCA)—the largest private prison contractor in the United States—was awarded its first government contract in 1984. The CCA reported substantial profits during the 1990s. The company was doing so well that at the end of the twentieth century it began to build speculative prisons—“excess prison space for inmates who did not yet exist” (Wood 2007: 232). At the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, rates of incarceration leveled off and the CCA faced serious problems of overcapacity and mounting debt. By 2001, CCA had 8,500 empty beds and was over a billion dollars in debt (Wood 2007). As states had cut back funding for prisons the CCA looked to the federal government. Its federal lobbying expenses increased from \$410,000 in 2000 to \$3 million in 2004. These efforts paid off, primarily because of the rise of immigration detention in the aftermath of 9/11.

In 2009, Congress passed a bill that included a “detention bed mandate.” This mandate requires immigration detention facilities to fill 34,000 beds each day with non-citizens awaiting deportation or an immigration hearing. In 2009, 49 percent of ICE immigration beds in the United States were in private detention facilities. After the implementation of the quota, this percentage went up to 62 percent (Carson and Diaz 2015). Between 2008 and 2014, CCA spent ten million dollars on lobbying related to immigration detention and immigration reform. This lobbying paid off, as the company’s annual profits increased from \$133 million to \$195 million in this time period (Carson and Diaz 2015).

The rise in detention has been accompanied by a rise in deportations. Countries that receive deportees have responded to this flow by finding ways deportees can be put to use. One of the uses of deportees is as skilled laborers. Call centers in Guatemala and the Dominican Republic are replete with deportees. They answer phone calls from people located in the United States and often earn only \$100 a week. Having lived in the United States, they speak English and are familiar with U.S. culture. Their cultural competence is an asset since the majority of callers are from the United States. The state of Baja California in Mexico, by way of example, has about 35 call centers that employ 10,000 people, nearly half of them deportees (Spagat and Millan 2014). Overall in Mexico, the call center sector doubled between 2005 and 2010, making it a \$6 billion industry (Wessler 2014).

## Conclusion

Understanding mass deportation requires a consideration of the political economy of racialized and gendered state repression. This consideration renders it evident that mass deportation reinforces the racialized dimensions of the international division of labor that Grosfoguel emphasizes. And, although Dunaway's essay in this symposium argues against the notion of global apartheid due to the rise of the BRICs, a look at mass deportation renders it evident that the sustainability of a system whereby workers in one country earn \$10 an hour and those in a neighboring country earn \$5 a day is dependent upon the enforcement of national borders. Mass deportation is crucial to the maintenance of global apartheid—a system where (mostly white) affluent citizens of the world are free to travel to where they like whereas the (mostly non-white) poor are forced to make do in places where there are fewer resources. As Dunaway points out, there are many affluent non-whites for whom borders pose no problems. However, global apartheid is not dependent upon the same strict racial divisions that undergirded apartheid in South Africa. Instead, mass deportation reinforces the limited mobility and enhanced vulnerability of black and brown labor alongside the rise of non-white billionaires who are happy to reap benefits from this marginalized labor. Global apartheid would not be feasible without deportation, as deportation is the physical manifestation of policies that determine who is permitted to live where.

## About the Author

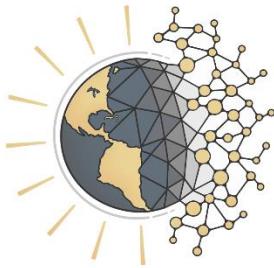
Tanya Golash-Boza is an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Merced. Her most recent book is *Deported: Immigrant Policing, Disposable Labor and Global Capitalism* (New York University Press, 2015).

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## Race in the Capitalist World-System: Response to the Symposium Essays

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The articles assembled in this collection speak to a desperately needed debate and theoretical advancement on matters of race, national oppression, ethnicity and global capitalism. What is most intriguing about this collection is that the authors do not fear stepping into the realm of supposed heresy. They are prepared to ask tough questions and advance, in some cases, unorthodox assertions and conclusions. This, alone, makes this entire collection a must-read.

The challenge in addressing the question of race revolves around appreciating that it cannot be restricted to matters of color, superiority/inferiority or hierarchy. Race is a system created with two objectives, as well articulated by several of the authors, which include: *one, domination and exploitation for a specific population, and, two, social control*. To a great extent this latter matter of social control was not addressed directly in this collection though was implicit in several essays.

In William Robinson's introduction, he quotes the iconic Oliver Cromwell Cox as situating the construction of modern racism in the period of 1493-4. I would suggest shifting that at least one year earlier to 1492 with the successful "Reconquista" carried out by the Castilians in Spain. This was the removal of the last of the Moorish kingdoms from Iberia and the expulsion of Jews. It was in this moment, as Etienne Balibar pointed out in his volume (with Immanuel Wallerstein) *Race, Nation, Class*, that we witnessed the merging, to a great degree of Christianity and a new concept of whiteness. This construction of race was further developed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century by a combination of the Spanish and Portuguese invasion of the Western Hemisphere (and subsequent genocide, as noted by Fenelon), the slave trade in Africans, and the English subjugation of Ireland



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and, with it, the imposition of a system of racial/colonial domination on the indigenous population. It is the latter that is of particular importance in understanding the origins and development of race and racist oppression in North America (a subject going beyond the scope of this paper).

When race is only viewed in terms of superiority/inferiority it misses a larger context. The construction of race certainly helped to justify slavery, colonialism and genocide. But it also served a purpose that is equally relevant to this day: *social control*. Race identified who was inferior and superior and with that, created the zones of being and non-being referenced by Grosfoguel. But in creating those zones, i.e., in creating a relatively privileged position for a specific “race” (in most cases identified as “white”), the objective of the capitalist ruling elites was to ensure that a ‘uniform’ was made available for one segment of the population denoting the ‘army’ in which they were now enlisted. That ‘army’ served to not only suppress those in the zone of non-being but, in so doing, acted to suppress themselves. In the USA context this could be witnessed through the collapse of bond servant revolts (indentured servants) that crossed so-called racial lines by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (as explored in great detail by the late Theodore Allen in his two volume work, *The Invention of the White Race*).

Of what relevance is this to the current situation? A major source of debate within this collection revolves, whether implicitly or explicitly, over the question of “global apartheid.” Dunaway and Clelland make a strong argument that the notion of “global apartheid” fails to appropriately identify the conjuncture. It would be wrong to suggest that they deny the continuing importance of race in making their argument regarding transnational capitalism. They correctly point out that racial construction today is substantially different than in the colonial and anti-colonial era. Transnational capitalism has introduced a new equation, which is the construction of a global class that is not simply the extension-through-subordination of comprador elements in the global South. The situation has become far more complicated.

Yet the question is whether the framework of “global apartheid” is useful. I would argue that it is, but only insofar as one understands it not in a 20<sup>th</sup> century context, i.e., apartheid South Africa redux. Global apartheid can be understood as the racialized subordination of supposedly un-assimilatable populations taking place in this era of global capitalism. Such racialized subordination, to again borrow from Balibar, is not exclusively or mainly defined by biological superiority/inferiority—in contrast to earlier forms of racism—but is in many respects defined by cultural compatibility, alien-ness, and the notion of relevant and irrelevant populations. If, for instance, one examines right-wing populist movements, one sees in common their identification of specific populations that are asserted to be un-assimilatable. They are allegedly incompatible with the dominant ethno-racial construct and, as a result, pose a danger. Golash-Boza and Grosfoguel speak to this in their respective essays.

Oyogoa's essay on cruise ships actually serves as a very appropriate metaphor for global capitalism and race in the explicit exploration of matters of social control. It is not just that the cruise lines are, for all intents and purposes, free of most nation-state controls, but the system that they have put into place is consistent with the centuries-old pattern of maintaining social control through the construction of a racial division of labor. In this division of labor each layer in the hierarchy comes with a particular role along with a justification or mystification, as the case may be. Oyogoa's reference to the Filipinos and the manner in which they are portrayed reminds one of the descriptions of the Black sleeping car porters who worked for the Pullman Company on the railroads in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. They were expected to smile and be entertaining and to put up with whatever hardship, including the humiliation of being referred to as "George" instead of the use of their own name.<sup>1</sup>

Global apartheid cannot be used as a means of suggesting anything approaching a monolithic white bloc vs. a monolithic black, yellow or brown bloc. Such was never the case and it certainly does not apply today. As William Robinson and others have pointed out, the evolution of global capitalism has meant, among other things, that the "global South" can be found in pockets in the global "North" and vice versa. It is also the case that the decline of nation-state empires has meant a transformation in imperial privilege (rather than racial privilege) such that the so-called native (white) populations in the global North find themselves facing a reduced living standard, job loss, etc., while in parts of the global South, elites-of-color are emerging who, according to the imperial/racial myth, should never supersede those in the metropolitan countries. This situation creates an ideological conflict for the native (white) populations who feel threatened by such a transformation and particularly threatened by the additional entrance into their countries of populations which are perceived to be difficult, if not impossible, to assimilate.

"Global apartheid," then, refers to the system created and imposed by global capitalism in order to structure the reorganization of the planet. This includes the creation of redundant populations, and corresponding failed states that become "reservations" for the unnecessary. Also, the rise of the semi-peripheral countries, discussed by Dunaway and Clelland, which create their own systems of racist oppression in line with the larger system of global capitalism.

The notion of global apartheid is also ironically useful in addressing some of the situations that Dunaway and Clelland point to as evidence that such a system does not exist. In a world where neoliberal globalization is the hegemonic framework, there is a fight for resources and space. The conquest of vast proportions of the planet's wealth by an ever shrinking segment of the global population means that there is much less to go around. It is in such a situation that the genocidal

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<sup>1</sup> "George" from George Pullman, the owner of the company.

‘gene’ that exists within capitalism becomes fully activated and one witnesses the horrors of the Indonesian slaughters in East Timor or the Hutu holocaust carried out against Tutsis (and their Hutu allies) in Rwanda, to name only two. Certainly in the case of Rwanda, there was an explicit conceptualization of race as justifying the genocide, wherein the right-wing Hutu genocidiers portrayed the Tutsis as less than human.<sup>2</sup>

This collection reminds us all that race and racism, though generally associated with matters of color, were never so restricted. Islamophobia has become, in much of the global North, a socially acceptable manner in which to be racist. Islam is not only associated with those who cannot be assimilated but is associated with the ‘colored peoples’ of the world and, therefore, not to be linked with the Judeo-Christian heritage. Islamophobia is, therefore, less about religion and more about the *origins* of the religion and the segments of the planet in which this religion is largely based.

Global capitalism, and specifically transnational capital, needs populations that can be mobilized to not only advance their interests, but to serve as a safety valve in the context of the three major crises afflicting the planet: the crisis of global capitalism; the crisis of the environment; and the crisis of the legitimacy of the State. Right-wing populist forces are attempting to motivate and activate a segment of the population based on fear and irrationality in order to preserve the nation-state and to impose various forms of authoritarianism, thereby reversing the progressive victories of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Though transnational capital is less sanguine on the preservation of the nation-state—except and insofar as it advances the interests of global capitalism—it shares with right-wing populism an interest in strengthened *authoritarian statism* (to borrow from Nicos Poulantzas) in order to ensure not simply the continuity of the system but its further evolution. “Global apartheid” holds out the hope, particularly for segments of the white populations of the global North, that there is a place for them in the brave new world of transnational capitalism.

A final thought. In 1988 I was introduced to the concept of “anti-Irish racism.” I was on a visit to Northern Ireland and Britain as part of an effort to better understand the similarities between the struggle of the Irish nationalist (Catholic) population in the north of Ireland, and that of African Americans in the United States. There was reference to this term “anti-Irish racism” which made me very uncomfortable. After all, how could there be racism against a population that was “white.”

In many respects the conquest of Ireland by the English, and their complete and total subordination of the indigenous population not only helped to define the terms of the system of racial (and later national) oppression to be instituted in North America against “people of color”. But it also provided a clue to understanding race as about various “markers,” as noted by

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<sup>2</sup> Going so far as to reference them as “cockroaches.”

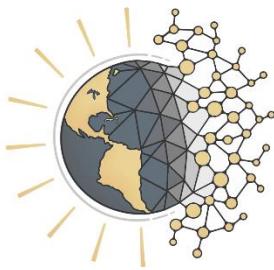
Grosfoguel. The Irish were declared to be an inferior race by the English, treated horribly and holding no rights that the English were bound to respect...until and unless they agreed to serve the Empire, or in the case of the United States, to serve the interests of the *white republic*. Despite the racial and national oppression imposed on the Irish, there were many of them who chose to fight to *become white*, that is, to situate themselves in their own minds and within the racial hierarchy of the dominant world bloc. If nothing else this demonstrated that the fact of oppression, no matter how vicious, in no way guarantees that the victims will seek or establish a progressive alternative. They may, like many of the victims of the Jewish Holocaust, choose to relocate—physically and/or ideologically—and ensure that while they will never be victims again...this will be done at the cost of victimizing someone else in the racial hierarchy. It is for these reasons that the debate contained in this volume is of such importance and relevance.

## About the Author

Bill Fletcher, Jr. is a writer and activist. He is a syndicated columnist and talk show host long active in the trade union movement and the Black Freedom Movement. He is also the co-author of Solidarity Divided: the crisis in organized labor and a new path toward social justice, and author of “They’re Bankrupting Us – And Twenty Other Myths about Unions. He can be followed on Twitter, Facebook and [www.billfletcherjr.com](http://www.billfletcherjr.com).

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## Introduction: Ireland in the World-System

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In 2008 Ireland entered an economic free-fall. The collapse of the Celtic Tiger challenged some of the central tenets of mainstream political thought in Ireland, as the country was revealed to be less a deregulated mouse that roared, and more of a politically weak and underdeveloped semi-periphery whose elite had little real control over the country's economy. Since then, the Irish political elite, as well as the ECB-IMF-European Commission Troika, have shown themselves to be strong supporters of socially destructive austerity policies. This has prompted a slowly emerging backlash, most notably protests against government plans to privatize the water supply. And in the recent February 2016 elections, a process of serious electoral re-alignment along Left-Right lines has been clearly evident.



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This political moment is an apt one for radical reappraisals of the history of Ireland's economic development, of the structures of power in Ireland and of the structures of power within which Ireland is bound up; issues, problems and questions for which world-systems analysis provides a most useful set of theoretical tools.

Ireland, both historically and in the present, has exhibited traits of both peripheries and semi-peripheries. Indeed, the papers in this issue's symposium on "Race in the Capitalist World-System" point out that the early modern English conquest of Ireland was a seminal moment for the history of whiteness, racism and global structural inequality. While Ireland suffered de-industrialisation, destitution and famine in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it did not experience a "second serfdom" in the early modern era, like Eastern Europe or Latin America, and in the closing decades of the twentieth century it appeared to have changed from "the poorest of the rich," as *The Economist* once labelled it, to one of the seemingly most successful economies in the European core. Investigating these phenomena can lead to a fuller understanding of world-systems and the patterns of global economic dependency. Therefore, the various papers in this symposium seek to use world-systems analysis to arrive at a fuller understanding of Ireland, while also seeking to use Ireland for a fuller understanding of the world-system as well as the characteristics of European semi-peripheries in relation to cores.

Aidan Beatty's study of "The Irish Revolution Without a Revolution" critiques what he sees as "the conventional view among Irish historians that a revolution occurred in that country between the passing of the Third Home Rule Bill of 1912 and the end of the Civil War in 1923." Irish nationalists spoke of a "break" with Britain, but in many respects what they demanded was simply the right to manage the country themselves along the same capitalist lines. The nationalist mainstream did not seek an economic or social revolution; this paper seeks to understand the structural reasons why this was so.

Thomas Murray's paper situates the history of the Irish constitution in the successive, international waves of constitution-making that have tended to correspond with decisive moments or ruptures in the contested formation of the historical capitalist world-system since the late eighteenth century. The changing nature of the Irish constitution, he suggests, owed to certain local manifestations of anti-systemic movements within the historical capitalist world-system and constitution-makers' attempts to contain—militarily, politically and ideologically—these movements' democratic and egalitarian ideals and practices. Various configurations of the balance of power in Irish society between "national" (core-peripheral) and "social" (capital-labour) forces crystallised in constitutional form.

Continuing the macro-level historical analysis, Tommy McKearney's "Northern Ireland: From Imperial Asset to International Embarrassment" places contemporary Northern Irish politics

and economics within a longer history of British imperialism and British rule in Ireland. McKearney has long been active within leftist and republican politics in Northern Ireland, and was involved in the hunger strikes in the H-Blocks Prison in the early 1980s. His paper is more in the style of personal observation than a conventional academic analysis; it is accompanied by a response piece by J.K. Jacobsen.

Sharae Deckard's "World-Ecology and Ireland: The Neoliberal Ecological Regime" argues for the usefulness of applying not only the tools of world-systems analysis, but also Jason W. Moore's world-ecological paradigm, to analysis of Ireland's role as a semi-periphery in the environmental history of capitalism. She observes that the socio-economic particularity of neoliberal capitalism in its Irish manifestation has increasingly been critiqued since the collapse of the Celtic Tiger, but little attention has been paid to neoliberalism as ecology within Ireland. Thus, her contribution explores the characteristics of the Irish neoliberal ecological regime during and after the Tiger, identifying the opening of new commodity frontiers (such as fracking, water, agro-biotechnology, and biopharma) constituted in the neoliberal drive to appropriate and financialize nature. She argues that what is crucial to a macro-ecological understanding of Ireland's role in the neoliberal regime of the world-ecology is the inextricability of its financial role as a tax haven and secrecy jurisdiction zone from its environmental function as a semi-peripheral pollution and water haven.

Maurice Coakley's "Ireland, Europe and the Global Crisis" explores Ireland's relationship to the European Union, and the background to the EU's imposition of austerity policies in the wake of the global financial crisis. He argues that the combination of the financialisation of Europe, consolidated by monetary union, alongside the collapse of the Soviet bloc has transformed the character of the European Union, turning it into an increasingly coercive formation that has undermined democracy across Europe. Ireland's attempt to establish itself as a bridge economy between the United States and Europe brought it a brief prosperity during the Celtic Tiger era; it is now paying the price for its extreme dependency on external capital.

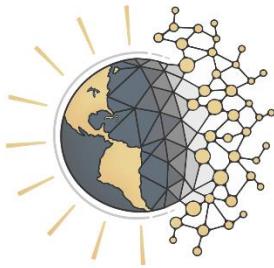
Finally, we end with an extended interview with Denis O'Hearn. O'Hearn has pioneered the use of world-systems analysis and dependency theory for understanding Irish historical development, most famously with his 2001 book, *The Atlantic Economy: Britain, the US, and Ireland*. In this interview, O'Hearn discusses his views of Irish politics and economics since the publication of that work, his views of mainstream "revisionist" historiography, and recent developments since 2008, including the rise of the EU's PIIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece, and Spain) and the meanings of UK devolution for Ireland.

## About the Authors

Aidan Beatty holds a doctorate in international history from the University of Chicago. His first book, *Masculinity and Power in Irish Nationalism, 1884-1938* will be published this summer by Palgrave-Macmillan, as part of their *Genders and Sexualities in History* series. He is currently a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies and a Scholar-in-Residence at the School of Canadian Irish Studies, at Concordia University in Montreal.

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## An Irish Revolution without a Revolution

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### Abstract

*There is a conventional view among Irish historians that a revolution occurred in that country between the passing of the Third Home Rule Bill of 1912 and the end of the Civil War in 1923. The violence of those years, the collapse in support for the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP), the meteoric rise to power of Sinn Féin, a new sense of meritocracy, a greater sense of democracy and a widespread radicalism; all are seen as elements of a major change in Irish politics and life, a ‘Revolution.’ Drawing on Gramsci’s notion of a “revolution without a revolution,” this paper seeks to understand the events in Ireland of 1912-23, not as a sudden rupture with the past but as the culmination of a much longer period of (often British-backed) capitalist development in post-Famine Ireland. This paper argues that Irish nationalist politics in the decades before 1912 is better understood via categories such as class, gender, capitalism and the pervasive power of the British state. As such, as well as pursuing a reassessment of the project of Irish historical development and state-building, this paper also seeks a reassessment of the project of (an equally statist) Irish historiography.*

**Keywords:** Ireland, Nationalism, Historiography, Irish Civil War



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There is something of a consensus among Irish historians that a revolution occurred in that country between 1912 and 1923. The violence of those years, the collapse in support for the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP), the meteoric rise to power of Sinn Féin, a new sense of meritocracy, a greater sense of democracy and a widespread radicalism; all are seen as elements of a major change in Irish politics and life, a “revolution.” One of the first serious historical works to study the period in these terms was David Fitzpatrick’s *Politics and Irish Life*, a seminal study of local politics in Clare. This county, he argues, underwent a profound social upheaval as, with echoes of Enoch Powell, those lower down the social ladder now “had the whip-hand” over those previously dominant (Fitzpatrick 1998: 49, 62). This collapse in deference seems, for Fitzpatrick, to have been the defining characteristic of the “revolution.” Not dissimilarly, Senia Pašeta has studied the decline in power in the decades before 1918, of an older conservative Catholic middle-class. These people were soon to be replaced, she argues, by emergent, radical lower middle-class Republicans (Pašeta 1999). The controversial Peter Hart has uncontroversially argued that the revolution was the product of competing, incompatible claims on the state and on popular loyalty: “The legitimacy and existence of the British state was directly and forcibly challenged; this challenge was supported by a large proportion of the Irish population; and Irish sovereignty in the 26 counties was ultimately transferred to a new polity and government” (Hart 2002: 18). Sitting somewhat uneasily with these analyses, Conor Kostick’s Marxist study sees the revolution as the intense agitation of workers and peasants’ movements, happening in parallel to the high politics of Sinn Féin and the Irish Republican Army but generally outside of their control (Kostick 2009).

All of these historians, in different ways, have made important contributions to the scholarly understanding of what was, by any reckoning, a tumultuous period during which Irish society exhibited important changes. This essay, however, proffers a different analysis and chronology of modern Irish history. Reviewing the secondary literature on the Irish revolution, as well as drawing on a smaller amount of primary research, this macro-historical essay argues that it is more profitable to trace a long arc of development from the years after the Famine well into the twentieth century, rather than identifying a rupture in Irish life in the years surrounding the Easter Rising of 1916. There was not a revolution, so much as there was a slow process of capitalist evolution, as post-Famine Ireland was integrated more and more into the capitalist world-system. Irish nationalism was a product of this socio-economic change and the Irish War of Independence was not a rupture with the past, but the culmination of that past.

In the aftermath of the War of Independence (1919-22) and Civil War (1922-23), the nationalist laureate W.B. Yeats spoke of a long gestation of Irish cultural ferment, stretching from the Parnellite schism of the early 1890s up to his own time (Cairns and Richards 1988: 58). More

recently, Patrick Maume's much-cited, if archly empiricist work has taken the notion of a "long gestation" as a framing device for understanding early twentieth-century Irish politics in general (Maume 1999). While Maume is somewhat circumspect as to what was "gestating" during this long gestation, he is right to place an emphasis on long-term change; temporality can be a slippery problem in scholarly analyses of "revolutions." As Immanuel Wallerstein points out, *revolution* is a term that connotes "sudden, dramatic, and extensive change. It emphasizes discontinuity." Yet, when many scholars come to study "revolutions," what they often end up studying are the much slower, long-term social changes that feed into an ostensibly sudden rupture with the past. Wallerstein even goes so far as to query the analytic utility of such a slippery and contradictory term (Wallerstein 2011b). At the very least, the study of a revolution should not be divorced from the formative events of preceding decades.<sup>1</sup>

Compounding this, Irish political and economic development, as Denis O'Hearn notes, occurred along a "path dependent process of globalization" (O'Hearn 2001: 15). Declan Kiberd has similarly suggested that Irish nationalists remained trapped within the very codes they sought to oppose (Kiberd 2009: 204).<sup>2</sup> The Irish revolution, such as it was, was also trapped with certain delineated codes and operated along pre-existing paths. There was a *certain* amount of radicalism, but this was tempered by a coterminous conservatism. As Fitzpatrick, the historian, and Kevin O'Higgins, the 1920s Irish Minister for Justice, have both suggested, this revolution was a markedly conservative event.<sup>3</sup> To understand why Ireland had a "conservative revolution" (a potentially oxymoronic term) requires placing the events of 1916-23 in a much broader historical and world-systemic context. What was gestating in the decades before 1912 or 1916 were market-driven economics, private property, an Irish variant of a privatised sense of selfhood; in other words, capitalist modernity. And already, well before 1916, Ireland and Irish identity were markedly affected by the country's status as a supplier of agricultural raw materials for British

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<sup>1</sup> In Kostick's *Revolution in Ireland*, his first chapter, on the "Prelude to Revolution," is dated 1913-1917. He begins, however, by tracing the country's socio-economics back to the Act of Union of 1801, thus more than tacitly recognising the slow pace of class-based histories.

<sup>2</sup> Kiberd says of Gerty McDowell and The Citizen, minor characters in Ulysses: "Gerty's problem... is rather like that of the nationalists in 'Cyclops': her rebellion is doomed because it is trapped in the very codes it opposes."

<sup>3</sup> Fitzpatrick concludes his analysis by stating: "if revolutions are what happen to wheels, then Ireland underwent a revolution between 1916 and 1922 [in which] social institutions were turned upside down, only to revert to full circle upon the establishment of the Irish Free State." More than fifty years earlier, Kevin O'Higgins famously asserted that "We were probably the most conservative minded revolutionaries that ever put through a successful revolution." *Dáil Debates*, ii, 1909 (1 March 1923). Quoted in Laffan(1985).

markets. The dominant currents of early twentieth-century Irish nationalism were products of this capitalist modernity on the periphery<sup>4</sup> of the British economy, and never broke from its strictures.

The problem with speaking of an “Irish Revolution” in the 1910s and 20s is much the same as that identified by Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski (1986) for a roughly contemporary Egypt:

In retrospect, the Egyptian Revolution of 1919 was far from being a revolution in the classic meaning of the term. Its leadership was largely drawn from the native Egyptian elite (albeit from newer, rurally based strata rather than the Ottoman-derived element that had dominated political life in the nineteenth century). It was primarily a political phenomenon, aiming at no socioeconomic transformation of class structure and as a result achieving none (the rural risings of 1919 were quickly repressed and were not repeated); the main economic aspiration of the nationalists was to seek to create a native Egyptian capitalist sector parallel to the foreign one that had dominated the economy to that time). Most important, even its political achievements were limited to a greater measure of (but by no means total) independence from Great Britain, which continued to maintain both military forces in the country and influence over Egyptian affairs. But to many Egyptians who participated in the Revolution of 1919, these limitations were either irrelevant or temporarily overlooked. At the time, Egyptians perceived it as a genuine revolution (Gershoni and Jankowski 1986: 40).

The dynamics identified by Gershoni and Jankowski are conceptually similar to those explored in this paper: the nationalist elite at the head of the Irish “revolution” represented the class interests of a slowly emerging and predominantly rural bourgeoisie, whose economic interests were tied to Ireland’s agrarian status. Like their Egyptian contemporaries they had a marked interest in ensuring that their political revolution never became a socio-economic one. Thus, their “revolution” never seriously challenged the country’s status within the world-economy. In this, Ireland did not buck any postcolonial trends. Perry Anderson has recently argued that in India, for

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<sup>4</sup> Ireland complicates the notions of periphery and semi-periphery in world-systems theory: it displays many characteristics of peripheral economies [a trend toward economic mono-culture, a mostly weak state] whilst also having a higher standard of leaving and relative democratic freedoms usually seen in core or semi-periphery states.

instance, “the motto of independence has invariably been: what empire has joined, let no man put asunder.” Anderson explains this both by recourse to the material interests of Nehru and the Congress party (“As a party, Congress was controlled by a coalition of rich farmers, traders and urban professionals, in which the weight of its agrarian bosses was greatest, and its policies reflected the interests of these groups, unconcerned with the fate of the poor.”) as well as something more diffuse: an Indian nationalist ideology produced by the colonial encounter itself. He talks of “the umbilical cord attaching the Congress regime of the post-independence years to the arrangements of the Raj” and identifies an “Anglophone provincialism” as being key elements here. As such, Anderson’s broad conclusion is that “There was no overthrow of the Raj, but a transfer of power by it to Congress as its successor” (Anderson 2013: 105-115). My contention is that something very similar happened in Ireland: not only was nationalist discourse heavily determined by the relationship with British rule but the Irish “revolution” was also strongly delimited by the economic and political “umbilical cord” linking Ireland to Britain and the broader world-system. What Ireland experienced in the years orbiting 1916 was “a revolution without a revolution.”

In seeking to understand Italy’s political and economic development, Antonio Gramsci espoused the idea of a “passive revolution,” something he also labelled “revolution without a revolution,” a slow change in the political order that avoids any rupture in social relations (Gramsci 1999: 250).

The “passive” aspect refers to the way challenges may be thwarted so that changes in production relations are accommodated within the current social formation. This might not be done in a “passive” way but refers to the attempt at “revolution” through state intervention or the inclusion of new social groups within the hegemony of a political order but without an expansion of mass control over politics (Morton 2003: 634).

This is a useful heuristic device for historical sociology. Drawing directly on Gramsci, Riley and Desai’s comparative study of Italy and India talks of passive revolution as “a revolutionary model of political organization and revolutionary political techniques... pressed into the service of a conservative modernization project” and “Specific to passive revolutions is the paradoxical combination of conservative aims and revolutionary means.” Moreover, “passive revolutions leave intact, and may even strengthen, the social and political power of pre-existing dominant classes” (Riley and Desai 2007, 816). The Irish events of 1916-22 certainly echo this; a new mass party rapidly came to prominence, armed militias attracted tens (if not hundreds) of thousands of

members, and populist politics were to the fore. Yet, the social order was not drastically altered, agrarian and labor agitation were undercut and ultimately suppressed, and the country's status in the world-economy remained largely the same. It was a (political) revolution without a (social) revolution. But it could be better to go even further, not just to redefine things along the lines of a "passive revolution" but perhaps to abandon the term "revolution" altogether. The "passive" part of Ireland's "passive revolution" highlights why "revolution," with its attendant notions of rupture and drastic change, can be unhelpful for fully understanding the events of 1916-22. Talk of "revolution" helps us to get at the popular mood in Ireland, but also blinds us to the deeper structures of Irish society and of Ireland's global status, which were not only unchanged by the "revolution," but were not seriously threatened.

Indeed, Jackie Smith and Dawn Wiest (2012:11) have recently shown how global structures of power "shape movements and their possibilities for challenging the social order, and the interactions of movements with states and interstate actors then transform the larger set of structures that form the stage on which social conflicts are expressed."<sup>5</sup> The Irish "revolution" occurred within a broader system of British power that ensured it would remain conservative. Scholars' continuing use of the analytical lens of "revolution" elides these larger questions of global power. Writing with Rachel Kutz-Flamenbaum, Smith (2010: 211-218) has also criticized the manner in which contemporary social science research "focuses on movements within particular states and frames conflicts largely within existing national (or diasporic) boundaries." According to Smith and Kutz-Flamenbaum, "The assumption that conflicts are bounded by national politics blinds the researcher to the ways these conflicts are shaped by a larger world system" and its attendant issues of political power. "Moreover, state-centric approaches ignore the fact that the national state can only exist within a larger system of states and institutions that recognise, legitimate and help to reinforce their authority and control over particular geographic regions."

These are problems familiar to Irish historiography. The scholar of nationalism John Hutchinson (1996) and the British imperial historian Stephen Howe (2000) have both labelled Irish revisionist historians "methodological nationalists," due to the manner in which they avoid comparative analyses and shy away from questioning the historicity and ontological reality of the Irish "nation."<sup>6</sup> The continued use of the analytic category of "revolution" represents a comparable

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<sup>5</sup> Smith and Wiest are here drawing on Terry Boswell & Christopher Chase-Dunn. *The Spiral of Capitalism and Socialism* (Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Using the same rhetoric as Howe and Hutchinson, Smith and Kutz-Flamenbam (2010: 218) state that "the 'methodological nationalism' that characterises a considerable amount of the social science literature... indicates a

problem. Viewing the events of 1916-22 as a revolution means accepting a nationalist narrative of a break with the past and a break with Britain. The use of this term imposes a singular narrative on a diverse set of events and thus subtly elides the competing political projects of the period. Many events that have been called a “revolution” are a mix of the radical conservative and all are experienced as a sudden rupture even if the temporal roots are far deeper; The analytic utility of this term, not only for the study of Irish history, is not always clear and as a scholarly tool “revolution” perhaps creates more problems than it solves.

For sure, the War of Independence was a culminating moment in a longer history of social change. But this resulted in a delineated widening of access to elite power rather than in a break with that power. It was a “revolution without a revolution.” Recognising this requires recognising a hidden Ireland, the underlying power dynamics of Irish society, rather than focusing on the conspicuous and the ubiquitous: military engagements, elections, and parliaments. *Who* ruled Ireland underwent some change as the Union was dissolved. *How* Ireland was ruled did not radically change.

In his politically charged account of *The Invention of the White Race*, Theodore Allen offers an intriguing alternative to more conventional chronologies of Irish historical development, in an analysis deserving of serious attention. With broad brush-strokes, Allen dissects the political relations between oppressors and their victims and, in seeking to understand the long-term structural dynamics of these unequal power-relations, he places much emphasis on what he calls “the intermediate social control stratum.” By this, he means an elite cadre within colonized and racially oppressed societies who act as a conduit for the political projects of the dominant colonizer or oppressor. The lack of such an Irish “intermediate social control stratum” was, Allen states, “the central problem of British rule in Ireland for more than two centuries” after the colonizing wave of the sixteenth century (Allen 2012: 70). This changed, however, in the aftermath of the 1798 Rebellion, an event that shook British complacencies in Ireland. The barring of Irish elites from political power “was a luxury that the British ruling class could no longer afford. *The resolution of the crisis would mean nothing less, and nothing more, than a change in the system of British colonial rule in Ireland from racial oppression to national oppression, by the incorporation of the Irish bourgeoisie in the intermediate buffer social control stratum*” (Allen 2012: 92, emphases in original).

In this context, Allen identifies a “détente with the Catholic hierarchy and bourgeoisie that was sprouting between the cracks of Protestant Ascendancy” and suggests that “Catholic Emancipation meant... in short, the formal admittance of propertied Catholics, although on a

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tendency of scholarship to remained within the statistical and conceptual confines (prisons?) of the modern national state.”

necessarily subordinate basis, into [Britain's] buffer social control stratum" (Allen 2012: 92-97). Allen's central programmatic claim is that "For the British colonial bourgeoisie, the categorical imperative was maintenance of the legislative union. If forced to it, they would be ready to abandon rule by religio-racial oppression in favour of admitting the Irish Catholic bourgeoisie into a role in the system of social control" (Allen 2012: 92-97). The central thrust of this paper is that accepting a limited set of the Irish Catholic bourgeoisie's demands (demands which were usually expressed in the new language of nationalism) meant abandoning the Union but ultimately was also the manner in which that Irish Catholic bourgeoisie were more fully incorporated into the capitalist world-system. The form and content of bourgeois Irish nationalism, I suggest, was heavily determined by this "system of social control" as leading nationalists devoted much energy to damping down anti-systemic politics. For much of the nineteenth century, Irish nationalists had worked to sublimate class tensions into an ostensibly cross-class nationalist project.

In a recent, highly innovative work of historical sociology, Anne Kane, focusing specifically on the Land War (1879-1882), argues that Irish national identity, as we currently understand that term, was in many ways a product of this period of intense agrarian agitation. Even more, she states that it was during this period that ideals of private property acquired a new, hegemonic status in Irish society. As Kane shows, during the earliest stages of the Land War, the demands of smallholding tenants drew on radically different ideas of property ownership than those held contemporaneously by "strong farmers," those with larger farms of fifty acres or more. Broadly speaking, the "strong farmers" believed in private property, the smallholders had not yet been *taught* the rules of private property, and the former looked with suspicion on the radical demands of the latter. By the end of the Land War, however, a certain amount of nationalist solidarity had been built up between small and large-farmers, and the idea of (relatively) inviolable private-property rights had been solidified in Ireland. Looking backwards and forwards at the longer history of Irish agrarianism, Kane concludes that the process that intensified during the Land War culminated with formal independence in 1922 (Kane 2011 1-29). Nationalism, in the Land War as in 1922, was a leading means for sublimating competing class interests within a homogenized (but at heart, bourgeois) vision of the "nation."

The path identified by Kane in the Land War certainly continued to be trudged in later decades. Fergus Campbell, studying the agrarian agitation of the 1890s, picks up on some remarkably familiar tropes. The Irish National League, successor to the Land League (suppressed during the Land War), adopted a constitution that "avoided advocating an agrarian policy that might alienate grazier support." The agrarian agitation of 1898 led to the founding of the United Irish League (UIL), a top-down organisation headed and controlled by William O'Brien, a wealthy

ex-MP. Though particularly active in the more impoverished west, its local leadership tended to come from relatively wealthier and more elite backgrounds. “Unlike the Land League, which the UIL self-consciously emulated in a number of fundamental ways, the new League did not commit serious crimes in order to achieve its objectives.” Nonetheless, the *perceived* radicalism of the UIL worried the IPP leadership, who were concerned that a focus on land redistribution, as Campbell says, “might alienate the support of the wealthy nationalist graziers of east Leinster.” In a process that did much to defang smallholders’ class concerns within the movement, the UIL were effectively integrated into the conservative IPP at the start of the twentieth century (Campbell 2005: 25-43).

Bourgeois Irish nationalism’s class biases continued to manifest themselves in some remarkably similar ways during the “revolution.” Denis O’Hearn (2001) has spoken of how Ireland remained trapped within a certain kind of capitalist path-dependency. This was no less the case in terms of how, even at the height of the supposed revolution, the interests of workers, smallholders and peasants continued to be suppressed in favour of a set of bourgeois interests masquerading as “the national interest.” Already during the Lockout, the bitter labor disputes of 1913, the Irish Republican Brotherhood’s *Irish Freedom* newspaper criticised socialism as a divisive ideology: “we wish, if at all possible, to heal breaches within the nation, to avert the war of class against class at a time when every class must stand together to save the nation, to reassert her independence, to rehabilitate our national life” (“Capital and Labour” 1913). As had long been the case, Irish nationalists continued to define their “nation” in narrow and exclusionary bourgeois terms. P.S. O’Hegarty (1924: 178-180), the co-editor of *Irish Freedom*, was certainly critical of socialists, seeing them as lazy and a threat to the nation, in general denouncing those who, he felt, put individual goals over supposedly shared national interests.

The IRA’s Dan Breen held to a similar view of the Labor candidate who stood against him in the Tipperary constituency during the 1922 general election (Breen: 1924: 254). He would later claim the Labour Party represented “a very poor type of manhood. They are one and all a gang of chancers with no interest in Ireland or the Irish people” (Breen 1966). Even Ernie O’Malley, a leading IRA figure who was not unsympathetic to left-wing politics, was critical of “extreme labour,” claiming “The Volunteer spirit in essentials was hostile to Labour, afraid that any attention to its needs or direction would weaken the one-sided thrust of force” (O’Malley: 1936: 59). On a personal level, he remembers “my annoyance at the convictions of purely revolutionary workers who stood outside the nationalist movement and a certain amusement at their arguments” (O’Malley: 1936: 144). Sinn Féin had already claimed to stand “less for a political party than for the Nation... Believing that the time has arrived when Ireland’s voice for the principle of untrammelled National self-determination should be heard above every interest of party or class,

Sinn Fein will oppose at the Polls every individual candidate who does not accept this principle” (Sinn Féin 1918). In 1921, the Sinn Féin-allied *Cumann Léigheachtaí an Phobhail* [Republican Lecture Group] issued a pamphlet on “the labour problem” which sought to present an image of aloofness from petty ideological squabbles, whilst still claiming strikes were the product of unions’ “selfish” demands for higher wages. The author also claimed “Labour... is like a virulent foreign element in the social system” and “whatever else we are, capitalist or worker or neither, we are all Irishmen interested beyond anything else in the welfare of our common country, and as an Irishman speaking to Irishmen I put it that these industrial conflicts, if continued, will inevitably impair, if not utterly destroy, our common country” (O’Ceileachar 1921).

This kind of thinking, obviously, did not represent the entire gamut of Irish nationalism. Leftist nationalists and republicans had long proved themselves adept at reworking the rhetoric of bourgeois nationalism. James Connolly’s *Labour in Irish History* had already posited the Irish nationalist return to sovereignty not only as a return to a glorious past, but also as the return to a lost Irish communal economics (Connolly 1919). Connolly employed a sense of historical time and a masculinist language of revival familiar to Irish nationalists. He claimed that socialism would be a return to “the Brehon laws of our ancestors” and was “the only principle by which the working classes can in their own turn emerge in the divinity of Freemen, with the right to live as men and not as mere profit-making machines for the service of others” (Markievicz 1925). Similarly, the Labour Party’s organ *The Watchword of Labour* drew on nationalist rhetoric when, during the War of Independence, it denounced the right-leaning *Irish Independent* as “Connolly’s Murderers” and “journalistic supporters of British rule in Ireland” (“Connolly’s Murderers Attack ‘Watchword,’ 1919).<sup>7</sup> In his study of socialist republicanism, Richard English devotes considerable attention to the contradictions inherent in left-wing nationalism, particularly the degree to which socialism, an ideology privileging the interests of the working class, sits uneasily with the cross-class unity ostensibly inherent to nationalism and Irish republicanism (English 1994). This is not inaccurate. Yet, it should also be said that the far less discussed, but far more prevalent “capitalist nationalism,” by far the stronger tendency within pre-Treaty Sinn Féin,<sup>8</sup> was also riddled with contradictions; it sought to promote an economic system based on individual self-interest but alongside a political system based on a supposed cross-class solidarity. During all this tumult, and as leftist ideas gained increased traction, the very real danger with socialist republicans was that they might expose these capitalist contradictions. Thus, leftists would have to be suppressed and

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<sup>7</sup> In the aftermath of the Easter Rising, the *Independent* infamously called for Connolly’s quick execution.

<sup>8</sup> “...characteristic of the party was a vote in the Naas Sinn Féin club on “Capital versus Labour from the Sinn Féin point of view.” Most of those present voted in favour of capital (Laffan 1999: 257).

their politics and concerns blocked by, and from, the harmonious narrative of Irish nationalism's fraternal unity. There would be no social or economic revolution.

The denunciations and dismissive attitudes of Breen or O'Hegarty reflected the more concrete actions taken against those who, in the midst of the crisis, seized land, went on strike, or formed soviets. A Sinn Féin manifesto condemning a spate of land seizures in Kerry, signed by leading party members Piaras Béasláí, Fionán Lynch and Austin Stack, declared that "The present time – when the Irish people are locked in a life and death struggle for freedom... is ill-chosen for the stirring up of strife amongst our fellow countrymen." Instead, signposting the later claims of post-1922 Irish politicians to be above petty ideological politics, the manifesto pushed for social politics to be fully removed from the nationalist agenda. "All our energies must be directed towards clearing out—not the occupier of this or that piece of land—but the foreigner who holds the Nation in his grip" (Sinn Féin 1920). Similarly, Art O'Connor, acting minister for agriculture, when intervening in a land dispute in Kerry in early 1920 felt that "the people confused license with liberty." As Laffan says, "his response was worthy of a Dublin Castle official" (1999: 315-316). Yet, even if land seizures and labor actions were never as radical as they might have appeared, there was widespread fear of them. As one official Dáil report concluded:

All this was a grave menace to the Republic. The mind of the people was being diverted from the struggle for freedom by a class war, and there was a likelihood that this class war might be carried into the ranks of the Republican Army itself, which was drawn in the main from the agricultural population and was largely officered by farmers' sons (Laffan: 1999: 315)

Conor Kostick, in his work on *Revolution in Ireland*, has successfully recovered the voices of those involved in land seizures and strikes. His account steps out of more conventional understandings of the War of Independence and Civil War, highlighting the serious ideological struggles that marked quotidian politics at this time. His work, however, is not without its problems. His claim that there was a "deep radicalisation" of the Irish working class between 1917 and 1923 probably overstates the depth of this change (Kostick 2009: 25). He relies on an essentially Leninist set of arguments to explain why this ostensibly radicalised working class did not prove more successful. A properly socialist vanguard, he argues, could have led the workers to victory (Kostick 2009: 47). The leaders of the Irish labor movement, Kostick says, had "no desire to play the role of Lenin or Trosky" (Kostick 2009: 150) and "the appearance of a Bolshevik-style party in Ireland had been smothered in the vital years of 1918 to 1920 more by the apparent radicalism of the labour leaders

than as a result of any structural considerations” (Kostick 2009: 157). This, of course, is to presume that the rank-and-file of the labor movement wanted a Bolshevik-style revolution, of which there is scant evidence. In fact, from the Land War onwards, conservative notions of private property had become increasingly dominant across rural Ireland. Timothy McMahon, for instance, has shown how a desire for private land-ownership among those “near the bottom of the social ladder” was part of the “rising expectations” of late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century Ireland (McMahon 2010). And Donald Sassoon, in his panoramic history of the European Left has critiqued the kind of analysis in which Kostick engages, which tends to ignore deeper (and more politically awkward) structural questions in favor of the simpler suggestion that for revolutions to succeed, all that is needed are “good and consistent socialists.” (Sassoon 2010: 63) Against Kostick, and for precisely structural reasons, it is strongly questionable whether rural Ireland was genuinely ripe for a Bolshevik-style revolution.

Already as early as de Valera’s electoral victory in 1917, the Catholic clergy (not usually known for their radicalism) had begun to swing behind Sinn Féin.<sup>9</sup> Kostick astutely notes that the First Dáil’s “radical stance with respect to Britain was accompanied by an outlook that in many other respects was conservative and, above all, Catholic” (Kostick 2009: 50). Moreover, he identifies Sinn Féin’s “philosophy of sublimating social differences in their model of an Irish nation” (Kostick 2009: 69). A major concern of this nationalist elite was to prevent any kind of substantive change in the social or economic order. Just as the word “nation” serves to hide a number of competing concerns, so also “revolution” imposes a singular narrative on a diverse set of events. Kostick argues that it is “clear that nationalist leaders such as Griffith and Collins were dealing both with opposition from Britain *and* aspirations from below which they saw as destabilising a future Irish society” (Kostick 2009: 5). What Wallerstein (2011b) identifies in the French Revolution, that there were actually two revolutions (one bourgeois and one anti-systemic), could also be tentatively applied to Ireland, with the important modification that the “anti-systemic” forces remained quite weak and the bourgeois “revolutionaries” were dedicated to conserving the prevailing socio-economic order.

As agrarian agitation increased during the War of Independence, prominent landowners flocked to the Republicans seeking protection. Sinn Féin, acting through their newly founded parliament, the Dáil, “was desperate to prevent ‘selfishness’ from breaking up the unity of the national struggle and equally anxious to prove its credibility with the landowners.... The point of the Dáil’s activities was to prove to the landlords and big business that *they could be relied on to*

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<sup>9</sup> Though Kostick points out that Sinn Féin’s membership were not universally supportive of this clerical support (Kostick 2009: 32-33).

*maintain the usual law and order.*" (Kostick 2009: 112-113, emphases added). As one piece of Sinn Féin electoral propaganda frankly noted: "It has been said that a Free Ireland means an Army and Navy. That is so. It has also been said that this means Red Ruin and Revolution... These are the facts. A Free Ireland does not mean Revolution: It means peace and prosperity... A Free Ireland means—not Red Ruin—but the salvation from Red Ruin" (de Valera 1917). Sinn Féin's leadership, whatever about their erstwhile radicalism, were themselves part of the same native bourgeoisie crystallising in post-Famine Ireland. For long-term structural reasons, it would be their class interests that would define the scope of this "passive revolution."

In the same vein, it is not clear how radical a political or economic break Sinn Féin sought from Britain. In a 1918 interview with the *Christian Science Monitor*, which Sinn Féin later reissued as a pamphlet, Eamon de Valera claimed that the Irish sought "to be free... not to have a master." At the same time, though, he claimed that once the "enforced partnership" with England was ended, a new friendship of equals, of "independent neighbours" could emerge, "each respecting the rights and interests of the other" (de Valera 1918). The implied assumption was that the country's socio-economic structure would not change, rather there would just be a change in terms of who had the responsibility of managing Ireland. Indeed, the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 left much untouched. The northeast corner of the island would remain a part of the United Kingdom, British troops would continue to be stationed in Ireland (on both sides of the border), and the Irish state would continue to contribute to the British national debt.

Nevertheless, defending the Treaty in which he had been so closely involved, Arthur Griffith, spoke of it as a "Treaty of equality," the first official document to recognise Ireland's equality with England (Griffith 1922). Even de Valera's much-debated *Document No. 2*, a proposed alternative to the Treaty, accepted partition as well as the country's continued status within the Empire. De Valera was probably being more accurate than he intended when he frankly asserted, in September 1922, "I must be the heir to generations of conservatism. Every instinct of mine would indicate that I was meant to be a dyed-in-the-wool Tory or even a Bishop, rather than the leader of a Revolution" (de Valera 1922). Declan Kiberd has suggested that Irish nationalists remained trapped within the very codes they sought to oppose. Irish nationalist ideology, for all its anti-British rhetoric, was itself a product of British rule and British influence. Sinn Féin, whatever about their claims to represent a supra-ideological "national" interest, were inherently ideological and advocated an agrarian-based and essentially capitalist political project. What they ultimately sought was the right to run the socio-economic entity called "Ireland" along capitalist lines and within a still British-centric world-system. As Wallerstein says:

The interstate system is not a mere assemblage of so-called sovereign states. It is a hierarchical system with a pecking order that is stable but changeable. That is to say, slow shifts in rank order are not merely possible, but historically normal. Inequalities that are significant and firm but are not immutable are precisely the kind of processes that lead to ideologies able to justify high rank but also to challenge low rank. Such ideologies we call nationalisms (Wallerstein 1991: 82).

“Nationalism” was the ideological means for understanding Ireland’s status within the broader capitalist world-system. But more than that, Ireland’s semi-peripheral economic status also had a major determining role on the ideological form and content of Irish nationalism. This is the rub of the issue: the main currents of Irish nationalism were too bound up with the country’s global politico-economic status to be able to (or really want to) imagine a revolution in that status.

Some in the Irish labor movement did seek to oppose all this. The famous Limerick Soviet, for instance, took control of that city in April 1919. Two years later, workers at the Cleeves’ Bakery in nearby Bruree took control of their factory and declared it a soviet: “Bruree Mills and Bakery are now the property of the workers. The mill and shop are open for the sale of bread, flour and meal. It is hoped to reduce prices and do away with profiteering within a day. By order of the workers.” There was something ephemeral about this, however. The Bruree soviet only lasted nine days after which “work resumed as normal” (Kostick 2009: 174-175). The Limerick Soviet lasted all of two weeks: “British authority had been shaken but remained intact” and, according to Kostick’s Leninist appraisal, “the workers fall back into passivity” (Kostick 2009: 86).

It is more accurate to say that those who went against the dominant capitalist trends of Irish nationalism failed to develop a coherent ideological alternative. Even some of the ostensibly radical soviets, for instance, still operated within a discourse and praxis of private property and wage labor. The first “soviet,” at an asylum in Monaghan (close to what would soon be the border with Northern Ireland), merely sought a four-shilling pay raise. Their “soviet” lasted twelve days and ended when that pay-raise was secured. Of the various strikes discussed by Kostick, many clearly did not have radical intentions and several ended within a single day (Kostick 2009: 116-117). Kostick himself recognises that, while there would be over a hundred “soviets” declared in Ireland between 1919 and 1920, “The news coming from Russia was insufficient for a full understanding of how a soviet functioned” (Kostick 2009: 74). Moreover, and more important for the focus of this paper, it is worth recalling that bourgeois nationalist politics remained dominant during this period and the new political space that benefitted land agitators and striking workers

was the product of the nationalist struggle. Nationalist thinking and language continued to predominate. Terence Brown, for instance, has noted how even “as intelligent a social commentator as Peadar O’Donnell,” a strong supporter of rural agitation, couched his radical economic programme within classically nationalist terms (Brown 1985: 94). Perhaps mirroring how Irish nationalists remained trapped within British codes, so also anti-systemic figures like O’Donnell remained trapped within nationalist political codes. O’Donnell would later write about the regret he and other veterans of the War of Independence felt about the lack of a social revolution during those years, and how they may have even contributed to its suppression. His perception, mixing nationalist and class-based shibboleths, was that “Fenian Ireland, the Ireland of the poor” had approached “the very doorstep of a struggle for power” but “failed to achieve a leadership to correspond with its needs and was driven back in confusion” (O’Donnell 1963: 19-20 & 32).

Working-class agitation was never as organised or as radical as Kostick suggests. Certainly, though, *the fear of radical social change* had an impact on the nationalist leadership; the emerging nationalist elite backed away from a full confrontation with the British partly out of a fear that it would unleash more subversive dynamics in Irish politics. Additionally, the form and content of Irish nationalism had long been influenced by British ideas of economics, state formation and social organization and the British never had too much to fear from the likes of Arthur Griffith or even de Valera. Consciously or not, Griffith or de Valera ultimately acted as defenders of a British-centric economic system, suppressing rural agitation and leftist workers’ movements. Mainstream Irish nationalists, even at the height of this “revolution,” remained a kind of “intermediate social control stratum.”

At the eve of the War of Independence, Kevin O’Higgins, rapidly emerging as a leading figure in Sinn Féin and later to be a dominant figure in post-1922 politics, told his interrogators in the Special Crimes Court that “most of us who support Sinn Féin in these days are out only for the independence of Ireland and not necessarily for the destruction of the British Empire; our idea would be if the British Empire behaved itself” (Regan 1999: 84). Sinn Féin, of course, was never a unified force. Even at the height of its electoral successes, the party continued to hold a diversity of political viewpoints. Moreover, O’Higgins could be accused of playing to the choir here, telling his prosecutors what they wanted to hear. Nonetheless, he was still hinting at a deeper conservative imperative within the party and the “revolution.” A desire to dampen down anything that would undermine the prevailing socio-economic order was a major concern of Sinn Féin’s leadership throughout the War of Independence. O’Higgins himself spilt much ink on the dangers to the “social fabric” (O’Higgins 1922; Regan 1999: 86).

As early as 1919, the Lord Lieutenant in Ireland, John French, was moving away from a policy of trying to suppress Sinn Féin, instead arguing that the partition of Ireland with a moderate Sinn Féin rule in the South was tolerable: “The British administration had come to appreciate the divergence between the relatively conservative Sinn Féin activists, such as Arthur Griffith, and those more willing to carry out military activities... The more the movement in the South was led by the conservative Catholic middle class, the less it would demand of Britain” (Kostick 2009: 63). Lloyd George may have brazenly informed the British Parliament that Irish sovereignty could not be allowed, but also, as Kostick points out, the British prime-minister “was more sensitive to the nuances of nationalist politics in Ireland, at least to the extent that his experience with the followers of John Redmond [the leader of the IPP] had taught him that there was a relatively moderate wing of the movement *with whom it might be possible to do business.*” Thus, though the British were considering a military dictatorship, they “also sought out possible compromises. It is for this reason that, on his return to Ireland at the end of 1920 [after an American fund-raising tour], British Intelligence did its best prevent harm coming to de Valera; they adopted a similar approach to Arthur Griffith” (Kostick 2009: 96-98, emphases added).

The range of British interests and imperial political objectives during the Irish War of Independence, Treaty negotiations, and Civil War remains a frustratingly understudied field within mainstream “revisionist” historiography, a lacuna that says a lot about revisionism’s unwitting ideological assumptions. Nonetheless, as John Regan has quite reasonably stated “His Majesty’s British ministers had not won a world war to lose a local one on the issue of the Crown in the backyard of the Empire” (Regan 1999, 374). At the 1919 May Day Parade in Glasgow, Constance Markievicz, a leftist veteran of the Easter Rising, addressed 150,000 workers (Nairn 1997: 33). In the era of the Red Clydeside, the British elite cannot have been enamoured with these more radical strands of Irish nationalism and the possibility that they would spread across the Irish Sea. The Anglo-Irish Treaty, signed at the end of 1921, kept Ireland within the Empire, partitioned off the industrialised north-east of the island, and helped to pour water on any radical aspirations. It was, Regan concludes, “an imperial settlement and can only be understood within the pink swathes of that global context” (Regan 1999: 374). There were profound power-disparities between the British state and the Irish rebels, which partly explains the British-centric content of the Treaty. But more than that, it is important to give due focus to the “much greater consensus” identified by Regan, “over the rights of private property, the rights of the private citizen, and Church-party-state relations” (Regan 1999: 375). Ireland had long been an agrarian periphery of the British economy. Maintaining Ireland as a pliant source of raw materials was an integral part of this capitalist project. This was not, as Irish nationalists would later claim, a devious plot by British policy-makers to

prevent Irish economic success. Rather, it was a much more impersonal function of Ireland's continuing status in a broader economic and political system; "the trend in the periphery was towards monoculture" (Wallerstein 2011a:102), and Irish people remained primarily the producers of agricultural products for British markets.

Much like Lampedusa's famous assessment of the Italian *Risorgimento* [itself the original subject of Gramsci's "revolution without a revolution"], *everything had to change, in order for everything to stay the same*. That the Union came to an end did not mean the end of conservative political thinking:

The responsiveness of the newly independent Irish state to the interests established by capitalist colonial rule and its anxiety to preserve and enhance those interests were manifested from the beginning. A major concern of the newly independent state was to stress that though the flag and the anthem had changed, though the language used on some official occasions had become Gaelic, and though the seat of legislation had moved from London to Dublin; despite these changes, the content of the legislation was substantially the same. It was very much "business as usual" in independent Ireland. It was "freedom from" rather than "freedom for" (Crotty 1986: 71).

The Irish nationalist leadership tended toward the economically conservative and valorised a private-property-based agrarianism, the very commercial form that reified the country's semi-peripheral status. Nineteen-Twenty-Two brought little in the way of substantive change in the Irish social-order or economics. The first Free State government, under the leadership of W.T. Cosgrave and the pro-Treaty *Cumann na nGaedheal* [The Irish Organization], remained wedded to British markets and British orthodoxies, as a number of scholars have noted (McCabe 2011; Regan 1999: 146-147). In 1920s Ireland, agriculture continued to employ over half the workforce, and accounted for eighty-six per cent of all the Free State's exports (Dooley 2004: 4). And ninety-eight per cent of these exports, worth £51.8 million in total, went to Great Britain and Northern Ireland. *Cumann na nGaedheal*'s economic policies were tailored to this situation (Dunphy 1995: 20-21). De Valera and his *Fianna Fáil* [Soldiers of Irish Destiny] party, in power after 1932, did try to change this, engaging in a tariff war with Britain, the so-called Economic War (1932-38). It ultimately did little to change the country's position within the broader world-system. As J.J. Lee

has pointed out “in 1937, despite the Economic War, Ireland still depended on Britain to take 91 per cent of her exports” (Lee 1989: 187).

It is telling that neither of the two dominant parties in post-1922 Ireland were quick to abandon the ideas of Irish privatised agrarian economics. Cosgrave promoted agriculture over all else, arguing it was the “spring and fertiliser of many other forms of industry *natural to an agricultural country such as this is*” (Regan 1999: 146, emphases added). Even de Valera, who drew on a more popular political base and sought to end Ireland’s peripheral economic status, sought to do so primarily via agriculture, the very sector that reinforced the country’s economic “servitude,” rather than through rapid and heavy industrialization, as other developmentalist states would seek to do in the twentieth century. Indeed, in a recent work that seeks to understand Irish historical development in the context of world-systems analysis, Maurice Coakley has spoken of the “limits of independence” in Ireland (Coakley 2012: 155-158). This could be expanded upon by speaking about the limits of an Irish nationalism whose ideological form and content was so strongly determined by the country’s gradual modernisation on the agrarian semi-periphery of the world-system.<sup>10</sup> Even at the height of the “revolution,” Irish nationalism remained something of an “intermediate social control stratum,” albeit acting on behalf of a harder to define capitalist orthodoxy, rather than the easier to pin down British rule.

### Conclusion

For those at the centre of contemporary Irish politics, as with other anti-colonial nationalists, discussions like this were probably irrelevant. The events of 1916 to 1923 were experienced as a “genuine revolution.” The question of whether it was a revolution is intimately linked to the categories of analysis used to understand these events. The vast majority of Irish historians have understood events from the Easter Rising to the end of the Civil War through the prisms of the “nation” and the “nation-state.” Moreover, they have often adopted a micro-historical focus.<sup>11</sup> Drawing on Fernard Braudel’s view that “*histoire événementielle*” [event-dominated or episodic history] can be “dust,” Immanuel Wallerstein notes that such a micro-historical focus can act as

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<sup>10</sup> Mike Cronin has intriguingly called Ireland’s situation after 1922 one of ‘Informal Empire’. His claim that *Cumann na nGaedheal*’s economic policies “stressed orthodoxy over ideology,” however, confuses the issue and elides the degree to which capitalist orthodoxy was, and is, highly ideological. This was not ‘post-treaty pragmatism’, as Cronin claims, but the construction of a reinforced hegemony post-1922 (Cronin 2000).

<sup>11</sup> Commenting on the micro-histories favoured by Irish historians, Regan says that “In these approaches—local, personal, intimate—the greater political forces at play—abstract, impersonal, universal—too easily can go overlooked... Rather than liberating us this approach may be limiting, even voyeuristic... It also marginalises ideology as a motivational factor” (Regan 2013: 210-211).

dust in a double sense: “that it spoke about ephemeral phenomena; and that it got into our eyes, preventing us from seeing the real underlying structures” (Wallerstein 2004: 15).<sup>12</sup> With this kind of thinking in mind, this paper has sought to use these “underlying structures” (class, ideology, Ireland’s status within capitalism’s global division of labor) as its primary categories of analysis. The macro-level narrative that results departs markedly from the story of a revolution in early twentieth century Ireland. For sure, it is a narrative that ignores some specific nuances, but historiographically is the general thrust not more important than potentially ephemeral finer details?

## About the Author

Aidan Beatty holds a doctorate in international history from the University of Chicago. His first book, *Masculinity and Power in Irish Nationalism, 1884-1938* will be published this summer by Palgrave-Macmillan, as part of their *Genders and Sexualities in History* series. He is currently a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies and a Scholar-in-Residence at the School of Canadian Irish Studies, at Concordia University in Montreal.

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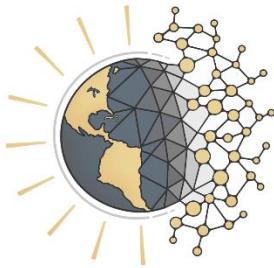
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<sup>12</sup> Braudel seems to have held to a different definition, and thus more positive view, of the ‘dust’ of history: ‘little facts which do, it is true, by infinite repetition, add up to form linked chains. Each of them represents the thousands of others that have crossed the silent depth of time and *endured*’ (Braudel 1981: 560). Nonetheless, Wallerstein’s point holds true.

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## Contesting a World-Constitution?

### Anti-systemic movements and constitutional forms in Ireland, 1848-2008

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### Abstract

*Recent accounts of constitutional development have emphasised commonalities among diverse constitutions in terms of the transnational migration of legal institutions and ideas. World-systems analysis gives critical expression to this emergent intellectual trajectory. Since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, successive, international waves of constitution-making have tended to correspond with decisive turning points in the contested formation of the historical capitalist world-system. The present article attempts to think through the nature of this correspondence in the Irish context. Changes to the Irish constitution, I suggest, owed to certain local manifestations of anti-systemic movements within the historical capitalist world-system and to constitution-makers' attempts to contain—militarily, politically and ideologically—these movements' democratic and egalitarian ideals and practices. Various configurations of the balance of power in Irish society between “national” (core-peripheral) and “social” (capital-labor/“other”) forces crystallised in constitutional form. Thus far, conservative and nationalist constitutional projects have tended to either dominate or incorporate social democratic and radical ones, albeit a process continually contested at critical junctures by civil society and by the organized left, both old and new.*

**Keywords:** Constitution-making; Ireland; Globalization; Anti-Systemic Movements



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Constitutions feature prominently in the struggle between the “spirits” of Davos and Porto Alegre over the future of the capitalist world-system (See Wallerstein, 2011).<sup>1</sup> The strengthening of non-majoritarian decision-making arenas, notably constitutional and treaty-based courts, is a function of the former spirit. From *Laval* in the European Court of Justice to *Citizens United* in the U.S. Supreme Court and beyond, judicial activism in the service of corporate power proliferates (Ewing 2012; Hirsch 2007).<sup>2</sup> Conversely, those movements seeking to make the world more democratic and egalitarian have turned to popular constitution-making assemblies to institute alternatives to neoliberalism, including socio-economic rights, ecological protections and decentralized decision-making. Initiatives along these lines in Bolivia and Ecuador were repeated in Iceland following the 2007 financial crisis (King 2013; Meuwese 2013).

The contemporary prominence of constitutions is unsurprising. Historically, new constitutional forms have emerged in the wake of exceptional circumstances, their framers generally seeking to endow newly emergent regimes with authority (Elkins, Ginsburg and Melton 2009). The world’s earliest written constitutions, such as those documented by Aristotle in Greece in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C., typically delineated the distribution of authority within a political community. Although sometimes misleading as a guide to practice, these “power maps” broadly set out the formal rules, functions and institutions of government (Duchacek 1973: 1). From the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, as the Age of Revolutions swept Europe and the Americas, constitutions were re-imagined to act as a limit to the arbitrary power of rulers, thereby substituting “a government of laws” for “a government of men” (Thornhill 2013: 196).

Considering the ensuing era, Jon Elster (1995: 368) has described seven “waves” of constitution-making emanating from a number of seismic, sometimes widely experienced, crises. These include: (1) the late eighteenth century constitutions of the post-revolutionary United States, Poland, and France; (2) the 1848 revolutionary constitutions of Europe; (3) the post-World War One constitutions of “new” European nation-states; (4) the post-World War Two constitutions of Japan, Germany and Italy; (5) the post-decolonization constitutions of Africa, Asia and South America; (6) the mid-1970s constitutions of newly democratized Southern Europe and (7) the post-1989 constitutions of post-communist Central and Eastern Europe. Remarkably, these constitutional waves correspond with significant turning points in the contested formation of the

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<sup>1</sup> For further development of the ideas presented here, see Thomas Murray, 2016. *Contesting Economic and Social Rights in Ireland: Constitution, State, and Society 1848-2016*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>2</sup> *Laval Un Partneri Ltd v Svenska Byggnadsarbetareförbundet* [2008] IRLR 160; *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, 558 U.S. (2010).

historical capitalist world-system (Arrighi 1994; Wallerstein 2004). This article attempts to think through the nature of this correspondence in Ireland.<sup>3</sup>

The work falls into three parts. Part one theorizes the relationship between constitutional development and the world-system. Key changes in the world's constitutions, coinciding with what Duncan Kennedy (2006) has periodized as the globalization of "classic" (1850-1930), "social" (1900-c.1970) and "neoformal" (c.1945 onwards) legal thought, are traced to the shifting fortunes of anti-systemic movements from 1848 onwards. *Bunreacht na hÉireann* (Irish: the Constitution of Ireland), I suggest, had a dialectical relationship to Ireland's incorporation into the historical capitalist world-system and to concomitant socio-political struggles over this evolving process. Various configurations of the balance of power in Irish society between "national" (core-peripheral) and "social" (capital-labor, but also inclusive of "other" feminist, youth, anti-racist and anti-homophobic currents) forces crystalized in different constitutional forms at different times (See Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 2011). Constitutional change or stasis resulted from established elites' attempts to contain—militarily, politically and ideologically—anti-systemic movements' ideals and practices.

Part two outlines Ireland's semi-peripheral constitutional development between 1848 and 1945. Over this period, Ireland resembled postcolonial peripheries insofar as popular, anti-systemic mobilizations adopted "national" rather than "social" trajectories. Constitution-makers in 1922 were thus free to reproduce "classic" political and market institutions inherited from the British Empire, including an enlightened conservative mode of conceding reforms to preserve a semi-peripheral economy from its worst excesses. Similarly, in 1937, the "social" form of constitutionalism adopted did not fundamentally change inherited political or market institutions, but instead prioritized creating a "native" or Catholic family law regime (See Chatterjee 1994; Lentin 1998). In 1922 and 1937, constitution makers registered and reproduced this conservative balance of core-peripheral and capital-labor relations, most notably in their determined exclusion of social constitutional forms that envisaged direct state intervention in economic production and welfare redistribution.

Part three traces Ireland's semi-peripheral constitutional development between 1945 and 2008. The country re-incorporated into a now U.S.-led world-system, advancing a state developmental project dependent on attracting multinational capital flows from the 1960s onwards before increasingly abandoning that project's social or redistributive content after the neoliberal turn of the 1980s. Anti-systemic struggles transformed and fragmented. Post-68 social, youth and feminist movements' rejection of Catholic social norms governing family and sexuality occurred

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<sup>3</sup> "Ireland" is generally used here to refer to the twenty-six counties of the Republic of Ireland. Depending on the political context, this territory has also been designated the Irish Free State, Eire, the Irish Republic and Ireland.

alongside organized labor-led conflicts over the expansion and subsequent removal of “social” limits to the market. Elite political actors negotiated Ireland’s transformation by relocating both market and family law conflicts to the non-majoritarian, expert domain of judicial review and EU treaty formation. Neoformal modes of legal thought, invoking abstract but positively enacted values embedded in domestic constitutions and international treaties, helped to legitimate this process and its results.

Diverse but limited changes to the Irish Constitution occurred through amendment via popular referendum and through judicial review. The Irish Courts generally reproduced “classic” constitutional forms, emphasising individualism, anti-statism, and “negative liberties” (including private property rights) ahead of communitarian norms, the interests of the “common good” or “positive” rights to welfare. Nevertheless, neoformal “human rights” conflicts have been fought in Irish and European courts by or on behalf of women, children, prisoners, gays, Travellers, asylum seekers, the disabled and the transgendered among others. These groups have successfully combined litigation with civil society activism to challenge repressive norms and expand collective freedoms. After the 2007 crisis, neoliberalism and associated modes of legal thought remain hegemonic. Their rapidly reduced and declining legitimacy, however, presents opportunities for anti-systemic movements as well as for more democratic, more egalitarian constitutional projects.

### **Co-constitutive Transformation: Law, Society and History**

We might divide the numerous works addressing constitutional development into “formalist” and “instrumentalist” accounts (Bourdieu 1987). Towards the formalist pole are those who consider constitutions to be autonomous from society and see in constitutional law self-contained principles developed through formal reasoning. Such jurisprudential analyses comprise the majority of recently published research on constitutions (Stone Sweet 2011). Towards the instrumentalist pole, conversely, are those who view constitutional law as registering and reproducing society’s prevailing values, institutions or interests. Cultural contextualists examine whether constitutions are congruent with broader social norms. Functional accounts emphasize how constitutions relate to a wider, often pre-existing institutional context and underline the relationship between constitutions, state-building and state legitimacy. Finally, interest-based accounts emphasize the wider social relations or constellations of power that determine constitutional development.

Collectively, this body of scholarship’s theoretical assumptions are questionable. On the one hand, formalist and culturalist accounts often accord the law primacy to other social phenomena and assume the state to be a neutral site of contestation between competing interests, thereby misrecognising the violent, “de-sacralised” nature of state practices (Congost 2003). On the other, in dismissing as “ideological,” “superstructural” or otherwise “epiphenomenal” the

structure of constitutional forms, functionalist and interest-based accounts risk emptying their analyses of the specific role of the legal field in the reproduction of those power relations that they claim to reveal (Fine 1985). Ultimately, the central point of contention here — the law's autonomy within society — cannot be resolved *a priori* but must itself be interrogated in terms of its emergence from particular historical conditions and previous social struggles (Bourdieu 1987: 815).

The field's dominant methodologies are also problematic. Traditionally, constitutional studies used single-country case-studies to the detriment of wider comparison (Hirschl 2007). While comparative constitutional studies are now resurgent, the problem with both single and multiple case-study approaches is that the hermetic isolation of nation-states remains assumed. Scholars thus tend to attribute to internal dynamics changes happening in strictly analogous ways in other jurisdictions (Kennedy 2006: 25). Recently, alternative “global” accounts of constitutional development have emerged, emphasising commonalities among diverse constitutions in terms of the transnational migration of constitutional ideas (Tushnet 2009: 3-17). A world-systems analysis of constitutional development gives critical expression to this emergent intellectual trajectory, potentially resolving its outstanding theoretical and methodological problems in a more coherent analytic synthesis.

The present analysis thus accords constitutions neither primacy nor epiphenomenality. Rather, by critiquing and synthesising the various insights of both formalist and instrumentalist analyses, it seeks to account for the development of constitutional forms in terms of their forming part of “a rich totality of many determinations and relations” (Marx 1996a: 146). Specifically, it is considered possible here to acknowledge the production of constitutional norms and discourses as part and parcel of wider legal and cultural transformations, while nevertheless insisting on understanding these developments within an overall frame of world-systemic inquiry, emphasising the development of the economic and inter-state world-system and anti-systemic politics (Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 2011: 30; see also Harvey, 1989: 355).

When considering this connection, it seems necessary to emphasize the manner in which the world-system of historical capitalism combined two key processes: the formation of an economic world-system and the formation of an inter-state world-system (Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 2011: 30-3).<sup>4</sup> This world-system produced a number of crucial antagonisms and corresponding anti-systemic movements, which may be divided, for analytical purposes only, into

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<sup>4</sup> In terms of the former, “core” regions of world capitalism, characterised by skilled, capital-intensive production, came to subordinate the economies of “peripheral” regions. Concomitantly, the inter-state system’s emergence was central to these processes, providing security of labor-power, property and trade as well as opening up new markets, colonies and ecologies to exploitation.

“social” and “national” tendencies.<sup>5</sup> Over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, rulers’ concessions to and, later, the triumph of popular, organized social and national movements underpinned the emergence of the modern nation-state, combining representative democracy with social reforms. Similarly, this shifting balance of core-periphery and anti-systemic relations crystallized in the various constitutional forms emerging in the course of successive waves of constitution-making.

In this regard, the critical legal studies scholar, Duncan Kennedy (2006), has forwarded an important periodization and geographical understanding of three overlapping “globalizations” of “classic” (1850-1930), “social” (1900-c.1970) and “neoformal” (c.1945 onwards) law and legal thought, each globalization understood as providing a broadly shared conceptual or justificatory vocabulary of socio-legal change (and not a one-size-fits-all model of law reform). Here, we might similarly distinguish the contested development of classic, social and neoformal forms of constitutionalism. In contrast to Kennedy’s emphasis on Weberian rationalization processes, however, I wish to foreground the importance of anti-systemic struggles and movements to socio-legal transformation. In this manner, world-systems analysis not only incorporates the transnational nature of nation-states’ constitutional transformations but more usefully accounts for their timing as well.

### **Constitutional Forms in the World-System: Classic, Social and Neoformal**

Briefly stated, “classic” constitutional forms (1850-1930) co-emerged with the rapid development of the British Free Trade cycle of accumulation. In the wake of the 1848 Revolutions, classic constitutions registered wider “national” movement influences and claimed an organic unity between the state’s fundamental law and the nation’s essence or *geist*. Independence movements in the Habsburg, Ottoman, French and British Empires as well as unification advocates in Italy and Germany explicitly identified constitution-making with nation-state building (Thornhill 2013: 250). Concomitantly, the widespread emergence of new forms of labor, factory workers in newly industrialising cores and farm workers in cash-cropping peripheries, stimulated the development of particular legal forms, notably the prioritization of contract law as well as of the individual as the central juristic subject (Kennedy 2006: 36). Classic constitutions thus tended to register the primacy of private over public law and of property and contract. Politically, the democratic component of “national sovereignty” and “basic rights” forwarded in these constitutional projects

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<sup>5</sup> “Social” antagonisms emerged between landed and landless in predominantly agrarian, peripheral societies and between capital and wage-labor in predominantly industrial, core societies. Concomitantly, a series of “national” antagonisms emerged in the course of inter-state contestations, principally between a national bourgeoisie and the imperial metropole.

was strictly limited. The French Constituent Assembly of 1848 most clearly illustrated this (Marx 1996b). Initial drafts fused classic, liberal rights of property, free belief, education, and equality of access to public office with material rights to employment and decent living conditions. The “Party of Order’s” brutal suppression of the Parisien workers, however, dictated the latter provisions’ eradication.

Social constitutionalism (1900-1970) coincided with the decline of British hegemony, the ascent of anti-systemic movements and the associated development of state capacities. Proponents of “social legal thought” redefined law as a purposive activity, thereby providing a justificatory vocabulary for state intervention to meet societal needs and to respond to collective, interdependent problems, including war, mass unemployment, urbanization, as well as financial regulation (Kennedy 2006: 48). Public law now came to delimit private law while both international and domestic law regimes provided for increasing state intervention. In core countries, this took the form of legalising universal social insurance and need-based entitlements; in peripheries, labor and land reforms. Importantly, social constitutions retained classic constitutional rights, including guarantees of property and contract. Politically, the overarching goal was “class-abatement,” limiting the appeal of revolutionary groups, particularly in the wake of the 1917 Russian Revolution, and preserving class-rule by means of limiting social polarization and ensuring social mobility (Marshall 1950: 32). Comparable strategies underpinned the social provisions of the Mexican constitution (1917), the *Wohlfahrtstaat* principles of Germany’s Weimar constitution (1919) and Roosevelt’s proposals to introduce a second bill of socio-economic rights to the U.S. constitution in the early 1940s (Sunstein 2004; Thornhill 2013: 287).

Post-World War Two, the emergent U.S. Free Enterprise cycle of accumulation era occasioned the globalization of a third, hybrid mode of law and legal thought, “public law neoformalism” (1945 - ). For three decades, core countries witnessed unprecedented levels of economic and social development, a phenomenon commonly attributed to diverse forms of state intervention to ensure full employment, growth and citizens’ welfare, founded on the class compromise between capital and organized labor (Harvey 2007: 10). In both cores and peripheries, political elites faced with conflicting pressures of tradition and of modernization—in both market and family law—shifted resulting disputes away from the domain of electoral politics and turned to the judiciary to resolve them instead (Kennedy 2006: 70). Constitutional courts’ case-loads increasingly shifted from traditional business and property disputes towards important civil, political and socio-economic rights conflicts. In the United States, for instance, the Warren and Burger Supreme Courts introduced significant precedents concerning race and gender equality as well as criminal due process and electoral fairness (McKay 2009: 343-50). Public law neoformalism offered a justificatory discourse for this disruptive mode of juridical activity,

enabling actors to invoke “supposedly transcendent but also positively enacted values in constitutions or treaties,” whether classic or social norms, to justify changing the status quo (Kennedy 2006: 64).

The role of constitutional courts became even more significant as the U.S.-led cycle of accumulation underwent a profound crisis in the mid-1970s. Given the associated transformation of class forces, particularly the decomposition of organized labor as a class for itself and the ascendancy of corporate and financial power, a specifically “new” or neoliberal constitutionalism came to prominence within the broader “neoformal” mode of law and legal thought. In the post-1989 era of globalization, a robust, anti-majoritarian logic of property rights entrenchment, redefining the public sphere in more privatized and more commodified ways, has accompanied the expansion and deepening of international trade and investment rules (Gill 1995). The European Court of Justice, for example, has been both neo-formalist and neo-liberal in its interpretation of the canonical “freedoms” of goods and persons in a single market, “pushing the project further and faster than the Member States had been prepared to go on their own” (Sweet Stone 2010: 5). This logic has shaped the legal infrastructure of the WTO, EU and NAFTA as well as a range of national constitutions, notably those recently created in Eastern Europe and the Middle East but also, through judicial activism, those of much older standing (Peebles 1997; Go 2003; Walker 2013).

### Ireland’s Constitutions in the World-System

Ireland makes for a particularly useful country case-study of these socio-legal transformations. Its constitutional development blends a mix of socio-legal cultures—including a common law tradition in the Atlantic English-speaking orbit; a wider European or continental law tradition mediated by its legal intelligentsia and by the dominant position of the Catholic Church; and a semi-peripheral and post-colonial heritage that, notwithstanding its relative economic wealth and liberal democratic development, suggests commonalities with the experience of states in today’s Global South. Comparatively speaking, however, the 1922 Irish Free State Constitution showed little trace of the robust social constitutionalism that characterized contemporary constitution-making in Mexico and Weimar Germany. Similarly, while the 1937 Irish Constitution incorporated a pronounced Catholic social discourse, it did so without expanding welfare rights or significantly altering the state’s institutional make-up. Clarifying Irish exceptionalism here is a useful step towards understanding the subsequent reception and development of neoformal constitutionalism.

Scholarship on the Irish constitution, however, has yet to consider its development critically, specifically how it intersects with long-term structures, class interests or popular movements. The first wave of Irish constitutional studies, led by John Kelly (1967), Brian Farrell (1988) and Basil Chubb (1991), concentrated on the Irish “state tradition” as a liberal legacy of

British rule as well as on the nationalist and/or confessional aspects of the 1922 and 1937 constitutions. While recent scholarship, notably by Gerard Hogan (2005) and Bill Kissane (2011), has usefully contextualized Irish constitutionalism within wider European and Transatlantic traditions of constitution-making, the focus of this research continues to centre on the shifting intersection of liberal institutions and norms with nationalist and Catholic ones. In comparative constitutional studies, similarly, the Irish case is most readily forwarded as an example of a socio-legal order deeply expressive of and divided by questions of national identity (Tushnet 2009: 12). Chubb's thesis on the "normative force" of the Irish constitutional tradition, a basic law gradually adjusting to changing societal norms, remains the standard explanatory account of change (1991:117; Kissane 2011: xii). Unlike existing studies, the key unit of analysis adopted here is not the Irish state or its constitution *per se* but rather the historical capitalist world-system.

The present survey attempts to synthesize existing studies of Irish constitutionalism into a more coherent whole. In places, this has necessitated original analysis of archives and jurisprudence. The specific method of inquiry has been to analyse and contextualize within the world-system the actions and discourses of actors involved in creating the 1922 Irish Free State Constitution and the 1937 Irish Constitution as well as those involved in referendums and judicial review cases important to the constitution's subsequent development (See Fairclough 2003). Hence, the Irish "case" is not explained in terms of "internal" factors such as constitution makers' "innate conservatism" (See Farrell 1988: 18) but rather understood dialectically in terms of its semi-peripheral relations within the world-system and how this conditioned popular anti-systemic struggles and discourses as well as governance strategies to contain them, coercively, politically and ideologically. What follows is less a final account than a challenging invitation. Adhering to a spirit of dialectical inquiry, the reader is encouraged to think through this argument's implications "critically and querulously" (See Bookchin 2005: 77).

### **Containing Anti-Systemic Movements: Classic and Social Constitutionalism in Ireland**

Emerging in 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe, the capitalist world-system gradually incorporated Ireland as a semi-periphery within Britain's regional economy (Crotty 1986; O'Hearn 2001). The late 17<sup>th</sup> century settlement imposed by England established a propertied Protestant minority as rulers, with core support, over the mainly un-propertied Catholic majority, among whom the folk memory of illegitimate land confiscations remained potent. Incorporation aided England's drive toward hegemony in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but at the cost of eliminating indigenous Irish production and thereby limiting capacities for future industrialization. The process transformed the countryside,

occasioning land clearances for a peripheral mode of agricultural production centred on the export of food and primary commodities to the core (O’Hearn 2001: xi, 104-14). For the immense majority, impoverished conditions ensured persistent emigration and periodic famine. The island’s population declined from 8 million in 1800 to 4 million in 1900, a figure which remained unchanged until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Core-periphery relations were subject to intense contestation. The landlords and their agents emerged as a powerful and relatively autonomous part of the colonising regime, protecting their interests from tenants (and the landless) primarily through their control of the colonial administration at Dublin Castle as well as political alliances at Westminster (Slater and McDonough 2008: 18). Ensuing “anti-systemic” conflict took both “social” and “national” forms, with the latter proving dominant. While “social” resistance to landlordism took the form of diffuse secret society traditions in the countryside, “national” advocates in urban areas, drawn from both an Anglo-Irish patrician class and an emergent indigenous petty bourgeoisie, adopted more centralized organizational forms, notably the mass party, to promote Irish variations on the nationalist ideologies flourishing in the wake of the 1789 and 1848 European Revolutions (See Garvin 1986).

Within the “national” anti-systemic movement, the Irish Republican Brotherhood adopted clandestine, militant and illegal means to advance independent statehood for Ireland, at times identifying this goal with a radical social programme. The IRB were central to landless laborers’ and tenants’ organizing in the Irish National Land League to wage “land wars,” mass direct actions for land ownership and redistribution. Conversely, “constitutional nationalists” represented a small though growing male, property-owning franchise and parleyed militant resistance into concessions on a strictly limited form of independence (or “Home Rule”). Of these reforms, Daniel O’Connell’s securing of Catholic enfranchisement in the 1820s was essential to establishing a nationalist, mass party and electoralist tradition in Ireland. Moreover, between 1880 and 1910, the Irish Parliamentary Party, a disciplined, electoral machine under the leadership of Charles Stewart Parnell and later John Redmond, negotiated successive Liberal and Conservative governments’ abolition of the established Anglo-Irish landlord caste. A mass transfer of land ownership, overseen by a Land Commission, occurred.

A number of features distinguish the Irish case as a semi-periphery, including its comparative wealth, industrialization, educational levels and religious homogeneity. The prominent role of the Catholic Church in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Ireland is particularly striking. Unlike in Southern Europe and the Spanish or Portuguese colonies, the Church in Ireland was not closely linked to the ruling class. On the contrary, the Catholic Church’s episcopal hierarchy, typically drawn from the more affluent farming strata, aligned itself with constitutional nationalism

and asserted its authority to intervene in the colonial administration and nationalist politics on behalf of the native population. In return for their support, the bishops expected deference to their “moral monopoly” and, in particular, control over the material means of producing that monopoly among the poor, specifically education, health and charitable services (Inglis 1998: 57). For the recently created petite bourgeoisie, leaving such services under church control was both pious and cost-effective.

By the 1900s then, the country’s major property interests, including banks, graziers, railway companies, breweries and dairies, as well as a newly emerged middle stratum of “native” owners of medium-sized farms, supported reproducing, deepening and accelerating core-periphery linkages within the British regional economy. Meanwhile, the mass of the working population, consisting of small farmers and landless laborers, emigrated or remained “land hungry” in the countryside while a smaller, politically conscious proletariat emerged in the slums of Ireland’s main cities. Worker-syndicalist and republican-insurrectionary challenges to these capital-labor and core-peripheral relations occurred in 1913 and 1916 respectively.<sup>6</sup> Their containment suggests that the subsequent emergence of a popular anti-systemic movement was far from inevitable. Just as it had taken a moment of world-systemic rupture, the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars, to form the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland in 1800, another such moment of global upheaval, World War One and the Russian Revolution, would be central to its breaking. The 1922 and 1937 Irish constitutions owed directly to and would be shaped by the mass, anti-systemic forces temporarily unleashed.

### **Popular Anti-Systemic Movements and the “Classic” Constitution of 1922**

A global wave of working class unrest and militancy emerged between 1917 and 1923, involving general strikes in the United States and Europe, as well as worker uprisings in Austria, Hungary, Germany, Italy and Spain. Concomitantly, war weakened or destroyed the multinational European empires, replacing them with a patchwork of nation-states carved out from their territory (Hobsbawm 1994: 85-109). In Ireland too, “national” and “social” anti-systemic struggles overlapped, sometimes uneasily. A rapid escalation in labor and agrarian militancy coincided with the Irish Republican Army’s pursuit of an anti-colonial struggle. Meanwhile, Sinn Féin, the nationalist party identified with the republican insurrection of 1916, won a decisive electoral victory in 1918, abstained from taking seats at Westminster and formed an underground

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<sup>6</sup> In 1913-14, some 20,000 workers, organized on the basis of syndicalist ideas and forms, engaged in an unsuccessful five-month battle with the country’s 300 primary employers for the right to unionise. In 1916, the IRB (acting through the Irish Volunteers) and Irish Citizen Army (a revolutionary workers’ militia) seized the difficulty presented to England by World War One to launch a week-long insurrection in Dublin.

government in Dublin instead. The manner in which Sinn Féin substituted a mass party for a mass movement ensured the victory of conservative forms of classic constitutionalism, acutely defensive of church, state and capital (Murray, 2015a).

This outcome was not inevitable. For a brief period, direct democracy in workplaces and communities flourished. Between August 1918 and August 1923, there were five general strikes, and eighteen local strikes, twelve of these in 1919. Workers took over and ran more than eighty workplaces, establishing “soviets” at the Cleeves factory in Limerick, the foundry in Drogheda, Co. Louth and the coal mines of Arigna, Co. Roscommon and Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny. Trade union membership rose dramatically, from 100,000 in 1916 to 255,000 in 1920, and transport unions’ refusal to handle British military equipment was crucial to the IRA’s success (Ferriter 2005: 210-1; Kostick 2009: 5, 148). Concomitantly, as the IRA forced the retreat of law enforcement to cities, rural communities created a network of local militias and arbitration courts (Kotsonouris 1994). The challenge to classic legal institutions and norms mounted. Small farmers and landless laborers, concentrated in Connaught and along the Western seaboard, escalated local rent-strikes into widespread cattle-driving and land-grabbing. Graziers favoured the creation of a “White Army” to combat “agrarian Bolshevism” (Lee 1989: 181).

During the ensuing military conflict with Great Britain (1919-21), social polarization and popular democracy posed a decisive threat to Sinn Féin’s capacity to govern. Class conflict, particularly agrarian agitation, threatened to split the IRA’s rank and file (Laffan 1995: 253). The party responded with a mixture of conciliation and coercion. In early 1919, Sinn Féin, with the support of the trade unions and Labor party, announced a radical form of “social” legal thought.<sup>7</sup> The Democratic Programme (1919) declared all rights of private property to be subordinated to the public welfare, assured Irish citizens of “an adequate share of the produce of the Nation’s labor” in return for serving the public welfare, and further outlined commitments to welfare state initiatives (*Dáil Debates*, 21.01.1919). In practice, however, Sinn Féin insisted on private property rights. Crucially, the party centralized the organic courts and banned their hearing of land disputes. Property-owners now looked to Dublin, not Westminster, to report expropriation (Casey 1970: 321).

Westminster, meanwhile, reinforced classic legal institutions and norms. The Anglo-Irish Treaty (1921), concluded at the cessation of armed hostilities between British and Irish forces, represented a classic negotiation of sovereignty between an imperial metropole and national jurists (Kennedy 2006: 50-4). The Treaty denoted sovereignty in classic legal terms, providing for a state-form with a monopoly on the right to command in its territory (See Lerner 2011: 169). It further

<sup>7</sup> The Labor party did not contest the 1918 or 1921 elections, acquiescing in Sinn Féin’s demand for national plebiscites on leaving the Empire.

envisioned the reproduction of existing rights of private property and free trade in the Irish Free State, retaining national debt repayments while remaining silent on social issues such as land purchase or the redistribution of large untenanted estates (Dooley 2004: 42). Under the terms of the Treaty, Sinn Féin would form a Provisional Government, empowered to create a constitution for the new Irish Free State.

Throughout 1922, constitution making occurred as a split in the “national” movement over the Treaty led to civil war. Here too, “social” concerns overlapped. Opposition to the Treaty strongly correlated with poorer areas of high emigration and agrarian radicalism (Pyne 1970). In addition to Westminster, Irish society’s established interests, notably the country’s large land and business owners, as well as the Catholic hierarchy and media, supported “constitutional government” and pressed for the re-imposition of “law and order” (Kostick 2009: 180). Class conflict, including “the recent revival of cattle-driving,” and intra-nationalist violence loomed large in constitution makers’ minds (UCDA P4/320). In addition to immediate coercive measures, institutional design was deemed crucial to countering revolutionary groups.

Insofar as the Treaty permitted, the government-appointed drafting committee and subsequent Constituent Assembly broadly advocated a conservative, classic nationalist constitution. A generation previously, the British constitutional theorist, AV Dicey, claimed that established elites could best retain their power in the face of mass electoral politics through executive dominance of parliament, bicameralism and a written constitution setting out rights for minorities, notably property rights (Tulloch 1980: 23). Initially, the Irish Free State adopted the Westminster model of parliamentary sovereignty; ultimately, it incorporated all three checks. For national constitution-makers, however, the legitimacy of these institutions was now based on the will of the Irish people under God (See Kohn 1932: 81). Notwithstanding the “artificial” fostering of the “English Common Law,” the state’s system of law would reflect the nation’s “organic” normative order or national spirit (UCDA P4/352), a disposition entirely characteristic of classic legal design.

Two distinct forms of social constitutionalism also emerged, challenging laissez-faire constitutionalism and financier-grazier control of Irish political economy. Clement France, a visiting American labor lawyer, proposed provisions to regulate property rights and ensure that the state captured the “unearned increment” arising from land value increases, thereby checking speculation in land and incentivising industrial investment (UCDA P4/308; 325; 339). Concomitantly, Catholic proponents of social legal thought such as Alfred O’Rahilly (UCDA P4/309; 328) or Labor TDs Tom Johnson and T.J. O’Connell, fearful of the Catholic hierarchy and of alienating farm-owners, supported a less interventionist state (*Dáil Debates*, Vol. 1, Col. 494-5, 708; 20.09.1922; Col. 755, 26.09.1922; Col. 697, 25.09.1922). Their proposals, emphasising the

rights and duties of property and including modest welfare measures and children's rights, were a pale shadow of the Democratic Programme. Nevertheless, they encountered strong opposition.

Classic liberal market advocates such as the economist, George O'Brien (UCDA P4/339), or Archbishop Harty (UCDA P178/24), questioned the social provisions' economic viability in a free market economy as well as their political viability given their potential to alienate conservative, land-owning supporters of the Treaty. When British law officers objected to the "Soviet character" of the constitution's declaration of "economic sovereignty," the offending provisions were quietly dropped (UCDA P4/362-3; Mohr 2008: 72-3). Finally, during the Constituent Assembly debates that autumn, the Provisional Government, having won the 1922 general election and having secured an effective military victory over anti-treatyites, eliminated any vestiges of a social constitutionalism in favour of state power ("law and order") and economic necessity ("national economy") (Dáil Debates, Vol. 1. Col. 707; 25.09.1922).

Ultimately, the 1922 Constitution was limited to two "programmatic declarations" only, one specifying a pre-existing right to elementary education and the other providing for state ownership of national resources (Kohn, 1932: 174). The debates and their outcome anticipated the manner in which the Provisional Government party, later Cumman na nGaedheal (Irish: Society of the Gaels), would defend financier-grazier interests throughout the 1920s (O'Hearn 2001; McCabe 2011). A large cohort of society, however, including republicans defeated in the civil war, organized labor, and small farmers, remained alienated from the Irish Free State.

### **Incorporating Anti-Systemic Movements in the 1937 Catholic Social Constitution**

Ireland's second constitution making episode occurred during the Great Depression (Arrighi 1994: 277-285; Hobsbawm 1994: 85-109). Internationally, the decade was characterized by rethinking forms of state or "social" control of the *laissez-faire* market, primarily in response to mass unemployment (Kennedy 2006: 21-2; Thornhill 2013: 301-3, 317-23). Among liberal democracies, the social took the form of the Matignon Agreements in France or the New Deal in the United States. Nationalists in Poland, Austria, Hungary, Spain and Portugal used a highly selective form of Catholic corporatist constitutionalism to justify more authoritarian government. In Italy and Germany, fascist movements introduced a highly coercive system of corporate societal management, achieving full employment while leaving intact the "classic" freedoms of capital. In all cases, social legal thought was proposed to prevent communist alternatives, whether supported by Stalinist Russia or autonomous such as occurred in Republican Spain (Kennedy 2006: 38).

Ireland did not experience the same extremes of mass unemployment and polarization as in the rest of Europe. Social forms of constitutionalism, however, similarly depended on a politics of "class-abatement" (Marshall 1950: 32). A range of "national and social" antagonisms

proliferated in 1930s Ireland, ranging from a boycott campaign of land annuities to Great Britain through agrarian and republican agitation over the Irish Land Commission's slow rate of land redistribution to the Irish Women Workers' Union's campaign against slum landlordism in the cities (Dooley 2004: 104; Murray 2000: 317-22). Moreover, a strike against Dublin Tramways occurred in 1935 while the subsequent building sector strike of 1937 was the largest since the foundation of the state (Ferriter 2005: 373). The broader mass of Irish society, however, including its "national" and "social" anti-systemic movements, adhered to liberal democratic, representative politics.

The newly formed Fianna Fáil (Irish: Soldiers of Destiny), whose leadership comprised of anti-treaty republicans, was central to the incorporation of civil society energies into a mass party and, ultimately, the state. While Cumman na nGaedheal remained a classic cadre party committed to law and order and free trade, Fianna Fáil created a populist, cross-class base of support for national independence, self-sufficiency and social equality. Built on a mushrooming network of local branches, the party would prove one of the most successful in Europe, forming a single party government for all but ten years between 1932 and 1981. Notwithstanding increased manufacturing, accelerated land redistribution and a modest expansion of welfare spending, however, Fianna Fáil governments did not fundamentally up-root core-peripheral dependency (O'Hearn 2001). Irish banks continued to invest the proceeds of the UK-centred cattle trade in the City of London until the late 1950s while mass unemployment and emigration persisted (O'Connor 2011: 144).

The 1937 Irish Constitution's classic form registered and reproduced precisely this balance of core-peripheral and capital-labor forces. Fianna Fáil Taoiseach Éamon de Valera, secure as the "chief" of a nationalist mass party, correctly believed a unilateral rejection of the Treaty possible. Drafted primarily by de Valera with the aid of a select committee of civil servants, the constitution redefined the territory of the new state of "Eire" to include the island of Ireland, asserted the state's legitimacy on the basis of popular sovereignty, removed inherited monarchical legal symbols and emphasized "national" traits such as the Irish language and Christianity. The 1937 Constitution retained its predecessor's conservative institutional design, centralising authority in the executive and representative party at the expense of local government or more direct forms of popular autonomy. Similarly, the text provided for a Supreme Court to interpret its provisions, including a list of classic civil-political rights, notably that of private property.

At the same time, the prominence of conflicts over credit, land, and living standards ensured a much greater crystallization of social constitutional forms than had occurred in 1922 (Murray, 2015b). The primary conflict resided between civil servants, notably John Hearne and JJ McElligott, who advocated continuity and clericalist advisors to de Valera, such as the Jesuits of

Milltown Park or the Holy Ghost Father, John Charles McQuaid, who desired a much stronger recognition of Catholic doctrine (UCDA P150/2393-5). The fundamental rights provisions took a Catholic social form. They acknowledged the “special position” of the Catholic Church (article 44.1.2) and entrenched the Church’s interests in property (article 44.2.6), education (article 42) and social policy, most notably in the constitution’s recognition of the family unit and of woman’s special contribution in the home as well as its comparatively exceptional prohibition of divorce (article 41).

The Bunreacht’s affirming of Irish national identity, most apparent in the Preamble and Articles 40–45, appealed to and helped reproduce ethnically narrow and patriarchal norms (Lentin, 1998). Family law proved more amenable to Catholic social influence, however, than market law. Primarily at the behest of the Department of Finance, who feared such rights would inspire rather than satisfy agitators, Catholic social proposals for land redistribution, welfare provision and social credit were relegated to “directive principles” (article 45) unenforceable in court (UCDA P150/2416). The text framed the state’s duty to the “weaker sections” of Irish society in terms of “charity” not justice or equality.

In the subsequent plebiscite, the 1937 Irish Constitution was accepted by a narrow majority of some 56% to 43% (Coakley and Gallagher 2010: 75). The balance of contending core-peripheral and capital-labor relations occasioned a conservative consolidation of existing state and market institutions. The Catholic social provisions that constitution-makers thought necessary to isolate revolutionary agitators intervened in family, not market law. Voting for the Bunreacht thus endorsed what the *Irish Press* (16.06.37) described as “hallowed traditions”: the institution of the family, the indissolubility of marriage and, naturally, the right of private ownership. What was new, however, was the 1937 Constitution’s increased legitimacy based on a nationalist mass party incorporating residual and emergent anti-systemic opposition. The new basic law’s rhetorical qualities thus cohered with broader subjective understandings of a small-holding, agrarian, Catholic and nationalist Ireland (See Kissane, 2011). By prioritising capital flows over welfare and by outsourcing welfare provision to the Catholic Church, however, the constitution protected and legitimated the particular interests of those financiers, graziers and assorted professions who benefitted from economic peripheralization.

### **Neoformal Constitutionalism in Ireland and the European Union**

The politics of contesting the Irish Constitution thereafter was inextricably world-systemic. Post-World War Two, Ireland broadly functioned as a semi-periphery, one in which “national” forms of anti-systemic politics took precedence over “social” alternatives, and the population’s welfare remained subordinate to the needs of stable, increasingly global capital flows (O’Hearn 2001;

O'Connor, 2011). We might distinguish, however, two periods in which these tendencies operated to lesser and greater effect. During the expansionary phase of the U.S. Free Enterprise cycle of accumulation, between 1945 and 1973, the Irish economic model collapsed and reformed. Successive Fianna Fáil governments abandoned protectionism for free trade and the emergent European common market. During the 1960s, export-led industrialization, centred on attracting multinational corporations and incentivising foreign direct investment, notably from the industrial cores of Germany, Japan and the United States, brought about comparatively modest growth rates and increased welfare expenditure.

The second period, from 1973 to the economic crisis of 2008, came about following a signal crisis of the U.S.-led accumulation cycle. During this period, Irish economic development took an increasingly neoliberal form as successive governments prioritized securing global capital flows and integration into the global economy ahead of national developmental goals such as domestic employment or living standards. Ostensibly, the goal was to boost employment in the short term and to build local capacities to support indigenous industrialization in the long run. In reality, the primary beneficiaries of the subsequent Irish boom were multinationals engaged in tax avoidance and indigenous “middle-men” specialising in property, transport, legal, financial and accounting services (McCabe 2011; McGee, 2012; McDonald, 2014). In particular, the dominance of financier-property speculators within Irish political economy remained unchallenged: property bubbles occurred periodically prior to the most recent crash of 2007 (MacLaran, Attuyer and Williams 2010).

Politically, the pronounced disarticulation of a “social” alternative in Ireland, whether social democratic or more radically anti-systemic, requires attention. Between 1945 and 1968, Old Left movements had achieved their historic goal of state power almost everywhere, including both the Communist parties of the Eastern bloc and the social democratic parties in power, or alternating power, in the pan-European world. In the latter instance, welfare state expansion, the principal policy of the social-democratic parties, was accepted and practiced by their conservative opponents (Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 2011). In Ireland, mirroring other postcolonial contexts, a nationalist mass party, Fianna Fáil, successfully incorporated organized labor into informal consultations (as opposed to formal negotiations) on economic development and wage-bargaining from the 1960s onwards, an alliance that would persist until the 2007 crisis. Unlike their European counterparts, Irish trade unions did not successfully articulate (or form the central group within) a cross-class, “social” form of national economic development or solidaristic welfare state expansion (Cousins, 2005).

Ireland’s semi-peripheral trajectory deeply conditioned its experience of the 1968 anti-systemic rupture. Notwithstanding dramatic changes wrought by industrialization, urbanization,

new media and improved living standards, the possibility of a stronger left-right alignment of Irish politics floundered on core-peripheral relations. Following British repression of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland in the early 1970s, the increased role of paramilitarism and state coercion on the island of Ireland split left-leaning nationalist and social tendencies in the south, and, in particular, reversed Labor's stance on refusing coalition with Fine Gael (O'Connor 2011: 220). In subsequent decades, Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, and Labor gradually redefined the coordinates of nationalism from irredentism towards the principle of unification by popular consent in Northern Ireland, from national-cultural revival to liberal economic growth. Successive Irish governments proposed changes to the Constitution, particularly its national sovereignty and Catholic social provisions, in response to the conflict and to the demands of European integration (Chubb 1991: 85).

Without achieving state power, post-68 social movements in Ireland, as in core countries, reduced the capacity of older generations, men and "majorities" to subordinate youth, women and "minorities" (See Arrighi, Wallerstein and Hopkins 2011). Successive campaigns challenged the ideological hegemony of the Catholic Church, winning key battles concerning women's equality in the workplace, censorship, adoption, illegitimacy, divorce, homosexuality, civil partnerships and marriage equality. "Social" advocates were notably less successful, however, in challenging neoliberal development. From the late 1980s onward, the Labor party joined Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, and the emergent Progressive Democrats in supporting further rounds of European integration, a process that necessitated and furthered acceptance of neoliberal norms. In association with autonomous elements from social movements and community groups, Sinn Féin, the Greens and various Trotskyist formations have since dominated opposition to welfare state retrenchment and EU integration (O'Connor 2011: 262). Crucially, the priorities of Sinn Féin, the largest party mobilising anti-systemic resistance, remain more "national" than "social" (See Maillet 2005: 103). An increasingly popular rejection of Catholic social norms governing family and sexuality thus coincided with successive nationalist-led governments' removal of "social" limits to the market.

The Irish Constitution both registered and reproduced this local manifestation of world-systemic politics in a series of seminal referendums and cases. Before looking at particular conflicts, however, an outline of the twin mechanisms for constitutional change is necessary. In terms of referendums, government parties, notably Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, have dominated decision-making concerning their necessity, timing and wording. Ireland's history of referendums thus reflects their priorities. There have been three distinct categories of referendum: those that pertain to comparatively minor institutional changes (such as the lowering of voting age limits or the regularization of local government elections), those that pertain to significant changes to the state (such as European integration or the territorial claim over Northern Ireland) and those that

pertain to significant changes to the law's Catholic social nature. Use of the referendum to change the constitution has increased over time: six occurred between 1937 and 1972 while a further twenty-three took place between 1973 and 2008 (Coakley and Gallagher 2010: 445-6).

In terms of judicial review, a U.S.-style Supreme Court emerged in Ireland. Constitutional cases are heard through the ordinary courts and the Supreme Court remains the final court of appeal.<sup>8</sup> Broadly speaking, the judicial appointment process, dominated by Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, has ensured the selection of conservative supporters of existing regime norms from among dominant status groups (white, male, upper class and Christian if not Catholic). "Traditional" norms in common law regimes include a strong defence of individual and property rights as well as "judicial restraint" or "deference" to parliament in constitutional cases (See Morgan 2001: 105). In law schools and the wider public sphere, social legal thought remained comparatively underdeveloped. Changing constitutional norms thus depended vitally on citizens taking new rights claims to court and on supportive networks of barristers and civil society groups (Hogan, Barrington and McEntee 1985: 107; Sturgess and Chubb 1988: 420). Support structures for taking such cases, mirroring the state's low welfare effort, were poorly financed, ensuring advantages to those able to fund cases (O'Morain 2003). Unsurprisingly, Ireland's "rights revolution" was a comparatively conservative one (See Epp 1998).

### Farewell to the Catholic Social Constitution

The conservative, nationalist dominated stasis of core-peripheral and anti-systemic relations in the 1950s and 60s occasioned comparatively few changes to the 1937 Irish Constitution, or indeed proposals for amendment (See McMahon 1979). A contemporary report of a cross-party Constitution Review Committee (1967: 8), created by Taoiseach Seán Lemass (Fianna Fáil), stated that the group was "not aware of any public demand for a change in the basic structure of the Constitution." The committee did, however, recommend removing certain Catholic confessional provisions, partly in response to changing social mores and partly with a view to furthering diplomatic relations with Northern Ireland's Unionist administration. To this end, in 1972, the government proposed and a majority voted to remove the constitutional provision outlining the "special position" of the Catholic Church. At the same time, faced with the conflicting pressures of tradition and modernization, Lemass privately encouraged liberal judicial appointees to emulate the activist U.S. Supreme Court under Earl Warren (Sturgess and Chubb 1988: 144).

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<sup>8</sup> European integration further occasioned the emergence of supra-national court structures, notably the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights, where EU statutes and case-law take precedence over national law.

Constitutional change in Ireland, as in the United States, owed partly to an empowered judiciary. Chief Justice Cearbhail Ó'Dálaigh's court of the 1960s newly interpreted the constitution so as to acknowledge the existence of rights not explicitly listed in the constitution (*Ryan v Attorney General* [1965]). At least eighteen such "un-enumerated" rights would be identified over the following three decades (Coakley and Gallagher, 2010: 87). The Supreme Court proved particularly activist regarding the preservation and enlargement of civil liberties, emphasising limits to police powers and rights of due process as well as expanding the private sphere, most notably with regard to the liberalization of Catholic social or family law. In the celebrated *McGee* [1974] case, the Supreme Court acknowledged an "unenumerated" constitutional right to marital privacy and thereby struck down Catholic "social" laws banning the importation of contraceptives. Thereafter, the spectre of an Irish judge following American precedents to liberalize divorce or abortion legislation mobilized conservative Catholic groups into action.

In market law, the judges retained a classic liberal view of individual rights trumping collective rights or social justice concerns. Judge Hanna's expressed inability to comprehend the meaning of such social constitutional terms as the "common good" or "social justice" would remain the traditional response of jurists trained in the canons of positive law (*Pigs Marketing Board v. Donnelly* [1939]). This classic disposition was most apparent in the judiciary's interpretation of the 1937 Constitution's trade union provisions. In *NUR* [1947], *Educational Company* [1961] and *Meskell* [1973], the courts prohibited picketing to obtain "closed shop" agreements and further established a low threshold for employers to obtain injunctions to restrain workers' collective action. Thus, while other European countries' legally entrenched corporatist bargaining models over this period the Irish Constitution was used to reverse inherited common law immunities for industrial action (Wilkinson 1989). Among other factors, the strength of this Anglo-American constitutional model induced trade unions' subsequent acceptance of FF-led social partnership and a restrictive Industrial Relations Act (1990).

From the 1970s onwards, however, as the crisis of the U.S.-led accumulation cycle deepened, neo-formal fixes increasingly involved national governments relocating majoritarian decision-making to international treaty-based institutions. As neoliberal elites sought to restore profitability by disembedding social reforms, successive Irish governments proved complicit by removing key policy-making instruments, notably monetary policy, from industrial relations and parliamentary arenas in order to insulate these decisions from majoritarian pressures (Hirschl 2007; Mair 2013). This shifting balance of core-peripheral and anti-systemic relations crystallized in a series of particular changes to the 1937 Irish Constitution. The contested removal of capital from the constraints of "social" development in market law and of society from the "Catholic

“social” in family law animated each of the seven referendums on EU treaties occurring between 1972 and 2008.<sup>9</sup> From a peak of 80 per cent approval for EEC membership in 1972, majority support for EU integration has declined steadily in line with its increasingly neoliberal form since Maastricht (Anderson, 2007).

The size of EU-critical opposition in Ireland is remarkable given that proponents of EU integration encompass the state’s three largest political parties (Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and, from the 1980s onwards, Labor) combined with the Irish Farmers’ Association, the Irish Business Employers’ Confederation, the American Chamber of Commerce, and both state and private media. Multinational corporations intervened directly in the Lisbon (2009) referendum to advocate a “yes” vote (Kennedy, 2009). Conversely, both “national” (Sinn Féin, the Irish Sovereignty Movement as well as Catholic conservatives) and “social” (Trotskyite Parties and social movements) advocates have helped organize anti-systemic opposition. Remarkably, in the Nice (2001) and Lisbon (2008) referendums support fell below 50 per cent, pronouncedly so in working class constituencies. On both occasions the treaties were rejected, modified, and approved at a second referendum (Table 1). Social partnership inhibited effective anti-systemic resistance. Notably, having remained neutral in 2008, SIPTU, the country’s largest trade union, opted to support the 2009 Lisbon Treaty.

**Table 1. European Treaty Referendum Results: 1972-2012**

	Turnout	Yes	No
Accession to the European Communities (May 1972)	71	<b>83</b>	17
Single European Act (May 1978)	44	<b>70</b>	30
Maastricht Treaty (June 1992)	57	<b>69</b>	31
Amsterdam Treaty (May 1998)	56	<b>62</b>	38
Nice Treaty I (June 2001)	35	46	<b>54</b>
Nice Treaty II (October 2002)	49	<b>63</b>	37
Lisbon Treaty I (June 2008)	53	47	<b>53</b>
Lisbon Treaty II (October 2009)	59	<b>67</b>	33
Stability, Co-ordination and Governance (May 2012)	50	<b>60</b>	40

Sources: Coakley and Gallagher, 2010: 445-6; [www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie).

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<sup>9</sup> Ireland’s comparatively unusual use of the referendum stemmed from a constitutional challenge to the government’s ratifying the Single European Act in 1987. The Supreme Court ruled that those treaties affecting competences of the Irish constitution required approval by referendum (Crotty v. An Taoiseach [1987]; Crotty 1988).

Over the same period, youth, feminist and “minority”-led attempts to remove the Catholic social imprimatur on constitutional issues such as abortion, divorce, homosexuality, adoption and illegitimacy proceeded haltingly. Attempting to win over unionist opinion to improve North-South relations, Fine Gael Taoiseach Garrett Fitzgerald proclaimed a “crusade” to remove sectarianism from the Irish Constitution, before bowing to Catholic pressure groups and holding a referendum to prohibit abortion in 1983 (Ferriter 2005: 717-9). The Fine Gael-Labor government also failed to carry a referendum to legalise divorce in 1986. By the 1990s, however, the counter-mobilizations of students, feminists, liberals and the wider Left had grown to a majority. In 1992, referendums prompted by court cases constitutionalized a right to leave the state for and to obtain information on abortion. In 1995, the constitutional ban on divorce was narrowly overturned (Table 2).

**Table 2. Catholic Social Referendum Results: 1972-2015**

	Turnout	Yes	No
Remove “special position” of Catholic Church (1972)	50	<b>84</b>	16
Abortion: right to life of the unborn (1983)	54	<b>66.9</b>	33.1
Right to Divorce (1986)	61	36.5	<b>63.5</b>
Abortion (1992)			
- exclude suicide as permissible grounds for termination	68	<b>65.4</b>	34.6
- right to travel	68	<b>62.4</b>	37.6
- right to information	68	<b>59.9</b>	40.1
Right to Divorce (1996)	62	<b>50.3</b>	49.7
Abortion: exclusion of suicide (2002)	50	49.6	<b>50.4</b>
Children’s Rights (2012)	34	<b>58</b>	42
Marriage Equality (2015)	60	<b>62</b>	38

Sources: Coakley and Gallagher, 2010: 445-6; [www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie).

The judiciary’s progressive liberalization of Catholic social family law was similarly interrupted. Judicial activism prompted successive Irish governments in the 1970s to make conservative (as opposed to liberal) appointments to the bench, primarily to ensure a tough line on IRA paramilitaries through the Special Criminal Court (Sturgess and Chubb 1988). During the 1980s, conservative appointees tended to preserve the “Catholic social” constitution, notably

defending challenged laws criminalising homosexuality (*Norris v. Ireland* [1988]). In the *X-case* [1993], however, the Supreme Court acknowledged a right to pursue an abortion in strictly limited circumstances where a mother's life was at risk. From that point onwards, possibly in response to the very public contestation of the X-case ruling, the Supreme Court has no longer proved particularly "activist" regarding constitutional interpretation. Strict, literal interpretations of the Constitution, not unlike the emergent "originalist" legal culture in the United States, gained greater support (Coakley and Gallagher 2010: 88). Groups for choice regarding abortion and for the decriminalization of homosexuality subsequently pursued successful legal actions to the ECHR.

In terms of market law, the Irish Supreme Court continued to strike down social legislation in defence of negative liberties or property rights. Special interest groups, including employers, landlords and farming associations, successfully used the constitution to challenge state regulation of the market place. These cases included successful constitutional challenges to rent restrictions and land taxation measures (*Blake* [1981]; *Brennan* [1983]; see Keane 1983). Conversely, responding to claimed socio-economic or "positive" rights, the Supreme Court proved reluctant to impose additional economic costs on the state. Judges, ostensibly distinguishing between "distributive" and "commutative" justice as well as claiming a commitment to the principle of the separation of powers, have characteristically refrained from challenging duly enacted legislation or issuing compulsory injunctions to the government in the realm of social expenditure (*O'Reilly* [1989]; *Sinnott* [2001]; *T.D.* [2001]). Seminal cases concerning court-ordered public expenditure, notably the introduction of free legal aid and the payment of welfare arrears, have instead been fought and won at the ECHR (*Airey* [1979]; O'Morain 2003: 13).

Both of the trajectories of Irish constitutional development outlined here - the disembedding of the (Catholic) social in market and family law – have featured prominently in the state's neoliberal response to the global economic crisis of 2007. On the one hand, constitutional referendums on children's rights (2012) and on marriage equality (2015) have further eroded residual Catholic social norms. Similarly, the recent Constitutional Convention (2011-13) considered further referendums along these lines, including the removal of confessional and gender-biased provisions. Moreover, after numerous critical judgments in the ECHR, protests following the death of a woman denied a termination in an Irish hospital compelled the Fine-Gael-Labor coalition government to legislate for the *X-case*. Campaigns for the repeal of the 8<sup>th</sup> amendment and for a woman's right to choose continue. On the other hand, constitutional referendums on Lisbon (2009) and on the so-called Fiscal Compact (2011), campaigned for and won by traditional proponents, have entrenched austerity and completed the project for a neoliberal European Constitution, albeit without its more symbolic features. The challenge for those creating (or defending what is left of) a "social" state is stark. While the Constitutional Convention also

proposed a referendum to constitutionalize socio-economic rights, the government retained and exercised its veto over this proposal. Social movements, however, notably those currently involved in housing and water privatization struggles, continue to demand socio-economic rights and, in the case of the trade union-led Right2Water (2015), to demand their constitutionalization.

### Conclusion

In sum, *Bunreacht na hÉireann* merits understanding as a world-constitution. Specifically, Ireland's constitutional development had a dialectical relationship to its incorporation into the historical capitalist world-system and to concomitant socio-political struggles over this evolving process. In the period between 1848 and 1945, Ireland resembled postcolonial peripheries insofar as popular, anti-systemic mobilizations adopted "national" rather than "social" trajectories. Following the world-systemic rupture of 1917, the manner in which Sinn Féin, a disciplined nationalist mass party, substituted itself for a popular anti-colonial movement and associated class conflicts ensured that conservative forms of classic constitutionalism triumphed over both social democratic and radical alternatives. In the 1920s and 1930s, the comparative weakness of social democratic or communist forms of anti-systemic resistance resulted from their internal fragmentation over national and social priorities and to their respective reliance on parliamentary-clientelism or paramilitary-vanguardism. Equally important, Fianna Fáil, a national-populist mass party, conceded reforms to co-opt small farmers and organized labor while targeting coercive measures, including censorship, at rival republican, communist and feminist groups.

In 1922 and 1937, constitution makers registered and reproduced this conservative balance of core-peripheral and capital-labor relations, most notably in their determined exclusion of social constitutional forms that envisaged direct state intervention in economic production and welfare redistribution. The 1922 Irish Free State Constitution thus reproduced political institutions and norms inherited from the British or Westminster model, notably those concerning electoral democracy and centralized executive-administrative authority. It also reproduced an enlightened conservative mode of conceding reforms, notably land redistribution, to preserve the inherited peripheral economy from its worst excesses. Again, similar to other postcolonial peripheries, the "Catholic social" form of constitutionalism adopted in 1937 did not fundamentally change these inherited political institutions, or classic laws of property and contract, but instead prioritized creating a "native" or Catholic family law regime. The *Bunreacht* similarly envisaged a model of welfare provision based on paternalist charity rather than justice or solidarity.

Ireland's contested incorporation into the historical capitalist world-system and associated constitutional forms, however, depart from a strictly postcolonial interpretation of Irish peripheralization. First, membership of the white, English-speaking Atlantic economy facilitated

Ireland's integration into the world-system on increasingly better economic and political terms than other peripheries, particularly from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Second, to a more pronounced degree than elsewhere, the conciliatory redesign of British-Irish relations, specifically the adoption of electoral and land reforms, created a residual Anglo-Irish and emergent Catholic Irish middle class of sizeable land-owners, professionals and administrators by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, thoroughly integrated into the “national” (peripheral) economy and, to varying degrees, the state apparatus. Third, unlike in Spanish or French colonies, the Catholic Church had not been popularly identified with the colonising regime, thereby strengthening its moral monopoly throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, marginalising rival ideologies and legitimating the independent state on the basis of supernatural authority more than popular reason. Together, these long-term factors facilitated a particular form of political stability or quietism unknown to poorer peripheries.

In the period between 1945 and 2008, Ireland's changing constitutional forms registered and reproduced more widely experienced, transnational developments. Semi-peripheral re-incorporation into a U.S.-led world-system, driven by the expansion of multinational corporations, prompted economic growth, limited industrialization, and fostered an increasingly suburban, consumerist and mass society. An emergent nationalist-populist consensus on liberal economic growth and more liberal values displaced a residual nationalist project of territorial reunification and cultural revival. As in the pre-war era, nationalist dominance owed to the capacities of a reformed comprador class—now centred on multinational service provision, the professions, government and administration—to advance a programme of “national interest” still capable of co-opting small farmers, organized labor and community groups. “Growth” accompanied comparatively modest levels of redistribution through EU-subsidized mass agricultural production, voluntary wage bargaining and gradual welfare state expansion. Anti-systemic movements fragmented. With rapidity from the 1980s onwards, post-68 social, youth and feminist movements’ rejection of Catholic social norms governing family and sexuality coalesced with neoliberal governments’ removal of “social” limits to the market.

While these developments form part of a more widely shared experience in the world-system, certain dynamics or historically specific legacies colored emergent constitutional forms in Ireland. From the 1970s onwards, the outbreak of violence in Northern Ireland split the left and reanimated nationalist-confessional politics against the encroaching “liberal agenda.” Moreover, the moral authority of the Catholic Church, albeit gradually diminishing, endured into the 1990s, its influence still apparent in the *Bunreacht*'s religious-gendered language and, in particular, the retention of highly restrictive provisions concerning abortion. Nevertheless, in Ireland, as elsewhere, the “national” bourgeoisie, faced with competing pressures of tradition and modernization in market and family law, relocated contentious political issues to the non-

majoritarian, expert domains of treaty formation and judicial review, notably those of the European Union.

Emergent neo-formal constitutional forms incorporated legacies of both domination and freedom. The Irish courts generally reproduced classic constitutional forms, emphasising individualism, anti-statism, and “negative liberties” (including private property rights) ahead of communitarian norms, the interests of the “common good” or “positive” rights to welfare. Concomitantly, numerous minoritarian “human rights” conflicts—fought by or on behalf of women, children, prisoners, gays, Travellers, asylum seekers, the disabled and the transgendered among others—have successfully challenged repressive constitutional norms and expanded formal and substantive freedoms. Importantly, the displacement of politics to technocratic legal domains was and remains legitimated by popular actions, not just by majoritarian referendums but also by periodic and significant citizen-initiated court cases.

Today, as the spirit of Davos ushers in a return to classic, laissez-faire jurisprudence in the service of corporate power, it is impossible to tell whether an alternative spirit of Porto Alegre may succeed in creating a more democratic, more egalitarian world. The present analysis suggests three insights for movements acting in the latter spirit. First, it underlines the deep-rooted relationship between state formations, constitutionalism and anti-majoritarian politics, specifically the defence of the rights of propertied minorities from mob-rule or, as the Greeks defined it, “democracy.” Second, it cautions social movements against expecting too much from state forms such as constituent assemblies or public interest litigation strategies as a means of challenging systemic priorities. Progressives cannot abandon political politics for judicial politics (Unger 2009: 111). Third and finally, this analysis highlights instead the potentialities of organized movements, premised on direct democracy and direct action, to effect systemic transformations (See Graeber 2013). If pre-existing institutional legacies, including state, constitutional and proto-state formations, may limit or contain these potentialities, moments of world-systemic rupture, such as occurred in 1917 or 1968, can enhance them in altogether new, unexpected and inspiring ways. The possibility of moving against and beyond anti-democratic constitutionalism, as ever, depends on us.

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## Disclosure Statement

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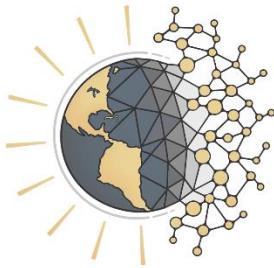
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## Northern Ireland: From Imperial Asset to International Encumbrance

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### Abstract

*The Northern Ireland story is more complex than the trite tale of orange versus green or two warring tribes. Current inhabitants are not settling ancient scores. Northern Ireland is the product of colonialism, the plantation of Ulster, machinations of a British state determined to retain a strategic outpost, 50 years of one party discriminatory government and the recent conflict. The Good Friday Agreement facilitated an end to armed conflict but is inherently flawed. Compounding the Stormont Assembly's very limited ability to steer the economy is reluctance by the political parties to accept the rationale of the Agreement. Republicans are unhappy that Northern Ireland will remain British while unionists dislike the fact that republicans are partners in administration. Northern Ireland's two leading parties, The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Sinn Féin (SF,) do not have the power (even if they wanted to use it) to address the social and economic issues affecting constituents' lives. Northern Ireland is changing demographically while also facing economic challenges at a time when both England and Scotland are reassessing the nature of the Union.*

**Keywords:** Colonialism, Northern Ireland, Democratic Unionist Party, Sinn Fein



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Northern Ireland is something of an anomaly. An area of deep running antagonisms nurtured by history, masked, apart from occasional spurts of violence, by an air of mundane normality. On the surface this region is much like any other region of the United Kingdom with an ordinary if somewhat modest Western European economy. The area is served by proper airports, decent motorways and by most standards it has efficient basic services. In spite of high rates of unemployment in comparison with other parts of the UK, Northern Ireland or Ulster, as it is sometimes wrongly called, is a part of the industrialized and developed world. Yet, alone among all the British and Irish police forces, every officer in the Police Service of Northern Ireland openly carries a firearm on duty. By itself, this fact underlines the very different nature of this area, and added factors such as the number of former prisoners in the devolved administration make this a place apart.

However mundane or normal Northern Ireland may look to the visiting stranger, it is not just another part of the British state, now in strained economic circumstances. There are significant differences that may be summed up in a stark note from the British Ministry of Defence (MoD) to mark Remembrance Day in November 2014. Britain's armed forces suffered their greatest number of causalities since the ending of the Second World War, in Northern Ireland. Official MoD figures recorded 1441 service personnel having lost their lives in several decades of conflict with militant Irish republicans. The armed conflict is over, but its impact remains and reverberates.

The latest Office for National Statistics<sup>1</sup> (ONS) region and country profiles analysis takes a look at the regional characteristics of the UK, exploring aspects such as population, age, employment, crime and house prices. The profile of Northern Ireland shows one of the youngest populations in the UK with a median age of 37.6 years. In 2011, the population stood at 1.8 million with the area's output accounting for 2% of Britain's economic output reflecting the fact that the six Northern Irish counties deliver the lowest added value of any UK region. Unemployment, currently running at 7.5%, is concentrated in a number of deprived or marginalised areas. This has been a feature of life in the region for decades. Setting aside the dry statistics, Northern Ireland shares many of the features found in any other peripheral regions of the United Kingdom or indeed other regions of Western Europe experiencing the impact of de-industrialization in the wake of globalization-induced flight of heavy industry eastwards. Northern Ireland's increasing geopolitical and economic marginalization helped make the current peace process possible, but, at the same time, austerity measures resulting from the global financial crisis are destabilizing political institutions and intergroup relations.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://bit.ly/1trCNTx>

## Background

Contemporary Northern Ireland is the product of English-led colonialism, a seventeenth century migration of English and Scottish settlers into Ulster, sectarian machinations by a British state determined until recently to retain a strategically important outpost, one party discriminatory government between 1920 and 1972 and a prolonged violent/bloody conflict through the final years of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> History can rarely be used to justify current actions but it certainly offers an insight into how the northern part of Ireland finds itself in its present situation. Late sixteenth century London with its Tudor monarchy viewed Ulster and its Gaelic inhabitants as the most dangerous region in all of Britain<sup>3</sup> and Ireland. In the closing days of that century, Elizabethan England suffered its greatest military defeat, at the hands of northern Irish Gaelic clans. Those who inflicted this reverse on English arms in 1598 were at the time allies of a Spanish monarch who had attempted to invade England with his armada a mere ten years previously.

Faced with this threat to the stability of the kingdom, James 1 on his succession, decided to replace the rebellious population of Ulster with more loyal subjects. Throughout the following decades, a violent campaign was launched to remove the indigenous inhabitants and people the province with loyal communities from Scotland and England. The process became known as the Plantation of Ulster.

Those who came as planters were in many ways indistinguishable from the natives, and but for one of history's great seminal events (the Protestant Reformation) would probably have become assimilated through time. Unfortunately this difference was to remain one of the decisive fault lines in this part of the world for centuries. Festering resentment caused the old inhabitants to launch frequent attacks on the new planters resulting in reprisals, which kept open these divisions through the following two centuries. Governments in London were content for centuries to allow divisions survive in order to maintain a virtual colony of settlers in Ulster. Feeling constantly under siege, the settlers acted as a garrison and thereby guarantor of London's strategic interests in Ireland.

Due to the counter attraction of the Americas as a better destination for emigration in the early part of the seventeenth century, the Ulster Plantation was only a limited success. It drew sufficient numbers to form a garrison population but not enough to entirely displace the surviving

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<sup>2</sup> For general histories from different stances see; Moody & Martin (2012); Foster (1990), Lee (1989), Rumpf & Hepburn (1977), Ferriter (2000), Coogan (2002a).

<sup>3</sup> See for example how the northern part of Ireland influenced English mindset of the period, Colin Murphy (2013) "How Shakespeare's plays reveal the secret of England's Irish obsession." *Irish Independent*. 11 August 2013 (<http://bit.ly/1vqaRVK>

indigenous inhabitants who were left to seek a precarious and resentment filled existence in the unwanted wastelands of the north of Ireland (Bardon 2011).

Maintaining a colony where the natives outnumber the colonialists frequently means that position and influence are protected by different and dubious practices. On one hand the colonists require physical military protection of the mother country and secondly they must convince themselves that they have a moral right or indeed duty to rule over the natives. Over the following centuries the planted northern Irish community, with military assistance from London, accepted and carried out the tasks of policing and containing the original inhabitants. As England evolved into Great Britain and grew to become a world superpower, it recognised Ireland as of vital strategic importance. The island occupies the gateway to Britain's western shoreline and was thus a potentially dangerous staging post for an invasion of Britain, if occupied by a hostile power. The settlers or Protestant population were, at base, a military asset to the growing empire.

Problems did arise nevertheless. One of the difficulties frequently faced by colonial powers is that occasionally dependencies rebel and seek independence. Towards the latter part of the eighteenth century, Britain's North American colonies were doing just this and simultaneously spreading the gospel of republican democracy abroad. In time the American "disease" spread to France and shortly afterwards the British government was alarmed to see the ideas and ideals of revolutionary France take hold in Ireland. To London's dismay, the anti-monarchist message had its greatest impact among the northern Irish Presbyterians, the very populace Britain had seen as its residential Irish garrison. Worse from a British point of view, this was happening at a time when His Majesty's Government was locked in a bitter war with France.

To counteract republican influence in the north of Ireland, Britain's agents worked diligently to re-ignite religious animosities that were by then becoming less intense. They exploited unrest that had arisen in central Ulster as a result of mechanization having led to the displacement of artisan Protestant weavers by unskilled Catholic workers. Displaced and disgruntled Protestant artisans were encouraged to attack Catholic workers who they saw as rivals taking their employment. To do so, they were organised into a group called "The Peep O'Day Boys" (Smyth 1995) which was to become the Orange Order (Jess 2007). What might otherwise have been a footnote of Luddite activity in Irish labor history therefore became a battleground leading to the founding of the Orange Order as a reactionary counter-weight to the democracy movement led by the republican United Irish movement. In 1798 The United Irishmen rebellion, inspired by the American and French revolutions, and led by the Protestant Wolfe Tone, was crushed (Pakenham 2000). What had been a temporary *sectarian* expediency for Britain in dealing with and dividing revolutionary France's Irish allies did not end after the battle of Waterloo. Divisions cultivated and nurtured during the Napoleonic era lasted to the present day. The famine of 1845-48 scarred and

depopulated Ireland but a land war arose in the later half of the 19th century which eventuated in the 1903 Wyndham Act granting land reform on conservative terms, and was conceived as a means of “killing Home Rule with kindness” (Seth-Jones 1983: 377; Lyons 1972: 320; Warwick-Haller 1990).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Conservatives in Britain still saw Irish demands for a devolved parliament in Dublin as a threat to the integrity of their Empire. To forestall what was becoming politically inevitable, they built upon the old animosities they had cultivated decades earlier and encouraged northern Irish Protestants, who were all too eager for their own reasons to heed them, to establish their own separate state composed ultimately of six (of the nine) Ulster counties partitioned from the rest of Ireland. There was no obvious logic for selecting all the six counties chosen to make up the new state though interesting explanations have since been mooted (Laffan 1983). Two of those counties (Tyrone and Fermanagh) had a pro-republican (or pro-independence) majority and were to bitterly resent inclusion in the partitioned entity. By insisting on including the greater portion of territory, the new Unionist state of Northern Ireland contained a very significant minority of those opposed to its existence. A community who felt isolated, vulnerable and compelled to live within what they feared would be a hostile and unfriendly state. They were soon to learn that they were not mistaken.

In 1920, the newly formed government of Northern Ireland under Sir James Craig feared not only militant Irish Republicanism but also the impact of organised labor. Trade unionists had in 1907 overcome old animosities and challenged the ruling class in Belfast with a city wide work stoppage (Beresford-Ellis 1996). Again in 1919 a mass strike by engineering workers had threatened unionist unity. There was too at that time the distant but real threat of Bolshevik-style revolution that had not only shaken Russia but had frightened the ruling class in every part of Europe. Faced with such a scenario, it was no surprise therefore, that the wealthy industrialists, merchant princes, aristocrats and reactionary military men, who formed the government of Northern Ireland would encourage bitter sectarian divisions in order to divide any potential opposition and maintain their hold on power (Farrell 1980; Bew, Gibbon, Patterson 1996). Indeed, loyalist resistance to Home Rule over 1912-1914 nearly brought the UK to the brink of civil war (Ryan 1956).

When the new state of Northern Ireland was established in 1920, it inherited three centuries of distrust and animosity between its inhabitants. Two aspects of this new creation were clear. In the first instance those supporting the state were not just giving it political approval but were also actively involved in its protection and maintenance by acting in a policing role. The second important feature was that in order to retain the loyalty and support of all its Protestant population,

the new state found it necessary to reward its supporters with privileges that could only come through discriminating against the minority Catholic population.

When after 50 years of such practice, the disgruntled Catholic minority managed to organize to protest in a way that could not be ignored or easily suppressed, there were bound to be problems (McCann 1993; Rose 1971). Supporters of the state were ill-prepared for dealing with significant criticism or objections and found it impossible to make the type and extent of concessions that would have been necessary to prevent civil disturbance. Centuries of living as a protected colonial minority had left the Northern Irish unionist constituency reluctant to deliver a democratic transition, and by this time as well, any such concessions would seem to arch-Loyalists to be tainted with concessions to Irish republicanism (Bell 1976; Bruce 1995). In previous centuries, dissent and agitation for reform had been met with physical suppression, and this tactic was resorted to again when Northern Ireland's Catholic population demanded reform in 1968.

### **The conflict years 1969-1994**

Throughout the Northern Ireland state's first fifty years of existence, its Unionist regime had ruled with absolute authority and brooked neither dissent nor questioning of its right to govern as it saw fit. On a number of occasions during that half-century, the state had been challenged by armed actions carried out by the Irish Republican Army (IRA). The various IRA campaigns failed abysmally to undermine the northern state to any significant degree. On the contrary, these sporadic and ineffective efforts had, if anything, reinforced the regime. They demonstrated, by their failures, the power of the Northern Ireland government while simultaneously allowing the regime to use the perceived threat to solidify its support base. By the middle 1960s, it appeared that not only was physical force Irish republicanism a thing of the past, but that it had no further role to play in the Ireland of the twentieth century. Circumstances, however, were to challenge this presumption.

The Provisional IRA did not initiate the Northern Irish conflict of the latter 20th century. Unlike previous IRA campaigns conducted in Northern Ireland, the organization, which had sold off its arms after the 1956-62 border campaign and taken a leftward political turn, was completely unprepared for what broke out around it in August 1969. The outbreak of armed conflict came as much of a surprise to the leadership as it did to the outside world at the time.<sup>4</sup>

The immediate cause for the 1969 outbreak of lethal violence in Ireland was, initially at any rate, a response to events arising out of demands for equality and democratic rights made through the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA). Unlike criticisms of the northern

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<sup>4</sup> This is the consensus view in any serious treatment of the period. See Coogan, 2002b; Bowyer Bell, 1989; Taylor, 1998; McKittrick & McVea, 2012.

state in previous decades, the NICRA critique did not focus on the more esoteric aspects of national self-determination and/or the perceived injustice of partition. Instead, the civil rights movement concentrated its demands on the issues of immediate concern to the disadvantaged Catholic community. "British Rights for British Citizens" was among the prominent placard messages at NICRA rallies and marches (Coulter 2015). As earlier noted, in order to retain support from an often demanding Protestant working class, Northern Ireland governments had awarded them, albeit unofficially, certain crucial privileges, which included preferential treatment in the allocation of employment, housing and cultural rights. To deliver for its supporters, the state's ruling class had to maintain control over local government, through which it was able to regulate the allocation especially of social housing.<sup>5</sup>

With control of local government, it also was possible to award town-hall funded employment to the state's supporters (Protestant, in practice). In rural Northern Ireland, experiencing the consolidation of agriculture resulting from mechanization post-World War Two, such employment, even on a part-time basis, was greatly valued as it helped supplement declining farm incomes. Elsewhere, the northern state facilitated the selective practice of finding jobs for its supporters by either directing government subsidies towards industries where there was a concentration of its voters or by the more direct method of awarding state or local government funded positions to its followers.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, in order to surround its discriminatory practices with a modicum of justification, (in the eyes of its supporters at least) the Unionist ruling class elevated its own cultural predilections to the level to a state religion while curbing those of its opponents. The Irish languages, Gaelic football, traditional Irish music were shunted aside by the state and on occasions some events were banned. Even the state-controlled media (the BBC) often overlooked Irish culture. The 1954 Flags and Emblems Act essentially promoted the Union Flag everywhere while permitting authorities to ban other symbols (Purdie 1990: 30). While this form of inequality did not have a detrimental physical impact, it was a constant reminder to the Catholic population that they were deemed second-class citizens in what they called the Orange State of Northern Ireland (Farrell 1980). The unavoidable outcome of blatant discrimination against one section of society was to generate bitter resentment against the state, its institutions and its supporters. When, in the late 1960s, a civil rights movement, inspired by the American civil rights movement and liberation

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<sup>5</sup> See: Disturbances in Northern Ireland. Report of the Commission appointed by the Governor of Northern Ireland. Chairman: The Honourable Lord Cameron, D.S.C. Presented to Parliament by Command of His Excellency the Governor of Northern Ireland, September 1969.

<sup>6</sup> See Farrell, 1980; Darby, 1976; Whyte, 1983; and the Cameron Report "Disturbances in Northern Ireland 1969" (Belfast: HMSO Cmd 532).

movements elsewhere, began to agitate around incidents of gross malpractice in housing, employment and electoral fraud, the Catholic community supported the campaign enthusiastically.

The authoritarian Northern Ireland regime was not similar to that of an absolutist monarchy. Society was not divided, as was Bourbon France, into the state against the people but rather government and its supporters against a minority (Catholic) population that could not help but question the legitimacy of the state and challenge its discriminatory practices. Paradoxically, though, an expanding UK welfare state in the context of heightened labor militancy also exerted an impact upon contention in Northern Ireland (most notably an increased presence of Catholic students at Queens University Belfast who became critical figures in the civil rights movement and the Troubles).<sup>7</sup> Therefore, when the civil rights movement began to agitate for an end to structural privileges, many in those communities benefiting from the status quo responded aggressively in defence of their advantageous position. Moreover, since the origins of division lay in the area's colonial past, many among the majority Protestant community believed that they were entitled to defend their position "using all means which may be found necessary" (Ulster's Solemn Oath and Covenant, 1912), which ominously meant armed force. This was a defining feature of the Northern Ireland state: *any* reform of the state was viewed very widely as a Republican attack on the unionist community, and so most likely would spark a violent reaction. Cooler heads, of which there were too few even in the Cabinet, could hardly prevail in this fraught atmosphere (Bloomfield 1994; Faulkner 1978; Bew & Patterson 1985).

This was what happened in response to the Civil Rights Association and violent attacks on the movement increased throughout 1968 and 1969. Before long it became evident that the state was resorting to a long-held strategy of preventing meaningful political reform by deploying all its resources, official and unofficial. Urged on by demagogue Ian Paisley, and condoned in practice by the state, working class Protestants launched physical attacks on civil rights demonstrations. In doing so, they were taking a lead from the state's police force, which had violently attacked one of the first civil rights demonstrations in October 1968 in Derry City. In August 1969 tensions boiled over into bloody two-way conflict. The state's police had launched a punitive attack on the Bogside community of Derry City and were repulsed. As it became evident that the police force was unable to contain the situation through the use of normal riot control techniques, other options were deployed.

From the foundation of the Northern Ireland state there had been an understanding that the Catholic population of Belfast was effectively the Achilles heel of nationalism and republicanism

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<sup>7</sup> My thanks to a referee for stressing this point.

in Ireland. They were a minority vulnerable to attack surrounded by often, hostile communities. In practice they were treated as hostages to the good behaviour of their co-religionists in the six counties and south of the border. This is not to discount the danger in Republican areas of Derry, where the Battle of the Bogside in August 1969 signalled a major turning point. This minority community, in turn, also was an Achilles heel for the UK in that the community's mistreatment, upon erupting into an international issue, became an embarrassment and encumbrance for Westminster.

So when the state and its unofficial supporters launched an armed offensive against Catholic districts in Belfast in mid-August of 1969 in response to the difficulties the police were experiencing in containing the riots in Derry, it was understood to be just another *sad but unremarkable* chapter in the Northern Ireland story. Once again Belfast's Catholic population was to be punished as an example to others. In a 24-hour period (14<sup>th</sup>/15th August) six Catholics were shot dead by police and hundreds more made homeless as a result of attacks by mobs carrying incendiary devices.<sup>8</sup>

In previous eras this punitive assault had succeeded in terrorising Belfast's Catholic population into submission, with a ripple effect on their co-religionists elsewhere. It is a matter of speculation in some quarters still why there was such a different response on that occasion. The IRA, and its non-existent arsenal, was not a factor. Perhaps because of widespread identification within the Catholic community with the civil rights movement and its articulation of their grievances, many saw this as a defining moment in their existence. Whatever the reason, many Catholics clearly resolved not to accept what had been their lot for generations.

In spite of the fact that central government in London committed regular British army troops in 1969 to stabilise the situation, Belfast's Catholic population still felt insecure. There was a conviction in working-class areas most affected by the violence that only by acquiring their own arms could they guarantee their security. History had left them with a fundamental suspicion of British Army bona fides and in late 1969 people from Catholic areas of Belfast began a frantic trawl to acquire small arms.

Initially a number of defence groups sprang up in Catholic areas. Very often these groups were built around former British army personnel. While these ex-servicemen were prepared and able to organize and even provide defence structures, they were not equipped with the contacts or knowhow to access the quantity of firearms required. There was no tradition of firearms possession by Northern Ireland's Catholic population, and obtaining guns was a specialist task. In reality there was only one section of society that had the contacts, skills, knowledge and wherewithal to access

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<sup>8</sup> See: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/chron/ch69.htm>

this type of material, and that was a segment of militant Irish republicans in the IRA, which split in December 1969 into the Official IRA (which would declare a ceasefire in 1972) and the Provisional IRA.

Notwithstanding the perception held by a majority within the Catholic community over the previous decades that the IRA with its physical force school of thought had become redundant, some people with old IRA connections unexpectedly found themselves with a military role to play after all. As had happened at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, unionism had again introduced the gun into Irish politics, engendering the altogether predictable reply from a militant wing of republicanism. The newly formed and revitalised IRA (Provisional) was nevertheless still politically cautious even as it embarked on a campaign of sniping and bombing. Many of its founding members were veterans of previous failed campaigns and were wary of launching an all out assault for which they lacked the resources anyway. They did not, for example, opt for a maximum programme of establishing an all-Ireland Republic for another two years (McKearney 2011: 108). Only after the indiscriminate use of internment in 1971 and the shooting dead of 14 civilians in Derry City in January 1972 on Bloody Sunday did the provisional IRA abandon its limited programme and declare its objective to be that of breaking the political connection with Britain (McGuffin 1973).

What had caused the IRA (Provisional) to opt for a maximum program was not merely a response to popular anger at British army shootings on Bloody Sunday. There had long been a view held within the Catholic community of Northern Ireland that attempting to reform the Northern Ireland state was impossible. Now, however, it seemed that there was no prospect of reform being imposed by London. The early hope that Westminster would force through meaningful change was dashed by the actions of its military as the behaviour of the British Army, sent in "aid of the civil power," since 1969 had managed to thoroughly alienate the Catholic population. A bloody curfew on the Falls Road, internment without trial, Bloody Sunday and retaining Unionist one-party rule in Stormont convinced the Catholic population that the British government's principle interest lay in maintaining the status quo. In reality, the IRA was responding to, rather than creating, a sense of anger and alienation within the Catholic working class.

Committed to overthrowing the Northern Irish state, the Provisional IRA made an analysis of its strength and of the balance of forces it had to contend with. In classical Irish republican thinking and theory, the core of the problem was the presence of the British government and its troops in Ireland. The reasoning was straightforward. The House of Commons was the sovereign parliament with overall responsibility for the area and the British Army was the ultimate agent used by the state to enforce its will.

Drawing on bitter experience from past failures the Provisional IRA, nevertheless, took on board a pertinent fact. The northern Irish state's first line of defence was not, in reality, the regular British Army but its locally recruited police force supported by a part-time regiment of the British Army also recruited locally, the Ulster Defence Regiment. When the British government decided, in the mid-1970s, to give priority to the use of these locally recruited forces, it became inevitable that the conflict in Northern Ireland would assume a different character, *with unavoidable sectarian consequences*, pitting as it did one community against the other rather than conducting a battle *strictly* between the IRA and the regular forces of the British state.

In light of Britain's centuries-long involvement in Ireland, it is difficult to see how London could have been unaware of the consequences of its action. Transferring the focus and primary responsibility for patrolling and securing the area away from the regular British Army and onto locally recruited agencies made a difficult situation much worse. As regular British troops' involvement was downscaled, giving a primary role to the Ulster Defence Regiment<sup>9</sup> and the Royal Ulster Constabulary,<sup>10</sup> it became inevitable that the IRA would concentrate its assault on the locally recruited forces. The predictable result was an ever more bitter communal divide. Imperial and colonial counter-insurgency strategies that concentrate on deploying local forces inevitably comes at the price of exacerbating divisions within that community, society or country, and Northern Ireland was no exception to this rule.

### **The Good Friday Agreement and how Northern Ireland society has changed**

It is useful to reflect on two points when considering an end to any conflict. In the first instance it is important to examine the concrete facts leading to the ending of hostilities and secondly it is worth keeping in mind that very few peace settlements are as neat or all-encompassing as they sometimes appear from a distance. Few battles have ended due to an unexpected and astonishing outbreak of mass enlightenment, and moreover almost every peace settlement leaves a store of unresolved issues. Northern Ireland was not an exception to this general rule either.

The 1998 Good Friday Agreement (GFA) came about as a result of several converging factors. The local protagonists had come to realise, albeit somewhat reluctantly, that it was unlikely

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<sup>9</sup> The Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) was raised by Act of Parliament in 1970, and was the largest infantry regiment in the Army with fulltime and parttime soldiers on its strength. <http://www.army.mod.uk/infantry/regiments/5952.aspx>. See also: Urban, 1992: 15-16, 50, 53.

<sup>10</sup>Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), state police force in Northern Ireland, established in 1922. The RUC had a paramilitary character until 1970, when the force was remodeled along the lines of police forces in Great Britain. In 1970 the security of Northern Ireland became the responsibility of the RUC, the British army, and the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR). <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/511633/Royal-Ulster-Constabulary-RUC>

either would gain a decisive military advantage over the other. Unsurprisingly, there was also a large degree of conflict-weariness across the stressed communities. In a wider context, the British government recognised that with the IRA signalling its willingness to negotiate an arrangement falling within what London considered acceptable, that it was important to take advantage of the opportunity. Moreover, post cold war euphoria had created a view among leading western governments' that it was opportune to address some burdensome legacies of a dated colonialism. There was a belief encouraged by the Clinton White House that at least some of these issues could be resolved through U.S.-sponsored diplomacy as had been attempted with the Oslo Accords in 1993 or in South Africa in 1994.

Prior to the open intervention of these agencies, there had been an extensive series of secret meetings and contacts between Britain's Secret Services and the IRA and between the IRA and the Dublin government through various intermediaries. Margaret Thatcher gave approval for secret talks with the IRA in 1990 though we don't know exactly when exchanges began in earnest and to what extent they spelled out bottom-line positions (Watt 1999). It is clear that the 1994 IRA ceasefire did not come as a surprise to the governments in London or Dublin. What is fair to assume is that the initiative involved a number of confidence building and trust raising measures by both sides.

As a consequence of the preparatory work and the IRA declaration of interest in a permanent ceasefire, external agencies came together in order to broker a settlement with all interested parties in Northern Ireland. In practice this meant that the British Government invited Irish and U.S. government representatives to assist in searching for a settlement. While it appeared on the surface that the facilitators were beginning with a blank page, the reality was that the British government was working to a plan that had been originally set out at the beginning of the 1970s. The "Sunningdale Agreement" (Dixon 2001: 136-150) of 1973, the basis for a failed power-sharing experiment in 1974, was based on an arrangement whereby the major parties in Northern Ireland would again share administrative power. To a large extent this programme dictated what the eventual outcome in the 1990s would be, echoing in practice the colour choice for Henry Ford's motorcar ... any colour you liked so long as it was black.

However pre-determined the outcome, there was a logic underpinning Britain's insistence on imposing power sharing on Northern Ireland's political parties. For a start, it sent an unambiguous message that the six-county state would remain intact, therefore reassuring Northern Irish Unionists and making them more likely to accept an emerging settlement. There was of course, the fact that this arrangement was not inimical to Britain's wider defence interests. Unspoken but of great importance also was that in terms of Irish realpolitik, an internal Northern

Ireland settlement also suited the Dublin government, which paradoxically was probably at least as fearful of Irish unity as were unionists in the North.

Although the external facilitators should not be accused of cynicism or bad faith, there were certain domestic political calculations involved in relation to the government administrations helping broker the deal (Mitchell 1999). U.S. President Bill Clinton, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern all found it agreeable and politically expedient to portray themselves as skilful arbitrators of a peace process that would undoubtedly be universally admired and applauded if delivered. As such, they were not working to a Northern Irish time scale alone but also had their own periods in office in mind. Wishing to see a conclusion before their administrations ended, the facilitators pressed hard for decisions to be made by the local Northern Irish parties. While there is always a certain tension between the need to get things done on one hand and to do them properly on the other hand, the former generally entails leaving loose ends.

What emerged as the Good Friday Agreement might be summed-up quite simply. The IRA made major ideological concessions in theory and in practice, chief of which was its acceptance of the legitimacy of the six-county state and with it the *de facto* acknowledgement of the unionist veto over ending partition. Furthermore by agreeing to permanently relinquish armed insurrection, verified by decommissioning its weapons, the IRA was signalling a dramatic about turn in what had been militant Irish republican orthodoxy for generations. Unionism, on the other hand, had also made an enormous concession to Republicans. By agreeing to enter government with what were in reality, senior members of the IRA, unionism had abandoned one of its crucial tenets that the Protestant majority alone was entitled to govern what had for long been its exclusive fiefdom.

A basic difficulty arising from the perceived need to force an agreement though was that a considerable amount of creative obfuscation was employed. In short, this took the form of avoiding detailing the hard logic of the agreement in favour of allowing different political communities to draw their own most favourable interpretation from the settlement. Compounding this political smokescreen was the fact that not only were the underlying implications of the agreement not clearly defined and spelled out to the Northern Irish community, but because of this, there was no agreement or consensus around the cause for past disputes. All sides would thereby draw their own interpretation of where the agreement was leading and from where it had come.

This may have been viewed as an enlightened arrangement—possibly even of Solomon-like wisdom—but the two sides nevertheless found it impossible to openly and honestly explain to their supporters what they had agreed to. The IRA described the agreement to its constituency as a stepping-stone to a thirty-two county Irish republic, while unionism attempted to persuade its electorate that the agreement guaranteed the permanency of the union. Obviously both could not be right—at least not in the end—which was conveniently far away.

Unionists also conceded the role of the Irish government in Northern Ireland affairs through the creation of the North/South Ministerial Council and the British Irish Intergovernmental Conference. The question of how to handle Northern Ireland's constitutional position within the United Kingdom appeared to be settled. The six-county state would remain part of the United Kingdom for so long as a majority of its electorate wished it to do so. This was certainly an answer of sorts, but it failed to address the other question of what might happen in the event that the electorate changed its mind. Moreover, by stating that the constitutional position of Northern Ireland indeed would change when the electorate sought to break the link with Britain, the issue of Irish unity and ending partition remained on the agenda. While some observers detect a trend in Catholics toward becoming less nationalist and more "Northern Irish," the evidence so far is a rather thin reed to lean on (Morrow 2015).

Ominously too, and due to the nature of Northern Irish politics, such a change would possibly come about when the Catholic population outnumbered the Protestant community. This in turn perpetuated not just the ongoing sectarian headcount in light of changing demographics, but it also ensured that communal politics (as distinct from more normal Left-Right or Liberal-Conservative politics) would play an enormous part in any political agenda in the days to come.

However necessary the GFA was in facilitating an end to armed conflict, the institutions created by the treaty had inherent flaws. Under it, devolved government has strictly limited fiscal authority (and therefore little power or ability to address social and economic issues) and both major constituencies have the ability to stymie each other with little incentive to cooperate. Two factors in particular contributed towards stifling the work of the institutions arising from the GFA. The D'Hondt system under which the power sharing assembly's executive is elected and the regulation permitting a legislation-blocking "Petition of Concern" have blunted the effectiveness of the political institutions created by the agreement.<sup>11</sup>

In order to ensure that both communities in Northern Ireland would have representation in the executive and to prevent a return to majority rule, the D'Hondt system guarantees that there is a shared administration in Northern Ireland. There are obvious advantages in this, insofar as it entrenches rights for minorities in a society divided along ethno-religious lines. Without such an arrangement, it would have been impossible to create any type of political administration in the region. However, in the absence of a majority administration with the ability to make and enforce decisions, government is frequently in deadlock. At its best, the D'Hondt system might provide for harmony and agreement allowing party differences to be overcome. In the absence of agreement,

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<sup>11</sup> The basic idea of the D'Hondt System is that a party's vote total is divided by a certain figure, which increases as it wins more seats. As the divisor becomes bigger, the party's total in succeeding rounds gets smaller, allowing parties with lower initial totals to win seats. On the D'Hondt Rule, see also O'Leary & McGarry, 1996: 374-375.

as is the case in Northern Ireland at present, it merely leads to stalemate and that has practically become the default position in Northern Ireland.

Moreover, with the D'Hondt system not providing agreement, the existence of the "Petition of Concern" has added to what has become almost a virtual breakdown in the Northern Ireland assembly. In practice any vote taken by the assembly can be made dependent on cross-community support if a petition of concern is presented to the assembly speaker. In such cases, a vote on proposed legislation will only pass if supported by a weighted majority (sixty percent) of members voting, including at least forty percent of each of the nationalist and unionist designations present and voting. Effectively this means that—provided enough MLAs from a given community agree—that community can exercise a veto over the assembly's decisions. Since the restoration of devolution in 1998, the device has been used a total of sixty three times, and more than half of those were in the past two years.

Over the recent past, petitions of concern have been lodged in order to prevent the scrutiny of a minister's performance when it appeared obvious that, at best, he was guilty of incompetence. In other situations it has been used in an almost table-tennis-like fashion as one veto begets another veto which in turn begets yet another veto.

Northern Ireland's two leading parties, the DUP and SF, are therefore embedded within a dilemma. They do not have the power (even if they wanted to use it) to address the social and economic issues that might enhance their constituents' lives and contentment and encourage people to place more emphasis on life's pleasures and less on its difficulties. Deprived of this option, the parties are obliged to work within a political accommodation that most of their supporters find unappealing at best, giving endless cause for disagreement.

The weakness inherent in not being able to agree to viable and working political structures was initially masked by competition within the two main power blocks. As Sinn Féin battled for hegemony within the Catholic community, it had to play a more conciliatory role in order to sustain the institutions so that it would be able to disadvantage the SDLP. To a similar extent, the DUP had to restrain itself sufficiently in order to enter an administration-sharing accord with Sinn Féin if it were to supplant its unionist rival in the UUP. As the two main parties, Sinn Féin and the DUP, gained the upper hand over their nearest rivals, they then turned more attention towards bickering with each other, and functional weaknesses in the system began to grow more obvious.

In spite of this situation of suspended animation, the Good Friday Agreement cannot be dismissed as having failed. There are many achievements to its credit. Few could dispute the incalculable benefits of having brought an end to a prolonged and bloody conflict. Lives were undoubtedly saved and quality of life rose to a different and better standard. Ultimately, few would argue with Winston Churchill's old observation that jaw jaw, regardless of how acrimonious, is

better than war war, and this is a view still shared by the overwhelming majority in Northern Ireland.

Moreover, the GFA delivered measurable political progress no matter how difficult this may be to see at times. This was a breakthrough that had seemed impossible in earlier generations. The old practice, arising from the area's colonial past, of a Protestant parliament for a Protestant people was definitively laid to rest by the institutions arising out of the GFA. Importantly too, this outcome was clearly underwritten by the British government, sending a clear signal that whatever had remained the same, there was to be no return to the past, and with this went a definitive ending of the Orange state. The genius of the GFA lay in that it allowed itself to be all things to all participants. By giving the IRA an opportunity to enter parliamentary politics and even aspire to share the administration of the area and to do so while being able to tell its supporters that this was an opening to their main objective of an all-Ireland republic, the GFA provided the organization's leadership the space to deliver and then maintain a cessation of armed actions.

By delivering a sustained ceasefire, the GFA, in turn, was able to persuade the unionist population that, no matter how distasteful it might be to have the IRA in Stormont, there was an absence of the violence that had inflicted so much damage on their community. Moreover, the GFA redressed a deficit that had concerned unionism for years after the old Stormont parliament had been prorogued in 1973. Without a local administration acting as a form of breakwater between itself and government in London, unionism felt nervous about London governments' long-term intentions. One of the ironies of Northern Ireland is that unionists distrust London only slightly less than they do Dublin. The over-generous allocation of members to the Northern Ireland Assembly assuaged this fear, for a time at least. At its most basic the GFA provided a most sophisticated, elaborate, and complex fig-leaf to those who wanted an excuse to end a war but who had difficulty agreeing on how to build a shared and integrated society post-conflict.

### **Factors that have emerged since signing of Good Friday Agreement**

Since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement and the crucially important establishment of an administration in 2007 under the joint management of the Democratic Unionist Party's Ian Paisley and Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness, there have been significant changes to the political and economic landscape in which Northern Ireland sits. The now largely pacified region no longer receives priority treatment from Westminster, Scotland's brush with independence is causing the format of the union to be reviewed, de-industrialization in peripheral regions coupled with the simultaneous expansion of a London-centric financial sector is altering the economic balance of the UK, changing demographics in the six-county area, and the likelihood of a strategic review by

Westminster in relation to Ireland as a whole are all important factors which will impact on the future of Northern Ireland.

No matter how relieved the population is at an end to political violence, there is the anticlimax of becoming just one other peripheral region of the UK. No longer is the area deemed a special case when assessed by the Treasury in London and no longer can leading politicians in Northern Ireland expect to be received at short notice by the Prime Minister at Downing Street. Following the heady and intoxicating days of being entertained by world leaders and interviewed by the international media, it's back to the dreary steeples for the North's political class.

On the rare occasions when the region features in the London media it is usually to draw unwanted negative coverage arising from riots and civil disturbances. These usually result from disputes over flag flying, marching bands, Irish language speakers or some other issue the British have difficulty understanding. Deprived of the old dangerous nuisance factor, the area and its politicians have now to make their own way in an indifferent and difficult world, which now also includes the rest of the UK.

Nor is it just a matter of being out of the international spotlight. The British Treasury treats Northern Ireland in the same manner as it does any other part of the UK. No longer is the security allocation sacrosanct and when the Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne decided to reduce social security provision, there was no exception made for Belfast. In fact, the resultant need to pare annual expenditure caused interminable wrangling between the parties in the Assembly and added to the instability of the local political institutions.

Looming too on the horizon in relation to Northern Ireland's future is the mooted reorganization of the United Kingdom into a more federal, rather than centralised union (Rigby, et al. 2014). The recent Scottish referendum was clearly the catalyst for this initiative and while the Scots voted against independence, the large number seeking to break with London has left the issue an ongoing concern and liable to be resurrected at any time in the future. The implications for Northern Ireland are not only in the uncertainty resulting from the inevitable re-organization of the UK but there is the clear reminder that profound change to the constitutional position of the region is distinctly possible.

Ominously too for the unionist position is the ever-present demographic factor that puts an unnerving question mark over the long-term future of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom. The closely monitored sectarian headcount is indicating that the numerical difference between the Catholic and Protestant communities is constantly diminishing, and the numbers will probably level out within the next quarter-century. Whether this will lead to a united Ireland is speculative, and the outcome of any vote remains far from certain. At the same time it would be

naive to believe that long-held political opinions will change dramatically in the next 20 or 30 years.

While Northern Ireland is changing demographically, it is also facing major economic challenges at a time when both England and Scotland are reassessing the nature of the Union. This matters enormously, since many of Northern Ireland's problems stem at least as much from the unequal distribution of wealth and power in a class sense as from a failure to reconcile two (or possibly three) different ethnic identities. The area has one of the highest levels of child poverty in the UK, the highest level of economic inactivity in the UK, reputable voluntary agencies fear for the well-being of the elderly, and there is an ongoing exodus of the young. Neo-liberalism and globalization have not been kind to Northern Ireland, and this is not likely to change anytime soon.

Moreover, deprived of fiscal authority and subsequently left without either the compulsion or incentive to plot an economic course, politics in Northern Ireland tends to descend into promotion of single-identity community issues, which in turn tends to merely highlight those matters that divide the communities such as; flags, emblems, cultural activities, commemorations, and sporting events. Economic and social issues are presenting profound problems that an assembly—obsessing over parades, demolished and disused prisons, and protocols surrounding flags and emblems—is not best equipped to deal with. At present, these questions are widely discussed, but no potential solutions are being offered. In time, this concentration on contentious but *symbolic* issues rather than addressing underlying social, economic and educational issues may prove to be a costly indulgence.

Significantly too in this context is the fact that as far as Northern Ireland is concerned, the economic rationale underpinning the union has been steadily eroded over the past few decades. Paradoxically, this is due in no small measure to the efforts of the strongly pro-unionist Margaret Thatcher and her supporters. As Britain's economy has moved steadily away from manual-labor-dependent coal, steel and heavy industry towards London-centric financial services, peripheral regions have grown less crucial to the needs of the center. In terms of the overall British economy, Northern Ireland is now the least crucial region of all. The nature of the United Kingdom's economy means there is no compelling economic reason for placing real priority on retaining Northern Ireland. The area offers little in the way of profit garnering, either in terms of what it produces or consumes.

Running alongside Northern Ireland's declining economic vitality is a palpable loss of patience by central government with the ineffective political situation in Northern Ireland. Alex Kane, a former adviser to David Trimble, wrote in the Belfast Newsletter (Belfast Newsletter 2014) that he would not vote in the local government elections because, as he said, "... the

Assembly isn't working, the Executive is dysfunctional, we have farce rather than government, the parties don't care; and nothing is being allowed to change." Kane was not just highlighting the stalemate in the Northern Assembly but also echoed in his article the words of Theresa Villiers, the British Conservative Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, who had bluntly warned local Northern Irish politicians that if Stormont can not evolve it may well collapse. She pointedly reminded them in her speech that a state that does not have the means to change is also a state without the means of its own preservation.

Ms. Villiers' words carry a more profound meaning than many of her audience realised because they may well reveal a long-term change in Britain's Irish policy. If this is the case—and it looks highly likely—that change is not relating to the North of Ireland alone but is something pointing towards a recalibration of London's policy towards all of Ireland. Over the past few decades, Britain invested considerable political and military capital in the "Ulster Question." Now, while undoubtedly content that it no longer has to contend with frequent bombings and gun battles, there is clearly a sense of frustration in Whitehall with the never-ending political deadlock in Belfast. Moreover, this exasperation has no doubt caused London to view Northern Ireland as unstable or even unmanageable, and therefore not the best possible fit for its wider requirements. Negotiations are currently underway between the parties to try and overcome these differences, but it is far from certain how permanent any agreement, if any, may be (McAdam 2014).

A principal attraction for London in the past was Northern Ireland's role as providing a military base protecting Britain's western flank. While this will always remain a concern for London, the nature of the strategic calculation changes with politics and technology. Old style conventional surface vessel-based sea power is not as crucial in an age of supersonic aircraft and nuclear-armed submarines capable of remaining under the ocean waves for months at a time.

In contrast to the vexatious nature of northern Irish politics, the much more stable Southern Ireland is becoming a more attractive partner for Britain's Irish interests. Dublin is becoming increasingly engaged with Britain and previous hostilities are all but forgotten by most in the Republic of Ireland. Queen Elizabeth made a historic visit to Ireland in 2011 and in return hosted an Irish state visit to Britain in 2014. It appears that London is more anxious to recruit the Southern Irish state as its ally on the island than depend on the more volatile Northerners. Moreover Britain is certainly aware of the potential for changing demographics and it is quite capable of taking the long view that at some time in the not too distant future it will be more advantageous to have the goodwill of Dublin. There is no doubt that these factors will play a major part in determining the future of Northern Ireland. What is in doubt is whether local northern Irish politicians and their parties can cope with the changes that are coming. The Northern Ireland case is exacerbated by dependency upon and control over funding by the British government. British government caps on

the Northern Ireland budget are creating extreme stresses on the Assembly and Executive. These stresses could either become a basis for unity across the ethno-nationalist divide or a further basis of frustration and division.

### **Conclusion—and a comparison with South Africa and Israel/Palestine.**

There is a view held by many who participated in negotiating the Good Friday Agreement that it provides a template for other areas of conflict (Bew, et al. 2009). As with all aspects of human relations, there are some features of the Northern Ireland peace process that may have universal application. However it would be wrong to stretch this point too far. Northern Ireland was not unique but at the same time there were and remain many significant differences between this small six-county state and other zones of international conflict. In the first place Northern Ireland is a small and rather insignificant place in the world, both in terms of its strategic importance and economic muscle. There may have been a time when global politics, geography and the existing state of technology made Northern Ireland a vital part in Britain's projection of power across the north Atlantic. Now, however, Britain depends much more for its national security on the military umbrella provided by the United States than it does on its own indigenous armed forces. Contemporary technology with its nuclear armed submarines; drones, and supersonic aircraft have combined to reduce the importance of Northern Ireland's deepwater harbours and remote airdromes.

Economically, Northern Ireland is a minnow in terms of Britain's annual output. In terms of global output, Northern Ireland is a non-presence. Nor does it control any strategically important natural resources. Changes in the inter-state system and military technologies changed the strategic significance of Northern Ireland to the point of nullity. The change doubtless influenced Britain's willingness to weaken Unionist control in Northern Ireland, particularly in the 1960s when the British government was redefining its role from declining hegemon to diplomatic facilitator (thereby increasing its vulnerability to international moral pressure).<sup>12</sup> Consequently the area does not enjoy leverage in the world's halls of power. Nor does it—if left to its own devices—pose any significant threat to international stability, the balance of power, or the uninterrupted flow of precious or vital commodities. In short, none of the world's superpowers have a vested interest in influencing the governance of Northern Ireland. Undoubtedly, Britain is determined to ensure that Northern Ireland (or any part of Ireland) will not be occupied by a hostile power, but if that were to happen it would be tantamount to a declaration of war on Her Majesty's government. Moreover,

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<sup>12</sup> My thanks to a referee on this point.

it would require a hard-to-imagine shift in the balance of world power for any state to attempt to do so, considering the difficulties involved in occupying a base so close to Britain.

There are many basic differences between the Northern Ireland situation and that existing in other areas that either have had or are currently experiencing conflict, areas such as the Ukraine, South Africa, or the Middle East. These are areas of significant geopolitical importance and some with the ability to influence the flow of precious natural resources. If there was an international interest in Ireland it was peripheral. The Clinton White House had an interest in the Irish peace process, but it was more like the interest the mayor of New York has in the St Patrick's Day parade rather than the type of interest the CIA has in events in the Middle East. British Prime Minister Tony Blair had a somewhat greater stake resting on the outcome since the IRA had physically attacked his state and its economy and armed forces. Nevertheless, there was for him and his cabinet the potential to be written into history as those who had finally solved the seemingly impossible "Irish Question."

This is very different, for example, from what is happening in present day Ukraine, where battles are taking place within the context of global politics. Sitting as it does between the European Union and the vast Russian State, Kiev is a pivot or a halfway house between East and West. It is no surprise therefore that the conflict in that country is now being described in old Cold War terms. In many ways the Ukraine suffers a double affliction in that its people are in violent disagreement over how the country should be managed on one hand and on the other hand, that they are situated geographically between two superpowers. Ukraine's destiny is not entirely in its own hands.

Look then at South Africa. This country was and remains a commodity-rich land producing much of the world's gold and diamonds. Moreover, its geographical position at the southern tip of Africa gives it a commanding position to control access to both the southern Atlantic and southern Indian oceans, two of the world's most important regions and vital sea routes.

During the apartheid years, the West, led by the United States and supported by its NATO allies, viewed South Africa through the prism of Cold War politics. The African National Congress (ANC) was advised and supported by the Moscow-leaning South African Communist Party, which had members occupying key positions in the leadership of the ANC. Consequently, the West feared an ANC victory, seeing it as a Trojan horse paving the way for a regime in Johannesburg that was influenced if not actually controlled by Moscow. In light of this analysis, the West took the view that the continuation of apartheid was a more tolerable option than a communist South Africa.

With the demise of the Soviet Union and the ending of the Cold War these geopolitical considerations changed. Western powers that had not only tolerated but supported apartheid regimes in South Africa, changed direction almost overnight. No longer fearing the left wing of

the ANC, the apartheid regime became an embarrassment to Western powers, which withdrew their support, forcing the white minority to negotiate with the African majority. The lesson of South Africa is that its place in world super power politics was a determining factor in its history. Ultimately, the world powers that tolerated apartheid, if only reluctantly, played a major role in forcing change and ensuring that there would be a relatively peaceful transition rather than a mutually destructive cataclysm. Interestingly, the western powers that feared communism were also influential in ensuring that while the franchise was extended to all; the free-market South African economy remained essentially the same.

For many of the same reasons, Israel and the Middle East are also quite different from Northern Ireland. Although the U.S. government endeavoured to broker a deal in the Middle East involving the State of Israel and the Palestinian people and had apparently achieved considerable progress with the Oslo accords, the wider political environment worked against a permanent settlement. Unlike South Africa, the Middle East conflict was not simply a Cold War standoff. Whether or not there is a Soviet Union, the Middle East remains the world's principal "swing" supplier of oil, and as such it has a decisive influence on the world's economy. The United States and its allies view the State of Israel as a key component in maintaining a balance of power in the Middle East. Israel's very existence prevents any of the contending currents within the Arab world gaining absolute dominance and thereafter creating turbulence in the world's economy through controlling the flow of oil.

There are, nevertheless, some intriguing parallels between the State of Israel and that of Northern Ireland, although not so much perhaps in the realm of peace-building but more in the make-up of the two states. The modern State of Israel had its origins, as did Northern Ireland, in a migration that displaced the local indigenous inhabitants. Furthermore, both states ultimately depend or have depended for their military survival on significant military support from a single, albeit different, external sources. There is too, in both regions, two communities separated ostensibly by religion but in reality by many other issues which have little to do with theological matters.

Ultimately, that may be where Northern Ireland and its "peace process" may sit in the greater world. The area is no longer an international news story, nor is it a strategically important location or asset in either economic or military terms. Ireland as a whole no longer is the valuable larder that, as Marx observed in the 19th century, shifts cattle, grain and hapless recruits into the factories and armies of the British empire (Marx 1958: 702-703). The details of the Northern Irish conflict and settlement are not of great interest to any but historians of Ireland or specialists in asymmetrical warfare. What relevance Northern Ireland has to an international audience lies in how it once fit into a wider context; that of protecting Britain's flank. As technology advanced and

the empire declined, it became attractive for London to relegate the area's significance and dispense with the ongoing embarrassment it caused. This is the real lesson from Northern Ireland.

## About the Author

Tommy McKearney was a senior member of the Provisional IRA from the early 1970s until his arrest in 1977. Sentenced to life imprisonment, he served 16 years during which time he participated in the 1980 hunger strike in the Maze. He is now a freelance journalist and an organiser with the Independent Workers Union.

## Disclosure Statement

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## Loose Ends:

### Considerations on the Aftermaths of the Celtic Tiger and the Northern 'Troubles'

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*This is a correction to the original article. For information about the changes made, please see the erratum*

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"If you wish to know what the spirit of conquest, religious hatred, combined with all the abuses of aristocracy without any of its advantages, can produce, come to Ireland." - Alexis de Tocqueville, 1835<sup>1</sup>

"I remember when the market took off, about 1988/89 . . . We'd no idea it was going to escalate into what it did. Nobody had experienced the type of boom that came. There was a lot of money made in that period. People who cashed in did very well." - An Irish auctioneer, 2005<sup>2</sup>



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From the imperially imposed destitution rued by aristocratic iconoclasts Tocqueville and Beaumont to the epic financial meltdown imposed by domestic quasi-aristocratic bankers and

<sup>1</sup> Larkin, 1990: 26; Beaumont, 1839.

<sup>2</sup> MacIntyre, 2005: 161-162.

allied insiders is quite a rocky journey, but one with steady themes: deference to authority, comprador capitulation to external forces, celebration of the conventional, and exclusion or erasure of anyone the least bit critical of elite schemes.<sup>3</sup> By the look of things, the Celtic Tiger, defunct or not, is still digesting its critics. The upshot of the Tiger era was not a presumably desired deepening (after a Rostovian “take-off” in the 1960s) of a vibrant, if mostly foreign, manufacturing base and a widening of prosperity, but resort instead to conjuring money out of thin air just long enough for the slickest operators to cash in.<sup>4</sup> In retrospect, and even at the time, it is hard to credit the notion that defeat was snatched from the jaws of victory in the developmental quest, a debacle, given who was in charge, was always in the cards.<sup>5</sup>

Progress in Ireland is all too aptly signified in the serpent Ouroborus swallowing its own tail — especially in the dispiriting sense of symbolizing a cyclical return (Jung 1968). Ireland has been thrust not back to proverbial “square one” where the citizenry can radically reconsider the socio-economic enterprise and how to go forward from here; instead middleman elites, as McCabe terms them, defiantly pressed the reset button on what should be a discredited model. As the “success narrative” of the tiger years fades into recriminatory nothingness, one hopes it is true that “a debate started in earnest as to whether we managed collectively to delude ourselves over the last number of years,” despite a power structure that has not budged one bit (Share and Corcoran 2013: 2, 3.). That one can name worse cases, such as Greece, is not comforting, as Coakley clearly shows.

Fintan O'Toole, Raymond Crotty, Paeder Kirby, Ronnie Munck, Jim Wickham and a host of scholars now arrayed around TASC sounded unheeded early warnings of misshapen development policies, and then in the 2000s of frothy financial legerdemain too (Jacobsen 1978, 1987, and 1994; Crotty 1985; Wickham 1987; Munck 1993; O'Hearn 1998; O'Toole 2003; Kirby 2002, 2008). Before the bubble burst Bertie Ahern, like Hamlet, dabbled with “self-slaughter” as a solution, at least for barking mad critics. Fear not for gatekeepers after the crash because no one gets punished for herd behavior in major institutions. The leaders plead they knew no one (who mattered) who raised grave questions about the developmental model or about the financial web of ghostly gossamer on which everything increasingly rested in the noughties. Irish academics too humbly even mock themselves for “operating at a safe remove from politics” when they were pointing out the economy rested on unstable ground (O'Connell 2012: 22). The core problem is

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<sup>3</sup> On the authoritarian strain in political culture see Ferriter, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> “Deepening” entails fastening foreign firms more firmly into local supply networks, generating more Irish-owned industry, public or private, service or manufacturing. See Yean and Loke, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> See O'Riain 2010, also O'Riain, 2013.

that just as gender patterns are seen as “reflecting essentialist and immutable realities,” so too is the world economy (O'Connor 2012: 60). It simply is out there and must be adjusted to. Structure rules all. On that point Celtic tiger proponents and critics seem agreed. Sod agency, unless it is an industrial development agency fine-tuning the terms of dependence.

Ireland from one end of the island to the other is the classic “policy taker” (versus “maker” or “breaker”) so far as the international order of predation is concerned, though there is no absurdity in Irish policy responses that was not manifested in mightier neoliberal powers like the United States and the UK (Krasner 1978). For decades financiers have been fashioning what is for them a utopian world without risk, which is not capitalism as the textbooks know it but a rigged game, ultimately protected and coddled by sympathetic politicians, judges, and administrators within the “competition state” (Ourosoff 2012). Will this preposterous free market fundamentalism ever become too threadbare to take seriously? What more calamitous events will it take? What screams from the bank bail-out experience is the “emperor's new clothes” observation that those in charge of the world economic system are busy doing their pious best to unravel it.

So ensued bailouts, austerity, and reinflation of bubbles in the United States, UK, and more widely the EU, in the service of shoring up banking systems that are themselves best described as toxic assets (Suskind 2011). In the Republic, symptomatically, a recent high-spirited volume “refuses to allow the next generation to accept the incarceration of thought that has captured its predecessor”—rejecting the “old official Ireland of banking oligarchs, social partnerships, mighty mandarins, and states monopolies”—and then trots out the same old “lean and mean” neoliberal nostrums (Burke and Lyons 2011). One cannot be blamed for yearning again for “the greatest growth in income per head over the period 1985-2010,” except that it hasn't sunk in that virtually all of it was bubble-based. It is not only decrepit Bourbons who forget nothing and learn nothing. Institutions resolutely close ranks during crises.

After relating a sour litany of scandals in finance, policing and political bribery in 1980s Ireland, keen investigators lamented that “institutions from *An Garda Siochana* to the Roman Catholic Church still operated on the basis that a scandal for the institution was worse than any infidelity to legal or moral standards” (Clifford and Coleman 2010: 198). Nothing, as Archbishop McQuaid reportedly stated after the liberalizing Second Vatican Council, has changed. Not if he could help it anyway. Not if they can help it now. McCullagh, like Coakley and McCabe, notes “discursive moments” in late 2008 when a self-serving elite diagnosis succeeded in blaming the entire Irish people, not bankers and speculators, for thinking up an infinitely complicated way to keep a stagnant system afloat on credit and exports. The key here is that you don't really have to fool people into believing a plainly silly story, you just have to fool people into thinking everyone

else believes the story, which is much easier and more disheartening for all those who otherwise might mount a challenge (Jacobsen 2008: 360-361).

The origins of this ideational and institutional stasis stem from thwarted revolutionary aspirations, which Foster, among many others, argues with ample if not clinching evidence was never likely in the 1916-23 epoch (Foster 2014: 329). Ernie O'Malley, cited in an essay above, serves as the ‘median’ Irish rebel, as unencumbered with social change aspirations as any politician or economist. O’Malley soon joined those who “rail against the new state for not delivering what they fought for.” So, beyond independence, there was some inchoate vision of social betterment (Foster 2014: 309). O’Malley expressed scorn for “the convictions of purely revolutionary workers who stood outside the nationalist movement and a certain amusement at their arguments” (O’Malley 1936: 144). Yet even this arch-nationalist Republican admitted that “class distinctions would jut out, and our merging into what we were pleased to call ‘the people’ was a figment” (p. 317). O’Malley also credits the crucial and perhaps indispensable role of worker action for the success of the struggle, so far as it went, just as Kostick (2009) argues. It was not historically inevitable that labour “waited,” but the consequences are immense.

O’Malley was not disposed to think far ahead, but plenty of others were. Figures like James Connolly or Paedar O’Donnell or George Gilmore are not fairly characterized as “prisoners of their own concepts,” but were more aware of their constraints than critics seem to be of their own biases. (The Gerty McDowell image fails to “reverse the gaze” and consider that it is her beach companions who seem most locked into a self-stunting swirl, not her.)<sup>6</sup> Peader O’Donnell’s nationalism was the antithesis of bourgeois nationalism, which his opponents appreciated well enough to want to shoot him for the difference. Translating socialist principles into locally applicable terms is a legitimate activity, which has had its successes elsewhere. The argument by English, Grant and predecessors regarding the “theoretical inconsistencies of mixing republicanism with socialism” portrays this task as a kind of crime of intellectual miscegenation (like mixing Marx and Freud, which engendered many fascinating works), and is just as foolish and fruitless as opposition to any other form of miscegenation.<sup>7</sup>

So what is to be done? Pity the poor developmental state. The formidable task of “getting it right” regarding the coordination (and/or lucky confluence) of international conditions, domestic coalition formation, and suitable institutional structure is a work that is never quite done. Neoliberalism imposes daunting, if not impossible, conditions. What were advantageous arrangements yesterday can burden or obstruct one unduly today. There's no resting on laurels

<sup>6</sup> For defenses of Gerty in this vein see Ross (2009) and Sondergaard (2011).

<sup>7</sup> Grant, 2012: 223; English 1994. Grant allows for adaptability but implies this is somehow cheating.

because, as O'Riain, and countless preceding scholars observe, development is “a politically contested process that generates continuous, albeit different, challenges as it unfolds” (2004: 125). Pragmatism, a word people rarely quibble with, was interpreted to best serve the mission, as Albert Reynolds stated in 1989, “to evolve, and apply policy so as to underpin rather than undermine growth prospects” (Boss 2011: 120). The Celtic tiger carefully eschewed the *dirigiste* element that deepened success for some Asian counterparts. The Irish polity, like Anglo-American counterparts, also was heartily disinclined to redistribute benefits to the less well-connected (Connolly 2006: 2). High growth—regardless of the ‘black hole’—teamed up with rising income inequality, a stinginess regarding welfare, and a surge in “virulent racism” on both sides of the border toward immigrants (O'Riain 2004: 63; Kinealy 2010: 317).

The developmental ideal of “self-reproducing dynamics” was elusive because no one seriously pursued it. After the *Telesis Report* in 1982 sounded the tocsin about overreliance on the multinationals, the Irish Republic refashioned itself into what O'Riain termed a “developmental network state” whose purported objective was to thread foreign investment more securely into the economy, cultivate local enterprise, and deepen their connections. Irish growth also was based on a willing coalition that other analysts call neo-corporatism or a “cognitively locked social partnership,” espousing what O'Riain nicely terms “solidarity without equality” (Murphy 2008). Contrary to business hype, the sources of Ireland's 1990s “takeoff” lay in foreign investor enticements, public sector spending, and a hefty influx of EU structural funds to shore up infrastructure. There is latitude for institutional experiment here and supple state institutions can influence the character of the market they operate in, even though O'Riain comes perilously close in all his work to a social constructivist claim that capitalism only is what states make of it.

The analytical upshot is that the “power of the global economy is not determining—the analysis shows that there is significant room for politics”—a lesson repeatedly noted from Fernando Cardoso in the 1970s stretching to yours truly in the 1990s (O'Riain 2004; Cardoso and Faletto 1979; Jacobsen 1994). Yet the point bears repeating. O'Riann, like other critics, shows how economic success, as understood by its main myopic beneficiaries, undermines the very institutional supports that make the system work in the first place. “If the institutions of the Celtic Tiger could generate the results they did in face of domestic neoliberal populism and an international order hostile to state and social shaping of economic life, what might they achieve given a more supportive political order?” (2004: 11). Good question.

Financialization means making money from money rather than from production (in the absence of sufficient demand and investment opportunities); it is devising, exploiting, and gorging on arcane pecuniary devices and getting away with it, even when failing (Salverda 2015; Hudson 2015). With so much spare cash seeking investible outlets one might imagine investors would be

in a disadvantageous position and be eager to go along with any productive scheme public authorities propose. Such was not the casse. What Cerny (1997) termed the “competition state” edges itself away from the ordinary populace and places itself at the service of global firms and banks, trusting that everything would work out because there was no alternative. Kirby finds the Irish experience redolent of a “competition state with pockets of developmentalism” (2009: 19). Even those pockets look like grist for the next sell-off. The tally sheet on the waves of privatizations and public-private partnerships in the neighbouring UK has not been a happy one either, but they go on anyway.<sup>8</sup> One path forward is a dispelling of the stubborn myth that valiant investors, and not state spending, always generate the conditions for productivity and prosperity, as Mazzacato most recently elaborated.<sup>9</sup>

As for the North, obfuscation was however regrettably crucial to achieve the Good Friday Agreement so that political figures could interpret it to their own communities in favorable ways. Stepping stone to the all-Island Republic or final recognition of the British link? Yet what an analyst alertly calls the Republican movement’s “continuation of war by other means” slowly has gained the upper hand over recalcitrant working class loyalists (Bean 2011: 61, 62). Northern Ireland from 1997 onward has seen indefatigable foot-dragging, dissident Republican violence, escalation in house prices (until the crash), racist sprees by loyalist gangs, proliferation of so-called peace walls, and a power-sharing executive without much power to alleviate local economic pressures and under almost constant threat of collapse due to conflict between a resistant Sinn Féin and SDLP versus the leading conservative DUP over inflicting an austerity budget.

A pair of recent IRA-linked killings provided grist for an expedient effort by Unionist Parties to torpedo power-sharing again, but the peculiar reprisal—peculiar, given that the murder victims were former or active IRA members—was averted last November by the latest of many a last minute deal. In Northern Ireland more people are dying on the streets from homelessness than from political violence (*Belfast Telegraph* 2016). There is precious little sign that stringent economic conditions are uniting rather than alienating the communities. The inequalities that underlay the conflict have not gone away, though the Catholic community has made undeniable strides. The Catholic-Protestant gap is closing quickly in sheer demographics, but this trend predicts nothing as to the issue of unification since only a minority of Northern Catholics are interested in it. As McKearney observes, the political establishment in the Irish Republic, with a

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<sup>8</sup> The Treasury estimated the lifetime costs of Labour-era deals at 215 billion pounds, paying for deals with a capital value of between 55 and 65 billion pounds.' Toynbee and Walker, 2013: 117.

<sup>9</sup> Mazzacato, 2013: 193. On the 'Sussex school' of technology and economics from which her analysis hails, see Jacobsen 1992.

wary eye as well on constitutional Sinn Féin, is in no more a hurry now than it was earlier to integrate a million plus discontented Loyalists into a single political structure (McKittrick and McVea 2000; Coakley 2002; Tonge 2005).

### Conclusion

The argument that “state-centric approaches ignore the fact that the national state can only exist within a larger system of states and institutions” is a cogent one so far as it goes (Smith and Kutz-Flamenbaum 2010: 211). Even the most conservative scholars of international political economy will agree heartily. The question is, how far? One brilliantly daffy theory I heard spun long ago in an Irish pub was that we all come into life with a mission to move half the distance away from our instinctive natures if we are to be fulfilled, content, or even just sane. If you are extroverted, move toward introversion; if introverted go toward extroversion. Everyone is thus encumbered with a difficult task. This is no less the case for analyzing how international forces affect nation-states through the interpretive (and interest-laden) lenses of domestic groups, at least those who manage to achieve a say in how the state responds.

The Irish Republic's February 2016 election, sorting itself out among players as of this writing, can reasonably be seen, regardless of the eventual governing arrangement, as a spectacle of a stark yet muffled repudiation of mainstream parties and of neoliberal economic policy (Walsh 2016). The two major centrist “civil war parties” Fianna Fail and Fine Gael barely got a majority of the vote, which is a remarkable drop from their standard post-independence 80% range (Loscher 2016). Irish Labour's self-immolation in yet another ill-advised coalition (30 of 37 seats lost) leaves the field to a confused if potentially formidable opposition of scattered leftists and independents. One task today is generating a movement for an “alternative political economy”—one that does not privatize profits and socialize losses would do for a start—for which a recent TASC survey indicates immense latent popular support (TASC 2014). A related task is finding the economic policy equivalent of Andre Gorz' “non-reform reforms” for guiding the next phase. From Tocqueville to the present an emphatic “lack of a moral tie between rich and poor” remains the case, and indeed is required for increasingly feral finance capital to expand.

### About the Author

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## World-Ecology and Ireland: The Neoliberal Ecological Regime

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### Abstract

*Since the collapse of the Celtic Tiger, the socio-economic particularity of neoliberal capitalism in its Irish manifestation has increasingly been critiqued, but little attention has been paid to neoliberalism as ecology within Ireland. This article conducts an exploratory survey of the characteristics of the Irish neoliberal ecological regime during and after the Celtic Tiger, identifying the opening of new commodity frontiers (such as fracking, water, agro-biotechnology, and biopharma) constituted in the neoliberal drive to appropriate and financialize nature. I argue for the usefulness of applying not only the tools of world-systems analysis, but also Jason W. Moore's world-ecological paradigm, to analysis of Ireland as a semi-periphery. What is crucial to a macro-ecological understanding of Ireland's experience of the neoliberal regime of the world-ecology is the inextricability of its financial role as a tax haven and secrecy jurisdiction zone from its environmental function as a semi-peripheral pollution and water haven. More expansive, dialectical understandings of "ecology" as comprising the whole of socio-ecological relations within the capitalist world-ecology—from farming to pharma to financialization—are vital to forming configurations of knowledge able not only to take account of Ireland's role in the environmental history of capitalism, but also to respond to the urgent ecological crises of the neoliberal present.*

**Keywords:** World-Ecology; Ireland; Neoliberalism; Food-Systems; Energy; Pollution



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Anna Klobucka's observation that world-systems paradigms offer a more complex understanding of European semi-peripheries than the binary models of colonial and postcolonial development is particularly suggestive for the Irish situation (Klobucka 1997: 125-6). Ireland's uneven development and peripheralization cannot be understood solely in the context of British colonialism, with no ability to account for its subsequent subordination to the hegemony of U.S. capital and to core Eurozone states. The historical development of Ireland has been profoundly shaped and continues to be shaped by its role as a politically weak and unevenly developed semi-periphery within the European economy and the capitalist world-system as whole. The converse point could also be made, that as an "intermediating semi-periphery" (O'Hearn 2001: 200) Ireland has played a significant role in the emergence of different cycles of systemic accumulation as a laboratory for new forms of expropriation, from sixteenth-century plantation to twenty-first century neoliberal austerity. However, this role must be understood not only in terms of Ireland's socio-economic relation to the world-economy, but of Ireland's function in the world-ecology. This article argues for the adoption of the theoretical tools of world-ecological analysis in order to conduct a radical reappraisal in the current conjuncture of Ireland's environmental history in relation to the structures of power and capital inside Ireland, and the structures of external power within which Ireland is bound.

Within the Irish academy, the recent emergence of transdisciplinary approaches to ecology has coincided with the intensification of technocratic approaches to funding of environmental research. European schemes and policy agendas such as Horizon 2020 are mostly oriented towards producing bankable technological "solutions" to the challenges of climate crisis, energy sovereignty, and food security confronting contemporary Europe. This forecloses the possibilities of investigating alternative, more emancipatory organizations of nature-society. Obediently incorporating EU policy targets, Irish national funding bodies have emphasized the degree to which technocratic solutions should be monetized, part of the ongoing drive to bolster the knowledge economy and to convert universities into patent factories, where intellectual property can be enclosed and converted into alienable commodities.

Thus, the "Food Harvest 2020" policy document produced by the Irish Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF) is rooted in an idealist conception of nature and tellingly motivated by the desire to "greenwash" the agri-industry at the same time as it implements the targets of ecological modernization laid out in the Horizon 2020 scheme. The document opens by declaring "Ireland's historic association with the color green is linked to our unspoilt agricultural landscape and our temperate climate. The modern use of 'green' to identify concern for the natural environment has, for some time, been recognized as representing a natural marketing opportunity for Irish agri-food to build on" (DAFF 2010: 3). This cynical

manipulation of the word “green” strips it of ethical and political connotations and represses the history of ecological imperialism and violence implicit in the transformation of Ireland into a mythical “emerald isle”: whether the mass deforestations of early Plantation, or the violence of what Marx famously called “the clearing of the estate of Ireland” that enabled the nineteenth-century conversion to grazier monoculture (Slater 2013: 29). Given the ongoing marketization of knowledge production in the Irish university and the unprecedented commoditization of new ecological commons under neoliberal capitalism, methodological approaches that historicize the evolution of regimes of capitalist nature in Ireland seem all the more vital.

In the past two decades, the primacy of “nature” as a category for analysis in relation to capital has grown more urgent and given rise to an “environmental turn” in left and Marxist theory that increasingly approaches the economic crises of the capitalist world-system as inseparable from the ecological crises of climate change and peak appropriation. Environmental historian Jason W. Moore yokes Marxian ecology to world-systems frameworks in order to forge a “unified theory of capital accumulation and the production of nature” (Moore 2011a: 126). He reinterprets the concept of ecology, adapting the term *oikeiosis* to designate “the creative, historical, and dialectical relation between, and also always within, human and extra-human natures,” a perspective that attempts to transcend Cartesian dichotomies of humanity vs. nature in favor of an understanding of humanity-in-nature as the matrix in which human activity unfolds and the field upon which historical agency operates (Moore 2013: 3). Through this view, capitalism is not something that acts *upon* nature but rather *through* it (Moore 2015: 6).

World-ecology enables diachronic and synchronic investigation of environmental problems at different temporal and geographical scales, adapting Giovanni Arrighi’s history of the systemic cycles of expanding and contracting capital accumulation to construct an environmental history of capitalism. Arrighi argues that four successive complexes of hegemonic state-capitalist alliances (Iberian-Genoese, Dutch, British, and American) emerged over the *longue durée* of capitalism, produced and sustained by organizational “revolutions” that provided each hegemon a competitive edge in economic and politico-military power (Arrighi 1994: 1). For Moore, the systemic cycles of accumulation corresponding to the rise and fall of different core-hegemonic complexes are founded in organizational revolutions not only of social relations such as class, but of biophysical natures. He posits the capitalist world-system as simultaneously a “capitalist world-ecology,” a “world-historical matrix of human and extra-human nature premised on endless commodification” (Moore 2011a: 108). This world-ecology is constituted not only through the periodic reorganization of geometries of power and economy, but through the remaking of socio-ecological relations:

World hegemonies did not merely organize resource and food regimes; the hegemonies of historical capitalism *were* socio-ecological projects. Dutch hegemony emerged through a world-ecological revolution that stretched from Canada to the spice islands of Southeast Asia; British hegemony, through the coal/steampower and plantation revolutions; American hegemony, through oil frontiers and the industrialization of agriculture it enabled (Moore 2011a: 125).

As such, the capitalist world-system does not merely possess an ecological dimension, but is inherently *constituted* by ecological regimes and revolutions that periodically reorganize and renew the conditions of accumulation to allow intensified appropriation of ecological surpluses. These regimes are dependent on the “dialectic of plunder and productivity”: the appropriation of “free gifts” of nature and their transmutation through labor into surplus value (Moore 2015: 138). When commodity frontiers in each successive ecological regime are exhausted and no longer able to produce surpluses, then the conditions of accumulation falter, until new ecological revolutions emerge. These revolutions produce new technics of appropriation and locate new frontiers, while intensifying existing extraction. However, each revolution cannot resolve the exhaustion of the previous regime; it can only displace its contradictions to a new geographical sector and reconfigure them on a larger scale. Indeed, Moore suggests that the neoliberal regime that emerged in the late 1970s is now mired in an epochal crisis, faced by the disappearance of new frontiers of enclosure and diminishing returns from the financialization of nature.

Since the collapse of the Celtic Tiger, the socio-economic particularity of neoliberal capitalism in its Irish manifestation has increasingly been examined, but little attention has been paid to neoliberalism as ecology within Ireland. As Lucy Collins remarks, much transdisciplinary research in Irish studies in areas such as built environments, migrant studies, heritage studies, and social justice is already inherently “ecological,” but tends to be compartmentalized or not consciously recognized as such (Collins 2014: 18). Any world-ecological history of Ireland must entail not merely examining “environments” and “landscapes,” but rather uncovering the periodic reorganizations of socio-ecological relations into new ecological regimes. Financial service centers and pharmaceutical factories, plantations and cattle ranches, tax havens and pollution havens, global empires and common markets are all forms of environment-making that constellate human relations and extra-human processes into new ecological regimes. More expansive, dialectical understandings of “ecology” as comprising the whole of socio-ecological relations within the capitalist world-ecology—from farming to pharma to financialization—are

vital to forming configurations of knowledge able not only to take account of past environmental transformations but also to respond to the global ecological crises of the neoliberal present.

In this article, I will focus primarily on the contemporary period, conducting an exploratory survey of the characteristics of the Irish ecological regime during and after the Celtic Tiger, identifying the opening of new commodity frontiers (such as fracking, water, agrobiotechnology, and biopharma) constituted in the neoliberal drive to appropriate and financialize nature. I argue for the usefulness of applying not only the tools of world-systems analysis, but also Moore's world-ecological paradigm, to analysis of Ireland as a semi-periphery. Before reading the particularities of Ireland's contemporary neoliberal ecological regime, I begin with a summary of Ireland's incorporation into the capitalist world-ecology in the early modern period, by way of demonstrating antecedents to and contrasts with the contemporary period.

### **Food and Fuel: The Formation of the “Green Donkey”**

Moore identifies three key world-ecological regimes in the environmental history of capitalism: colonization and plantation in the early modern period, the partition of Africa and the integration of Indian and Chinese peasantries into the world-economy under high imperialism, and the neoliberal regime emerging from the 1970s (Moore 2000: 142-5). The rise of capitalism in the fifteenth century was enabled by an ecological revolution in humanity's relation with extra-human nature. Frontier-led appropriations of the “Four Cheaps”—food, energy, labor power, and raw material—unleashed a strategy of commodification shaped around the technics of the plantation, the monoculture, and the mine (Moore 2015: 17). The early modern revolution of labor productivity within commodity production and exchange turned on the emergence of a twinned dynamic that combined strategies of exploitation (within commodification) and strategies of appropriation (outside of commodification). This strategy was enabled by new symbolic regimes and technics that reconceived nature as abstract and external, time as linear, and space as flat and geometrical. Extra-human nature was reconceived as an allegedly free gift, a surplus that could be appropriated and put to work without cost to the capitalist. “Abstract social labor”—the invention of new forms of expropriation of surplus human labor—was reliant on the simultaneous invention of “abstract social nature,” the reimagination of nature as a source of “cheap” or free surpluses that could be rationalized and efficiently appropriated in service to commodity production (Moore 2014b: 5). Nature's unpaid work was thus exploited in both human and biophysical form, whether the nutrient density of hitherto uncommoditized soils and of forests put to fire; the energy sources provided by new flora exported throughout imperial networks and transformed into global commodities, such as sugar or the potato; or the many forms of unpaid labor, including the reproductive labor of women and the work of slaves,

indentured servants, and tenant farmers. The symbolic regimes and technics involved in “abstract social nature” enabled the radical simplification of the “diversity of human and extra-human activity necessary to capitalist development but not directly valorized (‘paid’) through the money economy” (Moore 2014a: 21).

While the Americas are rightly seen as the ground zero of capitalist accumulation in the early modern period, opening a “Great Frontier” (Webb 1964: xv) that enabled the European appropriation of vast ecological surpluses from hitherto uncommoditized regions, Ireland also functioned, on a smaller scale, as a frontier and testing ground for new technics and imaginaries that were crucial to the formation of the Atlantic economy and to the expansion of the capitalist world-ecology. The Atlantic island functioned as a geographical stepping-stone for transatlantic settlement and a laboratory, conveniently proximate to expanding Britain, in which to trial techniques of privatization and expropriation: “It was the very people who were most deeply concerned with the plantation and colonization of Southern Ireland—Humphrey Gilbert, Walter Raleigh, Richard Grenville—who took the leading part in planting the first colonies in Virginia. It is as if Ireland were the blueprint for America” (Wallerstein 1974: 88). The radical simplification of nature can be clearly seen in the context of Irish plantation, where mass deforestation fundamentally transformed the ecology of Ireland, accompanied by radical forms of dispossession of indigenous populations and targeted destruction of non-human species and flora, including wolves and broad-leaf trees, in order to facilitate the importation and production of exogenous crops and commodities for export, and to eliminate the social and cultural bases of the reproduction of pre-capitalist modes of life. As Archibald Lewis remarks of the role of English expansion in relation to frontier development in Western Europe, “The most important frontier [...] was an internal one of forest, swamp, marsh, moor and fen” (cited in Wallerstein 1974: 138). The significance of land and agriculture is almost overdetermined in Irish historiography, yet it is crucial to understand the transformation of Irish environments not merely as a product of colonialism, but rather in relation to the larger early modern revolution in capitalist accumulation. The reorganization of Ireland’s biologically diverse bogs and forests into rationalized sites of capitalist monoculture was crucial to the erosion of Irish self-sufficiency and the integration of the island into the capitalist world-ecology.

Edmund Spenser’s notorious political treatise, *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (ca. 1598), composed from Spenser’s three-thousand-acre settlement in Munster in the 1590s, powerfully crystallizes the symbolic regimes associated with the reconception of Irish ecology as abstract social nature. Recounting the late wars of Munster as a historical precedent for the suppression of Irish insurrection and as a model for Tudor reconquest and plantation of Ireland, Spenser’s narrator approvingly describes the aftermath of English-imposed starvation of the

rebels: “In short space there were none almost left, and a most populous and plentifull countrey suddainely left voyde of man and beast; yet sure in all that warre, there perished not many by the sword, but all by the extremitie of famine” (Spenser 1997: 102). The ecological plenitude of Irish nature, conveniently emptied of its indigenes, is released for capture as ecological surplus. Spenser’s advocacy of tactical famine as a means of dispossession and as a force of creative destruction that will reshape the formerly unproductive Irish “wilderness” into generative plantation marks the historical transition from a feudal to capitalist mode of production, embodied in conceptions of abstract social nature as “tabula rasa” ripe for social reengineering. Sarah Hogan draws a parallel between the “shock doctrine” of neoliberal accumulation through dispossession, as described by Naomi Klein, and the “rationalistic, tactical, economic” expedients imagined by Spenser (Hogan 2012: 463) in the mathematical, abstract part of the work that proposes a scheme for English plantation. This scheme imagines the grid-like remapping of Ireland to impose a geographically dispersed network of plots, garrisons, and towns that will rationalize the countryside and produce new divisions of labor between Protestant English landowners and the newly landless Irish populace. Spenser proposes a radical simplification of Irish nature, suggesting the reorganization not only of social, but of ecological relations, in the course of agrarian revolution: “Evills must first be cut away by a strong hand, before any good can be planted, like as the corrupt branches and unwholesome boughs are first to be pruned, and the foule mosse cleansed and scraped away, before the tree can bring forth any good fruite” (Spenser 1997: 93).

In this scheme, deforestation is a form of abstract social nature necessary to integrate Ireland into the capitalist *oikeois* and to eliminate human political resistance and non-human resistance to the ecological revolution, killing both the Irish “wolf-heads” who took refuge in the forests, and the wolves which threatened imported livestock; tellingly, both varieties of “wolf,” Celtic insurgent and *canis lupus*, had bounties placed on their heads by Cromwell. Clearing the forests literally made space for new forms of agriculture, opening up land and eroding the basis of previous social unities such as kinship and communal transhumance that posed resistance to the ecological revolution. However, the forests were also a commodity frontier in their own right, a source of unpaid energy surpluses. The ascendant logic of capitalist accumulation in Western Europe was driven by a need to found new regimes of cheap food and cheap energy:

The drive for fuel and food—especially wood, wheat, and sugar—reinforced the uneven development of world capitalism; in the case of western and eastern Europe, it transformed the latter’s small differences into large and durable inequality, and it created new peripheries in the

Atlantic islands and the Americas. This development of an unequal world division of labor, in turn, created new capitalist efficiencies of specialization between agriculture and pasturage and between agrarian activities and industrial activities (Moore 2000: 134).

Wallerstein describes the “wood famine” confronting early modern capitalism as giving rise to an insatiable demand for wood products, which he labels “the other great basic need” next to food, and, along with sugar, the major growth crop of the early modern world-economy (Wallerstein 1974: 44-5). After the inexorable deforestation of Western Europe, England’s colonization of Ireland opened a crucial new frontier for the appropriation of timber. Oak was particularly scarce, and Ireland’s broad-leaf forests were “used up to supply England with timber” so that whereas one eighth of the island was under forest cover in 1600, it had “virtually disappeared by 1700” (Wallerstein 1974: 281). After timber supplies dwindled in the cores and semi-peripheries of the early modern world-system, a new revolution in cash-crop forestry would occur in the Baltic region, which by “the sixteenth century . . . had begun to export wood in large quantities to Holland, England, and the Iberian peninsula” (Wallerstein 1974: 45). The exhaustion of Ireland’s timber frontier demonstrates the sectoral relocation of commodity frontiers to new geographies and highlights the role of the Irish semi-periphery as an exemplar for the subsequent establishment of new timber frontiers in India’s teak forests, as well as the transformation of forested island ecologies in the Caribbean into cane-sugar monocultures through systematic deforestation. Furthermore, the Irish situation dramatizes the extent to which the invention of new modes of abstract social labor through which to expropriate surplus human labor—as captured in the evolution of new forms of capitalist agriculture to provide cheap food—are inextricable from the invention of abstract social nature and the creation of previously uncommoditized natures as a source of free surpluses—as captured in the reduction of the biodiversity of Irish forests to an “input” of cheap energy and timber.

The ecological regime that took shape during the long sixteenth century was not merely mercantilist, but productivist in its creation of an agro-ecological revolution that combined market, class, and ecological transformations in a geography expanding from the Baltic and Scandinavian peripheries of Europe to the Caribbean and South America (Moore 2008: 59). If sixteenth-century Dutch hegemony was partly founded in the appropriation of grain from Poland, the rise of English hegemony was subsequently dependent on the Caribbean plantations, American Midwest grain-belts, and the agro-economy of Ireland. Raymond Crotty describes the “non-individualist, non-capitalist, land-based economy” of pre-conquest Ireland as characterized by “communally grazed land determined output, [wherein] the individual, by his work or the

work of his slaves or capital, could not affect output" (Crotty 2001: 101). The organization of the pre-capitalist Irish *oikeois* around cattle—which due to Ireland's temperate climate could survive winters without fodder—enabled the Irish to avoid importing grain, and thus to maintain a degree of self-sufficiency without capital. Plantation, by enclosing, deforesting, and fencing off land, introducing new conceptions of cattle as private property to be sold in open markets, forcing populations to adopt regulated pasture and abandon hilly regions, building towns and garrisons in order to rationalize and control territories, and coercing those engaged in pasturage to begin practicing tillage and husbandry, undermined this independence from capital and converted the Irish into tenants deprived of rights to land. Nevertheless, as Eoin Flaherty reminds us, pre-famine geographies of communality such as the rundale persisted well into the nineteenth century (Flaherty 2013: 75).

The expropriation and privatization of Irish land, and the subsequent emergence of intensive, enclosed and export-oriented agriculture which it enabled, could not have been achieved without the inauguration of a new agri-food system organized around the potato, which sustained the new forms of appropriation of unpaid peasant labor (Crotty 2001: 172). The Irish were the first Europeans to accept *Solanum tuberosum*, imported from the South American Andes, as a primary food crop (D'Arcy 2010: 120). If Irish farmers could subsist on the potato, the costs of the reproduction of labor could be drastically lowered. Crotty emphasizes the global imbrication of Irish agro-ecology within the larger world-system, drawing an explicit connection between the subordination of the Irish peasantry and the construction of a global "coolie" class stretching from the West Indies to Ireland to India (Crotty 2001: 178). The subsequent conversion of Irish agriculture to grazier economy must be understood as indelibly linked to the development of salting technology and the ability to provision slaves in the Caribbean plantations with foodstuffs produced by disenfranchised Irish peasants, even as the Molasses Act of 1732 forced a new market for British West Indies sugar in Ireland.

In the mid-eighteenth century, when English agriculture encountered a yield crisis that forced England to shift from a grain exporter to a leading grain importer, Ireland's subordination as a semi-periphery organized around agricultural exports intensified. Conor McCabe powerfully describes the post-famine conversion that transformed Ireland into a roofless factory producing livestock, reshaping socio-ecological relations around the monoculture of King Cattle:

No matter how green the grass grew, no matter how flat the fields were,  
there was nothing natural about the Irish live cattle trade. It was a  
modern industrial assembly line, one which stretched for hundreds of  
miles, from the small holders of Sligo to the slaughter houses of

Deptford, and one for which the cattle ranchers supplied the raw material. The graziers did not produce beef. They did not produce shelf-ready products. They exported livestock to British fatteners and slaughter houses, and it was there that the products which ended up on the kitchen table were made. This system of production had deep historical roots—so much so that almost all attempts to disentangle the Irish economy from such a lopsided relationship as one which saw calves on grass as the *ne plus ultra* of agricultural and industrial ambition, were completely frustrated up until the 1950s, at which stage the importation of foreign industry was put forward as the seemingly perfect partner to the livestock business. Although not a straight line by any means, the first hints of this assembly line can be seen as far back as the early 1770s (McCabe 2013: 59).

The means through which the implementation of extreme forms of economic rationalization and liberalism refused assistance to the famine-stricken in nineteenth-century Ireland and enabled vast clearances that made way for new forms of grazier economy and cattle ranching have been amply documented by Irish historians, and read productively in comparison to the forced integration of Indian peasantries into the world-market through the social engineering of famine in nineteenth-century India (Davis 2002: 9). The institution of the grazier economy would marginalize other sectors of industrial production and crystallize a pattern of asymmetric development that would persist into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, opening the door to the ascendancy of financialization in the neoliberal regime.

### **Tax Haven, Pollution Frontier: Neoliberal Ecology with Irish Characteristics**

Whereas the early modern appropriation of new commodity frontiers from Ireland to the Americas provided a plenitude of surpluses that fueled the engine of capitalist accumulation for centuries, the neoliberal era confronts the exhaustion of the frontiers that made “cheap nature” possible. Farshad Araghi has argued that late capitalism is mired in a “crisis of cheap ecology,” caused by a decline of the short-term and contradictory gains of the Green Revolution and the loss of prior biophysical inputs in labor, energy, food and resources (Araghi 2010: 39). Loosely beginning in the 1970s, the neoliberal regime has relied on the rapid subsumption of whatever frontiers remained after nineteenth-century industrialization, including oil in the North Sea, West Africa and the Gulf of Mexico, the exhaustion of fertile soil and cheap water by agro-export

regimes appropriating food surpluses and peasant holdings from China to Mexico, and the privatization of cheap metals and oils enabled by the integration of the former USSR into the world market (Moore 2012: 245). However, following these enclosures, capitalist accumulation now confronts the stagnation of agricultural yields; a tendency towards mass urbanization that stresses the agro-demographic order; climate volatility, and geo-technical challenges to resource extraction, particularly of energy, water, and metals. The bubbles in global food and primary commodity prices since 2001 telegraph the decline of the “Four Cheaps” of labor, energy, food and raw resources, and the intensification of ecological contradictions by financial speculation.

Rather than being defined by a new productivity revolution, the neoliberal era has instead advanced the penetration of finance capital into the global reproduction of human and extra-human natures. Neil Smith describes the neoliberal invention of “nature banking,” which turns on the manufacture of “allowable natural destruction” by fragmenting nature into “tradable bits of capital,” as a fundamental shift in the capitalist production of nature that reconceives “nature as a financial accumulation strategy” (Smith 2006: 16). When traded on environmental derivatives markets, ecological commodities such as carbon credits allow financiers to speculate on and profit from price volatility as environmental crises accelerate. If previous forms of appropriation of nature emphasized the transmutation of ecological surpluses into use-values for capitalist production—wood into energy, cattle into food—these financial derivatives function primarily as market instruments, acting to transfer stewardship of previously uncontrolled commons to private business interests, and bringing nature under the control of the market in the attempt “to commensurate all of reality into generic income streams” (Moore, 2012a: 19). As such, neoliberal financialization extends beyond the manufacture of derivatives to the reordering of the totality of nature-society relations: “From the agro-food sector to working class households that depend on credit cards to pay groceries and medical bills, global nature has become dependent on a circuit of capital premised on accumulation by financial means rather than industrial and agricultural production” (Moore 2011: 43-4). Instead of the unprecedented horizontal expansion across space that marked earlier cycles of accumulation, the neoliberal regime privileges the vertical extension of profit-maximization strategies into new spheres of life, the transition from stakeholder to shareholder capitalism, and short-term profit-making strategies and privatization over the long-term strategies of fixed capital investment and development of new productive capacities. The neoliberal logic of accumulation is distinctive for its “impatience,” expressed in the extreme rapidity of its ecological asset-stripping.

This temporal hegemony of finance capital over accumulation can clearly be seen in the context of the Irish semi-periphery. Semi-peripheries act as “transistor zones” where “two different segments of a commodity chain become articulated and receive their first pricing” thus

making it possible “for the core and periphery to transmit value to each other, especially as both the rural dispossessed of the hinterlands and the factors of the core’s jobbing interests congregate there, one to commodify their labor and the other to finance and insure the material apparatuses that will consume this labor-power” (Shapiro 2007: 37). Since the late twentieth century, the Irish semi-periphery has acted as a transistor zone *par excellence* for the negotiation of new modes of financialization and speculative entrepreneurship. Ireland’s integration into the neoliberal ecological regime has been characterized by peripheral dependency on foreign capital investment, the tendency towards financialization and housing speculation rather than industrial production, the intensification of earlier monocultures formed under colonialism (such as the beef and dairy economies), the formation of new monocultures organized around new commodity frontiers in biocommodities, and the drive to enclose remaining commons (as in water, oil and gas).

In Latin America, Africa, Southeast Asia and other key regions of the Global South, the “neoliberal turn” has been distinguished by a subordination to “eco-financial imperialism,” manifested in the coercive imposition of waves of privatization and structural adjustment programs by supra-national institutions such as the IMF and World Bank, in exchange for loans to finance state debts, and by an emphasis on “speculative-centric, carbon-intensive accumulation” (Bond 2014). In contrast, Ireland’s boom was preconditioned by what Peadar Kirby, Luke Gibbons and Michael Cronin describe as its “subservient integration” into market fundamentalism: a submissive, rather than coerced, orientation to American and West European capital (Kirby, Gibbons and Cronin 2002: 2). Ireland’s contemporary position might be considered alongside the “Southern national champions” that Ruy Mauro Marini describes in the South American context as “sub-imperialist”: favored allies of capitalist cores and pro-corporate regimes that promote financial globalization and act as regional platforms for accumulation, collaborating with the expansion of transnational capital in their territories, while willingly undermining their own productive capacity and economic sovereignty in exchange for the alleged position of partnership with the cores (Mauro Marini 1972: 14). The key difference is that unlike sub-imperialist nations such as Brazil or South Africa, Ireland does not enjoy the regional geopolitical privilege of acting as a “deputy sheriff” and policing the behavior of neighboring peripheries; rather it primarily functions as a “poster nation” exemplar of semi-peripheral compliance with neoliberal financialization and austerity.

In Ireland, the national fantasy of having achieved “First World status” as a roaring Tiger, and thus of having overcome the asymmetries of colonial development, was contradicted by the dependency of Tigerhood on offering financial services to multinational corporates courted by the state, transforming the country into a tax haven and secrecy jurisdiction zone, while

concentrating urban employment in low-paid service jobs. The Irish government took pride in anticipating the growth of the financial services market and reshaping the country into a “treasure island,” where the economic growth would be driven not by job creation or investment in production, but rather by maximizing profit through tax avoidance (Shaxson 2012: viii). The Finance Acts of 1986 and 1987 introduced new financial incentives to encourage private sector investment and established low corporation tax rates of ten percent for certified companies setting up in the newly established Irish Financial Services Centre, a designated area within which companies could undertake any business in the financial services area while receiving 100 percent allowances on equipment and development spending, and 200 percent tax breaks for rental payments for ten years (McCabe 2011: 126).

As a tax haven, Ireland was attractive to U.S. and European multinationals because it offered cheaper property and salaries than its equivalent in Luxembourg, better geographical proximity to Europe than the Cayman Islands, and unlike the British tax havens in the Isle of Man and Jersey, it was already a member of the European Community. The advent of so-called “informational” capitalism in combination with the development of special tax breaks and financial services via the creation of the IFSC positioned Ireland as an export platform for foreign capital in the electronics and IT-sector industries in hardware, software and communications, with nearly every high-profile transnational with an IT portfolio establishing a European base in Ireland, including Apple, Intel, Dell, Sun Microsystems, Oracle, IBM, Hewlett Packard, Compaq, Xerox, Nortel, Ericsson, Panasonic, Philips, Siemens, Hitachi and Motorola (Smyth 2000: 125). Throughout the 1990s, a large proportion of European and central exchequer funding was invested in digitization of Ireland’s trunk transmission network (rather than in environmental infrastructures crucial to ecological resilience such as waste and water systems, or social institutions key to the functioning of Irish society, such as the health service and social housing) in order to form a base for the transition to a reticular economy (Cronin 2002: 56).

The Tiger economy was directly implicated in “the pressure placed upon non-renewable ecological resources by a highly flexible and mobile post-Fordist capitalism” (Smyth 2000: 163). Information and communications technology (ICT) contributes to environmental problems and exhaustion of resources at every stage from production to use to disposal: from the energetically-expensive manufacturing process, to energy-intensive operation of devices, especially as consumer usage continues to proliferate, to disposal of devices and network equipment (Williams 2011: 354). The significant amounts of energy consumed by personal computers, electronic devices and ICT infrastructure including telecoms networks, peripherals, server farms and data centers place a heavy burden on electric grids reliant on the combustion of fossil fuels and exacerbate climate change by contributing to greenhouse emissions of carbon dioxide.

Manufacturing computers and electronic and non-electronic components consumes not only electricity, but large amounts of chemicals, water, and a variety of exotic and highly refined materials including hazardous metals such as lead and cadmium. Despite the direct implication of the ICT industry in climate change and pollution, the environmental costs of the IT sector in the Tiger economy, and its dependence on the enclosure of new frontiers of water, waste, pollution, energy and raw materials, have been relatively invisible in the Irish context, obscured by the discursive tendency to portray the knowledge and creative economies as virtual and immaterial, or even as “green” and less energy-intensive than other forms of production. This invisibility is further aggravated by the absence of “establishment-reviewed epidemiological studies and the inability to trace the flight and subsequent destination of any particular pollutant” in Ireland: the existing science primarily functions not to track environmental consequences but rather to deny that pollution or resource-use exceeds “safe” levels or incurs “risk” (Allen 2005: 20). In contrast to this view, what is crucial to a macro-ecological understanding of Ireland’s role in the world-ecology is the inextricability of its financial role as a tax haven and secrecy jurisdiction zone from its environmental function as a semi-peripheral pollution and water haven. We can adapt Jason W. Moore’s slogan that “Wall Street...becomes a way of organizing all of nature, characterized by the financialization of any income-generating activity” (Moore 2011b: 39) to say that the “IFSC is a way of organizing nature,” with pernicious consequences for water, energy, and food systems in Ireland.

Indeed, the second major “muscle” of the Tiger economy, particularly after the dot-com crash, was the attraction of transnational pharmaceutical corporations. Ireland has followed a similar path to other semi-peripheries in becoming a haven for the processing wings of chemical and pharmaceutical corporations fleeing occupational and environmental regulation in their home countries, especially after the passing of the U.S. Clean Air and Clean Water Acts in 1970 and 1972, which threatened to raise the costs of production. From the 1970s onwards, most of the giants of the global chemical industry set up shop in Ireland, including SmithKline, Pfizer, Merck, Schering Plough and Roche, which accounted for nearly seventy percent of pharmaceutical industry output worldwide (Allen 2004: 4). While this concentration of transnational pharmaceutical industries has often been seen as a phenomenon local to Ireland, it is better understood as part of a world-ecological transition to the outsourcing of toxic industries, waste and pollution from capitalist cores to mediating semi-peripheries.

As Robert Allen notes, Ireland’s role as a “pollution haven” is directly comparable to that of the Mexican semi-periphery after the imposition of environmental deregulation by free trade agreements:

In 1970s the U.S. chemical industry investment in Ireland was \$22.25 million. Within three years it had climbed to \$175 million and by 1981 it had increased to \$1,121 million (approximately 6 per cent of the chemical industry's worldwide investment total)—by 2002 the IDA was quoting total investment at \$12 billion. Over the same period in Mexico a similar increase occurred: in 1973 it was \$503 million, in 1981 it was \$1,144 million. [...] In Ireland after 1981 investment fell off for several years before picking up again at the end of the decade. By 2002 the electronics and software industries had replaced the chemical and pharmaceutical industries as the jewels in Ireland's corporate crown.  
(Allen 2004: 4)

Neoliberal financial markets have consistently orchestrated decisions as to which forms of pollution are allowed and which eradicated, as in the infamous statement by Lawrence Summers that Africa was "underpolluted" because "the environmentally induced loss of life in more developed countries was more expensive to the world economy compared with the cheapness of life (lost wages) in Africa" (cited in Smith 2006: 18). During the 1990s, at the same time as other European economies began to invest heavily in alternative energies, recycling schemes, waste minimization, and organic farming, and as other underdeveloped and under-industrialized nations questioned or actively resisted the importation of toxic industries, the Irish state deliberately set out to attract industries of hazard, colluding with the powerful chemical lobby to soften EU environmental regulations. Not only does the Irish state demonstrate a lack of political will to enforce stringent environmental standards, improve environmental standards, or protect the quality of existing environments, but its principal objective has been to ensure that changes in regulation, particularly those imposed by the EU, would not be detrimental to the economic performance of the Tiger or deter multinationals specifically seeking to locate investment in a country where environmental regulation is lax. The main focus of the Environmental Protection Agency in Ireland has been "managing" environmental policy to ensure economic performance, rather than "protecting" ecosystems, a shift which George Taylor describes as "the complicated process of organizing consent around new definitions of the *extent to which pollution can be justified*" (Taylor 2001: 5).

While the role of tax breaks and financial services in attracting foreign capital to Ireland has been much remarked, far less attention has been paid to the cheap appropriation of Ireland's ecological frontiers, including groundwater resources, which are at approximately "15,000m<sup>3</sup>/person/year" about "five times that of many other European countries" (Allen, 2004:

4). Ireland's uncommodified groundwater resources—a source of “cheap water” that could be appropriated without cost to transnational corporations—have been key in attracting industries dependent on the exploitation of clean groundwater. Despite surges of public protests against industrial development in Ireland's rural peripheries throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the state acted to suppress environmentalist discourses and awareness of pollution and resource consumption corresponding to the importation of toxic industries, thus creating a durable amnesia surrounding hydro-ecological crises in Ireland, whether pesticide pollution in agribusiness, or dioxin contamination by pharmaceutical plants. As Allen remarks in the context of the Merck plant's toxification of the Ballydine watershed in the 1980s, “The great toxic disasters of the modern era happened elsewhere, out of sight out of mind and certainly out of Ireland. Yet Merck's poisoning of the Ballydine environment occurred in front of our eyes in Ireland, but it is as if nothing strange happened in this place Mary Hanrahan calls the ‘valley of tears’” (Allen 2005: 19). Much research remains to be done in order to reverse this process of invisibilization and gain a critical understanding of the costs of the reshaping of socio-ecological relations during the Tiger period.

Another key dimension of Irish neoliberal ecology that demands further investigation in the context of the nexus of climate change, petroleum consumption, and pollution is the grazier economy. Denis O'Hearn wittily describes the restructuring of the Irish economy at the end of the 1980s as the transition from the “green donkey” to the “Celtic Tiger” (O'Hearn 2001: 167). While the Tiger economy incorporated new monocultures in pharmaceutical commodities and ICT industries and witnessed a massive boom in banking and construction, the novelty of these developments should not be overembellished. Noting that the Tiger was dominated by financial and property speculation rather than new indigenous exports, and characterized by a continued failure to develop national industries in fisheries and gas, Conor McCabe emphasizes the long historical roots of the agro-export regime that continued to prevail during the Tiger:

The type of business activities which dominated the Irish economy in the twentieth century—cattle exports to Britain and financial investment in London; the development of green-field sites and the construction of factories and office buildings to facilitate foreign industrial and commercial investment; the birth of the suburbs and subsequent housing booms predicated on an expanding urban workforce—saw the development of an indigenous moneyed class based around cattle, construction and banking. [...] Up until the 1980s, cattle was to Ireland what the car industry was to Detroit and, although the Irish Free State

gained partial independence in 1922, its economy, via the cattle industry, remained intertwined with that of the UK. The structural problems related to that situation—an independent country with a regional economy—had an influence on the so-called Whitaker/LeMass revolution in the 1950s and the superficial industrialization of the Irish economy in the decade which followed in its wake. This is also the period when we see a new type of Irish businessman—the speculative builder and financier—come to the fore (McCabe 2011: 10-11).

Far from displacing the donkey, the contradictions of the Tiger emerged from the earlier ecological regime: the growth of financial speculation must be understood as dialectically related to the grazier export economy. Ireland's "green" rural countryside, as celebrated by the Food Harvest 2020 report, should not be understood as the product of temporal "backwardness," nor as innately pastoral and environmentally neutral, but rather as the structural product of semi-peripheralization, characterized by uneven and combined development of some sectors to the exclusion of others in the favor of particular class interests, in this case, the overdevelopment of the conveyor-belt agro-export—economy which emerged in the eighteenth century. In the 1950s, nearly three-quarters of Irish exports were comprised of agricultural and food products, destined for UK markets, resulting in a persistent over-concentration of activity around the agricultural monoculture and over-reliance on low-valued-added exports of agricultural produce. After Ireland's integration into EU, this overreliance was not corrected, since from the 1970s onwards, peripherality was a structuring principle in Irish applications for EU funding and CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) subsidies of the agricultural sector (Cronin 2002: 56). After the collapse of the housing bubble in 2008, the agro-export system organized around dairy and grazier monocultures has persisted as a fundamental sector of the Irish economy. As the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DEPR) announced in 2011, "The agri-food, marine and forestry sector is Ireland's largest indigenous sector and makes a major contribution to economic and social development, particularly in rural Ireland" (DEPR 2011: 22).

The domination of cows rather than cars in the Irish economy does not mean that the Irish neoliberal ecological regime has been "greener" than the automotive regimes of Detroit or Wolfsburg. In his short story "Animal Needs," Irish writer Kevin Barry tartly describes a farm in the west of Ireland as emitting a "general sensation of slurry" (Barry 2007: n.pg.), a phrase evocative of the dependence of the Irish agro-food sector on petrochemical fertilizers. Imported oil and GM-fodder underlie the production of Irish "cheap food," as well as substantial waste frontiers: whether the carbon emissions produced by methane-expelling livestock or the pollution

of Irish watersheds by fecal coliforms and nitrate runoffs caused by pig slurry, agricultural waste and illegal dumping. A significant component of Ireland's failure to reach its greenhouse gas emission reduction targets is the steady escalation of agriculture greenhouse gas emissions since 2012 as a result of the Food Harvest 2020 targets for expansion of livestock numbers, particularly of dairy cattle (Armstrong 2015). Understood in these terms, the Emerald Tiger is more brown than green.

The post-Tiger turn to ever more technocratic forms of mass agri-business has only accelerated the ecological contradictions of the agro-export regime. Industrial capitalist agriculture is highly unstable and “overridden with unsustainable ‘technological fixes’ and masked by a host of externalized costs,” including dependence on “relatively cheap oil” to subsidize “the low-priced industrial grains and oilseeds on which global food security has come to hinge” (Weis 2010: 315). The acute volatility of global food prices has resulted in an extreme polarization of dietary combined and uneven development, with many poor people in the Global South confronted with worsening conditions of manufactured food scarcity, at the same time as meat and dairy-centered diets continue to rise in rapidly industrializing economies in China and India. However, as Tony Weis emphasizes, the causes of the food crisis run deeper than market turbulence:

Industrial livestock production is the driving force behind rising meat consumption on a world scale, and the process of cycling great volumes of industrial grains and oilseeds through soaring populations of concentrated animals serves to magnify the land and resource budgets, pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions associated with agriculture. These dynamics not only reflect disparities but are exacerbating them, foremost through climate change. [...] Rising meat consumption and industrial livestock production should be understood together to comprise a powerful long-term vector of global inequality (Weis 2013: 65).

Contrary to the greenwashed vision of unspoiled rural environments offered by the Department of Agriculture, Ireland is a significant contributor to the biophysical contradictions of industrial capitalist agriculture, particularly the industrial grain-livestock complex that underlies the dairy economy and cattle economy, and thus imbricated in the crises of “cheap food” and “cheap oil” in the larger world-ecology.

Dairy exports, particularly of whole powdered milk and infant formula, are one of the largest sectors of the post-Tiger Irish economy, with a high rate of export to growing Asian markets. In 2012, as part of the Food & Agri-Services mission to China, the Chinese dairy producer Dairy United signed a Memorandum of Understanding with University College Dublin to collaborate on the creation of a trade corridor to facilitate the introduction of Irish exports and dairy agri-business to the Inner Mongolian region (UCD News 2012). This dairy revolution is reminiscent of India's "white revolution" in the 1990s, conducted as an agro-fix to the waning of the Green Revolution and driven by neoliberal reforms dismantling the Nehruvian state (Scholten and Basu 2009: 1). The Chinese version aims to secure supply of dairy products for its burgeoning urban markets and emerges from the larger internal contradictions of China's increasing limits to the appropriation of food, water, energy, and heavy metals. China's land carrying capacity for mainland agriculture is nearing its limit, especially as the peasantry are increasingly deruralized and industrial development seizes more land. With a thirty-seven percent decrease in wheat, rice and corn yields predicted by the mid-twenty-first century, China is searching for revolutions in food productivity that can unleash new ecological surpluses through agri-technology (Economy 2007). Northern China's Inner Mongolia has been subject to mounting clearances and land grabs, as the traditional grazing lands of minority ethnic Mongolians are seized by the Chinese state and nomadic peoples resettled in permanent housing. Ireland's comprador role in China's white revolution, reliant as it is on the colonization of Inner Mongolia, has a certain historical irony when the origins of the Irish grazier economy in colonial land clearance and liberalization are recalled. Ireland's concerted courting of Chinese capital, as captured in Enterprise Ireland's stated aim of "winning Chinese markets" (Story 2010: 1) also telegraphs the Irish semi-periphery's attempt at economic realignment in the light of shifting inter-state competition and the potential waning of European and American core hegemony. Finally, with the EU abolition of milk quotas after 2014, the removal of crucial subsidies and deregulation of Irish dairy production has created pressure to open up new strategies of financialization in the dairy sector, and the Irish Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney, has been aggressively advocating for a fully functional dairy futures market (Halleron 2015).

Post-Tiger, the politics of pollution structuring Irish environmental policy (Taylor 2001: 39) have been intensified in the development of new biofinancial mechanisms and environmental derivatives, such as the dairy futures proposed above, and the water futures market envisaged as an extension of Irish Water. The absurd semantics of the plan for a Green Irish Financial Services Centre vividly capture the government's embrace of nature as financial accumulation strategy:

We have the natural resources, the talent and the Government commitment necessary to become a hub for green enterprise. [...]The planned Green Irish Financial Services Centre will build on the success of the IFSC and become a leading player in the global carbon market and promote Ireland as a centre of excellence in the management of carbon. (GreenIFSC N.d.)

Besides providing new financial services in ecological commodities trading, the greening of the IFSC seems to consists largely of adding the word green to its title, while using accelerating climate crisis to force through new forms of biofinancialization. This is characteristic of the Irish government's response to the evacuation of multinational capital since the 2008 financial crisis, which has been to impose rounds of intensified neoliberalization: asset-stripping the public sector, flexibilizing labor, and restructuring higher education and healthcare to prioritize entrepreneurial "smart" technologies. If the Irish state had not previously been coerced into accepting structural adjustment programs, in the wake of the 2008 bank bailout, the largest in European history, it was subjected to the full artillery of neoliberal reforms by the European troika of the International Monetary Fund, European Central Bank and the European Commission, including budgetary austerity, privatization, reorganization of finance, opening of internal markets, removal of tariffs and barriers, and the disciplining of labor markets to increase flexibility. A key element of these reforms has been the identification of new ecological frontiers for enclosure: water via the privatization of domestic water provision; oil via the sale of offshore petroleum exploration licenses to transnational oil companies; natural gas through onshore hydraulic fracturing; fish through the development of mass aquaculture and intensification of salmon-farming; and biocommodities through the development of biotechnology industries in pharma, food, and energy.

The case of oil and gas in the Irish context demonstrates the transition from the era of easily obtainable fossil fuels—or “cheap energy”—to a late neoliberal regime of mounting geo-technical challenges to energy appropriation—or “extreme energy”—in which more intensive, toxic, and high-risk technologies of extraction are implemented. With diminishing returns to existing methods of extraction, and no undetected frontiers or untapped oil reserves still awaiting discovery, capital has been forced to turn to ever-more costly—in both economic and carbon-intensive terms—forms of energy extraction, from tar sands, to fracking, to deep-sea and rock formation drilling. Within this context of intensified competition for resources, Ireland has become a contested zone of experimental hydrocarbon extraction and energy imperialism, with a striking lack of national sovereignty over its resources. The ultra high-pressure upstream pipeline

and inland refinery built by Shell E&P Ireland in the Corrib field off northwest Mayo are a prime example of high-risk technologies that are being trialed in the Irish semi-periphery (upstream pipelines are usually only located under the sea or in uninhabited areas due to the risk of explosion posed by the volatile mix of chemical compounds and raw gas). The ecological regime intertwining Ireland's role as a tax haven and as a water and pollution haven can be sharply seen in this energy scenario. The Irish licensing system for oil and gas exploration is marked by an extraordinary pro-corporate bias and subservience to foreign capital, with the result that the proportion of the government's take of oil revenues is one of the lowest in the world, well below thirty percent. This is below even that of Peru, in contrast to seventy-five percent take of a country such as Norway (Johnston 2008: 39). The state share in revenues from the sale of gas from Corrib, according to a private 2003 consultants' study for Shell, is estimated to be only seven percent (Shell to Sea 2012: 12). The introduction of the Profit Resource Rent Tax (PRRT) by Minister for Energy and Natural Resources Eamon Ryan in 2007, far from increasing potential state revenues, allows foreign companies to offset all costs and calculate the ratio of their capital investment against remaining profits, thus avoiding paying tax.

Transnational oil and gas industries are among the most profitable companies in the world, and yet they are being subsidized by the Irish public at the same time as they are exploiting the lack of stringent environmental regulation to implement experimental forms of extraction. The tax regimes for fracking are amongst the most generous in the world, and Ireland is poised to become a key frontier for the shale gas revolution. Since 2008, three companies have been authorized to begin preliminary exploration for shale gas in parts of 12 Irish counties on both sides of the border, concentrated in rural, peripheral territories in Leitrim, Roscommon, Sligo, Clare, Cavan and Fermanagh. The need to locate and extract new oil and gas reserves as swiftly as possible has been consistently posed by the state as essential to Ireland's national interest, despite growing public awareness of the environmental costs of fracking, which in the course of hydraulically fracturing rock with high-pressure liquid to release the gas, contaminates groundwater with methane (Osborn et al. 2011: 8172) and can unleash seismic tremors. However, the decade of concerted resistance to the Corrib project from the Shell to Sea movement and local protestors in Rossport, with international connections to Nigerian anti-Shell campaign and the Bolivian "gas wars" and "water wars," has laid a crucial groundwork for grassroots resistance to the shale gas revolution, and may mitigate or delay the enclosure of new gas frontiers in crucial ways.

In the context of water as a resource, the reform of the Irish water sector after the fiscal crisis is part of the state's larger program to restructure the infrastructure sector around semi-state companies that will secure their own revenue from charges and borrowing, in order to take

environmental services off the balance-sheet of overall government deficit figures (Bresnihan 2015a: 7). This strategy of financial engineering is also being applied to other parts of public sector infrastructure, including healthcare, housing, and transport. Of the four main components of DPER's 2011 investment—economic infrastructure, the productive sector and human capital, social investment and environmental infrastructure—the latter, entailing the privatization of waste and water systems, is the most significant in this context (DPER 2011: iii). Due to the successful defeat of water charges in 1977 and again in 1995 by community protests in Ireland's own "water wars," Ireland remained the only EU member state not to charge for domestic water and wastewater services, which were paid instead through general taxation. Accordingly, a key component of the Program of Financial Support agreed with the troika was to transfer independent assessment for responsibility for water services provision from 34 local authorities to a new water utility by the end of 2011. The 2013 Water Services Bill established Irish Water as a new state water utility responsible for operation, maintenance and upgrade of water services infrastructure, customer billing and charging.

The privatization and commercialization of water services in the Global North and Global South has been a key dynamic of neoliberal accumulation—an unprecedented conquest of the hydrological commons that has accompanied the expansion of a water bubble and the drive to create international water futures markets. Ireland is now being belatedly inducted into this hydrological regime, in accordance with the emphasis on ecological modernization and hydrological management articulated in European agendas such as the Water Frameworks Directive. However, less attention has been paid to the specific process of *biofinancialization*, which constructs a new relationship between the flow of water and the flow of money in global financial markets (Bresnihan 2015b), "banking spatially on the future" through an "ecological fix" that redirects finance capital into the infrastructures necessary for social reproduction (Castree and Christophers 2015). The revenue generated by the introduction of household water charges by the Irish Water utility is not sufficient to finance the projected twenty-billion euro investments necessary to improve Ireland's ageing, failing water infrastructure (Bresnihan 2015a: 2). Instead, the new utility intends to raise independent external private investment by using the new stream of revenue from domestic charges to borrow from international credit markets, most likely by issuing infrastructure bonds similar to Bord Gáis's five-year bonds. The semi-peripheral tendency of the Irish state towards weak market regulation plays a central role in transformation of a previously publically-funded, state-managed large-scale infrastructure into a financial asset for private investors. Water infrastructure can be understood as a new frontier for appropriation by financial capital, in which the material, spatially-specific components of the

water system, from pipes to plants to pumps, are transformed into an asset commensurable with other investment opportunities in terms of yield and risk (Bresnihan 2015b).

The need to measure financial performance in order to demonstrate favorability of exchange also means that hitherto uncommoditized aspects of the hydro-social cycle are being incorporated into networks of finance, as in Irish Water's attempts to install household water meters across the country. Bresnihan highlights the novelty of the transformations entailed by this process of biofinancialization, which integrates the flows of finance capital with the flows of the vital resources necessary for socio-ecological reproduction:

What is being measured here is not the present value or condition of Ireland's water resources and infrastructure but their *future* value and performance (i.e. as providers of ecosystems services). One consequence of this is the central role that data and information communication technologies will increasingly play in mediating and representing the value of the water network and the comparative performances of the utility and of individual households. This intensifies and extends a more general tendency in how 'nature' is being valued within contemporary capitalism: no longer a limited stock of material inputs metabolized within the production process, but an infinite series of performing assets that can be measured, evaluated, circulated and *speculated* on in financial markets. Of course, the overlaying of these new information systems onto water resources and infrastructures are not neutral or transparent. They transform social and ecological interactions and generate new exclusions. (Bresnihan 2015b)

However, the establishment of Irish Water has been met by the most significant popular anti-austerity mobilization since 2008. The imposition of the new household water charges have been seen as the proverbial straw that broke the donkey's back: a regressive burden on Ireland's squeezed majority who have already born the pain of five years of austerity, and who already contribute to the cost of water provision through general taxation, making the water charge a double tax. Huge numbers have joined the campaign against water charges since autumn 2014, and protestors has made use of a wide range of tactics, from civil disobedience in the form of boycotts of registration to Irish Water and a refusal to pay charges, to direct actions blocking the installation of meters in working-class neighborhoods, to large-scale marches and mobilizations in the streets (Finn 2015: 49). At the time of writing, the charges seem likely to be defeated.

Eurostat, the EU statistics agency, ruled in 2015 that Irish Water failed the state corporation test, due in large part to the boycott of household water tax which crippled its revenue streams and blocked its capacity to fund itself into the future. The Irish public's insurgent refusal of the new forms of social discipline required to transform water users into efficient, rationalized consumers presents a serious barrier to biofinancialization of the water system.

Bioprospecting in the area of food systems, however, faces fewer obstacles to expansion in Ireland. A key feature of late neoliberal accumulation that seeks to open up new vertical frontiers for commodification, bioprospecting scours the natural world for sub-atomic commodities and patentable genetic material that can be transformed into laboratory-manufactured genes. In her prescient discussion of DuPont's OncoMouse, Donna Haraway observed that "biology—life itself" has become "a capital accumulation strategy" (Haraway 1996: 65). Eco-systems and microbiomes are being "unbundled" on unprecedented levels in order to enable privatization of their constituent parts, forging new commodities that Kaushik Sunder Rajan terms "biocapital" (Sunder Rajan 2006: 2). Although this terminology is problematic to the extent that it treats biocommodities as a distinctive new form of capital itself, rather than a particular frontier of enclosure within the neoliberal regime of capitalism, Rajan's observation that the life sciences have been commodified, financialized, and enclosed by corporate capital to hitherto unprecedented levels (Sunder Rajan 2006: 3) highlights a dominant tendency in the Irish setting. A central component of the EU policy agenda elaborated by European Technology Platforms in the agri-food-forestry-biofuels sectors is the "knowledge-based bio-economy" (KBBE), which proposes bio-technoscience as a techno-knowledge-fix that can reconcile environmental and economic sustainability. The KBBE is a political-economic strategy that furthers the neoliberalization of nature and knowledge in EU member states through intellectual property regimes, framing ecological crisis as a problem of inefficiency which can be overcome through "benign eco-efficient productivity" and promising to unlock the productive potential of natural resources, but actually dependent on the production of "new combinations of 'living' and 'dead' labour" (Birch, Levidow, and Papaioannou 2010: 2898).

Within Ireland's knowledge economy, despite the incessant urging of the government to "innovate, innovate," the development of biocommodities is largely founded on the intensification of pre-existing monocultures in pharma, agri-business, and energy. These include genetic tests to identify thoroughbred horses with the greatest genetic potential for racecourse success (Equinome 2015); research by Irish university departments in life sciences and genomics into the molecular mechanisms and genetics of chronic diseases so that transnational biopharma industry partners including GlaxoSmithKline, Pfizer and Merck can manufacture novel diagnostic solutions and gene therapies; the trials of transgenic "blight-resistant" potatoes

conducted by Ireland's agricultural agency Teagasc (Teagasc 2013: 2); the Irish state forestry company Coillte's creation of a sterile "green desert" of over a million acres of pesticide-laden monocultural non-native Sitka Spruce coniferous plantations for timber export (McCarthy 2013); and the development of *Miscanthus* and willow biomass plantations to replace the turf-based bioenergy regime in the now-exhausted peat bogs which Bord na Móna has strip-mined since the 1950s as part of the LeMass energy modernization (Dauber et. al 2010). These developments in bioenergy and agriculture are celebrated by green capitalists as ecological modernizations that will resolve the problems of food and energy scarcity and alleviate climate change.

However, biotechnology is a "short-term fix" that has not yet provided a productivity revolution sufficient to resolve the current decline of cheap food, water, and energy inputs and thus to sustain cheap labor (Moore 2012a: 15). Agro-biotechnology has been bolstered by a new intellectual property regime and pushed forward as the techno-fix to crises of (manufactured) food and fuel scarcity, but has failed to produce substantive yield revolutions, even after two decades of dissemination and experimentation. Biomass plantations, though often perceived as carbon-neutral or low-carbon fuels that provide a way of getting off the "oil hook," entail their own problems of decreased biodiversity, intensified deforestation, threatened food security, accelerated water use, and land grabbing, and can potentially produce carbon emissions greater than those of coal when planted on drained peat bogs and ancient grasslands, thus releasing more carbon than they capture, leading critics to question whether agrofuels are any "cleaner" than fossil fuels (Abbasi and Abbasi 2010: 919). Biotechnology has functioned primarily as a mode of wealth redistribution and economic restructuring of the world's food and fuels system, transferring surplus capital and control over land, genetic resources, economic space, and market power from small farmers to international financial institutions, biotechnology firms, governments and transnational agribusiness conglomerates, by enclosing new vertical and molecular frontiers of life, as in the case of GMO seeds (Holt-Giménez 2009: 180).

The socio-ecological violence of these extractive transformations in the eked-out regime of late neoliberalism is pervasive in the reconstitution of human subjectivity as post-genomic and the reshaping of the rules of reproduction, which are accompanied by the intensification of forms of state discipline, austerity, and biopolitical control, especially of the bodies of the poor, dispossessed, minority, and marginalized. According to the biopharmaceuticals wing of IDA, Ireland's inward investment promotion agency, nine out of the world's ten largest biopharma giants are currently based in Ireland, with thirty-three major plants clustered in the country, and since 2014, Ireland has become the world's seventh largest exporter of medicinal and pharmaceutical products (IDA 2014). The biopharma complex mines vertical frontiers of life and reproduction in order to commoditize and reshape human nature on the molecular scale, so that

people's very bodies and affects acquire economic and political value. The Irish pharma complex is at the heart of the global production of "pharmaco-pornographic capitalism" (Preciado 2008: 107), manufacturing up to 6 of the so-called "blockbuster drugs" that annually earn more than 1 billion dollars (IDA 2014). Many of these are psychotropic anti-depressants, which Beatriz Preciado argues reconstitute subjectivities through "micro-prosthetic mechanisms of control" (Preciado 2008: 107). As such, there is a dialectical relation to be uncovered in the Irish pharma complex between the mass manufacture of SSRI and SNRI export commodities for transnational corporations availing of tax, water, and pollution havens; the stark social violence produced by neoliberal austerity, labor precarity, and biopolitical control enforced by state apparatuses; and the national population's increased consumption of prescription drugs to alleviate privatized pain.

### Conclusion

The double dynamic of neoliberal governmentality, which deregulates markets while simultaneously intensifying state regulation and biopolitical subordination of human and non-human forms of life, can be seen sharply in the Irish context of state repression of environmental protest, whether in the jailing of the "Rossport Five" in 2005 and the forms of force consistently employed against Corrib protestors, or the political policing of anti-Irish Water campaigners which came to its head with the pre-dawn arrests by the Gardaí of left activists and working-class residents involved in the Jobstown sit-down strike in November 2014. In this article, I have offered a preliminary survey of the prevalence of cattle and construction, pharma and financialization within the Irish neoliberal ecology, but it is just as crucial to interrogate the ways in which the opening of new frontiers have been contested by anti-systemic protest and transformation from below. From the 1980s onwards, Ireland's decades of successful community protests against environmental issues ranging from the campaign against nuclear proliferation and extraordinary success of the movement to block the entry of nuclear power plants; to campaigns against waste management and toxic waste incineration (Fagan 2003); to resistance to GMO foods and Monsanto despite the relentless pressure of the Monsanto lobby and emergence of locally-based movements in organic farming, slow food and permaculture; to Shell to Sea's activism against the Corrib pipeline; to anti-fracking campaigns and the new campaign to block drilling and the creation of an oil refinery in Dalkey Prospect all offer evidence of the persistence of modalities of revolt and resistance that reject the neoliberal regime's oppressive configuration of nature-society. Tasks for future world-ecological analysis of Ireland might be then not only to excavate these histories, but to re-imagine the ways in which nature-society can be reconfigured to be more emancipatory, biodiverse, and renewing of the dialectical interrelations between

humans and the rest of nature, thus rethinking the place of food, energy, and resource frontiers in conceptions of development and modernity.

### About the Author

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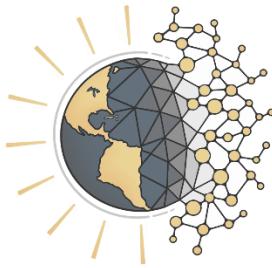
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## Ireland, Europe and the Global Crisis

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### Abstract

*This is a correction to the original article. For information about the changes made, please see the erratum <http://dx.doi.org/10.5195/jwsr.2017.702>. For Ireland—along with Spain, Portugal and Greece—membership of ‘Europe’ was seen as an opportunity to escape their historical legacy of ‘underdevelopment’ and become fully integrated into core positions in the global system. Each of these states, and especially Ireland experienced significant growth in the European Union, but once the global financial crisis struck, they suffered a deep economic and social crisis, and came to be categorized once again as ‘peripheral’ to Europe. This acute recurrence of a core-periphery divide in the European Union has been accompanied by a rapid diminution of democracy in the EU and its transformation into an increasingly coercive formation. The deprivation programmes imposed by the EU on the peripheral societies has not only damaged growth in the European economy, they have hugely diminished the legitimacy of the European integration project. The essay explores the roots of Europe’s changing power structures and assesses the implications of the Eurozone crisis for the future of the European integration project.*

**Keywords:** Ireland, European Union, Financial crisis



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From the mid-1990s Ireland was acclaimed as one of Europe's great success stories, and it was presented to the new entrants from Eastern Europe as a model for their own development. The Celtic Tiger provided clear evidence that by adopting pro-business and low tax policies any one of them could achieve standards of living on par with the Union's core states.

A few years later, in the wake of the global financial crisis, Ireland came to be re-classified in the financial media as a peripheral state, along with Greece, Spain, Portugal and, sometimes, Italy. In the wider media, the preferred term was PIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Spain), with Italy sometimes included in the grouping and sometimes not. This re-classification involved more than a fall from grace: it was a return to starting point.

Ireland's depiction as being on Europe's periphery has a much longer history. In 1985, Giovanni Arrighi edited a collection of essays entitled *Semi-Peripheral: the Politics of Southern Europe in the Twentieth Century* where he argued that the states of southern Europe shared many common characteristics, including a roughly similar average national income level. Ireland, geographically distinct from Southern Europe, was not discussed in that volume, but it did share with them a roughly similar national wealth. In a later essay, *The Semi-periphery in the Modern World System*, Arrighi describes Ireland as an "organic member of the semi-periphery" (Arrighi 1985; 1986; Broadberry & Klein 2012).

For Marx, writing over a century earlier, the point of comparison was not southern Europe, but southern Asia. India was from "a social point of view [...] the Ireland of the East." It was not just the impoverishment of the population, especially the peasantry, which linked Ireland and India in his mind, but the fact that the roots of this destitution were similar. Both Ireland and India had been turned into agricultural provinces of Britain (Marx, [1853] 1969: 488)

While Ireland was close to Mediterranean Europe in terms of average wealth, its historical trajectory was very different. Spain, Portugal and Italy were all colonial states; Ireland had been colonised. Arrighi noted: "Parliamentary democracy has never been at home in the semi-periphery" Arrighi (1986:26) It certainly sank roots in Ireland. While all the Mediterranean states of Europe developed fascist or authoritarian regimes in the 1920s or 30s, Ireland retained a parliamentary democracy. The persistence of parliamentary democracy is usually explained, in so far as it is noticed, as a feature of British influence, but given that a separate state came into existence as a consequence of a revolt against British rule this is hardly convincing.

Immanuel Wallerstein wrote: "One can interpret the whole development of Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Turkey in the interwar period as one grand response to the sense and reality of "having been left behind" (Wallerstein 1985: 37). This depiction also holds true for Ireland, with a modification: for at least a century Irish thinking was dominated by a sense and reality of "having been held behind. The linkage between national domination and economic backwardness was deeply rooted in the Irish popular consciousness. The Irish national

independence movement was closely associated with a peasant revolt against the landowning class and this resulted in a social structure quite distinct from that of Mediterranean Europe. While industry in Ireland (excepting the north-east which remained part of the United Kingdom) was probably less developed than in Mediterranean Europe, its agrarian structures were more emancipated. The power of the old agrarian ruling class had been decisively broken in Ireland, and this changed the socio-political composition of the new state and contrasted it to that of the Mediterranean states (Coakley 2012).

In Ireland, as in most of Mediterranean Europe, the Catholic Church was particularly strong, but here too there were significant differences. In Ireland, it was Anglicanism not Catholicism which had been the feudal land-holding church—and the church of the land-owning aristocracy—and this gave Irish Catholicism a distinctive social complexion. Catholicism was perceived as the faith of the oppressed, despite the Church's ambivalence toward the national independence movement. For the ascendant bourgeoisie, it was a valued ally not a rival (Paseta 1999; Coakley 2012).

The civil war that followed the Anglo-Irish treaty was won by the most conservative elements in the independence movement—with the support of Britain—and they pursued liberal economic policies little different from those previously imposed by London. Irish export trade mostly comprised agricultural primary products overwhelming destined for British markets. The Irish currency was linked to sterling and its banking system was dominated by the City of London. In shorthand, the social interests advanced by the Irish government were those of Ireland's 'comprador' bourgeoisie (Lee 1989; Regan 1999; Coakley 2012).

With the global crisis of the 1930s, and the adoption of further austerity policies, the conservative government had become deeply unpopular and could no longer secure a parliamentary majority. In the elections of 1932, the left-of-centre Fianna Fail party (composed of elements from the losing Republican side in the civil war) came to power and adopted policies that sought to encourage development and reduce the extremes of poverty. This damaged the interests of the 'comprador' bourgeoisie and the more prosperous farmers, and there was an attempt to build a counter movement along the lines of continental fascism—the Blueshirts—but they were swept aside by an alliance of republican and labor activists. In effect, the capitalist class lacked the social weight to impose its interests in an unmediated way, either through a parliamentary system or through a direct dictatorship (Regan 1999; Coakley 2012).

The Fianna Fail government policy of import substitution did lead to a significant increase in industrial employment over the following decades and their promotion of semi-state bodies contributed to wider social development, most notably the spread of electrification, while house-building and welfare programmes reduced poverty levels. Yet these achievements did not come close to alleviating the long term effects of Ireland's distorted development. Industrial growth was

never sufficient to offset the flight from the land. For most of the twentieth century, Ireland retained one of Europe's higher rates of emigration. What Ireland and the Mediterranean countries had most in common—apart from their roughly similar rates of income—was that they combined features of both core and periphery, albeit in different variations (Lee 1989; O'Grada 1997).

### The semi-peripheral states and post-war Europe

It is conventional among radical scholars to divide the post-war history of Western Europe and North America into two eras: the “Golden Age,” the three decades that followed the Second World War, and the neoliberal era that dates from the Reagan/Thatcher regimes. The former was characterised by high rates of growth, strong labor movements and the extension of social rights, the latter by declining growth, a weakening of labor and a diminution of social rights. For many, this history is seen as a shift from Fordism to Post-Fordism. Between the two eras was the crisis decade of the 1970s, an era of confrontation between labor and capital which ended with capital decisively gaining the upper hand.

This historical chronology has much to recommend it, but a reflection on the history of the European semi-periphery suggests a number of qualifications. Ireland and the European semi-peripheral states under discussion here do not quite fit the pattern. They largely missed out on the post-war Golden Age, though not on the decade of crisis. Their crisis decade was also more severe than that experienced in the core regions of the North Atlantic.

Many scholars have pointed to the jailing of air-control workers in the United States by the Regan administration in 1981 and the defeat of the miners' strike in Britain by the Thatcher government in 1984 as crucial turning points in the rise of the neoliberal order, and it is certainly true that these were important moments. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that these conflicts did not involve a full-scale confrontation between capital and labor. Neither the United States nor the British labor movements mobilised *en masse* to defend their co-workers. Labor was defeated *in absentia*. There is a case for arguing that a critical turning point in that era of crisis occurred earlier, in the European semi-periphery. At the very moment that the United States was suffering a humiliating defeat in Asia, it achieved a historic victory in Europe by curbing the revolutionary aspirations unleashed by the decomposition of the Mediterranean dictatorships. This was accomplished not through force of arms, but through means of political and social concessions. The European Economic Community played a key role in the process.

The semi-peripheral states of Europe in the post-war decades are often depicted as stagnant. In fact, they underwent important changes. Writing in the mid-1970s, at the height of the systemic crisis, Nicos Poulantzas argued that the crisis of the Mediterranean dictatorships needed to be seen in the wider context of the emergence of a new phase of imperialism characterised by the spread of what he termed *dependent industrialization*. The countries on the Europeans margins could

attract industry by offering lower taxes but this new industry was marked by a low level technology; limited labor productivity and the repatriation of profits. These countries also shared high levels of outward labor migration. This dependent industrialization was a distinguishing feature of U.S. (global) hegemony and gave global capitalism a very different shape from the era of British hegemony (Poulantzas 1976).

One of the effects of this dependent industrialization was to transform the relationship between the ‘internal’ and the ‘external’ within nation-states, enabling the United States to play a greater role in determining the policies of other states and providing security for local ruling classes. For Poulantzas, this did not in any way eliminate patterns of domination in international relations, but it did make them a good deal more complex. The new American order encouraged the closer integration of west European states, not only in the core regions but also on Europe’s periphery (Poulantzas 1975).

In the late 1950s, after a decade of economic stagnation, the Irish Republic—in close consultation with the World Bank—shifted away from import-substitution strategies toward more liberal economic policies. Attracting foreign capital became the central objective of the state and has remained so ever since. This shift in economic strategy had the important side-effect of enabling the Irish state to borrow from the global banks: the imprimatur of the World Bank permitted the adoption of Keynesian policies. Similar openings occurred in Spain and Portugal. Once Spain accepted NATO bases on its soil, the Franco dictatorship operated with U.S. protection and adopted economic policies of an increasingly liberal vein. Throughout the post-war decades the United States was actively involved in encouraging the liberalization of Europe’s southern economies (Lopez & Rodriguez 2011; Coakley 2012).

### The 1970s crisis and promise of Europe

In Washington and in the capitals of Northern Europe there was concern that they would be unable to contain the revolutionary impulses unleashed by the disintegration of the Mediterranean dictatorships. Not only was there a risk that NATO might lose control of these states, there was a serious danger that these upheavals might impact on other countries, most especially France and Italy where militant workers’ movements were accompanied by a widespread radicalization of youth. ‘Europe’ played a crucial role in the political stabilization of these countries.

While most commentators at the time assumed that Spain would be pivotal for the resolution of the Mediterranean crisis, it was Portugal where the crucial dramas unfolded. In Portugal the unthinkable happened when much of the colonial army, including many of its officers, came to identify with their anti-colonial enemies in Africa. The military overthrow of the right-wing dictatorship in Lisbon unleashed a wave of popular struggles that threatened the whole social order. The turning point in Portugal was the *República* newspaper affair, where the principle of

workers' control seemed to come into conflict with the principle of freedom of speech. The confrontation around *República* enabled Portuguese Social Democracy—with significant support from the German Social Democracy Party—to achieve political ascendancy in Portugal at a critical point in time. The Portuguese events showed that while there was a widespread mood for radical social change across Europe's Mediterranean, the Soviet-style authoritarian model was not regarded as a desirable alternative (Foley et al 1975; Frank et al 1975; Poulantzas 1976).

The European integration project was able to portray itself as representing an alternative political and social model to that of the United States, the USSR, and the fascist dictatorships. 'Europe' was seen as combining the best elements of both socialist and capitalist systems in a political context of democratic representation and constructive co-operation between nation-states. The promise of entry into 'Europe' also served as an important counterweight against those sectors of the state apparatus which might have sought to re-establish dictatorial regimes.

The Irish situation might seem far removed from the sharp social conflicts of the Mediterranean, but in Ireland too an acute political crisis arose in the early 1970s. A mass movement emerged in Northern Ireland at the end of the 1960s— influenced by the U.S. civil rights campaign—challenging the systematic discrimination against Catholics. When this movement was confronted by state violence, it morphed into a protracted guerrilla campaign seeking an end to British rule. In the early 1970s, this created a potentially explosive mixture where the unfinished goals of the national independence movement in the North risked converging with social unrest across the island.

The enormous mobilizations across Ireland following the 1972 Bloody Sunday killings shook the political order, yet a few months later, the population voted by a substantial majority to join 'Europe.' Opponents of Irish entry argued that membership would curtail national sovereignty and democracy. Supporters of the EEC claimed that on the contrary, membership would weaken Irish economic dependence on Britain and give the country greater, not less, autonomy. In a context where the great bulk of Irish exports went to the British market, this was a strong argument.

If a desire to avoid future war played a significant role in the original moves towards European integration, by the time Ireland, Greece, Spain, and Portugal joined, the war was long over and the notion of a unified Europe has come to acquire a different connotation. The European Economic Community had been highly successful economically and the cooperative spirit it seemed to embody made it a beacon for other European states. Not only had the EEC countries achieved a level of prosperity unimaginable before the war, this prosperity had been much more widely distributed than in any previous historical era. For the three Mediterranean states, 'Europe' had another significance: it seemed to promise a consolidation of democracy in their home countries. This feature did not apply to Ireland, but the prospect of joining a co-operative association which promised a wider prosperity was hugely attractive.

Ireland joined in 1973 (alongside Britain and Denmark), shortly before the deepest global recession since the war. Greece joined in 1981, and Spain and Portugal followed in 1986. The thirty glorious years were over, and the wave of growth which had marked out the post-war era would not be repeated. There was another problem too: the notion of a European social model with which new entrants might integrate was always illusory. There was no single European social model. Different types of welfare systems existed in most of the core European states, but these were organized and funded at a national level, not at a pan-European one. What ‘Europe’ *had* done in its early decades was to facilitate these nation-states to maintain their existing internal social arrangements (Coakley 2012).

A detailed comparison of the experience of these semi-peripheral states in the EU is beyond the scope of this paper. In general their fortunes were mixed. What Lopez and Rodriguez said about Spain could also apply to Ireland, and to a lesser extent to Portugal and Greece:

In this context, it is not surprising that the general perception in Spain was of having left peripheral status behind, once and for all. For the young generations, it was enough to travel around Europe to realize that the differences had become marginal and that prosperity and modernity, if they existed at all, were to be found as much on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees as beyond. (2011: 13)

At the same time each of these states experienced a weakening of their already fragile indigenous industrial bases. Their efforts to catch up with the core had the effect of increasing their dependence on external capital, the implications of which only became fully apparent with the global financial crisis (Lopez & Rodriguez 2011; Rodrigues & Reis 2012).

### Celtic Tiger

The 1980s was Ireland’s second ‘lost decade’ since the Second World War, characterised by low growth and reductions in state spending alongside high levels of unemployment and high rates of emigration. The strategy of relying on foreign direct investment to achieve economic growth appeared to have failed. In 1990, Ireland’s per capita income was 62% of the EU average. A decade later, a surge of growth had enabled it to surpass that average, at least on paper. Ireland, it seemed, had finally taken its place among the core nations of the world. For the Irish elite, especially the elite intellectuals, it was a source of great pride. They could rejoice not only in the country’s new found wealth, but in the success of the neoliberal policy prescriptions which they had enthusiastically advocated. For the rest of the population, more prosaically, the great achievement of the Celtic Tiger was that it seemed to have finally eliminated unemployment and emigration (Kirby 2010; Paus 2012).

In the Celtic Tiger years, Ireland experienced an average growth rate of 6% and unemployment fell from around 20% to 4%. The key to Ireland's surging GDP figures was a wave of investment by U.S. information technology and pharmaceutical companies. In 1989, foreign direct investment in Ireland increased sevenfold over the previous year and it continued to increase until peaking at €30 billion in 2002. Ireland became a conduit for U.S. corporations entering the European market. A significant factor in attracting U.S. direct investment to Ireland was its low tax rate, and numerous tax exemption schemes. The official corporate tax rate was 12.5% but it has been calculated that the actual effective rate was somewhere between 4% and 7%. One consequence of these tax avoidance schemes (and the repatriation of profits) is that Ireland's great leap forward in GDP statistics hugely exaggerated its actual growth (McDonough & Dundon 2010; Allen 2012).

Direct investment by U.S. corporations fell sharply following the dot-com crash, but the Irish state helped engineer a new wave of growth based upon a property boom, itself facilitated by the European Union's liberalization of the financial sphere. Irish involvement in the single currency led to lower interest rates, while the Irish banks and credit institutions were able to borrow huge sums from the major banks in Germany, France, and Britain to fund their lending. The property boom was partly driven by a shortage of housing brought about by the state's effective ending of its public housing programmes. House prices rose threefold between 1994 and 2006. Much of the lending was to a small coterie of politically connected property developers who invested not only in Ireland, but in Britain and across Europe. In 2007—when it ought to have been obvious to the most myopic that this was a bubble—Irish banks lent out €42 billion to the Irish private sector, three times the size of the Irish economy. The government and the leading state officials, as well as the media were all complicit in maximizing the credit bubble before it crashed. All of the subsequent debt was charged to the citizenry (Kirby 2010; Coakley 2012; Mercille 2013; Rafter 2014).

In September 2008, Lehman's Brothers, one of the major Wall Street banks collapsed, bringing in its wake the so-called credit crunch. Banks stopped lending to each other causing the largest financial crisis since the Second World War. Two weeks later, the Irish government announced it was guaranteeing all deposits and debts of all the Irish banks and their subsidiaries abroad. A year later, the ECB threatened to cut off emergency funding to the Irish banking system unless the government agreed to immediately apply for a bailout; the bailout involved an acceptance of a harsh austerity programme and an agreement to repay in full all the bondholders, even the unsecured ones (Irish Times 2014).

### The Unfolding Crisis

One of the knock-on effects of global credit contraction was to raise bond rates. Since the formation of the single currency, bond rates within the Eurozone had converged, with the weaker states able to borrow at rates very close to those of the stronger EU states. In the post-Lehman's mood of panic, financial investors began to distinguish between weaker and stronger states and speculate against the weaker ones.

Greece was the first in the firing line. Greece's public spending as a percent of GDP in 2006 was one of the largest in the Eurozone, but it was slightly less than Italy, and not hugely greater than Germany. Once the financial crisis broke on Wall Street, Greek borrowing costs rose rapidly. What made it unsustainable was that neither Greece nor of any other the endangered states were able to re-finance their debts because their central bank did not have the power to buy state bonds. This followed from the design of the single currency. While the ECB is nominally an independent bank, it has been clear since the beginning of the euro-crisis that it is closely tied to the private world of finance and is ultimately answerable to the major states: France and more especially Germany. Had these states agreed to change the structure of the European monetary system, there would have been no currency crisis. The framing of the crisis as a consequence of excessive public debt and spending had the effect of both transforming and exacerbating the crisis. It neglected the crucial role of financial liberalization in bringing about the crisis in the first place, and diverted attention from the culpability and indebtedness of the private banks. Not least it ignored the central role that European monetary integration has played in the affair (Guilen 2012; Streeck 2014a).

In the case of Ireland, there was a very real credit explosion in the new millennium, but this was concentrated in the private, not the public sector. In 2007, Ireland's public debt ratio was 25%, one of the lowest in the European Union. The explosion in Irish *private* debt was closely linked into, and largely dependent upon, the wider process of financialization that swept across Europe since the 1990s. The Irish banking surge was largely driven by a construction boom/bubble. The development of this bubble coincided closely with Irish membership of the euro. Irish interest rates were exceptionally low because of euro membership; these rates were largely determined by the needs of the German economy. Previously, Irish banks could only lend sums in relation to their deposit base. After monetary union, they could lend much larger sums based on what they could borrow from EU core banks. These banks in turns were facilitated in lending large sums because of the new financial instruments developed by Wall Street banks. A distinctive feature of these lending practices was that they were based on *short term* credit. The problem with short term credit is that it dries up very quickly in times of trouble, leaving the debtor stranded and unable to access new sources of funding to keep their business—or country—running (O'Riain 2014).

There was a very clear failure of the regulatory bodies in Ireland and other peripheral states to warn about the emergence of a financial bubble, to put it at its mildest. However, this failure was systemic. The European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund not only encouraged these practices but assured all concerned, just months before the crash, that if there was a ‘market correction,’ it would involve a ‘soft landing.’ The credit bubble in Ireland—and elsewhere on the European periphery—was encouraged by the major U.S.-based credit ratings agencies; the same agencies that would later play a key role in fomenting the Euro debt crisis. Far from pursuing a reckless fiscal policy, the Irish state had been continually restraining public expenditure, and had been enthusiastic in its zeal for neoliberal policies. Since 1990, they had carried out privatization across a range of public bodies that had been built up during their earlier ‘developmental’ phase: food; insurance; shipping; steel; banking; energy; telecoms and air transport (Kirby 2010; McDonough & Dundon 2010).

Spain and Portugal had also re-orientated their economies to the neoliberal zeitgeist. Both had lower rates of public spending than Germany. Spain had experienced a similar property-driven credit bubble as Ireland. Its high public debt by 2010 was a direct consequence of public authorities’ taking over the private debt of the banks and other financial institutions. Portugal had also pursued a neoliberal course during the 1990s. Unable to devalue its currency to boost its exports (and thus solve its balance of payment problem), the government encouraged financial liberalization and began an intensive course of privatization. Selling off public assets (much of it nationalised in the years immediately following the Revolution) enabled them to meet the immediate ‘convergence’ criteria for membership of the euro, but it left the country with only a very limited productive base with which to compete in the globalised economy. Even in the case of Greece, the representation of their fiscal problems as rising from extravagant social expenditure is erroneous. Much of the Greek public debt resulted from its excessive military budget and had little to do with social spending (Kouvelakis 2010; Lopez & Rodriguez 2011; Rodrigues & Reis 2012).

The image of the European core states bailing out the peripheral ones is quite at odds with what actually happened: the population of the peripheral states bailed out the banks of the core ones. The private banks in the core states, especially in Germany, France and Britain had lent large sums of money to the private banks in Ireland, Spain, Greece, and Portugal. They had also, to a lesser extent, bought public bonds from Greece and other states. What made these investments especially hazardous was that European banks, especially German ones, had bought huge amounts of dodgy financial assets from the big Wall Street institutions (Cafruny 2010; Lapavitsas 2012).

The European leaders initially minimised the significance of the crisis, even blaming it on liberal economic policies. In the immediate aftermath of the Lehmans’ crash in September 2008, Peer Steinbrück the German finance Minister sharply criticised the United States for failing to

regulate financial markets and told the German parliament: “The U.S. will lose its status as the superpower of the world financial system.” This world will become multipolar with the emergence of stronger, better-capitalized centres in Asia and Europe. The world will never be the same (*Financial Times* 2008) The French President Sarkozy was even more blunt:

Basically, a certain idea of globalization is biting the dust with the end of a financial capitalism which had imposed its rationale on the whole economy and contributed to corrupting it. The idea of the all-powerful market, which was not to be impeded by any rules or political intervention, was a mad one. The idea that the markets are always right was mad...Laissez-faire is finished. The all-powerful market which is always right is finished. (EU Observer: 28 September, 2008)

In Europe, as in North America, the political elites’ questioning of neoliberal verities did not last long. Two years later, Jean-Claude Trichet, the president of the European Central Bank proclaimed to a press conference: “The market is always right, and has to be completely respected at all times.” All the ECB has to do is to accompany “the market as it progressively gets back to normal” (Leaman 2014: 45)

The change in tune was partially due to a realization of how deeply the European banking system was implicated in the American financial debacle: “At the start of the crisis, German banks had the largest leverage rates among OECD countries [...] at the end of 2009 European banks were estimated to hold more than \$1 trillion in toxic assets, more than two thirds of which were held by German banks” (Cafruny 2010: 126).

Their losses to Wall Street made these banks’ exposure to the European periphery all the more critical. Unable or unwilling to confront U.S. financial capital, Germany and the other core states focused their wrath on Europe’s weaker states. Peter Böfingher, an economic advisor to the German government, told *Der Spiegel* in 2011: “(The bailouts) are first and foremost not about the problem countries, but about our banks which hold high amounts of credit there” (quoted in Chaterjee *Common Dreams* 28 May, 2012)

The fact that Greece became the fulcrum of the European financial crisis was advantageous because it enabled the European authorities and the EU core states, especially Germany, to transform what had primarily been a banking crisis into a crisis of sovereign debt. In the process, the Eurozone debt crisis could be represented as a crisis of the European periphery caused by an excess of public spending.

This representation of the European banking crisis was of huge significance. Greece was the first of the EU states to experience a sovereign debt crisis. By targeting Greece, the media in core states, especially in Germany, were able to draw on older forms of racial-cultural discourse

to win their case. It enabled the ECB and the core states to re-finance the major banks while directing political antagonism towards the peripheral countries. By implying that excessive public spending was at the heart of the Euro crisis, it upheld neoliberal or ‘ordo-liberal’ discourses, and legitimated the imposition of austerity policies across Europe. It also facilitated the re-emergence of a xenophobic nationalism in Germany, which would express itself a few years later with mass protests against the “rise of Islam.”

The EU authorities and the major EU states made a political decision that the banking crisis would become a sovereign debt crisis: that the weaker nation-states would pay for Europe’s financial expansion. This represented a convergence of interests between the European banks—effectively represented by the ECB—and the core states. Many of these tendencies were already nascent in the European integration project. The crisis brought them to the fore, and hardened them out, transforming Europe in the process. Not least they have transformed how the people of Europe perceive the European integration project (Lapavitsas 2012).

### **The politics of austerity**

Merkel told an audience of Christian Democratic Union-supporting business leaders on June 12, 2012: “The question of whether Greece carries out its programme is not just a question of whether the programme succeeds or not, but rather of whether obligations will be observed in Europe in future” (Deutsche Presse Agentur: June 12, 2012) Two main arguments were given in support of austerity policies: a moral one and an economic one. The moral one was that these states had overspent and should pay back what they owed. The economic argument was that austerity would make the peripheral states more competitive and would be to their benefit in the long run.

The very word ‘austerity’ is a loaded one, implying moral restraint and a refusal of all forms of self-indulgence. The problem with the moral argument for austerity is that those who are being made pay the price for running up debts are not those who benefitted from the credit boom or those who took the decisions.

The economic argument was that austerity would help states in crisis to become more competitive through a process of ‘internal devaluation,’ which would be achieved by lowering labor costs. The European authorities place great emphasis on structural reforms, especially of the labor market. Reduced social provision and more flexible employment conditions would result in lower wages, enabling the peripheral states to grow their way out of their fallen state and compete in the European and global markets. The problem with this argument is that a reduction of public spending—and lower wages—diminishes domestic demand. People have less money to buy goods, and so the whole economy goes into deeper decline. Many mainstream economic commentators like Paul Krugman, Joseph Stiglitz, Ambrose Evans-Pritchard and Martin Wolf have criticised the folly of these policies to no avail. Even the International Monetary Fund felt

obliged to criticise the futility of reducing public spending in a recession (Bloomberg News 2013). Most important of all, it hasn't worked. The peripheral states entered an extended period of stagnation.

### The austerity regime in Ireland

The austerity programme imposed by the Troika did not so much represent a break with Irish government policies of the Celtic Tiger period as a radical accentuation of these policies. During the boom, the state pursued policies of low taxation, privatization, accommodation towards markets and a reduction of public services. The feature that most distinguished Ireland from the Thatcherite-Blairite regime in Britain was its social pacts with the trade union movement. This was feasible because of rising employment and rising wages (McDonough & Dundon 2010).

Once the crash came, Ireland suffered a massive economic decline. Unemployment and emigration soared and huge numbers of people found themselves in arrears with mortgage payments. Wages in both the public and private sectors were reduced. A string of regressive taxes were introduced, and there were deep cuts across a range of social services. Poverty and inequality have hugely increased. By 2014, Irish public debt compared to GDP was over 125%, five times its pre-crash rate.

In Ireland, a small number of well-paid jobs were created by the arrival of U.S.-owned information technology and computer companies, but this did little to change the larger picture. Increasingly the Irish labor market is being polarised with middle income jobs being reduced and replaced by a small minority of secure highly paid jobs and a much larger number of precarious low-paid jobs (Andreosso-O'Callaghan *et al* 2014; O'Briain 2015).

Figures for exports and GDP in Ireland that showed growth in 2014 led to a huge amount of media hype about an Irish economic recovery. Both statistics are so notoriously unreliable that even the IMF has publicly questioned them, suggesting that they are distorted by the practice of 'transfer pricing' employed by the transnational corporations (*Irish Times*, 30 January 2015). Meanwhile wages and personal consumption have been stagnant. One area that has seen a significant increase has been house prices and rents in the Dublin region, but this has only added to the levels of popular deprivation. The costs of utility bills, transport, and healthcare have all increased. While the official jobless rate has fallen from 11.9% in 2014 to 10.2% in 2015, more than one in every five workers is part-time. EU statistics show that a quarter of the Irish population is suffering material deprivation and a tenth is suffering "severe material deprivation," one of the worst cases in the Eurozone (Burke 2014; Taft 2014a; 2014b)

Brian Lenihan, the Minister of Finance during the banking crash, famously expressed amazement that there had been no riots in Ireland in response to the austerity budgets. In fact, the austerity programmes have produced a transformation in Irish politics. Fianna Fail, which had been

Ireland's dominant party for eight decades, with a cross-class appeal, suffered a crushing political defeat in the elections of 2011. Fine Gael, the historical party of the Irish Right strengthened its position and became the leading party in the pro-austerity coalition government that followed, but it is not remotely close to being a majority party. The Irish Labor Party, which was the junior party in the coalition, experienced a meltdown in the local elections of 2014. In urban working class constituencies in particular, the pro-austerity parties have been marginalised.

While the Irish and international media have waxed enthusiastically about Ireland's recovery, this very image of recovery contrasts strikingly with the reality of deepening hardship which much, if not most, of the population has experienced. This contrast came to a head with the huge mobilizations against the imposition of water charges in 2014. The "Right 2 Water" campaign emerged as a coalition of forces, including oppositional currents within the trade union movement, grass-root activists and radical leftists. The initial response by the trade union leadership to the government's austerity programme was extraordinary timorous; decades of social pacts with employers and government had left them thoroughly domesticated. The presence of a current of radical union activists was crucial to broadening and deepening this anti-austerity coalition.

Believing their own propaganda, the government parties contested the 2016 elections on the slogan of keeping the recovery going, and were surprised to discover that most of the population had not noticed any recovery. The vote for Fine Gael, the main governing party, fell from over a third of the total in the 2011 elections to a quarter in 2016. Fianna Fail, which sought to distance itself from austerity policies, recovered some of its vote, but achieved nothing like its earlier support. The junior party in the government, Labor, suffered most, losing two thirds of its votes and the great bulk of its seats in the process,

The left-wing anti-austerity forces made significant gains across the country winning around a quarter of the vote, with Sinn Fein and the far-left coalition significantly increasing their support. For the first time in eighty years the combined vote of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael has fallen below 50%. While these conservative parties combined certainly have the capacity to push through further austerity policies, they will no longer have a loyal opposition available to swap office with in the event of suffering political defeat in future elections. An important milestone has been passed.

A more detailed look at the political economy of the northern Irish state is outside the scope of this article, but a couple of points need making. The peace settlement in Northern Ireland was premised upon a power-sharing system in a semi-autonomous regional government. Westminster maintained overall control. Since the election of the Tory-dominated government in Britain in 2010, there has been a concerted attempt to impose an austerity programme on all parts of the 'United Kingdom,' with a special emphasis on cutting welfare. In Scotland the left-of-centre Scottish National Party sought to block welfare cuts, while in Northern Ireland Sinn Fein and the

centrist Social Democratic and Labor Party—both representing the ‘nationalist’ community—were able to use the power-sharing veto rules to block similar measures.

Anti-austerity politics across the ‘United Kingdom’ is shaped by the distinctive legacy of the Thatcher era where a xenophobic English nationalism has come to play a major role in the dominant culture. The European Union is perceived by the English Right as being excessively generous in its welfare provisions (an attitude not dissimilar to that of the U.S. Right). In this context, many of those opposing austerity regard the EU as a positive force or at least as a lesser evil compared to the deeply reactionary politics of British Conservativism.

### **The new Germany**

Prior to the twenty first century global crisis, Berlin sought to pursue its national interests while accommodating other states within the EU. Once the crisis broke, this approach was abandoned and Germany reverted to an increasingly coercive model.

A number of factors encouraged this. The costs of German unification led to an extended period of fiscal retrenchment. The German trade unions, fearful that German corporations would move factories to Eastern Europe, acceded to this with the result that wages in Germany have stagnated or fallen. This led to a growing competitiveness gap between Germany and other parts of Europe, especially the south. The gap in competitiveness was masked during the boom years by the massive extension of credit from banks in the core regions to businesses and consumers in the peripheral regions. Once the crash came this gap became startlingly visible, but the peripheral states were not in a position to devalue their currencies in order to regain competitiveness (Bellofiore & Halevi 2011; Lapavitsas et al. 2012).

Since 2009, German exports have revived and Germany has built trade surpluses both globally and within the European Union. By definition, if Germany is running a trade surplus with the rest of the Eurozone, others must be in deficit, but the EU has no mechanism for dealing with this issue. Instead, Berlin and the EU authorities have insisted on rules of fiscal retrenchment which have imposed severe limits on public expenditure in countries which find themselves with trade deficits. A recessionary climate has spread across much of the Eurozone. Italy, France, the Netherlands and Belgium are all stagnant and their debts are rising.

The relentless austerity drives suggest that both the neoliberal intellectual programme and the finance-led regime of accumulation are more deeply rooted in long-term changes in the capitalist order than many critical scholars acknowledge.

### **The European Integration Project and the Global Order**

Up until quite recently the EU was widely viewed as representing an alternative model of capitalism to the United States: more humane, more law-abiding, and more pacific. European

integration was also viewed as a defensive measure against the power of the United States, enabling Europe to develop its home market and to establish a socio-economic order characterised by a high level of social cohesion. One difficulty with this perspective is that the United States has consistently supported the process of European integration. If European integration seemed likely to create a rival bloc, the United States would hardly acquiesce in the process.

The relationship between the United States and European integration was the location of one of the key debates in post-war European radical scholarship between Ernest Mandel and Nicos Poulantzas, with Mandel arguing that the EU represented an alternative imperialist project by European capital seeking to defend itself against U.S. corporations, and Poulantzas stressing the key role that U.S. capital played in the formation of the EU (Mandel 1970; Poulantzas 1975).

There are elements of truth in both positions. European economic integration assisted the larger corporations—both European and American—in their efforts to dominate the markets of Europe. Interestingly though, the bulk of investment by U.S. TNCs in Europe came *after* the formation of the ‘Common Market’ (Panitch & Gindin 2014). In the early phase, European economic integration was designed to stabilise the European economies and reduce friction between them. The United States encouraged this process in order to create a prosperous buffer zone against a potential Soviet threat to Europe. Washington was careful to ensure that European integration would not involve the exclusion of U.S. corporations or U.S. military detachments. Under the provisions of the Treaty of Rome—the founding treaty of the European Economic Community—there could be no discrimination against U.S. corporations. Moreover, European economic integration followed the incorporation of all the major west European states into the U.S.-led North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The U.S. approach towards Europe was never driven solely by economic considerations: geo-political factors were always present (Gowan 1999; Anderson 2011).

The EEC—and its later manifestations—represented something of a compromise between the United States and the European states. The European states were permitted a considerable degree of autonomy and co-ordination, provided they operated within the rules laid down by Washington. Two points were crucial: the U.S. maintained military over-lordship of (western) Europe through the means of NATO, and U.S. capital could freely operate within Europe (or was at least not subject to any discriminatory practices).

The compromise proved beneficial for Western European capitalism and the population of the core states experienced unprecedented levels of prosperity. Economic hegemony facilitated cultural hegemony and West Europeans came to absorb ‘American values’ through a myriad of means. Since then two key changes have occurred that have significantly altered the relationship between the United States and Europe: The drive to financialize the American and global economy, and the collapse of the USSR and its dominance over Eastern Europe.

The collapse of the Soviet system created not only new opportunities for U.S. global power, but also new difficulties, because the U.S. military was no longer necessary to deter the threat, real or imaginary, of the Red Army. In the period immediately following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the USSR, the future of NATO—and its usefulness—were widely debated. Peter Gowan has shown how the United States was able to use the military weakness (and political incoherence) of west European states during the Yugoslav crisis to re-assert its own dominance through NATO. Future entrants to the EU would first of all have to join NATO. This had been not been a requirement for earlier entrants like Ireland or Sweden (Gowan 1999).

The end of the Soviet Union also played a central role in the re-structuring of the EU (it was only after the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, that the name itself was adopted). Not only was ‘Europe’ to be enlarged by incorporating its eastern neighbours, but its organizational structures were radically overhauled. The driving element in this restructuring was the creation of a single currency. Pressure to create a single currency came from a number of sources. Currency instability following the end of the dollar-gold link was one factor, but not the major one. The argument that it would improve trade between the European countries—and consequently growth—was influential, but hardly overwhelming. An effective currency union presupposed both economic and political convergence. Western Europe, let alone the East, was a long way from either. Purely geo-political factors seem to have played an important role. The French political elite seems to have believed that German unification threatened the European project (or rather threatened their own central role within it) and that a single currency was necessary to tie Germany in (Connolly 1999; Anderson 2011).

The key social forces lobbying for monetary union were the large corporations, American and European, industrial and financial, in bodies like the Europe Roundtable and the Association for the Monetary Union of Europe. They seem to have played a significant role in giving European monetary union its peculiar design. German disinclination to participate in a single currency was also one of the shaping factors: the Bundesbank has always opposed monetary union and Berlin only agreed to participate in a single currency on conditions of such extreme rigidity that have effectively made the currency almost unworkable. The most important point was this: there was to be no democratic oversight in the workings of the currency and no fiscal transfers between European states. Nor could states engage in deficit financing, which is crucially important to overcome recessions (Cafruny & Ryner 2003).

Because the European Central Bank and the European Commission are not democratically elected or accountable, they have no popular legitimacy and little state apparatus of their own to ensure that their instructions are carried through. Their real authority then comes from the larger states in the Union who exercise the right to decide the exception. The full significance of all this only became apparent with the crisis of the Eurozone.

The formation of a single currency coincided with a significant structural shift in the make-up of German and French capitalism. Both states had operated closely regulated economic systems with the financial sector servicing production. In Germany, the banks long had close links with industrial corporations, marked by interlocking directorships. In France, the state tended to play a more direct role ensuring that industry received strong support from public and private finance. These regulated systems now began to unravel. Both the banks and the industrial corporations came to the view that they could do better apart. Credit for industrial corporations was often more cheaply available in the open financial markets, while the large banks saw new opportunities for profit in the global financial markets, speculating on currencies, derivatives and other financial instruments. The rise and consolidation of the single currency coincided with a shift from bank-based system to a market-based system of finance, especially in Germany, while the French government pursued a programme of privatization across the economy, including the banks (Grahl 2011).

Underpinning all this were declining growth rates in the European core states, just as occurred in the United States a little earlier. It was this long-term shift that encouraged the acceptance of the neoliberal paradigm by both public and private elites. European capital sought to emulate the American experience, and the U.S.-owned transnational corporations based in Europe encouraged the process. There can be little doubt that the absence of any ‘real existing’ systemic alternative gave the west European elites a whole new sense of confidence in their dealings with labor. The social compromises of the post-war decades now looked like a luxury that Europe could no longer afford; the apparent successes of the U.S. economy in the 1990s encouraged this view (Grahl 2011).

### **European integration and the erosion of democracy**

The 2008 financial crash consolidated trends within the EU which were already latent since the beginning of the second phase of integration. Most obviously the erosion of democracy has gathered momentum. The imposition of the Lisbon Treaty after the earlier rejection of the European Constitutional Treaty by French and Dutch electorates in 2005 was an early warning sign. Bertie Ahern, the Irish premier at the time gloated “90% of it is still there” (Anderson 2011: 59) The new Treaty was not put to a popular vote across most of Europe. Ireland was the only country whose constitution demanded that a referendum be held to ratify the treaty. When most of the voters rejected the treaty in the first referendum in 2008, a second referendum was imposed by the government and the electorate was left in doubt that if they did not accede to the wishes of

Brussels, they would pay a heavy price. The tale of the two referenda set the scene for Ireland's subsequent relations with the European Union (Anderson 2011).

These events foreshadowed the radical diminution of democratic governance in Europe. Macro-economic policy is determined by an autonomous European Central Bank. Neoliberal decrees—over-ruling national governments and national courts—are imposed by the European Court of Justice, while the unelected European Commission has the exclusive powers of initiating legislation. The European Parliament only possesses very limited powers. Huge areas of decision-making have been withdrawn from any democratic accountability. Wolfgang Streeck has summed it up: the European Union has become the key mechanism to free capitalism from the “democratic distortion of markets.” (Streeck 2014a: 106)

It is hardly surprising that the population of Europe has become estranged from, and increasingly hostile towards the institutions of the European Union, and indeed the very idea of European integration. While the functionaries in Brussels and Frankfort can remain indifferent to this popular mood, the elected politicians cannot afford to be so sanguine (Mair 2013; Streeck 2014a).

The euro crisis has impelled a paradoxical shift in the patterns of power. The augmented power of unelected EU officials and institutions has been accompanied by the renewed ascendancy of Europe's major state(s). Precisely because the EU lacks any democratic legitimacy of its own, it has been forced to rely heavily on the most powerful state(s). Initially it appeared that the leaders of France and Germany were assuming a joint presidential role in European decision-making. The recurring images of Merkel and Sarkozy holding joint summits to determine Europe's future indicated as much, but it soon became clear that Sarkozy was little more than a cipher: Germany appears to be the only nation-state to which the European Union is accountable. (Anderson 2012).

In the wake of the financial crash there has been a radical accentuation of the core-periphery divide within Europe, and a reinforcement of the hierarchy of nation-states. The promise of economic convergence between European nations has effectively been abandoned, as has any principle of equality between them. The EU has shifted from being a broadly co-operative alliance of states into being an increasingly coercive one. This has led not only to a loss of legitimacy for the European Union and its institutions, but also for those political forces most closely associated with them. Significantly, in Ireland, Greece, Spain, Portugal, and Italy this has involved the emergence of left-orientated anti-austerity forces threatening the old power structures. The treatment meted out to Greece following the election of Syriza in January 2015 is a clear indication of the great obstacles that any government challenging austerity policies will face. What the Syriza debacle did show was that the single currency has become the central mechanism for implementing the goals of financial capital in Europe. The European Central Bank quite deliberately engineered a bank run in Greece to bring Athens to its knees. The Syriza government's unwillingness to break

with the single currency sealed their fate and guaranteed their capitulation to the destructive demands of Berlin and Brussels (Lapavitsas 2015).

In Europe's core states, popular disaffection is mainly taking the form of an upsurge of racist and anti-immigrant political movements. The mass arrival in Europe of refugees, mostly fleeing the wars in Syria and Afghanistan, has strengthened and galvanised this trend. Its roots are deeper and are direct consequences of Europe's neoliberal evolution: the remorseless erosion of the welfare state; the cordoning off of most political decision-making from popular oversight and the elevation of possessive individualism in everyday life have all undermined older cultures of solidarity. These tendencies were hugely accentuated by the European elite's response to the financial crisis which effectively extinguished any lingering notions of solidarity between countries. A similar political pattern is well established in Eastern Europe where socialist ideas have been heavily discredited by their association with dictatorship and where disaffection with economic liberalism tends to take a conservative-nationalist direction.

Europe's peripheral states find themselves in a trap. If they stay in the single currency they can expect to see their societies suffer more or less continual attrition. The EU rules prevent them from taking measures—whether currency devaluation or economic stimulation—which might permit economic recovery. Their economies are now integrated to a considerable degree with the wider European economy. If they leave the single currency, they will still owe debts denominated in euros, and can expect little mercy from the European Union authorities. For their part, the elites within the peripheral states are overwhelmingly committed to the project of European integration. They are, however, locked into a contradictory position. While they are comfortable with policies that weaken labor and lower wages, sharp declines in domestic consumption undermines growth prospects and drives many companies out of business. The austerity agenda creates particular problems for their political representatives. Jean-Claude Juncker, the President of the European Commission captured the dilemma: "We all know what to do, we just don't know how to get re-elected after we've done it. (Daily Telegraph: July 15, 2014)

Ireland's exceptional level of dependence on both U.S. capital investment and on access to European markets makes it particularly vulnerable to a systemic crisis and vulnerable also to retaliation by Europe's rulers in the event of a government emerging that challenged the austerity agenda. For the Irish elite, the strategy of achieving national prosperity by creating a bridge economy between the United States and the European Union is unquestionable, but the limits of this strategy are becoming ever more apparent. As inter-state competition in Europe (and between Europe and the United States) intensifies, Dublin's schemes for corporate tax avoidance come under pressure from both Washington and Brussels, pressure which the Irish state is in a weak position to resist. The state's fiscal position dictates that it either increases taxation on Ireland's

propertied elite or it further reduces popular living standards and erodes public services. Either approach will cause major political problems.

This is not to suggest that progressive social reform is impossible in Ireland. There is ample scope for introducing re-distributive policies. A progressive system of taxation would enable an anti-austerity government to finance a programme of public investment in housing, infrastructure and public services. But the level of debt which has been imposed on the Irish public is so great that the arrival of a new European or global recession—or a new global financial crisis—would once again leave the Irish state exposed and at the mercy of the ‘troika.’ Any government seeking to break with austerity and to develop a sustainable social and economic strategy would need to be willing to challenge this odious debt burden and be prepared to break with the single currency if necessary.

### Conclusion

The contention that the process of financialization carries with it the sign of autumn has been largely borne out by developments in Europe. More than that, the rise of financial capital in Europe has been accompanied by the erosion of democracy which has in turn enabled Europe’s elites to ‘feather their own nests’ at the expense of the wider population, especially those at the margins of society. This diminution of democracy has been carried out under the rubric of closer European integration, which far from creating a deeper sense of solidarity among ordinary Europeans has had quite the opposite effect. At the level of popular sentiment, Europe has never been more divided since the end of the Second World War.

For the population of the semi-peripheral countries, ‘Europe’ represented hope and a confidence that the era of poverty, unemployment, emigration and precariousness would be consigned to history and a new age of prosperity and modernity had arrived. There is not a lot of hope left now and even less confidence: the European Union increasingly seems like a cage for trapping Europe’s nations. This disillusionment with the idea of European integration is in turn undermining the structures of hegemony across the European periphery with political opposition increasingly driven in an anti-systemic direction. Any renewed financial crisis or return to global recession will greatly exacerbate these tensions and put the future of the European Union at risk.

### About the Author

Maurice Coakley lectures in the Journalism and Media Studies faculty, Griffith College Dublin. He is author of *Ireland in the World Order: A History of Uneven Development* (Pluto: 2012). His research interests include the historical development of capitalism, patterns of hegemonic power and the structures of contemporary imperialism.

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## Ireland in the World-System: An Interview with Denis O'Hearn

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### Abstract

*In this interview, Denis O'Hearn presents his views of Ireland's historical and contemporary status in the capitalist world-system and which countries Ireland could be profitably compared with. He discusses how Ireland has changed since the publication of his well-known work on The Atlantic Economy (2001) and addresses questions related to the European Union and the looming break-up of Britain as well as contemporary Irish politics on both sides of the border. O'Hearn also touches on the current state of Irish academia.*

**Keywords:** Ireland, United Kingdom, European Union, World-System, Historiography, Sociology



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Denis O'Hearn has long pioneered the use of world-systems and dependency theory for historical and contemporary understandings of Ireland, most notably in his award-winning work *The Atlantic Economy: Britain, the US, and Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001). In this interview with Prof. O'Hearn, we invited him to discuss the major themes of our symposium — Ireland's status in the global capitalist economy, relations with both the United Kingdom and the European Union, and the limits of mainstream academic analysis in Ireland. Thus, as well as acting as a capstone to our symposium, we also intend this interview to highlight not only the importance of world-systems analysis for Irish studies, but also the relevance of Ireland for world-systems theorists.

*Aidan Beatty, Sharae Deckard, Maurice Coakley (ASM): Is Ireland a semi-periphery? What are the dis/advantages of understanding Ireland as a periphery and a semi-periphery? Are there regional variations? What are your views of Giovanni Arrighi's contention that GNP should be the measure for assessing a country as a periphery or a semi-periphery?*

Denis O'Hearn (DO): Yes, to the extent that we can define countries as “peripheral” or “semi-peripheral,” Ireland belongs firmly in the semi-periphery. I say this mainly because of its extreme dependence on foreign investment and because of the distortions that creates in the Irish economy and in Irish development prospects. The two most distinct aspects of this in recent history have been the huge gaps between GDP and GNP, caused largely by TNC profit-repatriations, and the post-tiger construction bubble that was wrongly interpreted by most economists as a “soft-landing” from the period of high growth in the 1990s. Of course, when we apply world-systemic terms such as “semiperiphery” we must always add an asterisk. First, each semiperipheral zone is distinct both in its place within the global division of labor and in its relationships to core areas. Proponents of the method of incorporating comparison, as Dale Tomich and others have reminded us, regard the world-system as a self-forming whole that is formed and reformed by the ever-changing relations between its parts. Peripheral and semiperipheral zones are not simply acted upon but are constantly casting and recasting bargains with core states and corporations, in ongoing relationships in which they are less powerful but not powerless. Second, there are regional variations; not only are agrarian regions of the island of Ireland distinct from urban and more industrialized regions but each region has its own specificities. It may seem obvious to say it, but Kerry is not Donegal, nor is Cork Dublin.

This was one of the main points Arrighi was making in his classic article with Jessica Drangel, where he showed that the world-system is comprised of countries that cluster into three distinct groups measured by GNP per capita (at least they did at the time the article was written).

But he did not *define* the zones in this way, rather they cluster by income because of the distinct structural characteristics of each zone. In particular, economic activities in semiperipheral zones are a mix of core and peripheral ones and as a result they are on average less profitable than the core but more profitable than the periphery; they are less technology-intensive than the core; and wage incomes are generally lower. Semiperipheral zones or countries within them are thus not in transition from periphery to core, as modernizationists would propose, but are structured in the middle. As Arrighi and Drangel put it, economic activities are structured in commodity chains that cut across state boundaries and this results in the semiperipheral mix of core and peripheral activities. Ireland is unique, however, in the degree of dualism of its economy, in the extreme domination of transnational capital in manufacturing and some services, on one hand, and traditional agriculture on the other.

Of course, some of the indicators of coreness are where Ireland has supposedly been “different.” For example, as we saw so distinctly in the Celtic Tiger period but even before and after, Ireland had dramatically high profit rates in manufacturing. Indeed, they were far higher than those of core countries. Irish manufacturing also seemed to be dominated by high-tech firms and products, again moreso than core economies. But did this mean that the island was not semiperipheral? Here is where world-systems categories like semiperiphery are quite useful. Even at the point where the south of Ireland had surged dramatically from one of the “poor men” of Europe to the second-highest EU country in terms of GDP per capita, one could pick apart its “profit rates” and its “high tech” character and see that they were largely illusions caused by the economy’s extreme dependence on U.S. capital. Yes, profit rates were extremely high in the U.S. pharma and computer sectors, but that was largely because of practices like transfer-pricing and the fruits of such profit rates were largely lost through repatriation.

As an interesting sidenote, the illusion of coreness in Ireland was partly produced by a statistical accident: the decision by Eurostat and others to use GDP rather than GNP as the basic measure of economic status. This made Ireland appear to be up to a third wealthier than it actually was.

And one final point while we are on this subject: nobody seems to ever learn any lessons from this. Lately, the U.S. media has been reporting on U.S. corporate “inversions,” a practice by which big U.S. companies buy out smaller Irish companies like the pharma company Allergan and relocate their corporate headquarters to Ireland in order to take advantage of low Irish taxes on taxes. They have been reporting this as if it is a new thing but, of course, we have been talking and writing about such corporate tax-evasive practices at least since the 1970s. It seems to be characteristic of business reportage on the semiperiphery that no one ever learns anything. The media go to the same group of “experts” who failed to see a recession or a bailout coming to find

out why the recession happened and how it will be fixed! Few people want real explanation, just the same old failed superficial answers.

*ASM: What other countries/situations are you most inclined to compare Ireland to? What are your views of academic analyses of Ireland, particularly of the revisionist school of historiography?*

DO: The answer to this question depends on the dimension of social reality or history we are interested in. Economically, Ireland is quite unique. If you look at measures of dependency, “globalization,” “openness,” or such things, no other country even comes close to Ireland in recent times. This is one reason why all the hype about the Celtic Tiger was just that...hype. For a time, you had Irish “experts” going all around the world, especially to Central and Eastern Europe, telling people how they could also become tigers, like Ireland. But it was all absurd! As I kept telling people, Ireland received something like 40 percent of high tech manufacturing investment into the EU with one percent of the population. This meant two things. First, the flow of inward investments had a much bigger effect on growth in a small country like Ireland than it could have in a larger country, even Hungary or a Czech Republic. Second, if Ireland was getting 40 percent and Britain another 40 percent of inward investment, where would the investment come from that was supposed to make all those East European tigers?! There is only one hundred percent in a hundred percent.

Then, when we get to the crisis, things are different, as well. In the most recent crisis, for instance, Ireland suffered from a specific disease of corruption, construction, and speculation that masked its true economic weakness for five or six years. While some local fat cats were getting rich in a phantom construction sector, transnational corporations were actually disinvesting. That bubble finally burst at about the same time as it burst in Iceland, Greece, and elsewhere. But the Irish bubble was a different and quite specific bubble from Iceland or Greece. So comparison is instructive but one has to be very careful to specify what one is comparing and, especially, the points of difference between Ireland and other places.

Historically, comparison is very interesting but again in a particular way. Ireland, as the first colony, played a very unique role in the British-led Atlantic economy. It was an important mediation point between England and the Caribbean and North America. But other characteristics of the colonial relationship are very important in a different sense for historical comparison.

Take the Famine. Ireland is important comparatively *not* because its famine is like other famines, except to the extent that it was created by imperialism. As Mike Davis shows in his wonderful book *Late Victorian Holocausts*, Ireland is important because it was a test run for subsequent famines by which England and other European powers “created” the Third World. The

same is true of the policy of surrender and regrant, by which clan lands were turned into private property and indirect rule was established in parts of Ireland. Again, Ireland was a guinea pig for policies that England used throughout empire. And then later, of course, the use of interrogation and surveillance techniques in the North of Ireland was a testing ground for Brixton and other poor parts of Britain, as well as for “wars on terror” around the world. *And* during the late 1970s up to the 1981 hunger strike, the use of long-term prison isolation against political prisoners was a template that was later used by the United States and Turkey, among others. Of course, this kind of policy-testing using “worthless” lives goes on all over the world, not least in medical testing in the Global South but also among poor populations of core countries. I think it is in these indirect policy comparisons that Ireland is most interesting in a historical context.

That brings us to your question about historical revisionism in Ireland. Obviously, I have big problems with this school of Irish historiography, which should more accurately be called historical negationism because its purpose is the denial of colonial and imperial oppressions of the Irish people. I was always surprised by the use of this term in the Irish context because in other places, like Africa, “revisionism” meant widening the net to use more and different kinds of evidence to address historical questions. It meant that the historian could use oral narratives and songs as data. It meant that the historian was expected to consider creative ways of “doing history from the bottom up,” as the U.S. historian Staughton Lynd puts it. Think of all the beautiful histories and cultural studies that have been enabled by this kind of thinking. One of the most enlightening studies I know is Keith Basso’s book on the Apache, *Wisdom Sits in Places*. It is all about the use of oral wisdom to understand the past and the present, and to address the future. In his magisterial work *The Art of Not Being Governed*, James Scott even argues that people may refuse literacy as a strategy to maintain their autonomy. Recording and measuring are the means by which states establish control over previously autonomous people. In such contexts, uses of oral data are critical.

But in Ireland we had “revisionist” historians telling us that this kind of data was invalid, that you could only believe data if it was written down. There are even studies of the Irish diaspora that claim special relevance because they use written letters by emigrants as data. I mean, what proportion of emigrants before the twentieth century could write home to provide their histories? This kind of thing is not just crazy, it is class biased. It is the history of the literate, which means history written from above. Boaventura de Sousa Santos talks of the “sociology of absences and emergences,” by which he means we have a duty to reclaim as real those experiences that have been discarded by the mainstream social sciences because they do not fit into their conceptions of “economy” or “society.” Moreover, we must see as “possible” many things that mainstream social sciences have continually called impossible, including utopia and communism and statelessness.

Thankfully, we also have a strong tradition of historiography in Ireland that recognizes such absences and emergences. I think, for example, of Jane Gray’s use of songs and poetry in Ulster Scots to recreate the gendered lives of spinners and weavers in protoindustrial Ireland. I have tried to follow such a “sociology of absences and emergences” in my work on Irish political prisoners and in subsequent work on isolated prisoners in U.S. prisons like California’s Pelican Bay. Rather than accepting the orthodox definitions of these prisoners as terrorists, in the Irish case, or gang leaders, in the United States, I have tried to understand them as full political subjects and, moreover, to recognize the lessons they have provided about how to build societies based on maximum participation, direct democracy, solidarity, and mutual aid.

If Irish historical revisionism did us a service, however, it was to force us to reconsider our analyses of colonialism and imperialism. In particular, it did challenge certain forms of knee-jerk nationalism that were just as superficial as orthodox economic histories. Thus, whenever I tried to place Ireland in the historical capitalist world-system, as in my book *The Atlantic Economy* or in my work on the Irish and English cotton and linen industries, I faced a new challenge and I did feel a need to uncover data and archival sources that had not been used in traditional nationalist histories. I had to interpret them in new ways and with better techniques, including econometric estimators. We need to use every tool at our command, every source of data, from statistics to poetry, and perhaps some Irish revisionist works drove us harder to make better arguments and use data more rigorously.

*ASM: In relation to your work on The Atlantic Economy, how has Ireland changed since you wrote that book? Has U.S. hegemony declined and what does that mean for Ireland?*

DO: Well, Ireland has changed in some ways. The specifics of its relationships to and with world-capitalism and especially with the EU have evolved. I wouldn’t say that U.S. hegemony has necessarily declined, but it has evolved and become more contradictory. For example, the United States has complicated its hegemony by overplaying certain military hands. It helped usher out the Soviet empire at the cost of creating an Islamic fundamentalism that is far more dangerous than any movement since the Second World War, although thankfully more localized than communism-as-it-actually-existed.

As for Ireland, it changed much more from the beginning of *Atlantic Economy* to the end of that study than it has changed since. Many of the key relationships that marked Irish dependency in the 1980s and 1990s are still there, particularly the overreliance on U.S. corporate investment. Perhaps the biggest change in the medium-term is political, including the fall-out of the peace process and the emergence of a new left political movement in Ireland. The Irish left is still not as

strong or as creative as Podemos in Spain or even Syriza in Greece but nonetheless it has at least the seeds of a challenge to Ireland as we have known it. I think at the end of *The Atlantic Economy* many people thought my analysis left Ireland in a dismal position, although I always argued for hope. Now, however, we live in a time of hope. This may sound strange to someone who focuses on the deep crisis we have just been through. But through crisis hope arose because more and more people began to see that another world is not only possible but necessary. We live in a time when a U.S. politician can run and be considered a serious contender for president *and* explicitly call himself a socialist. It is a time when people who refer to the one and the ninety-nine percent strike a chord right across the populations, not just of the Global South or Europe but even of the United States. So I think the biggest change since *The Atlantic Economy* is the return of hope and the promise of a new kind of politics.

*ASM: What are your views of the European Union and the role it plays both in Ireland and elsewhere? What role do you see the EU taking in the future? What are your views of the past, present and future of the single currency?*

DO: The EU has really gotten ugly of late (was it ever different?!). The raw use of power against the Greek people and the collapse, one might even say betrayal, of the hope that emerged with Syriza in their defiance against Berlin was a salutary lesson to progressives all over Europe. Tahrir took a few years to disappoint us but Greece deflated us overnight...from victory to despair! The EU has simply become more dictatorial, its economics have become more and more orthodox, and the collapse of any hint of progressivism in social democracy, including its overweening concern for macroeconomic orthodoxy over social welfare, has left little doubt about what the EU project is all about. The EU as an institution will be of little help to Ireland at least in the short run.

But solidarity with the people of Europe has never been more important than now. There are movements that present the hope of a new kind of politics. Here I refer not so much to national-level parties like Podemos—we have been betrayed by all kinds of political parties before. What is important are new ideas of politics, particularly the involvement of people at the grassroots and new emerging forms of local governance, as in Spain. All over the world, especially in poor suburbs of cities and in some rural areas, people are organizing new autonomous institutions of direct democracy and new economic practices that are based on self-management and mutual aid rather than profit before people. These things are still small and growing but there is no reason why more of them cannot happen in Europe and Ireland as they are happening elsewhere.

As for the single currency, it may sound somewhat cynical, but it is what it is. A lot of people on the left spent a lot of time fighting against and then worrying about the single currency,

whether it would survive or should fall, or whether the EU would become a two-tier society. Of course, it already is at least two-tier, both class-wise and regionally. Obviously, the single currency is a source of power for the core of Europe and expulsion from the Euro is a threat that can be used against peripheral countries. But I think there are better and more fruitful struggles to engage.

*ASM: What are your views of the Republic today? What role does Financialization play in Ireland’s status in the global economy? What links and parallels, if any, do you see between Ireland and the PIIGS [Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece, and Spain]? Why have things played out here differently in Ireland than elsewhere, since 2008, particularly in relation to anti-austerity protests?*

DO: You’ll excuse me if I begin by saying that we are still awaiting “the Republic”! But all kidding aside, I am interested to see the resuscitation of my “Celtic Tiger” analysis in the context of the crisis and post-crisis Ireland, and even by some of the more right-wing papers like the *Irish Sunday Independent*. A few people from across the political spectrum are asking some of the same questions about the hollowness of the dependent Irish economy that I and others, including Ronaldo Munck and Peadar Kirby, were asking for decades. Of course, financialization does play a role but it has been overestimated in many analyses of economic change. In particular, the key factors in the Irish economy are still tied to international productive sectors and particularly to the economy’s dependence on U.S. capital. Yes, financial capital has played a role but mostly an additive one that makes crises even more severe than they would have been anyway, and that changes the timing of crises. Financialization is largely a way that capital seeks profitable outlets for the economic surplus when there is insufficient demand or opportunity for productive investments. TNC disinvestments from Ireland were already occurring from 2001 but then all kinds of strange financial manoeuvres enabled corrupt Irish speculators to keep the domestic economy profitable for them until the whole thing crashed five-to-seven years later. So-called financialization did not cause the crash but it postponed, lengthened, and deepened it.

When we talk about what drives economic cycles in Ireland we should be talking mainly about productive corporations and especially U.S. corporations, and about demand. Even those corporations that appear to be “dematerialized,” as some popular accounts like to assert, are highly material. Google’s product may be “dematerial” in a sense but look at the vast amounts of water and other resources they use in “producing” their main product. And look at the crucial role Google plays in the material economy, from advertising to logistics to sales. I have always been suspicious of approaches that either downplay the material aspects of economy or which try to focus on one “leading sector,” particularly *haute finance*, as the center of the world-economy. As much as I love

Arrighi's *Long Twentieth Century*, his focus on finance was never any more convincing than Stephen Bunker's focus on economies of scale and scope in the transport of raw materials as the driver of hegemony...probably even less convincing.

As for the PIIGS, as I have already indicated, the dependent nature of Ireland is quite specific and therefore so are the causes of its recurrent economic crises. Yet the whole European periphery suffers from the orthodox policies that emerge from the Eurocore. The central insistence on putting balanced budgets above social welfare forced austerity measures throughout the EU periphery, so everyone suffers from that. And the measures that are forced on peripheral EU states through bailout agreements increase the pressures against the poor. The only Keynesian measures adopted are those that are designed to save banks and financial institutions from their own profligacy and corruption. As a result, all of the PIIGS including Ireland continue to have by far the highest poverty rates in the pre-1989 EU and these poverty rates are the least ameliorated by social transfers. So it is the impact of austerity rather than the source of crisis that is general across the PIIGS.

*ASM: What is your current assessment of politics in both the Republic and Northern Ireland? What do you see as likely future developments? How might political changes affect academic analysis of Ireland?*

DO: I think left alternatives are important at the national level and I am heartened by the emergence of more solid left movements throughout Ireland, including Sinn Féin. I hope the current left alternatives prove to be more trustworthy than previous ones, which collapsed into moribund mainstream *non-alternatives* like the Irish Labour Party. But I am increasingly convinced that the heart of future politics is not in electoral parties and processes. It is in the people. Real politics that will change society is built in everyday life in communities. The most important change of politics world-wide in the last twenty years is the revival of anarchism, and especially the beginnings of a dialog between Marxism and anarchism. Marxism tells us a lot about capitalism, crisis, and the nature of states, institutions, class relations and other unequal relations in capitalism. But it has not had a lot to say about what the historian Fernand Braudel refers to as "material life," that huge sector of life into which capitalism tries to sink its roots but is largely unable to do so. We forget how much of our lives we live outside of and even in opposition to capitalism. As my colleague Andrej Grubacic and I put it, we live much of our lives on the edges of capitalism.

Many of the things we work hardest at are things that we enjoy doing together with others. This is the unpaid "work" of building community, efforts that mainstream society does not consider work because they do not receive a wage, even though we exert much time and sweat

doing them. Indeed, we work harder and with more dedication doing things for which we receive no wages than the so-called “work” we do in formal employment. And when we do these things we are making directly democratic decisions about how our lives and our communities will be structured. I think the future of “politics” in Ireland as everywhere else in the world lies in building these everyday relations of life, to the point where more and more things are done outside of capitalist processes of accumulation or state institutions, and more of our time and energies are spent doing things for each other than doing things for someone else’s profits. In academic analysis, this kind of thought is gaining ground. Every year more Chomskys and John Holloways and James Scotts appear in the academy and elsewhere. That is the real future of politics.

*ASM: Where does Northern Ireland fit into your current views of global political-economy?*

DO: It doesn’t. It is an anomaly, a relic. Of course, there are many other anomalies in the world, including the Islamic State and Saudi Arabia, yet we have to take them into account because they do have impact in international politics. But as I have said, the main role of Northern Ireland, as was the whole island of Ireland before partition, has been a testing ground for security policies and technologies, political strategies, and so on. And of course the North before the peace process was also a hugely important example of resistance to people all around the world. And I suppose the peace process has been an important policy experiment, especially in ways of pacifying populations without affecting any real political change. But I think Northern Ireland’s days are numbered.

*ASM: What does the potential of Scottish independence (and perhaps also the general break up of the United Kingdom) mean for Northern Ireland? And what might it mean for the Republic?*

DO: I have long held that Scotland not Northern Ireland is the key weakness of Britain. It is also a key to Irish unity. Northern Unionism is based on the historical Scots-Irish connection. How can northern Unionists maintain their loyalty to a Union and a monarchy that no longer includes their ancestors? Scotland will probably exit the union before the north of Ireland does. Then it all comes crashing down...or, at least it should. The so-called United Kingdom has been a forced anomaly for too long and the sooner it is gone, the better.

But then the real work begins. Whether we are talking about Ireland or the Basque Country or Catalonia or Kurdistan the real question is not about what kind of state the people of those regions must endure but what kind of democracy they can build. So for the Republic, or for Scotland or even England for that matter, unity will clear the national problem off of the table and new questions about democracy and representation can finally emerge. We can finally get onto the

real business of building horizontal institutions of governance in which people take a more active role and have a direct say in how their communities are run, and not just the right to vote in barely meaningful elections. We can forget about questions of nation and instead work at building community, at building relations of mutual aid in those communities, and in that way building a new future that does not depend on nation-states or on the uneven economic and power relations in the interstate system or its regional groupings like the EU. Even as we seek national rights we can begin building these relations of mutual aid and community. It is happening already among Kurds in Rojava. They are not waiting to overthrow the Turkish or the Syrian state but are just building today the kind of society they want to have in the future. At the same time they are building Kurdistan. Could Celts in Ireland, Scotland, and elsewhere learn from this? Maybe so.

### About the Author

Denis O'Hearn was trained as an economist and sociologist at the University of Michigan, where he received his Ph.D. in 1988. He worked for a number of years in the Sociology Department at the University of Wisconsin - Madison, where he was Associate Professor, and at Queen's University Belfast, where he was Professor of Economic Change. He has been Fulbright Professor of Sociology at University College Dublin and visiting scholar at several universities in the US, Europe and Japan. He is currently a Professor at SUNY-Binghamton. His scholarly interests are in the sociology of economic change, Marxian and anarchist political economy, imprisonment, and exilic societies. He has published extensively in journals such as the *American Journal of Sociology*, *American Sociological Review*, *Social Problems*, *Politics & Society*, *British Sociological Review*, and elsewhere. His biography of Bobby Sands, *Nothing but an Unfinished Song* has appeared in multiple English editions and in French, Basque, Turkish, and Italian. His books have received many awards including the International Award 'Citta 'di Cassino Letterature dal Fronte,' Italy; the Alessandro Tassoni Prize, Italy; and the American Sociological Association PEWS Distinguished Scholarship Award. His latest book, with Andrej Grubacic, is *Living at the Edges of Capitalism: Adventures in Exile and Mutual Aid* (University of California Press, 2016).

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## Transitions in the Colonial Hudson Valley: Capitalist, Bulk Goods, and Braudelian

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### Abstract

*A long debate about the American “transition to capitalism” has been settled via a rough consensus on the gradual prevalence of rural capitalism in the north; and that even small, subsistence-oriented farm households engaged in some market exchange, while market-oriented farm households engaged in some subsistence activities. Yet certain Marxist scholars argue that even prevalent market exchange did not necessarily signify a capitalist economy. Similarly, certain world-systems scholars see the debates as somewhat pointless, inasmuch as capitalism is a systemic characteristic that exists regardless of any individual identification. These latter notions derive in part from Braudel’s tripartite structure of early modern economic life, which sees self-sufficiency and basic daily survival existing alongside market economies and everyday forms of exchange, with the capitalist world-economy in turn overarching, yet not necessarily affecting, the other two levels. This paper posits that colonial America’s “transition” to capitalism was effectively the addition of Braudel’s second layer of economic life — the market economy — onto the first layer of self-sufficiency and basic material life. The paper explores the notion of geographically-uneven Braudelian economic structures and transitions within the late 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century colonial Hudson Valley, demonstrating that even within relatively small geographical spaces it is possible to find different means of Braudelian economic life, and by extension, varying articulations with the world-economy and possible paths to eventual core emergence.*

**Keywords:** Braudel, Hudson Valley, Capitalist Transition, Economic Structure



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Interpreting the American “transition to capitalism” occupied many economic and social historians of the northern colonial United States and early republican period during the 1970s-1990s, though the debate stems back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Gilje 1996; Goldsworthy 2011; Post 2009). More recently, after about two decades of back-and-forth over the subsistence versus market orientation of colonial and early republic rural Euroamericans, as well as the timing of the market transition (Dunaway 1996a: 6-7), a rough consensus gradually emerged on several points: that rural capitalism in the north became more prevalent over time, especially during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Lamoreaux 2003: 438); that there were regional differences in this transition’s timing, in part based on the crops grown in a given area (Hornsby 2005; Lemon 1987); and that even small, subsistence-oriented farm households engaged in a certain amount of market exchange, while market-oriented farm households engaged in at least some subsistence activities (Bushman 1998; Kulikoff 1993). Various Marxian participants concluded that even where market exchange became predominant in the British North American colonies and early United States, it wasn’t necessarily a capitalist economy (Merrill 1995: 317-25; Mutch 1980: 856; Post 2009). In doing so, they were following their classical definition of capitalism as a market economy ruled by, or in the interests of, capitalists, as well as echoing Braudel on the idea that “the market” and capitalism are not coterminous *per sé*.

As Dunaway (1996a: 9) points out, a world-systems perspective obviates these debates via a broader and “more inclusive definition of capitalism” that not only examines production relations but also governance structures, land tenure arrangements, and labor mechanisms. In this perspective, one can be engaged with—and therefore basically a part of—the capitalist world-system regardless of any self-conscious individual or group identification with capitalism: e.g. in a time-space such as 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century Appalachia, a major supplier of raw materials to the core from soon after Euro-indigenous first contact (Dunaway 1994), “it would have been almost impossible for... a subsistence producer to be totally free of the capitalist economy” (Dunaway 1996a: 231). This also implies the modern world-system’s inherent geographical unevenness (Chase-Dunn 1989: 41-42, 68). Beyond the basic core-semiperiphery-periphery structure, Dunaway acknowledges that local economic sectors could “remain outside the realm of capitalist relations,” despite the larger regional economy being articulated with the capitalist world-economy and more-or-less structured along capitalist lines (1996a: 232).

Dunaway borrows that notion from Braudel, based specifically on his tripartite conception of 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century economic life, comprised of: (1) self-sufficiency and basic daily survival, or “material life”; (2) the market economy and everyday forms of exchange; and (3) capitalism itself, or more specifically the capitalist world-economy (Braudel 1977: 39-40, 112; 1981: 23-24, 560-62; 1982: 229-30; also see Arrighi 2001: 113-14; Talbot 2011: 59-64). Indeed, what has been

viewed as a “transition” to capitalism in colonial America is effectively the gradual, often contested, and geographically uneven addition of Braudel’s second layer of economic life—the market economy—onto the first layer of self-sufficiency and basic material life. In turn, this process was arguably driven by the third layer of the larger capitalist economy (Bruegel 1996b: 257, 269; Merrill 1995: 317, 325; Talbot 2011: 63-64, 84-85).

It is of course also a part of the larger process identified by world-systems analysis as incorporation, by which an expanding world-system “absorb[s] new peoples, new territories, or both” (Hall 2012: 47), albeit often in fits and starts while being contested by those seeking to resist, or at least negotiate, their incorporation (Leitner 2013: 265, 267, 273, 281). While this phenomenon is more typically explored for indigenous groups, especially in North America (e.g. Bush 2005; Dunaway 1996b; Hall 1989), a version of it occurred with Euroamerican settlers, who while arguably already within the capitalist system (Dunaway 1996a: 16), still had to face its deepening, i.e. the expansion of the market into their local economies (cf. Wallerstein 1989: 130).

Given this Braudelian transition’s geographical unevenness, it is most accurately explored at a regional level, inasmuch as “regions are the sub-unit of the world-economy that may be best defined as engaging in core or peripheral activity (or both in the case of the semiperiphery)” (Driscoll and Kick 2013: 2). However, as Driscoll and Kick (2013: 7) later explain, regions are “spaces in which processes of production, labor, exchange, and consumption ‘hang together within an open system that nevertheless exhibits some kind of structural coherence’ [Harvey 2006: 102].” Terlouw (2011: 203) adds the *caveat* that regions are tricky analytic units, given that they “are not lasting entities, but are constantly created and destroyed”; he prefers instead to use cities as a proxy for regions. By extension, we should try to have a heightened sensitivity to the possible existence of subregions, i.e. smaller regions nested within larger spaces that exhibit some greater coherence of their own (cf. Chase-Dunn 1989: 209-10; Driscoll and Kick 2013: 2). To the extent that neighboring subregions are peripheral to the same core area, we might expect them to manifest different types of peripheral relationships, given such differences as, e.g., crops produced, resources extracted, land tenure, and the attendant social relations of production.

In a recent attempt at world-systems analysis of colonial American political-economic change, Leitner (2013) tries a broader regional approach. Adapting Chase-Dunn and Hall’s (1997) nested interaction networks approach to world-systems, he compared the relatively successful transition from a prestige goods economy to a bulk goods economy in colonial New York with the rather less successful transition thereof in colonial Canada/Quebec. However, while alluding to New York’s diverse economic geographies, his colony-to-colony comparison elides the colony’s “internal diversity” (Dunaway 1996a: 7) and the unevenness of the supposed transition to a grain-

growing, bulk-goods economy. Per Leitner (2013), as the fur trade declined, New York gradually became a bulk-goods economy, producing grain and other foodstuffs for the Caribbean colonies.

A closer examination reveals two different paths to a bulk goods economy, or indeed, two different paths to the core, and also different models of internal core-periphery relations. One of these paths posits an explicit and rather straightforward port-hinterland structure via which commodities were produced and exported to external markets (Earle 1992a; 1992b). The other path posits fairly complex “networks of regional exchange” between hinterland and port as largely dependent on the agricultural social structure, and dictated in part by individual farm families’ attempts to attain basic self-sufficiency prior to market engagement (Vickers 1996).

The Hudson Valley arguably contained both these models of northeastern colonial American economy and contained areas with varying degrees of Braudelian transition in close proximity in the decades before the Revolution. Even within relatively small geographical spaces, one can find different means of articulation with the world-economy and different levels of Braudelian economic life (cf. Braudel 1977: 44; Bruegel 1996b: 269; Dunaway 1996a: 232).

### **Staples vs. Social Structure:**

#### **Core-Periphery Models of the Colonial American Northeast**

Indeed, Chase-Dunn (1980: 195n6) hints at this when, after commenting on the tenant-landlord class structure of the colonial Hudson Valley *vis à vis* the other American colonies, he notes “that in regions where soil productivity and climate is intermediate [in this case, between cold, stony New England and the warm, fertile southeast], political and institutional factors more easily affect the type of class structure that develops.” Given the relative complexity of the Hudson Valley’s agrarian tenure, he was perhaps more correct than he realized.<sup>1</sup>

Earle’s regional comparisons are developed in some depth (1992a; 1992b). In an overview of English colonization efforts in mainland North America, he identifies ideal-typical spatial configurations of settlement in the four main eastern seaboard colonial regions: New England, the “middle” colonies, the Chesapeake colonies, and the South (Earle 1992b: 486-89). New England was marked by large coastal commercial centers, chiefly Boston, with merchants engaged in active overseas trade, while its interior locales were otherwise self-sufficient. By the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century in the middle colonies, the major coastal entrepôts of Philadelphia and New York City were linked with smaller inland towns via roads and rivers, by which grain was shipped to the major ports. Grain, especially wheat, a high-bulk, highly perishable raw commodity, promoted urbanization and later sustained industrialization and economic growth, because it required extensive transport

<sup>1</sup> Having also remarked that the landlord-tenant structure was an evolutionary process, while it was rather more a politically-drive one; see below.

and service infrastructure, along with pre-shipment processing. Middleman profits “accrued to the handlers” of wheat and other “bulky...perishable commodities”; and he identifies a radial geographic system of tributary “transport service centers” that became British North America’s “first sizable interior towns,” typically demarcated by distances of a quarter-, half-, and full-day (ca. 30 miles) wagon-journeys (Earle 1992a: 113-18, 138, 143; 1992b: 487-89; also Hornsby 2005: 156-57; Leitner 2013: 276-77; more generally, Bunker 1989; 2005: 224).

In contrast, low bulk, less perishable raw commodities, such as those found in the southern colonies, e.g. tobacco or rice (Earle 1992a: 98, 142-43)—or even non-food commodities like naval stores (Driscoll and Kick 2013: 14-16)—did not have the same infrastructural needs, and as a result did not have the linkages leading to later growth (Earle 1992a: 140-42). Due to tobacco planters’ geographic dispersal among the estuaries, and their subsequent self-sufficiency, Chesapeake settlement geography was “cellular,” with small tobacco ports “each linked directly with London and British outports” (Earle 1992b: 486; 1992a: 99-114).

Rather than a regionally-comparative staples approach, Vickers (1996) examines hinterland social structure and economic processes in the northern colonies, and posits a dynamic and burgeoning economy comprised of still largely self-sufficient yet surplus-producing agricultural households, local crafts- and tradespersons, and larger merchants in the coastal seaports. While acknowledging that “fertile soil allowed wheat to grow into an important staple export very soon after [European] settlement” in the Hudson Valley, as well as New Jersey and Pennsylvania, “even the most commercial” of grain farmers were still highly diversified in their agriculture (Vickers 1996: 219). In general, Vickers argues that the complex northern colonial economies weren’t solely the product of merchant-led staple trades (cf. Hornsby 2005: 193-96; McCusker and Menard 1985: 19-32), but rather were founded on the surplus produced for these trades by numerous, mostly self-sufficient farm households, which also provided local demand for consumer goods. Colonial merchants in turn gathered these households’ surplus; indeed, the merchants were there in the first place to satisfy the demand for goods by the numerous farm families that had come to settle the northern colonies, as well as coordinating early regional industries via “the manipulation of capital” (Vickers 1996: 230-31; also see Chase-Dunn 1980: 197-98; Hornsby 2005: 140; Matson 1998: 250-51; Mutch 1980: 851, 858). The agricultural hinterlands also provisioned the seaports, helping promote “a highly diversified service and manufacturing population” in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia (Vickers 1996: 221, 238).

While this model best fits Boston (see Vickers 1996: 231-32), in the middle colonies, especially Philadelphia, Vickers’ model converges somewhat with Earle (1992a; 1992b). Though acknowledging its rapid 18<sup>th</sup> century growth, thanks to its fertile hinterland and William Penn’s family-focused settlement policies to promote economic diversification, Vickers points out that

Philadelphia was “the least sophisticated of the major colonial seaports,” due to its near-exclusive focus on wheat. This was because a single staple could not by itself necessarily “guarantee the parallel development of port facilities, merchant exporters, or a thriving maritime sector”; these would have to wait for further British government investment in the 1750s, during the Seven Years’ War (Vickers 1996: 235-37).

Vickers (1996: 234) concludes similarly for Dutch New Amsterdam and its stunted mid-17<sup>th</sup> century single staple economy: because the main export (beaver fur) had a high value relative to its bulk—i.e. it was more economical to ship trade goods back to North America, not people, and the Dutch West India Company took an anti-settler stance for much of its tenure (also see Leitner 2013). Vickers (1996: 234) further points out that only after the English conquest did Old World-style family farming start becoming more prevalent in New York, thanks to greater immigration by family groups—ironically because of British agriculture’s “intensified commercialization,” which created a surplus population of expropriated peasants (Chase-Dunn 1980: 198). As found throughout the northern colonies, this allowed for a gendered household division of labor: men typically engaged in primary production (farming, trapping, hunting, and fishing) and women typically processed the acquired resources (Vickers 1996: 219-20). Local merchants were available to purchase surplus produce, and in turn trade with merchants in the larger ports, including New York, which became more commercially important after a slow start under the Dutch (Vickers 1996: 234-35; also Leitner 2013: 275-77; Wermuth 2001: 62-63).

Vickers also posits that certain actors in colonial America’s regional hinterlands were externally oriented via relations with their regional seaboard port, particularly local merchants who gathered the agricultural surplus from the numerous small producers (1996: 221-22, 230, 235). Others were more locally-focused, i.e. many of the small farmers actually producing a surplus; and while arguably they were more subsistence oriented, maintaining subsistence likely required at least some trading activity, putting them into larger networks of trade whether they realized it or not (Vickers 1996; also Matson 1998; Wermuth 2001; cf Dunaway 1996a: 24-50, 195-223). This is a conclusion that aligns with both structural Marxist and world-systems interpretations of port-hinterland relations in colonial America, which see local merchants in small, upriver ports as tying non-capitalist small farmers into larger multi-nodal capitalist trade networks, with upriver merchants in turn “dependent upon the import-export business of the seaport merchant for their supplies of goods” (Mutch 1980: 851; also Dunaway 1996a: 33, 197, 206-08).

### The Hudson Valley’s Socioagroeconomic Subregions

Both Earle and Vickers posit a spatial gradient, whereby local economies nearer the coast tended to be more explicitly articulated with (or its actors perhaps just more aware of) the larger world-

economy, which apparently held for farmers as well as merchants: “[a]long the coast, near port towns, and adjacent to navigable rivers, farmers were attuned to Atlantic markets from the beginning,” with production for “the market” gradually coming to include inland farmers (Bushman 1998: 361). Indeed, the colonial Hudson Valley apparently had a geographic divide between export staples-oriented areas where economic actors were more-overtly/intentionally capitalist; and subsistence-oriented areas with generally less-overtly/intentionally capitalist economic actors. While Vickers’ model may have been generally true west of the Hudson, which was settled largely by smallholders, east of the river were the manors and patents: large, privately-owned tracts of land, whose tenants were typically obligated to dispose of their agricultural surplus through their landlords. Stemming from contemporary 18<sup>th</sup> century policy debates (Countryman 1981: 15), there is a long tradition in New York historiography that sees the large private estates as having been essentially negative, both for the tenants’ well-being and for the colony’s socioeconomic development: the big landlords held concentrated political and economic power, and the estates suppressed the colony’s population growth by making New York unattractive to new settlers aspiring to a freehold farm (e.g. Archdeacon 1979; Greenberg 1978: 483-84; Humphrey 1998; Kammen 1975: 190; Lustig 1995: xvi-xviii; Matson 1998: 230-31).

Revisiting early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century anti-landlord histories, Kim (1978: viii-x) argued they were limited in scope, period and data, with even the most “comprehensive” of these works (Mark 1940) distracted by some violent events, i.e. the various incidents of tenant riots in the 1750s-60s (see Kammen 1975: 302-04), impelling the author to ignore the many decades of quiet “order and prosperity” on the estates. Kim’s work also confronts the basic historical point of manorial holdings: to convert tenant surplus beyond “‘their subsistence and reproduction needs’” into landlord income (Bruegel 1996a: 1402, quoting Rodney Hilton). This arguably held in the Hudson Valley as it did anywhere else (Humphrey 2004: 241-42). Seen in Braudelian tripartite perspective, the east-of-Hudson landlords, a group firmly ensconced in the second layer of economic life (“the market”) and aspiring to eventually ascend to the third layer (“capitalism”), were at the very least in a structural position that dictated keeping their tenants at a subsistence level (the first layer of economic life). Kim instead posited that landlords often had to grant very favorable terms (e.g. deferred rent for months at a time; lower rents overall; lenient rent collection; and the right to profit from improvements) in order to attract tenants, whom they needed for rental income (which itself was often difficult to collect and in arrears), land development, and agricultural surplus production (Kim 1966: 151; 1970: 597-612; 1978: 157-72, 223-36).

Yet even those who disagree with Kim (e.g. Archdeacon 1979; Greenberg 1978: 483-84; Humphrey 2004; Lustig 1995: xvi-xviii) are also focused on the major landholdings largely east of the Hudson, rather than the fee-simple smallholders west of the river (though some are: e.g.

Countryman 1981: 27-29; Smith 1979: 758-59). It was not until the 1990s that several works examined the society and economy of smaller private farms that developed on the Hudson's west bank, as well as parts of the east bank (e.g. Bruegel 1996b; Fabend 1991; Wermuth 2001). Despite institutional differences in landholding, both sides of the river had similar physical, agricultural, and geographical constraints, particularly in terms of climate and crops that could be grown (Bruegel 1996b). Again, the small freehold agriculture on which Vickers (1996) bases his interpretation likely holds better west of the Hudson (see Fabend 1991; Wermuth 2001) than on the east bank, where small farmers were more likely to be tenants (Kim 1970; 1978).<sup>2</sup> East of the Hudson, Earle's (1992a; 1992b) staple interpretation may be more apropos. The Braudelian context cuts across both models, with arguably all three levels of economic life occurring in the Valley; as well as his acknowledgement of cities driving regional economic change, as local cores with regional hinterlands (Braudel 1982: 188). In this instance the local context comes from New York City's role as the colony's official port—its physical and institutional link with the world-economy (Cicciarelli and Bunker 1998: 1-4; Leitner 2013: 275-77)—and a major demand-source for foodstuffs in itself.

### New York City and its Hudson Valley Hinterland

Braudel (1982: 188) indicates supply sources are the first of a city's catchments, and as the colony's official entrepôt, New York City ca. 1670-1760 was indeed "a port city highly dependent" on its surrounding "commercial farmers" (Matson 1998: 227). Though small by European standards, by 1680 New York City merchants were exporting over 60,000 bushels of grain and "gristing an equal amount of flour" annually, to supply Newfoundland's fisheries and the Caribbean plantation colonies (Burrows and Wallace 1999: 87; Matson 1998: 100). The merchants in turn took political steps to formalize the city's dominance within the colony and promote bulk goods trade, *vis à vis* Albany and the Hudson Valley's grain producers, not unlike Paris just a few decades earlier, with "a series of regulations" to ensure that its "markets were kept constantly supplied" (Braudel 1982: 38). In response, New York governors in the 1670s and '80s granted monopolies to the city merchants over certain bulk staples and transport, including: flour sifting and grading (known as "bolting"); wheat, beef, and pork packing; Hudson River carrying; and a customs tax and monopolies over both exports and imports (formalized by gubernatorial decree in 1686), making New York City "the colony's sole port of entry" (Leitner 2013: 275; Norton 1974: 84). Post-1680, the city's merchants "enjoyed a virtual stranglehold" on the colony's trade (Burrows and Wallace 1999: 85).

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<sup>2</sup>In commenting on the manorial parts of the Hudson Valley, Vickers (1996: 225) basically agrees with Kim about low annual rents and easy credit allowing tenants "to operate much like freeholders."

In formal effect during 1678-92, the flour bolting monopoly “probably aided the city’s overall development,” as the number of houses nearly tripled (343 to 983), its commercial fleet nearly doubled, and the total number of merchants rose from 80 to 134 during 1674-95 (Matson 1994: 403-04; 1998: 104). Conversely, when the bolting monopoly was not in effect, new flour mills were noted to have been constructed in the colony’s outlying areas, “attesting to rising prosperity in the hinterlands” (Matson 1998: 102). Albany’s own agricultural hinterland grew thanks to early 18<sup>th</sup> century demand for wheat and wheat flour, the colony’s second city becoming both a trade center for farmers and city merchants and a port where “wheat and flour were certified, packed, and often exported directly to overseas markets” (Kim 1978: 112-13; Norton 1974: 93-94).

In much of the central Hudson Valley however, particularly west of the river, most communities lacked access to “good ports,” instead relying “on diversified farming,” rather than producing cash crops for long-distance trade (Wermuth 2001: 17). And yet, before the early 19<sup>th</sup> century construction of better roads and the Erie Canal, “a thinly populated stretch of the Hudson and Mohawk River Valleys monopolized grain production and trade in New York” (Wermuth 2001: 34), prompted by demand from the Caribbean sugar colonies and European food shortages (Leitner 2013), in addition to New York City’s burgeoning needs. As a result, “[b]y the 1740s, almost every town in the colony had a grist-mill to which farmers brought grain” from where it might end up in the city to be consumed or exported (Matson 1994: 408). Regardless of which riverbank, farmers over 15 miles from the city brought summer “harvests to these country mills, paid [the millers] in grain, and consigned portions of the flour to middlemen or storekeepers at negotiated prices,” though some sold their flour directly at city markets, shipped via rented small boats (Matson 1994: 408). Manor tenants were generally obligated to turn over at least part of their produce to their landlord, who also typically controlled the manor’s mill (Matson 1994: 412; and see below).

In the colonial northeast, mills were in fact “social necessities...intimately connected to agricultural production” and “crucial to the welfare of the inhabitants,” who took “communal action” to support the mills (Henretta 1978: 11). On the other hand, a “‘mill seat’—land beside a waterfall suitable for powering a saw[-or any other-]mill”—could mean “prosperity and local power” for those acquiring it and building a mill alongside (Taylor 1989: 16). Mills also helped connect local producers and larger markets (and the market economy more generally)—and were thereby an indicator of Braudel’s second level of economic life—with gristmill operators a source of “both market information and a conduit to such markets,” similar to local merchants, many of whom were also mill operators (McCusker and Menard 1985: 321-22). For Hudson Valley landlords (mostly on the east bank), constructing both saw and grist mills for their tenants was

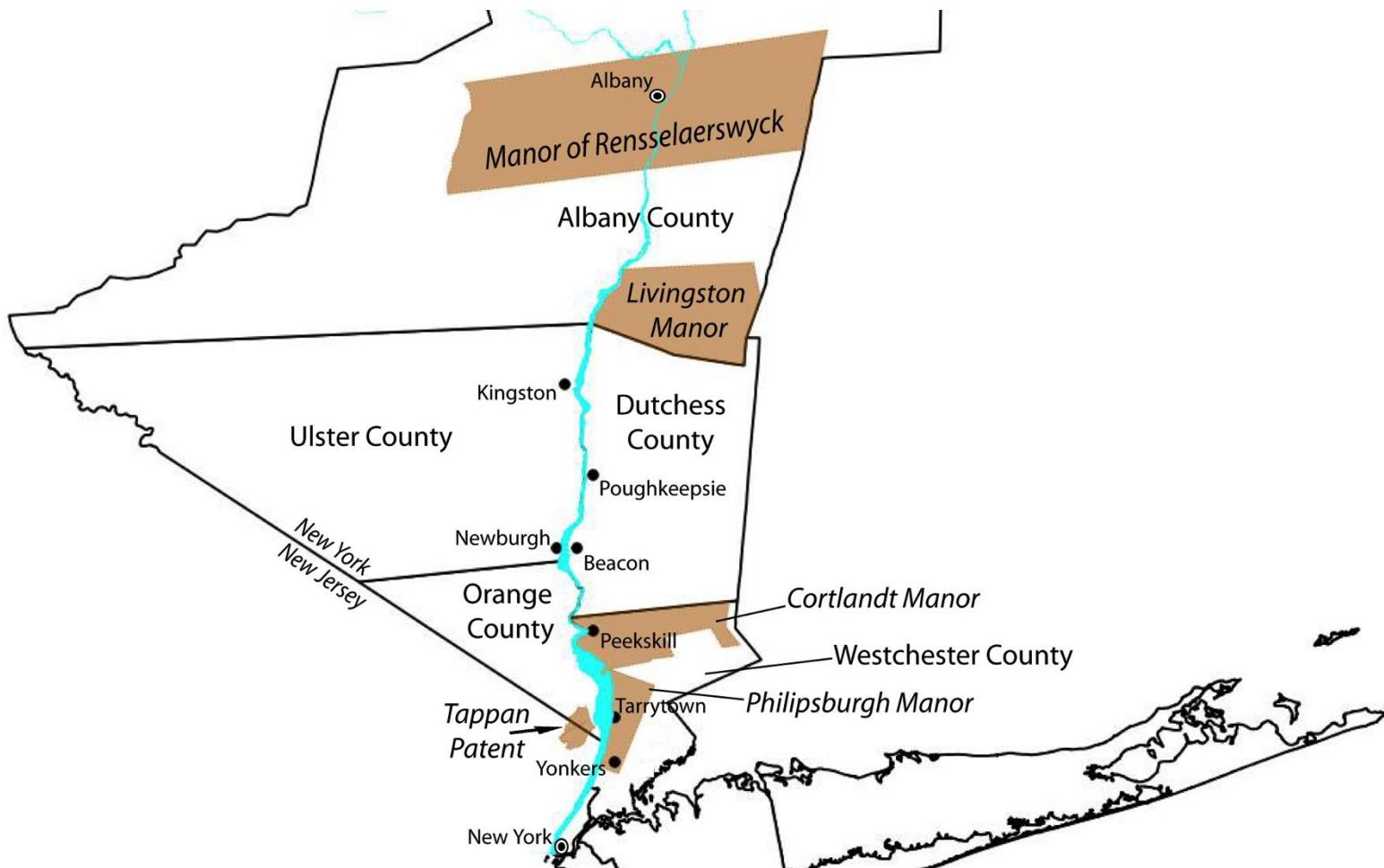
ostensibly a matter of “primary importance” that in turn enabled rent payment, increased the land’s value, turned wheat into revenue-generating flour, and encouraged settlement on manor lands by assuring prospective tenants of mill access (Kim 1970: 607-08; 1978: 229). Mills were therefore also promotional devices: a necessity for settlement and successful farming, and arguably “the concern of everyone in the community. Instead of being the instrument of a landlord’s exploitative impulses, a mill was an institution upon which the common economic welfare and even the survival of the community rested” (Kim 1978: 165-66). Most generally, the existence of a grist mill is a rough proxy of local colonial economic development—“the basis of early industrialization in British America” (McCusker and Menard 1985: 325)—whether grain was being ground locally for the subsistence needs of those who grew it, in line with Vickers (1996); or to turn it into flour for export, as Earle’s (1992a; 1992b) work implies. Both of these models have some truth to them in the colonial Hudson Valley, though the emphasis may be a matter of precisely where one looks.

### **Agriculture, Trade, and Development in Four Hudson Valley Subregions**

We can identify four colonial Hudson Valley subregions, based on bank (east vs. west) and distance upriver (see Map 1). The river’s east bank had the very large estates and numerous tenants stereotypical of the colonial/early national Hudson Valley; while west of the river the farmers tended to be independent smallholders of just a few hundred acres, with tenantry much less common (Wermuth 2001: 46). To the north, near Albany, the estates east of the river specialized in wheat growing, whereas closer to New York City they were more diversified, in part due to topography and in part due to the city’s food demands. On the western bank, though marked by different tenure relationships, the area to the north was also marked by a specialization in wheat, with the areas closer to New York City engaged in daily trade in foodstuffs rather than export staples. These differences in land tenure as well as distance upriver helped create different subregions, each of which display different stages of Braudelian transition, and are amenable to differing historical interpretations.

### **West of Hudson, mid-valley: Small Family Farms of Ulster County/Kingston**

A port on a major river, Kingston was more connected to New York City and larger markets beyond than were its neighboring inland towns: “an important market town” from the 1660s, Kingston in fact became provincial New York’s “granary” by 1670 (Wermuth 2001: 31). Kingston storekeepers gathered neighboring farmers’ surplus produce, then sold it to downstream merchants (Matson 1998: 138). Into the early 1700s, only a small part of this agricultural surplus was exported, because of “primitive” transport and communications systems; and even by the mid-1700s, only two sloops made the Kingston-New York run, and even then only every other week

**Map 1: Selected Manors and Patents in the Colonial Hudson Valley**

in the spring and fall—a shortcoming that larger, more commercially-oriented farmers circumvented by hiring sloops to ship their produce directly to New York City (Wermuth 2001: 53-54). Though no more than 30 percent of Kingston-area farmers in the 1700s were major agricultural exporters (Bruegel 1996b: 254; Wermuth 2001: 58-62), Ulster County farmers in general “supported attempts to promote the export of their surplus grain [and flour],” which along with the trade in wood and barrel staves “in turn stimulated the emergence of related service industries, creating a demand for day laborers and small manufacturers,” thereby promoting economic diversification (Wermuth 2001: 31, 53). For their part, Kingston-based interests in the 18<sup>th</sup> century “encourag[ed] the production of its rural hinterland for trade downriver” (Wermuth 2001: 17). As a formally corporate community, Kingston officials engaged in a sort of local mercantilism “to facilitate internal economic development... [albeit] reconciled with the social needs and demands of the local community” (Wermuth 2001: 29-30).

With very little external competition, Kingston's economic interests were generally unified, resulting in both formal and informal promotion and regulation; day-to-day economic workings were "not left to the vagaries of the free market" (Wermuth 2001: 32, 35). Yet 18<sup>th</sup> century Ulster County agriculture was comprised of mostly small, privately-held family farms, with a local economy focused on household production in a "community-oriented trade system" linking "agricultural, service, and mercantile trades" in an interdependent web (Wermuth 2001: 30, 62-65). This local trade web was not isolated from larger markets, especially "since shopkeepers traded many of the goods they accumulated from the myriad of small exchanges downriver to New York City" (Wermuth 2001: 61); but neither was it yet controlled by these larger markets. If it was perhaps a market economy, it was not yet a "market society" (Wermuth 2001: 34; also Bruegel 1996b: 269; 2002; cf. Kulikoff 2003). Based on Wermuth (2001), Kingston and much of surrounding Ulster County appears to align with Vickers' (1996) network model of the rural northeastern colonies. From a Braudelian standpoint, starting from a pre-1700 locale in which most were concerned with securing their material existence, over the decades an increasing number were at least occasionally engaged in market exchanges (Matson 1998: 110, 227), albeit not as major long-distance trading/finance capitalists. Rather, these were mostly "comfortably subsisting" family farmers, who were typically not interested in producing for commercial markets, though still needed cash for taxes, land purchases, and certain manufactured goods (Wermuth 2001: 46-47, 51-52).

**Table 1: Ulster Co. Population**

(includes black and white residents, except as noted)

1703	3,372
1723	2,923
1731	3,728
1737	4,870
1746	5,265
1749	4,810
1756	8,105
1771	13,950
1782	*15,747

\*white residents only

**Source:** O'Callaghan (1849-51: 1: 694, 695, 696, 697; 3: 996)

And yet, while maybe not precisely the sort of industrial and infrastructural development Earle (1992a; 1992b) posits for grain producing and exporting regions, there was at least basic growth in Ulster County, which more than quadrupled its settler population between 1700 and the 1770s (see table 1), being considered “well inhabited” by a 1774 gubernatorial report to the Board of Trade in London (O’Callaghan 1853-61: viii: 441). But manufacturing development was weak even post-independence in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, because of few markets (which also faced British competition) and local merchant investment in financial instruments, real estate, and sectors other than manufacturing or even just rural outwork (Wermuth 2001: 87). Despite the end of its flour bolting monopoly (see above), it may just have been New York City’s sheer size relative to the rest of the colony, and the demands for hinterland agricultural surpluses that its growth generated, that suppressed grain/flour-based industrialization in the mid-Hudson Valley of the kind Earle (1992a; 1992b) details for the southern and mid-Atlantic colonies.

Indeed, by the 1720s, “New York’s merchants aggressively sought exportable surpluses from a large region that radiated along waterways and wagon paths,” and it became thereby a “favored place of export” in place of more provincial/local ports for grain millers all over the northern colonies, including the Hudson Valley (Matson 1994: 406). Even so, though most export (and consumption) was still via the city, New Jersey and Hudson Valley farmers eventually “took greater control of processing and marketing their commodities,” thanks to the construction of increasingly complicated local grist mills in “almost every town in the colony” by the 1740s (Matson 1994: 408). Ulster County probate records in fact mention grist mills as early as 1743, with mills in Kingston proper by 1744 (Anjou 1906: 130, 143, 155; Foote 2007: 361-62).

We see therefore the gradual movement of those who a few decades previously would have been fully involved with securing their daily material existence now becoming more involved in the regional market economy (cf. Braudel 1982: 21)—and via the regional entrepôt, with other markets elsewhere in the world-economy (cf. Dunaway 1996a: 198, 206-08). Yet this was still an inherently uneven process. In the Catskill Mountain foothills a few miles west, “poor but industrious” small farmers in the 1780s-90s were still more focused on subsistence, despite the occasional market engagement; per Bruegel, “it was a rural population who, in Fernand Braudel’s architectural conception of economic activities in society, lived below the threshold of a market economy” (1996b: 257).

### **West of Hudson, downriver: Independent Patentees in southern Orange County**

Located mostly in far southern Orange County and partly in New Jersey, the 16,000-acre (or 25-square mile) Tappan Patent was purchased from the Tappaen Indians by a group of 14 ethnic Dutch New Yorkers in 1682, who then further subdivided and sold large parts of the land to smaller

farmers (Fabend 1991: 15-19; Nordstrom 1973: 29). It was not purely a speculative venture, “being one of the very few patents [in what would become Rockland County]…which was bought with the idea of a permanent settlement,” with most of the new patentees homesteading the land (Green 1886: 39). Those settling the patent wanted relief from New York’s port duties by becoming New Jersey residents, which would thereby enable them to export crops and timber (and probably fur, traded by local indigenous peoples; Greene 1886: 39) via the free ports of Philadelphia, Burlington, and Perth Amboy. These hopes were frustrated by most of the patent’s actual location within the colony of New York (and its requirement to export all goods via New York City), as well as New York’s temporary annexation of East Jersey in the mid-1680s; and the outlawing of direct trade with Amsterdam, on which many ethnic Dutch residents had relied even after the English conquest (Fabend 1991: 18-21; Matson 1998: 52).

Much like the rest of the colony, wheat was the main export crop for the Tappan-area farmers (Fabend 1991: 84-85, 210-11), but proximity made them important food suppliers to New York City. The Tappan Patent was in fact close enough for daily traffic to the city, sending a “fleet of small boats, filled with foodstuffs” downriver, which “usually return[ed] with the flood tide” later in the day (Fabend 1991: 85; Nordstrom 1973: 28). Despite their regular trade with New York City, Fabend (1991: 56-57, 78-80, 84-85) splits the difference between Vickers’ and Earle’s models (or, conversely, between the various Braudelian levels of economic life) and views the Tappan patentees along a subsistence-market continuum, similar to how Wermuth (2001) sees the contemporary Ulster County agricultural economy. She concludes they were driven by circumstance: the patentees would readily market their surplus “to the extent that opportunity permitted,” selling to neighbors, to local merchants, and in New York City markets (Fabend 1991: 84, 85)—Braudel’s second level of a basic market economy. Some patentees also had family members in bolting and baking businesses within New York City, “trusted connection[s]” who would purchase their patentee relatives’ wheat and flour as well as find the best price for their produce (Fabend 1991: 210). However, if the opportunity did not permit them to do so, whether due to poor harvest or other reasons, “they learned to be content with a livelihood closer to the subsistence level” (Fabend 1991: 84)—Braudel’s first level, meeting their household’s quotidian physical and material needs.

The patent became socio-economically stratified during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as a “prosperous minority” expanded its land holdings (Fabend 1991: 86-92). The Haring family, descended from original patentees, increased its overall acreage from 3,000 to 4,373 by the late 1770s. Conversely, the number of leaseholders rose, not unlike the tenants on the manors across the river—indeed, one of the patent’s landowners (William Bayard, a leading colonial New York merchant; Matson 1998) referred to his holdings as a manor, and in 1773 sold off nine tracts in 150- and 200-acre

lots for £3-£4 per acre. Examining the microeconomics of land purchases by former tenants, Fabend (1991: 93) points out that someone renting 200 acres from Bayard for ten years and not having their lease renewed would be paid £300; if they tried purchasing one of Bayard's 1773 sales, they could have acquired up to 100 acres. However, a new farm's start-up costs would probably impel the former tenant to buy a smaller piece of land, "one in the subsistence category of 51 to 80 acres...to reserve some of his small capital for expenses." Indeed, by the 1770s, the patent and its surrounding area was "inhabited...by significant numbers of subsistence and marginal farmers, unlanded laborers, and tradesmen with small properties" (Fabend 1991: 93)—persons who were mostly ensconced in Braudel's first economic level, that of basic daily material survival.

Writing in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Green (1886: 39-40) judged the patent a near-term developmental failure, insofar as it did not urbanize according to its founders' intention. Green partly blamed New York-New Jersey boundary issues, which had been indicated by 18<sup>th</sup> century observers as an "obstruction" to Orange County's growth (Smith 1972: 216), and an issue not resolved until the late 1700s (Schwarz 1979: 74-88, 133-61, 179-90). The other reason for Tappan's comparatively modest growth (see Table 2; cf. Tables 1, 3, 5) was the "rapid settlement of the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys," with Orange County's overall development judged a "struggling advance" (Green 1886: 39-40, 48).

**Table 2: Orange County Population**

(black and white residents)

1698	219
1703	268
1712	439
1723	1,244
1731	1,969
1737	2,840
1746	3,268
1749	4,234
1756	4,876
1771	10,092

**Source:** O'Callaghan (1849-51: 1: 689, 691, 693-97)

For southern Orange (present-day Rockland) County, the early-mid 18<sup>th</sup> century was "an era of peace and plenty," albeit with a still relatively low population of Euroamerican settlers

(Green 1886: 48). While slow, settlement did prompt road building, aided by public funding from 1730 on; “numerous inns” for travelers were built, particularly on the main road along the Hudson’s western bank (Green 1886: 48-52). Interior settlement also prompted investment in Hudson River docks; gristmills and sawmills “built where the water power and public demand warranted them,” in at least five southern Orange locales; “and roadways, that had been cut from the nearest highway to these mills, were sometimes further extended till they joined another highway” (Green 1886: 51).

Industrial and transport infrastructure development in 18<sup>th</sup> century southern Orange County aligns with Earle’s middle colonies model (1992b: 489). Yet even though wheat continued to be a major export crop in southern Orange (Fabend 1991: 84), the type of development Green (1886: 48-52) and Fabend (1991: 55-56) discuss was arguably driven as much by the sort of smallholding household-based rural economy that Vickers (1996) posits was key to the northern colonies’ development, albeit in a slower, more limited way at first. In other words, surplus export and attendant industrial and infrastructural development came in the wake of gradual smallholder agricultural development and production, not unlike what happened in Ulster County some 75-80 miles upriver, though perhaps a bit more rapidly given the burgeoning New York City consumer market’s daily demands. In terms of those food demands, though Braudel posits that colonial British North America’s towns “had to live by their own resources and emerge from the wilderness...the real parallel for them is the medieval city” (1981: 520). New York’s later experience better harmonizes with what he recounts about London, Paris, and other large west European cities in 1500-1800 *vis à vis* his levels of economic life. In those cities a relatively large urban area’s quotidian material needs (the first level) impelled parts of its rural hinterland to move from a general concern with subsistence and into the realm of at least basic market relations (the second level; Braudel 1982: 38-42).

### **East of Hudson, upriver: Manors and Wheat Production in Albany and Columbia Counties**

While smallholders predominated west of the Hudson, New York’s nine largest private holdings were mostly east of the Hudson (see Map 1), and arguably match up most closely with Earle’s (1992a; 1992b) model of northeastern colonial economy. Following on from the Dutch West India Company’s mid-17<sup>th</sup> century manorial system, meant to promote agricultural settlement in New Netherland (Bachman 1969; Rink 1986), English colonial authorities established something similar after the conquest. Attempting to win political allies (Kammen 1975: 79-80), New York’s governors granted 14 manors and at least 14 non-manorial patents (Bonomi 1971: 185). Like the Dutch intended, the manorial grants were also meant to promote agricultural settlement for both

economic development and defense, and were a response to the colony's transition from a fur exporting to a wheat exporting economy (Kammen 1975: 167-71; Kim 1978: 14-16, 42, 129; Matson 1994: 396-98). Farmland prices rose, leading New York City's larger merchants—among them the Philipses, Van Cortlandts, and Livingstons—to invest in rural grain milling and real estate, almost entirely east of the Hudson (Bonomi 1971: 186-87; Kim 1978: 26-28).

Per Kim (1978: 242-48), tenants came to the manors from various backgrounds and with various motives. Chief among them were the "desperately poor," often former indentured servants unable to purchase either land or farming equipment, which landlords generally "provided at the initial stage of settlement." A second group was "persons with marginal property" who were looking to avoid large early debts, learn about an area before purchasing land, and remain geographically close to family. Thirdly were the entrepreneurs, looking "to exploit the [manors'] commercial and industrial possibilities," by setting up shops, mills, taverns, and inns, assuming the manor's proprietor was either "unable or unwilling to establish and operate such facilities." Kim's three basic tenant types roughly mirror the Braudelian economic triptych: the former indentured servants merely trying to ensure quotidian material survival; the smallholders who planned on engaging with the market, but in a limited way; and those who were much more self-consciously engaged in profit-seeking, though admittedly not at the level of what Braudel saw as the "anti-market" of true capitalism (Talbot 2011: 259).

Large landowners wished to attract settlement in order to promote commercial and agricultural development, thereby increasing the land's value and generating an exportable surplus—or at the very least supply their grist mills (Kim 1970: 597-98; 1978: 157-72). Among the very largest with a 160,000-acre manor by the mid-1700s, starting in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century the Livingston family built mills (including the first gristmills in their part of the Hudson Valley), general stores, a brewery and a bakery, by way of both attracting and gleaning profits from their tenants (Kierner 1992: 26, 41, 65-85; Kim 1978: 39-40, 148-50, 167; Matson 1998: 99). The Livingstons "were particularly demanding" of tenant improvements, at least on their main manor, regarding quality of house and barn construction (Kim 1978: 221-23). However, by the 1730s, wheat was Livingston Manor's main crop, and its production for export (as both bread and flour) was "crucial to the Livingstons' commercial interests" (Kierner 1992: 96; also Kim 1978: 192). They therefore were less likely to push tenants too hard, in order to keep them on the estate and producing as much grain as possible (Kim 1970: 597-98), with more tenants being recruited from Europe in the 1740s (Kierner 1992: 67n39; Kim 1978: 167). By 1767, the manor's 285 tenant families leased 30,000 acres of land and produced about 50,000 bushels of wheat, ten percent of which went to the proprietor as rent (Kierner 1992: 71-72, 92). The tenant population grew to 460

families in 1774 (Kim 1978: 238), though declined during the Revolution, to 355 by 1784 (Kierner 1992: 91; also see Bruegel 1996a: 1399n14).

Iron was the Livingstons' third major export product, after lumber and wheat (Kierner 1992: 5). Taking advantage of their nearby iron ore deposits in Connecticut, local forests for fuel, the Hudson for transport to New York City, and cheap tenant labor, the Livingstons built the colony's "first permanent ironworks," with a blast furnace in 1743, a forge in 1745, and two more forges in 1749 elsewhere on the estate. A community grew up around their main ironworks, including housing for workers and managers, a general store, gristmill, churches, schools, and taverns. Over the next 25 years, the Livingstons further expanded the works and produced consumer goods, including "nails, kettles, pots, musket shot, carriage wheels, chimney backs, stoves, and other assorted items," besides basic pig and bar iron, with the family becoming New York's "premier iron producers through the Revolutionary era" (Kierner 1992: 80-83; Neu 1952: 3-8). Mirroring New York's larger economic transition from fur to grain (Leitner 2013; Matson 1994), the Livingstons went from fur-trading merchants to landowners / grain exporters, and then nascent industrialists. Though perhaps not quite at Braudel's third level, the family also converted its economic power into political power (the main reason they received such large land grants in the first place), becoming among the leaders of the colony's "landed interest" (Bonomi 1971: 69; Kierner 1992: 10-47).

The upper Hudson Valley's other two other major landed estates were owned by the Van Rensselaers: Rensselaerswyck (850,000 acres), established in the Dutch period, straddled the river around Albany; and Claverack (250,000 acres), just to the south of Rensselaerswyck's eastern half (Kim 1978: 36-37; see Map 1). Unlike the Livingstons, the Van Rensselaers were not as commercially diversified (Kierner 1992: 80-81), nor were they as demanding with their tenants, apparently due to their land being far enough north to have settlement-hampering security concerns *vis à vis* the French and their indigenous allies, up through 1763 (Kim 1970: 590-91; 1978: 144, 222-23, 238-40). Over its first 80 years (1634-1714), Rensselaerswyck only grew by about one family (5-6 persons) per year, to 82 tenants and 427 persons overall; though comprising about half of Albany County's land, it contained only one-seventh of its population (Kim 1978: 235-36). During 1714-1779, Rensselaerswyck grew from 82 tenants to approximately 1,000; Livingston Manor grew similarly, from 33 to 460 during 1716-1776, growth rates that were actually a bit faster than the provincial average (Kim 1978: 238), whose white population rose from 27,000 to 169,148 during 1715-1776; but slower than Albany County, whose combined black and white population rose almost 30-fold during 1698-1771 (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Albany City and County Population**

(black and white residents)	
1698	1,476
1703	2,273
1714	3,329
1723	6,501
1731	8,573
1737	10,681
1749	10,634
1756	17,424
1771	42,706

Source: O'Callaghan (1849-51: 1: 689, 691, 693-96; 3: 905)

For 18<sup>th</sup> century landlords, more tenants meant more agricultural production, especially wheat (Kim 1970: 598). This was particularly true for the Livingstons and Van Rensselaers in the upper valley, with land and soil well-suited to wheat growing (Cohen 1992: 115). Maximized grain production also allowed firmer control of prices, milling, transport, and marketing: Robert R. Livingston built and monopolized all mills on the manor, with grain transported to New York City from his wharves (Matson 1994: 412). From one perspective (e.g. Kim 1978: 231-34), tenants benefited from having major landlords (particularly those who were also major overseas traders) purchase and/or market their produce, especially if they were “remote from the market,” as they still received something resembling fair market value.

But though transport and marketing were key “conveniences,” a given tenant “probably compromised his ability to secure the greatest possible return on his produce” because landlords typically held preemptive purchase rights to their tenants’ grain. For instance, the Livingstons’ tenants were required to grind all their grain at mills on the manor, while being charged 10 percent of their produce to do so (Kierner 1992: 92). There was, nonetheless, a great deal of tenant-landlord bargaining over price; and some of the Livingstons did not always exercise their preemptive right to buy their tenants’ available surplus (Kim 1978: 231). But landlords still maintained a certain “ubiquitous” economic power over their tenants, who required financing for initial subsistence needs, milling and transport, which could well put them into further debt. Surviving evidence indicates that between a third and a half of Livingston Manor tenants avoided non-rental debt, implying that between a half and two-thirds incurred such debt (Humphrey 2004: 241-42; Kierner 1992: 93-94; Kim 1970: 599).

Their basic structural power over their tenants also put manorial proprietors in a position akin to merchants west of the Hudson. A manor's mill owner, whether the proprietor or those granted mill-rights on a given manor, "often became the leading store-keepers in rural areas because farmers needed mills to grind their grain and—in a cash-poor economy—they also traded their grain for tools, dry goods, and other items their families needed," including basic "daily necessities" (Kierner 1992: 41). As a result, these general stores induced settlement in their vicinity (Kim 1970: 599). In a Braudelian schematic, subsistence needs (the first economic level) drove engagement in local markets (the second level), to the benefit of those engaging with more distant markets (part of the third level).

But this was not necessarily true in all instances. Per Kim, a manor's ideal-typical economic configuration contained "the linked activities of wheat growing, milling, commercial trading, and operating stores" (1978: 160). In the upper Hudson Valley, only the Livingstons became that integrated, their gristmills turning their tenants' wheat into "flour, bread, and biscuits...in turn packed in barrels made of their lumber and...shipped on their sloops for overseas market" (Kim 1978: 160), part of the bulk goods network Leitner (2013) discusses. Livingston tenants were also a captive market for imported goods. By comparison, Rensselaerswyck's tenants had nearby Albany's extensive commercial options, which obviated any commercial development that might have been undertaken by the Van Rensselaers, who besides lacked "sufficient capital and ambition" to become overseas traders like the Livingstons (Kim 1978: 160-61). In Braudelian perspective, the Livingstons were on the way to possibly becoming full third-level capitalists, and that with only half the tenants Rensselaerswyck had. Yet their tenants were still very much in the first or at most second levels of Braudelian economic life: even into the 1760s, Albany County tax rolls indicate that "the majority of tenants on both" Livingston and Rensselaerswyck Manors "lived near or at the bottom of the social hierarchy," with about 90 percent of Livingston Manors' residents and 88 percent of Rensselaerswyck's assessed at £10 or less (Humphrey 2004: 240-41). By comparison, upon his 1769 death, Stephen Van Rensselaer's estate's £19,000 rating was almost 80 times that of even his wealthiest tenants' holdings; while his fellow "manor lord" Robert Livingston Jr. had holdings in 1778 rated at about £30,000, not including his urban property in Albany or New York City (Humphrey 2004: 241).

### **East of Hudson, downriver: Mixed crops on Westchester County's Manors**

Similar to Livingston Manor, but closer to New York City, Philipsburgh Manor was also a relatively well-integrated locus of production. Its proprietors were major trading merchants like the Livingstons: they saw agriculture as a commercial enterprise, leading them to promote wheat growing and mill construction (Countryman 1981: 18; Kim 1978: 160-61; Matson 1998: 99).

While both Philipsburg and Cortlandt, Westchester County's other large manor, were smaller than the two large upriver manors, their average leaseholds were larger (see Table 4). The

**Table 4: Manor Size & Average Leasehold**

	Size (in acres)	Avg. Leasehold (in acres)
Rensselaerswyck*	1,100,000	153
Livingston	160,000	106
Philipsburg	92,000	187
Cortlandt	86,000	237

\*including Claverack

**Sources:** Kim (1978: 36-37, 39-40, 69-70, 189); Kierner (1992: 26)

Livingstons and Van Rensselaers believed that, due to soil fertility, 80-120 acres was more than adequate for a farmer to grow wheat on their manors (Cohen 1992: 115; Kim 1978: 190-91). Downriver in Westchester this was not the case, with poorer soil and hillier terrain leading the Philipses and Van Cortlands to grant their tenants larger leaseholds. Unable to compete with mid-18<sup>th</sup> century Albany County's wheat production, and presented with New York City's burgeoning meat and dairy demand, the Westchester manors began to diversify into livestock grazing after 1730 (Hornsby 2005: 155; Kim 1978: 191-92). As a result, upriver tenants paid rent in wheat, while Westchester tenants paid rent largely in cash, at least after 1750 (Kim 1970: 598; 1978: 192-94; Reubens 1965: 440).

Prospective tenants' other settlement options, especially fee-simple "freehold" ownership, slowed the Westchester manors' settlement. A freehold was the British North American mainland colonists' ostensible choice, and the mid-Atlantic colonies' primary mode of agricultural settlement (Greenberg 1978: 483-84; Hornsby 2005: 153; Kammen 1975: 299-302). Founded in 1693, Philipsburg Manor had just 20 families in 1700, and still only some 60 tenants and 309 residents overall by 1712; while Cortlandt Manor was founded in 1697 but contained just 17 families and 91 residents in 1712 (Kim 1966: 12-15, 32, 59; 1978: 67-69, 235-36). Though comprising over half the county's land area, combined the two manors had only 14 percent of Westchester County's 1712 population (see Table 5). The county's small freehold towns were all much more densely populated in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century (Kim 1966: 78-79, 85; 1978: 93, 235-36).

**Table 5: Westchester County Population**

(black and white residents, except as noted)

Year	Population (black & white)
1698	1,063
1703	*1,946
1712	*2,803
1723	4,409
1731	6,033
1737	6,745
1746	9,235
1749	10,703
1756	13,257
1771	21,745

\*residents' race unspecified

**Source:** O'Callaghan (1849-51: 1: 689, 691, 693-97)

Philipsburgh grew to 272 tenant families by 1776 (Kim 1978: 238; Reubens 1965: 438), providing a convenient market for original proprietor Frederick Philipse and his major overseas trading operation (Howell and Keller 1977: 135). Like the upriver Livingstons, Philipse's business was initially based on the fur trade, but later included grain and flour (Matson 1994: 412; 1998: 363n5). He built "mills, blacksmith shops, and cooperage works at his main manor after 1693" to provide him with flour to export (Howell and Keller 1977: 130-39; Matson 1998: 115). There was even some tertiary production ofhardtack "ship biscuits" by the manor's bakehouse, established as part of his "model...full-scale production-distribution cycle, unique for its time" (Howell and Keller 1977: 135). Frederick's son and brother-in-law expanded the manor's "mills, blacksmith shops, coopering works, and tenant settlements" during the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Howell and Keller 1977: 139-42), and traded with other mainland colonies and the British Caribbean (Matson 1998: 60, 76, 99). By the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, with some 1,100 tenants and 24 slaves, Philipsburgh had become "an agro-industrial complex... [producing] a variety of grains for the New York market." These were "ground and bolted (sifted)...in its own mills, packed...in its own barrels, and shipped...downriver in its own sloops" (Burrows and Wallace 1999: 128), including about two tons of flour each day "during peak seasons of the 1740s" (Matson 1998: 234). But aside from its more industrialized section, Philipsburgh Manor was still noted in 1775 for being sparsely settled and rural (Reubens 1965: 438).

In comparison, Cortlandt Manor was much less of an integrated economic unit, marked by “complete administrative anarchy” until 1712 (Kim 1966: 59-61; 1978: 161). Containing only four or five tenant families as of 1701 (Bonomi 1971: 195), pre-1712 settlement was focused near the river just south of Peekskill, with most of its acreage “left unimproved” and the manor lacking good roads other than near the Hudson (Kim 1966: 79-80). Early Cortlandt Manor leases typically required tenants to build houses, plant fenced fruit orchards, and cultivate the land, though particular details varied per landlord; tenants were typically expected “to make good use of the land” in order to increase their own income (Kim 1966: 114-16; 1978: 221-23). By the 1730s, Cortlandt Manor was part of a “newly diversified agrarian economy” with a decreased role for wheat, but with tenants that were by now arguably engaged more in commercial than subsistence farming, and when they paid rent at all, did so largely in cash (Kim 1966: 144-47, 205; 1978: 194). With few mills of their own even into the 1730s, Cortlandt tenants took their grain to mills in adjoining patents and townships (Kim 1978: 169), a mixed blessing for the manor’s development. Indeed, at its 1732 division amongst the Van Cortlandt heirs, the manor still contained only about 20 tenant families, with settlement hampered by a general preference for freehold ownership, by tenancy-in-common (reducing the incentive to improve leaseholds), and uncertainty about the heirs’ intentions (Kim 1966: 85-87).

The division was initially no spur to the manor’s development. Each of the ten heirs was given four widely-dispersed, non-contiguous lots, which “impeded the development of an integral plantation system with mills and other facilities”—aside from the fact that most of the heirs were neither experienced, nor interested, nor local, nor wealthy enough to engage in “large-scale land development.” Only two of the heirs built mills on their land, while a third had one build on a leased mill site. In debt and facing low rental returns, eight of the ten sold off nearly half the manor (41,792 of 86,000 acres) during 1736-1776. The land sales and “generous lease terms” aided Cortlandt Manor’s settlement, along with new roads that tied it together internally and linked it closer to the outside (Kim 1966: 85-87, 95-110; 1978: 150-56, 169, 181-84, 421-24).

Westchester’s two large manors broadly exhibited a version of each type of colonial northeastern development: Philipsburgh more along the lines posited by Earle’s (1992a; 1992b) bulk staple export model; while Cortlandt was somewhat closer to Vickers’ (1996) independent households and small merchants model. This is also the reality of an unevenly developing world-economy, where local economies can have elements and actors that are not yet fully capitalist (Braudel 1977: 112; Dunaway 1996a: 232). Philipsburgh was part of an integrated agroexport operation, with attendant industrial and infrastructural development; while Cortlandt, in part due to its fractured ownership (Kim 1966: 55), was developed later and to a lesser degree (e.g. with much less milling investment) by smaller proprietors, many of them absentee, with its typically

more independent tenants producing a more diversified set of crops, and infrastructure provided (if at all) by the local state.

Despite tendencies toward agro-industrial commercialism by certain proprietors, on all the Hudson Valley manors the tenants did most of the actual work and value creation (Humphrey 1998: 142, 156, 158; Kim 1966: 199). In a colony with abundant land but relatively scarce labor, this explains why proprietors were eager to attract tenants and were often lenient about rent (Hedrick 1933: 75; Kammen 1975: 301; Kim 1966: 40-46; 1970; 1978: 163). As well, farm households had the option of moving to nearby colonies with land available for fee-simple ownership, making the colonial Hudson Valley a partial exception that upholds Domar's (1970) thesis whereby an economy can only have either two of the three factors of free land, free peasants, and non-working landowners, barring "exogenous" political factors (also Solow 1991: 35-37)—in this case the existence of alternative land tenure within the same colony and/or nearby colonies. This also partly explains the Hudson Valley's various overt tenant-landlord struggles during the 1750s-1840s. Underlying the more obvious pecuniary concerns about milling monopolies, first choice of crops, and relatively high lease re-sale fees owed to landlords (Bonomi 1971: 193-94), Hudson Valley tenants developed a labor theory of land value, by which their occupancy and improvements justified their right to eventual fee-simple ownership (Humphrey 1998). This was, ironically, similar to North American indigenous peoples' usufruct-based notions of land value, and was of course at odds with the landlords' title-based notion of land ownership (Humphrey 1998: 147-57).

While many of the manorial proprietors may have been starting to resemble fully capitalist actors in the Braudelian (if not Marxian) sense, the basic work of farming in 18<sup>th</sup> century New York was difficult: dependent on climatic vagaries, spatially-extensive, and reliant on (scarce) hand-labor using primitive tools, they lived lives that were physically difficult and often financially precarious (Bruegel 1996b; Hedrick 1933: 67-68; Humphrey 2004: 239; Wermuth 2001: 48). Westchester in particular was noted for its poor soil and steep, rocky topography (Reubens 1965: 440). In partial consequence, both manorial and non-manorial landlords granted tenants rent-free periods of up to 12 years, giving them time to develop their farmstead, support their families, and in turn produce and export surplus and pay rent (Kim 1978: 171-72). Most early-mid 18<sup>th</sup> century Westchester manor tenants, while increasingly involved in commercial production and becoming more affluent (Kim 1978: 264-65), were like other northeastern farmers elsewhere in this era: their primary concern was working the land to secure their household subsistence on at least a seasonal basis (Kim 1966: 204-07; 1982: 329; Post 2009: 472; Reubens 1965: 440-41, 446). While the landlords straddled Braudel's second and third levels of economic life, the tenants straddled the first and second levels.

### Conclusion: Gradual and Partial Transitions in the Colonial Hudson Valley

The 18<sup>th</sup> century colonial Hudson Valley contained various levels of Braudelian economic life co-existing in what was otherwise a peripheral region of the contemporary capitalist world-economy; that is partly the reason for different models of colonial northeastern economy as formulated by Earle (1992a; 1992b) and Vickers (1996). Seen another way, there were arguably different varieties of core-periphery articulation, determined in part by the level of Braudelian economic life in which peripheral actors existed. The independent smallholding farm households that comprised most of the western bank's population existed at the levels of subsistence and basic local markets; their dealings with larger markets were mediated by local merchants who aggregated local surpluses and traded in turn with their counterparts in the burgeoning colonial *entrepôt* of New York City. However, New York City's daily subsistence needs pulled hinterland farmers into the market, similar to Braudel's (1982: 38-42) discussion of western European urbanization's effect on neighboring rural areas in the same era, and analogous to the "spatial articulation" of rural commodity producers with larger regional *entrepôts* in 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century Appalachia (Dunaway 1996a: 198).

East of the Hudson, large landlords directly articulated with actors elsewhere in the world-economy, via production and export of wheat to the Caribbean, in line with Earle's (1992b) model; and were arguably at Braudel's third level of economic life, or at least aspired towards it, e.g. at Philipsburgh and Livingston Manors, with their integrated agroindustrial and overseas trading operations. The smallholders predominating west of the Hudson—some of whom were successful enough to become landlords—were themselves part of a larger regional staples economy in which the middle colonies were noted for grain and especially wheat production (Earle 1992b; Hornsby 2005: 156; Vickers 1996: 219). Manor tenants were a mixed group (Kim 1978: 242-48, 264-65), and presumably even those with a more upwardly mobile and entrepreneurial bent still had to be concerned with basic subsistence at least initially, as well as being subject to limited technology, labor scarcity, and geographic and climatic vagaries. But if generally more subsistence-oriented than their landlords, tenants' structural location forced them to at least articulate with the higher Braudelian levels (i.e. local and regional markets and the world-economy), via cash crop production for landlord export.

As suggested above *vis à vis* the Domar (1970) thesis, the Hudson Valley's manorial economy had a certain world-historical a-typicality in that attempted commercial export agriculture with scarce labor did not lead to "coerced cash crop labor" as in eastern Europe (Wallerstein 1974: 91-114). This is for the simple reason that tenants in British North America were not formally tied to the land as east European serfs were, and were free to remove to nearby areas with available land—hence the landlords' relative lenience regarding rent, in an attempt to

better attract and keep tenants (Kim 1970; 1978). Per Solow's comments on Domar, “[t]here certainly were positive rents and tenant farmers in colonial America, but the *essential* nature of the northern colonies was not that of a landed aristocracy” (1991: 37), with this very essentiality helping keep tenants from becoming serfs. In that respect, the colonial Hudson Valley manors of the late 1600s-1700s were not entirely unique, as agricultural rents and/or land prices have been kept low to induce settlement in other world-historical timespaces: the western Dutch peatlands ca. 1000-1300; various parts of 14<sup>th</sup> century post-Black Death rural Europe; the 19<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian steppe; and the central and western United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Anderson 1974: 324; Braudel 1981: 193; van Bavel and van Zanden 2004: 512-13; White 1991: 141-47; Wolf 1997: 111).

Nor was there large-scale chattel slavery in the Hudson Valley, unlike the southern colonies and greater Caribbean, trade with which was a major spur to the northern colonies' major industries, including shipbuilding, grain and sugar milling, rum distilling, and cotton textiles. All these sectors depended on trade with a set of regional economies explicitly reliant on chattel slavery (Burrows and Wallace 1999: 118-90; Matson 1998: 215-64; Richardson 1991). Yet, in the “bread colonies” slavery was uneconomical largely because wheat’s seasonal labor demand was short but intense, typically requiring just a few days for fall planting and 10-14 days during midsummer harvest, a point emphasized by both Earle (1992a: 180-81, 228-35) and Vickers (1996: 225-26), and earlier surmised by Domar (1970: 30). Better therefore to have tenants (or for smaller farmers, seasonal hired hands) who could feed themselves, than to buy slaves and be obligated to feed and maintain human property during the long off-season (Post 2009: 470). Instead, African slaves were more typically used on 18<sup>th</sup> century Hudson Valley estates as skilled labor, such as the two dozen slaves (see above) who ran Philipsburg Manor’s milling, dairying, and international shipping operations (Brawarsky 2003; Harris 2004: 343-44; McManus 1966: 46-67). A population that grew its own food contrasts sharply with certain other parts of British North America, such as eastern North Carolina, where the use of land and labor for nonagricultural extractive activities led to the region becoming a net food importer and conversely a net cash exporter, “a hindrance on the region’s economic growth” (Driscoll and Kick 2013: 16). Whereas in the colonial northeast, Vickers argues the dialectic between “diversified rural households” and “a sizable merchant community” in New York City “spurred...productive, linked development” that eventually prompted regional core emergence (1996: 235, 247-48).

At least in part, this regional core emergence was also due to the differential developmental effects of wheat as opposed to other types of staple crop, a point noted by both Earle (1992a, 1992b) and Vickers (1996), and explicated in world-systems literature by Bunker (1989; 1992; 2005). Conversely, having wheat as its major 18<sup>th</sup> century staple product helped the Hudson Valley

avoid the effects of colonial extractive underdevelopment that Driscoll and Kick (2013) explore in eastern North Carolina and Smith (1987) explores for Charleston and its hinterland. The region's success is due at least in part because it helped promote intensive industrialization in New York City (Burrows and Wallace 1999: 118-90), including the arguably core activity of shipbuilding for the bulk goods trade with the Caribbean (Leitner 2013: 277). Further, given that the "spatial separation of production, exchange and use in extractive economies" makes it extremely difficult for extractive regions to sustain economic development (Bunker 2005: 220-21), having a nearby major urban-industrial center that later became a world financial capital and exemplar of Braudel's third level of economic life in turn helped pull its surrounding agro-extractive region into the core.

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Jonathan Leitner is an independent scholar. He received his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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## Global Commodity Chains and the Production of Surplus-value on a Global Scale: Bringing Back the New International Division of Labor Theory

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### Abstract

*This paper offers a critique of mainstream and critical versions of Global Commodity Chain analysis of post-1960s global-economy transformations claiming that they suffer from different types of methodological nationalism. After arguing that the key to overcoming their intrinsic problems is to be found in the critical revision of Fröbel, Heinrichs and Kreye's New International Division of Labor theory, the paper advances a novel account of the structural dynamics of the stratified capitalist world-system developed by Iñigo Carrera (1998). Finally, the paper substantiates its main claims with an analysis of the long-term development of the global semiconductors industry.*

**Keywords:** Global Commodity Chains; Semiconductor industry; Global economic transformation; International division of labor theory



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In the last half century, the global economy has experienced notable changes in the location of industrial activities and hence in the structure of the international division of labor (IDL). These changes have been central elements of the so-called contemporary process of “globalization.” Of crucial significance in this process has been the consolidation of East Asia as a manufacturing powerhouse. Several methodological approaches and theories have emerged to account for the post mid-1960s transformations in the economic geography of global society. Global commodity chain (GCC) analysis and the New International Division of Labor (NIDL) theory are two of such attempts. Both originated from within the same scholarly tradition, namely, World-Systems Theory (WST). Yet, while the former has become part of the mainstream in the fields of economic geography, industrial organization, and development studies, the latter has, after a short-lived success, fallen into the dustbin of intellectual history.

The present paper has two main goals. The first goal is to advance a critique of “chain-focused” analyses of global economic development, crucially those inspired by institutionalist and neo-Marxist views. Secondly, to re-evaluate the analysis of post mid-1960s changes in the spatial location of industrial activities proposed by Fröbel et al. (1980) in their original NIDL thesis, especially the rise of East Asia as the new “workshop” of the world. For these purposes, the paper is organized as follows. The next section reviews the main ideas of leading scholars working within the GCC framework to account for global-economy dynamics and national-development experiences, uncovering their contributions and weaknesses. Section two revisits Fröbel et al.’s main claims regarding those processes and the critiques advanced against them. It also reveals central positive aspects and key problems of their analysis that have been ignored by early critics. Section three puts forward an alternative account of the structural dynamics of the stratified global economy that appropriates key parts of Fröbel’s analysis, while overcoming its shortcomings, in order to contribute to the development of critical analyses of GCCs. Section four presents an analysis of the evolution of the global semiconductors industry that illustrates the main points advanced in the previous sections, thus supporting the general claims made there. A final section closes the paper with its main conclusions.

### **Global Commodity Chains and Uneven National Development**

As noted above, GCC analysis emerged as an attempt to account for the structure and dynamics of the global economy within the tradition of WST: i.e., to explain the long-term reproduction of the stratified capitalist world-system and the trajectories of national societies within it (Bair 2005, 2013; Selwyn 2012: 207-8). Unsurprisingly, it did not take long for this analytical tool to become popular in a variety of social sciences studying the contemporary process of economic “globalization” and associated changes in the location of industrial productions and national-

development experiences. In particular, for the study of East Asia's structural transformation throughout the 1970s and 1980s, in view of the inability of dependency theory-inspired branches of WST to account for such process (Gereffi 1990; Storper 2008).

Defining development as the process of upgrading the mix of economic activities towards technology- and, crucially, skill-intensive ones (Gereffi 1990: 524), as the East Asian nations undoubtedly were managing to do, GCC analysis attempted to provide a methodological framework to study the micro- and meso-economic foundations of the process of national economic development. GCC analysis, in this instance, focused on the forms of integration of individual capitals in the global market – i.e., how they relate to other firms and contribute to the creation and appropriation of the value of commodities. This framework provided a hierarchical typology of individual capitals (and eventually of petty commodity producers) and a mapping of their progression within the world-system; and thus a way to represent its stratified structural dynamics (Selwyn 2012: 209).

Due to its micro/meso-level perspective, GCC analysis soon found practical use; it offered a conceptual framework for sectoral studies and for the design of public policies directed at fostering firm's upgrading capabilities and, hence, national development. Yet this approach to the study of economic development has not been without issues that bring into question its transformative power. First, “chain focused” analyses tend to take the direct, non-market relations amongst firms (i.e. the structure of governance of commodity chains) as the underlying force accounting for their economic relationships, even though the former are the concrete forms through which the latter come about. They thus misrepresent the nature of inter-firm relations and the forces explaining the flow of surplus-value amongst them in the process of differentiation of industrial capital that results from the immanent laws of capitalist competition.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, and the focus of the critique advanced here, the GCC framework provides only a formal account of *how* inter-firms relations reproduce the structural dynamics of the stratified world-system (i.e. of the spatial dynamics of the global economy) but not of *why* this occur in the way described, which is ultimately needed to understand national developmental experiences and, to devise political actions tending to affect them (Selwyn 2012: 207).<sup>2</sup> Hence, despite its theoretical origins in WST, the GCC framework has been used by mainstream political institutions (World Bank, World Trade Organization, UK and U.S. international development

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<sup>1</sup> See Iñigo Carrera 2008: 137-48 for the general-theoretical development; and, Starosta 2010a, 2010b for a discussion in the context of GCC analyses of contemporary organizational changes in industrial production.

<sup>2</sup> See Starosta (2010b: 555-7) for an outline of the critique of the GCC literature offered below.

agencies, among others) as much as by their irreconcilable critics (Selwyn 2015: 257; Bair 2013: 3-4).

Indeed, notwithstanding the widespread and variegated use, the mainstream version of GCC-focused analysis of national, regional and global development has, as much as the rest of the development economics discipline, increasingly revolved around an institutionalist view of state/market dynamics. Effectively, when accounting for the specific participation of national firms and economies in the global production networks developed since the mid-1960s by industrial multinational corporations (MNCs) attempting to reduce production costs, crucially East Asia's upgrading dynamics, leading scholars have gone from a focus on state policies and institutions (Gereffi 1995: 124-6; Humphrey 2004) to rather unspecific non-state institutional and cultural factors allegedly determining the quality and quantity of local entrepreneurs and firm behavior (Gereffi 1998: 58-9). The question that is not answered in these analyses, however, is why it was only then that industrial capitals began to find it profitable to pursue the international separation of productive activities leading to a new kind of IDL, and why East Asian institutional settings only then became conducive to economic development (see Grinberg 2013 for a critique of the institutionalist literature).

Picking up these tensions in mainstream versions of GCC analysis, leading young scholars working with the framework to analyze contemporary global-economy transformations, crucially the trajectories of "non-core" regions, have begun to propose forms for reclaiming it for critical social theory. Thus, Bair (2005, 2013) and the other contributors to this Journal's special issue on the topic (*JWSR*, Vol. 20(1); see, e.g., Quark 2013) suggest that the way forward is to bring WST back into the heart of GCC analysis: i.e. to understand GCCs as conduits for the reproduction of a stratified global political-economy rather than as developmental opportunities. Undoubtedly, this strategy points in the right direction. Yet, it should be taken cautiously. Despite claims to the contrary, many, though certainly not all, WST analyses reproduce mainstream methodological nationalism while considering, often implicitly, the capitalist *world-system* as the outcome of the politico-economic interaction of *nation-states* rather than understanding these as the former's modes of existence.

From a perspective that has points in common with that of Open Marxism (see, e.g. Burnham 1994), Selwyn (2012: 2015), in turn, claims that, to the degree that it fails to see the specificity of capitalist social relations in the production of surplus value, WST becomes part of the problem and, hence, cannot be part of the solution. In a series of papers in the *Journal of Economic Geography*, this author develops the point and proposes an alternative solution.

The problems with WST and GCC are cumulative: a limited understanding of capitalism gives rise to an overly exclusive focus upon technologies and managerial strategies in the understanding of innovation which then obscures labor from sight. Noting these numerous weaknesses might lead some to reject the GCC framework as possessing any methodological utility. However, the ways in which GCCs are structured and connect capital and labor in one part of the world with capital and labor in other parts of the world means that they are real determinants of labor regime formation, local capitalist configuration and its developmental trajectory. [...]. What is required is a methodology that enables us to investigate whether and how workers' actions impact upon the accumulation process and contributes to the shaping of wider developmental processes. (Selwyn 2012: 215-7)

In other words, in his first paper Selwyn, like Open Marxism's key contribution, proposes to include labor-capital antagonistic relations—i.e. the allegedly open-ended and contingent process of class struggle—as a “co-determining” factor of national-level technological development and therefore of firms’ upgrading pathways. Yet, as his second paper makes it clear, “[c]lass relations cannot be understood only as existing within nation states (or workshops), but must be conceived of as global social relations. That is, just as the most powerful units of capital (lead firms), with the assistance of hegemonic states and international institutions, seek to organize their relations with subordinate units of capital, so too do they seek through the governance of their GCCs to organize global capital-labor relations” (Selwyn 2015: 267-8).

Again, this approach certainly constitutes a parallel move in the right direction. Yet, it falls a step short. On one hand, Selwyn (2012, 2015) rightly argues that the production of surplus-value and the valorization of capital take place on a global scale. On the other, this author misses that class relations cannot, at the same time, be considered as co-determining forces of national developmental processes, and hence of the world capitalist economy. For, irrespective of the historical processes in which they are constituted, in capitalism, social classes, and hence their antagonistic relations, are continually reproduced in the process of capital accumulation, which is global in terms of its immanent structure, long-term potencies and general dynamics, and national in its forms of realization (Marx 1976: 723-4). Put differently, Selwyn’s approach is unable to account, other than with references to seemingly conjunctural processes and subsequent path dependence, for the determination of the relative strength of social classes and the outcome of their interaction in each national section of the world market.

Indeed, the historical specificity of the capitalist mode of re-producing human life resides in that the organization of social labor—i.e. the allocation of each of the individual fragments

that constitute society's total capacity to produce use values—is regulated autonomously, through the exchange of the products of individual capitals that pursue no purpose other than maximizing their valorization and expansion; their never-ending augmentation. In other words, the thing-like general social relationship amongst private and independent producers (commodities/money) develops into the automatic subject of social reproduction (capital), and this process takes the historically specific form, and becomes a by-product, of the accumulation of the total social capital. With social labor organized under this form, free individuals not only have to put all their senses, conscience and will to produce for markets. They also need to represent in the market the exchangeability of the commodities they own. Hence, in the process of social reproduction they relate to each other not as individual persons but as *personifications* of commodities who recognize each other as owners of private property (Marx 1976: 178-269; Postone 1996: 75-83; Iñigo Carrera 2014: 557-59).

Organized as a process of capital accumulation, social reproduction becomes, for the first time in human history, a universal, worldwide process. Not only the impersonal character of market transactions allows for the interaction of geographically-dispersed individual fragments of social labor (i.e. productive units in the form of individual capitals). The boundlessly expansive nature of the process of capital accumulation itself necessarily results in such ever-increasing interaction. Yet, due to the private form under which social labor is realized, capital accumulation started, and has so far existed, as formally independent, though fully interdependent, national processes that constitute politico-economic (i.e. accumulation) units in themselves. The world market, then, is not the context in which individual capitals and national economies develop, or simply the sum total of national markets interconnected through flows of commodities, money-as-capital and labor-power, as mainstream economics considers it. It is the other way around: national markets/economies are integral parts of the totality constituted by the world market/economy, and hence the forms in which the process of capital accumulation on a global scale realizes itself. International movements of commodities and “factors of production” are concrete forms through which the global unity of capital accumulation comes about (Marx 1976: 222, 247, 702, 929; Fröbel et al. 1980: 8; Wallerstein 1983: 18-9; Burnham 1994: 226-9; Postone 1996: 100, 149, 258; Iñigo Carrera 2008: 148-9).

Intra-class cooperative relations and inter-class antagonistic interactions are political (i.e. direct as opposed to market mediated) forms of organizing the allocation of the individual fragments of social labor. Yet, contrary to Selwyn (2012) and Open Marxism, they are the product of the actions of individuals who are themselves personifications of commodities, and hence forms of realization of the general social relationship of capital accumulation. Put differently, class relations are the form through which individual sellers and buyers of labor-

power—the commodity whose consumption by capital results in the creation of wealth, value and surplus-value—engage in the collective trading of that commodity in order to maximize/minimize its market price; thus subsuming their inherently competitive relationship as sellers/buyers of the same commodity into a cooperative relationship that clashes with that of those at the other pole of the market relationship (Marx 1976: 373-413; Iñigo Carrera 2008: 95-105).

The historical specificity of the *capitalist* state thus develops in this process as the direct representative of the process of capital accumulation in its unity, assuring the normal consumption of labor-power and its reproduction with the attributes needed by the total social capital. And, by virtue of its very nature, the capitalist state subsumes all the *direct* actions necessary for the normal development of the process of capital accumulation beyond those related to the reproduction of labor-power—e.g. the partial or complete centralization of capital; the political representation of national processes of capital accumulation in the global economy. These actions, however, do not develop as planned, consciously regulated processes. Rather, as any other necessary form of realization of the autonomously regulated process of capital accumulation, they develop through profitability crises and class-based political conflicts (Marx 1976: 779-80; Iñigo Carrera 2008; 106–108).<sup>3</sup>

In sum, the actions and antagonistic interaction of social classes, as well as the nation-state policies in which they manifest themselves, should not be seen as autonomous forces that (co)determine national developmental experiences, as in policy- and politics-centered analyses of GCCs. Rather, they should be understood as forms of realization, politicized mediations, of the global process of capital accumulation, through the specific determination of each national

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<sup>3</sup> This analysis of the capitalist state shares with other Marxists analyses the view that the state is a non-neutral institution, as in mainstream contractualist theories, that yet appears as autonomous of particular interests. However, the analysis of the state pursued here departs from these Marxist approaches in various ways. Crucially, this Marxist tradition that goes from structuralism-functionalism (Poulantzas 1969) to Open Marxism (Burnham 1994), through the German “state derivation” school (Hirsch 1978), does not understand the state as a concrete form of realization of the most general direct social relationship amongst commodity owners—the class struggle—through which their general indirect social relationship—capital accumulation—comes about. Rather, Marxist analyses, explicitly or not, regard the state as an institution whose necessity springs independently of the process of capital accumulation, yet is formally subsumed by capital to fulfill several functions that help reproduce the system as a whole while gaining some de facto autonomy. Hence, the capitalist state is not understood there as a necessary form of realization of the normal reproduction of capital accumulation, and of its historical potencies, but as a second-best, contingent solution for capital to address the crisis tendencies and contradictions inherent in the process of accumulation—e.g., inter-capital competition, fall in the rate of profit, the power of labor. Even Open Marxism authors who regard the state as a mode of existence of fetishised social relations fail to see the inherently antagonist capitalist class relations that take form in the state as modes of existence of the general social relationship of capital accumulation. In other words, they fail to recognize the thing-like general social relationship amongst commodity owners as the alienated subject of social reproduction and social classes as collective personifications of the commodities in which the capital relation is embodied.

portion of the total social capital, which includes the political representation in the world market, with its specifically determined strength, *vis-à-vis* other national portions of global capital (Iñigo Carrera 2008: 150-64).

Hence, the issues raised in this section against “chain-focused” analyses of global economic development are not directed at the methodological research framework, but to the theories incorporated in it. Nevertheless, as Bair argues (2005), the framework’s meso-economic orientation is partly to blame insofar as it tends to divert attention from the analysis of the general dynamics of the process of capital accumulation (see, e.g., Mahutga 2013). Consequently, authors working with it, crucially those discussed here, fail to understand GCCs as economic forms of realization of the autonomously regulated process of capital accumulation on a global scale, which comes about through the IDL and both global- and local-level political developments.

### The NIDL and Late Industrialisation<sup>4</sup>

It was argued in the previous section that, as a theory-light framework, GCC-focused analyses of regional uneven development can be filled up with various theoretical contents. The mainstream branch of GCC analysis fills it with firm- and policy-centered institutionalism that fails to account for the inner dynamics of global capital accumulation. Alternative GCC analyses like those of Bair (2013) and colleagues (see, e.g., Hough 2011; Quark 2013), as well as those of Selwyn (2012, 2015) fill it with different versions of critical social theory that, though moving beyond firm- and policy-centrism, remain, intentionally or not, focused on national-level, politico-economic processes as underlying explanatory factors. In this section, it will be argued that the key to overcoming the limits of these versions of GCC analysis of contemporary global-economy transformations, crucially the process of “globalization” and East Asian developmental experiences, is to be found in the critical revision of the work of Fröbel et al. (1980). Their NIDL theory was consolidating as the leading political-economy branch within WST when the GCC analysis came on stream and dethroned it. Yet their views are largely ignored by authors working with the latter approach. The next section will put forward an account of those processes that builds on the insights on the Marxian critique of political economy reviewed in the previous section, incorporating the rational kernel of Fröbel et al.’s theory but leaving aside its problematic tenets.

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<sup>4</sup> This section is based on, and elaborates from, Grinberg (2011: 160-5). Early versions of the section were written in collaboration with Guido Starosta.

The main novelty, and key contribution, of the NIDL theory developed by Fröbel et al., resided in that the fast post-1960s expansion of “developing-country” manufactured exports that resulted in the overhauling of the economic geography of industrial production was not regarded as being simply the product of nation-state economic policies trying to promote them, or the planned design of lead firms (i.e. MNCs) attempting to cost-cut through off-shoring or subcontracting, as in mainstream GCC analyses. Rather, these authors argued, it resulted from changing objective conditions in the process of valorization of industrial capital on a global scale. First, there had been significant improvements in communications and transport methods leading to strong reductions in the costs of spatially dispersing productive activities. Secondly, there had been large advances in the simplification of manual labor processes in manufacturing production, as a result of the intensification in the technical division of labor, which could then be performed by lower-skill workers. Thirdly, there were large industrial reserve armies (i.e. surplus populations) in the “periphery” of the world-system as a consequence of technological developments in the primary sector, such as the Green Revolution, and rapid population growth. According to these authors, these “new” objective conditions allowed industrial capital to relocate several production processes to “non-core” countries and take advantage of the low-cost labor-power available there by establishing world-market factories.

Hence, the fast growth of manufacturing production and exports, and of national output, in the East Asian Newly Industrializing Countries (NICs) during the 1960s and 1970s is understood by Fröbel et al. (1980) to have resulted from the combined effect those three processes, however limited the long-term developmental potencies of this modality of capital accumulation were thought to be by the authors. Though the vast pool of relatively cheap and unskilled labor existing in East Asia made the region *particularly* suitable for the development of world-market factories, Fröbel et al. (1980) did not consider these processes to be *specific* to that region. Conversely, these authors argued, world-market factories were by the mid-1970s establishing and consolidating in most of the periphery of the world-system.

Although these hypotheses were at the center of scholarly debates in the fields of economic geography, industrial organization and development studies until the late 1980s, they have been abandoned after receiving a wide range of criticisms on both theoretical and empirical grounds. First, as critics have rightly stressed, the initial formulations of the NIDL theory contained generalizations which cannot account for evident differences in national/regional developmental trajectories that would unfold subsequently (Jenkins 1984; Henderson 1989). Contrary to the predictions emerging from their analysis of the global economy, the development of world-market-oriented industrial sectors would not spread evenly across the periphery of the capitalist world-system. Even during the period covered by their study, 1960s and 1970s, while

the East Asian NICs, the so-called Tigers, were becoming major producers of garments and electronic goods for world markets, South American industrial sectors, though not those of Caribbean Basin countries (Grinberg 2010), remained largely unaffected by these global-economy changes and continued producing mainly for domestic consumers, even if some countries in the region also began to host Export Processing Zones (e.g. Brazil). Secondly, also contrary to the predictions offered in Fröbel et al.'s early analysis of the process, some of the countries which developed world-market-oriented manufacturing sectors would go through continuous industrial deepening/upgrading, labor-force up-skilling and steady increases in real wages. In this sense, the impressive developmental and growth record of the first generation of East Asian NICs openly undermines a theory which made export-oriented industrialization (EOI) based on low-waged, unskilled labor-power the center of its argument, as pointed out by critics (see, e.g., Gereffi 1990). Fourthly, and closely connected to the latter point, changes in the IDL have been more variegated in terms of nations' participation and firms' commercial strategies than envisaged in Frobel et al.'s formulation of the NIDL theory (Sayer 1985; Henderson 1989; Gereffi 1995).

Yet, despite these untimely problems, the original NIDL theory got it right in one crucial point. Contrary to what is usually claimed by some of their critics (see, e.g., Jenkins 1984; Schoenberger 1988), MNCs were considered by Fröbel et al. (1980: 46) not as the underlying driving force but as "institutional" *mediations* of the structural changes that were transforming the geographical location of productive units and the direction of capital and trade flows. In effect, Fröbel et al. (1980: 8, 24-5, 44-8) rightly related the emergence of the NIDL, and the specific GCCs in which it has materialized, to the process of self-valorization of capital, and hence the production of surplus-value, on a global scale. Nevertheless, as Iñigo Carrera points out (2008: 66), they failed to understand this process as a historical form of realization of the development of society's productive forces, and thus exclusively focused their analysis on the de-skilling aspects of technological developments (Fröbel et al. 1980: 25).

As a consequence of that, the authors failed to notice that neither the three "pre-conditions" they pointed out, nor the development of industrial productions for world markets based on them, were processes exclusive of the post-late-1960s period. As the "industrious revolution" metaphor reveals, Japan's pre-1960s industrialization had been similarly based (Sugihara 2003). What was then new, however, were the replacement in several industrial productions of the increasingly expensive Japanese labor-force with that of its poorer neighbors, including some of its former colonies; and, crucially, the rapid advance of computerization and robotization of industrial productions which, directly or indirectly, multiplied the scope of those

three conditions, crucially the variety of simplified labor-processes that could be performed by a relatively cheaper and lower-skilled workforce.

Indeed, though missed by their critics, the main problem with Fröbel et al.'s (1980) approach to the NIDL, and the cause of their inability to grasp fully the transformations at stake, including its long-term potencies and the above-mentioned regional disparities, was that they failed to properly locate their origin in the increased mechanization/automation of large-scale industry and its impact upon the differentiation of the skills of the different parts of the industrial labor-force, rather than in the intensification of the manual division of labor (Iñigo Carrera 2008: 66; Grinberg 2014: 732). Hence, the authors missed that even in the labor-intensive sector they studied in detail, the garments industry, unskilled manual workers were incipiently performing tasks as appendages (feeders) of the automated machinery (sewing machines). In other words, it was not the tool but the raw material what largely remained in the hands of manual workers. And, though they realized that automation in the capital-intensive textile industry was having a similar effect on the IDL, they related the process to differential legal restrictions on working hours and production runs favoring the "economical" use of relatively expensive means of production rather than to the transformations in the productive subjectivity of the global collective worker (Fröbel et al. (1980: 150-6), as will be argued in the next section. It was that problem that led the author's to one-sidedly focus on a single, and arguably the most superficial, manifestation of the NIDL (i.e. the relocation of unskilled-labor-intensive activities to cheap-labor countries), as their critics rightly noticed (Jenkins 1984; Sayer 1985; Schoenberger 1988; Henderson 1989).<sup>5</sup>

This section advanced a critique of Fröbel et al.'s analysis of post-1960s developments in the IDL, stressing its main contributions and uncovering the source of its problematic tenets. The next section will put forward an account of the structural dynamics of the process of global capital accumulation and of the formation and development of contemporary GCCs that starts from the analysis of the forms of production of relative surplus-value on a global scale—i.e., from the analysis of the manifestations of the Marxian Law of value on the world market. This account of global political-economy developments attempts to address the theoretical concerns of critical analyses of GCCs like those of Bair and colleague (2005, 2013) and Selwyn (2012, 2015).

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<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, Gereffi (1995) recognizes the development of flexible automation as being at the center of the technological changes at stake in the formation of the NIDL. However, following Kaplinsky (1989), he focuses on the impact that technological changes in production processes were allegedly having on plant sizes and not on the industrial labor-force skills requirements. Moreover, empirical studies have subsequently shown that the development of flexible automation only reduced production scales at product level (mainly by reducing the time setting and calibrating the systems of machinery) but not at plant and firm level (see, e.g., Alcorta 1999).

### **Global Capital Accumulation and the NIDL<sup>6</sup>**

As every concrete form of realization of the process of capital accumulation, its global unity is only fully developed in the process of production of relative surplus-value. Effectively, beyond the expansion of markets, which requires new consumers to have sold something first, it is in attempting to reduce the value of labor-power, and thus increase the amount of surplus-value produced in a given period of time, that the total social capital searches for places where particular natural or historical conditions allow it to reduce the cost of producing the commodities that directly or indirectly reproduce the labor-force without investing in productivity-enhancing technological development. As is broadly acknowledged, this process originally centered on the search for regions where, due to non-reproducible natural conditions, raw materials could be produced at a lower cost, or at all, which gave place to the classical IDL (Marx 1976: 579-81; Howe 1981: 91-4; Iñigo Carrera 2014: 562-3).

This form of subsumption of portions of the planet into the global circuits of accumulation, however, was ridden with a structural contradiction that determined the long-term pattern of capitalist development there. If, on the one hand, the total social capital managed to enhance its valorization capacity by reducing the value of labor-power, on the other, this was partly offset by the drain of social wealth in the opposite direction towards the owners of the natural conditions of production in the form of ground-rent (Marx 1981: 779-916), regardless of how these social subjects were constituted in the historical process of appropriation of the new territories. From being simply a source of cheap primary commodities, these spaces of accumulation thus became also determined as sources of ground-rent for industrial (productive) capital (Iñigo Carrera 2008: 150-6; Iñigo Carrera 2014: 562-3; Grinberg and Starosta 2014: 241-2).

Until the approximately 1930s, the process of capital accumulation through ground-rent appropriation generally revolved around the production, transport and international trade of one or various primary commodities. Then, whenever colonial states did not directly appropriate rent-bearing lands or monopolize foreign trade, capitals invested in those and related sectors, as well as foreign creditors, became private landowners' main partners in the appropriation of the local ground-rent. But, from the 1930s, and crucially after the end of the Second World War (WWII), this position began to be taken over by industrial capital invested in manufacturing, in whose valorization cycle originated the bulk of the surplus-value that formed the ground-rent. The so-called process of import-substitution industrialization (ISI) that consolidated in most

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<sup>6</sup> This section is based on, and elaborates from, Iñigo Carrera (2008); Grinberg and Starosta (2009); Grinberg 2013).

primary-commodity producing countries between the 1930s and 1950s, reached its peak during the commodities boom of the 1970s, and reproduced in a limited form thereafter, has been the paradigmatic form through which this specific modality of capital accumulation has come about (Iñigo Carrera, 2013: 149-52). As any other politico-economic manifestation, these regions' specific participation in GCCs (mainly as producers of raw and semi-processed materials) has been a form of realization of this specific modality of capitalist development. Unlike primary-sector capitals, industrial firms other than those processing raw materials (both foreign- and domestic-owned) have almost exclusively produced for the small-sized, yet protected domestic markets while their capacity to valorize normally (despite their small scale of production and the use of obsolete technologies) has depended on their ability to appropriate ever-increasing amounts of ground-rent.

As every concrete form of realization of the production of relative surplus-value on a global scale, the IDL has also been subjected to the former's continuous development. During the last forty years or so, both have experienced profound transformations as a result of the process of computerization and robotization of large-scale industry, especially since the microelectronics revolution of the mid-1970s. Though the process is inherent to the capitalist development of society's productive forces through the system of machinery (Marx 1973: 632; Marx 1976: 492-553; Iñigo Carrera 2014: 564), this leap forward in the automation of industrial activities— i.e. in the transformation of the productive attributes of individual labor into productive attributes of the collective laborer that yet exist as powers of capital objectified in the machinery—has greatly accelerated the internal differentiation of the collective worker of large-scale industry. On one hand, these technological transformations have involved the further expansion of the productive attributes of wage-laborers performing the more complex parts of the work-process, both of those involved in the vanguard development of scientific knowledge and its technological application and of those in charge of organizing the material unity of increasingly large and complex production processes. The cost of producing and reproducing these kinds of wage-earners has thus tended to increase. On the other hand, the automation of production processes has rapidly simplified the productive functions of most manual laborers remaining in the shop-floor as operators or appendages of the increasingly self-calibrating and self-adjusting machines, whenever it has not replaced these altogether and transformed workers into a surplus for the process of capital accumulation. Tacit, particularistic skills gained through lengthy on-the-job experiences of learning-by-doing have been replaced by a set of general skills acquired through formal technical education which, in most cases, have required a shorter period of overall training and have rapidly become trivialized, standardized and routinized. The cost of producing and reproducing this type of wage-laborers has thus tended to decrease. Moreover, the

new technological conditions have themselves generated a multitude of production processes still subjected to the manual intervention of low-skilled laborers, like the assembly, testing and packing of electronic micro-components and appliances (Aglietta 1979: 122-30; Coriat 1992; Balconi 2002; Iñigo Carrera 2008: 56-9; Grinberg and Starosta 2009: 771; Grinberg 2013: 178-82).

In terms of their general content, potencies and dynamics, those transformations in the productive attributes of the different portions of the collective worker of large-scale industry have been global. Yet, they have resulted in a novel differentiation of national spaces of accumulation and in the reconfiguration of the IDL, and hence of the production of surplus-value on a global scale (Iñigo Carrera 2008: 55-93; Iñigo Carrera 2014: 565; Grinberg and Starosta 2009: 771-2; Grinberg 2013: 180-1). Effectively, based on those transformations in the labor-process, and the associated revolution in communication and transportation methods, industrial capital has become increasingly able to disperse spatially the component parts of the labor-process according to the most profitable combinations of costs and productive attributes of the different national fragments of the global collective worker, rather than out-rightly engaging in the politically-expensive differentiated reproduction within the industrially-advanced countries, where the technological developments originally generated; thus giving birth to the NIDL.<sup>7</sup> Regardless of individual capitals' national origin, and the changing forms and structure of the GCCs through which it comes about, the NIDL has, directly or indirectly, reduced the costs of reproducing the global labor-force and has thus increased the mass of surplus-value available for the valorization of the total capital of world society, the active *subject* of the process of accumulation. In other words, it has enhanced the process of capital accumulation on a global scale (Fröbel et al. 1980: 46; Iñigo Carrera 2008: 63-72).

In general terms, the formation of global chains of production of surplus-value has been driven by the location of simplified labor-processes in regions where local labor-forces are not only *relatively* cheap but, also, whose specific productive attributes include the disciplined subordination to centrally- and hierarchically-organized collective labor-processes and the habituation to repetitive manual work during long hours. This has been the case of working classes whose formation occurred in wet-rice cultivating societies, like those of East Asia.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Transport and communication methods have not developed independently of the changes leading to the conformation of the NIDL. First, the technologies behind the development of transport and communication methods have been the same as those leading to the automation and computerization of industrial labor-processes. Second, industrial capital's necessity to spatially disperse productive activities has constituted a key pulled factor for the development of labor productivity in those areas.

<sup>8</sup> Wet-rice cultivation is highly labor-intensive, notably during implantation and harvest periods, and, crucially, whatever their extent and complexity, irrigation systems require – unlike dry-land agriculture or husbandry – the

Those characteristics have made the East Asian labor-force particularly productive when working as an appendage of the increasingly automated machinery systems or in manual assembly operations (Iñigo Carrera 2008: 65-72, 76-83; Grinberg and Starosta 2009: 772; Grinberg 2013: 182). It is this historical background, rather than the alleged initial egalitarian distribution of landed property suggested by Selwyn (2012: 216) following Kay (2002), that has determined the region's central place in the NIDL and its consolidation as a global industrial power (see Grinberg and Starosta 2009 for a detailed critique of this argument). As noted, the emergence of the Japanese textile industry as a global leader in the early twentieth century, and its consolidation in the post-war period, had already resulted from similar *skill-replacing* technical changes (the replacement of mule-spinning with ring-spinning machinery), well before that post-1960s developments in equipment automation greatly accelerated the process (Silver 2003: 87-9). Similarly determined was the emergence and growth of the Japanese electronics industry throughout the 1960s, as will be shown in the next section for the case of the components sector.

As any other global-scale economic process, the NIDL has come about through the consolidation of a variety of national- and international-level political processes, in particular of specific nation-state policies and institutions, described in great detail by neoliberal (World Bank 1993) and statist/institutionalist scholars (Wade 1990), and specific class and international relations, as described by their Marxist counterparts (Hart-Landsberg, Jeong, and Westra. 2007). Contrary to GCC-focused scholars reviewed in section 1, these political process did not determine the specific characteristics of capital accumulation in East Asia, and the region's rapid industrial upgrading and mode of participation in the IDL through GCCs; they simply mediated its transformations and development. Thus, in those Northeast Asian countries (plus Singapore) that around the early 1960s became sources of relatively cheap and disciplined labor-power to perform the simplified parts of industrial labor-processes, state policies and political/economic institutions concentrated on the creation and subsequent reproduction of the necessary conditions for industrial capital to accumulate under that new specific modality. Despite different national variations, all East Asian "developmental" states not only facilitated the outward-orientation of the industrial sector while centralizing capital in productions with large scale economies and nurturing private infant industry. They also pursued decisively the repression of the labor-force while upgrading worker skills. In other words, policies and institutions associated with East

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"cooperation at various levels between the farmers in a single water control unit" (Bray 1986, 67). Moreover, intensive agriculture has also led to particularly marked (hierarchical) gender division of labor, as it drew male labor away from household activities and resulted in the large use of heavy ploughs (Baserup 1970; Alesina, Giuliano and Numm 2010). See Quark (2013) for a WST-inspired analysis of GCCs that considers the structuring role of gender relations.

Asians “developmental” states and EOI experiences, and local firms’ chain-participation patterns, have been the political and economic forms of realization of processes of capital accumulation based on the use of a relatively cheap and disciplined workforce for simplified industrial activities, through which the production of relative surplus-value on a global scale has come about (Grinberg and Starosta 2009: 772-3; Grinberg 2013: 182-3; Grinberg 2014: 718-31). On the other hand, in those countries that became exporters of capital to, and importers of commodities from, the East Asian NICs, economic policies changed in the direction necessary to mediate the transformations at stake. And, so did the discourse and actions of those international institutions of governance that have expressed more directly the material unity of the process of capital accumulation on a global scale (e.g. World Bank and World Trade Organization).<sup>9</sup>

As mentioned above, processes behind the NIDL have not been static, as Fröbel et al. (1980) suggested in their original theorization on the topic, but have resulted in a wide and constantly changing range of combinations of relative cost and characteristics/productivity of national labor-forces. First, though the NIDL initially centered on the international relocation of unskilled-labor-intensive processes, like clothing, footwear and microelectronics assembly, the aforementioned skill-replacing technological changes have increasingly affected relatively complex processes and industries, like chemical, steel, shipbuilding, motor-vehicles, and microelectronics production/design (Coriat 1992; Hasegawa 1996; Ernst 2001; Brown and Campbell 2001; Balconi 2002).

Secondly, while surplus populations in the most advanced East Asian economies became exhausted, domestic labor-forces began to be reproduced, increasingly through state mediation, under new conditions which, in turn, have enabled them to perform increasingly more complex activities. As this process of skills upgrading occurred, the conditions of reproduction of industrial workers improved substantially. In some cases, the transformations came about smoothly (e.g. in Japan). In others cases, crucially when the process had to be done relatively rapidly, they were realized through working-class strong activism leading to political opening (e.g. in late-1980s South Korea). Thus, contrary to Selwyn (2012, 2015), local-level processes of class struggle, and working-class agency, have been the political forms through which the reproduction of industrial workers’ productive attributes have came about, and hence the production of value and surplus-value in national economies, as a result of the development of

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<sup>9</sup> Geopolitical processes cannot account by themselves for the transformation of East Asian economies. Briefly put, they cannot explain the, initially reluctant, U.S. support for EOI rather than ISI programs as originally envisaged for the region. See Grinberg (2014: 714-15).

the NIDL and the production of relative surplus-value on a global scale (see Grinberg 2014:728-30 for the South Korean experience).

Thirdly, new sources of relatively cheap and disciplined labor-power became available in the region and in other non-core parts of the capitalist world-system. Productions in specific industrial branches and subsectors, then, expanded in some countries while contracting in others where new and more advanced activities developed, following a rhythm determined by the evolution of those factors—i.e. the technological changes and the relative cost and productivity of national work-forces. The multilayered, dynamic structure that thus emerged has not, however, negated the original characteristics of the NIDL, as claimed by many of Fröbel et al.'s critics. Rather, this structure has been a concrete form of realization of the NIDL. The different sub-regional divisions of labor have all revolved around the NIDL's main trend, namely, the relocation of simplified labor-processes to territories where capital has had access to a labor-force that, due to its historical origins as surplus population (largely) working in wet agriculture, has been relatively cheap and highly disciplined, and thus productive under the prevailing technological conditions (Iñigo Carrera 2008; Grinberg 2010, Grinberg 2014: 719-20).

Undoubtedly, the NIDL has come about through a variety of continually-developing, across-the-border inter-firm relations and, in some cases, has resulted in the emergence of global-scale capitals in non-core countries, as rightly noted in GCC-focused analyses (Gereffi 1995; Sturgeon 2008). None of these developments contradict the original characteristics and general trends of the NIDL. They have been its concrete historical forms of realization, broadly determined by the materiality, including proprietary structure, of the productive processes at stake—i.e. whether or not it has been technically and commercially viable for industrial capital to fully or partly fragment them internationally, and whether or not the processes emerging in non-core countries have required relatively large scales of production. In other words, within each GCC, regardless of its structure of governance (and the differences between them have become increasingly slight as noted by GCCs authors like Sturgeon (2008)),<sup>10</sup> production processes have been subdivided and spatially-located according to the inner dynamics of the NIDL, as accounted for a revised NIDL theory. In some industrial branches, crucially where fixed-capital investments, including patent licensing, have been considerable, and minimum efficient scales high relative to total demand, as in the case of semiconductors, the process has

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<sup>10</sup> Effectively, unless the chain driver in a “buyer-driven” GCC is simply a commercial capital with no involvement in the production and design processes in a kind of putting-out system, the difference between buyer-driven and producer-driven GCCs is more of form than substance, revolving around a cut-off point in terms of outsourcing/off-shoring activities. The excessive focus of most GCC analyses on the governance structure of GCCs—i.e. on the direct forms of realization of inter-firm indirect relationships – rather than the valorization cycle of industrial capital have led scholars to miss out this point until global-economy trends reduced the differences.

led to the emergence of global suppliers based in non-core countries. In others cases (e.g. garments assembly), production in these parts of the capitalist world-system has been under the control of small capitals. In all cases, differences in the participation in the production of relative surplus-value have constituted the source of inter-firm, and across-the-border, transfers of surplus-value and, hence, the force behind the differentiation of firms' valorization capacities (Iñigo Carrera 2008: 137-48; Starosta 2010a).

Hence, the NIDL has superseded the classical IDL based on the determination of some countries as producers of raw materials for the world market (whether or not this has been accompanied by the development of industrial production for domestic markets as a form of recovering ground-rent by capital) and the concentration of advanced industrial production in others. The presence of distinctive natural conditions, enhancing the productivity of labor in primary productions, or simply permitting them, in the former group of countries played a crucial role in their form of participation in the capitalist IDL. The NIDL has tended to revolve around the international fragmentation of the different segments of the collective laborer of large-scale industry. Some countries have tended to concentrate within their boundaries the great bulk of the skilled labor-force and therefore of the most complex, core-like work-processes, while increasingly incorporating low-skilled, low-wage activities (mainly the United States and the European Union).<sup>11</sup> Other countries/regions have been mainly transformed into sources of relatively cheap and disciplined labor-power for simplified, though increasingly complex, productions (initially Japan and the East Asian Tigers, and then Southeast Asia, Mexico, China, India, etc.). Yet, a third group of countries has remained participating in the world market as producers of raw materials and, therefore, as sources of ground-rent for global industrial capital (e.g. South America, Africa and Australasia), and, in some cases, as reservoirs of surplus population (Iñigo Carrera 2008).

### The NIDL and the Semiconductors Industry

The previous section put forward an account of the post-1960 structural dynamics of the stratified global economy rooted on the Marxian critique of political economy that reveals the nature of processes leading to the formation and on-going development of the NIDL. In this analysis, it was argued that GCCs should be understood as conduits of the IDL, and hence as forms of realization of the production of surplus-value on a global scale. This section examines

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<sup>11</sup> First, immigration from Third World countries and regional economic integration has helped satisfy the increasing local demand for unskilled labor-power. Second, the replacement of the welfare state with its neoliberal successor has also played its part in increasing the local supply of this type of labor-power (Sassen 1988; Iñigo Carrera 2008, 72–6).

the specific manifestation of those general trends in the semiconductors industry. The experience of this sector is particularly illustrative of those processes. Not only has it been at the center of the skill-replacing technical transformations leading to the NIDL, but also, partly due to its young history, it has been itself a leading sector in the process of international fragmentation of industrial production under its different stages and modalities. Moreover, to a large extent due to the latter, the evolution of this industrial sector has been used as key evidence to disprove Fröbel et al.'s hypothesis (see, e.g. Sayer 1986; Henderson 1989).

The production of semiconductors is at the core of the microelectronics, and thus electronics, industries. The sector emerged in the aftermath of WWII when the transistor replaced the vacuum valve as the main device used to control the motion of electrons and produce electrical amplification through non-mechanical means. Though the industry was originally closely related to the U.S. defense sector, the transistor rapidly became a key input used to manufacture consumer and capital goods incorporating electronically-controlled functions. Already in the early 1960s, however, the transistor was replaced by the integrated circuit (IC), as technological improvements in materials and production equipment permitted the combination of several transistors into one single system. The IC, or microchip, is basically a network of tiny wires fabricated on a surface, connecting transistors that switch on and off for processing data in binary code (Flamm 1985: 39-48; Brown and Linden 2005: 280).

Since its origins, the production of ICs has involved several labor processes which, though functionally integrated and subjected to on-going transformations, are technically disarticulated and thus spatially separable: design of the device's physical structure and functionality; wafer production (the production of a thin slice of a semiconductor material, usually silicon); mask making (the production of the celluloid filaments that contain the microscopic electronic circuits); wafer fabrication (the process by which the circuits in the mask are transferred to the silicon wafer and etched into its surface); assembly of transistors, diodes and integrated circuits into the package; and, testing of the product. These component labor-processes have required different types of equipment investment, specialized inputs and, crucially, labor skills. The design stage is relatively capital-intensive and, crucially, has required highly-qualified scientific and engineering workers. Wafer production, mask making and wafer fabrication, in turn, are the most capital-intensive parts of the production process, needing highly-skilled engineers as well as large numbers of technicians. Wafer fabrication has also required significant numbers of semi-skilled workers, particularly in the operation of diffusion furnaces. The assembly stage has been predominately an unskilled-labor-intensive process, though since the mid-1980s automated equipment has begun to replace manual labor. Finally, the testing stage, although increasingly capital-intensive and automated, has required large amounts

of both technical and unskilled labor-power (Flamm 1985: 48; Henderson 1989: 31-2; Brown and Linden 2005: 284, 296).

Though semiconductor technology was born in the northeast of the United States, the industry rapidly relocated to the west coast, the Silicon Valley, in search for a more cost-effective mix of labor-power:

On the one hand, the industry's demands for unskilled and semiskilled labor was largely filled by [relatively cheap and compliant] immigrant female Latino and Asian (especially Filipino) workers who resided in the San Jose area of the County, some distance from the centre of production in such north-County cities as Palo Alto, Mountain View and Sunnyvale. On the other hand, the industry's demands for highly trained scientists, engineers, and technicians have been filled largely by white male graduates of local universities and colleges who tend to reside in relatively close proximity to the semiconductor plants and laboratories (Henderson 1989: 40).

This "spatial fix," however, would not be the industry's last. A new one, replicating those national-level developments on a global scale, and anticipating those associated with the NIDL, would soon after take place. Taking advantage of the vast local availability of relatively cheap and highly-disciplined, crucially female, labor-power of peasant origin, Japanese industrial capital emerged, already in the late 1950s, as a major producer of simple transistors, mainly used in the local manufacture of radios for export markets. Later on, in the early 1960s, as argued by Fröbel et al. (1980), U.S. firms responded to this competitive pressure by moving their assembly facilities to East and, subsequently, Southeast Asian locations, where a labor-force with similar characteristics as, but cheaper than, the Japanese could be found, or by subcontracting these activities to local firms in the region. A similar process of international relocation of productive activities took place later on, when ICs became the leading semiconductor device used in electronic consumer and capital goods. Trade policies in the United States, including tariff laws, and in the recipient countries were modified to mediate politically these transformations in the IDL. The relatively low transport costs involved in the international movement of ICs, due to their low weight and small size, facilitated this process. Only the two leading captive producers (i.e. producing for internal use), IBM and AT&T, kept their assembly operations in the United States and adopted a higher level of automation than the offshore plants (Flamm 1985: 48-9; Scott 1987: 145-50; Brown and Linden 2005: 282-5).

The place of Japanese capital in the global semiconductors industry, however, would not be limited to the lower end of the GCC, namely, the production of simple transistors used in low-

technology electronic goods. A major transformation of the local industry occurred during the 1970s and by the end of the decade Japanese firms were beginning to compete successfully with U.S. manufacturers in the production of one type of complex ICs: Dynamic Random Access Memory (DRAM) chips. This qualitative change in the economic geography of the global microelectronics industry, however, was not *simply* the result of the bold actions by the Japanese “developmental” state accelerating the process of industrial upgrading, as often argued (see, e.g., Cho, Kim and Rhee 1998, Mathews and Cho 2000). Rather, several other inter-connected forces favored this development in the structure of the microelectronics industry, all of them expressing the transformations in the process of capital accumulation on a global scale reviewed in the previous section.

First, though equipment automation had already begun, thus standardizing/simplifying labor-processes and reducing the tacit skills necessary to perform them, advances were limited and various steps of the production process (e.g. mask etching and wafer packaging) still required the intervention of manual laborers (Flamm 1985: 50-1; Balconi 2002: 366-7). By the 1970s, industrial capital had access in Japan to a large supply of electronic engineers and technicians, though not of PhD-trained workers, at internationally-low cost while the fragmented or dual character of the local labor market, which resulted from the historical origins of the local working-class and manifested itself in the extended use of subcontracting to small capitals by lead firms, assured the provision of the semi-skilled portion of the labor-force at prices substantially below international levels. This was especially so in manual-assembly operations, where young female workers of rural origin predominated. Under these technological conditions, the acquiescence and discipline of the Japanese labor-force, of all types, manifested itself in fast learning processes and large productivity increases. Indeed, contrary to neoclassical economics predictions, Japanese producers were incorporating automated equipment more rapidly than their U.S. counterparts, despite having access to a lower-cost workforce (Linville, LaMond and Wilson 1984: 21, 48, 51; Mody and Wheeler 1987: 371-80).

Secondly, memory chips were (and still are) the most standardized, low-end segment of the ICs market (Tassey 1990: 91; Brown and Linden 2005: 285). They have thus been the segment of the industry with the lowest level of scientific and engineering skills requirements, needing relatively low design capabilities (Cho et al. 1998: 499; Ernst 1998: 29). Unlike in the microprocessor or application-specific ICs (ASICs) subsectors, in DRAMs manufacturing, especially since the introduction of complementary metal-oxide technologies in the late 1960s, most productivity gains have come from “improving process technology and thus learning economies and yields, primarily through continuous improvements on the shop-floor and tedious trial-and-error” (Ernst 1998: 29-30).

Thirdly, Japanese firms were able to exploit the substantial scale economies existing in DRAMs production due to their vertical integration and large stake in the global electronic-goods industry, also resulting from the dynamics of the NIDL (Cho et al. 1998: 494-6).

As noted above, the extended and far-reaching actions of the Japanese “developmental” state, the political representative of the process of capital accumulation in Japan, accelerating the concentration of capital in the scales required and providing protection for local firms during their early-development stages, *mediated* politically the emergence, consolidation and growth of the local microelectronics industry. In other words, these direct forms of allocating individual portions of social labor came to life, and remained in place for some time, only because they realized a necessity of the indirectly regulated process of capital accumulation on a global scale—namely, the formation and development of the NIDL.<sup>12</sup>

By the mid-1980s, as the “microelectronics revolution” manifested itself in a leap forward in the automation of operations in the sector, Japanese memory-chip manufacturers were not only comfortably out-competing their U.S. counterparts due to their lower production costs. They were also leading the way in the introduction of innovations in process, production and, consequently, product technologies in this segment of the industry (Tassey 1990: 93; Cho et al. 1998: 496). By the late 1980s, Japan became the largest producer of semiconductors by volume and an important producer of manufacturing equipment (Linden et al. 2004: 251). Nevertheless, to a large extent chip designs were, well into the 1990s, developed through the local adaptation of circuit architectures licensed from U.S. firms. In the case of higher value-added devices like microprocessors, the technological dependence was even higher; they were mainly done under licenses from U.S. firms. This commercial strategy was not, however, without problems, as disputes over the copyrights of basic designs were frequent and contested in the courts of law (Mathews and Cho 2000: 152).

In capitalism, however, the only constant is change. Through the early 1990s, the same forces that had led to the emergence, development and growth of the Japanese semiconductors industry began to move against it. While the automation of production equipment, including that used in assembly operations, advanced rapidly, microchip design also began to be affected by tacit-skill-replacing technical changes through the use of specialized software programs. The

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<sup>12</sup> Despite being on-par to its U.S. counterpart during the pre-IC era, the Western European semiconductors industry fell behind thereafter. Crucially, without access to Japanese-style labor market and without a large US-style military contracts, European firms lack the scale to efficiently manufacture most ICs. Hence, they remained specialized in niche products for home markets and, crucially, in the production of equipment and inputs (Morris 1990: 111-33). European producers would need to wait until the integration of the European market advanced, and with it the consolidation of state support for the industry, and the “fabless/foundry” model consolidated, to regain global presence in the mass-production subsector.

development of equipment automation and design computerization not only permitted the production of more complex semiconductors, and thus reinforced the trend. It also resulted in the further standardization/simplification of production processes and gave place to new transformations in the industry's IDL that have gone beyond Fröbel et al.'s predictions but fit the analysis of the NIDL (i.e. the revised NIDL theory) advanced in the previous section (Brown and Campbell 2001: 452; Balconi 2002: 367-9; Leachman and Leachman 2004: 207).

First, U.S. firms began to concentrate on the higher end of the industry's value chain: the production of semiconductor-manufacturing equipment; the production of automated-design software; and the design and production of microprocessors and, to a lesser extent, ASICs. The latter were increasingly produced in the East Asia Tigers, notably in Taiwan and Singapore, and to lesser extent in the Caribbean Basin countries, where there was already a large semi-skilled and highly disciplined/acquiescent (thus productive and easily-trainable), yet relatively low-priced labor-force, as well as a sufficiently large supply of specialized engineers.<sup>13</sup> This type of commodity-chain structure manifested itself in the emergence of non core-country "foundries" specialized in wafer fabrication for different clients (in some cases outsourcing the assembly work to lower-wage countries) and core-country "fabless" (i.e. without fabrication facilities) companies specialized in the design of the microchips (Leachman and Leachman 2004: 220-4; Brown and Linden 2005: 289-92). On these bases, the U.S. semiconductors industry reversed the previous trend and by the mid-1990s had, again, secured a larger share of the world markets of semiconductors than its Japanese counterpart (Linden et al. 2004: 251).

Secondly, Japanese producers began to lose an increasingly larger segment of the DRAMs market to Korean capitals producing under own brand as well as for others, without being able to compete successfully with U.S. firms in the design and production of higher value-added microprocessors and ASICs. Korean capital took advantage of the relatively low design-and skill-intensity of the product and the easy access to production technology. Yet, Japanese capital expanded and consolidated its position in the market for semiconductor-manufacturing equipment, thus moving up the global value chain (Ernst 1998; Leachman and Leachman 2004).

Like in Japan before, widespread and far-reaching state actions mediated the development of the industry, including worker upskilling, in the East Asian Tigers, especially in Korea and Taiwan where the more capital-intensive parts of the sector's commodity chain

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<sup>13</sup> In 1996, wages in "Electrical Equipment, Appliance and Component Manufacturing" in Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea and Mexico were 8.85, 6.40, 6.97 and 1.40 US\$ per hour, respectively. They were US\$ 16.64 in the United States and US\$ 20.93 in Japan. Even if these industry-wide averages hide differences in the quality of the workforce and complexity of the tasks performed, they serve as an indication of international labor-cost disparities (Bureau of Labor Statistics).

consolidated and domestic capitals thus played a more extended role (Mathews and Choo 2000). Yet, contrary to the authors reviewed in section 1 and in accordance with Fröbel et al.'s analysis, East Asian state actions were, like the earlier actions of the Japanese "developmental" state, the political forms through which local processes of capital accumulation came about as an expression of global-scale economic transformations.

In South Korea, for instance, extended state investments to transform the local microelectronics industry from low-skilled, foreign-controlled assembly operations into high value-added components manufacturing (i.e. to move it up the global value chain) started around the early 1970s, but would only fully pay off in the mid-1990s, when the material conditions for this to occur (i.e. further skill-replacing technical changes) had matured and the Korean workforce finally reached the levels of productivity of their U.S. and Japanese counterparts, at a fraction of their cost (Baily and Zitzewitz 1998: 265). In the mid-1980s, around 80% most of the sector's workforce was still employed by MNCs, or domestic firms subcontracted by these, to assemble and package semiconductors, while the other fifth were employed by domestic firms both fabricating wafers and assembling them for own consumption and under original equipment manufacturing arrangements (Henderson 1989: 59, 64-6). Until the early 1990s, indigenous advances in "memory-chip" wafer fabrication depended heavily not only on often outdated foreign technology and designs, but also on foreign-trained engineers to manage the projects and overseas investments in R&D centers. Moreover, Daewoo's mid-1980s attempts to move beyond DRAM manufacturing into more complex, skill-intensive ICs, like microprocessors, failed completely and were quickly abandoned (Bello and Rosenfeld 1992: 157-61; Hong 1997: 99, 106-7; Mathews and Cho 2000: 121-9).

As Tiger firms moved up the global value chain, and the local workforce thus improved in quality and increased in cost, as a form in which the NIDL's inner dynamics realized themselves, their place in lower-value-adding activities was taken over by capitals located in other countries of the region, and the Caribbean Basin, where industrial capital had access to labor-forces with relatively similar productive attributes but significantly lower prices. In some cases, this spatial movement was coordinated by U.S. and European lead firms; in others, by Japanese and Tiger firms. Yet in other cases, the process emerged through the relatively more independent actions of indigenous companies (Brown and Linden 2005). These business-models, and related institutional variations, did not, however, change the economic content of the process at stake—namely, the relocation of simplified/standardized labor-processes to places where industrial capital could use a relatively cheap and disciplined workforce and thus increase the mass of surplus-value available for its process of valorization on a global scale.

Those national experiences sharply contrast with the South American ones, where industrial capital has continued accumulating through the recovery of a portion of the local ground-rent. In Brazil, for instance, extended state efforts to promote the production of semiconductors for domestic consumers began in the late 1970s, when an enlarged ground-rent and large loanable-capital inflows complementing it were sustaining the expanded reproduction of the process of capital accumulation through ISI deepening. However, as soon as these masses of extraordinary surplus-value contracted in the course of the debt crisis, state actions channeling them to industrial capital reversed (i.e. state support dried out) and the local microelectronics industry rapidly collapsed. It only started to revive somehow in the mid-2000s, when the global commodity-price boom manifested itself in the strong expansion of the Brazilian ground-rent and of the process of ISI mediating its appropriation by industrial capital (Grinberg 2016).

The automation of microchips design has not only facilitated the international separation of the design and fabrication stages. This process has also tended to simplify several parts of the design engineering work, made possible its modularization and its international fragmentation. Effectively, taking advantage of these developments, the improvements in telecommunication technologies (resulting themselves from the on-going microelectronics revolution) and the local availability of relatively low-cost engineers, industrial capital began in the late 1990s to relocate to Asia the less tacit-skill- and creativity-intensive parts of the now simplified design work. Due to the large local labor-force with engineering skills and experience in chip manufacturing, Taiwanese and Korean capitals have been at the forefront in this new transformation in the IDL in the semiconductors industry (Ernest 2005). Yet, the production of (high value-added) circuit-design software and manufacturing equipment, as well as the capacity to design and produce microprocessors and complex ASICs, have lagged in these countries well behind world-market leaders in the U.S. and Europe (Joo 2005: 21; U.S. Department of Commerce 2015).

Hence, the experience of the semiconductors industry shows that the key force explaining the formation and development of the NIDL, and the contemporary process of stratification of the capitalist world-economy through GCCs, has not been the general necessity of lead industrial capitals (i.e. MNCs) to reduce costs in order to increase profits, as in mainstream GCC-focused analyses, but the realization of this necessity under specific historical conditions that determine the forms of production of surplus-value on a global scale. The analysis of the semiconductors industry presented here has also shown that those conditions have not resulted from the simplification of manual work-processes due to the intensification of the technical division labor, as envisaged by Fröbel et al. (1980), but due to a leap in the automation of manufacturing equipment—i.e. in the transformation of manual labor's productive attributes into productive powers of the machinery. This trend has resulted in the increased differentiation of the

productive attributes of the collective worker of large-scale industry and in its international fragmentation. Finally, the analysis of the global semiconductors industry also showed that East Asia's ability to benefit from, rather than being exploited by, GCCs has not come from national state's capacities, entrepreneurial quality, or the initial balance of class forces, as argued by the chain-focused authors reviewed in section 1. Rather, it has resulted from industrial capital's access there to a labor-force whose historically-developed, and politically-enhanced, productive characteristics have closely matched those required by the new technological conditions at a relatively low cost.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

This paper presented a critique of GCC-focused analyses of the structural dynamics of the global economy. This critique showed that despite their multiple contributions those analyses remain nation-centered and thus fail to account fully for the forces behind the conformation and evolution of the IDL and hence of national and global developmental patterns. The paper then argued that the key to overcoming the limits of these versions of GCC-focussed analysis of recent transformations in the capitalist world-system is to be found in the critical revision of the work of Fröbel et al. (1980).

Hence, the paper claimed that the process of capital accumulation is global in terms of its general structural dynamics and national only in its forms of realization. It was argued, then, that the global unity of capital accumulation is developed in the process of production of relative surplus-value, which comes about through the IDL and the formation and development of GCCs. Originally, this process revolved around the spatial separation of industrial and raw-material production, resulting in the classical IDL. Since the 1960s, automation-driven tacit-skill-replacing technical changes resulted in the transformation of the composition of the collective worker of large-scale industry and in its international fragmentation, thus giving place to a new type of IDL that superseded the classical IDL; the so-called NIDL. This process has materialized in specific GCCs and in the specific geographical dispersion of their component parts. Industrial capital then began to take advantage of the particular historical origin of the East Asian working classes, and subsequently of those of other regions, to locate there those simplified productive activities that could be profitably performed by cheaper though highly disciplined/acquiescent labor-forces. South America and much of Africa, on the contrary, have remained integrated in the global economy as producers of raw materials and, increasingly, reservoirs of surplus population.

Processes behind the NIDL have not been static; nor have their effects on the productive attributes of the global collective worker. Contrary to Fröbel et al., they have

manifested themselves in the continuous transformation of labor processes, increasingly affecting relatively complex activities, and, in some cases, in the upgrading of workers' skills and firms' capabilities. Hence, the structural transformation of the East Asian societies and the massive improvements in the conditions of reproduction of the labour-force there. These claims were substantiated with the analysis of the global semiconductors industry which showed the concrete manifestation of those general trends in a crucial manufacturing sector.

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## Review of Nora McKeon's *Food Security Governance: Empowering Communities, Regulating Corporations*.



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**Nora McKeon. 2015. *Food Security Governance: Empowering Communities, Regulating Corporations*. London and New York: Routledge. 246 pages, ISBN 978-0-415-52910-5 Paper (\$44.95).**

This timely book combines food regime and governance approaches to explain the material, ideological and power dynamics of the global agro-food system and its discontents. Nora McKeon's book contributes to a growing literature detailing the shortcomings of the dominant industrial corporate food system in nourishing the world's people and environment. Yet it moves beyond many such volumes in identifying promising alternative agro-food initiatives based on traditional family/peasant farming and local food provisioning, and alternative food governance efforts which empower local citizens and communities and restrict corporate profiteering. McKeon draws on her unique insider view of United Nations policy venues and local food movements in Africa to argue that food security and food sovereignty can and must be linked.

Nora McKeon provides an insightful, historically grounded analysis of the dominant industrial corporate agro-food regime and its material and ideological underpinnings. She explains the roles of multilateral agencies, national governments, and transnational corporations, as well as powerful new actors like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, in the contemporary industrial food system, illuminating trends in corporate concentration and financial speculation. The book offers a powerful critique of neoliberalism in the agro-food sector and clarifies how recent world food price spikes and climate crises are tied to failures in food system governance. Challenging the idea that only industrial corporate production can feed the world, McKeon shows how in fact the vast majority of food eaten by people around the world comes from

peasant farming and local food systems. While these local food webs are under siege, most recently through land and water grabs, she argues that they are best able to ensure access to healthy food for all and foster environmental sustainability and resilience.

A key contribution of this book is its interrogation of key concepts upholding the global industrial corporate agro-food system, as well as those challenging the dominant paradigm. Nora McKeon analyzes how neoclassical economic notions of progress, development, and modernization foster the techno-industrial treadmill in agriculture and underpin a definition of food security based on international comparative advantage. The book critiques this market-based conception of food security, contrasting it with a rights-based food sovereignty conception promoted by social movements in the Global South. McKeon explains the key dimensions of this alternative paradigm, including its links to alternative development ideas, practices, and policies. This discussion merges food security and food sovereignty concerns through a focus on the “right to adequate food.”

Nora McKeon demonstrates how conventional food governance failures have fueled recent world food crises and, more importantly, how new local and global initiatives are emerging to forge a rights-based global agro-food system. What makes this volume both unique and highly persuasive is its combined discussion of innovative civil society efforts to foster food sovereignty from the bottom up and new United Nations efforts working to democratize food security governance from the top down. McKeon provides a rich discussion of emerging grassroots efforts to reclaim control over the food system, assessing their achievements and suggesting ways to reinforce these efforts. This analysis draws inspiring examples from across the globe, from Bolivia’s peasant farmer’s markets, Florida’s farmworkers’ Fair Food Program, and from McKeon’s own work with small farmers in West Africa. The discussion of new global governance approaches focuses on the rise of the United Nations Committee on Food Security and its successes and failures in integrating civil society actors and concerns. McKeon provides an insightful insider’s view of this important new governance arena and its policies to protect local land and natural resource rights and to steer agricultural investments in support of local food security and small producers.

This book illuminates challenges and emergent possibilities within the global agro-food system and invites readers to become engaged in fostering food rights at home and around the world. Written in an engaging style, the book is suitable for a wide audience. Many readers will find the numerous textboxes useful in explaining central theoretical concepts, providing illustrative examples, and presenting key movement insights and approaches. This book is recommended for classroom use in advanced undergraduate and graduate level social science courses related to agro-food studies, globalization, and development.

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**Review of Natalia Lambek, Priscilla Claeys, Adrienna Wong and Lea Brilmayer eds. *Rethinking Food Systems: Structural Challenges, New Strategies and the Law*.**



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**Natalia Lambek, Priscilla Claeys, Adrienna Wong and Lea Brilmayer, eds. 2014. *Rethinking Food Systems: Structural Challenges, New Strategies and the Law*. New York and London: Springer. 238 pages, ISBN 978-94-007-7777-4 Cloth (\$129.00).**

This collection of essays is structured around a paradox that is as obvious as it is scary: Food is a human necessity and a source of life. However, global food systems (and more specifically the corporate-capitalist way of conceiving food as a commodity that is produced, processed, transported, consumed and disposed of, according to the desires of worldwide consumers) are increasingly generating death, income inequality, poverty, food insecurity, socio-economic deprivation and environmental degradation.

*Rethinking Food Systems: Structural Challenges, New Strategies and the Law* is thus inspired by the editors' call for a change to "our current path" (1) and by the invitation not to be deceived by the unicorn of productivism (i.e. the idea — openly challenged in the introduction of the book — that food insecurity and famine are the consequence of a mismatch between production and consumption, and that increased productivity represents the solution to any current problem). On the contrary, as Claeys and Lambek argue in their introductory chapter, a real transformation of the global food framework can only be obtained through the identification and solution of structural problems that are the result of social, political and economic powerlessness, laws, and historical circumstances that continue to limit or interfere with the ability of so many to grow or purchase the food they need (3).

Published almost ten years after the "Global Food Crisis" of 2008, *Rethinking Food Systems* contains an introduction and nine contributions divided into three sections, each one

“reflecting interconnected approaches to achieving social change through using legal tools: *institutionalizing* new legal and policy frameworks [...]; *regulating* government and third parties [...]; and, *governing* and adopting governance structures” (13). All the pieces express a general disinterest in discussing what went wrong ten years ago; rather, they are inspired by the desire to propose new and alternative ways of thinking about what food systems should look like and what role law may play in constructing them.

Undoubtedly, the focus on law and the forward-looking attitude of the volume represent the two most valuable contributions to the ongoing debate around what we eat. As a matter of fact, even critical legal scholars seldom engage with the role of law in defining how food is produced and distributed, and when they do, they tend to criticize the status quo without engaging in any constructive endeavor. On the contrary, this edited volume looks at law not only to criticize its role in the construction of the current food system, but also to recognize it as a mechanism of socio-economic transformation. In addition, the introduction is particularly useful from the point of view of law and world-systems research because of its reconstruction of the food system as a multi-spatial and multi-legal phenomenon that is, at the same time, shaped by the content of often overlapping legal orders (international, regional, national, sub-national), and by the behavior of various actors (international organizations, national parliaments, and courts above all, but also corporations, civil society organizations and social movements).

Far from being a coherent legal space with well-defined boundaries and organization, the food system represented by Claeys and Lambek is legally and politically dense, charged with social and legal struggle, and riddled with tensions and prevarication—a realm where even the role of the state as a pivotal element of the international legal order is questioned. Anyone interested in legal interventions should thus take into consideration the issue of legitimacy and recognize the multiplicity of a system that does not have a center and that is resilient to change (to use a word that is often abused within the arena of environmental studies and whose negative implications are too seldom discussed). At the same time, and this is discussed in the introduction too, legal interventions are not seen as the sole possibility for change, and their effectiveness is not taken for granted. On the contrary, the authors are aware that social transformation may not be best achieved with legal tools and that, even when this is the case, lawyers may choose between creatively playing with existing structures, thinking of new legal institutions that operate within the same framework (such as international trade law and World Trade Organization law) or imagining alternatives that completely redefine the legal construction of the global food system (including its global reach). For these reasons, it is important to recognize the validity of the project and the significant contribution that it is aiming for in the field of law, food and inequality.

Unfortunately, the combination between the ambitious nature of the enterprise — rethinking the legal elements that underpin a food system constructed through centuries of public violence, legal authority and legalized subordination (McMichael 2009) — and the diversity of the contributors' backgrounds (academics, activists, members of the United Nations, etc.) results in a series of papers that often repeat themselves, seldom dialogue with each other, and, more importantly, tend to flatten their legal analyses of the right to food and food sovereignty as the 'legal crowbars' to open up the global food system. As a consequence, the overall approach to law and food systems appears a little fragmented (despite criticizing the fragmentation of the international legal order as one of the causes of the current inequality), excessively positivist, and not attentive to the unexpected and unpredictable consequences that legal interventions may generate when operating in a legally dense and power-laden framework.

In particular, I found the expectations generated by the introduction only partially satisfied by the subsequent three sections, although I must admit that I approached the volume with a critical legal background, some knowledge of the link between law and the food system, and the conviction that law is not only indeterminate, but also an instrument of coercion that favors those who 'act from above.' Therefore, the comments below are expressed from the point of view of someone who both considers it essential to talk about law and legal reforms in the context of the historical and contingent allocation of power, and believes that law cannot lead to any systemic transformation without the redefinition of the way in which resources are allocated between and within communities. Having thus laid out my biases, I found most, but not all, of the contributions suffering from two main weaknesses.

First, it is my impression that most of the authors seem to adopt a positivist and optimistic approach to "the law" (6) and legal tools that is coupled with the idea of democratic states and broad participation as implicit goods. In particular, laws and rules are seen by many contributors as neutral and technical elements that will lead to the expected outcome if they are generated within democratic institutions and properly enforced. In this light, some authors claim that in a fragmented and incoherent legal world, the goal for lawyers is to obtain legal coherence and the recognition (by courts, parliaments and international organizations) of the right to food (or food sovereignty) as the interpretative standard – or even the legal censor – that limits any other legal framework (international trade, investments, mining policies, the consolidation of market oligopolies, etc.).

As a consequence, the introduction of a right to food legislation in Uganda is described by Rae (chapter 4) as a step forward and a great achievement, despite the top-down nature of the process, the lack of public participation and the significant hurdles represented by budget constraints, economic inequality, international trade and internal political tensions. Similarly,

Lambek (chapter 5) correctly identifies the right to food as barring states from negatively impacting their citizens' livelihoods—for example, by authorizing open-pit mining. However, she dismisses too quickly issues such as developmentalist ideology, the lack of alternative paths, budget constraints and reduced resources, the status of economic dependency in which several peripheral countries have been drawn, and the need for something more than individual naming and shaming. Even De Schutter (chapter 10), whose scholarship is among the most critical in the area, evidences a very optimistic attitude towards the World Committee on Food Security (CFS) as a multi-stakeholder venue of engagement and collective identification of the international trajectory to implement the right to food. As others have underlined (McKeon 2015), including Borras and Franco in their thought-provoking and must-read contribution to this volume (chapter 7), the faith in 'inclusive' participation and the institutionalization of dissent often overlooks the multiple forms of misrepresentation and the power imbalance within the institutionalized space of political confrontation. In addition, they may also lower the aspirational threshold, transform political issues into technical contestations, and are seldom enriched by an effective and diffused mechanism for full accountability.

Secondly, I was left with the idea that the authors and editors should have manifested a stronger sensibility toward the historical construction of the global food system and the interconnected nature of the legal structures that lurk behind it. To the former point, only Gonzalez (chapter 8), Borras and Franco, and De Schutter provide the reader with some hints about the historical trajectory of the food system and the close link between colonialism and the way in which power and resources are distributed today. However, the colonial and unequal roots of food represent a political, economic and legal condition that must be taken into consideration if we really want to transform it. As for the interdependence between actors and legal orders, my own scholarship attempts to expose the complexity, unpredictability and political implications that characterize any attempt to legally map and intervene in transnational and multi-legal phenomena, such as the system that links sugar cane production in Cambodia and consumers in the United Kingdom (Ferrando 2015). As Lorenz (1993) and his *Essence of Chaos* teach us, a butterfly flapping its wings in Tokyo can produce a tsunami on the other side of the planet several weeks later; this is true, I think, also for the legal construction of the food system and any law-based approach to its modification. For this reason, it would be interesting to promote Brilmayer and Moon's invitation (chapter 6) to third-party states to label or boycott products tainted by land grabbing, but their intervention would have been sharpened by the recognition that land grabbing is often linked to actors who are closely associated with governments whose interventions the two authors invoke (for example, Norway may boycott products produced with grabbed land, but Norwegian workers may lose their pensions if the

Norwegian sovereign wealth fund stopped investing in all land-related projects). At the same time, lawyers and legal scholars cannot forget that interventions at any point of a complex legal system are likely to generate negative — or positive — systemic spillover effects that may go far beyond the intentions of the intervener. Consequently, we must be more cautious when suggesting that legal changes can lead to the desired outcomes (including when coherence is obtained between the right to food and the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, or TRIPS, as suggested by Hauger in chapter 9).

In conclusion, *Rethinking Food Systems* certainly is a timely and very welcome attempt to engage with the legal roots of the inequality and insecurity that thrive in the capitalist food system. Above all, it is a commendable enterprise because it does not stop at critiquing the disaster of the current food system, but it identifies punctual interventions and recommendation that may be put at the center of public campaigns and recrimination (if not at the center of a bottom-up legal action). The hope is that the unsolved questions posed by the book and the internal tensions between some of its contributions will stimulate further investigation, more writing, and the consolidation of a more critical understanding of law as a coercive tool that often reproduces power structures and that, for this reason, must be carefully and critically appropriated and utilized to create a food system based on redistribution, dignity, equality and long-term socio-environmental sustainability.

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## Review of Stefan Ouma's *Assembling Export Markets: The Making and Unmaking of Global Food Connections in West Africa*.



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**Stefan Ouma. 2015. *Assembling Export Markets: The Making and Unmaking of Global Food Connections in West Africa*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. 264 pages, ISBN 978-1118632581 Paper (\$39.95).**

For markets and supply chains to emerge and persist, entrepreneurs must confront an unending onslaught of “sociotechnical puzzles” (5). They must connect intricate assemblages of people and things in the midst of social, economic, political, technological, biophysical, and semiotic flux. *Assembling Export Markets* (*AEM*) brings an array of such sociotechnical puzzles to life and powerfully demonstrates that how market participants attempt to solve these puzzles often proves at least as important in shaping market consequences as do the macrostructural dynamics more commonly emphasized by political economists.

Stefan Ouma draws on fieldwork in Ghana to deconstruct the emergence of two value chain segments — one for cut pineapples and the other for mangoes — at the “frontiers” of the global fresh produce market. He seeks to show “how global agrifood market connections are carved out from a heterogeneous world, how they are rendered intelligible and technical, and what opportunities, costs, risks, and disciplinary forces accompany them” (206). Packed with tireless theorizing and vivid ethnographic description, this book makes for a challenging but more than worthwhile read.

*AEM*'s central project is to draw on interpretive analytic techniques and methodical empirical examination to reconstruct the interactional stories that are often missed within the global value chains (GVC), agrarian political economy, and development studies literatures (among other bodies of work). Ouma pushes back against the widespread tendency toward

“abstracting markets,” instead focusing his book on “how markets...come into being *practically*” (3). Achieving this aim requires close observation of the “organizational forms, resources, technologies, strategies, and practices” (5) from which market strands emerge. The study is explicitly designed to answer *how* questions rather than *what* or *why* questions about market formations. Nonetheless, after reading the book I was convinced that the former project has important implications for the latter.

In attempting to excavate unseen layers of value chains, Ouma draws on tools from the “social studies of economization and marketization (SSEM).” SSEM consists of strands from economic sociology and science studies including performativity, actor-network, and convention theories. The book offers relatively little critique of SSEM literature itself, except to occasionally note that SSEM tends to lack empirical engagement with developing-world settings and that the field can have a tendency toward relativism and depoliticization that Ouma does not wish to share. Yet the book spends more time discussing the SSEM literature than it does the GVC and political economy of development literatures that it seeks to productively critique. I would have preferred that the SSEM discussions be slightly condensed to make room for more of the book’s constructive criticism of GVC and development studies, but this comes down to a matter of taste and interest.

The book’s two case studies each center on a (respective) firm relying on local contract farmers for supply. The first is Tongo Fruits (TF), a just-in-time pineapple processor-exporter in relatively prosperous and well-connected southern Ghana. The second firm, Organic Fruits Limited (OFL) exports mangoes from comparatively poor and insulated northern Ghana (both company names were changed to protect anonymity). The fresh produce sector constitutes a substantively important arena for study since many development agencies have recently chosen high-value crop export as a strategic leading sector for development. In Ghana as elsewhere, the development establishment and government agencies have invested heavily in such chain upgrading schemes. The two firms studied in this book have themselves been held up as examples of successful exporters in various agency reports.

From the constellation of similarities and differences between these case studies Ouma takes advantage of abundant opportunities for productive comparisons and contrasts. On one hand, both firms operate at the “frontiers” of the global agrifood market—geographic spaces in which connections to global markets remain thin, sketchy, and contested (see Ouma et al. 2013 for a more in-depth discussion of the frontier concept). Both firms are heavily embroiled within the discourses and practices of corporate social responsibility, investing in host communities and at times blurring the lines between business and development work. TF and OFL faced similar challenges in “creating” contract suppliers they could work with from the subsistence farmers

and spot market traders who predominated before the arrival of these firms. On the other hand, the two cases represent two different contract farming models. And they operate within about as dissimilar socioeconomic environments as can be found within the Ghanaian export agrifood sector.

The book takes the firms as starting points, and then zeroes in on links between the firms and their suppliers. Although buyers (primarily Western European retailers) regularly come up in the analysis, downstream elements mostly remain outside of the author's direct empirical eye. In focusing on the firm-supplier links, the book seeks "to reconstruct crucial market encounters" among diverse actors at this nexus, including the firm's management and staff, external consultants, and farmers, as well as influential stakeholders from global development NGOs to local chiefs. Ouma asks questions like "How are such encounters organized? How (un)equal are they? How are prices being constructed? What sociotechnical arrangements structure these processes? What controversies arise during such encounters?" (43-44).

Ouma refers to his method as "critical ethnography of marketization." As he puts it, "'knowing the market' can be understood as the capacity to effectively align human and nonhuman elements so that a good can be qualified and objectified to a given modality of valuation, calculated, and detached. What I did during my research was to trace how people performed these alignments during interviews or their daily work" (86). Analyzing transnational connections requires expansion beyond traditional place-bound ethnography. Ouma instead sees his method as "a way of arranging sensitizing questions, sites of interest, and different methods of text generation and analysis in a recursive and reflexive manner...in order to unsettle the taken-for-granteds of global capitalism" (79).

While the first four chapters introduce the book's goals, cases, methods, and theoretical concerns, chapters 5-9 constitute the empirical and analytical core of the book. Of these, chapters 5 and 6 explain how the case study firms were able to create and stabilize the respective circumstances in which they were able to operate. Chapter 5 takes a broader perspective of how entrepreneurs envisioned their nascent market niches and brought them into being at the macro-level—for example, how founders were able to mobilize the necessary capital and make the necessary local connections; how they created the necessary "ontological reconfigurations"; and, how the two firms established their respective business models and gained the (relative) trust of producers. Chapter 6 takes a more ground-level perspective on how Ghanaian farmers emerged as market agents through their interactions with the firms. Although these chapters are full of insightful theorizing and instructive empirical accounts, they proved a bit unwieldy for this reader, and I found it difficult to extract cohesive arguments. More interpretively inclined readers, however, will feel right at home with these chapters.

On the other hand, Chapters 7 and 8 are much tighter and more focused. Each deals with a core theme (power and crisis, respectively), and each fleshes out its theme with reference to a central example from each of the two cases. Chapter 7 attempts to transcend homogeneous conceptualizations of power as a “substance,” instead exploring the micro-level interactions and “(anti)politics” through which power struggles actually play out. Ouma highlights “qualculative” power as key, i.e., the power to quantify and judge quality according to prevalent market norms, often with the use of technologies and algorithms.

I found the most memorable discussion within this chapter to be a section on power struggles between TF and its contract farmers that occurred through “valorimeters,” the mechanisms used to value the fruit purchased from contract farmers. Because of volatile demand from retailers, the company sometimes rejected higher than usual quantities of pineapples, and these rejections “were often not justified on grounds of under-demand or canceled orders, but by advancing technical arguments” (157). TF employees rejected pineapples because of low demand but claimed that they were doing so because of low quality. He points to the example of tests performed with refractometers—devices the company used to test sugar content. Because farmers generally did not own refractometers, there was not much they could do to argue when told that their pineapples had the wrong sugar content. This is a dimension of power that would be neglected by most political economy analyses.

Chapter 8 considers crises that occurred within each of the case studies. Here, I found OFL’s story to be the more interesting of the two. OFL’s crisis came about largely as a result of its flawed reading of “nature,” and resultantly faulty agronomic and business strategies. The company’s consultants estimated vital parameters of inputs required and outputs expected, and then based their production plans, finance and investment plans, etc. around these estimations. These “calculations became a linchpin for the mango project. Everything was based on them” (192). When it became clear that the equations had underestimated the number of years it would take mango trees to bear fruit and the years for which they would need irrigation, the entire project fell into an existential crisis. The company was forced to reconfigure and rebuild its operations, and could easily have gone under.

*AEM* is careful to maintain focus on the areas that its research design is best equipped to address, i.e., the *how* questions, and Ouma explicitly seeks to “move beyond an instrumentalist critique of actually existing value chain development.” Yet the book presents a wealth of insights that, if followed up on, could provide useful policy implications relating to often overlooked mechanisms. For example, NGOs striving to increase the bargaining power of small farmers in global value chains would do well to pay close attention to the subtle knowledge/power interfaces that the book highlights, for instance in its discussion of “valorimeters.” Supply chain-

oriented development strategists concerned with the well-being of small farmers would do well to heed Ouma's suggestion that "regional markets, which require a less demanding and costly *agencementization*, should be considered as viable alternatives...in the context of Africa agrifood industries" (212-213). While readers inclined toward political economy and policy-relevant development studies may struggle with this book more than those oriented toward interpretive SSEM-type theory, it is perhaps the former readers who have most to gain from this thoroughly eye-opening and perspective-changing text.

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## Review of Alana Mann's *Global Activism in Food Politics: Power Shift.*



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**Alana Mann. 2014. *Global Activism in Food Politics: Power Shift.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 205 pages, ISBN 978-1-137-34139-6 Cloth (\$95.00).**

As an academic with expertise in Communications, Alana Mann has angled her unique book, *Global Activism in Food Politics*, to address the logistics of ‘framing’ in the global food sovereignty movement—an approach that underlines the delicate balancing act inherent in sustaining a transnational alliance with diverse local chapters. This particular occupational hazard derives from the unique structure of the central player in the food sovereignty movement: La Vía Campesina (LVC), whose operational principle depends on the autonomy of member organizations, even as LVC is committed to member-based collective action at extra-regional/national levels, all the way up to the United Nations Human Rights Council and the Food and Agricultural Organization’s Committee on World Food Security. *Power Shift*, the book’s subtitle, refers to the process of scaling up advocacy and discursive frames from grass-roots organizations via “engagement with state governments, regional trade councils and supranational bodies such as the FAO” (6). Mann notes that scale shifting can be “uneven, ambiguous and inconsistent” (144), given that the food sovereignty movement takes the form of a network, and that local political-economic conditions fluctuate, altering opportunities for grassroots organizations. Nevertheless, she emphasizes that “the scope for autonomy provided by loosely knit relationships paradoxically contributes to the durability and stability of the network” (144). And of course the thread running through this thoughtful study is that insofar as the food regime undermines farming cultures, exploits agricultural workers and degrades ecosystems, it provides continuing cause for collective action.

Another key thread in Mann's study concerns the nature of LVC as a transnational movement, purportedly the largest social movement in the world, spanning over 70 countries in North and South and involving over 200 million members (small producers and landless workers). She notes LVC's now legendary ability to resist representation by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and its jealous protection of its own agenda setting, which distinguish it from other transnational advocacy networks. This is a central theme in Mann's nuanced characterization of social movement logistics. Here Mann references social movement theorists' observations of the balancing act between local realities and transnational framing, suggesting that "the construction of a global campaign jeopardises the diversity of subject positions of members" (152).

She illustrates this diversity via a careful reconstruction of three case studies of domestic organizations: the National Association of Indigenous and Rural Women (ANAMURI), a Chilean organization uniting indigenous and non-indigenous women; the Asociación Nacional de Empresas Comercializadoras de Productores del Campo (ANEC), a Mexican civil association of 60,000 small/medium farmers and over 200 grain producer cooperatives; and the Basque Farmers' Union Euskal Herriko Nelazarien Elkartasuna (EHNE). As Mann notes, ANAMURI focuses on gender, indigenous and worker solidarities, organizing around seasonal worker health, sustainable agriculture and preservation of traditional seeds; ANEC focuses on preserving maize culture and sustainability of rural livelihoods (competing with agribusiness in the market); and, EHNE promotes Basque heritage, reaches out to consumer organizations, and engages in Spanish and European Union (EU) parliamentary politics. Mann's point is that food sovereignty provides the ideological bridge between such local/domestic social and political particularities, given the interpretive elasticity of the concept of 'food sovereignty.' This elasticity derives from the fundamental importance of local autonomy in a transnational movement to democratize food politics on the foundation of sustainable agriculture. As such, the food sovereignty frame is an alternative to neoliberal conceptions of food security (via 'free trade') in defending local economies, women's rights, agrarian reform programs (rural livelihoods rather than simply land reform, World Bank style), protection of diversity and indigenous seeds, and national food policy autonomy.

While Mann's book is devoted to evaluating the capacities and claims of the food sovereignty movement and its strategic alliance building, it also offers a cogent summary of the institutional contours and social, economic, and environmental consequences of the food regime. This includes a substantive mapping of the political economy of agribusiness, from production to retailing, and of the rise of oppositional movements (from land-based through identity-based to alternative food networks), to the impacts of neoliberal food security policies via a trade/investment regime that erodes local and national food provisioning as well as the integrity of

ecosystems. Given her discursive predilections, Mann pays close attention to representational strategies of the food sovereignty movement writ large, emphasizing a maturing human rights politics, including promoting “the peasant farmer as a viable economic entity” (35). This strategy resonates at the United Nations (UN), where a Resolution of the Human Rights Council has created an Intergovernmental Working Group to consider the formal recognition of the rights of peasants and rural workers (a group constituting 40 percent of humanity), acknowledging the key role small-scale producers play in global food provisioning (producing up to 70 percent of food).

While such initiatives, together with the incorporation of ‘food sovereignty’ principles in the national constitutions of Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia, and in administrative organs of Senegal, Mali and Nepal, represent some “reclaiming of the state in the face of globalizing forces” (141), Mann is careful not to exaggerate the significance of these forms of ‘power shift.’ The UN of course is composed of member states, and, as Mann points out, Northern governments’ representatives “perceive that the struggle for peasant rights is not their struggle, and shy away from the very word ‘peasant’” (67), dismissing the mass of people who live and trade on the margins or outside of capitalist economy. Even so, Mann notes that LVC sees promising new openings in the international context, such as mounting resistance to U.S. ‘unilateralism,’ weakening of neoliberal institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF, growing links between civil society and the UN, gradual recognition of food sovereignty by governments, the specter of TNC gigantism, and a maturing climate change debate in which LVC claims small-scale agriculture returns energy to the soil and reduces carbon emissions, effectively cooling the planet.

Arguably, the value of this comprehensive book is its didacticism, attentive to the possibilities and limits of alliance building. Mann notes that LVC is breaking out of its self-imposed autonomy (an initial strategy to avoid NGO-style compromise, or academic influence), and realizing the importance of reaching out to other movements and struggles, many of which are directly or indirectly connected to what is happening on the land (from consumer movements, through precariat struggles with race, class, and gender dimensions, and environmental movements), and various organizations like the World Social Forum, Occupy Wall Street, People’s Global Action, and Our World is Not for Sale. In these potential alliances Mann sees the possibility of mass actions attracting media attention and public notice, as precursors to putting pressure on governments, international/global governance institutions, and transnational corporations. Mann challenges the food sovereignty movement to recognize the significance of projecting alternative narratives via public media outlets to inform citizens and states of the rights and potential of farm cultures and communities that are effectively marginalized in neoliberal discourse, and to develop media training to understand how to gain access to media outlets and how to project alternative narratives.

And, where dominant narratives circumvent movement voices, access to alternative media outlets becomes critical. Here Mann emphasizes the importance of “providing opportunities for social movements to produce and generate their own content, alternative platforms enable them to avoid frame ‘traps’ that lead to ambiguity, error and misrepresentation” (160). Even there, she maintains, there is always a danger of reducing face-to-face encounters via keyboard activism. One solution she offers is the example of farmsubsidy.org, which provides an alternative, virtual, public sphere regarding agri-food politics in the EU. Thus: ‘While investigative journalists have traditionally sought to reveal government money-trails, the tools to do so are now available to citizens through cross-border data-sharing initiatives such as farmsubsidy.org’ (162). Finally, Mann outlines some important strategic possibilities for the food sovereignty movement, such as recognizing the livelihood dimension of biofuel production for some farming communities (even as fuel crops displace food crops) and addressing current conceptions of ‘crisis’ in such a way as to offer alternative ontological frameworks that preclude a market solution reflex and promote coalition building to transform food systems. At a time of growing interest in, and adaptation of, ‘food sovereignty’ demands and claims, this book is a comprehensive, clear-headed and challenging template for agri-food scholars and activists alike.

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## Review of Jennifer Clapp's *Food*.



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**Jennifer Clapp. 2012. *Food*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. 218 pages, ISBN 978-0-7456-4936-8 Paper (\$19.95).**

*Food*, by Jennifer Clapp, is a valuable contribution to the burgeoning critical social science scholarship on agriculture and food. It is part of Polity Press's "Resources" series, whose other books include the similarly succinctly titled *Timber, Coltan, Fish, Water, Coffee, Oil, Land, and Diamonds*. In *Food*, Clapp takes a global perspective, identifying major political and economic forces shaping the global food economy and fueling its crises of hunger, uneven development, and ecological devastation. *Food* is written in clear, accessible language, and is coherently organized and focused on key political economic dynamics that play leading roles in these major social and ecological problems in the global food economy.

Clapp begins by detailing the increasingly globalized scope of food trade today and specifying that the book examines the international political and economic dimensions of the global food economy. The book focuses on four key forces: developed countries' investments in industrial agriculture and international food market expansion; international rules and agreements that unevenly liberalize agricultural trade; the rise of transnational corporations; and, the financialization of food and agriculture. She highlights what she calls the new "middle spaces" that have been opened up by these forces—nodes in the global food system "where control and influence over how it operates has become concentrated" and "where norms, practices, and rules that govern the world food economy are shaped by the very forces that are leading to its expansion" (6). This analytical focus on such global-scale political and economic actors and forces makes the book a welcome addition to recent literature on agriculture and food, which has paid more attention to localized food systems, specific commodities, and regional food politics.

The next four chapters elaborate these primary explanations for the contemporary crises in agriculture and food. First, Clapp succinctly details the history of developed countries' investments in industrial agriculture and the expansion of international food trade. Chapter 2 focuses on post-war government food aid programs, price supports, and other policies designed to maximize domestic agricultural production and create markets for the surplus product, as well as the Green Revolution programs to export the industrial model to countries in the global South. Clapp adeptly explains the underlying changes in developed nations' logic, specifies how these different initiatives articulated with each other, and identifies the resulting social and ecological consequences.

In Chapter 3, Clapp identifies the role of uneven trade rules in shaping the current global food system. Specifically, she details how the trade liberalization components of structural adjustment policies and international trade agreements systematically serve the interests of developed countries by allowing them to maintain their own long-standing protectionist policies, and how they disadvantage developing countries by making them liberalize their agricultural sectors and render them vulnerable to market forces. The chapter importantly identifies not only what is problematic about neoliberal policies in principle, but the uneven and unfair ways in which major policies and agreements have been implemented in practice. That said, it would have been helpful here if Clapp had provided more explanation for *why* the policies evolved in this lopsided way. She rightly emphasizes the World Bank's argument – which undergirded this uneven set of trade rules – that subsidies (which many developed countries have) are less "trade-distorting" than import tariffs (which were more available to resource-strapped developing nations). However, I wanted some technical evaluation of this argument. Is it well justified, or not? Relatedly, Clapp does not discuss the governance processes within these institutions; a political economic analysis of decision-making processes in the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organization would help explain how these institutions' outcomes have evolved in these grossly uneven ways.

In Chapter 4, Clapp details the rise and practices of transnational corporations (TNCs). She explains that, while some corporations have operated internationally in agricultural trade for hundreds of years, their power has skyrocketed under the trade liberalization policies detailed in the previous chapter. Clapp details the degree of corporate concentration in agricultural inputs, processing, distribution, and retail, and she valuably identifies mechanisms through which TNCs use their power to shape the rules of the game.

Clapp devotes Chapter 5 to financialization, detailing the ways in which food and finance have become increasingly and problematically linked in recent decades. Clapp describes this "intermingling of food and financial markets," shows how this has led to increased global land

grabs and investment in biofuel production, and identifies how these trends put food and agriculture in the hands of financial investors, and thereby contribute to catastrophic volatility in food prices. This chapter is Clapp's most novel contribution to the scholarship, as these are new forces whose impacts are just starting to be understood. However, I imagine that many undergraduates will need guidance through this chapter, as derivatives, futures contracts, commodity index funds, and other technical concepts will be new to many of them.

Finally, in the concluding chapter, Clapp showcases several ways in which social movements are working to combat these problems: fair trade, food sovereignty, and food justice advocacy efforts to reform existing rules. I especially appreciate that she introduces the reader to social movement efforts to confront and reform agricultural policies of developed nations and the World Trade Organization, rather than only showcasing the secessionist, market-based, and perfectionist forms of activism that tend to dominate popular and scholarly accounts of food politics. Clapp ends the book by posing a question – “Which way forward?” – inviting the reader to consider the potential of the various efforts to combat the global food system’s multiple, complex crises. Clapp offers no answer, but I don’t fault her for this. Clapp is focused on identifying the roots of the problems. Examining the strengths and limitations of various reform efforts is a task for us to take on elsewhere.

Readers will notice that much of the content here has been covered well by other scholars. While this is true, Clapp’s contribution is bringing this material together, updating it, and, crucially, making it accessible. The book is particularly well suited for undergraduate audiences, who will appreciate the clear writing as well as the thoughtful suggestions for further reading. As one who regularly teaches an introductory Food and Society class to undergraduates, I am always on the lookout for new scholarship that clearly explains complex global political and economic material to readers unfamiliar with these institutions and their activities. Clapp’s *Food* fits the bill. It is timely and up-to-date, and it makes otherwise abstract material readable, compelling, and engaging. Importantly, it makes clear why global political issues – not just local ones – matter.

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## Review of Philip McMichael's *Food Regimes and Agrarian Questions*



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**Philip McMichael. 2013. *Food Regimes and Agrarian Questions*. Halifax: Fernwood Press. xii + 196 pages, ISBN 978-1-55266-575-6 Paper (\$18.95).**

In *Food Regimes and Agrarian Questions*, Philip McMichael compiles much of his career's work around what he calls the "food regime project." This has been primarily a theoretical and interpretative enterprise geared to situating and understanding food and agriculture in the capitalist world economy since the nineteenth century. Along with work developed by and with Harriet Friedmann, the food regime approach outlined in McMichael's book has been highly influential since the late 1980s in interpreting the dynamics of food and agriculture in the world economy. McMichael's book offers a useful collection of his own work, discusses other elaborations of the food regime perspective, including the different tack taken by Friedmann, and endorses the food-sovereignty program advocated by Via Campesina, a major global social movement that advocates agroecology to mitigate climate change. In what follows, I first provide a brief summary of the food regime perspective and the three historical regimes that have been identified and characterized since 1870. I then offer a critical but appreciative review of McMichael's book along with a number of suggestions for theoretical refinement.

The task of food regime analysis is primarily to situate "the rise and decline of national agricultures within the geopolitical history of capitalism" (1). McMichael continues: "It was not simply about food, but about the politics of food relations." Citing from his article with Friedmann, he says that the concept was meant to link "international relations of food production and consumption to forms of accumulation broadly distinguishing periods of capitalist transformation since 1870" (1). Ultimately, argues McMichael, "the question concerns what is the stabilizing

condition of a regime: trade, currency, or agri-food production relations and their realization through trade?” (15).

The first food regime, dominated by the British Empire, was meant to produce cheap food by extending the agricultural frontier to its colonies. This would enable Britain to focus on manufacturing for the world. The second food regime started after a transitional period between the first and second world wars of the twentieth century, this time dominated by the United States. Rather than extensive, the U.S.-dominated food regime was intensive: it was predicated on new agricultural technologies that would eventually be identified with the Green Revolution, including hybrid seeds, mechanization, petro-chemical fertilizers and pesticides, monocropping, etc., and publicly-funded agriculture research to help articulate it to industry. Its crisis started in the late 1970s. McMichael terms the third food regime “corporate” because there was a shift from national agricultures to corporate management of the market in the interest of financial capital.

### **Methodological Problems: Levels of Abstraction, Units of Analysis and Causality**

McMichael does a fine job of summing up the evolving conceptualization of the “food regime project.” When addressing some of its critics, McMichael’s discussion is gauged at a very high level of abstraction, as he speaks primarily of “capital” in general and focuses on the world-system as the chief unit of analysis. This focus has been both the strength and the weakness of the food regime perspective, as developed by McMichael. One welcome aspect of his discussion, however, is that he posits the food regime analysis as open to scrutiny and extension by other scholars, which several of us have done.

One of the chief features in McMichael’s theorizing is trying to identify a single “principle” that rules each food regime: empire, state, and market, respectively. Corresponding features of capital accumulation in each food regime are: extensive (1<sup>st</sup>), intensive (2<sup>nd</sup>), and financial (3<sup>rd</sup>). In an inductive, empiricist turn, however, McMichael extrapolates what Vía Campesina has done since its founding in the mid-1990s and raises its proposed food sovereignty project and agroecological practices into the emerging principle of a post-corporate food regime.

Vía Campesina has become a significant peasant movement, which acts on a global scale, but advocates for the realization of food sovereignty on a national level. Many scholars have endorsed this movement, and the fact is that its constituent organizations are predicated on acting upon their domestic states, not merely on the global sphere (Otero et al. 2013; Gürcan 2014). Yet, McMichael disqualifies a class-based national approach (81) because he presumes that the only valid or effective sphere for political action is the global. I have critiqued this transnational-globalist position in favor of an internationalist nationalism elsewhere (Otero 2011). My reasoning is that, whereas the world economy is indeed global, politics continues to be fundamentally local

(i.e., national and subnational). It is from this bottom-up location that significant transformation can take place, not only because this is where local working classes and peasant ecologies are actually situated, but also because “capital” (its owners, that is) has already colonized the global sphere (Otero 2004). Privileging the global as the sphere of struggle is tantamount not only to accepting capital’s terms of engagement; it is a choice that will almost certainly end in defeat.

Thus, if the “food regime” is a form of historical method to which other dimensions may be added, as McMichael usefully proposes (108), then one must decide what are the relative causal dimensions, scales and units of analysis. We need to develop a systematic ordering of concepts in which a conscious decision is made as to what are the core dynamic dimensions of the food regime, what are the causal directions and interactions between which entities, and how does change happen. Short of this, we are left with an abstract theoreticism on the functioning of capital in general in the world-system at large. Or we are left with inductive empiricism to derive what, for instance, is the emerging “principle” in the midst of a crisis of the neoliberal or corporate food regime, although it may be developing on the margins of capitalism itself. McMichael’s treatment of crisis and restructuring does both: abstracted theoreticism drawing on multiple sources of ecological and peasant-studies thinking, and inductive empiricism drawing on social movements proposing the food sovereignty project based on a new peasantry.

Much of the implicitly or explicitly causal language that McMichael uses is inaccurate when discussing crisis and restructuring of the food regime. For instance, starting with the grand theoretical statement that the “patterning of food regimes is represented, phenomenally, as a succession of regulatory structures organizing the relations of production and circulation of food,” he then asserts: “Such regulatory structures represent episodes of [capital] accumulation dynamics *governed* by patterns of expansion and crisis (109, emphasis added). How do expansion and crises *govern* regulatory structures? Are they not the product of class struggles by specific classes or class fractions that manage to impose certain types of regulation that favor their historical interests? If so, what classes or class fractions are these?

With these abstractions and the empirical truism that there is an ecological crisis turning into catastrophe, McMichael proceeds to analyze the accumulation crisis that started in 2007-2008 through the food regime lens. He offers many good insights and interesting empirical quotations from various sources, but some are gauged at such a general level that they make me wonder about their usefulness or reliability. For instance, there is the calculated food calorie inflation of 20 percent since the 1960s per “average global citizen” (111-112): how do we determine the extent to which this caloric food inflation represents mostly increased empty-calorie consumption by the masses or primarily increased nutritional content (e.g., fruits and vegetables) for the upper-income

groups? And how is such caloric inflation allocated among countries in the world economy? A class-diets perspective would come in handy here (Otero et al. 2015).

Then, for more ad hoc data, we learn that a third of the world market was closed to food exports in the midst of the 2008 crisis (112). But how does this figure square with the “fact” that only a mere 10 percent of the world’s agricultural production is traded (157)? These contrasting data clash with other dramatic figures cited by McMichael, which highlight the extent of food dependency in developing countries: By the mid-1990s, fully 80 percent of foreign exchange in “low-income food deficit countries went to food imports” (55-56); food bills in food-dependent countries grew by 20 percent from 1990 to 1999; and, by the mid-2000s, fully 70 percent of countries in the “global South” were net food importers (55-56). If only 10 percent of world food is traded, does food dependency in developing countries affect primarily the poor? The rich? Both? McMichael’s heavy use of ad hoc data from a variety of sources, including “grey sources,” leads me to suggest that he could use more systematic and rigorous empirical research, not to mention some theoretical mediations to connect his data and conclusions.

### **Theoretical Problems: Neoliberalism, Peasant Populism, and Marx’s Capital**

My main disagreement with McMichael relates to his conceptual portrayal of the third food regime, which is conceptually flawed in several respects. To start with, he names it “corporate” because in the shift from national agricultures to corporate domination of the market, he argues, the shift was done in the interest of financial capital. Ironically, though, rather than corporations *per se*, McMichael points to neoliberalism (implemented by states via neo-regulation) as the third food regime’s core. If this is so, why does he not employ this term “neoliberal food regime” more often in his analysis (indeed, he uses it only once in the book, on page 77)? Citing other authors, McMichael states: “A savage regime, neoliberalism is premised on redistribution, rather than production, of wealth” (45). Neoliberal globalization, he claims, reverses the order of the second food regime: “States now serve markets” (47). We have discussed our disagreements with McMichael’s naming and characterization of the third food regime elsewhere (Pechlaner and Otero 2010; Otero 2012; Otero et al. 2013).

McMichael revisits the agrarian question, which was a major theoretical and political debate at the turn of the twentieth century among European Marxists. In short, he claims that the classical debate was “capital-centric” and what we need in the twenty-first century is a peasant-ecology focus around the food sovereignty project (see chapter 4). For McMichael, it’s no longer simply an agrarian but an ecological question geared to repair the metabolic rift between human beings and nature. The “metabolic rift” is just one of very many conceptual phrases that McMichael fails to properly define upon first use. Instead, he cites a phrase from Karl Marx quoted

by another author that merely states the problem but is far from a definition. The short glossary contained in the book does not mitigate this problem. Ultimately, McMichael shifts the agrarian question from a question of capital (in which labor should be but is not included—more on this below), and asserts a populist, peasantist project, as if this were not itself a class project.

As if the whole problem were merely a theoretical-analytical one, McMichael proposes to reframe the agrarian question as a food question. This move would supposedly allow us to transcend “the food regime’s abstract market calculus”—again hypostatizing both food regime and market. McMichael then goes on to formulate a series of proposals such as enhancing the practical (use) values of peasant agriculture, essentializing (137) and universalizing (145) peasants in the process. He suggests that “food sovereignty” is the emerging principle in the post-corporate food regime. McMichael posits the food sovereignty “project” as the countermovement to capital’s corporate food regime, which includes a wide range of practices “that incorporate, recover and develop value orientations supporting positive social and ecological relations of reproduction, in contradistinction to the under-reproducing tendencies of capitalism” (156).

Much of McMichael’s discussion of repeasantization seems to imply that it’s all a matter of how peasants are “viewed” by theorists (145-147) or their organic intellectuals (not his term): whether peasants are seen as backward and inefficient, or as stewards of the land capable of feeding the world in an ecologically sustainable way. In fact, much of the peasantry that does continue to exist, including Van der Ploeg’s new peasantry, do so either thanks to European subsidies or tenacious resistance in view of harsher realities in the rest of the economy. So, yes, the *differentia specifica* of peasantries is their ability to intensify labor, or what Alexander Chayanov called “self-exploitation.” But there are physical limits to this and, short of also idealizing poverty, enhancing peasant production requires social mobilization to bend state policies in their favor. How can such policies be promoted without an alliance with urban working classes, including those with middle-to-upper income concerned about food quality? How can we formulate such questions without a proper understanding of the state, also, as an entity traversed by class struggle and not merely a reflection, epiphenomenon, or an instrument of “capital”?

Make no mistake: capitalist farmers, particularly those in the United States, are also subsidized and this has been a chief factor decimating the peasantry worldwide. But the question about repeasantization is not merely analytical; it is chiefly political. Properly addressing it demands a food regime analysis with suitable theoretical mediations about class structures and states; methodological sophistication with units of analysis below the world-system, including world regions and nation states; and political sensitivity toward the subordinate classes as a whole, not merely the peasantry.

In formulating theoretical positons on the workings of the food regime, food sovereignty and climate, McMichael could have used less uncritical reliance on the language of his sources, a practice that often seems eclectic. He acknowledges that it may be problematic to draw on “conventional language” like “food sovereignty” and, especially I would say, “ecological capital.” These two concepts encapsulate the program proposed by McMichael, in tune with other agroecologist scholars and Vía Campesina. Let me reiterate that I sympathize with this program. But the way in which McMichael argues for it leaves a lot to be desired in theoretical and analytical rigor.

McMichael’s theoretical strategy to assert the sustainability of the food-sovereignty program is to start with a critique of what he calls “capital-centrism,” attributed to both classical discussions of the agrarian question and later developments of the food-regime perspective, including his own. The trouble with this phrasing is that McMichael refers to “capital” in relation to the owners of capital, not to capital as a social relation that includes the non-owners of capital, i.e., workers. As Karl Marx put it, capital “. . . is not a thing, but a social relation between persons which is mediated through things” (1977: 932). In fact, the whole process of capital accumulation is not merely about accumulating money or expanding profitability, but also extending the capital-labor relation. However much capitalism has changed in the era of neoliberal policies and prominence of finance capital, workers and their labor power continue to play a critical role in producing the conditions for profit making. Much new profiteering is also based on extractive activities like mining, land grabbing, and other forms of expropriation discussed by McMichael, but this profiteering amounts mostly to redistribution of existing social surplus value. Thus, placing the gaze primarily on the “analysts and captains of industry” while ignoring workers necessarily ends up in an incomplete look at the contradictions and dialectic of capitalism.

In sum, *Food Regimes and Agrarian Questions* offers a useful compilation of McMichael’s contributions to food regime analysis in a single text. It contains sharp and lucid insights into the functioning of food and agriculture on a world scale, as few scholars are capable of providing. Given the openness of the perspective espoused by McMichael, his insights promise to continue inspiring other researchers to elaborate the intricacies of food, health and climate relations in specific geopolitical locations.

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