

BOOK REVIEWS

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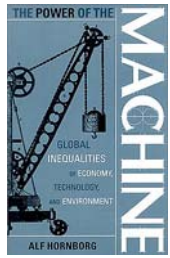
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Reviewed by Jonathan C. Woodring

Hornborg, Alf. 2001. *The Power of the Machine*. New York: Altamira Press. 273 pages, ISBN 0-7591-0066-7 cloth, ISBN 0-7591-0067-5 paper.
<http://www.altamirapress.com>



Hornborg's *The Power of the Machine* offers a rich theoretical analysis of how technology masks the inequalities between nations, humans, and ecosystems within the World System. As a cultural anthropologist, he challenges conventional political economic and sociological perspectives about global underdevelopment. By pushing beyond socially constructed categories of World System inequalities, he uncovers what he calls the "epistemology of exchange." As a truly interdisciplinary writer, Hornborg combines perspectives from natural science, political economy, and cultural anthropology to critique not only global unequal exchange but also the very categories that we, as social scientists, use to analyze such exchange.

Hornborg's primary argument is that machines, or technological development, are reified categories. Furthermore, as reified categories, machines mask the globalization of unequal development and exchange. Thus, machines distort the actual relationships between and among humans and between humans and their environments. With this book, Hornborg dismantles the fetishized concept of the machine.

First, Hornborg critiques the weakness of relying primarily on the social construction analysis of machines. He does this by drawing on the laws of thermodynamics. He demonstrates how machines are specific and tangible mechanisms for draining the natural resources of nations and indigenous peoples. He fully supports his thesis that industry is parasitic on its surrounding ecosystem.

Second, he engages a semiotic analysis of the institutional language that supports the reification of machines. This is another step in showing how machines mask unequal exchange among humans. Parallel with this argument, he presents a fascinating historical semiotic analysis of money. By tracing the legacy of *Spondylus* shells, he argues that money has evolved from a mechanism of local reciprocity to one that perpetuates the distance and anonymity between people and ecosystems. This loss of local reciprocity is crucial in masking the exchange process. As such, it supports alienation from others, the environment, and the self at a global level.

By drawing upon cultural anthropology, he compares the fetishism of the Inca emperor to the fetishism of the modern machine. Through his comparison,

he demonstrates how both are culturally and materially constituted. Like the machine, the office (symbol) and person (materiality) of the Inca emperor was a "concrete reification of a wider system of material exchange" (241).

The last substantive chapter is perhaps the unifying gem of the work. As a case study, Hornborg examines how the Mohawk Warriors, a group of militant Mi'Kmaq activists from the Kahnatesake reserve of Quebec, stopped the Kelly Rock Corporation from building a superquarry at one of the Mi'Kmaq's most sacred sites. Hornborg argues that the Mi'Kmaq effectively shatter the rational language of innovation and development proposed by Kelly Rock. In setting the stage for the study, Hornborg describes the region as one of the poorest in Canada. Further, the governments, both local and national, had a history of welcoming foreign capital into these poor areas for what usually amounted to unregulated resource depletion. Thus, the Mohawk Warriors were not just battling Kelly Rock, they were also waging war with the exchange system itself. According to Hornborg, the Warriors won because they uncovered (and arguably, recreated) the relationships between the Mi'Kmaq people and the sacred site of Kelly's Mountain. The rhetoric of development, new jobs, and the influx of capital was no match for a people reunited not only with each other but also with their environment.

The strength of this book is its interdisciplinarity. One would hope to find an interdisciplinary focus in a volume written by several authors, but one would not expect to find such focus in a single-authored text. In the preface of the book, Hornborg explains that each chapter has been a slow (in this case, 10 years) journey towards an understanding of power and global inequalities. Thus, many of his chapters have been published already. While this in itself is not new, the range of journals that he has published these chapters in is novel. In various forms, pieces of this book have appeared in such diverse sites as *Journal of World-Systems Research*, the *Journal of Material Culture*, and *Anthropological Theory*. The substantive chapters can function as stand-alone pieces from a variety of theoretical perspectives; however, taken as a whole, the book accomplishes its interdisciplinary quest without feeling like an edited volume of collected works.

This book would be appropriate reading for those social scientists, whether anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, or environmentalists, interested in global studies, Marxist critiques of culture, human-environmental relations, and science and technology studies. As a sociologist with very little background in anthropology and physics, I benefited from the careful explanations of arguments such as how the laws of thermodynamics support theories of uneven development, how the Inca Emperor relates to the modern day machine, and how *Spondylus* shells demonstrate the evolution of capital accumulation. Finally,

I appreciate Hornborg's two-pronged goal: not only does he demonstrate how technology operates as a mechanism of Western hegemony but he challenges us as social scientists to be wary of the role that we play in analyzing such inequities—to not reify the machine is to call global exchange by its real name: deliberate uneven development.

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Joxe, Alain. 2002. *The Empire of Disorder*, New York: Semiotext(e). 221 pages, ISBN 1-58435-016-4 paper. <http://www.autonomeia.org/>

Is there a coherent alternative to the dominance of American global power and neo-liberal hegemony? Alain Joxe in *Empire of Disorder* claims he has indeed found it in what some would consider the unlikeliest of places: the strong-state republican tradition of European political theory originating with Thomas Hobbes. This project of reclamation for the radical counter-hegemonic side of the most recalcitrant anti-democratic European thinker—save for Edmund Burke—of classical political thought is the most interesting and innovative part of the book. The rest is unfortunately uneven and unsystematic, full of standard anti-American left wing rhetoric with little in the way of the full analysis of international conflict and its relationship to globalization promised in the introduction (the first 75 pages of the book consists of a “dialogue” with Sylvere Lotringer). We do get a lot of empty functionalist talk about how the “balkanization” and “lebanonization” of the south, in the form of permanently stalled states of conflict referred to by Joxe as *frozen peace* (p. 92), serve to secure American power and to mask the true sources of global class conflict in a shroud of ethnic and religious hatred and violence.

The basic analytical strand running through the *Empire of Disorder* can be reconstructed as follows: the global American Empire, in its free-market, neo-liberal guise is the “acentral” manager of the post cold-war global (dis)order. This macro-chaos is characterized by the emergence of geographical zones of anarchy and brutal violence which the U.S. refuses to completely take control of, choosing instead a strategy of “regulation” and indirect management mediated through quick, targeted military strikes and a decentralized web of NGO's that pick up the governance slack in the absence of a clear commitment to reconstruct the

basis of political authority. While the current system limps along in this less than optimal state of affairs, the 9/11 attacks and the end of “new economy” finance bubble point to more ominous possibilities brewing within its interstices: a concentration of military might on a single territory and the digitalization and computerization of violent conflict which lead to war becoming pure technocratic management rather than the Clausewitzian “continuation of politics by other means”.

This is a key component of Joxe's indictment of the current U.S. order. America refuses to truly take command of the global system, in other words it refuses to engage in truly global *politics*, instead taking the cowardly route of *regulation* of disorder, like a technician standing in front of complicated machine and simply turning knobs and switching levers. But this is anathema to Joxe, who is in many ways a 19th century romantic cloaked in neo-realist garb. In his view, the essence of war resides in its dose of passion (p. 8): technocratic management of war comes too close to the antiseptic management of death engineered during the Nazi holocaust (p. 10). This banality of American evil, to put it in Hannah Arendt's terms, can only be challenged through a revitalization of the political form most beleaguered by the triumph of global markets and transnational corporations: the nation state. But as Joxe surveys the current global scene, all he sees are nations in crisis. Penetrated and neutralized by mobile capital, the traditional nation state has in this sense forsaken its original compact with its citizen-subjects. This is where Joxe deftly connects his critique of globalization and the decline of the nation-state, which are nothing new, with his radical reading of Hobbes and Clausewitz (chapter 3): he argues that they offer the guidelines to interpret the spate of “dirty little wars” currently littering the international scene as a return to a quasi-state of nature, where the political sovereignty that citizen-subjects bestowed on the nation state during the last 200 years of nationalism's classic phase is being taken back, and gradually devolving into micropolitical individual attempts at re-establishing some semblance of self-protection. This is the *Behemoth* to Hobbes' *Leviathan*: the reverse of the process of subjugation to a central authority. But Joxe (to his credit) does not celebrate this development as some sort of crypto-subversive event. Here his realism triumphs over his romanticism: he views the future well-being of mankind as inexorably tied to politics. And the problem with these new forms of amorphous conflicts that make them even worse than the major European wars of the 19th and 20th centuries is that they are in essence “non-Clausewitzian” or *not* the continuation of politics by other means, but simply the expression of pure disorder and as such not a bridge between two states but a hellish interlude with no seeming end in sight.

What then is Joxe's solution to this dire state of affairs? Nothing less than the revitalization of the republican form of governance, as exemplified by a

United States of Europe, a true moral and political alternative to U.S.-led global neo-liberalism. Joxe is aware that it is also a possibility that Europe can remain isolated and weak, a second rate core power. In this case, "Europe and its historic citizenship would resemble the Greek city-states under the Roman Empire" (p. 83). This is not an acceptable possibility. Europeans "...now have the new task to choose the form of chaos they prefer and try to achieve by steering away from the form of disorder proposed by 'American'[sic] leaders." (p. 109). Joxe imagines here a true historical paradox: Europe united in a confederacy very much like the United States, but in essence fulfilling what he implicitly perceives as the failed historical role of the latter. A United States of Europe would thus be a true global example of responsible democratic government that would be able to live up to article 10 of the 1793 declaration of human rights as drafted by Robespierre and quoted on page 113: "Society is obliged to guarantee the subsistence of *all its members*, either by procuring them work or by ensuring that those who are unable to work have the means to exist." The continental tradition of an active, strong state is transformed in Joxe's view to a truly subversive and counter-hegemonic possibility against the U.S.-led global (dis)order.

In the end, this is the weakest (because it is the most ideological) part of Joxe's argument. He wants to pour the new wine of hyper-globalization into the old cask of French social democracy, this time blown up to (sometimes blindly Europhilic) continental size. This is fine as a utopian possibility, but it stands about the same chance of happening as the United States falling under the throes of techno-military fascism. The connection to Hobbes and Clausewitz, while theoretically intriguing, does not in any way remedy the weakness of the original contention. Chapter 4, "Violence and Globalism", in which he tries to add some current theoretical strands to his arguments by differentiating between "logistical" (economically intensive) and "predatory" (militarily intensive) empires, owes a lot to Arrighi's (1994) classification of the two logics of accumulation (MCM' and CMC') but in classic French intellectual fashion, citations to other contemporary authors in sociology and political science are absent, and the discussion does not connect with the other parts of the book.

In the end, the book suffers from one even more basic conceptual flaw: the United States is invariably seen as an all powerful evil, able to orchestrate and twist all events and occurrences in the international arena in its favor. But global conflict and disorder may be as much a consequence of U.S. *hegemonic decline* (Bergesen and Lizardo, 2003) as they are an aid to American global dominance. In fact, the perception of unbridled empire may be all that is left after hegemony. But in Joxe's Eurocentric imaginary American weakness is unthinkable: the evil empire across the Atlantic is now stronger and more menacing than ever.

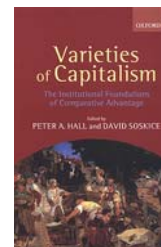
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Hall, Peter A. and David Soskice, eds. 2001. *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 540 pages, ISBN 0-19-924775-9 cloth, ISBN 0-19-924775-7 paper. <http://www.oup-usa.org/isbn/0199247757.html>

Compiling the diverse works of 16 authors into one edited volume, *Varieties of Capitalism* makes a valuable contribution to the growing literature on comparative political economy. In the introductory chapter, Hall and Soskice advance the volume's primary theoretical framework, namely that two distinct forms of capitalism operate across the advanced capitalist countries. At the center of their analysis lies a core question in macroeconomics: how does a complex economy successfully coordinate the diverse activities of myriad firms and other economic actors? A country's answer to this question, the authors contend, identifies its prevailing form of capitalism. In the "liberal market economies" (LMEs) of the Anglo-dominated countries, free-market competition, producing equilibrium between supply and demand, coordinates most economic activity. Generally this arrangement creates an economy characterized by flexible labor markets, heavily capitalized stock markets, high levels of income inequality, and minimal state involvement in the economy. Conversely, in the "coordinated market economies" (CMEs) of eastern Asia and northern Europe, prominent non-market institutions resolve many important coordination problems. Under this economic system, what the authors call "deliberative institutions" provide regular opportunities for major economic actors—such as corporations, labor unions, banks, and the state—to collectively negotiate agreements on many core



economic issues, including but not limited to prices, wages, working conditions, and vocational training standards. Generally this arrangement creates an economy characterized by highly regulated labor markets, powerful banks with close ties to industry, low levels of income inequality, and moderate state involvement in the economy.

After this theoretical introduction by Hall and Soskice, the volume's other contributors apply the distinction between liberal and coordinated market economies to a range of substantive issues. Listed in order of their appearance, these chapters cover the following subjects: (1) labor politics, (2) monetary policy and wage/price bargaining, (3) social protection and vocational training, (4) corporate strategy and social policy, (5) Maastricht negotiations, (6) labor market policy, (7) decentralized cooperation, (8) vocational training reform, (9) corporate governance, (10) strategic management, (11) corporate strategy and contract law, (12) comparative law, and (13) product standardization. Despite their substantive differences, these chapters share a common theoretical perspective, one that the authors call the "varieties of capitalism approach." As a result, the individual chapters have a theoretical cohesiveness that most edited volumes lack.

Importantly, the varieties of capitalism approach provides useful insights into several debates in the globalization literature. For instance, some recent scholarship on globalization suggests that, in order to maintain and attract mobile capital in an era of global market integration, national policymakers must roll back economic regulations. Ostensibly, as economies worldwide move towards freer markets, the policy regimes of individual countries will converge around a single neoliberal model. While this theory seems plausible, the varieties of capitalism approach suggests otherwise. Instead of convergence, several authors in the volume contend that globalization will likely solidify existing cross-national differences in welfare states and regulatory regimes. Specifically, they show that by creating important comparative advantages in international trade, coordinating institutions can become valuable sources of national economic competitiveness. For this reason, it is reasonable to assume that policymakers in many countries will seek to strengthen their economy's coordinating institutions, not weaken them, an outcome that works against convergence.

Similarly, the varieties of capitalism approach helps elucidate the logic behind prevailing patterns of foreign direct investment. Over the last few decades, a variety of scholars have argued that in an effort to reduce labor costs, firms in the advanced industrial countries will increasingly relocate their routine manufacturing activities to low-wage regions of the world economy. But, as some of the authors point out, this strategy may be counterproductive for many firms. Since firms can derive important competitive advantages from the coordinating

institutions in their home countries, many corporate managers may be reluctant to exchange these advantages for the benefits of low-wage foreign labor. Importantly, the distinction between liberal and coordinated market economies affects this trade-off. For example, firms operating in CMEs, especially those firms organizing their business models around non-market coordinating mechanisms, face limited opportunities to relocate manufacturing activities abroad, because most less developed countries cannot meet their non-market infrastructure requirements. Conversely, since many firms in LMEs have built their core competencies around flexible regulatory regimes, the typical business environment in a less developed country compliments their strategic objectives. For these reasons, the authors contend that firms located in LMEs are more likely to locate manufacturing activities abroad than firms located in CMEs.

While offering new perspectives on many issues within comparative political economy, the scholarship in *Varieties of Capitalism* has several limitations. First, due to its emphasis on the firm and the institutional sources of competitive advantage, this perspective on comparative political economy, in my opinion, will be most useful to social scientists working in the fields of economics, strategic business management, and industrial relations. Other social scientists will likely find similar works—such as Gøsta Esping-Andersen's *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* and Geoffrey Garrett's *Partisan Politics in the Global Economy*—more useful for their research agendas. Second, with other scholars positing similar typologies of advanced capitalism, it seems that the authors could have more thoroughly related their ideas to the existing literature. For example, despite their similar topics, the two books on comparative political economy mentioned above receive only scant attention. Third, given the theoretical importance the authors place on coordinating institutions, more attention should have been given to the complex reasons why these institutions vary across advanced capitalist countries. In their sixty-eight page introduction, which constitutes the volume's only theoretical treatment of the varieties of capitalism approach, Hall and Soskice spend less than two pages on this important question. And, besides its brevity, their discussion mentions only one explanatory variable—"informal rules" arising from a country's unique culture and history. Surely, several other factors, such as class conflict and the structure of domestic political institutions, contribute to cross-national variation in coordinating institutions. By avoiding this important issue, the volume disparages its potential theoretical contribution to the study of comparative political economy. Nonetheless, *Varieties of Capitalism* is an important and impressive book, one that merits the attention of scholars researching a number of issues within the fields of comparative political economy and strategic business management.

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Bjelic, Dusan I. and Obrad Savic (eds.). 2002. *Balkan as Metaphor: Between Globalization and Fragmentation*. London, England and Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press. 382 pages, ISBN: 0-262-02524-8 (hc). <http://mitpress.mit.edu/>

In the conclusions of my *Nationalism, Globalization and Orthodoxy: The Social Origins of Ethnic Conflict in the Balkans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2001), I point out that “in exorcising the Balkans, Western commentators exorcise principles of ethnic difference they consider illegitimate in their own societies,” thereby turning the Balkans into “an area of domestic ideological contestation in the US and Western Europe” (p.239). This process operates through Balkanism—an ideological discourse about the Balkans that is in many respects similar to Orientalism. Perhaps the most important contribution of this volume is refining our understanding of Balkanism, a concept originally developed by Maria Todorova in her groundbreaking 1997 book, *Imagining the Balkans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). The issue at hand is the extent to which Balkanism is a sub-species of Orientalism or whether it is an autonomous concept, related but conceptually distinct from Orientalism.

Most of the authors of this volume consider Balkanism an autonomous concept, hence the purpose of the collection is to explore its dynamics: Is it the same or different from Orientalism? How does it operate both in the region and in the West? What is its connection to local national identities? How does it color the expert and journalistic or popular understandings of Balkan sexuality and art? In order to unpack these issues, the volume is organized into fourteen chapters (grouped into three parts) plus an introductory essay by Dusan Bjelic. Bjelic’s essay provides a solid overview of the volume’s main themes and pulls together the various threads explored by the authors in their individual chapters. Below I provide brief accounts of each section, with more elaborate discussions of those essays I feel warrant special attention. Space considerations prevent me from providing full summaries of all the essays.

Part I addresses the conceptual issues of bias in Western discourse, thereby concentrating on locating Balkanism between Orientalism and Occidentalism. Vesna Goldworthy’s chapter provides a brief overview of the ways public policy and cultural discourses have used the “Balkans” to invoke images of barbarism,

inferiority, primitivism, chronic warfare, and so on. The chapter does not break new conceptual ground, but it is a useful introduction for a general academic audience. Tomislav Longinovic’s chapter continues along the same lines by describing the uses of the image of Vlad Dracul Tzepesh in the construction of the modern-day fable of Count Dracula. Longinovic masterfully reveals the subterranean ties between this popular image and the “exotic” nature of the “Balkans.” Milica Bakic-Hayden’s chapter aptly captures a main thread that runs across the volume: She asks rhetorically “What’s So Byzantine About the Balkans?” and proceeds to enumerate the biases and errors in Western discourse about Byzantium. Again, the essay does not include fresh material, and I should point out that serious Byzantine scholars are aware of the inaccurate stereotypes of Byzantium in the West, but such knowledge is lacking even among North American academics; hence, this brief overview is particularly useful to a non-specialist audience.

For me, the most interesting chapter in the entire volume is Rastko Mocnik’s essay on “The Balkans as an Element in Ideological Mechanisms.” The author sets out to challenge Todorova’s thesis that the “Balkans are the Ottoman legacy” by exploring the ways Balkanism operates within the context of the ideology of neo-liberal “globalization.” Mocnik persuasively argues that public discourse on the Balkans is structured along two main lines: First, there is a horizontal antagonism among the Balkan nation-states and ethnic groups; and second, there is a vertical system of co-operation between each of these groups or states and the EU. Having argued against Todorova’s thesis on world-historical grounds (Roudometof 2001:239), I admit to being a partial critic. But, I believe that Mocnik’s interpretation allows us to avoid a return to the usual “blame game” of Balkan cultural politics (whereby everything bad in the region is attributed to the four centuries of Ottoman control). Instead, we can move toward accounts that examine the way Balkanism shapes domestic politics, cultural production, and international relations both in the region and throughout Europe.

Part II explores the tensions brought into the local national identities by the application of a derogatory term (i.e., “Balkan”) throughout the region, as well as the different strategies articulated by local intelligentsias and diplomats eager to disassociate themselves from the “Balkan” label. In an insightful, masterfully written essay, Alexander Kiossev provides a fascinating picture of the *homo baklanicus*—a cultural species that every “Balkanian” tries hard to conceal within himself; yet the harder the effort, the easier it is for the “Western” outsider to recognize and identify. Both Kiossev’s (and Vlaisavljevic’s) chapters explore the degree to which the Balkan people actually form an ethnically or ethnic community (in Anthony D. Smith’s original meaning of the term). Of course, as Cioroianu’s chapter aptly demonstrates, this is not the type of news one should rush to



deliver to the Balkan peoples themselves. For, in the Balkans, everyone wants to be part of “Europe” while simultaneously wishing that one’s neighbors would eternally be condemned to be “exotic” non-Europeans, unworthy of membership in the EU club. Cioroianu explores the specifics of the Romanian experience, where this strategy has been pursued with particular stubbornness (albeit with limited results).

Part III explores issues of sexuality and art, including solid analyses of the biases in Western accounts of Serb “genocide” and “rape.” Arsic’s essay explores dimensions of Serb sexuality and its connection to politics; while, in a penetrating article, Bjelic and Cole deconstruct the Western portrayal of Serbs as “macho rapists” who grew up on pornography and used rape as an instrument of male domination. Finally, Gourgouris’ chapter includes a well-written analysis of the relationship between music and cinematography.

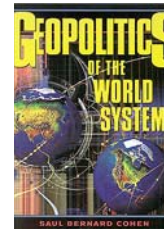
Overall, this volume is a significant contribution to the scholarly debate on the nature of Balkan identity. There are four major points of contention. First, with the exception of two or three chapters, most of the material is not advancing new arguments but rather reproduces information that should be familiar to Balkan specialists. Second, despite the volume’s subtitle, there is very little in the majority of the individual chapters that actually confronts the topic of globalization. Third, there is insufficient attention to the world-historical dimension of Balkanism. In fact, in my own work, I have addressed the connections between world-historical globalization and the production of national rivalries in the region. Consequently, I was looking forward to a volume that would actually elaborate the complex local-global relationships between the region and the modern world-economy, the contemporary cultural industries, and regimes of global governance and regulation. Fourth, the authors maintain a strict regional focus, thereby restricting the applicability of their analyses to the Balkans alone. But is it the case that Orientalism or Balkanism are cultural phenomena unique to the Arab world or the Balkans?

Despite these shortcomings, I highly recommend this volume to cultural studies scholars, political scientists, geographers, international relations specialists, social theorists, anthropologists, and other cultural workers. This volume is a useful guide for the North American academic audience.

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Cohen, Saul Bernard. 2003. *Geopolitics of the World System*. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 435 pages, ISBN 0-8476-9906-4, cloth, ISBN 0-8476-9907-2 paper. <http://www.rowmanlittlefield.com/>

Since the shifts of more than a decade ago, efforts to spell out the new structure of world politics have multiplied. *Geopolitics of the World System* is distinguished from other contributions by its geographical perspective. Cohen was editor of the *Columbia Gazetteer of the World* and the *Oxford World Atlas*. He is also known for a text on geopolitics in the early 1960s, *Geography and Politics in a*



Divided World (1963). The two orientations—reference and analysis—do not always cross-fertilize, and lead to frequent difficulties in pinning Cohen down; the deployment of a battery of terms and distinctions enhances this elusive quality.

The primary units of GWS are rooted in regional political geography rather than cultural complexes or economic regions. The importance of such configurations resulted from the diffusion of world power after the cold war. In this view, the current geopolitical arena is multipolar, consisting of five first-tier powers: the United States, the European Union, Russia, China, and Japan. On the second tier, there are 21 regional powers, ranging from Canada to Indonesia. Below this tier, defined by a decreasing magnitude of reach and influence relative to the major powers, there are four more. The hierarchy does not possess a strictly unidirectional power structure. Cohen cautions: “In assessing the strategic importance of states, policy makers need to recognize their appropriate levels of power, still keeping in mind that lower-order states are capable of upsetting the system by serving as terrorist bases. (46)” In fact, the War on Terrorism is often adduced in support of the claim that an emergent coalition [among the great powers] is the linchpin of geopolitical stability.

This purported equilibrium does have a significant fault line, which Cohen dubs the Shatterbelt: regions that are not organized by a major power and are in fact sites of competition and conflict between first-tier powers. At present, only the Middle East merits this appellation, though Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia are all possible shatterbelts. These three areas, roughly contiguous, could potentially be one great shatterbelt. In Cohen’s assessment, global stability requires cooperation among the major powers, with the US taking the lead as the first among equals. What this means for the Middle East, besides some fairly mainstream US positions, is unclear.

There is, however, more to the book than a multilateralist view. GWS asserts the important role of geography, setting out on a vast project of classification. The reader is introduced to a myriad of geographical and political terms and distinc-

tions: the geostrategic realm; the geopolitical region; Shatterbelts; Compression Zones; Gateways; Maritime Settings; Continental Settings; as well as geopolitical features (historic or nuclear cores, ecumenes, effective national territory, effective regional territory, empty areas, boundaries, and nonconforming sectors). The conceptual inventory strives to be exhaustive, but does not consider novel spatial properties like time-space compression, the space of flows represented by world financial markets, or the military absorption of the digital revolution.

Some of the conceptual foundations are questionable, in particular, the claim of a diffusion of power among the five centers (probably six, since India, according to Cohen, is fast moving up to the first-order tier of world powers). The case for relative parity, a far from obvious certainty, is never made. This reflects a larger problem in portraying the interplay of power and geography. By containing geopolitical entities in their respective spatial environments, issues of unequal reach and influence do not receive the requisite attention. For example, the geostrategic realm of the US consists of the North Pacific and North Atlantic but not the Middle East. It is not clear why US relations with Israel, Egypt, Turkey, the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council), and the overall militarization of the Persian Gulf are not sufficient for inclusion of the Middle East in the US's geostrategic realm. This reflects an over-projection of a plate-like model onto the social world in which contiguity over-determines any other logic. In other words, the traditional world region is positioned as the defining fact of geopolitics, thereby obscuring important asymmetries in world power.

Beyond any analytic shortcomings the book has a lot of useful information. A thirty-three page index, along with twenty maps, facilitates easy use. Additionally, there is a fascinating chapter devoted to major thinkers in the field of geopolitics: Friedrich Ratzel; Halford Mackinder; Alfred T. Mahan; Rudolph Kjellen; and Karl Haushofer. No region is left unexplored; Sub-Saharan Africa and South America, the two regions that seem to be excluded from the first-tier, are grouped into a "Quarter Sphere of Marginality." It is most insightful when describing the geographical features of regional variation.

Lastly, the use of the term world system bears no substantive connection to the world-historical approach of the same name. A jumbled description of Wallerstein's ideas is included largely to discredit the economic approach to international relations. There is no treatment of great power cycles or the application of theories of capitalist development to international relations. The viability of the interstate system is not in question. While the geographical perspective is useful, the book would have benefited from a closer engagement with issues of institutional change. Ultimately, it may be more useful as a reference text than a work of global theory.

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Ziauddin Sardar. 2000. *Thomas Kuhn and the Science Wars*. New York: Totem Books. 76pp. ISBN 1-84046-136-5 paperback.

Postmodern moves raise hackles in many quarters, but nowhere more than among students of the hard sciences. Science maintains a special status in modern western society. Its more strident supporters claim it to be value free and driven by nothing less than the infallible taskmaster of absolute truth. Science is what the enlightenment was all about, and its many gifts to society are said to warrant unquestioning support in return. In response, postmodern students of science offer a litany of criticisms, from the rejection of the existence of the very truth science claims to seek, to charges of gender, racial, national and religious chauvinism.



After 80 years of sometimes-arcane debates, the battle culminated in 1995 with the publication of a special issue of *Social Text* on 'Science Wars'. Edited at Rutgers and published at Duke, the impeccably credentialed culture studies journal was preparing a response to recent volumes with titles like *Higher Superstition: The Academic Left and its Quarrels with Science* and *The Flight from Science and Reason*. Within its pages, however, was a landmine written by physicist Alan Sokal titled "Transgressing the boundaries: towards a transformative hermeneutics of quantum gravity." The article was a bushel of purposely silly or meaningless phrases cobbled together as a parody of critical science studies. Its publication, trumpeted in Sokal's subsequent 'tell-all' interviews, was cheered by the hard science community as proof that its critics were frauds and charlatans who were beneath contempt.

Sardar is clearly a critic of the overblown truth and neutrality claims of traditional science, but he readily acknowledges that "Sokal's hoax proves what many scholars suspected: cultural studies has become quite meaningless, and anyone could get away with anything in the name of postmodern criticism." Sardar retorts that cultural studies' obvious failure does not mean that traditional science is automatically correct. This exceptionally short book (part of a well-conceived series edited by Richard Appignanesi) is a marvelously clear and balanced review of the most recent twists and turns in critical science studies. A quick consideration of early, multi-volume attempts to shine some light on the

social context of science by Bernal and Needham help introduce the major section of the book on Thomas Kuhn's 1961 *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn generated tensions of various sorts, and Sardar reviews his intellectual background, critiques from supporters and detractors, and the impact of his work on the course of the debate.

Shorter discussions of the inputs of Popper, Feyerabend, Lakatos, Latour and proponents of the Edinburgh School's 'Strong Programme' prove remarkably readable and illustrate the parameters of the debate in a helpful manner. As counter-position after counter-position falls prey to some logical or methodological weakness or another, the proponents of traditional science steadfastly refuse to budge. Continued claims of neutrality and rationality and truth offered by traditional science fail to bend to evidence of the rather obvious suggestion that science, like every other social activity, is vulnerable to social pressures both subtle and otherwise.

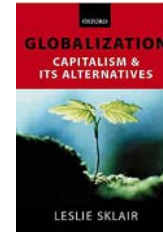
The final section of the book considers charges of masculinist and eurocentric biases. Once again the author provides a concise and interesting review of complex material. Feminist criticisms prove rather correlational, though enough so that further review seems more than warranted. Sadar's own deep knowledge of science in Islamic regions gives charges of an inherent and debilitating ethnocentrism real gravity and tempts the reader to search the bibliography for more material.

The book is short enough to finish in an hour, and given the role of science and technology in the current world (with recent charges of financially driven results, cloning, stem cell research, patenting genetic codes, genetically modified crops, organ harvesting), this is an excellent primer on the issues that drive a crucial debate on the subject. It is also evidence of an interesting palliative to the utter delegitimation that postmodern studies of science suffered in the *Social Text* fiasco. Instead of being assaulted by confusing verbiage and impenetrable grammar, the reader is treated to a lucid review of the qualms that postmodernists, among others, should have with traditional claims about science. Postmodernism shows some analytical strength, and the reader is rewarded with insights that are useful from a variety of perspectives.

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Sklair, Leslie. 2002. *Globalization: Capitalism and Its Alternatives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 372 pages. ISBN 0-19-924744-7 paper. <http://www.oup-usa.org/isbn/0199247447.html>

Readers familiar with Leslie Sklair's approach will not find a great deal new in this book in terms of his overall analysis of globalization. What they will find, however, is a more nuanced, better explained, and very readable account of globalization and the possibilities of some sort of socialist alternative, meaning a globalization that seeks to fulfill human needs.



The book is organized into twelve chapters. The opening chapter focuses on the issue of the global, and reducing state centrism in the analysis of the global, and introduces Sklair's unholy trinity: economics in the form of transnational corporations (TNCs), politics in the form of transnational practices (TNPs) and the transnational capitalist class (TCC), and culture in the form of culture-ideology of consumerism. This unholy trinity dooms capitalism to ultimate failure on the twin hazards of increasing inequality and environmental instability. Chapter two furthers the process of "thinking about the global" by analyzing various concepts and measures of globalization. Sklair is especially good at unpacking how virtually every measure of globalization is theory-laden, not theoretically neutral. His solution is to emphasize explicit awareness of these biases and keep them in mind when examining global processes.

In the third chapter he examines competing conceptions of globalization: world-systems, global culture, global polity, and global capitalism. His approach is refreshing. Rather than bashing all other conceptions unmercifully, he underscores what they do explain and begins to synthesize them. Interestingly, he finds world-systems analysis to be the most useful of these accounts, but finds it somewhat lacking in politics and ecology and seriously flawed with respect to culture. Not a novel critique, by any means. Still, his subsequent discussions are suggestive of ways world-systems analysis might dig further into these areas. He then delineates the polarization and ecological unsustainability crises in detail.

The beginning chapters are a bit dry, yet provide the initial vocabulary needed to introduce these topics to undergraduates clearly. He critically analyzes various theories and methodologies and highlights the negative and positive aspects of each. In so doing, Sklair establishes trust and reliability with undergraduate readers, because while he argues for his own theory he identifies the strengths as well as the weaknesses of other theories.

The next chapter is devoted to TNCs, their histories, their processes, and especially the damage that they do to human societies. His comments on Enron

are especially telling, given that they were written before the 2002 round of scandals broke. He follows this with detailed discussions of transnational practices, by describing how globalization works through economics, politics, and culture-ideology. He is careful to note that description is not explanation. However, when wedded to accounts of the transnational capitalist class and the culture-ideology of consumerism he begins to build a theory. By saturating and dominating the media, bombarding everyone with seductive calls to consumption and blocking out any alternative explanations, the culture-ideology of consumerism and capitalism becomes hegemonic in the Gramscian sense.

Sklair then takes this analysis to the third world and shows how and why these same practices, many of which can be seen to make some sense in the developed world, have serious deleterious consequences in the third world. Again, there is not much that is startlingly new here, but it is very clearly described and connected to first world practices. He traces the development of global agribusiness with some close attention to gender differentials that harm women.

From this he turns to a detailed discussion of consumerism, noting how the goal of all media and advertising is to promote consumption. He cautions against conflating consumerism with Americanism, even though in many cases they do coincide. Still, all soap operas promote consumption. The most engaging parts of this chapter are the discussion of baby bottle feeding controversy surrounding Nestle Corporation, the analysis of medicine production, the global cola wars, and issues of smoking.

Chapters 8 and 9 examine the impacts of capitalist globalization on the formerly socialist world. First, he examines sub-Saharan Africa and the old second world. He argues that globalization transformed the old second world into a new second world. Not formally communist, but not yet fully capitalist, and in most cases suffering consequences that linger from the Cold War era. Sklair then turns to a discussion of China, examining rising class formation inside this still nominally socialist state, and the increasing role of the culture-ideology of consumerism. In these two chapters Sklair is making several points. First, a familiar argument, that they were in some sense destined for failure precisely because they were embedded in a capitalist world. Second, and far more important, we can learn from their few successes and many failures how to, and how not to, pursue a socialist alternative to global capitalism.

Chapter 10 turns to the challenges to global capitalism. Just when it seems nothing can or has stopped the capitalist juggernaut, Sklair shows how people have, indeed, resisted. He begins with an account of blocking the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, then turns to discussions of the green movements, women's movements, and human rights movements. His discussion of the "battle in Seattle" highlights many of the issues he raises in this chapter.

The penultimate chapter presents Sklair's plan for a transformation to socialist globalization. It hinges the strategy on expanding the human rights argument to include economic human rights. He notes for any movement to work it must be nonviolent, not only for principled reasons, but because capitalists control virtually all the weapons. The final chapter ties it all together in a neat package.

The book and the argument are persuasive. But as one probes, prods, and pushes, one begins to see it as maybe a bit too pat. It is less realistic than Boswell and Chase-Dunn about the prospects of capitalism to fight back (*Spiral of Capitalism and Socialism*, Lynne Reiner, 2000). It is a bit too heavy on the newness of all this. Globalization has gone further and is proceeding faster than ever before, but it has occurred throughout the capitalist era.

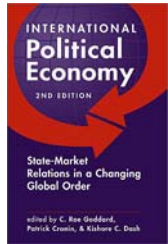
Sklair's strength is in his explanations and examples, both in the text and visually through the charts and illustrations. Each example draws upon aspects of life that most students are able to identify with and understand. Each example thus pulls the student into a new and deeper level of understanding globalization, and distinctly shows how the students may or may not be contributing to globalization themselves. The charts and diagrams underscore the text and reinforce the complex arguments for students. The book is effective for the study of globalization at the undergraduate level because it addresses several different learning styles.

Although many world-systems analysts will find parts, and even the whole, worthy of counter argument, Sklair's insistence on a global perspective is welcome. He argues that the state remains far too central in social science thinking about contemporary society. Yet Sklair does not advocate ignoring the state. Rather, he seeks to emphasize the emergence and growing power of transnational, that is, global, practices, classes, and organizations in contemporary society, politics, economics, and culture. Failure to attend closely to these powerful globalizing forces dooms any social analysis to the dust bin. Sklair also argues that global capitalism has improved the lives of some humans. For him a key issue is how to preserve and spread those gains while minimizing the harms. Though not novel ideas to world-systems analysts, *Globalization: Capitalism and Its Alternatives* adds clarity and potency to such arguments.

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Goddard, C. Roe, Patrick Cronin, & Kishore C. Dash, eds. 2003. *International Political Economy: State-Market Relations in a Changing Global Order*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers. 507 pages, paper, ISBN 1-58826-097-6. <http://www.rienner.com/viewbook.cfm?BOOKID=1339>



This collection is an attempt to orient undergraduates to the complex and dynamic field of international political economy. It seeks to expose students to the theoretical origins of many of the dominant perspectives in the field, while at the same time attending to contemporary manifestations of the different approaches to international political economy. After reading the book, students should be familiar with not only the foundations of the various perspectives, but also how these perspectives attempt to make sense of many of the current issues that dominate this ever-expanding field. Pieces on the emergence of the Euro, the financial crisis in East Asia, and the continuation of debates surrounding “globalization” and the sovereignty of the nation-state are all welcome additions to the second edition. Much has changed in the global economy since the publication of the first edition in 1996—from the Asian financial crisis to the emergence of the Euro as a common European currency—and the editors have clearly made a conscious effort to not only document these developments, but also provide alternative interpretations of them.

The book is divided into six parts, some of which are much more useful than others. The first section is arguably the most effective. Following introductory chapters by Gilpin and by Frieden and Lake which introduce the central concepts, tensions, and unique questions of international political economy, “the three major perspectives” of “liberalism, economic nationalism, and structuralism” (p. 2) are presented. All of the sub-sections in this part are replete with excerpts from Smith, Hamilton, and Marx, respectively, as well as recent theoretical contributions and pieces that provide a glimpse into the contemporary debates, albeit debates that ignore the world-system perspective for the most part. Unfortunately, the presented selections lack a more thorough grounding in the overall debate to which they contribute. Such an orientation seems necessary if students are to truly understand the context of the various articles.

The second part of the volume concerns itself with the international monetary regime and the extreme effects of “globalization” on capital markets and traditional state-market relations. The IMF is introduced in this section, albeit uncritically, and the monetary integration of Europe via the introduction of the Euro is outlined. Development and World Bank are the focus of the third section, in which the Bank is looked at in both a positive and negative light. The

chapter by Charles Gore is the only one in the section that does not deal specifically with the World Bank and is (unusually) helpful in recasting the evolution of the development debate over the years, providing a context for his own argument. Part 4 deals with the dynamic nature of international trade relations in the context of increased economic integration and regionalization. The two chapters in the section complement one another, as the first looks at the changes in trade relations from the perspective of core countries, while the latter focuses on recent alterations in relations and their consequences from the perspective of peripheral nations. The transnational corporation is the subject of Part 5. Given the staggering scope and influence of TNC’s in the contemporary world system, as well as the overwhelming amount of controversy they have generated in the field, it is curious that only two chapters are allotted to an analysis of the TNC. The book concludes with two articles: one by Hilary French on the emergent connection between “globalization” and ecological destruction, the second by Susan Strange documenting the utter failure of the state system to deal with the social and environmental dislocations associated with the injurious effects of unrestrained market forces.

While the majority of the articles were not specifically written for the volume, the editors do a nice job of selecting relevant material, presenting a collection that is relatively well organized by theme and succeeds in introducing some of the major issues of contention in the field. Some of the articles are much more accessible than others for an undergraduate audience however. As such, many of the selections would need to be complemented by thoughtful instruction and substantial amounts of in-class discussion. The issues covered are contentious enough that fruitful in-class debates would be possible given the appropriate guidance and explication. The jargon evident in the collection, while unavoidable, will likely need to be clarified if it is to be successful in reaching the targeted undergraduate audience. In addition, the sheer length of the volume might well dictate being selective in assigning the material.

But while the collection certainly has its strengths, it may well err on the side of attempting too much depth in places at the expense of omitting key issues and perspectives. Race and gender and their connections to international political economy are completely absent in the volume. Given that the field of international political economy is inherently interdisciplinary, the relative omission of the contributions of sociologists is particularly troubling. This leads to the relative neglect of and disregard for the world-system perspective in challenging the paradigmatic discourse on international political economy. While present in the first edition, the chapter from Wallerstein elaborating the differences between world-systems and dependency theory is curiously absent in the second. And while the excerpt from Amin’s (1997) book is present, both the editorial caveat

and the devotion of a mere 10 pages of a 500-page volume demonstrates the credence the authors grant the perspective. While this detracts from the overall scope of the collection, supplementary material could certainly be used to fill in the theoretical gaps that are present.

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