

BOOK REVIEWS

Chase-Dunn, Christopher and Salvatore Babones. 2006. *Global Social Change: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press. 371 Pages, ISBN 0-8018-8423-3 Alk. Paper, ISBN 0-8018-8424-1 Pbk.: Alk. Paper.

The last three decades have witnessed a changing social reality marked by neoliberalization, financialization, structural adjustment, post-Fordism, the new international division of labor, and the undoing of the welfare state. As scholars of global social change, we are constantly in search of new tools and concepts for making sense of these realities. This collection of both new and previously published essays offers a host of new ideas and fresh approaches through the lens of world-systems analysis. Chief Editor of this volume, Christopher Chase-Dunn, succeeds in connecting the new global research program to the older and broader literature on social change, grounding the seemingly new reality in its long historical and comparative context. Overall, this volume contributes to (a) improving the standards of global research, (b) expanding the scope of world-systems *theory*, and (c) transforming a world that has come to be dominated by transnational corporations and non-democratic governing bodies through the rational coordination of transnational social movements and the creation of a global democratic institutional framework.

The discussion for improving the standards of global research begins first with the critical step of distinguishing the global from the non-global. Babones (2006: 16) draws a line of demarcation with his definition of “a single, interacting system on a global scale that does not respect international borders.” This contradicts a widely held view that research is global when it includes the majority of the world’s population or countries. In light of the new definition, analyses drawing from this older and widely held standard often turn out to be non-global. For example, cross-national comparisons of life expectancy—though highly inclusive of world population—are of an aggregate rather than of a systemic nature. Life-expectancy in one country is not connected to life-expectancy in other countries due to some underlying system. This can be contrasted to climate change, since this is systemic in nature and the experience of one country can be linked to the experience of another. In a later chapter, Turner and Babones also discuss the global system of inequality. Here they give a rather technical discussion of the different relative and absolute measures that are available, describe the reality of inequality in the world, and attempt to understand it through modernization, dependency, and world-systems theories.

Beyond drawing the line between the global and the non-global is the even more daunting task involved with undoing the confusing and contradictory images that are evoked by the term globalization. These include the notions that globalization is entirely new, disconnected from the past, moving in a unilinear direction, and is primarily a positive economic force in terms of improving the conditions of traditionally poor societies. Most of these images are debunked in the chapters specifically addressing globalization, but additional chapters throughout the book contribute to this effort as well. Sklair broadly surveys the cultural, economic, and political conceptions of globalization that are found in the academic literature, maintaining that the world-system perspective can potentially integrate these. While it is not an exhaustive review—this would require another two or three volumes—it does address several important points. Hall and Chase-Dunn provide a discussion of globalization as being tied directly to historic cycles of expansion and contraction that include the Age of Discovery in the 16th century and the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century. They observe that the latest wave has achieved levels of spatial expansion heretofore unseen, thus giving the impression of globalization as an entirely new

phenomenon. However, they emphasize the real possibility of future deglobalization, since historical cycles suggest that contraction is an inevitable part of the systemic logic. Thus globalization does not move in a unilinear direction. In a later chapter, Gowan builds on this point when he addresses the process of hegemonic shifts, emphasizing that there are some historically unique qualities in the United States as global hegemon. Chase-Dunn summarizes the multifaceted view of globalization embodied in world-systems theory, and emphasizes the central importance of economic and political change. Consistent with the rather Habermasian vision of the book, Chase-Dunn concludes that the solution lies in a “global democratic commonwealth based on collective rationality.”

Another major contribution of this work is its theoretical insight. The first includes the aforementioned alternative views of hegemonic shifts. On one hand, the world-system can be understood as being dominated by one power (a unipolar core)—the U.S.—which Gowan suggests has altered the traditional pattern of hegemonic shifts. On the other, Arrighi maintains that the cyclical rise and decline of hegemonies is inevitable and asserts that the U.S. is in decline. Perhaps a third view is the possibility of a transnational structure replacing historically national hegemonies, in which existing institutions are reformed or re-made as Boswell and Chase-Dunn suggest. While Arrighi views hegemonic shifts to be endemic to the logic of the system—along with the decline of U.S. hegemony—Gowan takes the position that the U.S. has adapted and re-asserted itself in ways that indicate otherwise. Might it be the case that the U.S. has become such a powerful hegemon that it can prevent its own decline? Can it do so against the will of a unified transnational government? These are some of the central questions that are considered.

A further theoretical discussion involves expanding world-systems theory to incorporate the environment, as emphasized most emphatically by Hornborg. Early environmental sociologists such as Riley Dunlap and William Catton, Jr. belabored the point that the environment should be treated not as a peripheral concern in sociological theory, but as dialectically related to changes in society. Hornborg is one of the few theorists to provide a serious treatment of the environment in this manner. He elaborates Marx’s labor theory to include the idea that natural resources can be exploited to increase profits in much the same way as labor. His perspective can be described as an ecological dependency theory or as ecological Marxism. The chapter on energy inequality by Bruce Podobnik lends an empirical illustration of why such a green theoretical expansion is desirable. For instance, by re-thinking inequality in terms of energy usage, economic and political inequalities are re-cast as different dimensions of the global hierarchy alongside the environment. Jorgenson builds on the notion of global environmental inequalities and hierarchy in his discussion of consumption and the reciprocally related uneven distribution of environmental problems. Jorgenson’s chapter is grounded in historical developments beginning with the end of the 15th century, highlighting differences in the development of the core and the underdevelopment of the periphery. Moreover, Jorgenson relates his discussion to the extant literature in environmental sociology by discussing treadmill of production theory, the second contradiction of capitalism, ecological modernization theory, and the empirical literature associated with IPAT (first with Ehrlich and associates, and later with Dietz, Rosa, York, and associates). In sum, rather than making an additive contribution, the inclusion of environmental considerations has the potential to radically alter world-systems theory.

A final major contribution of this volume deals with future alternatives, and attempts to be forward-looking without being utopianistic. The focus is on Transnational Social Movements and the need for a global democratic institutional framework. Although not presented in this way, I view the foundation argument for this section to be in the environmental, labor, and anti-corporate globalization movements outlined in the chapter by Buttel and Gould. The central

emphasis of their discussion is on the need to overcome differences between individual movements in order to provide a unified resistance to the now dominant actors that are transnational corporations and international financial institutions. This discussion is bolstered by a chapter on gender and globalization by Moghadam, and a chapter on global civil society by Smith and Weist. Moghadam's discussion reveals the dynamics of economic and cultural globalization in terms of gender. Central to this is her claim that the feminization of labor goes hand-in-hand with the general pattern of downward pressure and the cheapening of labor. Moreover she illuminates the cultural backlash to the feminization of labor in the forms of sexual harassment and discrimination. The chapter by Smith and Weist takes an empirical approach to understanding individual level participation in TSMs, while accounting for national level variables. They find that the national indicators of political democracy are important predictors of individual level participation, but that economic integration is not a good predictor because it does not guarantee greater political openness.

The two concluding chapters, by Boswell and Chase-Dunn and by Markoff, deal with the democratic institutional basis for TSMs. What these chapters respond to is global economic and political integration and the formation of a non-democratic transnational institutional structure. Consistent with the earlier chapter by Buttel and Gould, Markoff points to the immense diversity within the different TSMs, in terms of ideology, tactics, organizational structure, and long-term objectives. Boswell and Chase-Dunn take this a step further by adopting a strong stance that essentially denounces the global anarchy philosophy that many organizations and social movement participants espouse either explicitly or implicitly. Boswell and Chase-Dunn claim that the only way to counter global economic and political integration is to create a transnational democratic institutional framework by either reforming existing institutions such as the United Nations, or by creating new institutions. Retreating into localism does not accomplish this goal, so it is thus criticized as an alternative.

For any graduate student or serious researcher in the area of global social change this book is a must read, as it contains the most up-to-date discussion of several key issues that have long been neglected in the literature, particularly with respect to doing comparative, cross-national, or global social research. Certainly more could be added to the discussion of globalization and its many different meanings and approaches, but an adequate treatment of this has already been attempted in several other edited works, such as the one by Held and associates. It is more worthwhile to delve into specific theoretical and substantive issues—as this volume does tremendously—with respect to global social movements, civil society, hegemony, democratization, environment, inequality, gender, and labor issues.

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Hornborg, Alf and Carole Crumley, eds. 2007. *The World System and the Earth System: Global Socioenvironmental Change and Sustainability Since the Neolithic*, Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press. 395 Pages, ISBN 1-59874-100-1 Cloth, ISBN 1-59874-101-2 Paper.

If there are any positive outcomes of global warming they may be the growing awareness that it is indeed a global issue that requires similarly scaled solutions (albeit with regional and local variants of each) and that *Homo sapiens* are integral parts, to the enhancement and detriment, of the ecological system(s) of the earth. Among intellectuals, global anthropogenic climate change is fostering the blurring divisions between those who exclusively study human-centered social systems and those focused solely on non-human “natural” systems. While disciplinary boundaries are not in imminent danger of disappearance, there are a number of scholars who are taking a more holistic approach to their research by extending the reach of their areas of inquiry and seeking collaboration with colleagues in other departments as well as those outside of the academy.

This edited volume reflects these welcome developments. Its publication is part of a two-volume collection of papers from scholars who had participated in a conference held in Sweden in 2003, titled “World-System History and Global Environmental Change.” The goal of the conference was to bring together researchers studying world systems; i.e., human social systems, and those specializing in earth-systems; i.e., “natural” ecosystems. The attendees came from a number of different fields and this diversity is reflected in the range of their contributions.

It is the focus on world- and earth-systemic processes such as climate change, socioeconomic synchrony, and energy, material, and information flows, that unites this collection, along with the realization that a robust understanding of those processes requires an approach that recognizes the recursive interaction of humans and nature in socioenvironmental change. Much of the research presented is over *la longue durée*, here extending as far back as the Neolithic. The scale and temporality featured here is what is different from most work in the field; these scholars think big, and they benefit from new data and computer applications that can enhance our understanding of systemic complexity at regional and global levels and deep into history.

A number of chapters attempt to specify a framework for analysis of this type. In her contribution, Carole Crumley calls for a holistic and transdisciplinary (or possibly unidisciplinary?) “historical ecology” that utilizes complex systems theory, multi-scale ecology, and heterarchy (non-linear, non-hierarchical order) to understand the environment-culture interaction. In recognition of the variability of the natural environment and the human response to it, she would also include locals with intimate knowledge of their ecosystem, a point shared in a later chapter by Emilio Moran.

Christopher Chase-Dunn, Thomas Hall, and Peter Turchin discuss the need to spatially bound world-systems according to their unique set of nested social interaction networks (Bulk Goods, Political/Military, Prestige Goods, Information), an interaction requiring two-way and regular contact to be systematic. Societies can also be differentiated according to their population density and/or complexity and by their dominant or subordinate position relative to each other. The necessity of addressing power differentials is echoed in the chapter by Susan Stonich and Daniel Mandell, who stress their importance in shaping the human-environment relationship and thus the need for a “political ecology” perspective. Thomas Abel, however, proposes a somewhat different method to bound world-systems than Chase-Dunn, Hall, and Turchin. In his chapter, Abel argues for a reconceptualization of world-systems as “complex human ecosystems,” bound according to their energy and material flows (resulting in a rough equivalent to Wallerstein’s bulk-goods definition). Based on this approach, Abel suggests that the twentieth century began

with three world-systems: a dominant European-centered system, and U.S.- and Japan-centered systems. During the Cold War a Soviet-centered system also emerged while the Japan-centered system declined, today there is a single world-system with a U.S.-E.U.-Japan hegemon. While many world-systems theorists will be surprised by this contention, the use of complex system dynamics in a human ecosystem framework deserves further consideration.

Assessing systemic interaction via energy and material flows receives treatment in two additional chapters. Andre Gunder Frank, in a piece that was not finalized before his death, discusses the possibility of accounting for entropy transmission from the core to the periphery of the world system. While years before Schnaiberg and Gould had highlighted multinational ecological disorganization as a negative outcome of human ecosystem intervention, particularly during industrialization, Gunder Frank examines entropy as constitutive of the cost of unequal economic production and growth in the world system; it creates order in the Global North and disorder in the Global South. Tracing its flow in the world-system, then, can explain hegemony and hierarchy. Closely related is the chapter by Nina Eisenmenger and Stefan Giljum, who use material flow accounting to enter a discussion of unequal trade from the perspective of social metabolism. In what would be a global extension of Marx's metabolic rift (as drawn out in other publications by Foster and then Moore), they find that the Global South exports low-value raw materials to the Global North, increasing the economic growth of the latter at the expense of the economy and environment of the former.

There are a number of chapters dealing with systemic synchrony in Eurasia. Thomas Hall and Peter Turchin suggest that climate change could be an exogenous system shock that leads to socioeconomic synchrony across large regions of the globe (the "Moran effect"). Curiously, they find that east and west Asia were in synchrony over a thousand-year period, but the south displayed a different periodicity. This leads them to speculate that either climate change must have had differential effects across the region, a theory modeled in the chapter by Chase-Dunn, Hall, and Turchin, or other factors may have produced the anomaly, including a possible link between south and southeast Asia. Focusing on an earlier period in history, Kristian Kristiansen suggests east-west synchrony occurring by the end of the second millennium B.C.E. was caused by geographic expansion, including migration and conquest, following the emergence of grassland and steppe environments that had created the conditions favorable for flourishing agropastoral economies.

Chapters appearing in this volume on disease and island ecology are intriguing means of demonstrating socioenvironmental interaction. Alfred Crosby discusses the influenza pandemic of 1918-19, which killed 25 to 50 million people. He reminds us that disease is an unfortunate part of the global system and warns that humanity needs to be better prepared for when the next pandemic inevitably hits. Separately, Thomas Malm contends that islands are affected by contact—physical, environmental, and social—with other parts of the earth and are therefore as much a part of the world and earth systems as the continents. As he states in the chapter title: "No Island is an 'Island.'"

Specifying the relationship between the environment and social instability receives consideration by a number of authors. William Thompson tests hypotheses derived from a model in which water availability, indicated by warm and dry climate and river levels, explain trade interruptions, regime transitions, and hinterland attacks in the ancient Old World. He finds correlations that suggest that there is a link, and possibly causation, between environmental conditions and the indicators of social disorder, and that the crises were more likely to occur together during declining environmental conditions. This is echoed in a contribution by Karin Holmgren and Öberg, who find that social instability and population movements in southern and eastern Africa from 800-2000 C.E. were likely correlated with climate change, and climate

change exacerbated already unstable societies. In contrast, Jonathan Friedman takes the position in his chapter that climate change cannot be the sole determinant of socioeconomic failure; instead, we need to look at accumulation cycles that strain the social system and leave it vulnerable to a climatic shock.

George Modelski discusses “ages of reorganization” in which growth in world urbanization and population slows or stops as the preceding period of expansion and concentration is broken by events such as environmental catastrophe, economic collapse, overextension, and attack from the hinterlands. Rejecting the notion of systemic dark ages, Modelski suggests that there have been areas of “dark spots” but that the evolution of the world-system since 3000 B.C.E. has been marked by alternating 1,000-year periods of concentration in which population, environmental degradation, urbanization, and inequality increase, and then periods of reorganization marked by slow or zero population growth, lessening environmental impact, decentralization, and more equality. Modelski contends that we are currently in a period of reorganization, beginning sometime around 1850, the outcome of which is likely to be an integrated world community with democratic global governance. Similarly, Björn Berglund finds that from 3900 B.C.E. to 1900 C.E. northwest Europe was characterized by “step-wise” development, in which a crises led to restructuring and then recovery. Climate was a major cause of this phenomenon for Berglund, but he notes that the specifics of its influence must be further researched.

Two chapters are on Amazonia. Betty Meggers uses carrying capacity to dispute the claims that the existence of large empires in the region was possible; the environmental constraints were too formidable. Alf Hornburg suggests that there was a regional system around the first century B.C.E in which economies were conditioned by both cultural and environmental forces, a phenomenon he suggests is common to all continents for millennia. This leads me to wonder if the carrying capacity of Amazonia could have been partially mediated by exchange with more productive areas?

Finally, computer-aided modeling is discussed by a number of contributors. Frank Oldfield discusses Integrated Assessment, John Dearing touches on cellular-automata and agent-based systems, and Bert de Vries presents models of historical climate and vegetation change developed from satellite and field studies: all of these tools hold promise to effectively deal with the complexity and scale of earth-system change. These models are useful for testing the feasibility of evolutionary and system theory and will hopefully lead to reliable predictability of future outcomes. This area should continue to dazzle as new technology and data are brought online.

On the whole, this is a solid collection from some leading scholars working toward a holistic and systemic history of the world. It is apparent that we know quite a bit about the human-environment interrelationship across vast swaths of time and space. But, as many of the authors point out, there is much more to discover and many of the contributions are merely suggestive about needed directions in future research. Yet their preliminary nature is more thought provoking and forward looking than incomplete.

What is missing, however, is a discussion of antisystemic movements in the world-system that can counter the threats to the earth system. The academy is only one site in what is still a nascent global reaction to anthropogenic ecological degradation. Global governance, including the World Social Forum, and other regional and local movements warrant inclusion beyond the light touch they receive here. A historically and scientifically informed discussion of viable alternatives to the projected socioenvironmental catastrophe would also be instructive.

Nonetheless, what is here is of considerable value and those seeking an overview of current thinking on the human-environment relationship across many different sciences and at a

macro-systemic level will be rewarded with an enlightening compendium. As such, this text will be of value to a broad range of graduate-level courses in addition to personal libraries. As a collected volume, some chapters will likely be of more or less value than others to a particular reader or for a specific purpose, yet they hang together fairly well, surely a result of their origin at a thematic conference. As with all collected volumes, the ideas and interest that are stimulated will require further exploration in single-topic sources but there is much here to be excited about and the material will likely generate that kind of action.

Finally, calls for interdisciplinary collaboration have a long history of proclamation and an equally long history of modest success or failure. Despite the promises this volume presents, further unbounded collaboration will be necessary to build on the possibilities it raises as intellectual integration is essential to the endeavor for a comprehensive understanding of the world. It is also urgent given the threat to the earth-system and world-system from the unsustainability of our present trajectory.

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Goldman, Michael. 2005. *Imperial Nature: The World Bank and Struggles for Social Justice in the Age of Globalization*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 360 Pages, ISBN 0-300-10408-1 Cloth.

Probably the largest number of “wow, I didn’t know that” moments I receive in the undergraduate classroom occur when teaching about the Bretton Woods Institutions. This is because 1) I teach in the United States (structural adjustment programs being much less mysterious to educated teenagers in say Argentina or Nigeria); and 2) It is not immediately clear to most people living in the global North more broadly how, if at all, these institutions affect their lives (or for that matter the lives of people living in the global South). Rich people lending money to poor people in the guise of fighting poverty seems fairly innocuous on its face.

But as readers of this journal know, and as Michael Goldman’s book *Imperial Nature: The World Bank and Struggles for Social Justice in the Age of Globalization* makes perfectly clear, the World Bank is not the Bailey Building and Loan. The biggest beneficiaries of World Bank activities live in the global North, and for every dollar invested by the Bank in the global South somewhere between ten and thirteen go back to Northern-based multinational firms. Much more capital flows out of borrowing countries – either from loan interest or the (often mandated) purchasing of goods and services from Northern-based firms – than flows in. Governments in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, now spend four times more on debt service than they do on health care.

But *Imperial Nature* offers much more than a typical description of the disastrous environmental and social effects of World Bank lending. This book uncovers the *process*. Goldman spent ten years conducting ethnographic and archival research at different sites around the world (Bank headquarters, research training seminars, dam projects in Laos, etc.), apparently with the blessing of the Bank itself (at one point he was even offered a desk). The end result is a sociological analysis of the actual production of development hegemony. While many scholars would not be surprised by the book’s main finding – that the Bank continues to enlarge the scope for capital accumulation in the global North through the grand illusion of development in the global South – Goldman shows us the processes by which this task is accomplished, especially given a world where the disconnects between the rhetoric of development and the realities of global poverty should be well-known.

The central fact framing Goldman’s analysis is that the Bank always has access to much more capital than it can lend. Thus to survive, and beyond that to see its investment portfolio grow into the trillions of dollars, the Bank has to incessantly create demand for its money and services in a circumspect world. As Goldman puts it, the Bank’s primary interests are not hunger and poverty, they are its primary *business*. Midway through the book, Goldman quotes an environmental technician working for the Bank in Asia: “Ours is a supply-determined agenda, and very prescriptive... we just go to countries and sell, sell, sell until the borrowers cave in.”

This is the point of departure of the book: that the Bank has never had trouble raising money, its trouble has always been lending it. *Imperial Nature* is essentially the story of how the Bank solves this problem through the production and dissemination of development knowledge and expertise. As Goldman tells it, knowledge created and manufactured for a specific purpose – to design and sell loans – is then reproduced outside as “development science,” to the effect that the development industry (controlled financially, intellectually and ideologically by the Bank) becomes “essential and natural” to the solving of global problems. The circle is then completed to the extent that this “science” creates more demand for World Bank solutions and capital.

But, as Goldman carefully demonstrates, the specific power/knowledge regime that drives Bank lending transforms over time. In a series of politically-motivated processes, the Bank, throughout its history, undergoes deliberate organizational restructuring – changes in “development regimes” in Goldman’s terms. These power/knowledge transformations, Goldman argues, not only allow the Bank to adapt to changing world-historical conditions, they also increasingly empower the institution globally and embed it deeper into the global South.

Imperial Nature concerns itself primarily with the Bank’s current organizational innovation: “mainstreaming the environment” into its neoliberal agenda, or the “greening” of its global development project. Green neoliberalism began in the 1990s as a response to the worldwide “reform or die” movement organized around the increasingly investigated environmental and human impacts of Bank projects (and especially those associated with large dams). This reorganization fundamentally altered and expanded the Bank’s neoliberal agenda by taking “underutilized” aspects of nature-society relations and restructuring them as newly capitalized commodities. The marrying of sustainable development with neoliberal development is, according to Goldman, “remak(ing) nature in the South, transforming vast areas of community-managed uncaptured lands into transnationally regulated zones for commercial logging, pharmaceutical bioprospecting, export-oriented cash cropping, megafauna preservation, and elite eco-tourism” (pg. 9). It also involves forcefully relocating tens of millions of “primitive” people (i.e., people “not part of their national economies” as one Bank specialist defined them) and transforming them into a new agro-industrial workforce. In other words, it involves “development.”

Goldman describes the rise of “green science” within the Bank (Chp. 3); the consolidation of a power/knowledge regime based on sustainable development (Chp. 4); and the execution of the newly greened Bank in both the financing and construction of hydropower dams on the Nakai Plateau in Asia (Chp. 5), and the water privatization movement worldwide (Chp. 6). As Goldman sees it, the green neoliberal transformation has been tremendously profitable, enabling the Bank to “expand into more places and insinuate its worldview into more lifeworlds than ever before” (p.5). But, as is also a large part of Goldman’s argument, the Bank’s idea of the environment, and nature-society relations more broadly, have been recast to mean something far beyond what a typical ecological conservationist means when she/he defines the terms. “The result is not that *no* environmental assessment or monitoring is done,” Goldman writes, “but rather, that a *type* of assessment is done that becomes the protocol for transnational development professionals, NGOs, and governmental agencies complying with World Bank conditions. This protocol...is set by the Bank in conjunction with its corporate partners rather than in conjunction with its expert hydrologists and soil chemists” (p.126).

Goldman’s research is high-quality, his sociological analysis persuasive, and his writing lively (he tells a number of fascinating anecdotes from his field research that would be funny if their consequences were not so tragic); yet the book is not without flaws. For one, Goldman essentially unveils a Manichaeian view of the Bank; there are literally no good guys in this story. The Bank’s research staff? Supervised and funded by project managers to sell loans. Green-minded ecologists? Not allowed to conduct sound science. Sympathetic anthropologists? Easily co-opted. African professionals? Bought-off with salaried employment. Environmental NGOs? In on the action. How about an emergent “global civil society,” the often romanticized transnational space for hope and progress? Sorry, also controlled by the Bank. According to Goldman, “International NGOs have played an increasingly crucial role...they have propelled the process along, in ways that private capital and the multilateral banks could not have done on their own” (p.194). This uniform casting of characters has the effect of moving the plot along, but

unburdened by potential complications, the analysis is light on nuance. Does the development industry really consist, in its entirety, of evildoers?

This lack of subtlety leads to a second weakness in the book, the Conclusion. Goldman does such a convincing job selling us on the analysis, that when he turns to the topic of the book's subtitle – social justice – there is little evidence that anything can be done. In effect, he tries to have it both ways. He wants the reader to understand the enormous power and scope of the Bank – to physically move millions of people to where it chooses, to change the direction that rivers flow, to have “*Its worldview...what people choose above all others*” (p. xv) – yet at the same time to see the institution as quite vulnerable, the historically high rate of return on its investments easily disrupted by the very NGOs and global activist networks derided in previous chapters. Indeed, he concludes the book with the Zapatista-*cum*-World Social Forums mantra “Another world is possible.” But if we are to believe the analysis just presented, this “other world” is likely to be controlled and operated by a bank headquartered in Washington, D.C.

These issues aside, this is a compelling and often times powerful analysis of the World Bank, its lending practices, knowledge production, and intervention into the lives of millions of people around the world in the name of capital accumulation (as Goldman states it, the environments and people living in the Mekong region have been judged in terms of their value to the proposed capital investment, and not the reverse). Harking back to the undergraduate classroom, the question invariably is raised: “Why, given all this, do poor governments still borrow from the Bank?” The *Imperial Nature* part of the book provides the answers, but in a way that makes it difficult to identify the actors and/or actions that would constitute effective *Struggles for Social Justice in an Age of Globalization*.

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