Democracy and Empire

Labor, Nature, and the Reproduction of Capitalism

Inés Valdez

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Democracy and Empire theorizes the material bases of popular sovereignty via the Black radical tradition. Popular sovereignty contains an affective attachment to wealth, secured through collective agreements to dominate others, that is, self-and-other-determination. Inés Valdez expands on racial capitalism by theorizing its Anglo-European-based popular politics, which authorize capital accumulation enabled by empire and legitimated by racial ideologies. Such accumulation stunts political projects in the Global South. Valdez masterfully outlines how racialized others who sacrifice families and communities provide social reproduction, and how political alienation from nature in wealthy polities is mediated by technology and enabled by a joint devaluation of nature and racialized manual labor. The book also theorizes anti-imperial popular sovereignty, also drawing on Indigenous political thought's accounts of nature-encompassing political relations. This title is part of the Flip it Open Programme and may also be available Open Access. Check our website Cambridge Core for details.

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For my parents, Patricia Tappatá and Gilberto Valdez Herrera

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Acknowledgments

I started writing *Democracy and Empire: Labor, Nature, and the Reproduction of Capitalism* in the summer of 2018 and developed and completed it during an itinerant period of my life, split between the United States, Germany, and Argentina. In each of these sites I was welcomed by a nurturing community of scholars, friends, and family that supported my writing and kept me grounded, for which I am infinitely grateful. In Columbus, the Migration, Mobility, and Immobility Project, the Global Arts and Humanities Society of Fellows, the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, and the Political Science Department (all at Ohio State) supported the archival research and writing of most of the book. I completed the last revisions of the manuscript in Baltimore, Maryland, where new and old interlocutors and friends welcomed me into Johns Hopkins's interdisciplinary racial capitalism group, its political theory community, and the Political Science Department. I could not have completed the book in a better place, one infused with the energy of a new and exciting chapter in my career.

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Introduction

On January 6, 2021, a mob stormed the US Capitol to stop the joint session of Congress from certifying the electoral votes cast for Joe Biden. The group had been encouraged by then President Trump to go to the Capitol and "fight like hell" against a "comprehensive assault on our democracy."[1] However false these claims are, they underpin a racial construction of a people, who felt their right to rule threatened by Black and brown citizens, whose grassroots organizing gave Georgia and Arizona to Biden and secured his election as the 46th president of the United States.[2] *Democracy and Empire* argues that the force of the arguments that led Trump supporters to storm the Capitol on January 6 harkens back to

[1] Brian Naylor, "Read Trump's Jan. 6 Speech, A Key Part of Impeachment Trial," *National Public Radio*, February 10, 2021.

[2] While Trump mentioned fictitious maneuvers of voter fraud in several states that day, he was particularly personal with Stacey Abrams, whom he mentioned five times, arguing that the problem with Georgia's results was "Fulton County, home of Stacey Abrams," adding later that he had to fight against "Michelle Obama, Barack Hussein Obama, against Stacey." Trump also focused his attention on Arizona, where he falsely claimed that "over 36,000 ballots were illegally cast by non-citizens" and that more votes were counted than there were actual voters. He went on to say that in Maricopa County 50,000 people registered after the deadline. These two states were won through grassroots organizing by Black and Latinx voters that was central to swing the states for Biden. This organizing had started years before, with Stacey Abrams's gubernatorial campaign in 2018, or even a decade prior, with the campaign against Sheriff Joe Arpaio's targeting of brown people and Arizona's "show me your papers" 2010 law. Ibid., Aída Chávez, "If Arizona Goes Blue, Look to Joe Arpaio – and the Latinos Who Organized against Him," *The Intercept*, November 2, 2020, Hannah Miao, "Democrats' Historic Georgia Senate Wins Were Years in the Making Thanks to Local Grassroots," *CNBC*, January 9, 2021, Anoa Changa, "Grassroots Organizers Flipped Georgia Blue. Here's How They Did It," *Truthout*, November 12, 2020.

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notions of the people that emerged in the context of empire, which – through settlement, slavery, conquest, and colonialism – built the racial formations that still frame US politics. These formations delimited the people and entailed the political rule and more intense capitalist exploitation of nonwhite people-qua-workers. These workers, located both at home and abroad, produced the wealth that was politically declared to rightfully belong to white collectives.

By describing the crowd as "the most amazing sight," "the real people … that built this nation," and by setting a militaristic tone by thanking "the police and law enforcement" and praising his own record on the military and "our vets," Trump put forward a particular picture of the people and its relation to the global. This group, with its extraordinary love for "this amazing country," was contrasted with Biden, who wanted to end the "America First" policy, and with others who "tore down this nation" and its monuments. These claims issue a historically intelligible call for a white democracy, one that, relying on the military and the police, can assert its global stature against the declining legitimacy of the American empire and resist challenges by nonwhite groups at home.

Democracy and Empire reconceptualizes central notions in political theory to make sense of these claims and the real system they reference and defend: imperial popular sovereignty and self-determination. The book goes beyond existing accounts of white democracy by theorizing the material and ecological components of this form of rule and conceptualizing it as a properly transnational imperial form. This requires tracing the racial capitalist logics that marked the historical emergence of claims of popular sovereignty in western polities and their reliance on imperial forms of extraction. The book makes the case that popular sovereignty and self-determination were underpinned by popular claims that demanded *collective* access to wealth obtained by imperial means and required the exploitation of nonwhite subjects. These structures still organize global accumulation, whose terms are the subject of contemporary authoritarian outbursts affecting wealthy democracies.

The book relies on the Black radical tradition, including the work of W. E. B. Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, Martin Luther King, Hortense Spillers, and Saidiya Hartman to trace how imperial logics were absorbed by democratic polities operating within empires, imbuing emancipatory notions and practices of popular sovereignty and self-determination. Through these thinkers, and in conversation with Indigenous and Latino political thought, I put forward a three-part theory of the joint operation of

racial capitalism, empire, and democratic politics.[3] First, *Democracy and Empire* conceptualizes *popular* sovereignty as a declaration demanding a part of a stock of wealth obtained through imperial violence that subjects others outside the collective. In other words, rather than distribute the wealth obtained collectively by a group among their members, imperial popular sovereignty demands to violently appropriate the wealth of others. Second, the book analyzes historical moments and emancipatory claims made by white groups to show that popular claims themselves were imbued with notions of white self-government that had affinities with imperial thinking. This step specifies further the racial ideologies that underpin popular claims and constitute the people *while* legitimating wealth extraction from racialized groups and regions deemed backward. In a third step, I attend to the basis of popular sovereignty in imperial polities, namely, the reciprocal interaction between a variety of regimes of racial domination, which evolved in articulation with each other to sustain privileged groups. To understand these processes, I zoom into how the racialized political claims and structures conscripted racialized labor *and* nature to facilitate the social reproduction of western societies. Political resistance and partial liberation within polities, I argue, led to negotiation, adjustment, and mutual rearticulation of regimes of racial oppression that targeted and target Africans and African Americans, Indian and Chinese indentured workers, Indigenous peoples, and Latinos in the United States.

This approach conceptualizes the mutual articulation of structures of racial oppression targeting differently racialized groups while attending to the heterogeneity of the institutions that enforce such oppression and their evolution in response to crises and resistance. This mutual articulation pushes against the taxonomic divisions between global and domestic realms, which blind us to the continuities between land dispossession, slavery, migration control, and overseas expropriation of nature. I disrupt the commonsensical character of the domestic and the global by showing

[3] This path to theorizing racial capitalism is not the only one possible. Anibal Quijano's framework of the coloniality of power offers an alternative framework with many affinities with the one I pursue. Quijano positions race as "the fundamental criterion for the distribution of the world population into ranks, places, and roles in the new society's structure of power" through labor control. Labor came to be organized in multiple forms, which included slavery and serfdom but also modes entailing reciprocity and/or based on wages. Quijano, moreover, diagnoses these sociological and historical formations as novel and articulated with the capitalist production of commodities for the world market, even though they were also structured around local conditions. Anibal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," *Nepantla* 1, no. 3 (2000): 535.

that racial and possessive forms of popular sovereignty organize both realms, thus transforming, but not overcoming, imperial structures of mobility and labor control, which continue to structure subjection and global struggles in the present.

Notably, this mutual articulation entails social separateness, i.e., the disjuncture or deactivation of relations between humans and humans and nature that stand in the way of capitalist accumulation. Thus, articulation is best understood as a multidimensional process of separation/interconnection. First, capitalism works through technologies of antirelationality or partition to extract subjects from collectives that are life- and nature-sustaining to then conscript them into unequal and separate functions determined by race, whose interrelation advances capital accumulation.[4]

Such a framework, by recognizing the active role of popular sovereignty in channeling imperial logics, recasts racial emancipation as needing a thorough reconfiguration of political formations rather than inclusion into a given polity. This reconfiguration must disconnect existing circuits of accumulation and reconnect collectives through a new language of popular sovereignty and emancipation that is not organized around racially exclusive communities sustained by the twin extraction of racialized nature and labor for profit. Only these new arrangements can recast politics as the search for a racially-egalitarian, socially-centered, and nature-regenerative democratic solution to exploitation and violence. Such a future would break off the parceling out of responsibility entailed by the organization of the world in sovereign states and envision a popular emancipatory discourse that encompasses the transnational dialogue and joint action of radical movements of Indigenous, Black-diasporic, migrant, and expropriated groups around the world.

DEMOCRACY, DOMINATION, AND TRANSNATIONALISM

Democracy and Empire contributes to the imagining and charting of alternative futures by clarifying the forms of entanglement, the continuities in forms of subjection, and the nodes of connection between apparently distinct realms of racial oppression. It then ties these formations

[4] Ruth Wilson Gilmore, "Fatal Couplings of Power and Difference: Notes on Racism and Geography," *The Professional Geographer* 54, no. 1 (2002): 161, Jodi Melamed, "Racial Capitalism," *Critical Ethnic Studies* 1, no. 1 (2015): 78, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, "Partition," *Keynote at Decolonize the City! Decoloniale Perspektiven auf die Neoliberal Stadt* September 21–23 (2012): cited in Melamed, "Racial Capitalism."

to the efforts of dominant *democratic polities* to moderate the effects of capitalism over themselves, while reinforcing hierarchies to delimit the reach of any gains attained. This is accomplished both by denying full subjectivity to racialized subjects and by conscripting these same subjects *and* nature to intensively exploitative conditions to boost their *common*wealth. This book thus theorizes both the articulation between racial regimes of capitalist oppression and their connection to popular sovereignty. In terms of the regimes of exploitation, Indigenous land dispossession created the "need" for enslaved labor, whose freeing led to the import of indentured labor from India and China, whose ban in the early twentieth century intensified the use of brown labor in the United States, also intensified by internal migration and the abandonment of farm work by emancipated Black laborers in the United States. These *needs* respond to capitalist accumulation priorities but are shaped by a racialized politics of white emancipation that partakes of the gains from and contributes to the organization of despotic rule over economically racialized others to separate them from the riches they produce.

By linking popular sovereignty as a form of government to the extraction of forced racialized labor and nature that is its condition of possibility in practice, this framework conceptually and historically links problems of exploitative work to political problems of rule. This means that instead of decrying the invasion of political realms by economic logics, it reconstructs how, historically, white *political* emancipation was intimately entangled with the management and distribution of *economic* wealth through the political rule of nonwhite laboring masses.[5] In so doing, *Democracy and Empire* integrates several literatures that tend to analyze popular sovereignty, empire, labor, immigration, ecology, and racial capitalism in isolation from one another. The study of these regimes as self-contained or exclusive of each other limits our understanding of the global past and present. These realms operate in coordination

[5] This concern animates recent contributions in critical theory, including Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015), Regina Kreide, "Democracy in Crisis: Why Political Philosophy Needs Social Theory," in *Transformations of Democracy: Crisis, Protest, and Legitimation*, ed. Regina Kreide Robin Celikates, and Tilo Wesche (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), Nancy Fraser and Rahel Jaeggi, *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018). See critical readings by Antonio Y. Vázquez-Arroyo, "Refurbishing Liberal Democracy?: On Wendy Brown's Undoing the Demos," *Theory & Event* 20, no. 2 (2017), Samuel A. Chambers, "Undoing Neoliberalism: Homo Œconomicus, Homo Politicus, and the Zōon Politikon," *Critical Inquiry* 44, no. 4 (2018), Lisa Tilley and Robbie Shilliam, "Raced Markets: An Introduction," *New Political Economy* 23, no. 5 (2018).

and according to continuous logics, responding to popularly supported demands to appropriate resources to sustain white groups' lives and well-being. This book traces how these regimes are synchronously articulated with each other but also reveals their dynamism and rearticulation following moments of partial liberation, geopolitical crisis, and – ultimately – the onset of neoliberalism. In the rest of this Introduction, I explicate further how and why this divide is theoretically distortive and re-join at the seams these realms of study to produce a more whole, as well as transnational, picture of racial capitalist oppression and (post) imperial popular politics.

THEORIZING THE MATERIAL INSIDE/OUTSIDE OF POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY

Democracy and Empire intervenes in the dynamic literature that addresses how concepts and practices of sovereignty, US democracy, freedom, and the political are limited by settler projects and/or the systematic exclusion of slaves and their descendants.[6] This point is also sustained by scholars of white democracy and the racial contract, who consider western democratic formations *Herrenvolk* democracies, where peoples collectively agree to exclude racialized others from a community of reciprocity, an account more recently extended to encompass the global.[7]

My focus on popular sovereignty and self-determination as curtailed principles of collective organization echoes these concerns but substantially expands the purview of the inquiry. First, to accounts that acknowledge the global character of white supremacy as an institution and circulating ideology, this book adds a more careful conceptualization of the political character of this rule and its material background. In so doing, it directly addresses and problematizes the predominant theorization of popular sovereignty and self-determination in isolation from

[6] See, respectively, the accounts of Joan Cocks, Adam Dahl, Aziz Rana, and Karena Shaw. Karena Shaw, *Indigeneity and Political Theory: Sovereignty and the Limits of the Political* (London: Routledge, 2008), Aziz Rana, *The Two Faces of American Freedom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), Joan Cocks, *On Sovereignty and Other Political Delusions* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), Adam Dahl, *Empire of the People: Settler Colonialism and the Foundations of Modern Democratic Thought* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2018).

[7] Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), Charles W. Mills, "Race and Global Justice," in *Empire, Race, and Global Justice*, ed. Duncan Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), Joel Olson, *The Abolition of White Democracy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

its entanglements with despotic global orientations and racial capitalism. Specifically, the book connects these two core political concepts to the coercive organization and extraction of labor, land, and resources for social reproduction; these are both incorporated into capitalist circuits of accumulation and make possible white democracies' collective political claims. To do this, I rely on a more expansive archive than previously engaged, including the reading of canonical scholars in the Black radical tradition, imperial archives, and the historiography of moments when imperial structures smoothly metamorphose into domestically grounded "democratic" regimes. In tracing the intersection of democratic and imperial moments and structures, I follow Lisa Lowe in tracking the "intimacies of four continents," that is, the relationality and differentiation of peoples and their contemporaneity, thus traversing distinct and separately studied areas.[8] I extend the study of these intimacies by centering the *politics* of these moments of imbrication between different racialized groups, their mobilities, and their location within the division of labor. I theorize the moments of reorganization of these groups vis-à-vis each other, and the continuous but distinct institutional mechanisms of marginalization and labor control that target them. Finally, in this reconstruction, I further integrate questions of migration and ecology into the frameworks of popular sovereignty, racial capitalism, and empire, two pressing contemporary issues that are relatively overlooked within these traditions.

Thus, the critical reading of the entanglement between democracy and empire proposed here could not be further from the well-known analysis of this couplet by British liberals at the turn of the century. While these scholars did critique the claim that empire was guided by a beneficent spirit to teach the British "arts of governance," they did not delve into the hierarchy that grounded the supposed need for such a transfer.[9] Most importantly, J. A. Hobson did not turn his critical eye toward self-governing colonies themselves, highlighting them instead as

[8] Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 5–6.

[9] Leonard T. Hobhouse, "Democracy and Empire," *The Speaker*, October 18 (1902): 76, Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, 116–17. See also further discussion of this question in Chapter 1 on "democratic despotism" and Robert Gooding-Williams's comparative reading of Du Bois and Hobson, which highlights the former's departure from the latter's trust in trade unionism and socialism as the path to ending "the new imperialism." Robert Gooding-Williams, "Democratic Despotism and New Imperialism," in *Abolition & Democracy*, ed. Bernard Harcourt (New York: Columbia Center for Contemporary Critical Thought, 2020).

exceptional within the British Empire because rather than being ruled autocratically, they were ruled by "responsible representative government" and thus were the one space where true democratic government within empire was taking place.[10] In contrast, the analysis that follows argues that self-governing settler colonies exhibited the most duplicitous forms of imperial democracy. This form obscured their dependence on the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and slave labor, and gradually went on to expand the reach of its formal or informal dependence on their own imperial possessions, all the while developing a democratic discourse of self-government and popular sovereignty whose seductive power exceeded Hobson and other liberals of his generation. This book argues that this political form is not an aberration but the single most prevalent regime in the western world, worth studying and conceptualizing because its reconstruction is necessary for undoing it, that is, in order to re-theorize popular sovereignty in ways that can dismantle its imperial form.

Because the claims of the emancipation of an increasingly vocal white working class at the turn of the century demanded access to imperial wealth, their aspiration cannot be separated from the exploitation of nonwhite workers and nature that this entailed. So even while British settler colonies and the United States came to be seen as progressive and democratic projects that eschewed the autocratic features of the other British dominions, these collectives were outwardly despotic because they depended on stolen land, enslaved labor, and other imperial forms of extraction. In European metropoles, meanwhile, colonial wealth and migration to settler colonies were also explicitly conceived of by elites and working-class leaders as vehicles for social enfranchisement and upward mobility for the impoverished.[11] Acknowledging these entanglements

[10] J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (New York: Gordon Press, 1975 [1902]), 114–15, Duncan Bell, *Reordering the World: Essays on Liberalism and Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 357. This recasting of settler colonies as promising sites of representative democracy and progressivism takes place at the turn of the century, as Duncan Bell and Marilyn Lake note. Bell, *Reordering the World: Essays on Liberalism and Empire*, Marilyn Lake, *Progressive New World: How Settler Colonialism and Transpacific Exchange Shaped American Reform* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019).

[11] As Paul Hindenburg, who would preside over Germany from 1925, put it: "Without colonies no security regarding the acquisition of raw materials, without raw materials no industry, without industry no adequate standard of living and wealth. Therefore, Germans, do we need colonies." Cited in Maria Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 98. See also Chapter 2.

requires thinking anew about the material underpinnings of popular sovereignty, and investigating how declarations of peoplehood are imbricated with affective attachments to wealth and status enabled by imperialism. Imperialism, as a form of outward domination, is the "very means of existence" of racial capitalism, meaning that dominant capitalist countries depend on the "assured complement of backward areas and their resources."[12] Thus, embedding collective declarations of peoplehood in empire means detailing their dependence on transnational networks of mobility and racial capitalist extraction that resulted in a variety of political formations facilitating these flows. Hence, the goal is not to reconstruct a bounded or harmonious whole, but the combined waves of political domination, instances of partial liberation, and the racial ideologies that supported them, all of which operated and operate transnationally to support imperial democracies. This focus on democracy and the imperial political formations that supported its material basis through capitalist accumulation is sympathetic with but distinct from Olúfẹ́mi O. Táíwò's Global Racial Empire, which names the "global economic structure," whose basis was racism and colonialism, and the resulting *social* system of "linked cumulative advantage and disadvantage processes."[13] By centering popular politics, *Democracy and Empire* brings home the imbrication between imperial capitalism and *political* languages and institutions of democratic government, including popular sovereignty, self-determination as a founding principle of international order, regimes of migration control, and alienation from nature as key aspects of modern democracies.

My approach also contrasts with accounts of people-making that explore moments of constitution of the people and the transformation of the multitude into a political collective. Even if these approaches do not minimize the violence and decisionism that are contained in these moments of constitution, their focus on undecidability leaves out what precisely these violent structures amount to, and why the multitude happens to be racist, two facets at the core of this book's account.[14] As such,

[12] Oliver C. Cox, *Capitalism as a System* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964), 136.

[13] Olúfhemi O. Táíwò, *Reconsidering Reparations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 23–31.

[14] See also Ben McKean's critique of Laclau's failure to account for and problematize the attachments to racist populist discourse and the form of subjectivity entailed. "Toward an Inclusive Populism? On the Role of Race and Difference in Laclau's Politics," *Political Theory* 44(6), 814.

these approaches are less interested in connecting this violence to race or the imperial wealth that the people – once constituted – appropriates.[15] Other approaches theorize the people as a process which both moors state institutions and allows for "change, surprise, and innovation," thus solving the problem of indeterminacy.[16] A processual account, however, cannot easily accommodate changes that require dismantling the dependence of the previously enfranchised group on those excluded and rebuilding polities in a transnational key, as this book argues is necessary, because in such cases the turning upside down of the people's foundations is required for any broad emancipation. Scholars also focus on popular assemblies as privileged sites of political representation and moments in which rebellious aspirations to share power in egalitarian ways are cultivated.[17] Yet the possibility of nurturing these moments requires us to understand that aspirations to share power and access to wealth too often depend on conscripting others to satisfy the people's well-being. None of these approaches, moreover, puzzle over the fact that the power and well-being that popular movements wish to access in the wealthy world requires transnational networks of exploitation as a condition of possibility. These shortcomings mean that, by not theorizing its material background, theories of popular sovereignty hide the very substance of what the people aim to access and distribute, and the relationship political subjects establish with the labor and natural resources that sustain them as a collective. Was this entanglement possessive and extractive, or reciprocal and regenerative? If the former, then popular sovereignty becomes the means to distribute ill-gotten gains, and omitting this feature disavows the imperial projects that boundedly progressive movements support (see Chapter 2). Instead, *Democracy and Empire* theorizes this imperially truncated form of emancipation as a proper form, one worth studying to better understand it and how it could be dismantled. This account of imperial

[15] Bonnie Honig, "Between Decision and Deliberation: Political Paradox in Democratic Theory," *American Political Science Review* 101, no. 1 (2007). For other critiques of this approach see Antonio Y. Vázquez-Arroyo, "Agonized Liberalism. The Liberal Theory of William E. Connolly," *Radical Philosophy* 127, Sep/Oct (2004), Regina Kreide's "Democracy in Crisis: Why Political Philosophy Needs Social Theory," 42–43.

[16] Paulina Ochoa Espejo, *The Time of Popular Sovereignty: Process and the Democratic State* (University Park: Penn State Press, 2011).

[17] Jason Frank, *Constituent Moments* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), Laura Grattan, *Populism's Power: Radical Grassroots Democracy in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), Jason Frank, *The Democratic Sublime: On Aesthetics and Popular Assembly* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021).

popular sovereignty transnationalizes and systematizes a recent crop of work that traces how racialized violence can ground moments of constitution of the people.[18]

This does not mean, however, that the proposed framework explicates only a sub-standard regime of popular sovereignty, leaving popular sovereignty in its ideal form unscathed as a theoretical concept. Because all existing forms of popular sovereignty emerged in either imperial regimes or postcolonial contexts, an "ideal" model of popular sovereignty needs to conceptualize forms of collective politics that are not only emancipating themselves from monarchs or nondemocratic elites, but also founding regimes that do not dispossess others. The proposed account also recasts popular sovereignty in the postcolonial context (Chapter 5), where emancipation following decolonization is not only from colonial powers, but also properly from authoritarian rulers of a particular kind, i.e, coopted postcolonial leaders who steer the polity toward the funneling of resources to former metropoles, meaning that the constitution of the people requires the recuperation of the *common*wealth from predatory actors at home and abroad. This shows that not considering the material underpinnings of popular sovereignty and the transnational despotic entanglements that they entail cannot but result in its mis-conceptualization, that is, its conceptualization in ways that disavow harms inflicted or suffered by the collective demanding self-government.[19] Ultimately, an ideal popular sovereignty is one that is anti-imperial, one that remains vigilant of its possessiveness rather than silent on its relations to its outside. This stance also forces us to rethink democracy and emancipation in transnational terms, knowing that otherwise it is impossible to fully account

[18] Fred Lee *Extraordinary Racial Politics* (*Philadelphia:* Temple University Press, 2018), Michael Gorup, "The Strange Fruit of the Tree of Liberty: Lynch Law and Popular Sovereignty in the United States," *Perspectives on Politics* 18, no. 3 (2020), Inés Valdez, "Socialism and Empire: Labor Mobility, Racial Capitalism, and the Political Theory of Migration," *Political Theory* 49, no. 6 (2021). Nazlı Konya also scrutinizes authoritarian efforts to emulate the desire and insurgency of democratic movements to cement their rule in "Making a People: Turkey's 'Democracy Watches' and Gezi-Envy," *Political Theory* 49, no. 5 (2021).

[19] Elisabeth Anker's recent theorization of "ugly freedoms" is a helpful parallel here. By calling certain varieties of freedom "ugly," she emphasizes "how a celebrated value of nondomination or uncoerced action can be practiced as brutality" in a way that discounts this brutality. Elisabeth Anker, *Ugly Freedoms* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 6. In my case, every account of popular sovereignty that does not ensure its material background is not dependent on despotic transnational ties is ugly in Anker's sense.

for connective lines of injury that make possible the well-being of privileged polities, to assume responsibility for these harms, and to undo them. These tasks of accountability, acknowledgment, and reparation must take place at the transnational rather than inter-state level, if they are to undo regimes of democratic despotism and their capitalist entanglements and refund them as thoroughly transnational regimes. In other words, as I argue in Chapter 5 and the Conclusion, no project of popular sovereignty can proceed soundly without the establishment of transnational solidarity ties and a global anti-oligarchic orientation.

Rethinking and undoing popular sovereignty is necessary because despite changing conditions, imperial democratic trends remain recognizable in the neoliberal refashioning of development discussed in Chapter 1, in right-wing populism, and in the authoritarian practices of state racism, such as the family separations and child detention at the US southwest border analyzed in Chapter 4. This does not mean minimizing the transformations that global and domestic institutions have undergone since the historical junctures studied in in this book, but taking these trajectories seriously to clarify the forces and structures of power that remain and stand in the way of emancipation.

Reconstructing continuities amidst transformations means that, rather than accept taken-for-granted markers of progress such as the New Deal, decolonization, or the civil rights movement, *Democracy and Empire* holds that the imperial democracies that took shape and expanded at the turn of the century, reached a zenith with the golden age of the postwar welfare state, and were threatened by decolonization during the Cold War, remain imperial. In other words, the imagery of the New Deal or the golden age of the welfare state, which is implicitly or explicitly invoked and contrasted with the neoliberal logics that prevail today by progressive actors and academics,[20] should serve less as a contrast to neoliberalism's ravages than as an instance of imperial social enfranchisement that helps explain the racist reaction that has accompanied the deterioration of standards of living among a portion of the white working class. Without centering these racialized and imperial processes

[20] This appears explicitly in Steve Klein's recent book but is also the background condition that neoliberalism operates over in the work of Nancy Fraser and Wendy Brown, among others. Wendy Brown, "We Are All Democrats Now …" *Theory & Event* 13, no. 2 (2010), Nancy Fraser, "Legitimation Crisis? On the Political Contradictions of Financialized Capitalism," *Critical Historical Studies* 2, no. 2 (2015), Steven Klein, *The Work of Politics: Making a Democratic Welfare State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). I engage with this literature in more detail in Chapter 2.

of formation of popular politics in the west, contemporary approaches beg the question of why precisely the reaction today is taking the racist turn that it does.

As noted in subsequent chapters, the genealogy proposed in this book acknowledges and theorizes these racist populist outbursts as not foreign to the popular political tradition of imperial western polities (and not limited to the fascisms of 1930s Europe). It also studies the transformations that neoliberal globalization has brought to the myths and realities of imperial popular sovereignty[21] to consider this less as a novel deterioration of a foundational principle than a bringing into relief of logics of difference and selective inclusion and exclusion that allow racial capitalism to thrive.[22] Thus, the hope is to prompt theorists of the people and democracy who reflect on the current crisis to better scrutinize the supposedly progressive historical formations of peoplehood that they implicitly contrast with the crisis *du jour*. The goal, in other words, is to problematize the implicit reference to past moments of popular emancipation being newly tainted by neoliberalism or other ills, as if this past was not already tainted by racialized and imperial entanglements that reappear in metamorphosed shape. To contribute to this project, *Democracy and Empire* offers a historically grounded analysis of how these imperial formations imbued central concepts of political theory and traces the implications for contemporary politics and political theorizing.

This analysis is particularly important because socialist and popular discourses and practices of the white working classes and trade unions directed against capitalism coexisted with imperial ideologies of racial hierarchy, which diluted the radicalism of these proposals.[23] This amounted to accepting capitalism as long as it could better cater to white workers' well-being, an equation that required the continued hyper-exploitation of racialized labor, as Chapters 1 to 4 make clear.

[21] Wendy Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 68–69.

[22] Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000 [1983]), 26, Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 2.

[23] Thus, my claim about the imperial character of socialist discourse is limited to a subset of this field, and does not include socialist discourse and practices that were actively anti-racist, including those of the thinkers that my project builds upon. Notably, Du Bois, who witnessed and critiqued the imperial progressive discourse at the turn of the century, which I cover in Chapters 1 and 2.

ARTICULATED RACIAL REGIMES AND IMPERIAL POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY

The literature on racial capitalism closely tracks the racial directions of the "development, organization, and expansion of capitalist society" and the social structure that emerged from it, including how ideologies of racialism permeated the class consciousness of white workers.[24] This framework offers a historical account of how capitalist imperatives advanced partly through the creation and manipulation of ideologies of racial difference in ways that created pockets of more or less intense exploitation and the political institutions to police their borders. There is disagreement regarding the particular relation between racism and capitalism in this literature, however. While some scholars see racism as intrinsic to capitalism, others see racialization as a factor that shapes the capitalist social order, and a third group considers racism and capitalism as independent, though articulated, systems of domination, alongside patriarchy.[25] The latter camp allows for autonomous logics of capitalism, white supremacy, and patriarchy, arguing that these regimes become mutually articulated to produce particular historical regimes of domination.[26] I repurpose the notion of articulation to conceptualize the shape and mutual relationships between the multiple racisms depicted in *Democracy and Empire*. Precisely because of how capitalism works through hierarchies based on racial difference, differently racialized groups are manipulated to fulfill needs for exploitable labor in ways that play them against each other and make up for the changed status of one group by subjecting another. This manipulation is accomplished through continuous techniques of subjection that confine these groups, commodify their kinship structures, subject their bodies to strenuous work, and expropriate their land. Because racial ideologies play a role

[24] Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, 2, 3.

[25] Here I rely on Michael Dawson's account of the literature, which categorizes Cedric Robinson and Jodi Melamed as proponents of racial capitalism, Nancy Fraser as a theorist of racialized capitalism, and himself and collaborators as instead putting forward a framework of race and capitalism. Michael Dawson, "Hidden in Plain Sight II: Why Race and Capitalism," *Manuscript on File with Author* (2021), Fraser, "Legitimation Crisis? On the Political Contradictions of Financialized Capitalism", Fraser and Jaeggi, *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory*, Melamed, "Racial Capitalism", Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*.

[26] Michael C. Dawson and Emily A. Katzenstein, "Articulated Darkness: White Supremacy, Patriarchy, and Capitalism in Shelby's Dark Ghettos," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 27, no. 2 (2019).

in sustaining these structures, and these discourses themselves are ridden by internal tensions and contradictions, it is difficult to argue for a singular and constant relation between racism and capitalism.[27] The contradictions, renegotiations, and transformations of racial hierarchy are particularly visible when the category of racism itself is opened up to theorize distinct forms of racialization that emerge in intimate relation with each other, and whose operation exhibits both continuities and contradictions, as this book does.[28] To account for these junctures, I theorize the domination of different racialized groups in dynamic interaction with each other and with the exploitation of nature, and make sense of their role in capitalist accumulation. These reciprocal effects extend to the mediating role of white popular politics in processes of racialization and regimes of oppression.

Vis-à-vis the literature on racial capitalism, my contribution is to draw the connections between different racial regimes and capitalism, on the one hand, and collective democratic practices and concepts such as popular sovereignty and self-determination, on the other. This illuminates how racial capitalist formations owe their existence at least partly to collective emancipatory discourses and actions sustained by white collectives. This is what I mean by the "material underpinnings" of popular sovereignty, a theoretical dynamic that I illustrate with three historical forms of articulation between racial regimes. The first concerns the racial oppression that followed and became articulated with the partial emancipation of slaves in the British Empire and the United States, namely territorial colonialism in Africa as a newly preferred mode of bringing land and labor together to produce raw materials. The second is the forced recruitment of Chinese and Indian indentured laborers, which fueled planters' efforts to maintain labor control after emancipation. A third form of articulation took place decades later with the ban on Asian migration into the United States, which reshaped the articulation of the US racial regime and racialized brown Mexicanos, through the heightened reliance on exploitable Mexican labor facilitated by US and Mexican racial/political formations, and the hierarchies between the two countries. All of these formations were in turn articulated with and grounded on land obtained through Indigenous dispossession, to the extent that the racial filtering of migration in the settler colonies and the United

[27] Stuart Hall, "Race, Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance," in *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism* (New York: UNESCO Press, 1980), 334.

[28] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 4–5, Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*.

States contributed to both settlement (by accepting white migrants as settlers) and the reliance of settlers on forced labor (through slavery and the hierarchical incorporation of nonwhite laborers). In a parallel process, the territorial dominion of Africa, while not always replicating the settler model of South Africa, nonetheless utilized the land and labor of natives for the purpose of accumulation. By tracking the imperial articulation of the domination of different racial groups and further connecting mobility and changing modalities of colonialism to transnational re-adjustments, this book expands on racial capitalism by contextualizing its predominant focus on transatlantic slavery and its US aftermath on the global arena, and by attending to how these racial formations prompted and were in turn shaped by others.

Thus understood, racial domination is a composite that emerges out of the encounter of different trajectories – including changing geopolitical conditions and resistance and/or partial emancipation by other racialized groups – which shape and orient the capitalist drive to extract nature and labor to fill the demands of workers/consumers and machinery. These processes are akin to what happens when waves overlap, bend, and spread out when they encounter an obstacle or one another.[29] In this way, the role of race and racism in capitalism can be understood as "unstable" in the sense that it is durable but also historically contingent.[30] Thus, rather than presuming bounded realms of domination – such as "colonialism" and "migration" – and studying them separately, *Democracy and Empire* focuses on how boundaries between realms are produced in the entangled operation of political demands, imperial mobilities, and differential modes of racial oppression and resistance. Two implications follow from this approach. First, race and racial difference are here theorized as thoroughly historical.[31] Second, by tracing the emergence of difference, rather than presuming this difference and letting it determine our foci of study, democratic politics, empire,

[29] Donna Haraway, "The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others," in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler (New York: Routledge, 1992), 300, Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 28–30.

[30] Angela Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," *The Black Scholar* 12, no. 6 (1981), Gilmore, "Fatal Couplings of Power and Difference: Notes on Racism and Geography", Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Marxism and the Antinomies of Racial Capitalism*, *After Marx* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

[31] Hall, "Race, Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance," 308.

migration, and ecology are revealed as entwined domains whose logics are continuous and whose narratives of legitimation are strategically and deceptively deployed by elite and popular actors in constructing racial boundaries. Thus, foreignness is only a marker of exclusion when augmented by nonwhiteness, and nonwhite Indigenous and slave descendants who are formally citizens can be targeted by tools of confinement and labor control that find echoes in both migration regimes and overseas colonialism. These combinations of realms, narratives, and techniques allow for multiple entangled forms of racial subjugation that must be studied as such.

MIGRATION, NATURE, AND RACIAL CAPITALISM

A central contribution of *Democracy and Empire* is to theorize, historicize, and carve a place for migration and ecology within the theorization of popular sovereignty, as noted earlier, but also to integrate them into our thinking about empire and racial capitalism. Regarding migration, this means departing from treating migration politics as an autonomous realm or issue area within democracies. On the one hand, analytical philosophers theorize the rights of migrants to admission and membership and the duties owed to particularly vulnerable migrants and refugees as if this was a semi-autonomous realm within democratic politics to which normative principles can be applied.[32] This group of scholars seldom historicize the question of migration, with the consequence that they do not consider its racialized aspects as anything but regrettable features that should be normatively condemned, rather than as constitutive of the patterns and functions of mobility. This also means that they do not theorize the entanglements between migration and transnational structures of labor control or grasp its role within the regimes of social reproduction that this book studies. On the other hand, when critical approaches to democratic politics and capitalism grapple with migration – typically prompted by its political salience in the current, at the time or writing, rise of right-wing politics in the west – they tend to consider migration as an external shock of sorts, that is, a recent phenomenon associated with neoliberal globalization, which, alongside other factors, contributed

[32] Michael Blake, "Immigration, Jurisdiction, and Exclusion," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 41, no. 2 (2013), Joseph H. Carens, *The Ethics of Immigration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), Anna Stilz, *Territorial Sovereignty: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

to authoritarian backlashes against a diversifying population.[33] Thus, despite their genealogical or critical-historical orientation, they offer presentist accounts of migration, and eschew theorizing migration itself and anti-immigration forces as historically central to shaping popular discourse among the white working classes. This account is problematized in Chapters 2 and 3, by recasting racialized migration control as a component part of settler colonialism and as foundational to white democracies in the west, and migrant populations as central to guaranteeing the social reproduction of white citizens.

Nancy Fraser's historical framework is notable in this regard, in the sense that it remains limited, despite acknowledging the limitations of left politics and rightly embedding migration within imperial relations and relations of expropriation. Fraser notes, first, that polities in the core depended on (neo)imperial relations to fund their social entitlements, and this they achieved through "politically enforced hierarchies of status" and "ongoing racialized exploitation in the periphery and the core."[34] She echoes feminist scholars such as Silvia Federici and Maria Mies in asserting that the western care gap was filled by importing migrant workers from poorer countries, typically rural women from poor regions who were obliged to transfer their own caring responsibilities to even poorer caregivers.[35] Yet Fraser's framework still stops short of recognizing the intimate entanglements between migration and founding political moments. Moreover, her framework remains at too high a level of abstraction to properly consider the dynamics of this hyper-exploitation, which she terms "expropriation." When pressed for

[33] Wendy Brown, *In the Ruins of Neoliberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 179–83. See, for contrast, Jacqueline Stevens's examination of anti-immigrant hostility as grounded in the violent attachments to birthright citizenship and kinship that constitute the nation or Paul Apostolidis's analysis of precarity among migrant workers as a critical entry point to critique neoliberalism and Trumpism. Jacqueline Stevens, *States without Nations: Citizenship for Mortals* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 25, 75, Paul Apostolidis, "Desperate Responsibility: Precarity and Right-Wing Populism," *Political Theory* 50, no. 1 (2022). These critical approaches, while not necessarily casting migration as a dimension of imperial regimes, do consider migration as a constitutive aspects of nation states or neoliberal logics, respectively.

[34] Fraser and Jaeggi, *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory*, 189, Nancy Fraser, "Capitalism's Crisis of Care," *Dissent* 63, no. 4 (2016): 110.

[35] Fraser, "Capitalism's Crisis of Care", Silvia Federici, "Reproduction and Feminist Struggle in the New International Division of Labor," in *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2012), Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour*.

specificity, Fraser claims that the politics of expropriation amount to hierarchical power relations that distinguish subject peoples (including unfree chattel slaves and dependent members of subordinated groups) from rights-bearing individuals.[36]

But power relations that are hierarchical and reproduce power differentials potentially comprise a wide variety of distinct arrangements. As Michael Dawson notes, Fraser's characterization of racial subordination as a mark that allows expropriation does not appropriately explain the meaning and experience of being a racially subordinate group living under white supremacy.[37] In other words, the focus on the distinction between exploitation and expropriation, as facilitated by social difference generally, or race in particular,[38] does not specify the heterogeneity of the political formations that further differentiate the experiences of those expropriated and how the institutions that ensure this subaltern position are created, in ways inextricable from both empire and moments of democratic founding. As Chapter 2 shows, this generalized account of racial expropriation does not account for the entanglement between white enfranchisement and the exclusion of nonwhite migrants, and how racialized foreigners were recruited to "solve" problems of labor control raised by the partial emancipation of Black slaves. Chapter 3 further showcases the heterogeneous regimes of domination devoted to labor control by embedding the regulation of nonwhite immigration into a longer genealogy of popular politics that governed brown laborers in the United States (through conquest and settlement, irregular migration, guest work, and mass interior policing and surveillance, subsequently) and ensured the social reproduction of white citizens. What is missing is the theoretical work that mediates between concepts and the specific structures of power that oppress,[39] and the connection between these two and the political narratives that legitimate it and the institutions that organize them.

While indebted to Fraser's careful mapping of contemporary capitalism, this book attends to the theoretical work needed to understand the *political* conditions of possibility of capital's "cannibaliz[ation of] labour, disciplin[ing of] states, transfer[ing of] wealth from periphery to core, and suck[ing of] value from households, families, communities and

[36] Fraser and Jaeggi, *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory*, 41.
[37] Dawson, "Hidden in Plain Sight II: Why Race and Capitalism," 11–12.
[38] See also Go's reliance on this distinction. Julian Go, "Three Tensions in the Theory of Racial Capitalism," *Sociological Theory* 39, no. 1 (2021).
[39] Lois McNay, "The Politics of Welfare," *European Journal of Political Theory* (forthcoming): 9.

nature."[40] The extraction of nature, in particular, is another area in which *Democracy and Empire* recasts the problem. While Fraser characterizes nature as one of the "hidden abodes" of capital accumulation, I theorize the political productivity and expansiveness of this divide, showing that the nature/technology binary both centrally shapes politics and organizes the racial divisions that sustain capitalism. Hence, Chapter 4 shows that the identification between western societies and technology alienates political subjects from the utter dependence of their bodies, polities, and economies on nature. In this way, popular politics proceed *as if* the technological superiority of western countries meant their emancipation from nature, contributing to the hubristic orientation toward its exploitation and the racialized labor that performs strenuous work in proximity to it. The chapter shows that the tying together of racialized labor and natural resources to be extracted was a central task of empire, and one that democratic polities inherited and remains pressing today. A central part of this project was/is the racialization of those who are conscripted to do the work of extracting raw materials, which proceeds by constructing their bodily capacities and dispositions as opposed to whites' technological abilities and their mastery of nature. This careful work of reconstructing how the extraction of nature is entwined with the creation of racial hierarchies that justify the treatment of nonwhite subjects, their families, community spaces, and land helps specify how structures of oppression work and create meaning, making it easier to identify the most promising instances of resistance and disruption.[41]

Differently put, Fraser's framework of capitalist contradictions provides a helpful background to the contemporary crisis of capitalism and democracy, but its theorization of politics remains too abstractly concerned with how capitalism truncates democracy by handing political issues to market forces and restricting the political autonomy of subjects and their ability to be joint authors of collective life.[42] Instead, I argue that capitalist logics of economic, natural, and labor extraction do not simply invade, or replace collective logic but are always in fact foundationally embedded in political processes, and thus work through them and through "the production of political subjectivities."[43] Without recognizing this, we risk repairing the regime of popular sovereignty rather

[40] Fraser and Jaeggi, *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory*, 113.
[41] Ana Muñiz, *Police, Power, and the Production of Racial Boundaries* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015), 122.
[42] Fraser and Jaeggi, *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory*, 131.
[43] Chambers, "Undoing Neoliberalism: Homo Œconomicus, Homo Politicus, and the Zōon Politikon," 706.

than recognizing it as the particularly possessive, technologized, and racialized form of rule reconstructed in this book.

To trace these multiple transnational racisms, the first part of the book reveals popular sovereignty and self-determination as emancipatory languages dependent on racialized understandings of family well-being and material prosperity reserved for white workers and upwardly mobile whites, who in demanding the expansion of the franchise racially delimit the people, while mutually agreeing to derive their subsistence from the exploited work of those excluded worldwide. I trace how the forms of exclusion evolved in response to changing working-class discourses of anti-capitalism, partial emancipation of certain groups, and the conscription of new racialized subjects to maintain labor control. The second part of this book zooms into the destructive drives of capitalism, on which democratic collectives within empires depend. The collective demands for better wages and working conditions, the aspirational model of the bourgeois patriarchal family, and the technological advances that transform workplaces all have as their counterpart the continued reliance on racialized workers for the work of social reproduction and raw material extraction. Chapter 3 shows how regimes of conquest and settlement, informal migration, guest work, and surveilled undocumented work subsequently facilitated the caring work and work of social reproduction. Chapter 4 illustrates how the appropriation of labor in the colonies is the other side of the coin of the appropriation and destructive exploitation of nature. The third part of the book explores the possibility of anti-imperial popular sovereignty, bringing together anti-imperial discourses in the core and the postcolonies to reconstruct a transnational anti-oligarchic solidarity that rejects the predatory dependencies described here. In closing, the book considers how anti-imperial solidarity requires attending to the articulations between the oppression of different racialized groups and the continuities in the techniques of control, so that political actors understand their place in anti-imperial resistance. Such an understanding must recognize nature as the base of all life, and – based on this – recast desirable political relations between all humans and nature as necessarily reciprocal, rather than extractive.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The questions and claims elaborated earlier set the stage for the arguments pursued in the chapters that follow, which theorize a popular sovereignty suffused with both an affective attachment to wealth and a collective agreement to dominate others abroad to secure that wealth. Imperial capitalist logics also turn the notion of self-determination from

a formal entitlement of peoples to self-govern toward an excessive entitlement to dominate others in the colonies and, later, the Global South (what I call "self-and-other-determination"). This collective agreement is racial, in the sense that it welcomed white Europeans arriving in settler colonies to a polity that gave them access to land, while excluding from this same compact nonwhite arrivals, who were instead conscripted into strenuous labor to sustain the white polity alongside other groups located in the colonies. This process was both "democratic" and imperial, in the sense that it was grounded in political collectives that claimed a right to popular government; such collectives were, however, grounded in stolen land and abided by logics of racial separation and capitalist extraction organized at the level of empires. These imperial features, moreover, were absorbed by avowedly "democratic" institutions, including those of immigration control, now sheltered by their status as legitimate features of sovereign, self-determining polities. Systems of migration control, in turn, worked together with other structures of racial regulation of local labor, conquest, and bilateral guest worker programs to consolidate and sustain over time the political and economic exclusion of racialized populations within settler colonies. This arrangement conscripted the exploited labor of these subjects into the protection and nurturing of the relatively privileged white groups, that is, their social reproduction, while threatening the destruction of the kinship structures and bodily integrity of racialized subjects. This "democratic" regime of internal and external oppression predicated on racial hierarchy evolved and consolidated around the global division of labor between the industrialized west and the rest of the world, in charge of the extraction of raw materials. This process fueled the identification of whiteness with technology and had as its counterpart the relegation of nonwhites to strenuous jobs performed close to the surface of and underground the land, facilitating a more intense and destructive exploitation of nature. In this scheme, ecological destruction and racial oppression go together, facilitated by the alienation of western subjects from nature and nonwhites, even as their high-technology way of life would not be possible were it not for raw materials and the racialized labor that extracts them.

This picture offers a bleak historical outlook of popular sovereignty as a praxis, but it also clarifies the mechanics of these popular claims to theorize and found a positively anti-imperial popular sovereignty, one that can track and act against the articulated oppression of different racial groups, who, in coalition, can lead an anti-oligarchic critique of transnational structures of injustice. This critique does not miss the domestic level of

politics as the site where these global structures are grounded and, at the same time, actively disavowed through the language of popular sovereignty and self-determination, but leverages the points of commonality in differently located realms to craft a radical politics of solidarity.

The chapters that follow develop these arguments in three parts: the first theorizes the entanglements between popular sovereignty and its material bases, which depend on a world-spanning capitalist empire of resource extraction and the control of racialized labor. The second part theorizes the forms of political rule that guarantee domination by creating the conditions of racialized labor exploitation that ensure social reproduction and the appropriation of nature overseas. The third part conceptualizes resistance, by exploring the emancipatory possibilities that remain within popular sovereignty and the alternative forms of attachment and collective action that exist to ground a radical politics of solidarity, its horizon located beyond accumulation through racism and ecological destruction. The argument thus proceeds from the conceptualization of the material background of self-determination and popular sovereignty, through its specification in the analysis of two realms of appropriation, and toward the identification of promising anti-imperial accounts of popular sovereignty to support transnational emancipation.

Chapter 1 of the book examines W. E. B. Du Bois's notion of democratic despotism to illustrate the entanglement of popular sovereignty and empire through an excessive form of western self-determination and theorizes how features of this formation remain – while transformed – in neoliberal arrangements. Democratic despotism implies that – in western democracies at the turn of the century – popular sovereignty was an impulse to partake of the wealth and resources obtained by racial capitalism in ways enabled through imperial domination. Rather than a self-contained unit, western democracies issued a claim to determine themselves (democratically), as well as others (despotically), that is, "self-and-other-determination." I rely on the writings of Frantz Fanon and Saidiya Hartman to conceptualize how the transformations of formal imperial arrangements do not prevent racial affective attachments from continuing to actively organize relations between the west and the rest of the world. In closing, I show that this critical approach to self-determination illuminates the contemporary rise of right-wing populism.

Chapter 2 expands on the imperial entanglements of popular sovereignty by focusing on the encounter between imperial elite narratives of racial hierarchy and white working-class emancipatory discourse, which

develops as white and nonwhite migrants flocked to settler colonies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This I reconstruct through the socialist writings of Henry Hyndman and the discourses and actions of national and transnational union organizing, the world historical writings of Charles Pearson, and archival documents of the British imperial bureaucracy. I make sense of how white self-government in settler colonies calls the state to regulate nonwhite migrants in a way that absorbs imperial functions of labor control. This account recasts state migration controls, routinely mistaken for attributes of sovereign states in the contemporary literature, as rehabilitated imperial functions that ensure both the continuation of the settler project (by admitting European migrants and excluding or marginalizing nonwhites) and a racial capitalist regime of labor control that guarantees access to hyper-exploited labor by racial others, which allows for capitalist profit and the well-being of an upwardly mobile white working class.

Chapter 3 homes in on a particular aspect of the material background of popular sovereignty: the regimes of labor control that facilitate the social reproduction of western subjects. This chapter theorizes how the continuous subjection of brown families was enabled by shifting institutional formations throughout history. I build upon the work of Spillers and Hartman on kinship; Indigenous political thinkers Shelbi Meissner, Anne Mikaere, and Kyle Whyte's writings on the family; and Latinx scholars Kelly Hernández, Mireya Loza, and Ana Rosas's work on migration, gender, and families to trace the intersecting effects of racial capitalist projects in Mexico and the United States on the *brown family*. I argue that the reliance of US social reproduction on racialized families required their construction as abject and the decimation of their resources for self-care and reproduction. I reconstruct this process by recasting conquest, settlement, guest work, and heightened immigration surveillance in the US Southwest as *distinct* regimes of domination guaranteeing a *continuous* system of labor control that facilitated access to cheap social reproduction for white waged labor. Coercive labor regimes were facilitated by the uneven relationship between Mexico and the United States, which brought their respective projects of modernization into conflict, given their parallel aim of conscripting brown/Indigenous labor to their cause. This disciplining was centrally about threatening and disallowing the integrity of brown families through ever-changing forms of exposure to potential or actual family separation, most recently in the mass separation of families and detention of unaccompanied children in 2018.

The focus on racialized labor in Chapters 2 and 3 as the material basis of popular sovereignty shows that the construction of race entailed conscripting nonwhite subjects to perform strenuous labor that engages the body in particularly intensive ways. Chapter 4 expands on this by tying the domination of racialized bodies to that of nonhuman nature, with which they combine to produce raw materials to feed industrial machinery. An ecological reading of W. E. B. Du Bois's writings on empire and development shows that racism maps onto a nature/technology divide, which positions technologically advanced societies as uniquely able to rule and dictate the fates of nonwhite peoples and the land they occupy. This stance devalues nature and alienates western societies from it and from the racialized subjects who labor on the earth's surface and underground. Du Bois reconstructs this racial theory of value and counters it by turning upside down the relationship between race and technology. Against accounts of white Europeans as uniquely technologically advanced, Du Bois posits racism as a convenient way of securing raw material and labor at null or negligible costs to feed European industrial machinery. Further, Du Bois critiques the technological mindset and the unsustainable speed of development imposed by (neo)colonial linkages, which prevents countries' pursuit of slower development oriented to satisfy societal needs. This results in a political rift that maps into the ecological rift created by global capitalism.

The first four chapters build a picture of polities whose emancipatory language and aims disavow their imperial aims of capital accumulation and racial domination. Yet they also offer a genealogy that illuminates fault lines and openings for abolition and political reconstruction. Such a project, I argue in Chapter 5, requires an anti-imperial popular sovereignty that differentiates peoples' popular will from elite projects of outward domination and withdraws demands for well-being that depend on the exploitation of others. Based on Martin Luther King Jr.'s writings on the US war in Vietnam, I reconstruct a tradition of popular sovereignty that urges worldliness and historical awareness among western peoples and extends anti-oligarchic discourses of peoplehood to criticize unholy western alliances with elites in the developing world. I juxtapose this account with Frantz Fanon's writings on postcolonial democracy and national consciousness, which tackle the problem of coopted postcolonial elites. This renewed language of popular sovereignty allows for the identification of potential radical affinities between differently located collectives struggling against oligarchic actors in both dominant and peripheral states.

The Conclusion considers the common imperial technologies of confinement and destruction of kinship that target Indigenous peoples, African and African American groups, and Latinx and other migrant subjects as a jumping-off point to examine the confluence in diverse languages of emancipation that emerge from these articulated but distinct and spatially grounded forms of subjection. It recovers from Marxist, Black, and Indigenous thought the centrality of relations of care and reciprocity vis-à-vis land, not simply as a technical matter that dictates the sustainable use of natural resources within a capitalist system, but as an acknowledgment that land is core to cultural, social, and political relations and foundational for life. On this basis, this section outlines an ecological popular sovereignty, in which the construction of a *we* depends on differently located subjects who acknowledge relations with each other and nature, whose sustenance is imperiled by imperial popular sovereignty and its authorization of racial capitalist accumulation.

In summary, my project begins by highlighting the despotic threads in the tradition of popular sovereignty and self-determination and traces how these despotic regimes transition from formal empire to an unequal postcolonial world. I then show that claims of popular sovereignty and the imposition of racial immigration control separated foreigners arriving at settler colonies between those who, because of their race, could join these projects as political subjects, and those to be exploited for the well-being of the former. Via Black, Indigenous, and Latinx scholars I theorize the commodification of kinship and the destruction of brown Hispanic/Mexicanas/Latinx families, conscripted into the social reproduction of privileged families, and return to Du Bois to explore how nature, joined with racialized labor, maintains the bodies and machines that underpin wealth and well-being in the western world. I conclude by recovering an anti-imperial script of popular sovereignty in King and Fanon, and go on to trace the coalitional possibilities of an ecological popular sovereignty by engaging with Indigenous political thought and practice.

PART I

IMPERIAL POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY

1

Empire, Popular Sovereignty, and the Problem of Self-and-Other-Determination

When W. E. B. Du Bois tackled the problem of democracy and empire in 1915, this debate was well-threaded but had yet to grapple with this couplet in his proposed terms.[1] The theme of despotic rule by democratic polities over other countries appears multiple times in the history of political thought. Athenians, for one, often thought of their democracy in terms of tyranny, referring nonpejoratively to the authority of the *dēmos* as "tyrannical and despotic," both vis-à-vis politicians who aimed to rule over it and with respect to other polities.[2] Nineteenth-century liberalism also grappled with these relationships, with Alexis de Tocqueville, for example, arguing that imperial projects could supply the virtue and glory that would ignite republican public-spiritedness.[3] John Stuart Mill and other reformist British liberals, in contrast, enlisted the self-evident backwardness of British colonial subjects as a standard against which to evaluate whether domestic groups deserved the extension of the franchise.[4] As noted in the Introduction, J. A. Hobson and Leonard T. Hobhouse's interest in the confluence of democratic and imperial forms of government was associated with their concern with the British polity's decay due to its sprawling empire, which they contrasted with the representative democratic promise of settler colonies.

[1] W. E. B. Du Bois, "The African Roots of War," *The Atlantic Monthly* 115, no. 5 (1915).
[2] Kinch Hoekstra, "Athenian Democracy and Popular Tyranny," in *Popular Sovereignty in Historical Perspective*, ed. Richard Bourke and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 17, 25–27, 38–42.
[3] Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 193–94.
[4] Ibid., 249.

Unlike his predecessors, Du Bois focused on the despotic linkage that western polities established with their colonies and internal others and its racial and material motivations, and argued for the reconceptualization of popular sovereignty and self-determination because of how this transformed the meaning and workings of democracy in the metropole. I recover Du Bois's notion of democratic despotism to conceptualize popular sovereignty, self-determination, and their interrelationship in the context of imperial and postcolonial racial capitalism – a central building block of this book's critical project.

I contextualize my reading of Du Bois in the discourses that prevailed among turn-of-the-century mass movements of labor enfranchisement in the west. These took place in the context of empire and thus infused popular sovereignty with affective attachments that supported and required the capitalist expropriation of the land and labor of imperial possessions. Because of this, I claim that it is analytically more accurate to understand the dominant iteration of western popular sovereignty as entailing *self-and-other-determination*, given its emergence in the context of imperial and racialized processes of enfranchisement.[5] Critical work has so far not scrutinized this feature of self-determination, because of its focus on postcolonial countries' deficits rather than on core countries' excessive self-determination. Yet the proposed analysis is potentially more productive to understanding continuing global domination as well as the rise of right-wing populism and its resentful global attachments at a time when peoples in wealthy countries are losing their imperial entitlements.

This chapter first contextualizes my account within the recent literature on empire. Then, I examine Du Bois's notion of democratic despotism in the context of evolving labor politics in the early twentieth century. After that, I conceptualize self-and-other-determination as an institutional form entangled with racism and capitalism and facilitated by racial affect. Fourth, I build on the work of Saidiya Hartman and Frantz Fanon to theorize how racial affective attachments that circulate and organize western democratic polities' relationship to the global mutate but persist after decolonization and into the neoliberal era. Lastly, I discuss implications for the literature on self-determination and the contemporary rise of right-wing populism.

[5] My point is not that every claim of popular sovereignty since the turn of the century fits this form, but that early twentieth-century white workers' enfranchisement was embedded in racial logics of empire, and that although groups that still profit from the imperial alliance have shrunk, collective attachments to exploitation abroad, led or facilitated by western governments, remain.

1.1 POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY, SELF-DETERMINATION, AND EMPIRE

Critical engagement with popular sovereignty in the literature on empire has predominantly – and importantly – attended to projects in the postcolonial world.[6] These scholars note that the Westphalian frame and its attendant view of decolonization as the incorporation of newly independent states into an international society leave much to be desired. This model overlooks projects of sovereignty that were decidedly anti-imperial, yet not necessarily national or statist.[7] It also leaves out the radical break in the thought of postcolonial statesmen with the Eurocentric society of states.[8] These accounts confirm that a Westphalian understanding of sovereignty disregards how, in an unjust world, background conditions are lacking for genuine self-determination.[9]

Yet these accounts of subaltern popular sovereignty and self-determination limit their criticism to the international system and omit theorizing specifically how the global hierarchies and injustices they identify are grounded in the *democratic* European and settler polities that sustained the imperial order and remain dominant today. In other words, a notion of imperial popular sovereignty is needed that encompasses a will to self-government entwined with an entitlement to govern others abroad. It is this facet of popular sovereignty and self-determination that co-constitutes the hierarchical international system *and* makes the claim of an expansion of the society of states in equal terms truly absurd. To the extent that western states' self-determination involves a claim both to govern themselves and dominate others, its very expansion is an inconsistent project; that is, a world of equally outwardly dominating states is impossible.[10] From the

[6] By the "postcolonial world" I mean formerly colonized and currently independent countries who formally detached themselves from colonizers, though a core claim of this chapter is that colonial relations with powerful western countries persist under different guises.

[7] Manu Goswami, "Imaginary Futures and Colonial Internationalisms," *The American Historical Review* 117, no. 5 (2012): 1461–62, Karuna Mantena, "Popular Sovereignty and Anti-Colonialism," in *Popular Sovereignty in Historical Perspective*, ed. Richard Bourke and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 300–1, Inés Valdez, *Transnational Cosmopolitanism: Kant, Du Bois, and Justice as a Political Craft* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[8] Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 12.

[9] Catherine Lu, "Cosmopolitan Justice, Democracy and the World State," in *Institutional Cosmopolitanism*, ed. Luis Cabrera (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 234.

[10] Maria Mies (1998, 76) expresses this logical flaw more generally in her critique of Engels's strategy of extending "what is good to the ruling classes" to the whole of society

start, the relative equality of western states among each other sanctioned in Westphalia coexisted with their internal organization as democratic despotisms (i.e., domination of non-European states that was *popularly* embraced). This means that the political forms that brought western citizens together behind this despotic project must be critiqued and transformed if decolonization is to result in the end of domination. This is because wealthy polities' unreformed orientations and material sustenance continue to depend upon racial capitalist accumulation, which in turn requires the imperial organization of the globe.

The entwined character of the US polity, on the one hand, and settler colonialism and external imperial aggression, on the other, has been more thoroughly addressed. Critical readings of figures ranging from J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, Thomas Paine, and Thomas Jefferson to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman, and Louis Hartz show that democracy and citizenship were shaped and dependent on imperial projects, cast the people as an agent of settler colonialism,[11] and required expanding slavery and expropriating Indigenous groups.[12] Moreover, the citizen subjects and the forms of belonging that emerged out of Jefferson's "empire of liberty" were shaped by the materialities and legalities of slavery and empire.[13] These engagements with texts, legal documents, and policy, however, still fall short of exposing the material base of popular sovereignty as a political form – that is, how popular sovereignty both depends on and disavows racial capitalist processes of accumulation reliant on empire. This chapter and the next tackle this very problem by revealing the seams joining together democracy, racial capitalism, and empire.[14]

when she notes that "in a contradictory and exploitative relationship, the privileges of the exploiters can never become the privileges of all."

[11] Dahl, *Empire of the People: Settler Colonialism and the Foundations of Modern Democratic Thought*, 9–11.

[12] Rana, *The Two Faces of American Freedom*, 22.

[13] Anthony Bogues, *Empire of Liberty: Power, Desire, and Freedom* (Lebanon, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2010), 29.

[14] For reasons of space, I support Du Bois's conceptualization with an analysis of working-class discourse in the US case, while construing the analysis of affect within unequal global politics more broadly. Hence, despite the US focus of the analysis, the effort to bring working classes into the fold of empire through the promise of access to wealth was a more general facet of western politics, at play in British workers' feelings of superiority over Irish workers, the joining of the British working class in the celebration of imperial victories in South Africa, and the German social democratic embrace of colonization as a way to increase domestic forces of production and allow German families to overcome miserable conditions of living. See Karl Marx, "Confidential Communication. Letter to Ludwig Kugelmann on Bakunin, Vol. 3," in *The Karl Marx Library*, ed. Saul K. Padover

In this reconstruction, I single out the role of affective attachments in facilitating the embrace by the white working-class of narratives of imperial exploitation and the demands of this class for the distribution of this wealth among themselves. This embrace shaped popular sovereignty and produced an excessive form of self-determination, which I call "self-and-other-determination." To make sense of the material dimensions of this concept, the chapter explores the articulation between capitalism and racism. Scholars have argued that capitalism offered moderate concessions to white waged workers while more intensively exploiting and expropriating the labor, property, and bodies of racialized workers, who lacked the political resources available to citizen-workers.[15] I specify how these dynamics operated vis-à-vis external others and tainted popular sovereignty by turning white citizen-workers into beneficiaries of the imperial regime of outward despotism and preventing radical challenges to imperial capitalism. This is not to argue for an exclusively economistic notion of self-and-other-determination, in which racial capitalism is the primary and determinant force. Racial capitalism and European and white settler nationalisms were articulated transnationally, in the sense that domestic struggles for enfranchisement relied on transnational networks and beliefs in the racial superiority and global domination of "Anglo-Saxons" that were still prominent at the turn of the century.[16] Portable racial identifications created solidarity among transnationally located white populations but took particular local shapes.[17] Western polities' claims of popular sovereignty and their relation to the outside through claims of self-determination absorbed these transnational logics and embedded them in domestic political and economic regimes. In other words, it examines how racial ideas contained in the "ideological cement" of empire[18] became contingently entwined with ideas of self-governance and self-determination and articulated with capitalism.

(New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973 [1870]), Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour*, 98–99, and Chapter 2.

[15] Michael C. Dawson, "Hidden in Plain Sight: A Note on Legitimation Crises and the Racial Order," *Critical Historical Studies* 3, no. 1 (2016): 149, Nancy Fraser, "Expropriation and Exploitation in Racialized Capitalism: A Reply to Michael Dawson," *Critical Historical Studies* 3, no. 1 (2016): 171–72.

[16] Anthony Pagden, *Peoples and Empires: A Short History of European Migration, Exploration, and Conquest, from Greece to the Present* (London: Modern Library, 2007), 136.

[17] Michael Hanchard, *The Spectre of Race* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 6–7, Kornel Chang, "Circulating Race and Empire: Transnational Labor Activism and the Politics of Anti-Asian Agitation in the Anglo-American Pacific World, 1880–1910," *The Journal of American History* 96, no. 3 (2009).

[18] Eric Hobsbawn, *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914* (New York: Vintage, 1987), 70.

1.2 DU BOIS, DEMOCRATIC DESPOTISM, AND LABOR POLITICS

Du Bois's writings on imperialism during and after World War I introduce and develop the notion of "democratic despotism."[19] This concept describes how the color line and the particular affective attachments that "festered" alongside it were central for the development and consolidation of western democracies during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Instead of optimistically expecting the racially oppressive relations within the United States and between colonial countries and the colonized to be eventually taken over by the "irresistible tide" of democracy, Du Bois theorizes democratic despotism as a proper political form that operates alongside racial capitalism, whose existence depends on imperialism as a form of outward domination. This type of regime depends on collective attachments to the wealth extracted through imperial rule, which shows a despotic face toward colonial dominions.

Du Bois's essay "The African Roots of War," published in 1915 in *The Atlantic Monthly*, locates the European struggle for Africa at the core of the rivalries and jealousies that caused World War I. This intervention also clarifies the meaning of nationhood and popular sovereignty in the imperial age and the attachments that sustain a racial democracy. He opens the essay with the well-rehearsed progressive narrative of democratization and socialization:

> Slowly, the divine right of the few to determine economic income and distribute the goods and services of the world has been questioned and curtailed. We called the process Revolution in the eighteenth century, advancing Democracy in the nineteenth, and Socialization of Wealth in the twentieth. But whatever we call it, the movement is the same: the dipping of more and grimier hands into the wealth-bag of the nation, until to-day only the ultra stubborn fail to see that democracy in determining income is the next inevitable step to Democracy in political power.[20]

Yet, this "tide of democracy" is not as irresistible as it seems, and the remaining realms of despotism in the west's imperial possessions or the race hatred and racial brutality in the United States are far from

[19] Tocqueville discusses "democratic despotism" in *Democracy in America* but is interested in how certain democratic rules make "even the most original minds and the most energetic of spirits" unable to "rise above the crowd." For Tocqueville, US citizens leave their state of dependency only long enough to choose their leaders and are content otherwise with obeying the ruler, because it is not a man or another class of people but "society itself" that directs them. See "Democracy in America," in *Democracy in America and Two Essays on America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003 [1835]), 806.

[20] Du Bois, "The African Roots of War," 708–9.

paradoxical. Du Bois terms this disjuncture "democratic despotism" and finds it easy to explain: "The white working man has been asked to share the spoil of exploiting 'ch**ks and n*****s.' It is no longer simply the merchant prince, or the aristocratic monopoly, or even the employing class that is *exploiting* the world: it is the nation; a new *democratic* nation composed of united capital and labor."[21]

Du Bois states that western *democracies* claim a right to dominion over the rest of the world that is facilitated by racism, and he implicates white labor as an actor that, while demanding incorporation into the people, does so with "a worldview that casts that-which-is-not-white (persons, lands, resources) as personal possessions that rightfully belong to those marked 'white.'"[22] Du Bois's interest in white dominion as an accessory to emancipation is not new. This form of thinking and acting in accordance "with the conviction that racialized others are their property" appears already in an 1890 essay on Jefferson Davis.[23] There he reflects on the Civil War as an instance of "a people fighting to be free in order that another people should not be free" and globalizes this trend by noting that western civilization represents "the advance of part of the world at the expense of the whole."[24] What interests me, however, is how in

[21] Ibid., 709, W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: 1860–1880* (New York: The Free Press, 1998 [1934]), 634.

[22] Ella Myers, "Beyond the Psychological Wage: Du Bois on White Dominion," *Political Theory* 47, no. 1 (2019): 12. Conceptually, the affinity between Du Bois's essay and the Marxist critique of imperialism – notably that of Vladimir Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg – is evident even before his groundbreaking Marxist rereading of Reconstruction in the 1930s and his more explicit leftward turn in the post–World War II era (Eric Porter, *The Problem of the Future World: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Race Concept at Midcentury* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010)). Yet, in addition to worrying about the susceptibility of the working class to nationalism and imperialism like Lenin ("Opportunism, and the Collapse of the Second International," in *Lenin Collected Works, Vol. 21* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974 [1915])), and seeing imperialist competition and the drive to accumulation behind the "ransacking" of the planet like Luxemburg, ("The Accumulation of Capital: A Contribution to the Economic Theory of Imperialism," in *The Complete Works of Rosa Luxemburg Volume II*, ed. Peter Hudis and Paul Le Blanc (London: Verso, 2015 [1913]), 258–59, 64), Du Bois adds racism and a theory of racial affect to the equation and theorizes the politics of this relationship by connecting democratic peoples to imperialism.

[23] Myers, "Beyond the Psychological Wage: Du Bois on White Dominion," 13–16.

[24] W. E. B. Du Bois, "Jefferson Davis as a Representative of Civilization," in *Against Racism: Unpublished Essays, Papers, Addresses, 1887–1961*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988 [1890]), 14. A domestic polity "characterized by simultaneous relations of equality and privilege: equality among whites, who are privileged in relation to those who are not white", Olson, *The Abolition of White Democracy*, xv, is also at the core of Du Bois's democratic thought. A

1915 Du Bois takes aim at central concepts of political theory and argues for their attunement to the *practice* of western imperial democracies. Du Bois, in other words, counters the deflection that characterizes canonical accounts of popular sovereignty and self-determination and casts them as imperial and excessive. This is because democratic despotism presupposes particular claims of popular sovereignty, which depend on excessive forms of self-determination that operate within imperial capitalism, whose operation and modes of exploitation/expropriation are filtered by racial hierarchy. Accordingly, material ambitions for violently extracted resources infuse the ties of solidarity among citizens in the metropole: "Such nations it is that *rule* the modern world. Their *national bond* is no mere sentimental patriotism, loyalty, or ancestor worship. It is the increased *wealth*, power, and luxury for *all classes* on a scale the world never saw before."[25]

Thus, wealth and luxury, as well as power over dominions abroad, are constitutive of the national bond or imagined community that holds western polities together. These polities are democratic – that is, "all classes" are bonded together and partake of the national wealth – but also *rule* beyond the confines of their territory. Moreover, the bond of those polities is not exclusively inward looking but depends on the pursuit of foreign dominions and the unprecedented levels of wealth and luxury that follow from it. In this sense, popular sovereignty and the determination of the fates of other peoples that imperial countries exploit become fused.

Du Bois's critique of material attachments reappears a decade later in his essay "Criteria of Negro Art," which claims that Americans possess a sense of "strength and accomplishment" but lack a conception of beauty.[26] For Du Bois, American goals are "tawdry and flamboyant," embodied in acquiring "the most powerful motor car," wearing the "most striking clothes," and giving "the richest dinners," rather than a world where "men create, … realize themselves [and] … enjoy life."[27]

related literature considers Du Bois's notion of the "wages of whiteness," or the *domestic* dynamics of appropriation of psychological and economic resources. See David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 2007 [1991]), Myers, "Beyond the Psychological Wage: Du Bois on White Dominion."

[25] Du Bois, "The African Roots of War," 709. See also Du Bois, "Jefferson Davis as a Representative of Civilization," 14, my emphasis.

[26] W. E. B. Du Bois, "Criteria of Negro Art," in *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, ed. David Levering Lewis (New York: Penguin Classics, 1995 [1926]), 325.

[27] Ibid. There are echoes between this discussion and Andrew Douglas's (2015) illuminating reconstruction of Du Bois's critique of the competitive society.

Du Bois was tapping into a general transformation in culture that enticed Americans into the pleasures of consumption and indulgence and away from work as the path to happiness.[28] The myth of plenty that had characterized the United States was being transformed by the early 1900s into a focus on "personal satisfaction" and on places of pleasure such as department stores, theaters, restaurants, dance halls, and amusement parks, keeping pace with urbanization, commercialization, and secularization.[29] Pursuing material goods was the means to all that was "good" and to "personal salvation," even when, in the context of concentrated wealth, this pursuit was most often mere desire.[30] Criticisms of wealth accumulation as the occupation that absorbed the American people and of its unequal distribution were also voiced by others, including the progressive thinker Herbert Croly.[31]

This shift in culture was tightly connected to the transformation of discourses of labor enfranchisement in the late nineteenth century. In contrast to an earlier focus on producerism and cooperativism that identified wage labor as inherently exploitative, new labor narratives highlighted that wage work was not essentially problematic if it allowed for a high standard of living.[32] Rather than aiming to transform the social order, consumerist ideologies demanded higher wages, thus seeking to extract more resources while leaving the existing order intact. In the words of labor leader Samuel Gompers, "The conflict between the laborers and the capitalists is as to the quantity, the amount, of the wages the laborer shall receive for his part in production and the residue of profit which shall go to the capitalist."[33]

[28] William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 27.

[29] Ibid., 27–28.

[30] Ibid., 27–28, 35.

[31] *The Promise of American Life* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1909), 22–23.

[32] For republican cooperativist traditions in the US labor movement, see the work of Alex Gourevitch, *From Slavery to the Cooperative Commonwealth: Labor and Republican Liberty in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014). On the transformation of producerist narratives toward narratives focused on consumption, see the work of Helga Hallgrimsdottir and Cecilia Benoit, "From Wage Slaves to Wage Workers: Cultural Opportunity Structures and the Evolution of the Wage Demands of the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor, 1880–1900," *Social Forces* 85, no. 3 (2007), and Lawrence Glickman, "Inventing the 'American Standard of Living': Gender, Race and Working-Class Identity, 1880–1925," *Labor History* 34, no. 2–3 (1993). Finally, Paul Durrenberg and Dimitra Doukas (2008) highlight the persistence of counterhegemonic producerist narratives in particular locales after this shift.

[33] Samuel Gompers, "The Eight-Hour Work Day," *The Federationist* 4, no. 3 (1897): 47.

Wages were no longer the badge of slavery they represented within producerist republicanism but – according to George Gunton, an eight-hour pamphleteer – a "continual part of social progress."[34] These wages were supposed to lift the American worker beyond the standards of the "Irish Tenant farmer or the Russian serf, and could be determined only according to a level of consumption appropriate to the "American Standard of Living," which went beyond food and clothing to include "taxes, school books, furniture, papers, doctors' bills, [religious] contributions," as well as "vacations, recreational opportunities, [and] home ownership."[35] This trend followed from the expansion of imperialism and the rise in Europe and the United States of the bourgeois housewife, a figure who contributed to creating a family culture of consumption and luxury needs, which would be subsequently mimicked by the white working class.[36]

Du Bois's framework throws into relief that the desire to achieve the American Standard of Living that fueled demands for enfranchisement by white workers depended on the exploitation of faraway peoples,[37] and that rather than a simple add-on, it was a constitutive aspect of the collective bond. It was constitutive because the great wealth amassed by states was entangled with both democratic impulses and despotic ones. It was "democratic" both because this wealth was being shared among newly enfranchised groups and because the high standard of living avowedly served to preserve republican institutions and safeguard liberty and virtue, and maintained the physical, mental, and moral foundations of the masses that grounded institutions.[38] In this account, virtue was mistakenly equated with well-being, an equation that Black people "had excellent reasons for doubting," as James Baldwin would

[34] "The Economic and Social Importance of the Eight-Hour Movement," in *Eight-Hour Series*, ed. AFL (Washington, DC: American Federation of Labor, 1889), 8, cited in Glickman, "Inventing the 'American Standard of Living': Gender, Race and Working-Class Identity, 1880–1925," 223.

[35] This according to a labor advocate, Glickman, "Inventing the 'American Standard of Living': Gender, Race and Working-Class Identity, 1880–1925," 226.

[36] Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour*, 100–1, Fraser and Jaeggi, *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory*, 88.

[37] W. E. B. Du Bois, *Peace Is Dangerous*, *W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312)* Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries (New York: National Guardian, 1951), 4.

[38] Symmes M. Jelley and et al., *The Voice of Labor: Plain Talk by Men of Intellect on Labor's Rights, Wrongs, Remedies and Prospects* (Chicago: A. B. Gehman & Co., 1887), 163, cited by Glickman, "Inventing the 'American Standard of Living': Gender, Race and Working-Class Identity, 1880–1925," 226.

note decades later.[39] Those virtues, "preached but not practiced," were merely additional means to subject Black groups and, Du Bois added, imperial subjects abroad.[40] In other words, the extraction of wealth distributed democratically among white citizens required despotic rule over nonwhite subjects.

1.3 SELF-AND-OTHER-DETERMINATION

In the proposed model, popular sovereignty is a collective right not exhausted by self-government but dependent on rule over avowedly inferior peoples, whose self-determination is denied and who are subject to expropriative working conditions within and outside the polity.[41] Thus popular sovereignty and self-determination are co-implicated. While external self-determination obtains (as western polities refuse to be ruled by outsiders) and internally popular sovereignty prevails (given the collective claims for inclusion and self-rule entailed in the working class demands described earlier), the rule of this collective also exceeds these boundaries. This excess encroaches on the self-determination of others by declaring a right to impose an external collective will over peoples; namely, *self-and-other-determination*. In other words, popular sovereignty for western countries means the "ownership of the earth for ever and ever;"[42] that is, the appropriation of others' resources, subject only to the demands of other western states.[43] Importantly, this claim to mastery, according to which a polity asserts its right to rule others, depends

[39] *The Fire Next Time* (New York: Vintage International, 1993 [1963]), 22–23.

[40] Ibid., 23.

[41] Throughout the chapter, I use "exploitation" as entailing access to labor markets and the ability to sell labor, and "expropriation of labor" as depending on force and – if at all – attenuated access to labor markets and citizenship, even though these are not internally homogeneous categories and there are not always clear-cut distinctions between the two. Dawson, "Hidden in Plain Sight: A Note on Legitimation Crises and the Racial Order," 151, Fraser, "Expropriation and Exploitation in Racialized Capitalism: A Reply to Michael Dawson," 166–68, Emily Katzenstein, personal communication (2019).

[42] W. E. B. Du Bois, *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil* (New York: Dover, 1999 [1920]), 18.

[43] This mutually respectful stance among western states is at the core of a second insight by Du Bois – that "Western solidarity" could be a particularly pernicious practice, given that it facilitated European powers' ability to pursue goals of territorial control and imperial domination (*WC*, 431). Notwithstanding the abundance of war among European powers, which Du Bois attributed to imperial conflict, European peace and cooperation – widely celebrated today in the subfield of international relations – was no obvious reason for celebration for the majority of the world population, which lived under their imperial yoke.

centrally on claims of racial superiority. The co-implication of despotic rule and racism is clear in *Black Reconstruction*:

> The dark and vast sea of human labor in China and India, the South Seas and all Africa; in the West Indies and Central American and in the United States—that great majority of mankind, on whose industry and broken backs rest today the founding stones of modern industry—shares a common destiny; it is *despised and rejected by race and color*; paid a wage below the level of decent living; driven, beaten, poisoned and enslaved in all but name.[44]

These are the subjects who

> spawn the world's *raw material and luxury*—cotton, wool, coffee, tea, cocoa, palm oil, fibers, spices, rubber, silks, lumber, copper, gold, diamonds, leather—how shall we end the list and where? All these are gathered up at prices lowest of the low, manufactured, transformed, and transported at fabulous gain; and the *resultant wealth is distributed and displayed and made the basis of world power* and universal dominion, and armed arrogance in London, Paris, Berlin and Rome, New York and Rio de Janeiro.[45]

The association between wealth, luxury, and power is not trivial. Rather, it implicates collective processes of decision making that dictate whom such power and wealth will benefit.[46] It is, according to Du Bois, "white labor" that insists on making "the majority of the world's laborers … the basis of a system of industry which ruined democracy."[47] Collective processes, moreover, rely on mutual identification and "shared" rule within western publics that perceive the world as bounty. Affect, in particular, plays a central role in organizing the circulation of feeling differentially across groups and thus stabilizing democratic despotism. I define affect as emotional attachments and self-conceptions melded with ways of seeing the colonized other in relation to the self – in ways that both justify and facilitate dominion.[48] Affective attachments have long been recognized as important in nation-building and democratic life, but Du Bois's conceptualization adds to standard notions an account of affect partitioned along racial lines, because it links citizens

[44] Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: 1860–1880*, 15, my emphasis.

[45] Ibid., 15–16, my emphasis.

[46] They also implicate nature in the form of raw materials extracted by racialized labor and imply a drastically different compensation for strenuous work performed close to nature and work that is performed away from it and alongside technology, as I argue in Chapter 4.

[47] Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: 1860–1880*, 30.

[48] Hagar Kotef's excellent book *The Colonizing Self* explores (wounded) attachments to the violence entailed in the acquisition of land by settler colonies, a project connecting to but distinct from the present focus on attachments to the material wealth made possible by imperial capitalism. Hagar Kotef, *The Colonizing Self: Or, Home and Homelessness in Israel/Palestine* (Duke University Press, 2020).

not only reciprocally to each other but also (nonreciprocally) to subjects in faraway lands in ways that are entwined with possessiveness enabled by imperial capitalism. Thus, collective affect contains a desire for material goods and, in the extreme, luxury – a gratification that is dependent on a racially-based lack of reciprocity and dehumanization of the colonized other, whose exploitation enables western consumption. These components make up Du Bois's account of the mechanics of democratic/global attachments within racial capitalism, in which love of humanity is precluded by nations' love of luxury that depends on the extreme exploitation of human beings who they regard as inhuman.[49]

Du Bois juxtaposes the love of humanity with the love of luxury and posits that the latter is incompatible with the former if desires for luxurious consumption and wealth are fulfilled by capitalist and imperial systems of expropriation supported by racial hatred. He restates this claim later by positing that the desire for the "American way of life" drives these political impulses. Such a way of life entails a comfortable home, enough suitable clothing and nourishment, and vacations and education for children, an ideal to which only about one-third of Americans have access and to which the rest aspire.[50] Desire for goods, luxurious or not, remains the motivating factor, alongside the "knowledge or fear" of those who enjoy these comforts that their standards will suffer if "social and industrial organization" were to change.[51] Politically, racial hatred allows for and rationalizes the coexistence of democratic feeling toward a smaller community and oppression internally and externally along racial/imperial lines. This hatred is not based on rational belief but is trained through world campaigns that comprise the slave trade and the attribution of every bestiality to Black people, because such feelings allow for profitable exploitation of these groups. This campaign

> has unconsciously trained millions of honest, modern men into the belief that black folk are sub-human. This belief is not based on science, else it would be held as a postulate of the most tentative kind, ready at any time to be withdrawn in the face of facts; the belief is not based on history, for it is absolutely contradicted by Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, and Arabian experience; nor is the belief based on any careful survey of the social development of men of Negro blood to-day in Africa and America. It is simply *passionate, deep-seated heritage*, and as such can be *moved by neither argument nor fact*. Only faith in humanity will lead the world to rise above its present color prejudice.[52]

[49] Du Bois, "The African Roots of War," 712.
[50] Du Bois, *Peace Is Dangerous*, 4.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Du Bois, *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil*, 41, my emphasis.

Thus, deep-seated passions, enabled by the history of dehumanizing exploitation and inherited by subsequent generations, underlie color prejudice. Du Bois traces the education of affect that creates a tragically narrow community to novelists and poets and the "uncanny welter of romance," alongside "the half knowledge of scientists, the pseudoscience of statesmen," which put white workers fully at the mercy of their beliefs and prejudices.[53] This curious and childish propaganda dominates the public sphere, such that millions of men who are otherwise good, earnest, and even intelligent believe almost religiously that white people are a peculiar and chosen people, whose great accomplishment of civilization "must be protected from the rest of the world by cheating, stealing, lying, and murder."[54]

Thus, racism truncates reciprocity and humanitarian feeling to allow for "cheating, stealing, lying, and murder" with the goal of satisfying deep-seated desires for luxury, wealth, and dominion. But not any humanitarianism will do, for western humanitarians and peace activists were notably reluctant to discuss colonial violence, making their humanitarianism either platitudinous or outright deceitful and complicit in sustaining racist narratives.[55] Du Bois singled out the religious hypocrisy of these groups for particular criticism, offering the example of their condemnation of the "'Blood-thirsty' Mwanga of Uganda," who had killed an English bishop due to their fear that his arrival meant English domination. This, Du Bois added, was very much what his coming meant, as the world and the bishop knew well, yet "the world was 'horrified'!"[56]

[53] W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Negro Mind Reaches Out," in *The New Negro: Voices of the Harlem Renaissance*, ed. Alain Locke (New York: Touchstone, 1997 [1925]), 407. This account echoes Benedict Anderson's well-known account of "imagined communities," although Ètienne Balibar's work is a more apt comparison, given both the role he grants to "language and race" in the formation of a "fictive ethnicity" and how he ties this construction to the circulation of discourse, education, and written and recording texts. See Ètienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London: Verso, 1991), 96–98. Regarding global narratives, this is the period in which the dream of "perpetual peace" was embedded in a tradition of "white supremacist arguments about peace and global order" that embraced a "global racial peace," which promised the abolition of war following the imperial unification of white nations. See Duncan Bell, "Before the Democratic Peace: Racial Utopianism, Empire, and the Abolition of War," *European Journal of International Relations* 20, no. 3 (2014): 649.

[54] Du Bois, "The Negro Mind Reaches Out," 407.

[55] W. E. B. Du Bois, *Color and Democracy: Colonies and Peace* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1945), 110, 11, Du Bois, "The African Roots of War," 714.

[56] Du Bois, "The African Roots of War," 714.

These excerpts reveal Du Bois's keen understanding of the involvement of the west in producing the very barbaric Black subject it intends to dominate. It does so both through narratives of humanitarianism that cover up the aims of domination behind religious missions and through violent interventions:

> The Congo Free State … differed only in degree and concentration from the tale of all Africa in this rape of a continent already furiously mangled by the slave trade. That sinister traffic, on which the British Empire and the American Republic were largely built, cost black Africa no less than 100,000,000 souls, the wreckage of its political and social life, and left the continent in precisely that state of helplessness which invites aggression and exploitation. "Color" became in the world's thought synonymous with inferiority, "Negro" lost its capitalization, and Africa was another name for bestiality and barbarism.[57]

The very violence that characterized the slave trade established the conditions that would then be cited as "barbaric" to justify the western project of civilization via colonialism. For Du Bois, capitalism is never far away from racism; the world, he argues, invests in "color prejudice" because the color line pays dividends.[58] A similar assessment is present in Fanon, who claims that racism is preceded, made possible, and legitimized by military and economic oppression. In other words, while racism is a disposition of the mind, it is not merely a "psychological flaw": it is the "emotional, affective and sometimes intellectual unfolding" of the inferiorization required by economic domination and appears in the potentialities and latencies of the psychoaffective life that underlie economic relations under racial capitalism.[59] Therefore, it is "normal" for countries that live and draw their substance from peoples who are different to "inferiorize" these peoples. Even in his largely psychological works, Fanon is always clear that a primarily economic process is behind inferiorization, which is then "epidermalized" and internalized psychologically.[60] These psychoaffective relations pervert forms of political attention that may otherwise accompany exchanges between individuals or groups, and they prevent the establishment of solidarity, as Ange-Marie Hancock notes regarding the politics of disgust. Reciprocity and solidarity are replaced by hostility, which

[57] Ibid., 708, W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Development of a People," *International Journal of Ethics* 14, no. 3 (1904): 305.
[58] Du Bois, "The African Roots of War," 708.
[59] Frantz Fanon, "Racism and Culture," *Presence Africaine: Cultural Journal of the Negro World* 8/10 (June–November 1956): 127–29.
[60] *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1986 [1952]), 12–13.

mediates political (non)relations that are monologic and based on dispositional (rather than contextualized or situational) judgments about members of the targeted group.[61]

These affective attachments also contain a thwarted view of others' emancipation. This view explains how aggressive western imperialism came paradoxically to be accompanied by the fear of violent colonial rebellions and, in the interwar era, a deep anxiety about the west's military and political supremacy. This is because vast returns "seduce the conscience" so that even resistance to oppression provokes surprise and indignation in "the best people."[62] In other words, given the forms of attachment outlined earlier, emancipatory efforts are seen as revanchist threats that confirm the barbarism of colonial others, rather than as an intelligible claim to self-determination. Because of how jealousies and hatreds continuously fester along the color line, laborers feel the need to fight the Chinese to prevent them from taking our bread and butter, and "keep Negroes in their places," lest they take our jobs. In other words, the expectation is that, without white men throttling colored men; China, India, and Africa "will do to Europe what Europe has done and seeks to do to them."[63]

Differently put, the western right to wealth attained through the dominion-cum-expropriation-cum-"civilization" of racially inferior peoples makes subaltern emancipatory claims against the status quo either unintelligible (because they are inconsistent with racist accounts of colonial peoples) or threatening (because, when taken as equivalent to western claims, they suggest dominion and plunder). Not only is love of humanity out of the question when love of luxury – obtained through expropriation – prevails but luxury also contains a desire for excessive, superfluous wealth, a form of unending accumulation that cannot make sense of notions of mutuality, reciprocity, and distribution of resources across the color line.

In sum, racism and capitalism are closely entwined, and not just because racism degrades certain groups and makes them available for exploitation and expropriation, as the racial capitalism literature notes. Du Bois further grounds the entwinement between racism and capitalism in politics proper; that is, the result of political subjects' materialist attachments to comfort

[61] Ange-Marie Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust: The Public Identity of the Welfare Queen* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 11, 12, 17.
[62] Du Bois, "The Development of a People," 303.
[63] Du Bois, "The African Roots of War," 711–12.

and luxury is despotic rule accompanied by hostility and nonreciprocity toward those whose expropriation makes access to these goods possible.

Notably, these despotic dynamics are pictured neither as antithetical nor separable from processes of democratization in western countries in the early twentieth century. Instead, claims of popular sovereignty, which demanded political and socioeconomic enfranchisement of the white working class, were molded to partake *democratically* of the wealth and luxury made possible by empire, which despotically determined other peoples' fates. Du Bois theorizes the democratic bargain of the white working class of imperial countries and the racialized imagined community thus brought into existence to sustain these arrangements. The self-determination implied in this structure allowed the metropole to determine both its own affairs and set expropriative conditions abroad: self-and-other-determination. The "other" in this construction represents three conceptual features of this political relationship. In the first place, "other" conveys excess; a collective determines not only itself – as per ideal standard accounts of self-determination – but also external others. Second, "other" conveys that the excessive rule by this collective is based on racist affective attachments that *other* those ruled. Finally, the inclusion of "other" alongside the "self" of self-determination refers to the need for the toil of these others to produce the wealth that is held in common and distributed, making possible a *self*-determining community.

The notion of self-and-other-determination puts in question standard divisions of labor in political theory between democratic theory and global justice by theorizing the entanglements between popular sovereignty and racial capitalist accumulation enabled by empire. Moreover, the possessive and affective character of the attachments that sustain this entanglement suggests that the mere fact of decolonization cannot have singlehandedly transformed the entanglement between the national bond and global affective attachments of western polities, a point I examine next.

1.4 EXCESS AND THE QUESTION OF SELF-DETERMINATION IN POSTCOLONIAL TIMES

If, as argued earlier, western polities were constituted alongside the racial capitalist dynamics that organized that imperial world, the formal granting of sovereignty to postcolonial countries cannot, by the stroke of a pen, erase the affective inclinations of western citizens toward wealth

and luxury and their disregard of the means for obtaining them. If these attachments remain in place – which, in the absence of public acknowledgment, the transformation of western imagined communities, and changes in production and consumption patterns, they should – we can expect the political economic formations at the international level that link and relink former empires and formerly colonized countries to each other to transform, rather than overcome, past hierarchies. Fanon's work is particularly perceptive about moments of transition, noting that racism survives and thrives despite seemingly epochal transformations that partially liberate men and allow groups to circulate.[64] For Fanon, the survival of racism does require an adjustment to work along "perfected means of production" rather than brutal exploitation. For this reason racism must take on shades and change physiognomy, and work through camouflaged techniques for exploiting men, thus following the fate of the cultural whole that inspired it.[65] Just like racism, the colonial structures of extraction that racism legitimates are neither immutable, ahistorical structures nor abstract entities but mutate in complex ways, inventing "frontiers and intervals, zones of passage and … spaces of transit."[66] This mutations follow what Fanon calls "partial liberation," in which racism can no longer show itself undisguised in the metropole; instead, it must be denied frequently, because citizens are "haunted by a bad conscience." In this case, racism emerges, if at all, only through the passions, as in certain psychoses.[67] Fanon's account echoes Du Bois's interest in the survival of racial affect after the waning of particular institutional formations of domination such as colonialism, whereas domination finds its place in seemingly novel arrangements such as free enterprise, which is further sustained through "false ideals and misleading fears."[68]

The continuity of affect despite legal changes is also central in Saidiya Hartman's analysis of slave emancipation in the United States and her skepticism about the ability of formal change to lead to political emancipation in the absence of genuine liberation in society.[69] The salience of formal emancipation, she notes, deviates attention from "the violence

[64] "Racism and Culture," 125–26.
[65] Ibid., 122, 25.
[66] Achille Mbembe, *Sortir De La Grande Nuit* (Paris: La Découverte, 2013), 170.
[67] Fanon, "Racism and Culture," 125.
[68] Du Bois, *Peace Is Dangerous*, 6.
[69] The reproduction of injustice is also the focus of Alasia Nuti's work *Injustice and the Reproduction of History: Structural Inequalities, Gender, and Redress* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), although it does not focus on the question of affect as being central in sustaining structural injustice.

and domination *perpetuated* in the name of slavery's *reversal*."[70] Hartman's strong and paradoxical claim that violence and domination are "*perpetuated* in the name of slavery's *reversal*" captures the complex interplay between past and present and law and practice. Absent the legal institution of slavery, subjection must rely on a new language – of freedom, property, labor, vagrancy, and crime, among others. The new language assumes formal freedom and thus acknowledges and depends on new terms consistent with legal emancipation, but it is nonetheless put into the service of a subjection that is continuous with the past. Thus, legal change transforms institutions without necessarily overcoming subjection. This is not to say that no change whatsoever emerges from legal reform, but to note that an attentive scrutiny of new institutions is warranted to detect if and how racism recirculates and justifies new forms of oppression.

These transformed institutions and forms of subjectivity are what I am interested in tracking in western societies as they leave behind colonial dependencies and reengage and produce the burdened free states, newly responsible yet encumbered, to use Hartman's language and her attention to the plasticity of race.[71] The ability of race to take on new meanings works alongside new forms of domination that continue western well-being's dependence on the extraction of other peoples' land and labor. We know that, for decolonized countries, "independence" means incorporation into a regime that re-creates dependency through the need to take debt in foreign currency while specializing in volatile agricultural exports, their dependence on foreign ownership of natural resources, and their limited space of maneuver given western countries' control of financial institutions and stewardship of their multinational corporations. In Fanonian terms, these are the new relationships that are reconstructed while maintaining racism's "morphological equation."[72]

But how do white western citizens make sense of and adapt to postcolonial forms of international oppression and eventually neoliberalism? Hartman's focus on societal conditions, attitudes, and sentiments provides guidance for answering this question.[73] The novel forms of affect that organize western peoples' attachment to wealth must fit with

[70] *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 13, my emphasis.
[71] Ibid., 116–17, 19.
[72] "Racism and Culture," 123.
[73] *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, 171.

postcolonial institutions and conditions of extraction and democratic decision making, which I explore by engaging the contemporary literature on global commodity chains. My claim in this section, however, is not that the transformations of affect in western countries embedded in a world economic order shifting toward neoliberalism are *equivalent* to the shifts outlined by Hartman or Fanon. Instead, my claim is that, conceptually, Hartman and Fanon's frameworks are helpful to understanding how the formal independence of nonwestern countries during the present neoliberal era *similarly requires* new economies of feeling that reproduce domination without straying from the new structures of governance.

I define neoliberalism simply as the theory of political economy that takes entrepreneurial freedoms operating in the context of strong property rights, free markets, and free trade to be the most conducive road to human well-being.[74] This theory has underpinned a political turn since the 1970s toward deregulation, privatization, and the withdrawal of the state from social provision.[75] A neoliberal state apparatus is one whose "fundamental mission [is] to facilitate conditions for profitable capital accumulation on the part of both domestic and foreign capital."[76] The safeguarding of capital, according to neoliberal globalists, needs to be accomplished through the embedding of states in an international institutional order insulated from democratic decision making to replace the organizing role of waning empires.[77]

While the system of rule imposed by neoliberalism seems looser and harder to assess than empire, political theorists interested in justice and responsibility have focused on the unjust relations of production, trade, and consumption structured through the global commodity chains that accompanied the turn to free trade.[78] But, rather than seeming singularly neoliberal and detached from coercive rule, commodity chains can be seen to work in tandem with self-and-other-determination, as updated

[74] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[75] Fraser and Jaeggi, *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory*, 31–35, Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 3.

[76] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 7.

[77] Quinn Slobodian, *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 9, 12.

[78] Iris Marion Young, "Responsibility and Global Labor Justice," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 12, no. 4 (2004), Leif Wenar, *Blood Oil: Tyrants, Violence, and the Rules That Run the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), Benjamin L. McKean, *Disorienting Neoliberalism: Global Justice at the Outer Limit of Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

structures that cater to privileged western consumers still rely on racialized schemes of dominion and expropriation (e.g., through off-shore export-processing zones and exceptional regimes of labor and taxation). In other words, the vicious colonial linkages described by Du Bois, which enable the right to imperial dominion and expropriation for the sake of wealth and luxury in the metropoles, reappear and find in commodity chains apt mechanisms to link together sites of expropriation enabled by western corporations' search for profit, western-backed free trade agreements, and willing elites in formerly colonial states.[79] Critical logistics scholars highlight these very affinities when they argue that global logistics is constituted by "violent and contested human relations," including "land grabs, military actions, and dispossessions" to make space for the exchange infrastructure.[80] Their claim is that, despite paradigmatic shifts, the architecture of contemporary trade "marks the continuation of centuries-old processes of imperial circulation and colonization."[81]

Yet the possessive popular sovereignty tied up with self-and-other-determination must mutate in parallel with the freeing of trade and investment flows and the new terms of exchange. Even though they remain racialized, the affects must be reoriented toward new languages and legal linkages to fit this new and complex architecture.[82] Whereas explicitly racial discourses of barbarism and civilization were associated with formal empire; notions of governance, human rights, and liberal or decent versus outlaw, burdened societies or failed states dominate the debate today.[83] Affective attachments follow suit; the shift toward

[79] This elites were the target of Fanon's criticism in another of his works, analyzed at length in Chapter 5, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004 [1961]), 98.

[80] Deborah Cowen, *The Deadly Life of Logistics: Mapping Violence in Global Trade* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 2–3.

[81] Charmaine Chua et al., "Turbulent Circulation: Building a Critical Engagement with Logistics," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 36, no. 4 (2018): 619.

[82] On this structure, see Anthony Anghie, "Time Present and Time Past: Globalization, International Financial Institutions, and the Third World," *New York University Journal of International Law & Politics* 32, no. 1 (1999), "The Evolution of International Law: Colonial and Postcolonial Realities," *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 5 (2006), and Turkuler Isiksel, "The Rights of Man and the Rights of the Man-Made: Corporations and Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (2016).

[83] Antony Anghie, "Decolonizing the Concept of 'Good Governance'," in *Decolonizing International Relations*, ed. Branwen Gruffydd Jones (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), John Rawls, "The Law of Peoples," in *The Law of Peoples with 'the Idea of Public Reason Revisited'* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), Jack Donnelly, "Human Rights: A New Standard of Civilization?," *International Affairs* 74, no. 1 (1998). There is some overlap between this brief account of the transformation of narratives of

"responsibility, will, liberty, contract, and sentiment" that Hartman shows justified Black oppression post-emancipation[84] has a parallel in discourses of responsible government and its implied association with free markets that justify substantial societal transformations toward export-led economic development, "poverty-lifting" programs of minimally taxed off-shore production, and reduced state intervention, which supposedly weakens economic growth. These new terms are tied to new affective attachments that circulate dynamically through reconstructed psychoaffective and economic relations that modify racism and how it operates vis-à-vis domination. Racialized constructions of corrupt governments, civil conflict, black markets, and informality complete the affective picture of degraded subjects, one that warrants punitive stabilization and structural reform projects packed with conditionalities to steer economies toward global trade priorities, rather than their own well-being. Thus understood, technocratic interventions that supposedly *assist* developing countries reveal their affinities with the affective constructions of the nonwest as disordered; these interventions resubordinate and expropriate, ensuring continued access to cheap raw materials and mass-produced consumer and luxury goods.[85]

These affective orientations are at play in Leif Wenar's policy-engaged work *Blood Oil*, which recommends action by western citizens against unjust regimes in the Global South. There is much to praise in Wenar's account: he shows that global supply chains are "tainted" by their reliance on violent forms of extraction of raw materials, which are key to keeping the west's high-tech way of life going. Wenar declares that, ultimately, "We [in the west] all own stolen goods" because the "rip[ping] … out from

development in history and Thomas McCarthy's *Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 201–19, which tracks the evolution of developmentalism in postcolonial discourses of modernization, neoliberalism, and neoconservatism. However, my focus is on connecting these discourses to self-determination and its entanglement with the desire for wealth and consumption.

[84] Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 119.

[85] An existing literature considers the orientations of western citizens necessary for overcoming relationships of injustice. However, the characterization of the political ground in which these desirable orientations can take root depends on understanding how *existing* orientations sustain – through disavowing narratives – unjust commodity chains, something that Benjamin McKean (2020) does do in his work, though with a focus on neoliberal, rather than racialized, imperial attachments. Iris Marion Young, "Asymmetrical Reciprocity: On Moral Respect, Wonder, and Enlarged Thought," *Constellations* 3, no. 3 (1997), Young, "Responsibility and Global Labor Justice", McKean, *Disorienting Neoliberalism: Global Justice at the Outer Limit of Freedom*.

the ground" of raw materials for supply chains has disastrous results for those nearby.[86] Moreover, he highlights the obfuscation built into commodity chains and insists we reenvision our daily lives and the products we use every day by considering where their component parts came from and how they were extracted.[87] At the center of Wenar's approach are also a powerful defense of popular resource sovereignty and a clear-eyed acknowledgment that "the choices of [western] governments … decide the rules that run the world" and allow for the authoritarian plundering of natural resources in violation of the former principle.[88]

Yet Wenar's critical claims about the global supply chain apply exclusively to those goods that depend on raw materials that are extracted by authoritarian leaders variously described as tyrannical, bloody, cruel, and murderous.[89] Once these leaders are replaced by democratic governments, Wenar argues, the western way of life could be sustained without violence. He explicitly acknowledges the anxieties about consumption that I posited as core to self-and-other determination but assures readers that the comfort of western citizens that depends on natural resources that enrich bloody authoritarian regimes will not suffer by the proposed reforms.[90]

Moreover – despite the acknowledgment of the western role sustaining the global legal structure that allows for trade in tainted products – Wenar repeatedly returns to authoritarian regimes as the initiating agents in the problem that occupies him. These authoritarian leaders, he argues, have greatly affected the west, whose crises, conflicts, and threats from abroad radiate from "resource-disordered states."[91] Western citizens, in contrast, are unambiguously on the "right side" and only need to be made aware of the disturbing violence entailed in the production of their latest gadgets to press their own governments to break ties with these strongmen, thereby righting the trajectory of global trade.[92]

[86] *Blood Oil: Tyrants, Violence, and the Rules That Run the World*, xx, xxii.
[87] Ibid., xxv.
[88] Ibid., 191, 32.
[89] Wenar, ibid., xiv, xxxix, xl, 23, chapter 3, borrows from the extensive literature on the resource curse to argue that the extraction of raw materials (including petroleum, metals, and gems) from the ground is the "defective" link in the chain, because it wrongly incentivizes leaders, who can sell these resources in the global market and can therefore ruthlessly accumulate power without needing to rely on popular support or taxation. See Timothy Mitchell's *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil* (London: Verso, 2011) for a critique of this literature.
[90] *Blood Oil: Tyrants, Violence, and the Rules That Run the World*, xv.
[91] Ibid., 81.
[92] Ibid., 259, 80–81.

Thus, when I take issue with Wenar, it is not out of disagreement with his diagnosis of the violent character of the global supply chain or the principle of popular sovereignty of natural resources. Instead, I take issue with the assumptions that authoritarian strongmen are the main source of these problems, that we should only be concerned with these extreme cases of violence, and that western citizens are ready to intervene against this violence once they are made aware of their mistaken reliance on "blood oil."[93] These assumptions reveal two broader problems. First, Wenar's narrative reaffirms the racialized figures of authoritarian leaders as violent others as the core problem behind tainted goods, and western citizens as the benevolent agents righting these wrongs, rather than scrutinizing the capitalist extraction of raw materials more generally as a source of violence and injustice that underlies western well-being.[94] By focusing on extreme violence and obvious benevolence, Wenar falls into the narrative of "savages-victims-saviors" that scholars find entwined with human rights discourse and that often justifies economic and military intervention.[95] Starting with the blood-soaked hands on the book's cover, Wenar aims to spur action through a shared feeling of horror, which Sinja Graf associates with a minimal and hegemonic form of inclusion because it incorporates certain nonwestern countries only as law breakers or criminals against humanity.[96] Du Bois's critique of humanitarian discourses noted earlier also applies here, as does his reaction to the equalization of Africa with "bestiality and barbarism," which he saw as contributing to the racialization that facilitated domination.

Although Wenar's support for the popular ownership of natural resources is the opposite of the domination or intervention that Du Bois condemned, the framing of Wenar's critique works against this recognition

[93] Ibid., 259.

[94] This positioning of western citizens is a broader tendency in the global justice literature. See Inés Valdez, "Association, Reciprocity, and Emancipation: A Transnational Account of the Politics of Global Justice," in *Empire, Race, and Global Justice*, ed. Duncan Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[95] Makau Mutua, "Savages, Victims, and Saviors: The Metaphor of Human Rights," *Harvard International Law Journal* 42, no. 1 (2001): 202, Nicola Perugini and Neve Gordon, *The Human Right to Dominate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 13. See also Cameron Macaskill, "Beyond Conflict and Cooperation: Systemic Labor Violence in Natural Resource Extraction," manuscript on file with author (2023), on the blood diamonds campaign, which encourages consumers to shun "conflict diamonds," while disavowing the routine violence of exploitive mining work in nonconflict countries.

[96] *The Humanity of Universal Crime: Inclusion, Inequality, and Intervention in International Political Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021).

and, importantly, relativizes western responsibility for these ills. This relates to the second problem in Wenar's framing: the presumption that acceptance of popular sovereignty in western polities directly translates into acceptance of popular sovereignty for others on whose work their well-being depends.[97] Wenar specifically claims that the "[f]ight for people's rights has been fought and mostly won," making the principle of popular sovereignty widely accepted and western societies' "belief in their own innate racial superiority" a thing of the past.[98] In this picture, the only surprise for western citizens is "how much [they] contribute to the violation of people's rights,"[99] because Wenar assumes that as soon as western citizens notice this, they will not "doubt which side is right."[100] This is the very point that Du Bois argues against, noting that racialized forms of affect allow western citizens to both govern themselves democratically and accept the domination of others whose exploitation enables their wealth. The racialized affect associated with humanitarianism is one example of this trend, notably the focus on child soldiers (which figure prominently in Wenar's account), which entails the mistrust of the moral and political capacity of adults in those countries, weakening the right to self-determination and leading to a more unequal international system.[101] Thus the affective attachments that Wenar elicits by focusing on bloody conflict (outraged disgust and humanitarian pity toward violent statesmen and their victims, respectively) works at cross-purposes with his commitment to recognizing the popular sovereignty of natural resources. Such forms of affect also fit with technocratic prescriptions of responsible government and neoliberal measures of labor, trade, and capital liberalization, taken to be the opposites of disordered, corrupt, and authoritarian regimes. Again, Wenar advocates popular sovereignty rather than neoliberal reforms, but his singling out of the cruelty of resource-owning nonwestern authoritarian leaders as the core defect of commodity chains and the assumption that western access to goods will be undisrupted if extreme

[97] *Blood Oil: Tyrants, Violence, and the Rules That Run the World*, 259.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Vanessa Pupavac, "Misanthropy without Borders: The International Children's Rights Regime," *Disasters* 25, no. 2 (2001). Further supporting the distinctiveness of humanitarianism, Sabrina Pagano and Yuen Huo, "The Role of Moral Emotions in Predicting Support for Political Actions in Post-War Iraq," *Political Psychology* 28, no. 2 (2007), show that, although feelings of empathy enhance support for humanitarian aid to Iraq, feelings of guilt more clearly correlate with support for "restoring damage created by the U.S. military," thus illuminating the detachment between humanitarianism and responsibility.

instances of violence at the source of commodity chains are addressed have a certain affinity with property rights' discourses of neoliberalism. This stance appears to suggest that violent others need to learn to play by market rules and puts western peoples at ease with their lives of abundance, which are viable with the "correct" functioning of markets.

Rather than soothing western citizens' anxiety about material possessions by assuring them that genuine popular sovereignty can coexist with capitalist extraction, the account I propose exposes the problematic (because excessive) modes of self-determination in the west that underlie global injustice. It requires the self-determination scholarship to engage critically with the problem of self-and-other-determination and the affective attachments that jointly enable the political, economic, and racial rearticulations of postcolonial regimes of extraction.

1.5 SELF-DETERMINATION: FROM LACK TO EXCESS, FROM SETTLER TO DETERRITORIALIZED DOMINATION

A dynamic critical literature has addressed the question of self-determination. Joseph Massad's work, for example, tracks the trajectory of self-determination from its progressive origins toward a right of conquest in the post–World War II era.[102] In this period, a right that had been narrowly applicable to European nations was briefly expanded and acquired emancipatory potential during Bandung, only to be reclaimed by settler states. The ultimate co-optation of self-determination by world powers was epitomized by Woodrow Wilson's adoption of the term in response to Russian support of a progressive and anticolonial instantiation of this concept.[103] The co-optation of self-determination by empires transformed it into a tool for "securing and maintaining colonial claims and gains, especially in settler-colonies," where this principle was granted to the colonists rather than the colonized.[104] Given Massad's interest in settler colonies, he understandably focuses on the 1970s restriction of the right to self-determination to the government of peoples who represent "the whole peoples of the territory," a fatal clause for peoples who are dispossessed of their land.[105] Yet Massad understands self-determination

[102] Joseph Massad, "Against Self-Determination," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 9, no. 2 (2018).
[103] Ibid., 168.
[104] Ibid., 169.
[105] Ibid., 173–74, 85. See also Catherine Lu, "Decolonizing Borders, Self-Determination, and Global Justice," in *Empire, Race, and Global Justice*, ed. Duncan Bell (Cambridge:

as contained in the legal documents and practices that sanctioned this principle as a tool to legitimize settler colonialism. In contrast, I am interested in conceptualizing how western peoples – not just settler ones – effectively determine other countries' fates by appropriating resources from abroad – not just from the populations living within their territory whose land they occupy – and treating these resources as part of the commonwealth they collectively adjudicate among themselves.

Iris Marion Young's critique of self-determination understood as noninterference is also partly motivated by Indigenous peoples' claims.[106] She criticizes the understanding of self-determination as the ability of a political unit to claim "final authority over the regulation of all activities within a territory" because it does not acknowledge the interdependence of peoples, their common embeddedness in relations and institutions, and the possibility of domination.[107] Young's relational nondomination account implies that powerful states' actions over others give the latter "a legitimate right to make claims" on the former when these actions are harmful.[108] She rightly diagnoses the problem that motivates this chapter: that powerful states can interfere arbitrarily with and dominate formally self-governing peoples while being absolved of responsibility to "support these countries."[109] But she quickly refocuses attention on the dominated peoples, who have no public forum or authority to "press claims of such wrongful domination against a nation-state" and who therefore cannot be said to be self-determining.[110] In response to this problem, Young proposes to regulate international relations to create such forums and prevent domination.[111]

Adom Getachew further develops a nondominating relational account of self-determination by drawing on the writings of postcolonial statesmen and thinkers.[112] This tradition recast sovereign equality as world making, as a global anticolonial project that would "undo the hierarchies that facilitated domination." The world that these thinkers sought to transform entailed the unequal integration of newly independent

Cambridge University Press, 2019), who notes that the recognition of self-determining settler states consolidates the dispossession of indigenous peoples.

[106] "Two Concepts of Self-Determination," in *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Minority Rights*, ed. Stephen May, Tariq Modood, and Judith Squires (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 181, 85–89.

[107] Ibid., 85–89.

[108] Ibid., 188.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Ibid., 189.

[111] Ibid., 188–89.

[112] Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination*, 2.

countries – that is, membership with onerous obligations and limited rights – and racial hierarchy.[113] In contrast, anticolonial statesmen sought to bring into being a radically transformed world order with enhanced bargaining power for postcolonial states, democratized decision making, and international wealth redistribution.[114]

Thus, whereas Massad is concerned with uses of self-determination that enable domination in settler–native situations, Young and Getachew focus on dominated countries embedded in an unequal international system and propose global democratization measures to enable the self-determination of these groups. Thus their critique only reaches the international system, and leaves unexamined the inner workings of dominating states and how they depend on and infuse practices of self-rule through which democratic collectives appropriate outside wealth. This is the contribution of the present chapter: to spell out the excessive self-determination of western countries and its entanglement with western peoples themselves, whose collective projects of self-government are tied to this excess by affective attachments to possessions, whose appropriation is facilitated by a racial capitalist global order enabled by empire. These affective attachments and the popular politics they infuse, moreover, do not end with formal decolonization but transform themselves while continuing to rely on racialized sentiment, presently operating within the neoliberal world order.

This story holds even if the gains of global neoliberalism are no longer appropriated as equally within the west as during the golden age of welfare capitalism. This is because an aspirational, popularly felt possessiveness remains and shapes the politics of resistance to neoliberalism, channeling it toward right-wing populism. The empirical literature that examines support for Trump, for example, notes that rather than actual hardship, or in addition to it, it was the perception by high-status groups that their standing was threatened by domestic racial others and potential global challenges to US power that motivated these voters.[115] The proposed genealogy of global attachments illuminates why "the global" in the form of migration, refugee flows, trade, and regional integration emerged as central sites of affective engagement for right-wing populist movements. These resentful reactions target racialized others who are seen as rightly deployed for low-cost production and as victims of failed governments, but who are

[113] Ibid., 10, 18.
[114] Ibid., 12, 74.
[115] Diana C. Mutz, "Status Threat, Not Economic Hardship, Explains the 2016 Presidential Vote," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (2018): 2–3.

not supposed to trespass western borders or demand better conditions of exchange. When migrating or exiting the role of victims or exploited workers, these actors are seen as unduly taking what is not theirs. Thus, the threat, for many western citizens, is that of equality, which clashes with the hierarchical orderings associated with self-and-other-determination.

In other words, even if western democracy suffers under neoliberalism, the possessive popular sovereignty and dynamics of self-and-other-determination reappear in the *resistance* to neoliberalism. Such collective forms of identification and the desire to continue appropriating resources extracted from abroad constitute a *popular* imaginary worth analyzing, whether they appear under the guise of left-protectionist nationalism or right-wing antiglobalism. Just as an anticapitalist imaginary at the turn of the twentieth century demanded the distribution among democratic white publics of violently obtained wealth, a reaction to neoliberalism's drastic effects on western peoples may elicit an equally narrow democratic imaginary. This imaginary demands the continued exemption of the west from the ravages of neoliberalism (variously personified by the European Union, Chinese manufacturing prowess, or free trade agreements), rather than the transformation of the system away from racism and capitalism. In so doing, this imaginary reveals an indebtedness to the world of imperial self-and-other-determination that I describe and remains tethered to possessive attachments and extraction abroad.

The proposed theorization is necessary to scrutinize contemporary writings and political responses to neoliberalism and the right-wing reaction to it. A salient strategy is to focus on the how neoliberalism economizes all aspects of existence and damages basic elements of democracy, including practices of rule and democratic imaginaries.[116] Scholars have also shown that global neoliberal thought and institutions strive to keep markets "safe from mass demands for social justice and redistributive equality."[117] These critiques work against an assumed past in which the demos was able to rule over the economic realm, but disregard the fact that before these *peoples* were negatively affected by neoliberalism, they claimed to rule themselves partly based on resources appropriated from others. As this chapter reconstructs, these *lived* practices of rule were important in founding moments and did not so much contest capitalist logics of extraction as racialized them, making sure that a white sub-group could access goods and wealth well beyond their territory by

[116] Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, 17.
[117] Slobodian, *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism*, 14, 16.

dominating racial others. Critiques of neoliberalism's de-democratizing effects misrecognize this past and thus mourn a form of popular politics that both lacked a radical critique of capitalism and related despotically to racial others. In so doing, they also cannot capture why racialized possessive attachments still hold popular appeal as part of discourses that *oppose* neoliberal forms of global extraction. The proposed framework instead shines a critical light on the genesis of the racialized welfare capitalist states that were dismantled by Thatcher and Reagan, to inform a future-oriented popular politics that does not relate despotically to the global and sheds its entanglements with racial capitalism, which the third part of *Democracy and Empire* develops.

In other words, western publics oriented toward self-and-other-determination are ill prepared to judge their relation to the global without devolving into resentment at the loss of their right to dominion and exploitation. Their reactions target racialized others in the Global South or within the west and assert, rather than contest, the economic structures and unequal wealth distribution that were central to their past prosperity. The proposed framework shows that these orientations are not exceptional or foreign to democracy; indeed, they were internal to the expansion of popular sovereignty in western imperial countries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Within this frame, western citizens cannot see the relative decline in their living standards – when applicable – as part and parcel of the new neoliberal shape of capitalism that must be opposed or discover commonalities between their grievances and the historical and present vulnerability of the Global South, and demand instead the reinstatement of their right to rule others and appropriate their resources. By reconnecting western *polities* (rather than states or the international system) to the institutionalization and maintenance of domination, two important theoretical implications follow. First, it becomes clear that we cannot unreflectively assume that in the absence of a radical transformation in their consciousness and practices of consumption, western citizens or polities themselves will lead the struggle for global justice, as does much of the liberal literature.[118] Second, the thoroughly transnational dimensions of contemporary right-wing populism emerge clearly, highlighting that the hostile global attachments that characterize this movement

[118] Valdez, "Association, Reciprocity, and Emancipation: A Transnational Account of the Politics of Global Justice", Valdez, *Transnational Cosmopolitanism: Kant, Du Bois, and Justice as a Political Craft*, Margaret Kohn, "Globalizing Global Justice" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

contain an entitlement to global wealth obtained via racial domination, wealth that neoliberalism is concentrating in fewer and fewer hands.

In this framework, the vulgar racism that has accompanied the growth of right-wing populism must be taken seriously, i.e., in Fanon's words: "it is racists who are right."[119] Overt racism clues us into important *political* dynamics of racial capitalism that need theorizing and contesting. In other words, the outward expressions of racism are more telling about the current crisis than the constitutional principles invoked against these outbursts or the "facts" adduced to counter lies. If these outbursts used to be only episodic, it is because the solidity of the overall system of domination made daily assertions of superiority superfluous, and more subtle and "cultivated" forms of racism could prevail.[120]

Yet the increased regularity of outbursts at the time of writing indicates that the quid pro quo through which "the state … maintained [white groups'] privilege in implicit return for their support of capitalism" is in crisis.[121] This is because of both economic deterioration and challenges to white and male privilege by Black, Indigenous, Latinx, women's, immigrant, and anti-neoliberal movements around the world.[122] Thus understood, the reactive targeting of racial others (both foreign and domestic) reveals that energies are still directed to repairing self-and-other-determination, rather than contesting the dehumanization and exploitation of racial capitalism.

In addition to eschewing nostalgia toward historical moments of enfranchisement, critiques of neoliberalism must resist demands of isolationism, protectionism, or closed borders as motivated by normatively defensible white grievances, as commentators in the United States and leftist leaders in Europe have done.[123] Chapter 2 expands on this question, by exploring how racist systems of immigration control were also foundational to the imperial mode popular sovereignty theorized here, because they served to organize the distribution of resources in ways that catered to white settler priorities while governing racialized immigration flows to ensure access to controllable labor.

[119] Fanon, "Racism and Culture," 128.
[120] Ibid., 126.
[121] Dawson, "Hidden in Plain Sight: A Note on Legitimation Crises and the Racial Order," 154.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Michael Sandel, "Progressive Parties Have to Address the People's Anger," *The Guardian*, December 31, 2016, David Adler, "Meet Europe's Left Nationalists," *The Nation*, January 10, 2019.

2

Socialism and Empire

Labor Mobility, Popular Sovereignty, and the Genesis of Racial Regimes

This chapter further clarifies the entanglements between popular and imperial discourse at the turn of the twentieth century by focusing on the writings of labor leaders and activists, elite world historical writings, and documents from the British imperial bureaucracy. I show that popular discourses embraced by white labor in the United States and the British settler colonies borrowed from imperial scripts to mark nonwhite workers as a threat. This discourse was thus both imperial and popular, because it enlisted the working class throughout the European and the settler colonial world to defend imperial logics of labor control and settlement while demanding their own enfranchisement. Moreover, while finding channels and institutionalization in emerging national states, white labor enfranchisement demands were part of a transnational emancipatory imagination. These institutional formations emerged from the encounter between capitalists interested in facilitating the mobility of racialized laboring subjects around the globe, elite projects invested in sheltering settler spaces, and white workers concerned with protecting their own labor from competition by excluding exploitable nonwhite workers. Ultimately, white labor's embrace of racial prejudice and the exclusion of workers of color created segregated labor spaces that fit neatly with both capitalist goals of labor control and settler logics.

In developing the entanglement between empire and popular sovereignty mediated by racial capitalism, this chapter highlights the centrality of migration for prompting the negotiation of tensions in a way that responded to racialized priorities of capitalism and infused popular sovereignty with imperial hierarchies. This makes migration a world historical event, that is, an event with large-scale historical consequences, in this

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case its prompting of the negotiation and definition of dominant narratives of popular will and self-government. In the process of negotiating tensions between white and nonwhite migrants to the settler colonies and priorities of labor control, ideas of settler self-government consolidated around demands of emancipation grounded in racial hierarchies and redirected anticapitalist critiques in reformist directions. The value of this analysis is to capture a moment of flux in which mobile racialized and white labor reached settler colonies to fulfill different roles within a division of labor dictated by capitalist drives for accumulation. This encounter prompted thinkers, workers, and the British imperial bureaucracy to consider questions of race and democracy, self-government, and profit in ways that shaped the meaning of popular sovereignty and structured the struggles of enfranchisement by white labor. As such, this study makes salient the dynamic and contingent political arrangements that "solve" tensions between capitalist, racial, and democratic logics, as they find new modes of mutual articulation.

Methodologically, the chapter weaves together texts, archives, and regions that are usually approached separately, and grounds the textual analyses in the varied imperial mobilities of the era and the political formations that emerged from these encounters. This historical contextualization illuminates how political practices infuse central political concepts with meaning. The account proposed does not mean to encompass the wide expanse of progressive imperial thought that circulated in this period but it does illustrate the affinities of discourses by imperial bureaucratic elites and working-class intellectuals, on the one hand, and capitalist interests, on the other.

In the rest of the chapter, I first specify how the novel methodological framework of the chapter facilitates the theorization of the dynamic articulation between racism and capitalism, whose existence depends on imperialism and whose shape is partly determined by and underpins popular sovereignty. Then, I analyze writings on labor and world history, which I read jointly with narratives of the British imperial bureaucracy that made sense of the circulation of labor and its curtailment. I connect this conversation to labor politics in England and its white settler colonies or former colonies, and read these events through the prism of popular sovereignty. Having shown the central role of immigration in shaping the intersecting forces of empire, racial capitalism, and popular sovereignty, and how it was also shaped by these forces, I conclude by calling for its historicized reconceptualization within critical theory.

2.1 METHOD, MIGRATION, AND MOBILITY WITHIN EMPIRE

This chapter theorizes the imperial origins of popular sovereignty in British settler colonies and the metropole by focusing on the actual political exchanges, bureaucratic practices, and economic imperatives that shaped moments of enfranchisement. These are "material practices," by which I mean those actions – including political claims and institutional changes as well as economic and extractive capitalist endeavors – through which empire took shape on the ground and affected the lived meaning of political concepts whose nature concerns political theorists. Even if the existing scholarship reveals that the inherited canon of political thought *obscures* or *disavows* a dynamic realm of imperial hierarchies, its focus on absence cannot possibly *illuminate* this realm, a scrutiny that requires centering material practices to understand how they infused the social and political world in those times, and how they transformed its meaning and trajectory. The entanglement between popular sovereignty and empire means that popular claims were made over the wealth obtained through racial capitalist modes of accumulation enabled by overseas domination. In other words, the material practices of empire and the capitalist wealth it enabled were an integral part of the political world that political theorists interested in empire and popular sovereignty must grapple with.

Onur Ulas Ince's work on empire and racial capitalism is a partial exception to this trend in that it explicitly takes a "material" approach that centers capitalism conceptually.[1] Yet the exclusive focus on *textual* resources – in particular, the theory of colonization of Edward Gibbon Wakefield – directs Ince's attention to the schemes of governance that Wakefield devised for the emigrating British working class, without following this group into the settler colonies, where they would adopt imperial discourse in their own racialized demands for enfranchisement, which had no place for nonwhite workers arriving on these shores at the same time.[2]

[1] Onur Ulas Ince, *Colonial Capitalism and the Dilemmas of Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), chapter 4.

[2] More grounded approaches to liberalism and empire characterize the intellectual history of imperial law, which is studied as a central mechanism of the transmission of liberal ideas that are examined in practice. These scholars study how law impacted everyday practices and was resignified, i.e., circumscribed, interrupted, and/or extended. Anupama Rao, *The Caste Question: Dalits and the Politics of Modern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), Rachel Sturman, *The Government of Social Life in Colonial India: Liberalism, Religious Law, and Women's Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge

In sum, attention to practice is not simply about *applying* theory but about correcting the formulation of central political theoretic concepts to account for their (racialized) operation and their entanglement with imperial capitalism. To do this, the chapter jointly analyzes archives, regions, and groups that are traditionally studied in isolation.[3] By "read[ing] across separate repositories organized by office, task, and function,"[4] the chapter co-implicates distinct geographical areas and seemingly separate preoccupations and reconstructs a genuinely transnational phenomenon of racially regulated labor mobility and its political ramifications. This reading is organized around mobility as a central feature of empire and an entry point to understanding the political process by which settler colonies recruited labor and enfranchised/excluded it depending on racial markers. In this way, imperial policies of labor control dictated by capitalist needs for labor impacted self-governing colonies and were shaped by (foreign and native) white working classes, who demanded their enfranchisement while rejecting the incorporation of racialized others. Transit, displacement, and groundedness led to entanglements with theoretical implications for how we theorize popular sovereignty but are missed in exclusively textual engagements with these concepts.[5]

By focusing on practices of violence, capitalist labor exploitation, and clashes between different political forces underpinned by *ideas* about race and labor, this approach necessarily broadens our view spatially and

University Press, 2012), Andrew Sartori, *Liberalism in Empire: An Alternative History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), Keally McBride, *Mr. Mothercountry: The Man Who Made the Rule of Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). This attention to the sociohistorical contexts of articulation of liberal thought is necessary, but still remains within liberalism and leaves aside the imperial threads in *socialist* ideas and the racial capitalist formations and practices that were the context of these articulations. They focus their studies, moreover, predominantly on colonial spaces, rather than attending to socialism and the polities of imperial countries.

[3] Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, 38.

[4] Ibid., 5.

[5] The focus on text more broadly characterizes political theory and may be attributed to a reluctance to assert the preeminence of the material over the ideational, but can ultimately unmoor the ideational from social and political life. Samuel Moyn, "Imaginary Intellectual History," in *Rethinking Modern Intellectual History*, ed. Darrin M. McMahon and Samuel Moyn (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*. This is more readily recognized by scholars engaged in grounded political theory. See Brooke A. Ackerly, *Just Responsibility: A Human Rights Theory of Global Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), Paul Apostolidis, *The Fight for Time: Migrant Day Laborers and the Politics of Precarity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), Valdez, *Transnational Cosmopolitanism: Kant, Du Bois, and Justice as a Political Craft*.

temporally. Spatially, this move refocuses attention onto transnational imperial currents that shape politics in the metropole and self-governing settler colonies who negotiated political demands with imperial capitalist priorities and, in so doing, determined the fate of racialized others. Temporally, this move relativizes the break between empire and self-governing democratic politics, because it shows that the popular movements that spearheaded democratizing trends in the metropoles and the settler colonies were committed to maintaining the subjection of nonwhite subjects and the imperial capabilities of extraction, differing only in the distribution of the gains between capital and white labor. Importantly, this exploration recasts western democracies as imperial products that internalize hierarchical understandings of belonging that fit with racialized capitalist exploitation, on which they depend for their well-being.

With this framework in place, I expand on Chapter 1's focus on moments of transition and changing forms of subjection and further complicate these processes by theorizing the role of mobility in spearheading instabilities that prompt the negotiation of existing political formations and give shape to new institutions. White workers – transnationally linked through common discourses and networks of solidarity – claimed a right to move and settle, while objecting to the mobility of nonwhite labor, which they saw as threatening. These claims of self-government and demands for a racial regulation of mobility were made at the state level in both settler colonies and the metropole, but converged to create gradated spaces of exploitation globally and within territorial borders. In settler colonies, these struggles cemented the role of the state as the arbiter of working-class struggles and as the gatekeeper of the land, naturalizing its expropriation from Indigenous peoples.[6]

These processes were not independent of the experience of the emancipation of Black slaves in the United States, which was understood as a "failed" incorporation into a white polity and loomed large in how elite writings and demands for white enfranchisement dealt with nonwhite newcomers in Australia, Canada, South Africa, and the United States. As shown later, these connections and separations resorted to notions of "popular sovereignty" to create what is known today as "immigration control," but can more accurately be characterized as imperial labor control in the service of racial capitalism. It is in these interconnections and transitions that I continue to track the imperial character of our present institutions.

[6] Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

Attending to mobility and emerging tensions shows that the global British imaginary and common culture that scholars have reconstructed developed neither just at the elite level nor in isolation from the native and nonwhite groups it excluded,[7] but very much through the encounters and the actions, negotiation, and arguments about these exclusions. The expansive view proposed here shows that differently racialized groups in transit shaped each other and were shaped jointly by capitalist imperatives, elite priorities, and grassroots movements for white labor enfranchisement, three parties that often found themselves at odds. While capitalists were invested in facilitating labor control by moving laboring subjects around the globe and curtailing their mobility upon arrival, elite projects were invested in sheltering settler spaces, a concern echoed by white workers invested in protecting their own labor from the competition of exploitable nonwhite workers. Ultimately, white labor's embrace of racial prejudice and the exclusion of nonwhite migrants cemented subject constructions and segregated labor spaces that fit neatly with racial capitalist goals of labor control through differentiation and separation.

All three actors – imperial capitalists, intellectual elites, and white workers – relied on racial arguments about the ability to perform disciplined, self-directed work and/or partake of self-governing, civilized societies, even if they did not always pull in the same direction. While white workers' demands were for *local* state-based restrictions on the entry of nonwhite foreigners, their narratives were part of global imperial narratives and operated in transnational solidarity with other white workers. The state institutions that emerged imitated the imperial racial regulation of mobility while materializing them through self-governing rules, which eventually congealed and hid their imperial and transnational origins.

2.2 RACIAL CAPITALISM AND MOBILITY WITHIN EMPIRE

In his Inaugural Address to the International Workingmen's Association in 1864, Marx argued:

> In all countries of Europe it has now become a truth … only denied by those whose interest it is to hedge other people in a fool's paradise, that no improvement of machinery, no appliance of science to production, no contrivances of communication, *no new colonies, no emigration*, no opening of markets, no free

[7] Bell, *Reordering the World: Essays on Liberalism and Empire*, 175–76.

trade, nor all these things put together, *will do away with the miseries of the industrious masses*; but that, on the present false base, every fresh development of the productive powers of labour must … deepen social contrasts and point social antagonisms.[8]

Here, Marx notes two transnational dimensions of capitalism. First, capitalist exploitation and dispossession reached abroad through the acquisition of colonies. Second, it required the expulsion (via emigration) of redundant sections of the population,[9] which in turn populated British settler colonies in North America, Oceania, and South Africa. Moreover, Marx notes that capitalism has no national loyalties; imperial exploits, along with other techniques to increase productivity, did not aim to relieve the miseries of European workers, and did not in fact do so. Thus, as Marx notes in closing, before demanding proletarians of all countries to unite, the success of the working classes will come out of "combination and knowledge" and from standing "firmly by each other." Failing that, any efforts must collapse due to the "common discomfiture of their incoherent efforts."[10]

The story that this chapter tells is one of discomfiture and incoherent efforts, organized along axes of race that Marx did not examine, but that would prove determinant for the failure of projects that could oppose imperial capitalism in its transnational form. Even in his limited internationalism, Marx's hopes that the early signs of British working-class internationalism – at play in its support for Lincoln and the struggle of Poland against Russia – would prevail were unwarranted.[11] This internationalism, which had thrived during Chartism's cooperative work among British and Irish workers and would be sustained by radical artisan groups who actively debated imperial questions, would wane as the century progressed.[12] It would give way to a tamer trade unionism, the depoliticization of workers' social activities, and, ultimately, an embrace of imperial successes, represented by the euphoria around the end of the siege of Mafeking, in the Second Boer War (1899–1902),

[8] Karl Marx, "Inaugural Address to the First International," in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000 [1864]), 578. My emphasis.

[9] Karl Marx, "Forced Emigration," in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels on Britain* (London: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962 [1853]).

[10] Marx, "Inaugural Address to the First International," 581–82.

[11] Ibid., 580–81, Royden Harrison, "The British Labor Movement and the International in 1864," *The Socialist Register* 1, no. 1 (1964): 294.

[12] Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, chapter 2.

which radical workingmen's clubs joined in 1900.[13] The war had split the socialist Fabian Society, between those behind S. G. Hobson and Sidney Olivier and a branch that followed George Bernard Shaw. The former maintained that the aim of the Boer War was to establish supremacy over the natives and that imperialism as a whole detracted the British government from worthy domestic purposes, such as the establishment of an "industrial democracy." Shaw, on the other hand, was invested in the protection of British miners and the transfer of mining to public control to support an imperialism for the public interest. The Society ultimately did not take a position on the war, though most of its members sanctioned some form of imperialism.[14]

These evident divisions among progressives by the end of the century are predicted by Marx's increased pessimism about the unity of the working class, expressed only six years after the 1864 address, in his comments about the divisions between Irish and British workers. He criticized the latter's self-conception as members of the "*ruling* nation," one fueled by "the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, … [i.e.,] the means at the disposal of the ruling classes."[15] These imperial alignments turned the British worker into "a tool of the English aristocrats and capitalists against Ireland, thus strengthening their *domination over himself*."[16]

Marx points to the important – and still pressing – problem of working classes' cooptation by imperial capitalist projects, but he also misses the point that alongside white emigrants, Indian and Chinese subjects had circulated within and beyond the British Empire since the early nineteenth century and had joined freed slaves and native labor within the empire.[17] This does not mean that differentiations among white workers were inconsequential – as Marx's discussion of Irish labor shows – or that these differences were not racialized. There is a long trajectory of

[13] Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History 1832–1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 207–10.

[14] Fred D. Schneider, "Fabians and the Utilitarian Idea of Empire," *The Review of Politics* 35, no. 4 (1973): 505, 507, Duncan Bell, "Founding the World State: HG Wells on Empire and the English-Speaking Peoples," *International Studies Quarterly* 62, no. 4 (2018): 875.

[15] Karl Marx, "Letter to Siegfried Meyer and August Vogt, April 9, 1870," in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000 [1870]), 640, emphasis in the original. See also Marx, "Confidential Communication: Letter to Ludwig Kugelmann on Bakunin, Vol. 3," 172–74.

[16] Marx, "Letter to Siegfried Meyer and August Vogt, April 9, 1870," 640. My emphasis.

[17] This omission is not surprising, given Marx's racial and Eurocentric blindspots. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, xxix–xxx, Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History 1832–1982*.

European racialism, comprising enslavement regimes (of Slavs, Greeks, Russians, among others), the devaluation of European peoples identified with the "Orient," the drawing of the European bourgeoisie and proletarians "from particular ethnic and cultural groups," and the racialization of white workers through slave analogies.[18] In the United States, white workers' skills and wage differences were exploited by employers for the purposes of labor control, with Eastern European migrants conscripted to break strikes or counter unions' threat to take management control.[19] Ethnic differences, moreover, were often exploited to lower labor clout, by creating competition among different ethnic groups or mixing ethnicities on the shop floor. These maneuvers interacted with technological change and allowed for workers to be replaced by unskilled labor, predominantly from Eastern Europe. For example, 80 percent of "common laboring jobs" at the former Carnegie Mills in Allegheny County were filled by Eastern Europeans by 1907.[20] Further illustration of the distinct character of white ethnic gradations vis-à-vis the white/nonwhite divide appears in South African debates about Chinese indenture. Debates about mining acknowledged the alternative of relying on "mean" or "hardy" whites such as Swedes, Italians, Lithuanians, or Russians, but took these groups to be undesirable in comparison to the acknowledged equality of the Dutch and English "races."[21]

Yet the competition of these groups, while "unwanted," was threatening precisely because, unlike Chinese indentured migrants, other white workers could and would demand salaries closer to those earned by Dutch and English workers and could not be disciplined or segregated

[18] Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, 16, 26, Robbie Shilliam, *Race and the Undeserving Poor: From Abolition to Brexit* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Agenda Publishing, 2018), 4–6, Satnam Virdee, "Racialized Capitalism: An Account of Its Contested Origins and Consolidation," *The Sociological Review* 67, no. 1 (2019), Inés Valdez, "Toward a Narrow Cosmopolitanism: Kant's Anthropology, Racial Character, and the Construction of Europe," *Kantian Review*, 27, no. 4 (2022).

[19] Yda Schreuder, "Labor Segmentation, Ethnic Division of Labor, and Residential Segregation in American Cities in the Early Twentieth Century," *The Professional Geographer* 41, no. 2 (1989): 133, Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States, Vol. 2: From the Founding of the American Federation of Labor to the Emergence of American Imperialism* (New York: International Publishers, 1955), David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865–1925* (Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[20] Joshua B. Freeman, *Behemoth: A History of the Factory and the Making of the Modern World* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2018), 110.

[21] Imperial South African Association, *The Chinese Labor Question: Handy Notes* (London: Imperial South African Association, 1905), 8, J. Howard Reed, *The Gold Fields of South Africa* (Manchester: Cooperative Wholesale Societies, 1907), 16.

like the Indian and the Chinese were. Thus, the subtle hierarchies within whites do not diminish the qualitative and quantitative break of transatlantic slavery in this genealogy. Similarly, while an array of distinctions among different white ethnicities were discussed by eugenicists and exploited by employers in the United States and the settler world, the racial distinctions, practices of separation, and intensity of exploitation between whites and nonwhites were starker and more persistent, and merit particular attention. Notably, while ethnic whites in the United States were allowed to fill low skilled positions in factories that incorporated new machinery, nonwhite workers were confined to strenuous bodily work in the fields, mining, or railway construction, pointing to the stricter labor segregation and exclusions affecting these groups. This was at play in occupations like crane operation, which was an easily learned skill but it "long survive[d] as a craft job preserved for white workers."[22]

Nonwhite labor flowed into the settler colonies via indenture programs that became prominent after the gradual abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1834. Labor imports, regulated by the Court of Directors of the East India Company and the British Parliament, were sought to control newly freed African laborers in the Caribbean.[23] While indentured labor – recruited predominantly from British India – was defined as "free" labor, all recruited individuals traveled as a group,

[22] See Chapters 3 and 4 and Mario Barrera, *Race and Class in the South West: A Theory of Racial Inequality* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 44–45, Joseph F. Park, "The History of Mexican Labor in Arizona During the Territorial Period" (University of Arizona, 1961), 173–74, Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, ix. In South Africa, while there were qualms about admitting nonDutch or nonEnglish whites, the reasons against admission were that they would demand higher wages than Indian and Chinese workers and compete with European workers, as opposed to discussions of Chinese labor, which then-Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies Winston Churchill called "the lowest form of labour hitherto tolerated in modern times under the Union Jack." Winston Churchill, "Coolie Labor Regulations," *House of Commons Debate*, February 22 (1906): 554.

[23] Radhika Mongia, "Race, Nationality, Mobility: A History of the Passport," *Public Culture* 11, no. 3 (1999): 529–30, Madhavi Kale, "Projecting Identities: Empire and Indentured Labor Migration from Indian to Trinidad and British Guiana," in *Nation and Migration: The Politics of Space in the South Asian Diaspora*, ed. Peter van der Veer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995). While the literature on Indian indentured labor has long argued that these flows responded to a situation of labor shortage post-emancipation, here I follow Kale, who sees this movement as an effort by planters to control the labor of freedmen, despite the acceptance of labor shortage arguments by the British imperial bureaucracy and their acquisition of historical authoritativeness through their compilation in official archives. Madhavi Kale, *Fragments of Empire: Capital, Slavery, and Indian Indentured Labor in the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 7.

contracted some form of debt, and/or were attached to an employer upon arrival.[24] Moreover, while regulations existed to protect the emigrants, reports abounded of recruitment through "fraud, deception, and kidnapping."[25] Finally, findings from official investigations indicated that indentured workers were subject to high death rates and corporal punishment if they tried to escape.[26] Attesting to employers' motivations, many proposed schemes were rejected for containing conditions considered "even less equitable than [those] of slavery itself."[27] In the face of loud protests from the Indian Colonial Office and anti-slavery activists, the program was suspended only a year after its official sanctioning; it was allowed again in 1843 with conditions less favorable to planters and shorter contracts, which were expanded to five years only in 1860.[28] Even after reforms and the establishment of offices to protect workers and control employers, reports noted the abundance of disease in waiting camps and vessels carrying indentured laborers, poor living conditions, and the use of criminal prosecution and hard labor as punishment for labor disputes.[29]

While labor imports from India were banned, colonial secretary Lord Stanley expressed no reservations about Caribbean planters recruiting from Chinese territories under British control. He noted that "emigration was … routine among some Chinese communities," making protocols addressing fraud and abuse unnecessary.[30] Thus, throughout the nineteenth century, imperial authorities scrambled to "solve" the post-emancipation problem of labor control by transporting laborers from around the empire to provide planters, mining interests, and infrastructure developments with a submissive workforce. In the process they deployed racial discourses that assigned to different groups particular propensities to work, obedience, and adaptability to "free" contracting.

[24] Adam McKeown, "Global Migration, 1846–1940," *Journal of World History* 15, no. 2 (2004): 157.

[25] Kale, "Projecting Identities: Empire and Indentured Labor Migration from Indian to Trinidad and British Guiana," 75–76.

[26] Ibid., 76.

[27] Cindy Hahamovitch, "Indentured Labor, Guestworkers, and the End of Empire," in *Making the Empire Work*, ed. Daniel E. Bender and Jana K. Lipman (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 235.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Indian Legislative Council, "Resolution Re Abolition of the System of Indian Indentured Labor," *Proceedings of Indian Legislative Council – British Library IOR/L/PJ/6/1412, File 4522*, no. March 20 (1916): 3, 13.

[30] Kale, "Projecting Identities: Empire and Indentured Labor Migration from Indian to Trinidad and British Guiana," 79.

Just as arguments about the laziness of freed slaves and their inability to honor contracts had been deployed to justify importing Indian labor to the Caribbean in the 1830s, planters – likely in the face of desertions, strikes, and the lodging of complaints by indentured labor – turned to argue that Indians, while steadier workers than Afro-Caribbeans, were also "avaricious, jealous, less robust, and given to killing their women, not to mention dishonest, idolatrous, [and] filthy."[31] In comparison, recruiter James T. White reported from China that Chinese workers were alive to the needs of authority and generally "tractable and manageable," strong, tough, and "not averse to foreigners.'"[32] Halfway through the nineteenth century, Chinese laborers started reaching North America and Australia in greater numbers, fleeing the opium war and political instability in China, and spurred by the discovery of gold in California in 1849, in New South Wales in 1851, and in British Columbia in 1858.[33] The construction of the intercontinental railways in the United States and Canada brought more Chinese laborers from Guangdong and Hong Kong, respectively, who arrived with pre-paid contracts and free passage and the official imprimatur of the Burlingame Treaty for *temporary* migration, signed in1868 by the United States and China.[34] In the second half of the nineteenth century, Australia received significant numbers of Chinese migrants and arranged with the India Office to recruit indentured workers from India.[35] South African colonies similarly resorted to labor recruitment programs that brought Indians to work in sugar plantations in Natal, and, later, Chinese in mining in the Transvaal.[36]

[31] Hahamovitch, "Indentured Labor, Guestworkers, and the End of Empire," 237, Kale, "Projecting Identities: Empire and Indentured Labor Migration from Indian to Trinidad and British Guiana," 77.

[32] Kale, "Projecting Identities: Empire and Indentured Labor Migration from Indian to Trinidad and British Guiana," 78.

[33] Kenneth M. Holland, "A History of Chinese Immigration in the United States and Canada," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 37, no. 2 (2007): 150–51, Herbert Ira London, *Non-White Immigration and the "White Australia" Policy* (New York: New York University Press, 1970), 7–8.

[34] Holland, "A History of Chinese Immigration in the United States and Canada," 150, Suzy Lee, "The Case for Open Borders," *Catalyst* 2, no. 4 (2019): 6–7.

[35] Secretary of State for the Colonies Earl of Kimberley, "Letter to Lord Curzon (Governor of India)," *British Library IOR/L/PJ/6/88* File 2146 (1883), W. Grey, Esquire – Secy to the Govt. of India, "Letter to J. D. Sim, Esquire – Secy to the Govt. Of Fort St. George," *British Library IOR/L/PJ/3/1088* No. 150 (1861), Kenneth Rivett, *Australia and the Non-White Migrant* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1975).

[36] Robert A. Huttenback, "Indians in South Africa, 1860–1914: The British Imperial Philosophy on Trial," *The English Historical Review* 81, no. 319 (1966): 273–74.

Different forms of labor mobility and immobility awaited white workers. Liberal intellectuals such as Edward Gibbon Wakefield were concerned with excess labor in the metropole (which brought risks of unemployment, poverty, and labor militancy) and the dispersal of capital and labor in the settler colonies, and saw emigration from the metropole as a solution to both problems.[37] Accordingly, the New Poor Law Act of 1834 allowed parishes to raise or borrow money to support the emigration of its willing members, who joined earlier programs of child emigration, convict labor, and voluntary migrants from England and elsewhere in Europe. Altogether, upwards of 55 million migrants left Europe for the Americas between 1846 and 1940, while others left for Australia, in various capacities, starting in the eighteenth century and picking up pace in the second half of the nineteenth century.[38]

By the end of the nineteenth century a backlash against nonwhite migrants had set in. In 1893, Charles H. Pearson – an Oxford-educated historian, King's College professor, and recent emigrant to Australia – published *National Life and Character: A Forecast*, which prophesied the decline of western civilization in parallel to the advance of Asia, in particular China.[39] The work was inspired by two realizations. First, Pearson noted, "America was filling up," making less plausible the use of British emigration as an escape valve for working class organization and fueling a tendency toward state socialism in the west.[40] Second, Pearson noted the breakthrough of nonwhite peoples onto the world stage. This was not merely hypothetical for Pearson, who witnessed the Chinese empire's exchanges and demands regarding its subjects in Australia.[41] Pearson contested prevalent conceptions of world history by acknowledging nonEuropean countries' political agency, even as he reproduced a number of dictates of racial science, such as the inadaptability of the white race to tropical climates, the barbarism of certain peoples, and/or the inferiority of Indigenous Central Americans.[42] It was

[37] Ince, *Colonial Capitalism and the Dilemmas of Liberalism*.

[38] Leslie Page Moch, *Moving Europeans: Migration in Western Europe since 1650* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 199.

[39] Marilyn Lake, "The White Man under Siege: New Histories of Race in the Nineteenth Century and the Advent of White Australia," *History Workshop Journal* 58, no. 1 (2004).

[40] Charles H. Pearson, *National Life and Character* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1915 [1893]), 1.

[41] Lake, "The White Man under Siege: New Histories of Race in the Nineteenth Century and the Advent of White Australia," "The Chinese Empire Encounters," *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 9, no. 2 (2013), Huttenback, "Indians in South Africa."

[42] Pearson, *National Life and Character*, 56, 60.

the latter, among others, that he foresaw being ruled by the Chinese, an estimation informed by both the difficulty of white settlement beyond temperate zones, and the experience of Chinese settlement in other countries. He cited the Straits Settlements as an example of the spread of the Chinese, noting that they amounted to half of the population in Singapore and Perak (Malaysia), and that the Malay could not hold their own against them.[43]

Moreover, Pearson continued, the Chinese were "tolerably certain" to gain the upper hand in the long run, given their superiority in numbers vis-à-vis the Malays ("sixteen to one"), and their superior industriousness and organization in precluding competition. If in fifty years China had become one of the great world powers, he inquires, would "the larger part of Borneo … still be a dependency of the Netherlands?" or would this island "have passed, by arms or diplomacy, into the possession of China?"[44] If the Chinese had not become a power in the Australian continent despite their growing numbers in Victoria, Pearson explains, it would only be because of the "vigilant opposition of the Australian democracies."[45] Pearson saw whole areas of Central and South America "north of Uruguay" (where the aboriginal race – decimated by misrule and the half caste – "is fit for nothing but servitude"[46]) as open to the control of "Chinamen" with a footing in Peru, or by "coolies … working profitably in British Guiana."[47] Pearson thus concludes that a strong presumption exists for a people of such enormous natural resources as the Chinese, that they will eventually "overflow their borders, and spread over new territory, and submerge weaker races."[48]

Pearson's book caused a stir in academia and political circles. Theodore Roosevelt reported directly to Pearson of the "great effect" his work was having in the United States, and Prime Minister Gladstone was reportedly "full of Pearson's book."[49] *The National Character* influenced nativist American tracts such as Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916), and *The Rising Tide of Color* (1920), by Lothrop Stoddard, who characterized Pearson's book as "epoch-making."[50] Pearson's book

[43] Ibid., 50.
[44] Ibid., 53.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid., 56.
[47] Ibid., 57.
[48] Ibid., 54.
[49] Lake, "The White Man under Siege: New Histories of Race in the Nineteenth Century and the Advent of White Australia," 41.
[50] Ibid., 51.

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transformed the victorious Teuton marching triumphant through world history into a narrative of the white man under siege, one that would justify a host of exclusionary immigration and domestic measures securing "white countries" around the globe.[51]

2.3 EMPIRE, SETTLEMENT, AND THE PEOPLE

Elite discourses of threat had a popular counterpart in the anti-immigrant claims by workers in the British colonies who refused to compete with "free" workers of color.[52] Australia and most colonies in South Africa, for example, already mandated nonwhite guest workers to return at the end of their contracts and subjected them to tight restrictions while in the country. These racialized discourses were also prominent in the metropole, as the British general election of 1906 illustrates, with the historic defeat of the Tory government of Arthur Balfour in an election that revolved around the Second Boer War. In this election, the recruitment of Chinese indentured workers by mining companies in the war's aftermath figured prominently, a phenomenon dubbed "Chinese slavery" by abolitionists and humanitarian activists.

The buildup to the Second Boer War mobilized British ethnic feeling both in the South African colonies and the metropole by highlighting the vulnerable position of British subjects in South Africa.[53] The diamond and gold wealth discovered in the 1860s and 1880s in Kimberley and the Witwatersrand had renewed Britain's hopes of turning South Africa into a destination for English emigration. Such a project envisioned its gradual transformation into a unified self-governing colony in the style of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.[54] Through the promise of wealth through emigration-cum-settlement, political elites implicated the British working class in the war and the policies toward Chinese migration. The victory of the Liberals in the 1906 election and the historic Tory upset were based on a campaign that tied Toryism with a "South Africa for

[51] Ibid., Marilyn Lake, "From Mississippi to Melbourne Via Natal: The Invention of the Literacy Test as a Technology of Racial Exclusion," in *Connected Worlds: History in Transnational Perspective*, ed. Marilyn Lake Ann Curthoys (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2005), Marilyn Lake, "White Men's Wages," in *Outside In: The Transnational Circuitry of US History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[52] Hahamovitch, "Indentured Labor, Guestworkers, and the End of Empire," 242.

[53] John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World System, 1830–1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 238.

[54] Ibid., 227–52.

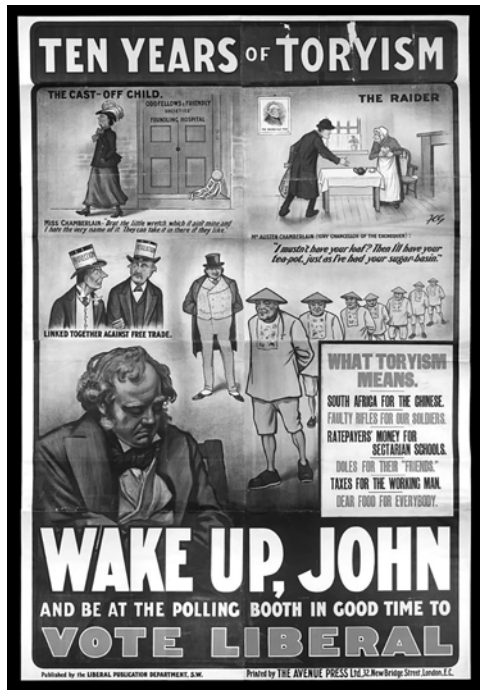

FIGURE 2.1 Artist Unknown. Poster produced by the Liberal Party for the 1906 General Election campaign: "Ten years of Toryism." LSE Libraries COLL MISC 0519/98.

the Chinese" policy, a platform shared with the Labour Representation Committee (later the British Labour Party)[55] (Figure 2.1). In particular, British trade unionists relied on anti-slavery rhetoric to condemn the conditions of Chinese labor. Yet, in this condemnation, those enslaved received no sympathy, which instead went to "British and South African white workers," whose rights to welfare and employment were threatened by Chinese competition.[56]

The tensions between race, mobility, capitalist profit, and the settler project came into relief in turn-of-the-century South Africa. The discovery of gold had turned this colony from a strategic port on the way to India into a crucial source of the precious metal needed to maintain the

[55] Emmet O'Connor, "William Walker, Irish Labour, and 'Chinese Slavery' in South Africa, 1904–6," *Irish Historical Studies* 37, no. 145 (2010): 48.

[56] Kevin Grant, *A Civilised Savagery: Britain and the New Slaveries in Africa, 1884–1926* (London: Routledge, 2014), 81–82.

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supremacy of British sterling.[57] But the strategic importance of gold, and the urgent need to secure the labor to extract it, had to be reconciled with the goals of white settlement, which entailed establishing British dominance in relation to Boer settlers and attending to the anti-Chinese demands of white workers in the metropole and the colony.

According to a report that circulated among British imperial bureaucrats, opposition to Chinese labor imports in the Transvaal was associated with the fear that they would "swarm over the whole country in enormous numbers, invading every trade and acquiring a permanent hold of the land."[58] A communication from South African leaders to Viscount Alfred Milner (British governor of the colonies of Orange and Transvaal), including soon-to-be Prime Ministers Louis Botha and Jan Christian Smuts, put a popular spin on this objection. They claimed that introducing "Asiatic" labor without *consent* would be fatal and looked upon as "a public calamity of the first magnitude," because it would "prevent this from ever becoming a white man's country" and exclude the native population from participation in the development of industry.[59]

Interestingly, those who favored the importation of Chinese labor to the Transvaal in no way departed from basic settler assumptions. For proponents of Chinese labor, the dignity and superior racial status of whites *required* the temporary importation of indentured laborers, who would be repatriated after fulfilling unskilled mining work or until native labor could be relied upon again.

The strenuous work that whites could not perform for either "climatic and physical reasons," the simple taboo on performing demeaning work, or the fact that their wages made their employment in unskilled positions unprofitable, was required to return the mining industry to health and fuel economic activity that would benefit white workers.[60] Thus, the settler logic relegated African natives to physically intense jobs without which gold extraction could not be made profitable; for this, they relied on taxes that pushed natives into selling their labor and, failing this, enlisted Chinese

[57] Robert Ross, *A Concise History of South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 75–76.

[58] n/a, "The Feeling in South Africa with Regard to Chinese Labour," *British Library Add/MS/88906/22/12* (1904).

[59] Viscount Alfred Milner (Governor of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony), "Telegram to Alfred Lyttelton (Secretary of State for the Colonies)," *British Library Add MS/88906/22/12*, no. February 10 (1904).

[60] Imperial South African Association, *The Chinese Labor Question: Handy Notes*, 7, 6, Reed, *The Gold Fields of South Africa*, 8–9.

indentured migrants to be returned at the expiry of their contracts. White settler jobs were thus cordoned off, just as the land they settled was protected by the creation of native reserves, pass laws, and ordinances that separated African, Indian, and Chinese laborers from whites' places of residence. Indentured work "failed" only when nonwhite migrants remained in the territory and accessed "certain classes of white trades" and political rights, as happened in Natal.[61] The established division of labor, assigning "brain work" to whites and "brawn and spade work" to "black or some coloured race," reinforced racial theories that established the superior status of the white race over all others, and required a wage to match "the higher scale of civilization and standard of living" that laboring Englishmen, however despised at home, achieved by merely landing in South Africa.[62] Restrictions applied to nonwhite arrivals and nonwhite residents curtailed this same upward mobility and political enfranchisement for everyone else. The connection between wage and stage of civilization was by no means a new or isolated claim; Marx himself casually tied together the "necessary requirements" of workers with the level of civilization in his discussion of the sale and purchase of labor power.[63] This feature of labor power – which sets it apart from other commodities – is what Marx calls the "historical and moral element" in the determination of its value,[64] and reappears racialized in the debates reproduced here to justify the racialized threat that nonwhite arrivals posed to white settlers-qua-workers. This metamorphosis of the "historical and moral" into the racial is clear in how white workers could leave behind their wretched conditions in Europe, while racialized immigrants remained tethered to their supposedly inferior "scale of civilization" indefinitely. The grounds of this dispute were, in turn, the land dispossession of Indigenous peoples, whose "civilization" made them unfit to control land, given their inability to work it in the destructively productive manner sanctioned as proper by European modernity.

The division of labor which required the physical exploitation of Black and brown workers was entwined with the production of racial difference and the protection of white settlers, who appropriated the most valuable jobs in the mining industry, in addition to the most valuable land. But the exclusionary impetus among white workers had to be modulated by the interest of British capital, which depended on South African mining,

[61] Imperial South African Association, *The Chinese Labor Question: Handy Notes*, 8.
[62] Ibid., 8, 6, Reed, *The Gold Fields of South Africa*, 9.
[63] Karl Marx, *Capital Volume I* (London: Penguin, 1990 [1867]), 275.
[64] Ibid.

leading a member of Parliament to claim that taking away Chinese labor from the Rand gold mines would be "an act of treachery to the Empire itself."[65] Thus, the racist construction of the Chinese as ready for harsh and poorly paid labor served to prop up South African mining cheaply after the war, a position solidified by the popular mobilization of white workers against them; this mobilization failed to exclude them altogether, but demanded and embraced measures to enforce these workers' precarious, exploitable position and their residential and labor segregation.

A similar privileging of white workers' well-being and an implicit settler orientation characterizes the writings on Chinese emigration by prominent British labor leader and intellectual Henry Mayers Hyndman, credited with building "what there was of a Marxist movement" in England, including founding and dominating the first 1880s Marxist organization (the Social Democratic Federation), the forerunner of the Communist Party.[66] In his volume *The Awakening of Asia*, Hyndman devotes a full chapter to the question of Chinese emigration. He acknowledges the racial motivations of anti-Asian feeling in the United States and Australia, but considers wage competition an acceptable ground for restricting their settlement in countries "*already partially peopled*, not by Malays or other Asiatics, but *by men of European Race*."[67] This is because he thinks that it is beyond dispute that "under capitalism, competitive wagedom and production for profit, the European and American workers cannot hold their own against the Mongolian toilers."[68] Hyndman explains that the transition toward the "general organisation of industry upon the basis of co-operation instead of competition" cannot advance fast enough to handle the problem of Asian labor competition with white workers before "it is forced upon the world on a vast scale."[69]

Hyndman was frustrated with discussions of Chinese migration in international socialist fora and in Special Commissions on which he served. Hyndman thought the majority exhibited great ignorance about the matter and were not inclined to "look facts in the face" when they conflicted with "universal humanitarian theories," making the reports

[65] Gilbert Parker, "Coolie Labor Regulations," *House of Commons Debate*, February 22 (1906): 550.
[66] Mark Bevir, *The Making of British Socialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 65.
[67] Henry Mayers Hyndman, *The Awakening of Asia* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1919), 180. My emphasis.
[68] Ibid., 190.
[69] Ibid.

presented practically valueless. The facts, according to Hyndman, were that European workers were not yet competent to handle "the whole of this immigration problem" and that American and Australasian workers were, mostly, bitterly prejudiced.[70]

Thus, Hyndman acknowledges and implicitly condemns racial prejudice (with some equivocation on whether it is justified against the Chinese rather than the civilized Japanese).[71] However, he demands that the facts of Asian superior toil and the difficulty of addressing the competition for labor in a society that falls short of cooperativism take precedence over universal principles. In fact, he does not even specify these universal principles, socialist or otherwise. Hence, as in the South African case, the discussion is centered on the grievances that befall white workers as a consequence of Asian labor, rather than on those that affect Asian workers, including the unpacking of assumptions regarding their work ethics, surely due to vulnerable legal status, discrimination, and exploitation rather than a natural propensity toward toilsome work.[72]

The world historical conceptions of Asian threat, the Chinese slavery debate, and white labor's discourse about nonwhite workers reveal that race, space, and capital figured prominently in turn-of-the-century global discourse. This discourse was clearly imperial, but it was also popular, because it reached and enlisted the white working class throughout the United States, England, and white settler colonies, and became part of their emancipatory imagination, binding them together "into an imperial working class."[73] This transnational working class linked British trade

[70] Ibid., 191.

[71] Ibid., 189.

[72] It is important to distinguish between labor activists' stance on imperialism, which was often in solidarity with oppressed groups, and their position vis-à-vis nonwhite labor in white countries. It is clear that by the early twentieth century Hyndman had turned against empire, expressed solidarity and recognition of the collective agency of Indians, and even acknowledged that imperial Britain would not hesitate to "play the same game" with Britons, were they to become as dangerous as agitators in India. Marcus Morris, "From Anti-Colonialism to Anti-Imperialism: The Evolution of Hm Hyndman's Critique of Empire, C. 1875–1905," *Historical Research* 87, no. 236 (2014): 296, Priyamvada Gopal, *Insurgent Empire: Anticolonial Resistance and British Dissent* (London: Verso Books, 2019), 171–73. Despite this change of heart, Hyndman's 1919 position on Chinese immigration and settlement still aligns with racial accounts of capacity to toil and threatening competition continuous with a settler logic, allowing for anti-colonial solidarities only as long as they do not require relinquishing the "democratic" gains of the settler working-class.

[73] Jonathan Hyslop, "The Imperial Working Class Makes Itself 'White': White Labourism in Britain, Australia, and South Africa before the First World War," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 12, no. 4 (1999): 399.

unionists and socialists with white workers in South Africa and "criss-crossed the western U.S.-Canadian frontiers to engage in riots, lobby for immigration restriction, and establish anti-Asiatic organizations," animated by a broader pattern of racialization drawing from linkages between racist proletarian movements in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the British metropole.[74] Labor organizers echoed the language of competition that displaced the injustice of capitalist arrangements and instead centered their critique on capitalists' recruitment of Chinese labor. This was expressed crisply by British Columbian M. A. Beach, who, speaking at the Washington Federation of Labor gathering in the United States, celebrated working class successes, such as increasing the Chinese head tax from $50 and $500, but encouraged his comrades not to rest until "we get total prohibition of the yellow evil."[75]

While the multiple acts restricting and ultimately banning Asian migration to the United States that emerged in this political climate are relatively well known, the Canadian efforts at restricting Indian migration and taxing Chinese entrants are less so. Yet even if during this period their common belonging to the British Empire prevented an outright ban, Canada creatively restricted Indian migration.[76] Debates between 1906 and 1915 culminated in the creation of a passport system for the British empire and made embarking on a journey in any British India port without a such a document a crime, breaking with the principle of free movement and equal subjecthood within the empire.[77] Thus, settler and former settler colonies were of one mind with US eugenicist Stoddard, who remarked that what concerned the Japanese in California also held "for all types of Asiatic [elsewhere in] our Union, in Canada, in Australia, in South Africa and in every other region of white settlement where the man of color attempts to penetrate." This, "a true world-problem," he argued, "must be considered in this broad way."[78]

The language of self-government and democracy figured prominently as the British bureaucracy coordinated and made sense of the demand for immigration restrictions within the empire. In a letter to the secretary of

[74] Ibid., 679.
[75] Ibid., 678.
[76] Mongia, "Race, Nationality, Mobility: A History of the Passport."
[77] Ibid., 533.
[78] Lothrop Stoddard, "The Japanese Question in California," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 93, no. 1 (1921): 43.

state for the colonies, responding to a complaint by Sikh groups about restrictions on entry to Western Australia and curtailed access to work permits, the governor of that colony argued that, regardless of the views of the government, it could not "retain its position in this Democratic Country, and advocate an equality of rights to coloured people."[79] The "democratic" conception of rule is clearly distinguished here from a substantive commitment to equality. The letter then states that Western Australian voters do not take into consideration "what the obligations of the Mother Country may be to the Indian Subjects," but "the competition of a Race or Races who can and will, owing to their different conditions of living and frugality, undersell them in production and labor."[80] The latter argument connects the popular will to the well-being of white workers, who are entitled to demand that the polity excludes those who are exploited, for they offer a competition that less "frugal" workers cannot beat. As with other instances of narratives of threat, these claims run counter to the fact that the measures defended – like banning nonwhites from certain trades – in fact produced the frugal workers that would then be deemed threatening.

However, the opposition between the self-governing colonies and the imperial government's "obligation" to protect Indian subjects is not so pronounced as the exchange suggests. In a later exchange regarding the Union of South Africa, the Earl of Crewe (secretary of state for India) states the point to Viscount Gladstone (governor of the General Union of South Africa) by acknowledging that while His Majesty's Government raises strong objections to "the prescription … of the inhabitants of one part of the Empire by another," it also fully recognizes "*the right of a self-governing community such as the Union to choose the elements of which it shall be constituted*." He concludes by noting that it is not their desire to press the government to admit immigrants whom the people of South Africa are resolved to exclude.[81] Here, the British crown relies confidently on the language of constitution of a people as having to do with its (racial) "elements" and acknowledges this as a legitimate feature of white self-governing polities, even though it contradicts the formal principle of equal subjecthood.

[79] E. H. Wittenoom, "Letter to Joseph Chamberlain," *British Library IOR/L/PJ/6/470* File 122 (1898).
[80] Ibid.
[81] Lord Crewe, "Draft Despatch to Viscount Gladstone," *British Library IOR/L/PJ/6/1036* File 3578 (1910). My emphasis.

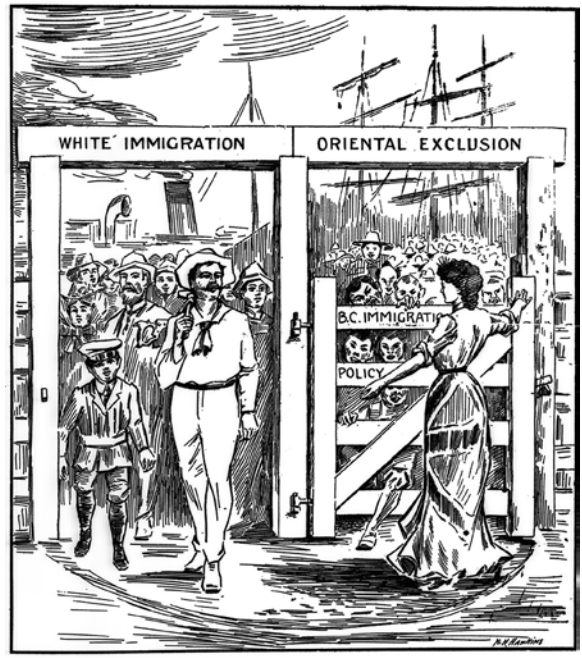

FIGURE 2.2 N.H. Hawkins' cartoon in the *Saturday Sunset*, August 24, 1907: "The same act which excludes orientals should open the portals of British Columbia to white immigration." Vancouver Public Library, Special Collections, VPL 39046.

In these debates, which are formally concerned with immigration, the distinctions cited in favor of exclusion by intellectuals, labor, and the imperial bureaucracy were strictly about race, rather than foreignness. Claims by labor groups followed not from longstanding membership in the polity but from whiteness. These claims, moreover, were made in dialogue or solidarity with white working classes in other colonies and the metropole, who saw emigration and settlement as a path to upward mobility. Understandably, then, restrictions on Asian migration co-existed with incentives and desires to foster European white migration (Figure 2.2).

The salience of race, rather than membership, in motivating labor hostility was evident in the United States, where racial animosity also pitted white workers against Mexican-American and Black workers who were citizens. Du Bois's critique of Democrats in *Reconstruction* reflects this when he notes that California and Washington state

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opposed the franchise of Black, Indian, and Chinese groups in 1868.[82] Moreover, immigrants from Mexico, while foreign, were exempted from the quotas established by the anti-Asian laws in order to provide the labor needed after the ban on Asian migration led to a shortfall.[83] Despite this exemption, this group was the subject of widespread racism and targeted by border policing and other forms of surveillance in ways that their foreign white counterparts were not.[84]

It follows that the control of nonwhite immigration was simply one among many mechanisms of labor regulation and dispossession of racialized others that privileged the well-being of white groups and their access to land. In the countries under study, land dispossession and/or racial labor regulation targeted African natives in South African colonies, Indians in Natal, Indigenous, Black, and Mexican-American groups in the United States, and Indigenous groups in Australia and New Zealand, all groups whose subjection could not be ensured through migration control. These internal racial exclusions were also supported by white groups, and the reasons for the avowedly threatening character of these racialized groups were continuous with those to restrict migration. A racial capitalism approach, which takes the differential and more intense exploitation of racial others as typical of capitalist forms of reproduction through the exaggeration and racialization of difference,[85] clarifies that migration control constitutes no realm of its own but a racial technology akin to many others.

Not only was race the overarching axis of exclusion across many domains, but the racialized discourses were also continuous throughout imperial republics, self-governing units, and the British metropole and sought to order all races, not just Indians and Chinese. Indeed, much of the debate on the threat of Asian migration in the settler world was inspired by the historiography of the "failed experiment" with racial equality in the post–Civil War United States.[86] This question also figured in the discussions about white emigration from Britain, leading Wakefield to judge British emigration an incalculable gain for Americans, who were "cursed

[82] Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: 1860–1880*, 374.
[83] Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).
[84] Clare Sheridan, "Contested Citizenship: National Identity and the Mexican Immigration Debates of the 1920s," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 21, no. 3 (2002).
[85] Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, 26.
[86] Lake, "From Mississippi to Melbourne Via Natal: The Invention of the Literacy Test as a Technology of Racial Exclusion," 213–14.

with slavery."[87] This "curse" was also discussed in US labor circles. Samuel Gompers, the English-born US union leader and founder of the American Federation of Labor, argued that the association of manual labor with "those who were formerly slaves," who were placed below white workers in terms of worth and dignity, operated against efforts "to secure social justice" by law or labor organizing.[88] David Roediger captures this dynamic when he identifies whiteness as the identity that allowed US white workers to respond to fears of dependency on wage labor and to the discipline of capitalist wage work, but I show that these dynamics are neither strictly national nor limited to anti-black racism.[89] In fact, Gompers moves on to discuss labor competition in relation to the annexation of the Philippines, which would have "the Chinese, the Negritos and the Malays coming to our country," or "Chinese coolies" from the Philippines swarming "the United States engulfing our people and our civilization."[90]

In sum, the paths carved by mobile colonial subjects, and the popular, discursive, and administrative justifications for restricting nonwhite migrants fueled a conception of proper global mobility, newly regulated by self-governing colonies and sovereign states that absorbed rather than abandoned imperial logics of mobility and white settlement. The very view of settler colonies as more advanced democratically and socially progressive coexisted without contradiction with their presumed right to govern inferior others, a position publicly endorsed by Roosevelt, Alfred Deakin, and many others.[91] In this sense, the control of nonwhite migration was at once imperial, colonial, and popular, in that it presumed a collective agreement to displace Indigenous peoples and populate these areas with white European subjects while conscripting nonwhite labor for strenuous jobs, or excluding them altogether when they attempted to enter the territory.[92] Racial discourses of labor competition grounded

[87] Edward Gibbon Wakefield, *A Letter from Sydney: The Principal Town of Australasia* (London: Joseph Cross, 1829).

[88] Samuel Gompers, "Imperialism: Its Dangers and Wrongs (an Address at the Chicago Peace Jubilee)," in *The Samuel Gompers Papers: An Expanding Movement at the Turn of the Century, 1898–1902*, ed. Stuart B. Kaufman (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1986 [1898]), 28.

[89] Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, 13.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Lake, *Progressive New World: How Settler Colonialism and Transpacific Exchange Shaped American Reform*, 12, 47, 63.

[92] This echoes Adam Dahl's account of the settler character of American democratic thought and extends it by pointing at the centrality of migration, labor, and mobility as

the popular justification for exclusion and the performance of settler self-government that so enthused nineteenth-century liberals.[93] Throughout the settler world, the regulation of mobility and establishment of sovereign border controls was less about foreignness and more about finding institutional proxies through which to racially shape population inflows and enforce a profitably precarious status for racialized others, while protecting the well-being of white subjects in "white countries."

In this sense, the "present everydayness" character of settler colonialism revealed itself as not only the continued occupation of Indigenous land and expansion of its oppressive logics to other subaltern subjects that Chikasaw scholar Jodi Byrd recovers,[94] but also the continued recruitment of settler subjects (European migrants) into the project. Following Byrd's warning about how struggles for hegemony within and outside institutions may make us lose sight of underlying structures of settler colonialism,[95] my focus is *not* on the exclusion of racialized others from a normalized settler-citizen status, but on how white subjects arriving from Europe enthusiastically joined the settler project and called it democracy. These enthusiastic joiners solidified the territorial character of settler dominions, cordoned off nonwhites from the area through land dispossession, and sustained white life through the forced labor of workers of color, facilitated through the strategic establishment of different governmental technologies that produced subjection and vulnerability.

Overlaying and hiding this structure, discourses and actions by the white working class successfully posited a "people" that encompassed foreign and native whites and enacted a particular shape and content of popular sovereignty, while constituting their demands as "the people's will."[96] Although the democratic legitimacy of such a declaration is dubious, it is nonetheless a popular claim to authority, an attempt at "racialized people making" that provided closure in moments when the boundaries of the polity were contested.[97]

practices that reinforced and institutionalized these commitments. Dahl, *Empire of the People: Settler Colonialism and the Foundations of Modern Democratic Thought*.

[93] Bell, *Reordering the World: Essays on Liberalism and Empire*, 46, 364–65.

[94] Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*, xviii.

[95] Ibid, xvii–xviii, xxiii, xxvi.

[96] Honig, "Between Decision and Deliberation: Political Paradox in Democratic Theory," Jason Frank, "Populism and Praxis," in *The Oxford Handbook of Populism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[97] Gorup, "The Strange Fruit of the Tree of Liberty: Lynch Law and Popular Sovereignty in the United States."

The instance of people-making depicted in this chapter, however, indexes the notion of popular sovereignty in two further ways. First, it highlights the transnational affinities of movements that enlisted states as protectors of white well-being – an early instance of "think global, act local." Second, it illustrates that popular sovereignty in self-governing white spaces was entangled with empire, in the sense that it continued the imperial mode of governance of labor mobility, this time through immigration regulations that protected and solidified settler colonialism. This brand of popular sovereignty relied on selective modes of sharing and concentrating power, and was built on differentiation and selective inclusion and exclusion in modes typical of empire and its racial capitalist mode of extraction.[98] In this sense, popular movements demanding enfranchisement in the early twentieth century should be seen less as self-determining units differentiating themselves against other units than as processes of decentralization of imperial governance through its absorption by settler states. The same can be said of the immigration regimes that ensued from these emancipatory struggles, which were imperial institutions through and through, and whose goal was to exclude racialized others.

In this equation, people-making and critique of white workers' exploitation, on the one hand, and the element of racism, on the other, were inextricably entangled.[99] This undermined the democratizing and anticapitalist credentials of this activism. Yet it would be incorrect to consider the demands of white labor as necessarily contradicting the priorities of imperial labor control, because the differential commodification of labor needed not erode the standing of privileged wage labor and may have even safeguarded the well-being of this group.[100] Tragically, this development displaced more structural challenges to capitalism and its reliance on racially gradated regimes of exploitation.

[98] Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, 26, Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference*, 2.

[99] Hyslop, "The Imperial Working Class Makes Itself 'White': White Labourism in Britain, Australia, and South Africa before the First World War," 399.

[100] Gargi Bhattacharyya, *Rethinking Racial Capitalism: Questions of Reproduction and Survival* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 68. This also means that white workers were controlled, but differently. While indentured labor and, later, guest worker programs moderated wage pressure and disciplined the labor, these operated differently depending on the population being disciplined. In the Caribbean, the recruitment of Indian and Chinese indentured labor was one of many techniques used to demote black freedmen to the bottom of the labor ladder, with parallels to the fate of this group in the United States. In the case of white workers, the disciplining effect was complemented by social protections at the turn of the century and during guest worker programs that co-existed with the golden age of the welfare state.

2.4 CRITICAL THEORY, MIGRATION, AND THE QUESTION OF EMPIRE

The proposed account suggests that imperial mobility was organized to differentially govern subjects in order to create a racially exclusive *people* that relegated other groups to the margins, thus facilitating more intensive accumulation, which enabled the expansion of well-being among white groups. In contemporary political theory, mobility is theorized under the category of "immigration," which is studied either as a realm of its own by political philosophers or in an ad-hoc manner prompted by worrying political developments by critical theorists. In the former case, which I analyze at greater length elsewhere,[101] migrants are taken to be outsiders whose treatment ought to be assessed via a variety of normative principles, including territorial rights, freedom of movement, or national culture. But in considering immigration control a legitimate attribute of (popular) sovereignty or contesting this legitimacy, these accounts fall for the disappearing act performed by the transfer of the functions of imperial labor control to white, self-governing, settler colonial states. As such, they debate imperial remnants that racially segregate and control labor as an ahistorical realm that we can judge via ethical principles while avoiding engaging with its genealogy. In the latter case, migration has been addressed by those interested in the growth of support for right wing, xenophobic leaders and the democratic erosion that sometimes accompanies this trend. Yet critical theorists seldom make migration itself a topic worth theorizing on its own, assuming instead that it is either one of the "flows" characteristic of globalization, or the target of anxiety provoked by the precarization of increasing portions of the white working class.

Wendy Brown, for example, takes "immigrant flows" alongside capital flows, digital networks, and supply chains as evidence that "the world has invaded the nation," weakened its borders, and transformed the existential conditions of populations.[102] Brown ties white men's affirmation of supremacy and entitlement to the threat that neoliberalism poses to their status, and their racialized reaction to the fact that they hold "politicians … responsible for allowing [new immigrants] into the West."[103] This framework superimposes "immigration as source of anxiety" over

[101] I deal with the lessons that this account has for the political theory of migration in "Socialism and Empire: Labor Mobility, Racial Capitalism, and the Political Theory of Migration," 921–23.

[102] Brown, *In the Ruins of Neoliberalism*, 183.

[103] Ibid., 179–83.

the complex role of mobility and migration in the founding of western democracies. From European migration populating settler colonies and easing excess labor problems in the metropoles to the Indian and Chinese indentured migration that facilitated continued labor control post-abolition and emancipation described in this chapter,[104] and the Mexican labor that made up for the eventual exclusion of Chinese and Indian labor, analyzed in the next chapter, migration appears as a world historical force that allows for the negotiation of shifting regimes of domination and capitalist accumulation on a world scale. Naturally, the salience of migration is intensified in moments of crisis, but the phenomenon itself is nested in and indicative of imperial labor control, which is missed when it is theorized simply as an external flow associated with globalization and neoliberalism. In this sense, migration control was and remains an essential governmental tool to racially filter foreigners and locate them on distinct paths in terms of access to land, political enfranchisement, and labor conditions vis-à-vis privileged whites. This racial filtering operates in tandem with historical declarations of the people that found and refound the settler polity. *This* explains its salience as a realm of governance when white status achieved through the historical marginalization, exclusion, and expropriation of nonwhite workers is in crisis. Without this background, the naming of the "backlash" against migrants prompted by neoliberalism simply begs the question of why this group is being targeted and problematically cast migrants as an external – rather than the group with and against whom white polities were founded. As this chapter shows, migration control functioned historically and still functions continuously with other racial capitalist arrangements domestically and globally, which are being reshaped by neoliberalism, rather than being outcomes brought about by this economic logic. In other words, this chapter's proposed conceptualization of migration and its control transforms immigration from an external flow that prompts the authoritarian backlash into an imperial field whose evolution grounded and shaped the western polities that today reward anti-immigrant political agendas. This means that the xenophobic agendas that garner support at the time of writing are not an "inversion of values … [that closes] out three centuries of modern experiments with democracy,"[105] but a component part of how

[104] Gurminder K. Bhambra, "On the Politics of Selective Memory in Europe: Rethinking 'National' Histories in an Imperial Context," in *Dimensions of Heritage and Memory*, ed. Christopher Whitehead et al. (London: Routledge, 2019), 175.

[105] Brown, *In the Ruins of Neoliberalism*, 179.

democratic regimes in the west took shape, and a core marker of the historically continuous racial exclusions of these polities.[106]

Another displacement of the question of racial subjection generally and migration in particular is at work in Nancy Fraser's comprehensive appraisal of capitalist crisis. Migrants appear in three instances in Fraser's system: as the group of women of color who take up care work when state-managed capitalism is dismantled in the west; as part of the group of workers that are expropriated rather than exploited by capitalism historically; and – similarly to Brown – as the group that is targeted by white voters in their backlash against neoliberalism. To start with the third aspect, Fraser suggests that the fear of immigrants could be expressing the understandable anxiety "that things are out of control."[107] This statement begs the question of why is it that the feeling "that things are out of control" does not result in solidarity with migrants, who, after all, come from countries where things have been "out of control" more regularly and for longer periods of time.[108] Fraser asserts further that disgruntled voters with real grievances react with racial hostility because they lack access to left-wing alternatives that can provide anticapitalist and anti-imperialist diagnoses of the crisis.[109] This problem, she adds, is compounded by the cooptation by neoliberalism of certain forces of emancipation, further reducing their appeal among industrial workers and rural communities.[110] What this account leaves out is that, as this chapter reconstructs, socialist and social democratic narratives were historically connected not only to capitalism, but also to imperial narratives of racial hierarchy and entitlement to rule, making contemporary reactions not a misunderstanding of emancipation, but the channeling of particular racialized threads of popular narratives that still hold currency and emotional appeal in Europe and the white settler world today.

In other words, the problem of the left is not just its cooptation by neoliberalism, but its equally worrying internalization of the racialized logics that characterize capitalism. Hillary Clinton's advice to European leaders

[106] Siddhant Isaar raises a complementary critique of Brown's separation of neoliberalism from structures of racial domination in her work on the undoing of democracy, Siddhant Isaar, "Listening to Black Lives Matter: Racial Capitalism and the Critique of Neoliberalism," *Contemporary Political Theory* 20, no. 1 (2021).

[107] Fraser and Jaeggi, *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory*, 197.

[108] See Paul Apostolidis's analysis of these affinities through the concept of precarity in his "Desperate Responsibility: Precarity and Right-Wing Populism."

[109] Fraser and Jaeggi, *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory*, 199.

[110] Ibid., 200–3.

that they should get a handle on migration, because it "lit the flame" of right-wing populism, falls into this problem.[111] This line echoes a generation of left-wing politicians in Germany, France, and England, including Jeremy Corbyn, Mette Frederiksen, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, and Sahra Wagenknecht, who avoid, equivocate, or are skeptical about migration while embracing left-wing social policy.[112] This vision protects domestic white labor while evading addressing western global corporate practices that today, as in the past, benefit from the manageability of labor, including its global segregation and the vulnerability induced by tough migration policies. As in the past, too, this strategy deflects the transnational modes of imperial extraction operating now through neoliberalism that shelters western workers through the exclusion of migrants and mild wealth socialization. These measures are misguided even when judged by the goal of protecting the domestic working class, because privileging domestic struggles allows capitalist elites freer play worldwide, strengthening their power at home.[113] Most importantly, it displaces from left-wing agendas the politicization of business elites' responsibility in global and domestic oppression, and the distinct but entangled conditions of workers around the world.

Thus, the contemporary reaction against migrant and refugee flows on the right and left, which perceive them, respectively, as unduly trespassing borders or as competing for social gains that rightfully belong to the native working class, needs to be understood in the context of the proposed genealogy of the imperial and popular roots of immigration control, that is, how white collectives aimed to appropriate territory and wealth while reaping the benefits of racial regimes of exploitation. The fact that the share of the wealth being distributed at the time of writing is increasingly paltry even in wealthy countries likely increases possessive anxieties among downwardly mobile white groups, who, like a century ago, tragically direct their anger to precarious nonwhite workers and migrants. This account also offers lessons for the US left, which does not explicitly oppose immigration but avoids contesting the right's political economy framing of immigration as an economic threat. Here, the neoliberal cooptation of the left is operative because it prevents it from properly

[111] Patrick Wintour, "Hillary Clinton: Europe Must Curb Immigration to Stop Rightwing Populists," *The Guardian*, November 22, 2018.
[112] Adler, "Meet Europe's Left Nationalists."
[113] Karl Marx, "Letter to Siegfried Meyer and August Vogt, April 9, 1870," in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000 [1870]).

articulating and contesting capitalist labor control as implemented via the contemporary immigration regime of surveilled undocumented labor, thus leaving it to focus on humanitarianism and immigrant rights discursively, while departing only marginally from the right-wing focus on the militarized surveillance of borders and interior control in practice.[114]

Fraser goes some way toward addressing this point in her account of capitalism by including immigrants in the group of workers subject to "expropriation," that is, accumulation by other means that dispenses with contractual relations of wage labor to instead confiscate capacities and resources into capital's self-expansion in violent ways or through veiled means of commerce and debt.[115] Here expropriated labor is facilitated by a political order that denies certain subjects the status of free citizens, whose subjection is a condition of possibility for the freedom of merely exploited workers. This chapter – and the book as a whole – goes further by showing both the complexities of the political order that facilitates the co-existence of diverse forms of subjection within expropriation, and the intimate connection between white democratic politics and the creation of these realms, which expropriation as a blanket term falls short of capturing. Rather than blanket expropriation, then, capitalism depends on a heterogeneous and dynamic field of action sustained by a popularly supported racial hierarchy that targets different racial groups with varied institutional tools and reacts to resistance and emancipation efforts by re-arranging these conditions in order to maintain workers' docility.

To understand these entangled conditions, the first part of the book theorized the entanglements between racial capitalism, popular sovereignty, and empire. The second part, to which I now turn, attends to social reproduction and nature, realms that constitute two of Fraser's hidden abodes, but whose emergence from the combination of racial capitalist priorities, technological developments, and "democratic" moments of enfranchisement in wealthy countries remains undertheorized. Social reproduction is also the realm in which Fraser addresses migration as a fix to the capitalist crisis of social reproduction. But the political aspects and historical pedigree of this fix remain undertheorized.

[114] Inés Valdez, "Reconceiving Immigration Politics: Walter Benjamin, Violence, and Labor," *American Political Science Review* 114, no. 1 (2020), Lee, "The Case for Open Borders."

[115] Fraser, "Expropriation and Exploitation in Racialized Capitalism: A Reply to Michael Dawson," 166.

It remains unsaid how longstanding democratic and family formations enacted and policed via collective rule entail ruling over racialized others whose labor and expropriated land provide the rulers' conditions of possibility. In this vein, Chapter 3 theorizes the racial dynamics of social reproduction. In particular, it shows that diverse institutional formations such as conquest, guest work, and irregular migration, traditionally studied as separate phenomena, served, throughout history, the very same purpose of securing strenuous bodily work from Mexico at minimal cost. These formations both preceded and were intensified when the supply of Asian labor ended with the 1924 US immigration quota law and were/are facilitated by the unequal relation between the United States and Mexico. Chapter 4 extends this analysis to consider how the forced conscription of racialized labor occurs in tandem with the exploitation of nature, with both manual labor and nature being devalued through ideologies of techno-racism that disavow privileged subjects' dependence on this couplet.

PART II

REPRODUCTION THROUGH POPULAR RULE OF LABOR/NATURE

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3

The Brown Family and Social Reproduction in US Capitalism

This chapter conceptualizes processes of capitalist racialization that ensure social reproduction in the United States. This regime materially supports the white commonwealth, whose pursuit of historically evolving models of heteropatriarchal family depends on nurturing and care by disposable brown workers. The provision of social reproduction is part of the mode of rule of popular sovereignty through the racialized possessive attachments theorized in the first two chapters. These attachments underpin a demand for comfort and spaces of regeneration that are secured through the relegation of nonwhite racial groups to the strenuous work required for their provision. This scheme is propelled forward by the capitalist drive for accumulation and advances through the racialization of brown families and the destruction of their intimate and community spaces. The garnering of their bodily energies to serve other families' needs disorders brown families, depleting their emotional spaces and regenerative abilities, recruiting their young into adult roles due to family separation, and/or subjecting members to the constant anxiety of losing their loved ones to detention and deportation.

This chapter focuses on one population central for this function in the United States – Mexicanos, Mexican Americans, and Latino migrants – to conceptualize how separate institutional formations have served the continuous function of securing cheap bodily labor devoted to the care of others. By centering capitalism and its operation through the manipulation and leveraging of racial hierarchies, I expose that the territoriality, jurisdiction, and differentiated functions of political institutions obscure the continuity in the goal of subjection with the aim of accumulation. This focus also allows me to theorize how the unequal relation between

countries (in this case, Mexico and the United States) contributes to racial capitalist processes of subjection. Most importantly, this chapter shows how race works in "structural and agential ways" to organize the political economy of social reproduction, and how, in this process, capitalist exploitation and racialization constitute each other.[1]

Historically, conquest, settlement, and foreign investment in Mexican labor-expelling projects of modernization produced an exploitable supply of brown labor. The groups displaced from Mexico that migrated into the United States were met with few protections when arriving through the Bracero Program and, later, with militarized systems of enforcement, all of which secured a workforce to sustain the social reproduction and care of the privileged. This genealogy confirms migration as a crucial component of empire and the vulnerable position of migrants as a purposive aspect of racial capitalism. This account revises presentist accounts of the political theory of migration and grounds post-9/11 immigration politics and the crisis of family separation in the longer genealogy of empire and its role facilitating the expropriation of brown families' social reproductive capacities to reproduce capitalism.[2] In so doing, it complements critical theory accounts by conceptualizing the central role of immigration enforcement and anti-immigrant sentiment in facilitating social reproduction through expropriation.[3]

This account also illustrates how racial immigration regimes – which depend on global inequality and state-backed violence – shape and help solve capitalism's contradiction between its dependence on racialized labor and its destructive modes of accumulation by continuously conscripting new brown laborers into reproductive functions.[4] Thus, here,

[1] On "racialized capitalism," see Tilley and Shilliam, "Raced Markets: An Introduction," 541–42, Charisse Burden-Stelly, "Modern US Racial Capitalism," *Monthly Review* 72, no. 3 (2020): 1, 9, Onur Ulas Ince, "Deprovincializing Racial Capitalism: John Crawfurd and Settler Colonialism in India," *American Political Science Review* 116, no. 1 (2022).

[2] I use the term "brown families" in the same way in which Kelly Lytle Hernández uses "Mexican brown," i.e., as a "conceptual and rhetorical tool that captures the shades of class and color" of the people that immigration policing targets. In my case, the families comprised by this term are indigenous-looking, poor Mexican and Central American families. Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Migra! A History of the Border Patrol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 13.

[3] Fraser, "Expropriation and Exploitation in Racialized Capitalism: A Reply to Michael Dawson."

[4] Federici, "Reproduction and Feminist Struggle in the New International Division of Labor", Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour*. For a broader background on the reproduction of capitalism and its reliance on natural and communal resources, see Luxemburg, "The Accumulation

I extend the previous chapter's claim that migration is a world historical force, that is, an event that entails the mobility of subjects and their bodily energy at the global scale in order to address capitalist needs that result from crises, bottlenecks, and the partial liberation of other subjects. Here, unequal power between poor/sending and rich/host countries, is a key factor in facilitating accumulation through labor exploitation. This makes contemporary migration and its regulation a neo-imperial arrangement that racially partitions labor conditions and access to well-being for profit, rather than merely exogenous flows that provoke "backlash." This chapter's account, finally, shows the payoffs of extending the study of empire forward and into the present, demonstrating that (neo-)imperial regimes emerge not as well-structured wholes but as the result of the accommodation, re-organization, and adjustment of a variety of state institutions that respond to the political pressures and imperatives of accumulation.

Via Indigenous, Black, and Latinx feminist thought, I show that racial violence degraded brown subjects and made them readily exploitable to facilitate the social reproduction of white workers, while destroying the intimate family spaces of the former and preventing them from fulfilling their own social reproduction.[5] This account expands on current understandings of social reproduction by, first, extending feminist theorizations of kinship, property, and race to consider the site occupied by the brown family in this scheme; and, second, by expanding on the understanding of social reproductive work to encompass productive work that is strenuous and dangerous and serves to shelter and protect privileged groups.

The degradation of the abject brown family occurs through the destruction or corrosion of family spaces of nurturing and regeneration for brown workers and the decimation of community realms that could support reflection and resistance. I show later that the degradation of brown

of Capital: A Contribution to the Economic Theory of Imperialism," 262–63, James O'Connor, "Capitalism, Nature, Socialism: A Theoretical Introduction," *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 1, no. 1 (1988): 24, Alan P. Rudy, "On Misunderstanding the Second Contradiction Thesis," *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 30, no. 4 (2019).

[5] Throughout this chapter I refer to degradation and the creation of abject subjects or families interchangeably. By these terms, I refer to the effect of the systematic conscription of certain racialized subjects to strenuous bodily work over these subjects' bodily integrity and the capacity to replenish themselves physically and emotionally. I note in particular the detrimental effects of coercive regimes on brown families, their integrity, their embeddedness within supportive communities, and their capacity to operate as nurturing spaces of renewal. In this sense, this study departs from studies of the abject that attempt to locate it within cultural realms and instead aims to document the forms and processes of abjection that are central to understand social exclusion and marginalization. Imogen Tyler, "Against Abjection," *Feminist Theory* 10, no. 1 (2009): 95.

families and communities was facilitated by subsequent coercive regimes, including the annexation of northwestern Mexican territory; white settlement in these areas; guest labor; and undocumented migration, coupled with the criminalization of border crossing, surveillance, and mass deportations. In each of these regimes, the separation of families was a prime controlling mechanism, either through transnational migration, forceful family separation at the border, detention, or deportation. The effects on immigrant families exceed the instance of separation, however, because immigrant families who are intact nonetheless remain precarious because immigration policing and the multiple statuses of family members make the enjoyment of a fulfilling and caring family life unattainable. I tie this systematic separation and degradation of brown families to a cruel and resentful backlash against these families' assertion of their integrity and their demand to take up residence where brown bodies are granted only temporary stays. Family integrity is a radical move because it opposes the destruction of an intimate nurturing sphere that resignifies brown bodies as more than just laboring tools, even if it does not deny the persistence of patriarchal arrangements and women's disproportionate shouldering of reproductive work within most families, regardless of race.

In the rest of this chapter, I first introduce and develop a framework to explain how the brown family becomes a site of degradation and how this serves the social reproduction of US capitalism. Second, I use this framework to argue that conquest, settlement, and immigration surveillance secured social reproduction and capitalist profit, while depleting the capacity of brown families to sustain nurturing relationships, health and well-being. Third, I extend the analysis to consider the post-9/11 regime of immigration enforcement and how it targets family integrity.

3.1 SOCIAL REPRODUCTION: FROM GENDER TO RACE, FROM WOMEN TO FAMILIES

Racial capitalism approaches highlight that a variety of gradations of labor exploitation co-exist, acting in a complementary and/or supplementary, rather than competitive, fashion.[6] Labor may be waged, unwaged, approaching conditions of slavery, informal, and/or intermittent.[7] This follows from the historical drive of capital to set labor power

[6] Bhattacharyya, *Rethinking Racial Capitalism: Questions of Reproduction and Survival*, 67–68.

[7] Ibid., 39–70.

"free" from noncapitalist social contexts and relations and incorporate it into the capitalist system.[8] Yet this drive does not imply homogeneity, because different groups are assigned positions that range from serfdom to waged labor based on their different circumstances, including race, access to citizenship status, and historical influences, which nonetheless lead to a coherent regime that can be scrutinized as such.[9] This chapter focuses on one such gradation of exploitation, which historically produced informal, temporary, and vulnerable labor pools of brown subjects that facilitated a durable regime of brown labor that provided for the social reproduction of US white waged labor.

In feminist accounts, social reproduction encompasses the realm and work that guarantees the production and reproduction of the worker, which is disavowed by capitalism despite being a socio-economic activity required for capital accumulation.[10] This means that the presentation of female labor as a natural resource or a personal service, and thus unwaged, is central to capitalist profit.[11] These approaches reframe the question of power differentials between men and women as neither cultural nor natural, but as associated with the dependence of capitalism on women's unpaid labor.[12] I expand this approach by building upon frameworks of race and capitalism to conceptualize social reproduction as thoroughly racialized, and to implicate the family as an important unit of analysis; in particular, I argue that brown families are systematically degraded and effectively relegated to an exploitative and badly paid realm of informal labor to guarantee the social reproduction of relatively more privileged, predominantly white labor.

Moreover, I expand the realm of social reproduction to encompass brown men's nominally productive activities in the areas of farm work, construction, and landscaping, and generally strenuous jobs in, for example, mining, agriculture, and construction. In the case of farm work, the work of harvesting performed by brown men and women, whose exploitation allows produce to reach consumers at lower prices,

[8] Luxemburg, "The Accumulation of Capital: A Contribution to the Economic Theory of Imperialism," 261–62.

[9] Karl Marx, *Capital Volume III*, trans. David Fernbach (London: Penguin, 1991 [1894]), 927.

[10] Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2004), 8.

[11] Ibid., Mariarosa Dalla Costa, *Women and the Subversion of the Community* (London: Falling Wall Press, 1972).

[12] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 8, Dalla Costa, *Women and the Subversion of the Community*.

straightforwardly contributes to the nurturing of wage laborers, and thus their social reproduction. Work in construction, on the other hand, produces affordable housing for these workers and their families, again contributing to the shelter necessary for their social reproduction. The landscaping performed by brown workers, yet again, beautifies the private or public environment that wage laborers and professionals enjoy during their leisure time, in segregated white spaces with generous access to green areas and clean air, which is lacking in underserved Black and brown neighborhoods. Finally, the historically purposeful segregation of brown workers in physically strenuous professions protects white male bodies from extreme weather, injuries, and wearisome activities, yet again contributing to an easier work of reproduction.[13] The more broadly researched caring work of nurses, nannies, home aids, and cleaners – jobs fulfilled predominantly by brown women – completes the picture of social reproduction by fulfilling the often dirty work of bodily care, distinguished from the more nurturing and supervisory aspects reserved to white women in households and public realms.

My goal here is not to homogenize the trajectory of the diverse sectors that I bring together under a single umbrella. Capital's needs for accumulation drove deep transformations in, for example, the meatpacking and dairy farming industries, which became concentrated and responded to price pressures by corporate buyers by segmenting labor markets and recruiting immigration labor for the worst paid and least safe jobs.[14] These processes played out earlier and differently in the case of agriculture. In the case of the increased demand for badly paid care work inside and outside the home, the drivers were a lack of a social state infrastructure and transformations that made a single-breadwinner

[13] As Mario Barrera notes in his study of the Southwest, historically racially segmented markets benefited white workers by sparing them the most undesirable work, and the labor reserve role played by Chicano workers cushioned white workers against the worst dislocations of the economy. Barrera, *Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Inequality*, 213.

[14] "Death and Disability in the Heartland: Corporate (Mis)Conduct, Regulatory Responses, and the Plight of Latino Workers in the Meatpacking Industry," *Great Plains Research* 10, no. 2 (2000), Stephanie E. Tanger, "Enforcing Corporate Responsibility for Violations of Workplace Immigration Laws: The Case of Meatpacking," *Harvard Latino Law Review* 9 (2006), David Weil, "Enforcing Labour Standards in Fissured Workplaces: The US Experience," *The Economic and Labour Relations Review* 22, no. 2 (2011), James Wilmers, "Wage Stagnation and Buyer Power: How Buyer-Supplier Relations Affect U.S. Workers' Wages, 1978 to 2014," *American Sociological Review* 83, no. 2 (2018).

household a relic while continuing to underpay women for their work.[15] While recognizing these heterogeneous dynamics, I bracket them to focus on the groups that, through the coming together of a variety of social, political, and economic factors, left their countries and were conscripted into the strenuous bodily jobs needed to maintain the social reproduction of privileged workers.

My argument is that this group – brown families made up of the brown laborers conscripted into strenuous jobs that sustain the social reproduction of relatively privileged white workers – sits at the intersection of reproductive labor and primitive accumulation identified by Marxist feminists as labor that is not traditionally remunerated through a formal wage but belongs squarely in capitalist arrangements. These scholars assimilate the workers who sit at this intersection to the "housewives of the world," by which they mean female and male peasants engaged in subsistence production and occupying marginalized positions, predominantly in the Third World.[16] The historical reconstruction in this chapter theorizes the systems of coercion that ensure the vulnerability of these workers, regimes that were historically and continue to be part and parcel of western political economies.

Historically, care and reproductive work in the United States depended on systems of coercion such as racial and gendered labor segregation and discrimination, welfare regulations that pushed single mothers into badly paid work, and prison labor programs that placed Black women to work in private homes.[17] The provision for the needs of the social reproduction of white families by brown and Black labor operated historically alongside nineteenth-century narratives of the heterosexual, white, male-breadwinner family. The family remains at the center of politics, now as a site of neoconservative and neoliberal anxiety around racialized families, negotiated through punitive legislation of migration, crime, and welfare. From concerns about marriage immigration fraud, which made migrant

[15] Valdez, "Reconceiving Immigration Politics: Walter Benjamin, Violence, and Labor," 101–4, Federici, "Reproduction and Feminist Struggle in the New International Division of Labor."

[16] Claudia von Werlhof, "Women's Work: The Blind Spot in the Critique of Political Economy," ed. Maria Mies, Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen, and Claudia von Werlhof (London: Zed Books, 1988), 15–16.

[17] Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Forced to Care: Coercion and Caregiving in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 36–37, Sarah Haley, "'Like I Was a Man': Chain Gangs, Gender, and the Domestic Carceral Sphere in Jim Crow Georgia," *Signs* 39, no. 1 (2013).

spouses more vulnerable in the 1980s, to DNA collection from asylum seekers to detect fraudulent families at the border in 2020, attacks on the brown family highlight its political significance.

To theorize the racialized/gendered constructions of Latino families, I turn to Black feminist scholars' sophisticated accounts of social reproduction.[18] Because of the particular forms of subjection that affected them, the formation of gender and Black womanhood in particular has to be understood in the context of property relations, slavery and its sexual economy, and calculated injury.[19] This is also true for the Black family, a support structure that was shaped and modified by a dominant symbolic order aimed at maintaining white supremacy and capitalist accumulation.[20] During slavery, notably, Black kinship was limited to making genetic reproduction an opportunity to extend the boundaries of property, through what Angela Davis called "a rigidified disorganization in family life" which proscribed all social structures within which Black people could forge a collective and conscious experience.[21] These theoretical insights on the destruction of kinship and the loss of natural motherhood associated with slavery indicate that the state and capitalism centrally shaped the realm of the Black family, whose status as a "private realm" was accordingly denied.[22]

The destruction of intimate spaces is a more generalized trait of colonization, notably as part of the process of land dispossession of Indigenous peoples, their aggressive assimilation into settler society, and the destruction of their culture and communities. Questions of family and marriage were tightly regulated by British law or rules enacted in the settler colonies, and they all relied on an account of nonnuclear Indigenous kinship structures as lacking a privatized, intimate sphere, and thus as uncivilized and faring poorly compared with the family-making practices of white settlers.[23] Settler colonial interventions upset familial formations and the place of women in Indigenous communities, whose arrangements had not previously resembled western patriarchal structures.[24] These policies

[18] Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, 97.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Hortense J. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," *Diacritics* 17, no. 2 (1987): 75.
[21] Ibid., Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," 4.
[22] Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," 76.
[23] Mark Rifkin, *When Did Indians Become Straight? Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 146.
[24] Shelbi Nahwilet Meissner and Kyle Powys Whyte, "Theorizing Indigeneity, Gender, and Settler Colonialism," in *Routledge Companion to the Philosophy of Race*, ed. Paul C.

included the forced removal of Indigenous children from their families and their education under white women's supervision in residential schools. These regimes of confinement included programs of forced labor for girls (who joined white families as servants) and a variety of calculatedly cruel behavior, including medical experiments, sexual abuse, and outright violence, which resulted in thousands of deaths among the kidnapped children, and thus contributed at once to the cultural and biological elimination of Indigenous peoples.[25] This targeting and destruction of Indigenous kinship structures was central to further projects of land dispossession and for asserting settlers' claims of sovereignty.[26]

Hence, Black and Indigenous families were sites of public intervention, shaped by capitalist priorities of land appropriation, property creation, and the availability of unfree or vulnerable labor. The interventions are dissimilar, in that they aim at maximizing the reproduction of slaves in one case, and at elimination or violent assimilation in the other. Yet they confirm that race, sexuality, and family are mediating categories for capitalist accumulation that need examining to properly theorize expropriation and dispossession. The analysis that follows builds upon this tradition and existing accounts by Latino thinkers to analyze interventions that target the brown family. In so doing, I do not claim these experiences are equivalent to the experiences of oppression of Black and Indigenous peoples through slavery and settler colonialism. Instead, the analysis illuminates how the kinship structures of Mexican Indigenous groups – inferiorized by the Mexican project of *mestizaje* and state formation as well as by the US annexation and labor regime – were also targeted. This contribution thus locates US Latinos within the messy encounters of different racial groups with each other and the state, that is, the entwinement between settlement and forced migration that

Taylor, Linda Martin Alcoff, and Luvell Anderson (New York: Routledge, 2017). In the case of the Maori, for example, women were embedded in communal interrelations rather than being confined to the authority of their husbands within a private household. Anne Mikaere, "Maori Women: Caught in the Contradictions of a Colonised Reality," *Waikato Law Review* 2 (1994): 125.

[25] Margaret D. Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880–1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), Meissner and Whyte, "Theorizing Indigeneity, Gender, and Settler Colonialism."

[26] Mikaere, "Maori Women: Caught in the Contradictions of a Colonised Reality," 127, 33–34, Rifkin, *When Did Indians Become Straight? Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty*, 147.

demands the "careful spatialization of positionalities within ongoing Indigenous dispossession."[27]

The kinship structures of Latinos, including Mexican Americans, Mexican migrants, and Central American migrants and refugees, was subsequently shaped by the conquest of the Mexican northwest by the US state and the transfer of its land and skilled labor to agricultural businesses and European settlers, the establishment of guest worker programs, and past and present regimes of immigration enforcement. These groups, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, filled the ranks of workers in low-skilled and physically strenuous jobs that fulfilled tasks of social reproduction. It needs highlighting that the *shifting* populations that carried out this labor were central to the *continuity* of the regime of exploitation. This is because exploitation depended on the continuous availability of subjects who were either recently dispossessed of land by the conquest or recently arrived migrants, who were the most susceptible to exploitation. During the Bracero period, in fact, local Mexican Americans constituted communities that were largely separate from Mexican guest workers and recent migrants, and older arrivals with more secure standing tended to move north in search of better jobs, leaving undesirable jobs for new arrivals.[28] In this picture, the intimate lives of Mexican Americans, and of Mexican and Central American migrants, became sites of absorption of public rhetoric, ideology,[29] and exploitative practices that sustained capitalist profit. The capitalist imperative to guarantee social reproduction at the lowest possible expense, thus, formed and deformed brown families. In this framework, the family separations produced by guest worker programs, seasonal work, and intensified detention and deportation are the dramatic and intimate personalized effects of this regime and the immigration policing that accompanies it.

3.2 SETTLERS, GUESTS, AND MIGRANTS

In positing the question of migration as continuous with conquest and settlement, my point is to associate these regimes as contributing parts of

[27] Jodi A. Byrd, "Weather with You: Settler Colonialism, Antiblackness, and the Grounded Relationalities of Resistance," *Critical Ethnic Studies* 5, no. 1–2 (2019): 209, 14, Robin D. G. Kelley, "The Rest of Us: Rethinking Settler and Native," *American Quarterly* 69, no. 2 (2017), Justin Leroy, "Black History in Occupied Territory: On the Entanglements of Slavery and Settler Colonialism," *Theory & Event* 19, no. 4 (2016).

[28] Ernesto Galarza, *Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story* (Charlotte: McNally and Loftin, 1964), 32.

[29] Lauren Berlant, "Intimacy: A Special Issue," *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 2 (1998): 282.

evolving racialized and gradated labor regimes that facilitate US social reproduction and continued capital accumulation. In other words, both the conquest and white settlement of the Mexican northwest and the recruitment of vulnerable migrants through legal or informal ways contributed, through coercion, to putting white and brown workers on opposite trajectories of economic mobility: access to consumption and family formation for the former, and expropriative labor and immobility for the latter. The case of Mexican annexation and Mexican and, later, Central American migration, moreover, illustrates the transnational aspects of subjection, by relating migration to international hierarchy and to displacement through modernization, including the roles granted to brown/Indigenous workers and families in the Mexican national project.

Mexicanos

It is well established that the status of Mexican Americans in Texas and the US Southwest declined precipitously after annexation. The inflow into the area of white groups varied by state and region and even preceded the Mexican–American war in the case of Texas (where US landowners could access "empresario" grants offered by the Mexican government, and land speculators had secured private ownership over land even before white settlement took place).[30] This process, jointly with generous land grants, the first homestead law in the United States, and squatter rights, meant that it was "virtually impossible … for a [white] Texas family to be landless" in the second half of the nineteenth century.[31] More generally, intimidation and gradual or accelerated settlement dispossessed Mexican American ranchers of land, wealth, and power, a process quickened by the arrival of the railway later that century, which made land desirable for irrigation companies and subject to speculation.[32] The shift was equally drastic for nonlandowning Mexicans; a pastoral economy was turned into a capitalist one, transforming the masses into a source of unskilled labor.[33] The gradual replacement of ranching

[30] Theodore R. Fehrenbach, *Lone Star: A History of Texas and the Texans* (New York: Open Road Media, 2014), 283.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Paul S. Taylor, "California Farm Labor: A Review," *Agricultural History* 42, no. 1 (1968): 54, Victor B. Nelson Cisneros, "La Clase Trabajadora En Tejas, 1920–1940," *Aztlan* 6, no. 2 (1975).

[33] Alfredo Mirandé, *The Chicano Experience: An Alternative Perspective* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Pess, 1994), 28.

by mechanized agriculture, and the parallel introduction of technology into mining, similarly transformed the occupations filled by Mexican Americans, who went from serving as cowboys and sheepherders or miners to low-skilled farmworkers and mining wage workers.[34] In other words, mid- to high-skilled positions formerly occupied by Mexican Americans went to Anglos, and the former were also excluded from new positions operating agricultural machinery.[35] Capitalist logics of private property and gradated realms of exploitation thus proceeded via racialization, creating the menial Mexican laborer through land dispossession (legally – through new taxation regimes or laws encouraging homesteading – or through fraud or force) and disruption of non-capitalist forms of production,[36] which created a mass of laborers that could only access meagerly compensated and strenuous jobs, without the opportunities for upward mobility that awaited unskilled white migrants arriving in the United States.

These socio-political and economic processes made cheap and strenuous work "Mexicans' work."[37] Hence, the devaluation of this work depended on the concentration of a "succession of dispossessed persons of myriad races," in these sectors,[38] including, in time, immigrants from Mexico, whose influxes gathered speed in the 1920s and 1930s owing to revolutionary turmoil in Mexico and increased demands from US growers

[34] Barrera, *Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Inequality*, 42–45, Mirandé, *The Chicano Experience: An Alternative Perspective*, 29.

[35] Barrera, *Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Inequality*, 44. The exclusion of brown workers from less physically demanding jobs or jobs operating machinery was consistent with racist arguments about the fitness of particular races for various industrial employment by, among others, Max Weber, and with the formal and informal practice of preventing black workers from being trained as operators of machinery. Andrew Zimmerman, "Decolonizing Weber," *Postcolonial Studies* 9, no. 1 (2006): 67, Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, ix, Judith Stein, *Running Steel, Running America: Race, Economic Policy and the Decline of Liberalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 100–1.

[36] Donald W. Meinig, *Imperial Texas: An Interpretive Essay in Cultural Geography* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010 [1969]), 54–55, Barrera, *Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Inequality*, 30–31, Mirandé, *The Chicano Experience: An Alternative Perspective*, 21.

[37] The societal character of this construction is demonstrated by the fact that only in those areas where certain jobs were overwhelmingly filled by Mexicans were the jobs devalued, while in areas with smaller Mexican groups mining, farming, and ranching jobs were devoid of stigma. Park, "The History of Mexican Labor in Arizona During the Territorial Period", 180–81, Barrera, *Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Inequality*, 44.

[38] Taylor, "California Farm Labor: A Review," 50.

for cheap agricultural, mining, and railway labor (these demands could no longer be filled by Chinese workers, who were banned). The inflows took place in the context of multiple nativist demands to restrict Mexican migration, demands that were countered from within nativist circles by reframing Mexican influxes as a problem to be controlled so that their labor could be extracted and their permanence prevented. While considered "an inferior race," or "at least … different," Mexicans were assumed well fitted for the work of "picking cotton and grubbing land" and the wages that these jobs would secure, as they produced more and charged less than white and Black workers alike.[39] Thus, in the context of a congressional debate, it was assured by Texas Representative Garner that "80 percent of that labor would return to Mexico" and that no more than 2 percent of the remaining laborers "would ever get out of Texas."[40] The temporary character of labor migration thus ensured that the inflow of migrants would not "deteriorate the American citizenship, as you and I understand it" and the particular origin of the laborers ("peon labor") ensured in turn that they would not hold "any of this evil philosophy against capital and property that … a good many Mexicans have."[41]

The same narrative dominated the debate of an ultimately unsuccessful 1926 bill to limit Mexican migration to the United States. Growers conceded that Mexican workers presented a "racial problem" for the Southwest akin to that the "old South [created] when it imported slave labor from Africa," but insisted that, in California, "they can handle the social problem." This was echoed by a Texan agribusinessman: "If we could not control the Mexicans and they would take this country it would be better to keep them out, but we can and do control them."[42] In addition to their manageability, growers favored Mexican labor vis-à-vis ethnic whites, as emerges from an exchange between US Representatives William P. Holaday and Czech-born Adolph Sabath from Illinois, on the one hand, and Nebraskan beet grower J. T. Whitehead. According to Whitehead's testimony, German-Russians would soon "endeavor to try

[39] U.S. Congress, *Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization on H. J. Res. 271 Relating to the Temporary Admission of Illiterate Mexican Laborers* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1920), 4, 13.

[40] Ibid., 5, see also Alexandra Filindra, "The Emergence of the 'Temporary Mexican': American Agriculture, the U.S. Congress and the 1920 Hearings on the 'Temporary Admission of Illiterate Mexican Laborers'," *Latin American Research Review* 49, no. 3 (2014).

[41] U.S. Congress, *Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization on H. J. Res. 271 Relating to the Temporary Admission of Illiterate Mexican Laborers*, 6.

[42] Cited in Hernández, *Migra! A History of the Border Patrol*, 29.

to secure farms of their own" rather than remain laborers.[43] Here the argument hinged on the differential access to land by racialized groups, and their assimilability; German-Russians, it was argued, were wont to become "very decent citizens" after a few years, while "the Mexican does not become a neighbor."[44] Mexicans, instead, were like children, some of whom needed a good deal of discipline, but ultimately made no trouble once growers were "able to talk to them in their own language and explain things to them in a way that they are used to have things explained to them."[45]

The corporeal focus of racist discourse about brown and migrant labor is notable for how it serves to legitimize the kind of work assigned to them. Race, moreover, is important to determine the differential gendering of white and brown women, which organized the care hierarchy between the nurturing work of white women and the dirty work of the women of color under their supervision.[46] This corporeality also looms large in the racist discourses of labor competition discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, according to which the ability to perform toilsome work and subsist in degraded conditions distinguished nonwhite from white migrants. It was this racist construction of Mexican workers as adept to toilsome work and requiring only scant compensation for their labor that, in turn, made them into a threat. When objections to the threat of Mexican labor were raised, they entailed further racialization, which attributed to Mexicans a natural reluctance to move away from their laborer position. Moreover, the supposed superior strength and resistance to extreme climate of Black and brown subjects overdetermined their fitness for strenuous bodily work. The associated derogatory accounts of their intellectual capacities additionally marked them as unfit for laboring with machinery, relegating them to the harsh labor that machinery could not execute and "native white men generally will not do."[47]

However natural these attributes were considered, these corporeal attributes were constructed though the political economy of settlement and migration in the Southwest. In other words, the violent land

[43] U.S. Congress, *Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization on Seasonal Agricultural Laborers from Mexico, Book* 2 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1926), 106.

[44] Ibid., 106–7.

[45] Ibid., 107.

[46] Glenn, *Forced to Care: Coercion and Caregiving in America*, 36.

[47] Melita M. Garza, *They Came to Toil: Newspaper Representations of Mexicans and Immigrants in the Great Depression* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2018), 73.

dispossession that followed Anglo settlement created a pliable labor force, violent social segregation prevented Mexicans from accessing the jobs they had fulfilled before the conquest, and coercive labor and controlled mobility led to the avowed reluctance of peons to abandon the status of laborer. In other words, here capitalism can be seen leveraging race to increase accumulation, in a process that both relies upon racial hierarchy and reinforces it further, because the successful labor segregation marks these bodies as belonging to certain jobs and as particularly adept at toilsome work. Accumulation is facilitated by the racialized understanding of bodily capacities because it follows that fewer protections on the job and only pitiable compensation are required. Accumulation, in other words, proceeds through racialization. Family structures are also shaped by racializing capitalism, both because they are restructured according to profit motives and because racialized accounts of their degraded status is posited to legitimize claims that their nurturing is not worth supporting via higher wages.[48] In fact, the hardships Mexican American families suffered after Anglo annexation and settlement in the Southwest forced women to exit the private realm to work in laundering and caring for white families, a process prompted by land dispossession and the destruction of noncommercial agriculture in the Southwest.[49] This process of racialization made the family wage a racial construct, one meant to facilitate white women's dedication to nurturing their families. Moves to limit women's working hours to protect the time they could devote to mothering was contested by business interests, but the concern never applied to Black and brown families, where wives' employment was a given.

These racialized dynamics were at play in the exclusion of farmworkers and domestic workers from California's 1911 Eight-Hour legislation for women. The debates motivated by the constitutional challenge of this law in 1915 reveal its racialized and gendered dimensions, but also

[48] Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Issei, Nisei, War Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), 3, Barrera, *Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Inequality*.

[49] Barrera, *Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Inequality*, 48–49, 89, Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 82, 85. This is not to say that the white family complied neatly with the "traditional" nuclear heterosexual family. As Linda Nicholson notes, the view of the family as *not* including extended family was only consolidated in the postwar period, enabled by a housing boom that made up for the overcrowding and scarcity that characterized the 1930s and 1940s. Linda J. Nicholson, *The Play of Reason: From the Modern to the Postmodern* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 77–78.

the particular place assigned to nonwhite families. In defending the law, California Attorney General Ulysses S. Webb argued that "the limitation of the number of hours women must work … has a direct relationship to women's health and, hence, to the health of the race as a whole, as well as the safety and health of those she serves."[50] Limiting women's working hours, Webb continued, "may check the rapid decline in reproduction of the older American stocks" by expanding the amount of time women can devote to "wifehood and motherhood," which strengthens the race by "the shaping of the child mind [sic], the directing of his habits and the development of his character."[51] In other words, the exclusion from protection of women workers in agricultural and domestic labor was a claim about which female bodies needed protection and whose families needed nurturing. The wifehood and motherhood functions of brown women did not concern the California Attorney General, nor did the nurturing of the mind and character of brown children. In fact, in the Supreme Court decision, Justice Charles Evan Hughes affirmed the ability of the law to "recognize degrees of harm" and limit restrictions to sectors in which the need is clearest.[52] Here he was countering the claim of hoteliers that the measure was discriminatory toward their business, but the statement also conveys that the more strenuous and less protected conditions to which women farmworkers and domestic workers were subjected did not constitute harm worth protecting them from. This again confirmed the racialized corporeality of brown women, who disproportionately filled these jobs in California, as objects to be deployed to increase accumulation through unregulated and unprotected hours of toil.

Indigeneity in Mexico

These dynamics of exclusion in which the creation of vulnerability is a precondition to recruiting certain workers into exploitative work are widely recognizable in the Bracero period, as is the strain put on brown families by this program. Yet before turning to this, it is important to understand the parallel processes of dispossession and family construction operating in Mexico. Mexican revolutionary and nation-building

[50] California Senate Labor Committee, "Preliminary Report of the Senate Labor Committee to the 1957 Session of the California Legislature – Part I: Office Work Occupations under the Eight-Hour Law," in *Appendix to the Journal of the Senate* (Sacramento: Legislature of the State of California, 1957), 15.

[51] Ibid.

[52] *Miller V. Wilson*, 236, 373 (1915).

projects considered the emigrant subject a central actor in the development of the country, although not without ambivalence. Mexican anthropologist and sociologist Manuel Gamio, who studied under anthropologist Franz Boas at Columbia University and served in the Mexican education portfolio in the 1920s and 1930s, was well known and respected on both sides of the border and wrote extensively on the question of Mexican migration.[53] He would eventually compose a report on the topic for the Social Science Research Council. Gamio strongly objected to the racist arguments against Mexican migration that circulated in the United States at the time, and couched his response in cultural/developmentalist arguments that positioned most of Mexican Indigenous groups as holding valuable cultural traits. This, however, did not detract Gamio from judging certain Indigenous traits as backward with respect to the modern civilization of the United States, Europe, and Mexican elites. Gamio's notion of development stemmed from a Larmarckian view that tied the biological and cultural development of individuals to environmental factors.[54] Given this, Gamio positioned migrants who returned from the United States as an important input in the evolution of Mexican culture in more civilized (i.e., capitalist and consumerist) directions, which would also fuel economic development. Gamio's account of emigration echoes the place that Edward Gibbon Wakefield gave British emigration within his theory of colonization.[55] Gamio, like Wakefield, conceived of temporary Mexican emigration as an important "safety valve" for the Mexican economy, whose uneven development and chronic unemployment problem could otherwise lead only to starvation or rebellion.[56] Yet, unlike Wakefield, who envisioned British emigrants as permanent settlers, Gamio realistically conceived of Mexican emigration as temporary,[57] and counted on these journeys to teach the poor and unschooled

[53] Benjamin C. Montoya, "'A Grave Offense of Significant Consequences': Mexican Perspectives on US Immigration Restriction During the Late 1920s," *Pacific Historical Review* 87, no. 2 (2018): 347.

[54] Casey Walsh, "Eugenic Acculturation: Manuel Gamio, Migration Studies, and the Anthropology of Development in Mexico, 1910–1940," *Latin American Perspectives* 31, no. 5 (2004): 120.

[55] Wakefield, *A Letter from Sydney: The Principal Town of Australasia*.

[56] Montoya, "'A Grave Offense of Significant Consequences': Mexican Perspectives on US Immigration Restriction During the Late 1920s," 348.

[57] He judged that the "racial shocks, social discrimination, and cultural antagonisms" could be avoided if "steps were taken to prevent all permanent immigration." Elsewhere, Gamio argued that the only way for racial prejudices toward Mexicans to lose their significance would be if massive European migration to Mexico gradually absorbed "the

classes to live "on a higher scale."[58] Gamio deemed this project more realistic than aiming for the permanent settlement of migrants, given the cultural differences between Mexicans and European Americans, as well as the prevalence of "race prejudice" among whites in the United States, which made for "an intellectual, emotional, and traditional disparity too great to be bridged rapidly and perhaps never completely."[59] But racialized cultural assessments were not absent from Gamio's account of the backwardness of the predominant demographic of migrants, Indigenous groups that were "incomparably the inferior of the Toltec, Aztec, and Maya," as well as of Mexicans of European descent.[60] Despite these unbridgeable differences, Gamio still trusted the US "schooling" that Mexican emigrants received – including access to better "furniture and clothing," their use of "machinery and modern tools," and their acquaintance with "sports and hygienic practices" – to contribute to the progress of Mexico upon their return.[61]

This expectation stood in contrast with the actual conditions of exploitation faced by Mexican migrants and their exclusion from work using technological equipment, conditions that were, incidentally, often justified by US discourses akin to Gamio's own acknowledgment that the needs of Mexican natives were less complex than those of Europeans,

indigenous ethnic characteristics" constituting another country of "occidental descent" in the American continent. This prejudice, however, he accurately found to be "the best defensive wall against a definite American conquest," given that, in the absence of racial prejudice, "Mexico would already have been peacefully and fatally absorbed by the United States." Manuel Gamio, "Observations on Mexican Immigration into the United States," *Pacific Affairs* 2, no. 8 (1929): 468, Manuel Gamio, "Migration and Planning," *The Survey* 66 (1931): 174, Paul Frymer, *Building an American Empire: The Era of Territorial and Political Expansion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

[58] This was echoed by many of his contemporaries, including Mexican president Pascual Ortiz Rubio, who encouraged Mexican migrants' return to improve Mexican well-being and the economy through the spread of the ideas and work habits acquired in the United States. Garza, *They Came to Toil: Newspaper Representations of Mexicans and Immigrants in the Great Depression.*

[59] Manuel Gamio, *Mexican Immigration to the United States: A Study of Human Migration and Adjustment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930).

[60] Ibid., 61.

[61] Gamio, "Migration and Planning," 174. Gamio's claims about indigenous groups and modernization were not exclusive to his generation. In fact, his claims closely echo intellectual José López Portillo's early twentieth-century account of "la raza indígena" as naturally defeated by the fitter Spanish race, though the former were not completely hopeless in terms of adapting to "modern life," if the material bases for regeneration were provided. Thomas G. Powell, "Mexican Intellectuals and the Indian Question," *Hispanic American Historical Reviev* 48, no. 1 (1968): 34.

as well as to other Mexican racial thinkers of *mestizaje* that praised the "Indian['s] … superior organism" and "resistance."[62] In other words, there was relatively little debate about the racial undesirability of Mexican migrants of Indigenous extraction on either side of the border. Rather, their admission to the United States was vocally justified by, first, the economic need in the context of the ban placed on Chinese migrants, and, second, their relative "advantage" vis-à-vis other racially devalued groups in the United States, such as Puerto Ricans, Filipinos, and African Americans, given that they were able to repatriate during economic depressions, or could be forced to do so given their lack of status.[63]

This means that the migrant leaving Mexico for the United States was subjected in multiple ways by racial capitalist projects developing on both sides of the border. The land dispossession and displacement in occupied Mexican territory was matched by Indigenous land dispossession and the decline of collective land holdings in the territory that remained under Mexican control. These transformations were fueled by legal changes, informal takeovers, land speculation driven by the railway construction in Mexico, and foreign investment that led to a boom in agricultural exports.[64] Their location at the intersection of Mexican and US projects of modernization and state-building meant that Mexican migrant laborers were sent to the United States by a domestic project of modernization that positioned them as uncivilized subjects whose worth would be increased by contact with US culture and their transformation toward the "Western type" of Mexican elites.[65] This expectation contrasted with their admission into the United States as peons expected to live in barracks, perform only the most basic work, and move only between employment locations to perform their required tasks.

Braceros

Discourses of cultural inferiority and transformation through and for modernization persisted during the Bracero period, both in terms of how

[62] These thinkers included José López Portillo y Rojas, among others, Powell, "Mexican Intellectuals and the Indian Question," 34.

[63] Benjamin C. Montoya, *Risking Immeasurable Harm: Immigration Restriction and US-Mexican Diplomatic Relations, 1924–193* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 2020), 239.

[64] Powell, "Mexican Intellectuals and the Indian Question," 29, 33, Hernández, *Migra! A History of the Border Patrol*, 25.

[65] Gamio, "Migration and Planning," 175.

the Mexican state's project aimed to reform extended family structures predominant among peasants, and the hope that the guest worker program would provide the impetus for "Indians" to abandon primitive customs and nonmodern familial arrangements.[66] The glowing portrayal of the Bracero program as an opportunity for modernization by the Mexican government was complicated by memories of abuses suffered by Mexican workers on US soil and the experience of mass deportation in the 1930s.[67] Only the entry of the United States into the Second World War, and the Mexican support for the Allied Powers announced in 1942, provided the basis for more reciprocal cooperation, couched in terms of a democratic partnership against authoritarianism, a situation that did in fact strengthen Mexico's bargaining position, allowing it to negotiate strong protections enforced by the US state rather than growers.[68] Yet the end of the war and the unending numbers of Mexican workers willing to sidestep the program and head north to work quickly weakened Mexico's position.[69] This translated into worsening conditions of exploitation for Braceros and resurgent racial narratives of inferiority that served to justify and produce harsh labor conditions. Among these narratives, US authorities highlighted the "superiority" of the Bracero work ethic, connected to their "animal vitality," which allowed the "Mexican worker" to overcome crushing illness and injury, and "literally [work] himself to death."[70] The shaping of the Mexican family by the Bracero program followed the logic of racialized capitalist accumulation. In particular, the desire to keep Bracero labor cheap and the racial undesirability of settlement dictated that the pool of recruited workers was kept all male. It was acknowledged by the authorities that recruiting women would have required "separate and expensive forms of housing" and that

[66] Mireya Loza, *Defiant Braceros: How Migrant Workers Fought for Racial, Sexual, and Political Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 64.

[67] Lawrence A. Cardoso, "Labor Emigration to the Southwest, 1916 to 1920: Mexican Attitudes and Policy," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 79, no. 4 (1976), Deborah Cohen, "Caught in the Middle: The Mexican State's Relationship with the United States and Its Own Citizen-Workers, 1942–1954," *Journal of American Ethnic History* (2001): 112.

[68] Cohen, "Caught in the Middle: The Mexican State's Relationship with the United States and Its Own Citizen-Workers, 1942–1954," 112–13.

[69] Galarza, *Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story*, 70–77, Cohen, "Caught in the Middle: The Mexican State's Relationship with the United States and Its Own Citizen-Workers, 1942–1954," 112–13.

[70] The statement is by the labor director of the Santa Ana county Farm Bureau. Galarza, *Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story*, 238.

"marrying or entering into extended family arrangements" would result in a "combined wage-earning potential" that would encourage Braceros to skip their contracts or settle permanently.[71] In other words, it was explicitly the *cost* of a fulfilled domesticity and family life for Mexican workers that was excised from the Bracero program and expropriated for the reproduction of US capitalism and its waged workers. The exclusively male and temporary character of the Bracero program also fit tightly with the settler colonial project, which reserved opportunities for upward mobility and fulfilled domesticity for white families. This puts into perspective the nonsensical expectation that the program would facilitate "family advancement and modernization of familial economics" for Mexican migrants, positing a respectable masculinity tied to the nuclear family that Braceros could not possibly practice given their separation from their families and the exploitative conditions offered.[72]

The other side of the coin of this capitalist vision were the female-headed households left behind in Mexico (the program privileged married men, whose sacrifice would pay for the advance of their families).[73] For many families in Mexico, the promised remittances never came, and even when they did, they had to be complemented by the wages earned by the women, who were also single-parenting their children – who, in turn, often took up informal jobs – and taking up functions previously performed by their husbands.[74] When Braceros returned, with or without savings, it was often only for a few months before they renewed their contracts or decided to cross the border irregularly instead.[75] These processes relativized the meaning of "return" and "home" for workers who spent their lives migrating, as well as for the young who were socialized into a tradition of "norteños," whose career path was to go north in search for work.[76] The needs of these families and the emotional and financial hardship the program often implied were signs that value was

[71] Ana Elizabeth Rosas, "Breaking the Silence: Mexican Children and Women's Confrontation of *Bracero* Family Separation, 1942–64," *Gender & History* 23, no. 2 (2011): 385.

[72] Loza, *Defiant Braceros: How Migrant Workers Fought for Racial, Sexual, and Political Freedom*, 66–67.

[73] Ibid., 7–8.

[74] Ibid., 65, Rosas, "Breaking the Silence: Mexican Children and Women's Confrontation of *Bracero* Family Separation, 1942–64," 385–87.

[75] Rosas, "Breaking the Silence: Mexican Children and Women's Confrontation of *Bracero* Family Separation, 1942–64," 390.

[76] Víctor M. Espinosa, *El dilema del retorno. Migración, género y pertenencia en un contexto transnacional* (Zamora: El Colegio de Michoacán, 1998).

being produced and appropriated by employers north of the border and Mexico's project of modernization. Vocal complaints, however, were rare because they could have been seen as backward and selfish attempts to derail the government's project.[77] This meant that reproductive and care labor performed by women left behind by Braceros was made invisible and denied recognition, the optimal form that this work takes in capitalist economies.[78] The male labor that this reproductive work made possible in the United States, moreover, was also kept out of sight of privileged US citizens by housing workers in barracks near their place of work and significantly restricting their mobility. This hidden labor, supported by the unpaid care networks left behind, ensured war and postwar social reproduction, and guaranteed the continuity of food provision, which had been threatened by the war effort. Later, with the reduced negotiating clout and protections of the postwar period, the costs of feeding, sheltering, and transporting laborers were kept to a minimum and even more labor was extracted from the Braceros.

The Bracero program thus remained a political project to produce vulnerable labor at the intersection of US and Mexican capitalist regimes entangled with their respective racial systems, which were both in need of social reproduction facilitated through uncompensated care work and barely compensated work in commercial agriculture, roadwork, and railway maintenance.[79] Mexican and US landed interests fought to control the flows of migrants, the former to prevent the outflow from pushing farmworkers' wages upward and the latter to prevent limitations on inflows and state protections on incoming migrants to keep wages low and conditions

[77] Ibid., 390. While the scholarship on transnational families during the Bracero program is relatively scarce, Rosas' account is largely consistent with the extensive literature that explores the emotional and familial hardships experienced by left-behind families as a consequence of more recent migration waves. Karlijn Haagsman and Valentina Mazzucato, "The Well-Being of Stay Behind Family Members in Migrant Households," in *Routledge Handbook of Migration and Development*, ed. Tanja Bastia and Ronald Skeldon (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020).

[78] Maria Mies, "Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale Revisited (Keynote Lecture at the Green Economics Institute, October 2005)," *International Journal of Green Economics* 1, no. 3–4 (2007): 269, Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour*.

[79] Railroad jobs, however, were available to Mexican Braceros only during the war, because of the better conditions and wages attached to them. In fact, the fear of Mexican agricultural workers "deserting" and going "through the country to work on the railroads" was considered a problem in earlier debates about Mexican labor. US Congress, *Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization on H. J. Res. 271 Relating to the Temporary Admission of Illiterate Mexican Laborers*, 16.

exploitative.[80] Both Mexican and US growers pressured their states to regulate these flows in their favor, at first with US growers coordinating laxer border control with local Border Patrol units. Later, they pressured the Departments of Labor, State, and Justice in 1954 to force Mexico to accept scaled-down protections for Braceros in the renegotiation of the program.[81] The higher relative wages in the United States was a boon for US growers, who could count on an unlimited supply of fresh labor arriving from south of the border. Despite the heavy-handed negotiation tactics and the exploitative conditions that the lack of negotiating clout facilitated, US commercial farmers saw their use of Braceros as "a contribution to Mexican economic uplift," emphasizing that Bracero wages were higher than the wages paid to native US workers (an accounting trick that calculated the prevailing wage before deductions for "food, transportation, insurance, etc.," some of which went back to the farmers).[82] As Texas Representative Ted Regan concluded: "Mexicans … need North American dollars and we need their labor. [Migration] is an aid to the Mexican economy and to ours."[83] Yet the labor needed had to be actively made vulnerable against the demands of the Mexican government, as is evident in the tone of 1953 Senate hearings regarding the renegotiation of the program. At the time, the majority of the chamber demanded the abandonment of the program altogether, as eloquently put by Iowa Senator Bomke Hickelooper: "Come on, boys, there is work here, come in under your own power and go back under your own power."[84]

This account shows that social reproduction is a transnational endeavor facilitated by various racialized hierarchies operating at the level of family, country, and the differential status of sending and receiving states. This account corrects the dominant approach in immigration scholarship, whose focus is exclusively on the conditions of migrants in the receiving territory. In contrast, I show that the hierarchical relation

[80] Galarza, *Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story*, 77, Cohen, "Caught in the Middle: The Mexican State's Relationship with the United States and Its Own Citizen-Workers, 1942–1954," 119.

[81] Cohen, "Caught in the Middle: The Mexican State's Relationship with the United States and Its Own Citizen-Workers, 1942–1954," 119, Hernández, *Migra! A History of the Border Patrol*.

[82] Galarza, *Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story*, 103.

[83] Excélsior, "Editorial," January 17, 1954. Cited in Cohen, "Caught in the Middle: The Mexican State's Relationship with the United States and Its Own Citizen-Workers, 1942–1954," 119.

[84] Cohen, "Caught in the Middle: The Mexican State's Relationship with the United States and Its Own Citizen-Workers, 1942–1954," 122–23.

between the United States and Mexico, and the victimization of Mexican workers in the United States, requires an examination of the place that Mexican capitalism grants to racialized workers/emigrants-to-be. In fact, US exploitation of migrant labor depended and depends on hierarchies operating both between the United States and Mexico (and, increasingly, the Northern Triangle) *and* within sending countries, which makes the exploitative conditions relatively attractive to would-be migrants. Finally, the claim by US businessmen that they "contribute to Mexican development" by exploiting its citizens is continuous with other aid discourses proper to an unequal world, such as corporations bragging that export-oriented assembly plants offer higher wages than would otherwise be available to the natives of the receiving countries. There is a baseline problem here: The hierarchical world system determines that certain countries can only aim to employ their citizens at home or abroad under expropriative labor conditions attached, which may ease the capital accounts of the country in question but provides only temporary jobs with grueling labor conditions to subjects expelled from their land or subsistence communities by commercial agriculture, infrastructural projects, or war.[85] Rather than contributing to development, these projects show how racialized hierarchy domestically and international are themselves sources of accumulation when joined with the skewed structure of value that organizes an imperial world (see Chapter 4).

This complex picture of overlapping hierarchies and transnationally enabled vulnerability is the proper background against which to assess the role that brown families are called to occupy in the contemporary US regime of social reproduction.

3.3 THE BROWN FAMILY, SOCIAL REPRODUCTION, AND IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

The end of the Bracero Program in 1965 generalized undocumented work as the predominant status for the workforce in low-skilled and physically strenuous jobs in the United States. The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act unified quotas for all countries and ended immigration bans for Asian countries whose entry requirements had not already been relaxed. This meant the imposition of the first-ever immigration quota for the western hemisphere, which was not proportionate to the

[85] Silvia Federici, "War, Globalization, and Reproduction," in *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2012).

heavy reliance of the US political economy and its social reproduction on migrant labor from this area. Therefore, by putting a ceiling on legal entry, the measure produced *illegality*, a vulnerable status for workers preferred by employers interested in exploitable labor.[86]

The vulnerability of this status would only worsen as border fortification increased in the 1980s, initially in association with the war on drugs. The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act allowance for the regularization of undocumented status provided some respite, but ultimately just shifted the demand for exploitable workers to new arrivals, as had been the practice historically. In the decades since the Immigration Reform and Control Act, and up to the time of writing, there has been no bipartisan consensus for new regularizations. The period leading up to and following these reforms also coincides with transformations on both sides of the border, including the increase in foreign direct investment in developing countries – associated with disrupted labor markets and the familiarization of workers with Western products in export-oriented industries with high turnover – creating a pool of emigrants.[87] Other trends include weakening union power in several sectors in the United States – notably meatpacking – which led to the replacement of unionized workers with migrant labor. The destabilization of Mexico's agriculture due to the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement further displaced workers and filled the ranks of would-be emigrants.[88] The state apparatus that these migrants encountered deepened the level of vulnerability for undocumented workers systematically through border fortification and the expansion of internal immigration policing. Border fortification made immigrants reluctant to risk returning and attempting new crossings, thus encouraging a settled immigrant population and, eventually, the desire to reunite with their families on US territory.[89] These families – unable

[86] Nicholas De Genova, "The Legal Production of Mexican/Migrant 'Illegality'," *Latino Studies* 2, no. 2 (2004), Lee, "The Case for Open Borders."

[87] Saskia Sassen, *The Mobility of Labor and Capital: A Study in International Investment and Labor Flow* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[88] Peter J. Rachleff, *Hard-Pressed in the Heartland: The Hormel Strike and the Future of the Labor Movement* (Boston: South End Press, 1993), Walden F. Bello, *The Food Wars* (London: Verso, 2009), Roger Burbach and Patricia Flynn, *Agribusiness in the Americas* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980), Kim Moody, *An Injury to All: The Decline of American Unionism* (London: Verso, 1988), cited in Raj Patel and Jason W. Moore, *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things: A Guide to Capitalism, Nature, and the Future of the Planet* (London: Verso, 2018), 156–57.

[89] Douglas S. Massey, "The Wall That Keeps Illegal Workers In," *The New York Times*, April 4, 2006.

to rely on the benefits for unification of immediate family members of legal residents or citizens included in the 1965 law – would be targeted and further degraded through tough crime, welfare, and immigration legislation in the 1990s, which restricted access to welfare for regular and undocumented migrants and increased both the criminalization of brown and Black populations and, symbiotically, the range of legal offenses that triggered deportation, even for permanent residents.[90] At once, these laws restricted judicial discretion to consider staying orders of deportations based on the existence of strong community and family ties.[91] This regime systematically forced separations through lone migration, long working hours of draining work, detention, and deportation. The families targeted by these regimes are the same that would – through their work – make possible the aspirational features of the white family, now increasingly featuring highly educated women working outside the home. This arrangement exceeded the reliance of professional couples on badly paid work by brown women (and the displacement of the contestation of the division of labor within white families) and came to include more broadly the dependence of these families on brown labor for accessing affordable fresh produce, packed meat, and prepared food;[92] for construction, renovation, and landscaping work to shelter families and beautify their environment; and for filling the lower rungs of the food service and hospitality industry.

Constructing and Reproducing the White Family

The historical trajectory outlined earlier, complete with the coercive structures that mobilized brown labor, had the outcome of valorizing white families and their well-being while degrading nonwhite families.

[90] Susanne Jonas and Catherine Tactaquin, "Latino Immigrant Rights in the Shadow of the National Security State," *Social Justice* 31, no. 1–2 (2004), Desmond King and Inés Valdez, "From Workers to Enemies: National Security, State Building and America's War on *Illegal* Immigrants," in *Narrating Peoplehood Amidst Diversity: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives*, ed. Michael Böss (Aarhus: Aarhus Academic Press, 2011), Inés Valdez, "Punishment, Race, and the Organization of U.S. Immigration Exclusion," *Political Research Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (2016).

[91] Amalia Pallares, *Family Activism: Immigrant Struggles and the Politics of Noncitizenship* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2014), 33, Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia, *Beyond Deportation: The Role of Prosecutorial Discretion in Immigration Cases* (New York: New York University Press, 2015).

[92] Federici, "Reproduction and Feminist Struggle in the New International Division of Labor," 71, 73.

The normative white family enabled by undocumented work entailed and entails participation in a "collection of isolated family units," rather than a real community.[93] Brown migrant subjects are conscripted to sustain this white, patriarchal, and atomized family life, through the cheap contracting-out of social reproduction services and the elimination of community exchanges and mutual aid, a structure intensified by white women's entry into the labor force. This was the product of a branch of the feminist movement that questioned the isolation of women in the private sphere and their lack of access to the labor market, but not the primacy of capitalism over communal forms of organization that could reduce dependence on wage labor and the cash economy.

The vulnerability to surveillance and policing brown migrants face, the exploitative labor conditions this regime enables, and their exclusion from social services makes them ineligible for the society of privatized citizenship, that is, social membership re-defined as acts and values directed toward the privatized family sphere.[94] Going full circle, this family is what the moralizing discourse and tough policies of welfare and national security protect. In other words, just as the state apparatus separates brown families and pushes them into impossible choices, the resulting "disordered" families are judged abject through discourses of political membership that find them wanting vis-à-vis properly lived private worlds.[95] These disordered families emerge from the negation of self-care and a nurturing space for social reproduction for brown families whose members perform the essential work of social reproduction for well-ordered families. Several aspects of the contemporary legal and material configuration of immigration enforcement contribute to this degradation, as I now explain.

Disordering the Brown Family

Families shape subjects' orientation toward the world: it is where their self-identity is cultivated, their children are socialized, strong social ties develop, and culture is transmitted. Family spaces are thus central

[93] Valerie Solanas, *The Scum Manifesto* (London: Verso, 2016 [1968]), 49. This is what Lauren Berlant, decades later, would call a "constricted nation of simultaneously lived private worlds," Lauren Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 5.

[94] Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship*, 5.

[95] Ibid.

sites where workers can access a value system that is an alternative to the racist and capitalist ideologies used to justify their subordination.[96] In other words, by grounding individuals in place and providing emotional and material resources that nurture them and allow them to thrive, families and social networks strengthen the symbolic and material resources available for political action and resistance.[97] For undocumented workers, domestic spaces also provide respite from the stress and fear associated with public spaces and the possibility of an encounter with law enforcement. These virtuous connections are destroyed by assaults on brown families, which destabilize them and deprive racialized workers of spaces of refugee from the competitive logic of the market and the exploitation and dehumanization faced in their everyday public lives, furthering their vulnerability to exploitation. Yet the degradation of brown families does not affect all of its members homogeneously. The historical denial of a family wage to workers of color, for instance, "intensifie[s] and extend[s] women's reproductive labor" by creating tensions and strains in family relationships and requiring women to compensate for poor and unsanitary housing conditions, labor that they perform in addition to subsistence labor outside the family.[98]

These strains have been widely documented in the case of migrants leaving families behind, including the phenomenon of transnational motherhood,[99] but the legal and material reach of immigration enforcement also creates vulnerabilities among families who are formally together. Their togetherness is relativized by the continuous anxiety created by the threat of involuntary and forceful parting following the detention and/or deportation of family members who are undocumented. Moreover, the constructed vulnerability and uncertainty for undocumented or mixed-status families that live together in the United States produce emotional burdens that are worth examining. The children of undocumented parents, in particular, carry the emotional weight of knowing that their parents may at any time be picked up by law enforcement or federal immigration enforcement and separated from them, first within

[96] Glenn, *Issei, Nisei, War Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service*, 195–96.

[97] Federici, "War, Globalization, and Reproduction," 79.

[98] Bonnie Thornton Dill, "Our Mothers' Grief: Racial Ethnic Women and the Maintenance of Families," *Journal of Family History* 13, no. 4 (1988): 218, 428–29.

[99] Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila, "'I'm Here, but I'm There': The Meanings of Latina Transnational Motherhood," *Gender & Society* 11, no. 5 (1997): 568.

the country and potentially across the southern border.[100] Parents, in turn, face the reality of parenting children from whom they might be separated.[101] Given the growing reach of enforcement, separation is not an extreme, hypothetical situation for Latinx communities. A recent survey found that 66 percent of Latina/os "worry [some or a lot] that they, a family friend, or a close friend could be deported," a figure that decreases to a still high 43 percent for United States-born Latina/os.[102] Moreover, According to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) data, in the six months between January and June of 2011, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) removed 46,846 parents of US citizens, compared to 180,000 removals of parents of US citizens in the nine years spanning 1998 and 2007. Many of the children left behind were sent by ICE to Child Protective Services (CPS), and some were subsequently put in foster care.[103] These children face higher barriers to reuniting with their parents because no mechanism exists to connect parents in immigration detention to children in CPS custody and because CPS is unlikely to allow undocumented family members to take the children. Moreover, CPS is biased against children rejoining parents abroad and seldom coordinates with foreign consulates about family reunification, despite this being the single most effective means of reunification.[104]

[100] Ana Elizabeth Rosas, "Some Children Left Behind: Families in the Age of Deportation," *Boom: A Journal of California* 2, no. 3 (2012): 79.

[101] Ibid., 82.

[102] Mark Hugo Lopez, Ana Gonzalez-Barrera, and Jens M. Korgstad, "More Latinos Have Serious Concerns About Their Place in America under Trump," in *Hispanic Trends* (Pew Research Center, 2018).

[103] Seth Freed Wessler, "Shattered Families," (New York: Applied Research Center, 2011), 6, 11. The 2011 data is the result of a Freedom of Information Act request from the Applied Research Center, and statistics are not regularly released by DHS or ICE. However, to the extent that the growth in deportations of parents is a function of the growth in deportations from the interior, these numbers are likely to have kept pace with deportation numbers, which decreased with the issuing of enforcement priorities that de-prioritized parents in 2014 but likely grew again with the discontinuation of those priorities by the current administration at the time of writing. Inés Valdez, "DACA, DAPA and U.S. Immigration Politics: Plus Ça Change?," *Newsletter of the APSA Section on Migration and Citizenship* 3, no. 2 (2015).

[104] Wessler, "Shattered Families," 8. The growth in family separations followed from the reduced space for judicial consideration of ties to the community, including family ties, in adjudicating deportation cases after the 1990s immigration reforms. While this discretion can still be exercised by ICE officers, the agency sees these considerations as detracting from its mission. As a consequence, it was only between 2014 and 2017 that this agency softened its position in response to executive actions that explicitly mandated criteria to deprioritize the deportations of those with strong family ties. Valdez, "DACA, DAPA and U.S. Immigration Politics: Plus Ça Change?"

The separations may be unexpected and follow from chance encounters with law enforcement or they might be the result of equally unexpected but spectacular and orchestrated mass raids conducted by hundreds of immigration officers targeting hundreds of undocumented workers at their place of work. These operations were legally enabled by the turn to employer-focused enforcement instituted in 1986, which, in combination with the 1998 identity theft law, other criminalized immigration violations (such as "illegal re-entry"), and high bonds, are used to pressure migrants into plea deals, quick deportation, and thus family separation.[105] Raids operate in the tradition of the mass roundups and deportations of the 1930s and mid-1950s, but they also have affinities with counter-insurgency operations, at play in the secrecy that surrounds the operations until their implementation, their militarized character, the targeting of hundreds of individuals at a time, the collective court appearances of shackled detainees (in the Postville case), and the deeply traumatic effects on the small rural communities where they take place.[106] In these raids, schools and other social services organizations are not always contacted ahead of time, and the former, alongside faith leaders, have to scramble to ensure the safety of children and their placement with family; this was particularly the case in the pre-2007 and 2019 raids which did not release primary caregivers, departing from ICE 2007 guidance requiring them to do so.[107] Communities also had to deal with the aftermath of the raids, the depressed economic activity for community businesses, the need to organize politically to press for releases, and the trauma for children and partners left behind, which requires the mobilization of therapeutic services to help children and adults process the loss.[108] Increased enforcement, detention, and deportation means that these same outcomes apply in Latina/o communities around the country in less spectacular form. It

[105] Erik Camayd-Freixas, "Interpreting after the Largest ICE Raid in US History: A Personal Account," *Latino Studies* 7, no. 1 (2009): 132–33, Wendy Cervantes, Rebecca Ullrich, and Vanessa Meraz, "The Day That ICE Came: How Worksite Raids Are Once Again Harming Children and Families" (Washington, DC: The Center for Law and Social Policy, 2020), 6.

[106] In the recent past, these have included simultaneous raids in Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, and Texas (2006), New Bedford, Massachusetts (2007), Postville, Iowa (2008), Sandusky and Salem, Ohio (2019), and Canton, Carthage, Forest, and Morton, Mississippi (2019).

[107] Ajay Chaudry et al., "Facing Our Future: Children in the Aftermath of Immigration Enforcement," (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 2010), 15, Cervantes, Ullrich, and Meraz, "The Day That ICE Came: How Worksite Raids Are Once Again Harming Children and Families," 5.

[108] Cervantes, Ullrich, and Meraz, "The Day That ICE Came: How Worksite Raids Are Once Again Harming Children and Families," 10, 17.

is these detentions that initiate the majority of the 3.1 million migrant deportations from the US interior since 9/11. These have slowly but surely decimated families and communities, and led to the loss of loved ones for an estimated 1.6 million people.[109]

Today, just as during the Bracero program, the loss of the primary breadwinner heavily disrupts family dynamics, leading older youth to take one or two jobs, in addition to shouldering the caregiving of younger siblings.[110] This disruption, moreover, can follow from enforcement that does not separate families. For example, the Obama administration conducted thousands of "silent raids," which audited companies' employment records and mandated mass firings of undocumented workers. Measures such as this contribute to the systematic instability of employment for undocumented workers, which not only confirms their disposability as individuals, as Raymond Rocco notes,[111] but also cements their vulnerability as families. Even in the absence of raids or unemployment, migrant families' internal dynamics are heavily shaped by the legal and material environment that they face. Notably, children of undocumented parents who are fluent in English, have access to citizenship, or have status through Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) take on roles as language and culture brokers, tutors, and advocates in the interactions between their parents and a variety of institutions.[112] Older children of undocumented parents who are US citizens, in particular, step in to mitigate the legal vulnerability of their parents through access to financial services and by assuming legal guardianship of their minor siblings.[113] The same is true, though to a lesser

[109] The number of deportations is based on the author's calculations based on DHS yearly releases of removal statistics. The second figure is from Human Rights Watch, *Forced Apart: Families Separated and Immigrants Harmed by United States Deportation Policy*, July, vol. 19 (2007), 6.

[110] Cervantes, Ullrich, and Meraz, "The Day That ICE Came: How Worksite Raids Are Once Again Harming Children and Families," 10.

[111] Raymond A. Rocco, "Disposable Subjects: The Racial Normativity of Neoliberalism and Latino Immigrants," *Latino Studies* 14, no. 1 (2016).

[112] Laura E. Enriquez, "Gendering Illegality: Undocumented Young Adults' Negotiation of the Family Formation Process," *American Behavioral Scientist* 61, no. 10 (2017), Abel Valenzuela, "Gender Roles and Settlement Activities among Children and Their Immigrant Families," *American Behavioral Scientist* 42, no. 4 (1999).

[113] Isabel García-Valdivia, "Legal Power in Action: How Latinx Adult Children Mitigate the Effects of Parents' Legal Status through Brokering," *Social Problems* (forthcoming): 2, Leisy J. Abrego, "Relational Legal Consciousness of US Citizenship: Privilege, Responsibility, Guilt, and Love in Latino Mixed-Status Families," *Law & Society Review* 53, no. 3 (2019): 664.

extent in accordance with their lesser legal privileges, of youth who are DACAmented.[114] Even during childhood, children with access to citizenship are often overwhelmed by guilt and high expectations, which may lead them either to resist their legal privileges or to self-imposed efforts to defy the odds, despite the many obstacles to the progress of Latinx children in US society.[115]

Thus, in parallel to the production of illegality, there is a production of disordered families through a racializing process that extricates labor from noncapitalist social relations for the purpose of accumulation.[116] A key tool in this double production is the regime of immigration enforcement and the attendant anxiety, vulnerability, and uncertainty created among immigrant families, requiring its members to take up more reproductive work and forcing children to assume formal and informal roles to mitigate the vulnerability of their parents and families. The regime positions brown families in impossible situations, such as deciding whether to leave their children behind in the event of a deportation or to uproot them, or deciding whether to stay apart or entrust their unaccompanied children to strangers who will get them across the border. These families are deemed abject vis-à-vis the white, heterosexual, commodified model of family, even if they are produced by a regime of immigration enforcement that places families in these tragic situations, only to deem these behaviors deviant and in need of deterrence.[117] The variety of discourses of the supposedly irresponsible mores of migrant families is extensive and targets reproductive practices that are supposedly excessive,

[114] Leisy J. Abrego, "Renewed Optimism and Spatial Mobility: Legal Consciousness of Latino Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Recipients and Their Families in Los Angeles," *Ethnicities* 18, no. 2 (2018).

[115] Abrego, "Relational Legal Consciousness of US Citizenship: Privilege, Responsibility, Guilt, and Love in Latino Mixed-Status Families," 660.

[116] Luxemburg, "The Accumulation of Capital: A Contribution to the Economic Theory of Imperialism," 261.

[117] This is the stance of immigration enforcement authorities, who castigate parents for sending their children on a "perilous journey … with no legitimate claim to enter or remain" in the United States. Chad Wolf, "Memorandum: Reconsideration of the June 15, 2012 Memorandum Entitled 'Exercising Prosecutorial Discretion Withrespect to Individuals Who Came to the United States as Children'," ed. Department of Homeland Security (Washington, DC, 2020), 5. See also ICE, "Unaccompanied Alien Children Human Smuggling Disruption Initiative" (Washington, DC: Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2017), John Burnett, "Transcript: White House Chief of Staff John Kelly's Interview with NPR," *National Public Radio*, May 11, 2018, John Washington, "The Government Has Taken at Least 1,100 Children from Their Parents since Family Separations Officially Ended," *The Intercept*, December 9, 2019.

welfare-seeking, or strategic and devoted to obtaining residency through "anchor babies."[118] The same narrative of shame and bad parenting operates vis-à-vis Dreamers, whose innocence is compared with the reckless law-breaking behavior of their parents, who imposed the condition of illegality on their own children.

In other words, the historical and contemporary process of racialization and degradation I describe produces the social condition of brown families, whose degraded state is cited as an argument against their inclusion. Moreover, the denial of family stability through separation, unsteady, and informal work, and the threat of detection when appearing in public depletes spaces of social reproduction where emotional lives and physical bodies can be nurtured. Mass deportation, moreover, decimates communities and weakens ties that are central to a collective understanding of the conditions of oppression and resistance against these structures. In sum, immigration enforcement should be understood as a regime that coercively creates and racializes vulnerable labor to allow for capitalist accumulation, a process that entails systematic attacks on families, their stability and ability to reproduce physically and emotionally, their integrity, and the integrity of their communities of belonging and ability to engage in resistance struggle.

Family Activism

The dramatic decisions that migrant families face because of their lack of regular status and the attacks on families by today's regime of immigration enforcement has shaped contemporary activism. The family has become salient in migrant-organizing discourse through the strategic use of family ties by pro-immigration activists in anti-deportation campaigns and through the emergence of the family as a key collective source of identification in debates between immigrant rights and their opponents.[119]

However, the invocation of families, in general, and family separation, in particular, can be fraught when considered *in isolation* from the

[118] Leo R. Chavez, *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), Natalie Cisneros, "'Alien' Sexuality: Race, Maternity, and Citizenship," *Hypatia* 28, no. 2 (2013). Ana Puga and Victor Espinosa focus on the strategic use of melodrama, but see pro-migrant melodramas as different from restrictionist melodramas that cast migrants as criminals and citizens as the suffering victims. My point here instead notes that the handicapped image of brown families is convergent in pro- and anti-immigrant discourse. Ana Elena Puga and Víctor M Espinosa, *Performances of Suffering in Latin American Migration* (London: Palgrave Macmillan), 17–18.

[119] Pallares, *Family Activism: Immigrant Struggles and the Politics of Noncitizenship*, 2, 12.

capitalist priorities and coercive racialization that disorder and separate families. This is not to deny that some family-centered activism disrupts strict separations between citizens and migrants and between migrants with and without documents, makes visible alternative family formations, and is led by subjects who take up spaces not given to them.[120] Yet, as long as they employ genres of melodrama and humanitarianism detached from the political economy conditions that motivate subjection, there are two risks. First, narratives based on the tragic and – for most white audiences – extreme character of the forceful separation of families and detention of children both highlights the spectacular nature of their suffering and dissimulates it by portraying state crimes as melodrama, transforming extreme instances of state coercion into a vehicle for white enjoyment.[121] This activism exploits the spectacle of migrant suffering, which confirms the abject character of the brown family and converges with anti-immigrant accounts that derive enjoyment from immigrants' suffering, which they attribute to their unruly behavior and irresponsible parenting.

The second risk of making the domestic realm of the family the central axis of activism without scrutinizing the structural conditions of its fashioning is that it misrepresents and thus narrows the character of politics in two ways. First, by positing the harmed brown family as an outrageous overreach of state action, activists both reproduce an illusory strict separation between private life and collective life, and also mark nonfamilial forms of political identification as dangerous.[122] In an example of the imaginary strict separation between private and collective life, US Congresswoman from Washington State Pramila Jayapal identified "kids in cages … and moms being separated from breastfeeding children" as "beyond politics … really … just about right and wrong."[123] Yet racialized families have consistently been the terrain of politics and state intervention. From sanctioning the heterosexual family and the attendant unpaid women's labor of social reproduction to sacrificing enslaved women's maternal kinship for the sake of the slave owner's property, the state has shaped the family, elevated some families over others, sanctioned an internal pecking order, and relied on these divisions to fulfill different roles within capitalism.

[120] Ibid., 17–18.

[121] Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, 22–23.

[122] Berlant, "Intimacy: A Special Issue," 282–83, 88, Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship*, 5.

[123] Alexandra Yoon-Hendricks and Zoe Greenberg, "Protests across U.S. Call for End to Migrant Family Separations," *The New York Times*, June 30, 2018.

Second, family-centered activism sanitizes political engagement and contributes to marking nonfamilial forms of political association as dangerous by privileging political action that can be safely grounded in empathy and the defense of the family. During the family separation crisis, white women, in particular, claimed to relate to the suffering of migrants through their experience as mothers ("if it was my child, I would want someone to do something").[124] Activist Jess Morales Rocketto from the National Domestic Worker's Alliance noted that she was "blown away" by the unusually high turnout for the marches against family separations compared to other instances of immigrant activism. A white woman and new mother at the Washington march further illustrates this empathic mindset, saying that she had stayed away from the news because she could not bear the stories of family separation but she realized it was time to "come out."[125] Yet the mobilization of white women through the scenario of "shared feeling" only confirms the fungibility of the bodies toward which empathy is being extended, whose sentience is confirmed once the pain is felt – through identification – by the white witness.[126] Such an identification, moreover, mischaracterizes the structure of injustice because white families are in fact protected, in part by the exploitation of the very same families targeted for separation with whom the claim to empathize. This approach to activism also means that alternative forms of organizing, including those that center the dependence of white families on exploited racialized workers and the functionality of this regime for the minimization of the social reproduction costs of capitalism, are rendered unsafe because they may alienate the wide support that familial scripts can garner.

In other words, truly emancipatory activism needs to highlight *how* families are conscripted to provide social reproduction for white groups and capitalist accumulation and are thus *public* spaces of intervention. This is the reason for the sacrifice of their intimate spaces through the uprooting of members of the family suddenly and with little recourse, through the migration of one or two parents, detention, deportation, or separation at the border. Immigrant families living together, moreover, remain subjected to backbreaking work, economic precarity, and emotional vulnerability due to fears of separation, extensive surveillance, and the multiple statuses of family members (undocumented, DACAmented,

[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, 19–20.

with Temporary Protected Status, parolee, resident, or citizen). Activism focused on migrant families that fails to engage with these features misdirects energies toward a supposedly outrageous instance of family separation rather than the systematic and routine production of abject brown families by the coercive regime of mass policing at the border and in the interior, which works alongside US racial capitalism.

In a regime of racial capitalism, what is outrageous – in the sense of disruptive or nonnormative – is the attempt by brown families to privilege their integrity and pursue joint settlement in a polity that aims to extract their labor while blocking their own social reproduction. In this context, the reclaiming of a space where bodies used for disciplined labor production and the care of others could rest and replenish physically and emotionally is nothing short of revolutionary.[127]

3.4 RACIAL CAPITALISM AND THE 2018 CRISIS OF FAMILY SEPARATIONS

The racial capitalist regime of social reproduction theorized in this chapter is the proper context in which to assess the 2018 crisis of family separation affecting migrants and asylum seekers from the Northern Triangle. The arrival of families had already been met with state coercion in the form of family detention during the Obama administration and evolved into the policy of family separations in the subsequent administration. Their arrival as family units conveyed a will to maintain family integrity despite migration, which represents a departure from the historical mode of lone and uprooted labor migration to the United States and explains the violent state response that met them at the border. This is because they counter the logic of social extrication and anti-relationality that relegates these groups to realms of vulnerable labor and propels capitalist accumulation forward. The violent response of the US state is in keeping with its historical record of coercive intervention in intimate family realms and its destruction of kinship among brown, Black, and Indigenous groups.

The search for asylum by Central American migrants fleeing US-supported post- or currently authoritarian regimes at home is reminiscent of the location of Mexican migrants at the intersection of programs

[127] The disruptive and emancipatory move of reclaiming bodies for activities other than work is highlighted in Mireya Loza's study of Braceros' expressions of "sexual desire, physical violence, and bravado," which contest normative forms of masculinity and redirect their disciplined, laboring bodies for pleasure and recreation. *Defiant Braceros: How Migrant Workers Fought for Racial, Sexual, and Political Freedom*, 65.

of modernization in Mexico and the United States. The structures of subjection causing asylum seekers' exile and those expecting them in the United States are entwined, this time by neoliberal reforms in Central America and the transformation of civil conflict through the economy of drug trafficking and US-led, anti-drug, military doctrine. This updated transnational nexus behind contemporary migrant and refugee flows from the region remains to be theorized.[128]

The genealogy offered earlier posits migration regulation as a structure of racial capitalism that is entangled with racialized labor control resulting from conquest and continuous with the subjection of other racial groups in its effects over kinship. Scholars have noted the connection of the last wave of migration to the contemporary crisis of care and social reproduction, whereas women of color increasingly meet the urgent demand for externalized care following from the increased hours of paid work required to support a family, which sent women into waged work just as the public provision of care diminished.[129] The racialized migrant women who took up these responsibilities had to transfer their own care duties to their families and communities to other, poorer caregivers, further squeezing social reproductive capacities.[130]

This chapter shows, however, that a pre-existing regime of racialized labor mobility, one already materially supporting the US polity, provided the background for these new and feminized migratory flows. Moreover, by analyzing social reproduction alongside the regime of migration control, the proposed account illuminates the role of state coercion over the brown family as a key mediating factor in delaying the breaking point of social reproduction. In so doing, this analysis specifies, redirects attention, and recategorizes migration regulation as operating at the intersection of systems of racialization and capitalism. This extends Raymond Rocco's work on disposability as a form of political containment by nesting it in a longer historical genealogy that centers the family and locates

[128] Teo Ballvé and Kendra McSweeney's account of the convergence of geopolitical and capitalist interests in Central America is an excellent step in this direction. The authors show how state actors have "seized upon the geographical realignments of the drug trade to expand the … military-agroindustrial nexus," suggesting a form of primitive accumulation and labor expulsion that surely remains an important component of the viability of the US regime of social reproduction described in this chapter. "The 'Colombianisation'of Central America: Misconceptions, Mischaracterisations and the Military-Agroindustrial Complex," *Journal of Latin American Studies* (forthcoming).

[129] Nancy Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," *New Left Review* 100, no. July/August (2016): 114.

[130] Ibid.

it at the intersection of the racialized labor regimes of the United States and Mexico.[131]

The transnational focus in this chapter illuminates the background location of these peoples as subaltern subjects within the settler Mexican state, expelled by modernizing projects and delivered into exploitative work in the United States, work performed on the lands stolen from Indigenous peoples by the Spanish before they were annexed by the United States.[132] Like Chapter 2, this chapter makes clear that racial capitalist regimes of forced labor and migration abide by the settler logic. This is because they welcome into settler societies white foreigners, who make their way into "the people" and jointly enjoy access to the land and sanction the carving out of spaces of expropriative labor for nonwhite arrivals, including Indigenous peoples from Meso and North America. In so doing, this project contributes to outlining a colonialism that has settled on Indigenous land but is never static. Instead, this colonialism is a site of the "simultaneous dispossession of Indigenous peoples and racialized, gendered, and casted labour formations," which relies on "conscription, constraint, forced diasporas, and slavery."[133] This vulnerable labor in turn cuts the costs of the white privatized family described in this chapter, whose wages become the means through which the value of the products of forced labor is realized.[134]

Chapter 4 complements this picture by focusing on another case of simultaneous oppression that characterizes the extraction of nature and racialized labor in the colonies. Returning to Du Bois, this chapter reveals how race and technology facilitate the alienation of wealthy peoples from the natural world and the racialized manual labor that sustains them. In addition to theorizing racialization and technology as mediating mechanisms in the devastation of nature, the chapter expands the theorization of the unacknowledged and expropriative material conditions that underpin popular sovereign demands for well-being among privileged groups.

[131] Rocco, "Disposable Subjects: The Racial Normativity of Neoliberalism and Latino Immigrants," 100.

[132] David Lloyd and Laura Pulido, "In the Long Shadow of the Settler: On Israeli and US Colonialisms," *American Quarterly* 62, no. 4 (2010): 797.

[133] Nishant Upadhyay, "'We'll Sail Like Columbus:' Race, Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, and the Making of South Asian Diasporas in Canada" (York University, 2016), ii, Byrd, "Weather with You: Settler Colonialism, Antiblackness, and the Grounded Relationalities of Resistance," 2019.

[134] Federici makes this point regarding the links between waged and slave labor, *Caliban and the Witch*, 104.

4

Techno-Racism, Manual Labor, and Du Bois's Ecological Critique

This chapter continues the exploration of the material conditions that sustain white democracies, whose popularly supported claims entail affective attachments to material wealth, secured through racial capitalist arrangements dependent on empire. Here I turn to the question of ecology, which extends Chapter 3's engagement with racialized labor to show that capitalism, in its quest for accumulation, appropriates labor alongside nature in colonial or postcolonial regions, a process facilitated by the technology-mediated devaluation of these two constructs. Beliefs in technological superiority and an attendant exaggeration of technology's value vis-à-vis manual labor and nature alienate white polities from their dependence on land and labor, further cementing an imperial popular sovereignty, now fully defined as also an ecologically destructive one. I make these claims via an ecological reading of W. E. B. Du Bois's writings on development, which track the racialized valuation of technology, manual labor, and nature, and reveal it to be political construction key for imperial racial capitalism to extract labor and natural resources from the colonies and the Global South.

The proposed reading of W. E. B. Du Bois has two aims, one theoretical and one political. Theoretically, it expands on the affective attachments that underpin popular sovereignty by examining the racialized meaning and ordering of manual labor, nature, and technology in modernity. This sheds critical light on the question of technology in advanced societies and its connection to underdevelopment in the Global South. Politically, it shows that imperial popular sovereignty depends on privileged citizens' attachments to technology and alienation from nature and the hard manual work that happens in proximity to nature

that sustains them. This shows that imperial popular sovereignty is also ecologically destructive.

In addition to tying imperial popular sovereignty to the question of ecology, the proposed account corrects or augments recent ecological political theory that focuses on humans' alienation from nature. It shows that the destruction of nature is not indiscriminate but organized through racial hierarchies and is a core component of imperialist projects that selectively and radically disrupt ecological and sociopolitical formations abroad. This global and racial division of labor and nature is connected to the divide between nature and technology that took shape alongside European industrialization and its growing need for raw materials. The construction of nature as obsolete and alienated from western societies proceeded along with ideologies of techno-racism, which facilitated the domination of colonial societies to secure sources of labor and raw material to sustain these societies' well-being. The alienation from nature among citizens from wealthy societies cements colonial constructions of backwardness and underdevelopment and hides the dependency of western standards of living and sustainable environments on the devastation of subjects, communities, and nature overseas. Thus, alienation from nature is an internally heterogeneous and racialized process, one which differently positions western and colonial peoples vis-à-vis nature. In particular, western alienation from nature depends on the racialized dehumanization of those who work the land's surface and mine its underground resources; this dehumanization allows for the more intense exploitation of their bodies and the natural environment they inhabit, a feat that, in turn, alienates colonial peoples from inwardly determined social and political projects. Ultimately, this account shows that imperial popular sovereignty and the racial capitalism it enables are inevitably entwined with our present ecological crisis, a crisis that cannot be solved without the dismantling of racism.

In the rest of the chapter, I first engage with recent ecological political theory, which deals with the politics of exploitation of nature and humans' alienation from it, to note the need to further specify how alienation from nature is racialized and structurally embedded within imperial capitalist regimes. To make this claim, I draw from the writings of Karl Marx and Rosa Luxemburg on land rent and imperialism, respectively, complementing Marx's writings on the joint robbery of the soil and the worker with Luxemburg's political account of imperialism, which exposes the alienation from nature of colonial subjects whose land and labor produce the raw materials needed to fuel industry and the well-being of the metropole.

In a third step, through an ecological reading of Du Bois, I explain how racial hierarchy underpins these processes. In particular, the devaluation and intensified exploitation of racialized subjects and nature follows from the alienation of technologized societies from nature, facilitating the careless exhaustion of nature overseas, and the disruption of a metabolism with nature oriented toward human needs rather than capitalist accumulation. Du Bois's account of techno-racism turns upside down claims about whiteness and technological advances, contests the inferiorization of manual labor relative to technological work, criticizes capitalist-oriented development, and champions a vision of society oriented to satisfy societal needs rather than profit, wealth, and luxury.

4.1 ALIENATION: HOW AND FROM WHAT?

Human societies' material dependence on and destructive relation with nature has been examined by ecological political theorists. For example, Sharon Krause diagnoses the problem of the domination of nature as emerging from an excessive exercise of power over nature, which imperils its existence and its functioning. Such a regime, Krause argues, affects poor and marginalized groups in particular, but ultimately affects us all by involving us in the degradation of the earth.[1] Alyssa Battistoni addresses the related problem of how to account for nature as part of our political relations, and criticizes the conceptualization of nature as capital, an economistic response to its past classification as a free resource.[2] Battistoni's answer is to consider nature as labor, or, rather, as an aspect of hybrid labor or work of nature understood as a "collective, distributed undertakings of humans and nonhumans acting to reproduce, regenerate, and renew a common world."[3] Jane Bennett, finally, contests an instrumentalist view of matter, which she contrasts with a vitalist and political account of ecosystems.[4] The instrumentalization of matter, she argues, feeds earth-destroying fantasies of conquest and consumption, preventing "greener forms of human culture and more attentive encounters between people-materialities and thing-materialities."[5]

[1] Sharon R. Krause, "Environmental Domination," *Political Theory* 48, no. 4 (2020).
[2] Alyssa Battistoni, "Bringing in the Work of Nature: From Natural Capital to Hybrid Labor," *Political Theory* 45, no. 1 (2017).
[3] Ibid., 6.
[4] Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 100.
[5] Ibid., x.

These approaches can be unified as attempts to grapple with the problem of alienation from nature, understood as estrangement (being cut off from something) and/or reification (the reduction of processes that involve human action to mere things).[6] Alienation prevents us from understanding ourselves as responsible in the degradation of nature, considering nature as part of political and work relations, or allowing for a less dualistic understanding of matter. Alienation from nature, in Simon Hailwood's account, follows from the reification of and estrangement from landscape, understood as nature modified, interpreted, and ultimately "appropriated" for anthropocentric purposes, a construct which other thinkers term "Land" or land.[7] If we do not recognize land or landscape as the result of social processes entwined with matter, we become estranged from it and fail to take responsibility for our participation in its creation and modification.[8] Estrangement can take a variety of forms, notably the estrangement involved in the willful misrecognition of landscape as *terra nullius*, which opened the way for colonization and Indigenous dispossession.[9] Alienation is also operative in the commodification of nature and the disregard for the impact of economic activity on landscape, which predominantly concerns Krause and Battistoni.[10] While the understanding of nature as inert matter that Bennett criticizes is not considered by Hailwood, one can think of this problem in terms of alienation as well, as entailing the disregard of the potential agentic assemblages that human and nonhuman matter form together.[11]

[6] Simon Hailwood, *Alienation and Nature in Environmental Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 16.

[7] Ibid., 86, 100. When I refer to land and nature in this paper I rely on and modify Max Liboiron's account. Hence, I refer to nature as the "fixed geographical and physical space that includes earth, rocks, and waterways" and to land, which Liboiron capitalizes, as a "place grounded in interconnected and interdependent relationships, [and] cultural positioning" that is highly contextualized. This concept is akin to Hailwood's notion of "landscape," and, in Rob Nichols's Marxist terms, to land understood as "not a material object but a mediating device" that relates humans or labor to "nature." Max Liboiron, *Pollution Is Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 300–1, Hailwood, *Alienation and Nature in Environmental Philosophy*, Robert Nichols, *Theft Is Property!: Dispossession and Critical Theory* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 76, 83.

[8] Hailwood, *Alienation and Nature in Environmental Philosophy*, 86.

[9] As Hailwood notes, building upon Axel Honneth, reification involves more than simple cognitive errors; it also entails a praxis that is distorted and atrophied. Axel Honneth, *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 22, cited in Hailwood, *Alienation and Nature in Environmental Philosophy*, 93.

[10] Hailwood, *Alienation and Nature in Environmental Philosophy*, 100–2, 19.

[11] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, 111.

The framework put forward in this book provides a constructive corrective to this literature because it points out that both the dependence on material sustenance of wealthy states and their citizens and its disavowal are racialized. In particular, this chapter complicates the question of alienation from nature by showing that it is mediated by techno-racism, thus completing the conceptualization of imperial popular sovereignty by noting its ecological consequences.

The more nuanced notion of alienation from nature that I conceptualize via Du Bois encompasses the racialized subjects who work closely with land. Race and racism, entangled with technology, organize estrangement from and reification of nature in ways that allow formally democratic collectives to satisfy their possessive attachments while disregarding the destructive effects of their wellbeing on human and nonhuman nature. Privileged subjects are alienated both from nature *and* from the racialized workers who engage with it, despite the dependence of their wealth on their twin exhaustion. This equation, moreover, forcefully alienates from nature the native peoples whose social and political structures are disrupted and redirected toward capitalist accumulation and the well-being of the privileged.

To capture these racial dynamics, it is necessary to first conceptualize more systematically how land is connected to labor, and why racialized groups align themselves or are forcefully aligned with nature and technology in particular ways. For this, before turning to Du Bois's account, I conceptualize the joint appropriation of nature and labor in the colonial world via Marx and Luxemburg.

4.2 LAND WITH LABOR

> The more a country proceeds from large-scale industry as the background of its development, as in the case of the United States, the more rapid is this process of destruction. Capitalist production, therefore, only develops the *techniques* and the degrees of *combination of the social process* of production by simultaneously undermining the *original source of all wealth*—the *soil* and the *worker*.
>
> Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. I, 638, my emphasis

Imperialist appropriation of nature only makes sense along with the appropriation of another form of energy that comes attached to seized foreign land: racialized labor. The surface of the land and the riches underground are worthless without labor. Thus, the appropriation of

the former does not make sense without the social and political relations that force the availability of the latter.[12] Marx's writings on land and its enclosure, and the recent attention given to the rift in land regeneration caused by capitalism, alert us to the displacement toward cities of workers who are free to sell their own labor (because they are neither serfs nor in possession of means of production).[13] Yet this quick turn toward the proletariat created by the enclosures and the cities that emerge around industry obscures other ramifications of private ownership of the earth, which become more salient as industrialization in the core leads to a scramble for raw materials elsewhere in the world. In the colonies, the exclusion of workers "from the very earth itself" is vital not to displace them toward industrial centers but to make sure their waged work is available to produce the raw materials required by European industry. This process chains labor to the land in order to produce rent; it amounts to a tribute for "the very right to live on the earth."[14]

The lack of access to land for the nonpropertied, in other words, permits the accumulation of land rent through the simple addition of a certain amount of unpaid labor to the soil that is now privately owned.[15] Marx's eloquent language reveals the exploitative conditions behind the commonsensical appearance of landed property and shows that nature can be conscripted into capital's project of accumulation only when subjected to the proper social relations and fully entwined with labor. Importantly, the private ownership of land and the channeling of profits toward *accumulation* upsets labor understood as a process occurring between "man" and nature, set in motion by man's own natural forces to appropriate the materials of nature to serve *human needs*.

[12] These social relations naturalize the appropriation of the surplus value extracted from the worker and depend on an absurd proposition: that earth can be owned. In particular, for Marx, the holding of land as private property, a key development in the emergence of capitalism, always operates against the background of a more rational social formation, in which subjects are mere possessors of the land, beneficiaries who have to "bequeath it in an improved state." Marx, *Capital Volume III*, 911, John Bellamy Foster, Richard York, and Brett Clark, *The Ecological Rift: Capitalism's War on the Earth* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 60.

[13] Marx, *Capital Volume I*, 874, 91.

[14] Marx, *Capital Volume III*, 908.

[15] Ibid., 914, 28.

While man's actions mediate, regulate, and control "the metabolism between himself and nature,"[16] capitalism can and does introduce an antagonistic rift in this self-directed appropriation devoted to serve human needs.[17] Differently put, the metabolism between man and nature that is constitutive of labor is shaped by the social relations that determine land ownership and labor conditions. Capitalism drastically transforms society and, in so doing, redirects the forces of men away from the appropriation of nature to serve individual and social needs and toward appropriation for accumulation. All along, capitalist agriculture progresses through "the art, not only of robbing the worker, but of robbing the soil."[18] Both worker and soil are, moreover, exhausted in the process through the extraction of labor's surplus and the land's nutrients.[19] Here Marx's language explicitly echoes and expands organic chemist Justus von Liebig's notion of "robbery agriculture," that is, processes by which soil minerals in the countryside are diverted to cities, preventing the replenishment of the soil.[20] Marx adds labor to this metabolic process, and considers its exploitation alongside that of soil exhaustion as entailing the redirection of its bodily energies – combined with nature – away from the fulfillments of its needs and toward accumulation.[21] The exhaustion of nature in

[16] Marx, *Capital Volume I*, 283. While Marx condemned the relations of personal and political domination of feudalism (which would disappear in the consciously constructed unity between humans and nature), he contrasted the close relation between producers and land prevalent in this system with the destruction of this link by capitalism. Capitalism not only creates a rift in labor–nature relations, but also hides the domination previously sanctioned by traditional systems under the myth of the "free worker." Marx, *Capital Volume III*, 911, Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts," in *Collected Works, Volume 3 Marx and Engels 1843–1844* (New York: International Publishers, 1975 [1944]), 268, Kohei Saito, *Karl Marx's Ecosocialism: Capital, Nature, and the Unfinished Critique of Political Economy* (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 43.

[17] Saito, *Karl Marx's Ecosocialism: Capital, Nature, and the Unfinished Critique of Political Economy*, 61. As Kohei Saito makes clear, starting with *The German Ideology*, Marx abandoned his earlier Feuerbachian/naturalistic account of human essence in favor of a historical account of nature, which is constantly transformed through social production, namely, the mutually constitutive action of humans and nature upon each other, ibid., 59.

[18] Marx, *Capital Volume I*, 638.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Kohei Saito, "Marx's Theory of Metabolism in the Age of Global Ecological Crisis," *Historical Materialism* 28, no. 2 (2020): 14–15, Kohei Saito, "Marx's Ecological Notebooks," *Monthly Review* 67, no. 9 (2016), Marx, *Capital Volume III*, 949.

[21] The ecosocialist literature takes this metabolic rift in the conditions of human life caused by capitalism to constitute its own "general law of environmental degradation" within the ecological realm of the law of accumulation. John Bellamy Foster and Paul Burkett, *Marx and the Earth: An Anti-Critique* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 6–7.

turn sets up barriers to its reproduction, subsequently overcome through expansion into further areas not yet deployed in the service of capitalism,[22] a process masterfully described by Rosa Luxemburg.

4.3 IMPERIALISM AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE NATURAL ECONOMY

> The demand for the highest possible profit, the quickest possible timeline, the cheapest possible operation, seems to translate eventually into the understanding … that the troublemaker must go. The blame rarely if ever makes its way back up to a corporation's HQ. But it should.… [T]he people who inhabit these places never really share in the riches produced there: colonialism is still running strong.
>
> Bill McKibben, "Climate activists are being killed for trying to save our planet. There's a way to help," *The Guardian*, September 13, 2021

Luxemburg's work on the reproduction of capitalism is helpful to conceptualize the specificities of the global rift in metabolic relation between man and nature brought about by imperialism. Luxemburg connects the health of the soil and the broader viability of ecosystems, water sources, and biodiversity to the social and political dynamics of colonized and postcolonial societies. Luxemburg's account of imperialism distinguishes between the "natural economy" and the regimes shaped by capitalist interests that emerge after its destruction. "Natural economies" are social formations that have no inclination or ability to exchange commodities due to their property structures.[23] Imperialism upends these social formations and subjects societies to capitalist logics, which alienate them from nature and from the ability to direct their engagement with nature toward communal needs. This is a twin alienation: from nature and from self-directed development, a break akin to a "political rift." This rift is caused by capitalism's expansionary hubris and need to appropriate land, including its rich resources underneath (minerals) and on the

[22] O'Connor, "Capitalism, Nature, Socialism: A Theoretical Introduction," 13–14, István Mészáros, *Beyond Capital: Toward a Theory of Transition* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 599, Saito, "Marx's Theory of Metabolism in the Age of Global Ecological Crisis," 17–20. Consider, for example, the turn to nitrate fields in Peru/Chile to regenerate exhausted European and US American soils (deposits that were eventually depleted along with the ecology of the area) and the indentured Chinese laborers conscripted into the task of extracting the natural resource. Ibid.

[23] Luxemburg, "The Accumulation of Capital: A Contribution to the Economic Theory of Imperialism," 266.

surface (pastures, forests, waterways, and livestock raised by natives), which necessarily clash with and destroy self-directed relationships with nature and societal arrangements.[24]

This framework conveys the deep interconnections of humans, political regimes, and ecosystems, as well as the frictions, tensions, and harms to these systems produced by imperialism and the capitalist drive to accumulate.[25] Moreover, judging from the vastly unequal patterns of land use between western peoples and the Global South,[26] surprisingly little seems to have changed in terms of capitalism's targets of expropriation. But re-reading Luxemburg's texts is striking because the resources she focuses on not only continue to drive capitalism's land- and resource-grab, but can also be re-cognized as leading causes of global warming and biodiversity loss via fossil fuel use, deforestation, and cattle raising.

This structure of expansion, conflict, and appropriation, for Luxemburg, makes the idea of restricting capitalism to "peaceful competition" an illusion. Despite it still being the animating assumption behind many liberal cosmopolitan accounts and the field of international political economy, Luxemburg makes clear that the drive to appropriate natural resources violently clashes with the "social bonds of the indigenous inhabitants," which Luxemburg sees as the strongest bulwark of their society and its material basis. Because the incorporation of new territories into the realm of accumulation of European capitalism threatens the very existence of native peoples, Luxemburg predicts they will resist until they are exhausted or exterminated. Capitalism's response to this resistance is the "systematic, planned destruction and annihilation of any non-capitalist social formation."[27] The need to quash resistance to the colonial appropriation of land and labor requires colonial powers to establish permanent military occupation in the colonies to repress Indigenous uprisings that constrain accumulation.[28] Via militarized

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., chapter 27, David Naguib Pellow, *What Is Critical Environmental Justice?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2017), 10.

[26] Yang Yu, Kuishuang Feng, and Klaus Hubacek, "Tele-Connecting Local Consumption to Global Land Use," *Global Environmental Change* 23, no. 5 (2013), James Rice, "Ecological Unequal Exchange: Consumption, Equity, and Unsustainable Structural Relationships within the Global Economy," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 48, no. 1 (2007).

[27] Luxemburg, "The Accumulation of Capital: A Contribution to the Economic Theory of Imperialism," 267.

[28] Ibid. Such conflict is today clearest among Indigenous and environmental activists around the world, their lives threatened by the paramilitary squads of governments

colonial rule, capitalist accumulation can appropriate foreign productive forces, after forcefully integrating native property structures into the global markets for commodity exchange. This turn also redirects societies' organization for subsistence toward exchange, including through the creation of nonsubsistence consumption satisfied by international trade. Therefore, these processes – in contrast with older forms of trade – entail a radical transformation of societies that cannot proceed without the deployment of force to expand the sphere of accumulation.[29]

Luxemburg anticipates contemporary conceptualizations of the colonial attitude toward nature, that is, "the ruthless exploitation of natural resources and the arbitrary transformation of the environment without regard for regional traditions and experiences."[30] Luxemburg, moreover, centers political and social struggles as important determinants of the particular forms of capitalist use and abuse of nature and labor.[31] Indeed, her work highlights the intensity of capitalist exploitation, and the speed with which imperial capitalism radically transforms noncapitalist societies in order to integrate them into its conduits of accumulation: "In its drive to appropriate these productive forces for the purposes of exploitation, capital ransacks the whole planet, procuring means of production from every crevice of the Earth, snatching up or acquiring them from civilizations of all stages and all forms of society."[32]

and corporations. Global Witness, "How Many More? 2014's Deadly Environment: The Killing and Intimidation of Environmental and Land Activists" (London: Global Witness, 2015), Nina Lakhani, "Indigenous Environmental Defender Killed in Latest Honduras Attack," *The Guardian*, December 29, 2020, Nina Lakhani, "Berta Cáceres Assassination: Ex-Head of Dam Company Found Guilty," *The Guardian*, July 5, 2021.

[29] Luxemburg, "The Accumulation of Capital: A Contribution to the Economic Theory of Imperialism," 267, 339. Notwithstanding the importance of colonial violence, it is worth noting that "peaceful" exchange also leads to vast transformations when local elites are coopted into these projects and the violence is displaced downstream. This is the case with developmental authoritarianisms in the Cold War period, some of which were beneficiaries of benign imperialism, such as South Korea or Turkey. Begüm Adalet's recent account of the operation of modernization theory in Turkey is a good example of the intellectual and bureaucratic concerns that animated Turkey's integration into the global economy. While not concerned with nature or climate as such, Adalet's focus on hotels and highways further illustrates the extent to which modernization theory and practice was a colonial climate project as much as a particular school of developmentalism. Begüm Adalet, *Hotels and Highways: The Construction of Modernization Theory in Cold War Turkey* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2018).

[30] Radkau, 153.

[31] See also O'Connor, "Capitalism, Nature, Socialism: A Theoretical Introduction," 25.

[32] Luxemburg, "The Accumulation of Capital: A Contribution to the Economic Theory of Imperialism," 258.

This voraciousness is both about spatial reach ("every crevice," "all stages and all forms of society") and speed. Regarding the latter, Luxemburg argues that for capital to await the disintegration of the non-capitalist social formations that possess the minerals and lands that it covets "would be tantamount to forgoing the productive forces of these territories altogether."[33] A parallel taste for speed and intensity characterizes capitalism's refusal to "wait for the natural increase in the working population" when it requires labor in excess of that available in Europe.[34] Capitalism, in other words, always opts for the method that is most expedient (in terms of both rapidity and intensity, and thus profitability), regardless of the violence and destruction that it entails.[35]

Yet Luxemburg's account falls short of theorizing what is behind the belligerence with which capitalism attacks peripheral societies. When she addresses this point, Luxemburg suggests that "the precapitalist soil of more primitive social relations" is particularly fertile for "develop[ing] such a power of command over the material and human forces of production" and for conjuring amazing transformations in brief periods of time.[36] While she is aware of the role of "myth" in facilitating many of these transformations,[37] her framework does not develop further how ideologies of white superiority make these distant lands populated by nonwhite subjects the target of a particularly destructive exploitation of human and nonhuman nature. She does not, in other words, consider how race intersects with the imperial exploitation of nature and destruction of social relations she describes, i.e., how racialization results in capitalist accumulation.

4.4 NATURE, TECHNOLOGY, AND RACIAL OPPRESSION

Du Bois's essays on development and imperialism are indebted to the writings of Marx and Luxemburg on land and imperialism, but he substantively amends their frameworks by incorporating race and technology into the analysis. Du Bois makes two diagnostic and two critical normative points. Diagnostically, Du Bois first argues that the intensification of racism follows western technological needs, turning upside down then-prevalent techno-racist claims that equated whiteness to the ability

[33] Ibid., 266.
[34] Ibid., 267.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid., 258.
[37] Ibid., 269, 72.

to devise technological objects and operate them.[38] Second, Du Bois contests the inferior place given to manual labor by this ordering. On the critical side, Du Bois first contests the desirability of speedy "development" and integration into the global economy. Second, Du Bois claims that the technological mindset is a poor standard by which to measure the progress of humanity.

Technology and Race

Du Bois intervened in an intellectual arena that coupled racial and technological superiority. In the nineteenth century, accounts of science and mastery of nature and scientific racism had proceeded separately, but by the end of that century they converged to tie racial superiority to the belief in the greater ability of westerners to develop technology and regimes of social cooperation that positioned them above nature.[39] This convergence connected Baconian ideas of control over nature with modified accounts of Darwin's theory of evolution and/or Alfred Wallace's evolutionary account to argue that the white race's scientific achievements were evidence of its superior morality and intellect, which allowed it to dominate and displace the "lower and more degraded [races]."[40] These beliefs have affinities to long-standing accounts of the separation of physical labor and intellectual/political work dating back to ancient Athens that even Luxemburg accepted without much skepticism.[41] When joined with technology and race, however, accounts that posited that human progress depended on science and the mastery of nature also marked nonwhite races as incapable of advancing.[42] The global division of labor completed in the nineteenth century, which turned Europe into a "pre-eminently industrial field" and converted the other part of the globe into a "chiefly agricultural field for supplying the other part,"[43]

[38] Andreas Malm and the Zetkin Collective, *White Skin, Black Fuel: On the Dangers of Fossil Fascism* (London: Verso, 2021), 442.

[39] Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 310–11.

[40] Ibid., 23, 311, Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990), 192–93, 288.

[41] Jane Anna Gordon, "A Political Economy of the Damned: Reading Rosa Luxemburg on Slavery through a Creolizing Lens," in *Creolizing Rosa Luxemburg*, ed. Jane Anna Gordon and Drucilla Cornell (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021), 125.

[42] Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance*, 23, 297, 312, 14–18.

[43] Marx, *Capital Volume I*, 579–80.

facilitated these racial beliefs. Du Bois saw this division as not simply about the kinds of labor performed, but about race:

> The interesting thing about modern commercial organizations is that white Europe and white America have organized industry and commerce so as to employ *raw materials* from colored countries and colored labor for the raising of these materials. The low wages of these workers and the high selling price of *manufactured* articles represent the immense profit which modern civilization is making at the expense of colored folk.[44]

This global division of labor and its racialization alienated raw materials/nature from technology, identifying the modern west with the latter and disavowing that the "deep base of technological progress" was biophysical resources.[45] Here Du Bois's account anticipates critiques of alienating views of nature as an input to the productive process, that is, "a passive set of assets to be scientifically assessed, used and valued in commercial (money) terms."[46] When nature is quantified and explicated in mathematical terms, scientific narratives separate reality from normative ends and make the exploitation of both nature and humans a scientific and rational affair.[47] Yet references to "nature" and "humans" incorrectly specify that it is particular portions of nature and the treatment of certain humans that are more systematically detached from normative ends. This is facilitated by the equivalence between whiteness and technology, an equivalence facilitated by the re-mapping of the world through the industrialization of Europe and the global division of labor it necessitated, which attached the fetish of the machine to the white race.[48] By the end of the nineteenth century, the estrangement from the natural basis of western modernity and its disavowed reliance on the destruction of social

[44] W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Story of Cocoa," *The New York Amsterdam News*, September 9, 1931, 8, my emphasis.

[45] Malm and the Zetkin Collective, *White Skin, Black Fuel: On the Dangers of Fossil Fascism*, 443.

[46] David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Malden: Blackwell, 1996), 131, Peter F. Cannavò, *The Working Landscape: Founding, Preservation, and the Politics of Place* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 6.

[47] Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 163.

[48] Malm and the Zetkin Collective, *White Skin, Black Fuel: On the Dangers of Fossil Fascism*, 443. See the work of Paul Cicantell and David Smith, who show that contemporary research on global commodity chains continue this trend, by forgetting that natural resources constitute the "'beginning' of the chain." Paul Ciccantell and David A. Smith, "Rethinking Global Commodity Chains: Integrating Extraction, Transport, and Manufacturing," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 50, no. 3–4 (2009): 362.

and political structures in the racialized periphery was complete, and Du Bois saw it as such:

> [I]n the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Color Line was drawn as at least a partial substitute for [social hierarchy in Europe]. Granting that all white men were born free and equal, was it not manifest—ostensibly after Gobineau and Darwin, but in reality after James Watt, Eli Whitney, Warren Hastings and Cecil Rhodes—that Africans and Asiatics were born slaves, serfs or inferiors? The real necessity of this fantastic rationalization was supplied by the demands of modern colonial imperialism.[49]

Thus, while conventional wisdom indicated that the inferiority of nonwhites was dictated by the scientific racism of Gobineau and neo-Darwinian theories of natural selection, which provided legitimate grounds to subject nonwhites even after social hierarchy among whites was waning, Du Bois suggests otherwise. For him, technological change and the drive to feed machines with raw materials explained racism as well as the political subjection entailed by empire. Du Bois posits the steam engine (Watt) and the cotton gin (Whitney) – which respectively allowed for the more efficient operation of coal-fueled machinery and vast productivity increases in the mechanized separation of cotton fibers from their seeds – as what requires racist ideologies, which facilitate a stronger political hold over the colonies (Hastings) to allow capital to secure the raw materials that its machinery requires (Rhodes).[50] Thus, Du Bois reveals that the identification of the west with scientific and technological superiority, which provides legitimacy for its political dominion, omits that technology would simply not *be* without the ability to appropriate cheap racialized labor alongside land and raw materials, which were the main attractions Africa offered to an increasingly technologized west. In this regard, Du Bois's singled out Germany, whose demand for raw materials such as "vegetable oils, fibres and foods from Africa in equal terms," he argued, became its main motivation to enter the First World War.[51]

The geographical spread of imperialism and the appropriation of land and labor abroad was itself the result of technological change. The introduction and expansion of machinery and the relative exhaustion of

[49] W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Realities in Africa: European Profit or Negro Development?," *Foreign Affairs* 21, no. 4 (1942): 725.

[50] Coal-fueled machinery included warships. See the excellent discussion of the steam engine and colonial wars in Malm and the Zetkin Collective, *White Skin, Black Fuel: On the Dangers of Fossil Fascism*, 343–63.

[51] Du Bois, "The Realities in Africa: European Profit or Negro Development?," 729.

natural resources in Europe, as well as the limited domestic demand for products, started to confine the growth of "large-scale industry."[52] These barriers were and are eliminated by developing and deploying technology to overcome natural limitations and by conscripting the subjects and lands of the colonial world, where natives and settlers alike labor in "fields for the production of [Europe's] raw materials," whose supply is also increased by technology (e.g., cotton and the cotton gin).[53]

The rift in the regenerative metabolism of nature, then, is magnified by a technology-enabled temporal rift between natural time and capital's time, that is, the inability of natural processes of soil renewal and forest culture to keep up with the continuous acceleration of capitalism's turnover time.[54] The geographic division of labor between town and country, first, and then between Europe and the rest of the world adds a spatial dimension to this rift, because the soil's nutrients are transported away from the countryside, or even the countries of origin, preventing the natural cycle of regeneration that otherwise returns nutrients to the soil.[55] It is important to note the twofold work of technology in creating the temporal and spatial rifts in nature's metabolism, respectively. First, technological advancement shifts the production and labor profile of European countries toward manufacturing, requiring industry and workers to be supplied with raw materials and nourishment, respectively, that depend on the conscription of racialized labor and nature from abroad. Second, by developing scientific tools to overcome the limits to accumulation set by nature (through the cotton gin, fertilizers, and industrial modes of cattle raising and feeding, among other technological fixes), technology accelerates the pace at which capitalist production and accumulation demand foreign raw materials and the labor that can extract them.

The increasingly tight mapping of technology onto Europe and of nature onto the periphery creates the conditions of possibility for Europeans' estrangement from nature as an essential component of their well-being and a disavowal of responsibility for the destructive effects of the extraction of raw materials, whose speed is magnified by technology.

[52] Marx, *Capital Volume I*, 579.

[53] Ibid., 579, 758, Saito, *Karl Marx's Ecosocialism: Capital, Nature, and the Unfinished Critique of Political Economy*, 78.

[54] Saito, "Marx's Theory of Metabolism in the Age of Global Ecological Crisis," 16–20.

[55] Here I follow Kohei Saito's development of the three dimensions of the metabolic rift, though I see the spatial and temporal dimensions of the rift as not separable, but as factors that contribute to its first dimension, i.e., the rift in the metabolic cycle of nature, ibid., 14–17.

Racial hierarchy magnifies this estrangement, moreover, fastening the identification between whiteness and technology. The accumulation of wealth by the metropole, however, is not due to technology, as Du Bois makes clear:

> Coal gave England during the nineteenth century an immense industrial advantage. She trained her working classes and became a manufacturer of iron, steel, cotton and woolen goods and other commodities on a world scale. She sold these all over the world to pay for the food and raw material which she imported. But imports were cheap, because they were raised largely by primitive, undeveloped countries, with low wages and slave labor; and goods were dear because England set the price according to her skill and wants, and she wanted wealth and leisure.[56]

England accumulated wealth through, first, an advantage built upon a *natural* resource: coal.[57] This advantage (in industry and warfare) made possible colonial domination which allowed for "low wages and slave labor," which depended, in turn, on *political* dominion, that is, the control of supply and the arbitrary setting of prices of manufactured goods to fulfill England's *normative* account of the good society, one that catered to wealth and leisure for the privileged. Du Bois finds this reactionary program still active in "sinister" 1940s narratives about Africa in the United States, which emphasize "'free access to raw materials' and partitioning of Africa among white owner nations" without explanation to natives.[58] Here the lack of concern for natives, which opens the way for capitalist accumulation, depends on the successful construction of racial hierarchy – that is, racialization – meaning that as capital is accumulated, so is whiteness and its other.[59] In this sense, imperialism is a "race-making project."[60] To the extent that this structure depends on any particular "skill," it is the skillful application of violence, which facilitates the monopoly of "finance, capital and technique" that allows imperial countries to set wages and prices, which Du Bois contrasts to the

[56] W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Crisis in England," *The New York Amsterdam News*, September 2, 1931.

[57] See also Malm and the Zetkin Collective, *White Skin, Black Fuel: On the Dangers of Fossil Fascism*, 343–63.

[58] W. E. B. Du Bois, "Silence on Africa," *The New York Amsterdam News*, July 8, 1942, 6, The Committee on Africa the War and Peace Aims, "The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint" (New York: 1942), 102.

[59] Siddhant Issar, Rachel H. Brown, and John McMahon, "Rosa Luxemburg and the Primitive Accumulation of Whiteness," in *Creolizing Rosa Luxemburg*, ed. Jane Anna Gordon and Drucilla Cornell (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021).

[60] Ibid., 350. See also Sylvia Federici's account of accumulation through difference and hierarchy: Federici, Caliban and the Witch, 63–64.

wiser program of making property common and educating "all classes and nations in modern technique."[61]

With this framework in mind, it is possible to re-read the extreme violence of imperialism as having to do with the geographic partition of the world and the organization of human mobility with the goal of accomplishing the right combination of labor and nature to maximize profit unhindered by moral qualms and local political projects, which would have continued or emerged in the absence of hierarchical racial ideologies and colonial political control, respectively. Racial ideologies, in Du Bois's terms, were designed to "ease [the] consciences and increase [the] incomes" of those who championed them.[62] Thus, the slave trade was deemed an appropriate solution to solve the labor scarcity produced by the genocide and dispossession of Indigenous peoples in conquered lands in the American continent.[63] Indentured servitude was seen as a similar solution after the abolition of slavery in the British Empire; this involved the transportation of Indian and Chinese labor to plantations, mines, and railroad-building sites to set up the transport of raw materials extracted from overseas. Throughout this period, European migrants circulated and settled around the nonEuropean world alongside these racialized groups but accessed vastly different conditions owing to their heterogeneous but nonetheless credible claim to whiteness (Chapter 2). The late nineteenth-century "scramble for Africa," yet again, secured control of both land and labor, this time in African territory.[64] While Indian and Chinese indentured labor was transported to several regions of Africa, a host of other measures, including land enclosure, taxation, and force, was used to ensure that native African labor abandoned subsistence activities and made itself available to work the land, whose surface or undersoil would be exploited by colonial powers in monopolistic conditions.[65]

[61] W. E. B. Du Bois, "As the Crow Flies," *The New York Amsterdam News*, November 15, 1941, 15.

[62] W. E. B. Du Bois, "As the Crow Flies," *The New York Amsterdam News*, August 15, 1942, 6.

[63] This required, as Anna More explains, an exception to natural law that authorized the death of a population defined by race and geography. Anna More, "Necroeconomics, Originary Accumulation, and Racial Capitalism in the Early Iberian Slave Trade," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 19, no. 2 (2019): 68.

[64] W. E. B. Du Bois, "Worlds of Color," *Foreign Affairs* 3, no. 3 (1925): 434.

[65] W. E. B. Du Bois, "Liberia and Rubber," *The New Republic* 44, no. 572 (1925): 328, Du Bois, "The Realities in Africa: European Profit or Negro Development?," 723, W. E. B. Du Bois, "A Cup of Cocoa and Chocolate Drops," *W. E. B. Du Bois Papers – Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries* MS 312 (1946): 2, 3. See also Marx, *Capital Volume I*, 48, Luxemburg, "The Accumulation

This means that the rift in the relationship between natives and land, through their forced conscription into the production of raw materials for the benefit of colonial powers, is central to the "irreparable rift" in the natural and social metabolism that Marx associates with the separation of nutrients from the soil and their transport "far beyond the bounds of a single country."[66] The rift, and the wealth produced thereby, does not result from technology, but from politics, that is, the coercion involved in the colonial control of nature and labor and the monopolistic conditions of both the extraction and sale of manufactures. This means that the project of African development, in combination with free trade considered during the brief interlude between abolition and territorial colonialism, could not possibly produce the drastic societal transformations required for accumulation.[67] This explains the quick transition toward imperialism, with the support of abolitionists – who saw colonial power as necessary to stop the slave trade and abolish slavery – and English capital, which "saw that transporting material could be made to pay better than transporting black men."[68]

Du Bois is keenly attentive to how nature and labor are jointly required to cheaply and quickly extract raw materials from the land and sell them dearly.[69] Free trade on its own does not provide the needed societal control to expropriate the land, and land expropriation does not deliver rent without human labor, which must be tied to the land and forced to work beyond what is required to satisfy its own needs.[70] The capture of both nature and racialized labor and their intensified exploitation creates a political rift that destroys local political projects, which would have otherwise kept these societies away from the pliant and accelerated provision of raw materials for European machinery. This political alienation, which serves to make nature available for western societies, moreover, coexists with the alienation from nature in the core, that is, the belief

of Capital: A Contribution to the Economic Theory of Imperialism," 261. The rationale of these measures can be seen in South African colonists' concerns about the low propensity to work by African natives and the need for taxes and the civilizing influences of industrial education to overcome this problem. Imperial South African Association, *The Chinese Labor Question: Handy Notes*, 5.

[66] Saito, "Marx's Theory of Metabolism in the Age of Global Ecological Crisis," 15, Marx, *Capital Volume III*, 949.

[67] Du Bois, "The Realities in Africa: European Profit or Negro Development?," 722.

[68] Du Bois, "Worlds of Color," 434, Du Bois, "The Realities in Africa: European Profit or Negro Development?," 722. See also Du Bois, "The Crisis in England," 8.

[69] Du Bois, "The Realities in Africa: European Profit or Negro Development?," 723, 29.

[70] Marx, *Capital Volume III*, 928.

that that these societies have overcome their dependence on nature, a step facilitated by the mythical identification of whiteness with technology.

Soil, Sweat, and Status

Du Bois's insistence in putting nature at the center of his critique of imperialism counters the avowed separation between nature and a technologized modernity. This separation is accomplished through geographical spread and the racial division of labor domestically and worldwide proper of racial capitalism. Racial hierarchy, and the reification of wealth as a moral accomplishment that marks western civilization as separate from and superior to others, obscures the fact that the metropole remains intrinsically dependent on nature.

Central to Du Bois's project of highlighting this dependence is his recasting of "humble work," the manual toil performed in proximity with nature, as the core of "modern marvels," in opposition to prevailing devalued accounts of this labor as dirty work fit only for racialized workers. Du Bois makes this argument in a series of columns in the *New York Amsterdam News* that counter the "economic illiteracy" that underlies the devaluation of manual labor. He proposes an "honest and intelligent" framework of property as a social creation to consider the value of work and wages.[71] He acknowledges the diversity of tasks involved in production, noting that some work is of inestimable value, while the contribution of other forms of work is very small, only to turn upside down the common values assigned to each of the steps. Thus, the work he considers most valuable includes "mothers in a household," employers in "science and geography," and "most of the work of most artists." He similarly asserts that some profitable work is evil, like stock market gambling on "land values … and much of the profit in the distribution of food and raw materials."[72] An elimination of the profit motive, he argues, would mean "more valuable work and work better paid."[73] Such a world would provide an alternative way of distributing "toil and wealth and enjoyment," which, rather than apportioning labor as has long been the norm, would acknowledge that most "wealth, most well-being, depends

[71] W. E. B. Du Bois, "Economic Illiteracy," *The New York Amsterdam News*, May 30, 1942, 6.

[72] W. E. B. Du Bois, "Economic Illiteracy, Dangerous Half-Truths, and Value of the Product," *The New York Amsterdam News*, June 6, 1942, 6. Du Bois wrongly asserts, however, that the work of mothers yields no profit for employers.

[73] Ibid.

on labor and sacrifice."[74] The products we enjoy, he argues, emerge from an intricate cooperative process, where engineers who plan the machines that are built out of metal depend both on the "miners [who] dug the metals," the "teachers [who] taught the engineers," and the laborers who raised food to feed those workers who "made the road bed" for the railways which transported these materials.[75]

The badly paid tasks within the production chain are seldom acknowledged, not because of manufacturing's essential or self-sufficient character, but because racial prejudice organizes the vastly unequal distribution of wealth and care attached to different groups of laborers and variously located nature. Thus, although industry and the capitalist system were built "on the backs of Negro slaves," and manual toil is inescapable for modern life and its marvels, manual labor is badly paid and disrespected and its contribution to modernity mostly ignored through its construction as backward and too close to nature.[76] Here Du Bois re-politicizes wages, and, more generally, value, as a problem of political judgement within the economy.[77] Rather than accepting the strict separation between economic and normative value judgments, he unveils the thick background social formations that determine economic value. By questioning the devaluation of manual labor and the disproportionate wealth that accrues to investors and highly skilled work, Du Bois reveals that economic determinations are always value-ridden, that there is no objective, rational rule that distributes resources. Instead, there is a political determination to elevate the judgment of a few, whose wealth and leisure depends on the domination of poorly remunerated workers and extracted natural resources from abroad, to the level of objective economic law.[78]

This account by Du Bois reverses the racist logic by showing that racism naturalizes the exploitation on nonwhite workers; he uncovers the performative contradiction of basing technological prowess and wealth on forced labor and nature while allocating these inputs the lowest value. Two distinct debates about the labor imports of nonwhite

[74] W. E. B. Du Bois, "Work and Wealth," *The New York Amsterdam News*, September 12, 1942, 6, W. E. B. Du Bois, "Income Again," *The New York Amsterdam News*, September 5, 1942, 6.

[75] Du Bois, "Work and Wealth," 6.

[76] W. E. B. Du Bois, "Humble Work," *New York Amsterdam News*, September 21, 1940, 10.

[77] See also Samuel Chambers's argument about the misguided separation between the realm of "the economy" and that of value. Samuel Chambers, *There's No Such Thing as" the Economy": Essays on Capitalist Value* (Goleta: Punctum Books, 2018), 47–48, 63–64.

[78] Du Bois, "The Crisis in England."

populations in South Africa and the United States, respectively, show the prevalence of this logic: the parallel work of acknowledgment and disavowal of the centrality to modern commerce needed to devalue work performed under strenuous conditions by racialized subjects and in close contact with nature.

Documents from the colonial administration of post–Boer War South Africa record a variety of rationalizations of the differential ability of whites and nonwhites to perform different types of work. For example, an analysis of an unusual experiment with white labor in unskilled mining work claims that "white labourers cannot successfully compete with blacks in the lower fields of manual industry," because their wages are simply uneconomical for particular jobs and that these laborers are anyway "unwilling to do more 'dirty work'."[79] If mining in South Africa attempts to fill unskilled positions with white workers, the argument continues, "it would mean the cessation of profitable work in most of the mines of the Witwatersrand."[80] Reliance on white labor would mean leaving undone the most bodily strenuous activities that white workers refused to perform, such as the sorting of rocks and breaking rocks manually rather than by drilling.[81] The need to limit "white labour to the performance of skilled work" traditionally associated with detachment from nature and the machinery-led processing of minerals follows from their "insuperable objection … to put forth his best endeavours as a wage earner by manual labour in the presence of a black man," a trait common to the "southern States of America."[82] This racialized organization of labor is taken to be traditional custom in South Africa, where labor is strictly distributed between "the sphere of the white man and that … of the native," to which Chinese imported labor is assimilated.[83]

The differential assignment of value and rewards is implicit in the economic impossibility of enlisting white labor, understood as neither

[79] Transvaal Labour Commission, "Memorandum on the Evidence with Regard to the Employment of White Unskilled Labor in the Mines Given to the Transvaal Labour Commission," *British Library Add/MS/88906/22/1* February (1904): 2–3.

[80] Ibid., 6. The Witwatersrand, or the Rand, is the location of large gold reserves in South Africa.

[81] Ibid., 3.

[82] Ibid., 36–37.

[83] Lord Selborne (High Commissioner for South Africa), "Memorandum to Alfred Lyttelton (Secretary of State for the Colonies)," *British Library, Add MS 88906/22/12* October 7 (1905): 1–2.

affordable nor exploitable enough to fit the cost requirements of mining.[84] This economic assessment presumes that racialized workers can be gotten for cheap, for "climatic and physical reasons." The claim, moreover, is that Chinese workers' performance of the *unskilled* labor "which white men could not do" provides the "necessary basis for white man's labour – *skilled* labour."[85] Thus, racialized labor emerges as essential, the *sine qua non* of both white labor and – as noted later – commercial riches, a conclusion that is both in tension with and dependent on its economic devaluation and violent treatment. Such treatment is assured by minority rule over a native majority, which in turn requires maintaining the status and prestige of white workers in the eyes of African natives.[86] Racism is a central mediating mechanism in a circular logic in which the priority of accumulation requires the construction of a population at once endowed with hyper-resistant bodies and the ability to live at or below subsistence levels to get production off the ground. The work of processing and manufacturing made possible by the hyper-exploited group, in turn, is performed by white workers, whose dignity and higher standards of living prevent them from engaging in strenuous jobs.[87] These divisions are enabled by a political regime that sanctions racial hierarchies and authorizes the hyper-exploitation that *makes possible* the further processing of raw materials – by dignified white workers – and the industrial machinery that depends on these resources.

In other words, however "natural" this division of labor appears, its operation requires violent coercion sustained by white rule, whose stability must be ensured partly by rigidly excluding white workers from undignified work and nonwhite workers from skilled professions or the territory altogether.[88] Through these and other measures, "brain toil" is kept as "the province of the white," while "brawn or spade work that of the black or some coloured race," a necessity for the "salvation of

[84] Walter Rodney reaches a similar conclusion though critiquing the racial oppression entailed in the arrangement rather than presuming it as natural. He argues that Black South African workers in South Rhodesia "recovered gold from deposits which elsewhere would be regarded as noncommercial." Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (New York: Black Classic Press, 2012 [1972]), 179.

[85] Imperial South African Association, *The Chinese Labor Question: Handy Notes*, 4, 7.

[86] Ibid., 7–8.

[87] These lower wages cannot match the "higher scale of civilisation and standard of living" of whites, let alone "the greater dignity of the higher race." Reed, *The Gold Fields of South Africa*, 9.

[88] Consonant with this priority, proponents of Chinese labor imports are adamant that their plan involves the strict prohibition on entry of Chinese workers into skilled profession, as well as the repatriation of workers after a period. Imperial South African Association, *The Chinese Labor Question: Handy Notes*, 8–9.

South Africa" as a white settler colony.[89] Thus the manual and strenuous work of nonwhites (African natives and Chinese alike) sustain the skilled employment and dignity of whites, but also continues to feed technologically enabled manufacturing in England.[90] In fact, the Transvaal mining industry was considered "vast[ly] importan[t]" to the mother country by the vice president of the Manchester Geographic Society, J. Howard Reed. This is because the demand for foodstuffs, clothing, and general stores by the "populous hive of busy workers – white, black, and yellow – employed in the mines," but also for the "large quantities of machinery and continuous supply of stores" for the mining industry.[91] Reed concludes that if the progress of the mining industry were to be interrupted, it would "cause a baneful disturbance of our commercial life."[92] Hence, the mining industry, which gets off the ground through racialized exploited labor, enable more comfortable jobs for white workers in South Africa and also realizes commercial gains for producers of foodstuff and machinery.

A similar paradoxical combination of devaluation and need for nonwhite labor appears in the 1920 US congressional debate on waiving the entry tax for illiterate Mexican labor to address farm labor scarcity (attributed to the emigration of Black farmworkers toward cities). Proponents highlight the superior adaptability of Mexican peons to the strenuous tasks of "prepar[ing] [the land] for the plow" by grubbing from the roots a "scrubby growth of timber" and harvesting cotton.[93] Texas congressmen argued that the Mexican laborer is "specially fitted for the burdensome task of bending his back to picking the cotton and the burdensome task of grubbing the fields," labor that is beneath the "raised dignity of the [white] laborer."[94] In addition to highlighting the higher efficiency of Mexican laborers at this task, proponents stress that the technologically enabled processing of the cotton fiber cannot proceed without securing enough labor at the lower wages that illiterate Mexicans are paid.[95] Texas Congressman Carlos Bee predicts that up to half of the cotton crop that contributes to the "material prosperity of this country will lie rotting in the field" without the Mexican labor to

[89] Ibid., 8.
[90] Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 179–80.
[91] Reed, *The Gold Fields of South Africa*, 7.
[92] Ibid.
[93] U.S. Congress, *Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization on H. J. Res. 271 Relating to the Temporary Admission of Illiterate Mexican Laborers*, 4.
[94] Ibid., 19–20.
[95] Ibid., 4–6.

pick it.[96] Thus, Mexican labor is the single, essential, initiating step for prosperity, even though the laborers themselves are devalued. In fact, there is no disagreement between proponents and opponents of this measure regarding the undesirability of Mexican peons as citizens; proponents assured their peers that about 80 percent of migrant laborers will return to Mexico, not least because of the biology and adaptability to climate of "the Mexican," who is a "hot-weather plant" that avoids the cold and returns to his tropical climate when he is done with his labor.[97]

These vignettes show that Du Bois's writings on manual work capture a widespread narrative that both acknowledges and obscures its centrality to technology and commercial wealth, and further shows that the securing of this labor depends on coercive white rule. Given these constructions, Du Bois is not surprised that everyone seeks frantically to escape the burdens of manual toil, but responds by turning upside down the devaluation of manual labor. He argues that this labor, alongside nature and the raw materials produced by the combination of both, supports the entire edifice of industry, an arrangement that only an entrenched racialized hierarchy can obscure.[98] That labor can be procured to work in contact with nature more intensively and for lesser pay is a consequence of coercive social and political forms. Thus, the burdensome character of manual toil and its meager pay is by no means a logical necessity: "higher labor costs and less docile labor might have forced a *less spectacular but more humane development*."[99]

Speed, Ecology, and Development Critique

Du Bois's nod toward "less spectacular but more humane development" is an example of his advocacy for slower but more sustainable change in the colonial world. He writes in 1946 that the Gold Coast could have become a wealthy community of peasant farmers engaged in the production *and* processing of raw materials. Gradually, Du Bois argues, this country could have achieved autonomous status within the Commonwealth, like Australia or South Africa did as providers of wool

[96] Ibid., 19.
[97] Ibid., 3–4, 18.
[98] Walter Rodney puts this succinctly: "Wealth has to be produced out of nature—from tilling the land or mining metals or felling trees or turning raw materials into finished products for human consumption … things done by the vast majority of the population who are peasants and workers," Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 23.
[99] Du Bois, "Humble Work," 10. My emphasis.

and minerals, respectively.[100] But because the Gold Coast was not a "white colony," instead of such "swift and direct" development, every penny was extracted from the farmers and they were denied participation in government. Racialization and racism here allowed for a more intense exploitation of labor and nature, the curtailment of the development of manufactures associated with extracted crops, and for the denial of native subjects' political voice, all factors contributing to capitalist accumulation.[101]

Du Bois connects the more ruthless exploitation of colonial areas to the lack of interest in the conditions of these regions in the metropole. This, he notes, is not necessarily "conscious discrimination based on race" but sheer disinterest, which allowed for exploitation in the service of selfishness to proceed.[102] Development discourse conceals these actions by claiming to operate on behalf of natives, but the practices are one-sided: while the west relies on colonial areas such as the West Indies for "vital necessities as rubber, hemp, quinine and palm oil," it does not try "good wages, civilized conditions or work, and democratic forms of government."[103]

These statements contain a normative critique of the colonial integration into the global capitalist economy and capitalist development as a whole. Regarding the former, it contains Du Bois's account of colonial alienation or "political rift," that is, the political re-redirection of raw materials and racialized labor away from local needs and desires and toward accumulation, that is, the estrangement of natives from relations with nature that could fulfill community goals while regenerating nature. Against the ruthless exploitation of land and labor which politically reorganizes colonies "for business," Du Bois advocates gradual development in Africa through the recognition of native ownership of "land and natural resources," and development based on fair taxation over higher local wages.[104] His 1925 essay on Liberia and the rubber trade expands on these points. Liberia's troubles, he argues, are not about climate, scarcity of skilled labor, transportation, or markets – even though these factors pose challenges. Instead, the problem is that "world public opinion" will not let a small country "develop simply and slowly," not if it can produce

[100] Du Bois, "A Cup of Cocoa and Chocolate Drops," 2.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Du Bois, "As the Crow Flies," 6.
[104] Du Bois, "The Realities in Africa: European Profit or Negro Development?," 732. See also Du Bois, "The Crisis in England," 8.

large quantities of world commodities, such as "palm oil, rubber, coffee, sugar [and] piassava," in high demand in world markets. Western desire for raw materials drives small countries such as Liberia to produce these crops "quickly and cheaply," and makes foreign interference fair game if these products are not forthcoming.[105]

Thus, Du Bois identifies the speed and intensity of capitalist development as sources of harm and dehumanization. These features, moreover, produce a political rift that alienates native peoples from alternative social and political forms that could be pursued in the absence of their forceful integration into the global economy. Were it not for the accelerated capitalist extraction typical of empire, countries would also not be inserted into networks of trade and would not demand "modern comforts" before they were ready to afford them.[106] This dual process forces these countries "into the turbulent currents of world commerce" from without and within.[107]

The alienation from domestic collective goals imposed by imperial relations that is proper of the political rift reappears in Du Bois's comments on United States–Mexico relations. In 1940, he argues that Mexican soil, oil, and minerals were "filched" at an enormous profit by the United States, an exploitative exchange that was only slowed down by the revolution, which educated and provided land to "peons."[108] The revolutionary transformations that Du Bois highlights are congruent with his social understanding of property; they are tied as well to his vision of development as slower and more rational, guided by free peoples.[109] Du Bois is after an understanding of property where owners are responsible to the social good: "It is not, of course, easy to think of this Social Public as the real owner and spender; but unless we become socialized we cannot become human; and unless we become human we cannot end war."[110]

[105] Du Bois, "Liberia and Rubber," 328.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid. Du Bois here follows quite closely Luxemburg's account of capital accumulation through the dominion of natural resources and labor power of pre-capitalist societies and the incorporation of noncapitalist purchasers of surplus value. Luxemburg, "The Accumulation of Capital: A Contribution to the Economic Theory of Imperialism," 263.
[108] W. E. B. Du Bois, "Mexico and Us," *New York Amsterdam News*, September 21, 1940, 1, 10.
[109] W. E. B. Du Bois, "Economic Illiteracy and a Social Obligation," *The New York Amsterdam News*, June 20, 1942, 6, Du Bois, "The Crisis in England," 8.
[110] Du Bois, "Economic Illiteracy and a Social Obligation," 6.

Violence and imperial war, in other words, result from a racial capitalist system where private property rules and racial difference are leveraged to expand imperial domains and over-exploit nonwhite labor and nature, regardless of its social effects. The imperialist pursuit of territory, cheap racialized labor, and raw materials that feeds racial capitalism both covets these goods and declares them objectively worthless compared to the technological societies they feed. This alienation from nature in wealthy countries results in the forceful alienation of colonial peoples, whose societal arrangements are turned into regimes that guarantee accelerated development through intensified exploitation of human and nonhuman nature and ecologically destructive and destabilizing integration into global markets. Such speed of development is far from humane because it is geared toward ever-accelerating capitalist drives for profit and accumulation. This drive, therefore, necessarily produces a rift in the social and political organization of colonial countries conscripted into this structure, away from democratic aims of education and access to land by the masses.

Overall, Du Bois reveals that what ecosocialists call the "general law of environmental degradation" of capitalism is not general at all, but racialized.[111] The exertion demanded of white labor and the intensity of land and mineral extraction do not match the levels of exploitation of human and nonhuman nature at play vis-à-vis racialized labor and (post)colonial regions. In metabolic terms: there are qualitative and quantitative differences in how the labor of different groups "mediates, regulates, and controls the metabolism between himself and nature" and the degree to which this mediation exhausts labor and departs from sustainable forms that allow for the replenishment of the soil and its natural fertility.[112] In the colonies, and in sectors where nonwhite labor can be put to work, the energy that is extracted from humans and nature is several times higher than that which is obtained from "protected" labor and nature. This quantitative bonus is made possible by imposed political arrangements that alienate natives from nature by re-directing their labor and their land's use away from public needs. Instead, colonial arrangements conscript natives as unfree laborers who aid the unrestrained exploitation of nature. This scheme sustains the well-being of white privileged subjects, who are alienated from the natural resources and manual labor that sustain their lifestyles. These two disjunctures are made possible by the color line.

[111] Foster and Burkett, *Marx and the Earth: An Anti-Critique*, 6.
[112] Marx, *Capital Volume I*, 283, 637.

Technology, Humanity, and Critique

> When Nishnaabeg are historicized by settler colonial thought as "less technologically developed," there is an assumption that we weren't capitalists because we couldn't be—we didn't have the wisdom or the technology to accumulate capital, until the Europeans arrived and the fur trade happened. This is incorrect. We certainly had the technology and the wisdom to develop this kind of economy, or rather we had the ethics and knowledge within grounded normativity to *not develop* this system, because to do so would have violated our fundamental values and ethics regarding how we relate to each other and the natural world. We chose not to, repeatedly, over our history.
>
> Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*, 78

It is important not to lose sight of the connections between Du Bois's critique of dehumanizing and ecologically destructive development and his critique of technology, and the relation between both and the account of the modern self that he develops in the aftermath of his dispute with Booker T. Washington. Years after Washington's death, Du Bois's thinking perceptively returns to that debate in an effort to dis-alienate both Black subjects, whose education ill-prepares them for understanding their position vis-à-vis a racist capitalist system, and, more universally, white Anglo-Europeans, whose faith in technology and the disproportionate rewards they appropriate orients them toward unthinkingly participating in existing imperial structures. These writings, moreover, reveal Du Bois's broader critique of capitalism, which focuses not only on its destructive effects over (post)colonial countries, but also over the wealthy societies that most benefit from it.

In a speech to Howard University graduates delivered in 1930, Du Bois faults both technical and liberal arts education for their lack of a "disposition to study or solve our economic problem."[113] Liberal arts education, he argues, fails if it does not come with "first-hand knowledge of real every-day life and ordinary human beings" and instead seeks professional advancement and wealth that despises work and toil.[114] This route is taken by college graduates who take after "the white undergraduate," who unthinkingly participate in the industrial machine in which they were born.[115] Instead, both colleges and vocational institutions must

[113] W. E. B. Du Bois, "Education and Work," *The Journal of Negro Education* 1, no. 1 (1932): 64.
[114] Ibid., 69–70.
[115] Ibid., 64.

prepare students to understand the business organization of the modern world and acquaint them "with human beings and their possibilities."[116] Rather than becoming cogs in the machine, where the machine is a merciless mechanism of enslavement, Black graduates must critically understand how to use the machine as an instrument to improve their well-being.[117] Here, Du Bois centers the question of technology and industry to distinguish a world that pursues advancement and discovery without guiding ideals from one that devotes knowledge, that is, "critically tested and laboriously gathered fact martialed under scientific law," to the goal of feeding (rather than choking) fancy and imagination that can orient us to create new worlds.[118]

This is a severe critique of the technological subject, characterized as a dehumanized being unable to lead a self-shaped life outside of the machine. This is not what Du Bois envisioned for emancipated Blacks. Instead, he argued, the South and, in particular, Black groups needed not just land but "to learn the meaning of life," through gifted teachers that would work *not* to make "men carpenters, but to make carpenters men."[119] This requires not simply "reading, writing, and counting," but "knowledge of this world."[120] Such is the kind of education that prepares subjects to grow into citizens, and their voices to guide political development and contribute to the "reformation of the present social conditions."[121]

This connection between education, political subjecthood, and the ability to politically steer societies is at play in his analysis of British West Africa, where he depicts educated Black leaders as "a thorn in the flesh of the new English industrialists."[122] White colonial officials, Du Bois argued, were interested in the development of Africans as long as they remained "primitive," and prevented any union of forces between the masses and the educated group.[123] Colonial officials feared this latter group because their criticisms of the colonial system of domination revealed it to be an anomaly and disadvantageous for West Africans. Moreover, this group demanded an effective voice for the people in their

[116] Ibid., 72.
[117] Ibid., 63.
[118] Ibid., 73.
[119] Ibid., 61.
[120] W. E. B. Du Bois, "Knowledge," *The New York Amsterdam News*, July 4, 1942, 6.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Du Bois, "Worlds of Color," 435.
[123] Ibid., 434–35.

affairs and attempted to steer countries toward forms of development more responsive to their population. In the terms of this chapter, the aim of anticolonial actors was to repair the rift in the politics of these regions, including by redirecting the use of raw materials for the benefit of African peoples, and thus removing a threat to European access to these resources.

That Du Bois's interventions moved seamlessly between domestic and colonial affairs is no surprise given the continuity in discourses of development and education between these realms, including the welcome reception of Washington's Tuskegee model in German and British Africa as a way to keep "the African true to his own best nature."[124] These debates also eventually led to a shift in French colonies, from assimilationist education emphasizing literature and the sciences toward "technical and vocational training" and the "most modest" level of training in the sciences.[125]

Understanding Du Bois's writings about education as applying to the operation of the color line domestically and globally allows for a broader reading of his critique and the political imagination that fuels it. It expands on existing accounts that focus on Du Bois's condemnation of the myth of the competitive society and the exposure of its racialized character.[126] As Andrew Douglas notes, Du Bois viewed the Black college as a crucial site of critique, from which a new notion of universality could emerge.[127] The current reading reveals this critique to be richer, because it engaged centrally with questions of nature and capitalist accumulation, extended its notion of racism to account for its entanglement with technology, and applied to the global colonial condition.

The critique of the technological mindset rejected both imperialism and domestic visions of greatness based on "mechanical horsepower … electric power, manufacture, and [the] army."[128] Du Bois wanted to rid Africa of colonial powers, but also – through knowledge and liberal and

[124] Begüm Adalet, "Development and Empire in American Political Thought," *Manuscript on File with Author* (2021), Kenneth King, *Pan-Africanism and Education: A Study of Race Philanthropy and Education in the Southern States of America and East Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 49, cited in Adalet "Development and Empire," 23–24.

[125] Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance*, 319–20, 24.

[126] Andrew J. Douglas, *W. E. B. Du Bois and the Critique of the Competitive Society* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2019), 45.

[127] Ibid., 66–67.

[128] W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Menace of the United States," *The New York Amsterdam News*, July 29, 1931, A8.

radical thought coupled with self-denial – to help rescue the "terrible" United States from itself, and in the process redirect Black Americans away from "aimlessly imitat[ing]" the desire to be "big and powerful and all-conquering."[129] Du Bois's repurposes his criticisms of the British Empire, which built its success on coal, low wages, and slave labor, to engage with the newfound world power status of the United States.[130] He hoped that greatness and power could be used to invest in "human intelligence for the masses" and "humanitarian ends for all sorts of people."[131] In other words, US culture and its accomplishments were wrong not just because of racial injustice, but wrong in themselves because they followed no clear program of "rightness in religion or in morals" and its technological superiority was used for wealth accumulation and caused poverty all over the world.[132] Du Bois's normative critique demanded a radical reorientation of the US project and its citizens from a "wealth-worshipping plutocracy" toward the leadership of a "real missionary effort for the uplift of the world."[133]

4.5 POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY, RACIAL CAPITALISM, AND ECOLOGY

> Never once in their arrogance did they stumble upon the single fact that in subsuming the wilderness and the Indian within their synthesis they were irrevocably cutting themselves off from the very substance of the new life they were forging in North America.
>
> Winona LaDuke (White Earth, Ojibwe),
> "Natural to Synthetic and Back Again"[134]

This chapter reconstructs how the melding between ideas of racial superiority and technology mediates capitalist accumulation by allowing the destructive exploitation of racialized manual labor and nature. This critique is grounded in an ecological reading of Du Bois that makes two diagnostic and two normative critical claims. Diagnostically, Du Bois first

[129] Ibid.
[130] Du Bois, "The Crisis in England," W. E. B. Du Bois, "Change America," *The New York Amsterdam News*, October 31, 1942, 8.
[131] Du Bois, "The Crisis in England", Du Bois, "Change America," 8.
[132] W. E. B. Du Bois, "Want to Be American," *The New York Amsterdam News*, October 24, 1942, Du Bois, "Change America," 8.
[133] Du Bois, "Change America," 8.
[134] Winona LaDuke, "Natural to Synthetic and Back Again," in *Marxism and Native Americans*, ed. Ward Churchill (Boston: South End Press, 1983), i.

turns upside down the claim that technological superiority stems from racial superiority, a claim that dictates the confinement of nonwhites to manual work better adapted to their nature. Instead, he notes, racism makes possible technologically advanced societies because it allows the violent exploitation of human and nonhuman nature that would otherwise be found outrageous and unacceptable. Racial ideology and the violent extraction of resources that it allows sustain technologically enabled superiority. Second, Du Bois exposes the primacy of nature and "humble work" in making modern life and its technologically enabled comforts possible: there is no modern life without soil and sweat. Normatively, Du Bois first denounces the breakneck speed of the development required by global capitalism's conscription of land in the colonies and, in particular, its prioritization of private property over socialization and the good of society. Second, Du Bois condemns the technological mindset as a poor measure of human achievement and a deviation from the good life. Technology, in other words, reflects a peculiar and not particularly admirable western obsession with speed, efficiency, and the mastery of nature.

This account adds to the picture of imperial popular sovereignty and excessive self-and-other-determination painted in this book so far. It illuminates that imperial popular sovereignty, which rules other societies despotically, operates over both human and nonhuman nature. On the one hand, techno-racist popular sovereignty alienates wealthy publics from their dependence on nature and manual labor. On the other hand, their "other-determination" coercively alienates colonial peoples and peoples in the Global South from their own projects of economic cooperation and socialization, which would require a slow and humane approach to nature and economic development, creating a political rift.

Wealthy societies' alienation from nature and racialized manual labor not only illuminates a crucial mechanism for racial capitalism to access nature and labor on the cheap, but also reveals the mechanism by which formally democratic collectives embrace it. The alienation from nature of these collectives stems from an identification or integration of whiteness with technology as indicative of modernity/superiority and a concomitant identification of Blackness/brownness with bodily exertion and strenuous work in contact with nature. This alienation from "nature" does not apply to humans in general but to the group racialized as white and is more precisely a double alienation from both nature and the nonwhite humans who work the land. This alienation depends on the disavowal of the intimate dependence of the technologically enabled comforts on this manual labor and nature Differently put, alienation from nature cannot

be understood without the racialized mapping of the nature/technology divide, which results in indifference toward the destruction of nature implemented through a variety of unfree labor forms. Consequently, the undoing of an ecologically destructive capitalism cannot proceed without the dismantling of racism.

It follows that the problem of environmental injustice is not just about the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation over racialized people but about how capitalist accumulation occurs through hierarchically produced vulnerabilities, making inequalities and dispossession drivers of environmental destruction.[135] In other words, racialized political formations are entwined with our present ecological crisis because they facilitate both the more intense devastation of nature overseas and its disavowal.

By adding an ecological substratum to the material underpinnings of white democracies, this chapter completes the critical account of popular sovereignty and excessive self-determination, making clear that labor exploitation and the destruction of nature are entailed in political regimes that are brought together by possessive attachments. Racial hierarchy is required for these groups to demand and enjoy riches that are made possible by a regime of accumulation that depends on the destruction of racialized families, communities, and their natural environment.

Having spelled out an imperial popular sovereignty and its material presuppositions, *Democracy and Empire* turns now to exploring the emancipatory possibilities that remain in this concept and practice. Such an exploration, conducted in Chapter 5, grapples with the transnational aspects of racial capitalism and the structures of imperial and post-imperial domination that enable it, and contests the cooptation of democratic discourse for the legitimization of societal models dependent on destructive forms of capital accumulation.

[135] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 63–64, and Ajay Chaudhary, "The Climate of Socialism," *Socialist Forum*, Winter (2019): 2, 3.

PART III

ANTI-IMPERIAL POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY

5

Anti-Imperial Popular Sovereignty and the Politics of Transnational Solidarity

> From July 1954 onward the colonial peoples have been asking themselves: "What must we do to achieve a Dien Bien Phu? How should we go about it?"
>
> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 31

> If America's soul becomes totally poisoned, part of the autopsy must read "Vietnam." It can never be saved so long as it destroys the deepest hopes of men the world over.
>
> Martin Luther King, Jr., "Beyond Vietnam," 205

The first part of this book traces the imperial genealogy of popular sovereignty by grounding collective "emancipatory" projects in wealthy polities in racial capitalism and imperial relations of exploitation and dependence. These chapters show that declarations of peoplehood entail possessive attachments to wealth obtained through empire and posit excessive self-and-other-determination of wealthy countries as central to understanding global injustice. The second part traces the specificities of the material background that sustains white projects of popular sovereignty by examining the provision of social reproduction by brown subjects and the joint forced conscription of racialized labor and nature. These chapters explicate how communities, families, and their natural environment are depleted because of these arrangements, including through racist narratives of bodily capacity that circulate through alienated entanglements between technology, race, and nature. The third part now moves to consider the emancipatory remainders in the notion of popular sovereignty, including, in this chapter, by constructing an anti-imperial version that instead of being founded upon the destruction of relations is built upon relationships of transnational solidarity.

I do this through a reading of the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr. on Vietnam and peoplehood and Frantz Fanon's writings on national consciousness and transnationalism. The war in Vietnam as an event encapsulated both the mobilization of the United States and its people to keep Vietnam within the controlled realm of empire and the anti-militaristic activism within the country, particularly – though not exclusively – among racially oppressed groups. The politics of resistance to the Vietnam war is a generative realm to consider potential openings that can properly differentiate the popular will of peoples from national elite imperial projects of racial capitalist subjection or collective projects to attain well-being at the expense of the exploitation of racial others. With this renewed language of popular sovereignty, it is not only possible but necessary to enter solidaristic relations with other peoples affected by oligarchic projects of accumulation in order to contest the global political economy. This language opens a path to the rehabilitation of the concept of popular sovereignty and confirms that the term needs not be rejected outright but must instead be theorized anew so that it can diagnose and undo its imperial entanglements.

To conceptualize this anti-imperial popular sovereignty, I read jointly Martin Luther King's anti-war essay "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence" and Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. Based on this reading, I define anti-imperial popular sovereignty as a popular democratic claim to self-government that actively eschews elite projects of outward domination and instead seeks to coalesce with democratic movements elsewhere in the world. The need for an anti-imperial popular sovereignty is particularly pronounced in wealthy countries, where progressive movements are often complicit in the domination that enables the wealth that they aim to redistribute. King's essay "Beyond Vietnam" is particularly well suited for the task of reconstructing an anti-imperial tradition of popular politics because in criticizing US aggression in Vietnam, King places the United States in a genealogy of imperialism and contests the disavowal of this trajectory in Cold War narratives of containment. King urges the American people to collectively condemn the ties between their government and unjust regimes and to reject the benefits emerging from these ties. King's critique targets the unworldliness and ignorance that underlies the disavowal of the global as a proper subject of popular politics and notes its misguidedness by tracing the continuity of anti-democratic politics and exploitative foreign relations. Moreover, he convincingly casts peoples as world historical actors whose responsibility is to stand in solidarity

with others, or at least refrain from blocking other peoples' struggles for justice.

I juxtapose King's framework of anti-imperial popular sovereignty with Fanon's writings on national consciousness and transnationalism, including his critique of postcolonial elites. With Fanon's writings on national consciousness and his skepticism about bourgeois internationalism, I theorize further the desirable connections between democratic collectives and transnational projects. In this reading, Fanon's critique of postcolonial elites is continuous with King's denunciation of the Vietnam war as a project of US elites to defend the wealth of their Vietnamese counterparts and their access to peripheral countries' resources. With this, I build an account of symbiotic elites that projects of popular sovereignty in the wealthy world and Global South must jointly oppose. In other words, King's anti-imperial notion of popular sovereignty alongside Fanon's account of postcolonial democracy and Thirdworldism counter standard accounts of popular sovereignty whose emancipatory potential is assessed solely domestically because they disavow their dependence on global racialized capitalist accumulation.

This account of anti-imperial popular sovereignty is world historical in two ways. First, it demands peoples position themselves vis-à-vis world-spanning events – like the anti-colonial revolutions that the US war in Vietnam aimed to curtail – and take responsibility for their actions in advancing or obstructing emancipation. Second, the account I propose articulates the past historically not to simply recount events and represent it as "it really was," but to show that common dangers obstructed emancipation in the past and do so in the present, and that revolutionary traditions must be recovered, both to honor those who were at the receiving end of violence in the past and to contribute to subduing the forces of domination today.[1] This historical groundedness, as well as the explicit reference to peoples complements and/or amends recent contributions to anti-neoliberal and anti-imperial consciousness. Moreover, while an anti-imperial popular sovereignty primarily serves to scrutinize the Anglo-European projects of imperial popular sovereignty which primarily concern this book, the proposed account also considers critically how postcolonial countries' notions of peoplehood can resist their own oligarchic elites, a task that Fanon did not eschew. Finally, vis-à-vis the literature on the people engaged in earlier chapters and recent

[1] Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968 [1940]), 255.

accounts of postcolonial peoplehood, the concept of anti-imperial popular sovereignty shows that a historically grounded genealogy of resistance to empire can inform more capacious accounts of democracy which scrutinize the material bases of self-definition, theorize oligarchies as global actors dampening democratization, and re-cognize genuine popular sovereignty as necessitating transnational democratic coalition-making.

In the rest of this chapter, I first consider recent writings on transnationalism that theorize the dominating outward behavior of wealthy polities and place King within this tradition. I then analyze King's popular call for opposing the war in Vietnam as an effort to persuade the US people to withdraw their support from US elite-based projects of capitalist exploitation in alliance with Vietnamese elites. This opposition must be pursued in solidarity with democratic groups within the countries targeted by US aggression, making the realm of the transnational an alternative space of popular contention, which straddles the Global South and the west.[2] King positions the people as a world historical actor that judges US outward behavior politically, and must recast the Cold War as an imperial alliance between the United States and authoritarian elites in the developing countries to make the world safe for capitalist accumulation. Further, King connects this violent foreign policy to the failings of US democracy. I then juxtapose King's account with Frantz Fanon's work on national consciousness and postcolonial authoritarianism to propose an account of symbiotic elites and their dampening effect on emancipatory struggles around the world. Through Fanon's work on transnationalism, I theorize the right conditions for the establishment of solidaristic interconnections between peoples around the world.

5.1 THE DOMESTIC–GLOBAL NEXUS

Recent contributions theorize how western citizens' political stances and orientations are located vis-à-vis relations of outward injustice. These accounts focus on global commodity chains, exploring, for example, how neoliberalism shapes western citizens' orientations in ways that obscure the injustice of these arrangements.[3] Authors in this tradition

[2] Valdez, *Transnational Cosmopolitanism: Kant, Du Bois, and Justice as a Political Craft*.

[3] McKean, *Disorienting Neoliberalism: Global Justice at the Outer Limit of Freedom*. See also Young, "Responsibility and Global Labor Justice," Iris Marion Young, "Responsibility and Global Justice: A Social Connection Model," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 23, no. 1 (2006).

argue that resisting neoliberalism requires reorienting our view of the economy as an apolitical place where market freedom is exercised toward a space saturated with coercive authority that attempts to appear legitimate.[4]

This alertness to the transnational entanglements of well-being and its political implications is indebted to work in the Black radical tradition, including Audre Lorde's anti-imperialism, which demands that people of color in the United States take responsibility for their entanglement with exploitation and counter it by declaring their solidarity with the "victims of Euro-American imperialism."[5] Lorde's anti-imperial politics (which requires US citizens to recognize the power they hold and put it at the service of transnational solidarities) echoes Du Bois's writings in the 1920s and 1930s that I reconstruct elsewhere, including his account of transnational solidarity with anti-colonial activists and the emergence of an anti-colonial counter-public during this period.[6] Du Bois reveals the imperialism of the US polity and the continuity in the narratives of racial inferiority that legitimize the injustices suffered by African Americans and colonial subjects.[7] Yet these claims are not intelligible within an imperial domestic public sphere, making Du Bois turn toward nonmainstream publics where Black political subjects can re-cognize themselves as participants in transnational anti-imperial counter-publics.[8] These accounts, by nesting Anglo-European publics within imperial relations and highlighting the continuities of racial exclusion domestically and racialized injustice globally, are better equipped to orient political action in conditions of deep and growing domestic and global injustice. They also point toward promising forms of coalition-making that can contest the exploitative dependence of peoples on extractive arrangements of an imperial or neo-imperial kind.

Martin Luther King's essay "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence" can be located within this tradition, but it is particular in that it specifically addresses the US people as a whole and calls on them to oppose an imperialist war. As such, it offers rich theoretical resources to

[4] McKean, *Disorienting Neoliberalism: Global Justice at the Outer Limit of Freedom*, 179. See also Young, "Responsibility and Global Labor Justice," Michael Goodhart, "Interpreting Responsibility Politically," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 25, no. 2 (2017).

[5] Jack Turner, "Audre Lorde's Anti-Imperial Consciousness," *Political Theory* (forthcoming): 22.

[6] Valdez, *Transnational Cosmopolitanism: Kant, Du Bois, and Justice as a Political Craft*, chapters 4 and 5.

[7] Ibid., 117–52.

[8] Ibid., 138–47.

understand the process of self-definition that is required to position the peoples as world historical collective actors that can stand in solidarity with colonial peoples in the periphery and enact a radical democratic response to the transnational reactionary elite politics that he outlines.

5.2 POLITICAL WORLDLINESS AS ANTI-IMPERIAL POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY

King's anti-imperial popular sovereignty foregrounds transnational solidarity that opposes and transcends statist projects of outward domination allied with multinational corporations and international organizations. King makes clear the need for popular narratives that are anti-elitist and *explicitly* face the complicities of western democracies in projects of political control and economic extraction abroad, thus directly targeting the imperial tendencies of popular sovereignty critiqued in this book. King's account also reveals how racial capitalist projects of domination depend on the cooptation of oppressive elites in the periphery. This framework opens avenues to transnational solidarity without being naïve about the deep possessive attachments to imperial structures that tie white citizens to imperial projects. To counter these attachments, King argues, citizens ought to cultivate a sense of history and worldliness, through which they can both understand the dependency of their well-being on global exploitation and start the work of refusing such entanglements and connections with those abroad who struggle against imperial domination.

King gave "Beyond Vietnam" in 1967 as a speech to an audience of 3,000 people at the Riverside Church in New York. It was based on a four-part draft prepared by King before departing for Chicago on March 24, but was stalled by King's assistants, obliging Pastor Andrew Young to rely on volunteers, including Spelman College's Vincent Harding and John Maguire of Wesleyan, to develop the draft, subject to King's feedback and changes to the final version, past the deadline for submission to the news media.[9] King's stance against Vietnam went against close allies and visible Black leaders, including Ralph Bunche, then United Nations under-secretary-general.[10] While the speech itself was continuous with

[9] Taylor Branch, *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965–68* (Simon and Schuster, 2007), 586–91.

[10] Branch, *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965–68*, 584–94; David Lewering Lewis, *King: A Biography* (University of Illinois Press, 2012), 357–8.

his public anti-war statements in the two years that preceded it, its delivery in New York and its role as a preface to King's participation in the April 15 anti-war march to United Nations Plaza magnified its impact.[11] The speech resulted in widespread public condemnation, sometimes followed by half-apologies.[12] In an editorial ("Dr. King's Error"), the anti-war *New York Times* declared that diverting "the energies of the civil rights movement to the Vietnam issue is both wasteful and self-defeating" and that combining these "distinct and separate" causes could prove "disastrous for both."[13] This reaction suggests the threat that the mere naming of these connections posed to structures of domination, let alone that of King's positioning himself in greater proximity to the Black tradition of anti-imperial critique.[14] King's attention to these connections entailed a radical challenge, by bringing into relief his account of transnational oligarchic politics, collective self-definition, and their interplay in a world historical moment that finds the United States taking the mantle of empire, an underemphasized aspect of his thought.

This interpretation goes beyond the predominant focus on one of King's claims in that speech, namely that the war effort was diverting resources away from poverty programs and social uplift.[15] While this was one of King's claims regarding the entanglement between foreign and domestic affairs, his critique is more expansive, including three other points. First, he notes that war-making curtails dissenting voices that call attention to the reactionary character of the Vietnam expedition.[16]

[11] Adam Fairclough, "Martin Luther King, Jr. and the War in Vietnam," *Phylon* 45, no. 1 (1984), Branch, *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965–68*, 584, Lewis, *King: A Biography*, 359.

[12] Including by President Johnson's advisers and Bunche himself, who argued that he misunderstood the speech to be a "mandate to 'fuse' civil rights with peace groups." Branch, *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965–68*, 596.

[13] New York Times, "Dr. King's Error," *New York Times*, April 7, 1967.

[14] Unlike others in this tradition, King stopped short of embracing Marxism, but he did show unequivocal signs of support for democratic socialism and opposition to capitalism, while distinguishing himself and his proposals from communism and his ideas from Marx's, who, he argued, "didn't follow Hegel enough." See Martin Luther King, Jr., "Where Do We Go from Here?," in *The Radical King*, ed. Cornel West (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015 [1967]), 176–77, Andrew J. Douglas and Jared A. Loggins, *Prophet of Discontent: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Critique of Racial Capitalism* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2021), chapter 3.

[15] Fairclough, "Martin Luther King, Jr. and the War in Vietnam," Henry E. Darby and Margaret N. Rowley, "King on Vietnam and Beyond," *Phylon* 47, no. 1 (1986).

[16] Fairclough, "Martin Luther King, Jr. and the War in Vietnam," 26–27, Thomas F. Jackson, *From Civil Rights to Human Rights: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Struggle for Economic Justice* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 313–14. For

Second, King contrasts the militarization of US society with a nonviolent, persuasive approach to democratic politics. Finally, he connects the war with a desire for wealth and material goods, which he deems a poor principle to orient democracy.

King, moreover, proposes an outward stance that is both collective and historically minded. If adopted, this stance positions a people as an actor whose actions abroad can be judged politically. In King's address, this judgment concerns the role of the American people vis-à-vis the historical moment of decolonization. This stance pierces the ideology of Cold War discourse,[17] which focused on communist threat and containment and distorted the public understanding of the conflict, disavowing the US imperial project and the liberatory character of the Vietnamese struggle against the violent political alienation of imperial exploitation.

To recast Vietnam as an imperial endeavor, King historicizes the moment, recounting that as early as the mid-1950s, the United States was meeting 80 percent of the costs of the French effort to recolonize Vietnam after the country declared independence in 1945.[18] The defeat of the French, King states, could have been followed by independence and land reform, but instead the United States supported dictator Ngo Dinh Diem, who allied with landlords, crushed the opposition, and refused to unify with the North. The successive dictatorial regimes that replaced Diem after the coup against him and his assassination only brought more US troop commitments; this was followed by massive population displacements to escape US bombing and the bulldozing of entire areas.[19] Throughout, the United States boycotted peace efforts from the North and elections that would have brought Ho Chi Minh to power.[20] In light of these actions, King concludes, the Vietnamese must see Americans as "strange liberators" and reasonably distrust their talk of democracy and land reform.[21]

the relation between war and democracy, see also Lucia Rafanelli, "Not Just War by Other Means: Cross-Border Engagement as Political Struggle," manuscript on file with the author (2021).

[17] The question of ideology figures prominently in King's public writing on Vietnam, where he consistently condemns the brainwashing of people by the press and others, which prevented their critical engagement with the question. Fairclough, "Martin Luther King, Jr. and the War in Vietnam," 27.

[18] Martin Luther King, Jr., "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence," in *The Radical King*, ed. Cornel West (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015 [1967]), 207.

[19] Ibid., 207–8.

[20] Ibid., 210.

[21] Ibid.

But while the Vietnamese people knew that the discourse of freedom and democracy orienting US Cold War foreign policy was "political myth," such worldliness was lacking among US citizens, who were content with mechanical allegiance to nationalistic goals.[22] This unthinking embrace of narrow self-interest, varnished by Cold War ideology, King argues, is a symptom of a deeper malady of American democracy, whose spirit is dampened by racism, militarism, and materialism.[23] The popular will emerging from this scenario is not clear-eyed but misinformed, apathetic, and conformist.[24] Here King harshly criticizes his allies, who cautioned him against speaking, claiming they do not know the world they inhabit.[25] Hence, American support for foreign policy operates "blindly" in the world, making them an agent that advertises its credentials of freedom and democracy while siding with powerful elites who exploit their peoples. This unworldliness prevents US citizens from properly taking the perspective of their "enemies" and leads them to the violent crushing of liberatory struggles that they do not understand.[26]

Without perspective-taking and understanding, US actions in Vietnam are "horribly clumsy and deadly" games.[27] The particular language that King uses is important; US actions are not only deadly, they are also "clumsy," in the sense of relying on a rough and unsophisticated binary reading of the moment and employing violence in the name of materialism only partially cloaked in anticommunism. By recasting the era as one of anti-colonial revolution rather than "Cold War," King exposes the magnitude and stark consequences of the lack of responsibility of the US citizenry. Rather than standing on the side of liberation, their shallow assessment and clumsy games, backed by a massive military and its weaponry, destroys the "deepest hopes of men" around the world.[28]

Thus, King implicates the demos itself in his critique of US imperial endeavors in Vietnam. Imperial exploitation is tied to the unworldliness of the American people, their willingness to enlist behind shallow assessments of the world and destructive wars predicated upon such historical misreadings. This is a public unwilling to judge its outward behavior democratically; it is too concerned with how to fairly distribute the spoils

[22] Ibid., 206.
[23] Ibid., 214.
[24] Ibid., 201–2.
[25] Ibid., 202.
[26] Ibid., 213.
[27] Ibid., 211.
[28] Ibid., 205, 13.

that comes from this behavior, or is prevented from doing so by a state all too ready to repress voices who dare to express dissent. The United States is an ungainly world leader, King argues: it confidently enlists its military to prioritize the stability of its investments over the revolutionary projects of other peoples and, in the process, reveals the very poor conception of democracy that animates it, a democracy that is fully subsumed within empire.[29]

This account amounts to a *geopolitics* of popular sovereignty which is outward looking and historical, rather than inward looking or based on abstract principles. Polities must grapple with their global position, their dependence on and support of systemic forces of global exploitation, and their positioning vis-à-vis world historical forces of emancipation, a task that depends on dismantling racial ideologies that naturalize hierarchies and delegitimize claims of emancipation as mere violence and disorder. This account goes beyond traditional ways of thinking about popular sovereignty, as having to do exclusively with questions of representation, determining the shape of the people, or the dynamics of this process.[30] It also departs from how contemporary cosmopolitan accounts consider the interrelation between popular sovereignty and the global as bottom-up projects of diffusion of European democratic norms toward the rest of the world.[31] For King, popular sovereignty, that is, a collective project that democratically distributes *common*wealth, can be legitimate only if it scrutinizes its place

[29] Ibid., 213–14. These claims echo more radical and outspoken Black activists of King's era. Only two years later, and partly inspired by the disillusionment with moral appeals that followed King's murder, James Boggs's claim that the United States wields its global influence against other peoples' revolutionary projects would echo King's statements. James Boggs, "Manifesto for a Black Revolutionary Party," in *Pages from a Black Radical's Notebook: A James Boggs Reader*, ed. Stephen Ward (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011 [1969]), 202.

[30] Frank, *The Democratic Sublime: On Aesthetics and Popular Assembly*, Grattan, *Populism's Power: Radical Grassroots Democracy in America*, Macarena Marey, "The Ideal Character of the General Will and Popular Sovereignty in Kant," *Kant-Studien* 109, no. 4 (2018).

[31] These scholars conceptualize the nexus between democracy and outward behavior as building upon neo-Kantian accounts of the democratic peace. They include Jürgen Habermas, "Does the Constitutionalization of International Law Still Have a Chance?," in *The Divided West* (Cambridge: Polity, 2006), Lea Ypi, *Global Justice and Avant-Garde Political Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), Shmuel Nili, "Liberal Integrity and Foreign Entanglement," *American Political Science Review* 110, no. 1 (2016), and Lior Erez and Cécile Laborde, "Cosmopolitan Patriotism as a Civic Ideal," *American Journal of Political Science* 64, no. 1 (2020). Elsewhere I contend that the

in the world and rejects the reliance on the resources of others obtained through violence. King's vocal denunciation of Vietnam was necessary to debunk the geopolitics of containment and anticommunism that were layered over and obscured the imperial and exploitative goals of US involvement. Anticommunism, which was deployed with particularly zeal against Black radicals,[32] operated as an epistemology of white ignorance, namely, a collective cognitive process that entails an active "not knowing" of facts and incorrect moral judgments about right and wrong regarding the treatment of nonwhites.[33] The reaction to King's intervention, moreover, illustrates the coercive resources invested in the protection of this social epistemology, at play in King's associates' fear of taking his anti-war stance public and the vicious attacks King suffered after he did. A genuinely democratic popular will would have criticized the dark underpinnings of the US polity and its foreign expeditions, but the mere ability to question the Vietnam war and connect it to racial injustice was severely thwarted, and dissent was assimilated to disloyalty.[34] This censorship, King would later argue, "bring[s] down a blanket of intimidation" to disconnect societal discussions from structural change.[35] But dissent, he argued, is necessary to air the many wrongs of US foreign policy, to expose it as imperial, and to redirect attention toward ties of solidarity and commitment to emancipatory struggles at home and abroad, all necessary steps for an anti-imperial popular sovereignty.[36]

predominant moral focus in these approaches, and the assumption that democracy or republicanism at the domestic level (sooner or later) translates into benevolent stances toward the world, obscures rather than theorizes *imperial popular sovereignty* as the dominant mode of western popular sovereignty. Valdez, *Transnational Cosmopolitanism: Kant, Du Bois, and Justice as a Political Craft*, 60–72, 148–51, "Antiimperiale Volksouveränität: Martin Luther King, Frantz Fanon und die Möglichkeit Transnationaler Solidarität," in *Volkssouveränität und Staatlichkeit: Intermediäre Organisationen und Räume der Selbstgesetzgebung*, ed. Philipp Erbentraut and Oliver Eberl (Baden Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2022).

[32] Charisse Burden-Stelly, "In Battle for Peace During 'Scoundrel Time': W. E. B. Du Bois and United States Repression of Radical Black Peace Activism," *Du Bois Review* 16, no. 2 (2019).

[33] Charles W. Mills, "White Ignorance," in *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, ed. Nancy Tuana and Shannon Sullivan (New York: State University of New York Press, 2007), 22, 27.

[34] Fairclough, "Martin Luther King, Jr. and the War in Vietnam," 27.

[35] Martin Luther King, Jr., "Domestic Impact of the War" (National Labor Leadership Assembly for Peace: 1967).

[36] King, "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence," 211, 17.

King's critique also addresses how imperial foreign policy dehumanizes US citizens, by enlisting the poor in the fight for the protection of capitalist interests. King's claim here is not that the war should end because it hurts the United States, but that the entanglements abroad are of a piece with oligarchic forces at home, which will only harden if their power is furthered by political support for foreign exploits. These problems, in King's terms, "are tied together;" a nation that "thingifies" slaves will exploit them as well as poor people, and a nation that exploits their own "will also use its military might to protect [its foreign investments]."[37] These entanglements are clear in King's reflections on Black and white poor soldiers who return "physically handicapped and psychologically deranged" or who die to protect US corporate interests and wealthy elites in Vietnam. The violence required to sustain exploitation abroad, in other words, enlists the poor at home to fight on the side of the wealthy at home and abroad and create hell for the vulnerable in Vietnam, something that "the most sophisticated among the soldiers surely realize."[38] In this way, citizens' acceptance of and support for imperial war means that they abide by a transactional political form that deploys vulnerable members of a democratic collective into what King calls "brutal solidarity," that is, the joining of forces for the purposes of destruction, death, and the obstruction of decolonization.[39]

King calls on Americans to instead occupy "the high grounds of a firm dissent based upon the mandates of conscience and the reading of history."[40] In other words, morality is insufficient without a clearheaded world historical analysis. The popular sovereignty King puts forward requires an active acknowledgment of the place occupied by western states in the world and the extension of solidarity toward revolts against old regimes of exploitation that can leave way for "new systems of justice and equality."[41] This is a *political* critique of the United States as a power that has "strength without sight," that is, a critique of its historical sensibility and its vision, which is also that of its citizens.[42] In question are not just the brutality of war and the eerie ability of the United States to brush off the blood and despair it leaves behind, but also its aim to violently pursue enrichment at the expense of the global struggle against colonialism around

[37] King, "Where Do We Go from Here?," 178.
[38] King, "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence," 210–11.
[39] Ibid., 213.
[40] Ibid., 202.
[41] Ibid., 215.
[42] Ibid.

the world during the Cold War. Ultimately, Americans' refusal to renounce the privileges and pleasures facilitated by overseas profit positions the country on the wrong side of world revolution.[43] The Cold War operates as a blanket excuse to establish alliances with elites in postcolonial countries to maintain western access to the wealth of the Global South. These connections exceed Vietnam to include alliances with the "landed gentry of Latin America" and the sizable investment of western capitalists in Asia, Africa, and South America, whose profits are taken out without concern for the social improvement of the countries involved.[44]

Here King zeroes in on the dangers of the notion of popular sovereignty criticized in this book, that which presumes that its task is limited to providing for the people and omits analyzing the sources and means through which their wealth is acquired. Here, he echoes Du Bois's critique of imperial democracies or "democratic despotisms," in which the formal advance of democracy coexists with "hatred toward darker races" and the exploitation of the rest of the world, as reconstructed in Chapter 1.[45] Peoples, in King's account, must be held accountable for the sources of the power and wealth they proudly display and for their actions when confronted by urgent times. In other words, a world historical and geopolitical perspective informs his assessment of the behavior of powerful countries when they had the opportunity to act and neglected to do so, or acted to secure oppression instead, feats that are recorded in an "invisible book of life."[46]

By pointing at the possessive attachments that underlie wealthy democracies, King questions the sufficiency of domestically oriented progressive projects for legitimate popular sovereignty. Instead, peoples are responsible for the actions that make their well-being possible and must engage critically with the position of their polity in the world and its role in crucial historical moments, which should follow from "an overriding loyalty to mankind." This contrasts with racism and militarism as the dominant way wealthy countries relate to the Global South and its diasporas, theorized in the second part of this book. These exploitative relations and the materialism they enable become the very source of collective purpose, a stance that degrades the democratic character of their

[43] Ibid., 213, 14.
[44] Ibid., 214.
[45] Du Bois, "The African Roots of War," 709.
[46] King, "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence," 217.

popular will by enlisting white citizens in projects of alliance with and enrichment of elites around the world. To this King opposes loyalty to mankind and love, understood not as something "sentimental and weak" but as the "supreme unifying principle of life." Loyalty and unconditional love, he continues, must replace the hate and retaliation that has wrecked nations that "pursued this self-defeating path."[47]

This self-defeating path is led by the interests of capitalists and the force of the state, but King's critique exceeds these groups; he asserts that a polity that is outwardly unjust already bears the marks of these orientations in its own functioning, that is, racism, materialism, and militarism. These flaws, he argues, both precede and are magnified by an unjust foreign policy. As King shows, the most vulnerable in western societies pay particularly dearly for the aggressive pursuit of power abroad, and the revolution of values he advocates depends on the reorientation of the domestic content of popular sovereignty away from military defense and toward social uplift, away from war and toward peace, and away from racism and toward solidarity.[48] Involved in all of these shifts is a refusal of materialism (an orientation to "things" rather than "people"), for it is the force that crowds out solidaristic feelings and creates predatory political systems at home and abroad.

5.3 SELF-DEFINITION, TRANSNATIONAL SOLIDARITY, AND EMANCIPATION FROM SYMBIOTIC ELITES

The account of anti-imperial popular sovereignty I read in King's essay on Vietnam mirrors Fanon's account of postcolonial popular sovereignty in its keen understanding of the world historical moment of postwar anticolonial struggle and of the transnational linkages that serve the purpose of democratization.[49]

King contends that democracies degenerate when they conscript their poor into the task of sustaining global power and their wealthy allies in the (post)colonial world, the selfsame coopted bourgeoisies that Fanon

[47] Ibid., 216.

[48] King, "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence," 215.

[49] The pairing between Fanon and King might raise questions, given their divergent ideological locations vis-à-vis socialism and the use of violence. Their different persuasions, however, do not so much invalidate this juxtaposition as make their convergence in the diagnosis of an oligarchically supported imperialism a sign of the strength and reach of a transnational anti-imperial revolutionary ethos. Moreover, recent readings of King's thought have brought into relief the radicalism of his critique of capitalism. Douglas and

targets in *The Wretched of the Earth*. For Fanon, postcolonial bourgeoisies serve as the intermediaries between the metropole and their own country partly by choice, partly due to lack of clout, and partly because of the rapacity of the colonial system.[50] Thus King and Fanon take apart nation-states, offering a nuanced account of oligarchies in the west and the Global South who are the primary beneficiaries of the alliances that enable capitalist accumulation, whose costs are bore by racialized marginalized groups within states. King highlights that Black and white soldiers that would not be able to live in the same neighborhood jointly work in support of empire. This "brutal," cooperative, inter-racial work against the revolution of the dispossessed in the underdeveloped world is the same revolution whose democratic credentials Fanon is interested in deepening post-independence.

Fanon, in his analysis of national consciousness among postcolonial peoples, focuses on the receiving end of western military intervention, military aid, and the training of national armies in the Global South, all of which aim to immobilize the people's consciousness.[51] This immobilization, alongside western-oriented elites' distrust of the capability of the masses for self-government, is what the self-definition of these peoples and their emergent national consciousness counters.[52] National consciousness aids people's resistance to oppression and their ability to grasp complex issues, despite the chemical and psychological warfare of world powers and the corruption and brainwashing of the "would-be-dictators" that replaced them.[53] The struggle itself, moreover, opens new visions for the masses, whose self-definition is rooted in local and collective practices of consciousness-raising that serve to resist top-down efforts to thwart their emancipation.[54]

Loggins, *Prophet of Discontent: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Critique of Racial Capitalism*. Finally, despite King's championing of nonviolence, "Beyond Vietnam" finds him assessing violent resistance in Vietnam as a reasoned and emancipatory response to the ruthless violence of the United States and the regime it supports. This is not unlike Fanon's own assessment of force as the only language that the colonizer understands, and the one it has used, consistently and without moral remorse, in its colonial dealings. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004 [1961]), 43.

[50] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 98.

[51] King, "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence," 203–4, 14, Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 118–19.

[52] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 130.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

Fanonian projects of radical democratization are built upon practices that overcome the nationalism of the independence struggle and replace it with a national consciousness that is both historical and transnational. Fanon describes this transformation in spiritual terms that echo King's own prophetic style and his orientation toward new forms of participation by the poor in his later years.[55] For example, Fanon describes meetings of local citizens' cells as "a liturgical act," where the masses "meet, discuss, put forward suggestions and receive instructions," in a way that makes their brains multiply the potential association of ideas and opens up a wider panorama in front of their eyes.[56] The theme of discovery and widening vistas also animates King's essay, which condemns the narrow "thing-oriented" panorama of US society, and the poisoning of "America's soul" entailed by the crushing of revolutionary actions abroad.[57] This poisoned background, moreover, makes the breaking of the silence on Vietnam "a vocation of agony" given the attacks and censorship that follow, and thus not too different from countering postcolonial authoritarian elites.[58]

Like King, Fanon grounds national consciousness in history. For this, local intermediary organizations must develop the "towns and minds" to see beyond the next harvest and "answer to history."[59] These intermediary bodies do not so much communicate government orders as become spokespersons and defenders of the masses against corruption.[60] The national consciousness of local groups develops in dialectical relation with their representatives so that, through this back and forth, gradually, the people can overcome the demoralization instilled by colonization and become worldlier, more aware of the sense of time of the "rest of the world."[61] But simply looking outward and creating institutions that draw their inspiration from Europe will not do.[62] Fanon offers the cautionary tale of the United States, who two centuries earlier decided to catch up with Europe and was "so successful that [it] ha[s] became a monster where the flaws, sickness and

[55] Shatema Threadcraft and Brandon M. Terry, "Gender Trouble: Manhood, Inclusion, and Justice," in *To Shape a New World: Essays on the Political Philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. Tommie Shelby and Brandon Terry (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 234.

[56] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 136.

[57] King, "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence," 202.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 127–28, I take the term "intermediary organizations" from Oliver Eberl and Philipp Erbentraut, "Einleitung: Vokssouveränität, Staatlichkeit und intermediäre Organisationen," in *Vokssouveränität und Staatlichkeit*.

[60] Ibid., 130.

[61] Ibid., 135.

[62] Ibid., 239.

inhumanity of Europe have reached frightening proportions."[63] Instead, Fanon argues, international consciousness establishes itself and thrives at the heart of national consciousness, where it can nurture the Third World project of solving the problems to which Europe could not find answers and avoid alienation, i.e., "dragging man in directions which mutilate him, [impose on his brain] tempos that rapidly obliterate and unhinge it, … tear him from himself and his inner consciousness, break him, and kill him."[64]

Here Fanon works on multiple scales, where local groups are one important aspect of the undoing of the work of colonization, whose effects are also felt on a variety of levels.[65] Fanon's emphasis on the "psychological and corporeal elements of the process of construction" after colonization has a counterpart on the national and the global scales,[66] but always resisting the imitation of Europe, and instead pioneering new ideas drawn from processes of national consciousness that increase the affinities of the brain mass of humanity, rather than separating men from each other.[67] In this way, Fanon's account of postcolonial peoples, who craft a trajectory that explicitly eschews European dehumanizing ideals, echoes recent theories of postcolonial peoplehood by Nazmul Sultan, David Temin, and Arturo Chang that grapple with developmental ideas, repurpose them, or restore Indigenous genealogies to claim popular sovereignty, respectively.[68] Yet the anti-imperial notion of peoplehood that I put forward via King and Fanon exceeds these accounts by singling out the problem of postcolonial elites as a central obstacle to democratic founding, whose overcoming requires establishing transnational solidarity to target the oligarchic networks of power and coercion that sustain racial capitalism. This transnational anti-oligarchic orientation reveals an embrace of the global that is nuanced, wary of internationalisms that either rescue "African culture" to measure up with the ostentatious culture of Europeans, extend Europe's essentializing of all Africans and

[63] Ibid., 236–37.
[64] Ibid., 238.
[65] Begüm Adalet, "Infrastructures of Decolonization: Scales of Worldmaking in the Writings of Frantz Fanon," *Political Theory* 50, no. 1 (2022): 25.
[66] Ibid., 19, 21, 22.
[67] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 237–38.
[68] Nazmul Sultan, "Self-Rule and the Problem of Peoplehood in Colonial India," *American Political Science Review* 114, no. 1 (2020), David M. Temin, "Development in Decolonization: Walter Rodney, Third World Developmentalism, and 'Decolonizing Political Theory'," *American Political Science Review* (forthcoming), Arturo Chang, "Restoring Anáhuac: Indigenous Genealogies and Hemispheric Republicanism in Postcolonial Mexico," *American Journal of Political Science* (forthcoming).

their problems, or do not carefully historicize African and Afro-diasporic political questions.[69]

In contrast, transnationalisms that "aid in the struggle against colonial clients domestically and against western dominance abroad" are welcomed,[70] a project that fits King's desired response to Vietnam from the core of the American empire. This solidaristic reach toward marginalized groups within the Anglo-European world has not been given as much attention as Fanon's "collective dynamics of the Third World project" expressed at a mass scale.[71] Anuja Bose's account of Fanon's articulation of the tension between the logic of repressive sovereignty of the imperial nation-states and the logic of resistance within the colonies, does not inquire into the potential of solidarity with groups within the metropole that could work to destabilize empires from within.[72]

Vietnam and the Re-Historicization of Modernity

King and Fanon's affinities extend to their engagement with Vietnam, which Fanon uses to articulate the relationship between national consciousness and transnational solidarity through the establishment of a common temporality that brings together subaltern subjects around the world.[73] This shows in Fanon's assessment of the victory of Vietnam over its colonial power: "The great victory of the Vietnamese people at Dien Bien Phu is no longer strictly speaking a Vietnamese victory. From July 1954 onward the colonial peoples have been asking themselves: 'What must we do to achieve a Dien Bien Phu? How should we go about it?'"[74]

Thus, the Vietnamese victory against the French (and its ally the United States) at Dien Bien Phu shows to colonized peoples that victory is "within reach of every colonized subject," subject only to the proper

[69] Inés Valdez, "Cosmopolitanism without National Consciousness Is Not Radical: Creolizing Gordon's Fanon through Du Bois," *Philosophy & Global Affairs* 1, no. 2 (2021): 7.
[70] Ibid., 12.
[71] Anuja Bose, "Frantz Fanon and the Politicization of the Third World as a Collective Subject," *Interventions: An International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 21, no. 5 (2019): 672.
[72] Ibid., 673.
[73] Valdez, *Transnational Cosmopolitanism: Kant, Du Bois, and Justice as a Political Craft*, 156, 62, 71.
[74] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 30–31.

organization.[75] Vietnam here appears as an exemplar event that expands the realm of imagination for colonized peoples and brings them together as agents who can expand the realm of the possible. Colonial subjects, whose "dreams of liberty" were made impossible by the colonizers, become "political creature[s] in the most global sense of the term."[76] The political import of Vietnam thus exceeds the achievement for the Vietnamese to mobilize subaltern actors worldwide, including Fanon, King, and Black Power activist James Boggs:

> If mankind still lives a thousand years from today, the chief contribution of this historic epoch to human progress and the advance of civilization will be recognized to have been not the flight to the moon nor the conquest of outer space but the discovery in Vietnam, China, Cuba, the Middle East, and the liberated areas of Africa of the revolutionary process by which great masses of technologically undeveloped peoples are transforming themselves into the politically most advanced human beings the world has ever known. With the conscious mass creation of these new men, women, and youth in the second half of the twentieth century, the history of humanity really begins.[77]

Boggs mentions the technological superiority of core countries only to discard it as a marker of "progress" compared to the truly progressive political accomplishments of "*technologically* undeveloped peoples," which truly initiate the history of humanity. Thus, the anti-colonial imagination that Vietnam elicits in the colonial world was also politically transformative in US left politics, not least because it transformed strategies and spearheaded coalitions among differently racialized groups. Notably, the war switched the political tactics of Mexican-American activists, who had since the Second World War relied on their service in the military to justify their demands for equal treatment.[78] Black Power militants and their insistence upon race pride further inspired Chicano activists and led Mexican-Americans to shift away from claims to whiteness as a route to inclusion and to start politicizing their brownness.[79] This, and other influential left critiques within the anti-war movement, led to the sustained campaign against US Vietnam policy, the founding of the National Chicano Moratorium Committee, and the largest anti-war

[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid., 40, 50.
[77] Boggs, "Manifesto for a Black Revolutionary Party," 227.
[78] Lorena Oropeza, *Raza Sí!, Guerra No!* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 49.
[79] Ibid., 6, 52, Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 60.

march organized by a US ethnic group, in August of 1970.[80] The anti-war coalitions, comprised of Asian Americans, Chicano and Latino movements, and Indigenous peoples, moreover, were approached by North Vietnamese representatives, or traveled to Vietnam to cement their solidarity.[81] Further, the travel and communication that brought together these groups further stimulated their political imagination and expanded the sense of community beyond the United States.[82] Thus, when Fanon cites Vietnam as a world historical event that creates new visions for colonial peoples, he participates in a transnational anti-colonial community that encompasses radical activists of marginalized groups worldwide that elevated Vietnam for its ability to upset the historical trajectory of a mechanistically destructive European project and opened new paths. What is notable and important for the reconceptualization of popular sovereignty is that both Fanon and King, writing six years apart from each other, specifically connect Vietnam to the radical potential of self-definition among the masses of the core and the Global South – a necessary step to counter the dampening of democratizing forces by capitalist elites, who act transnationally and symbiotically.[83]

Vietnam and other anti-colonial events, in Fanon's telling, not only create a common revolutionary consciousness and temporality among the colonized, but also affect the colonizers, who, in panic, move to decolonize, believing that making the "first move" can let them set the conditions of the aftermath.[84] Facing unrest at home during the period of decolonization meant that European powers could no longer station troops in the colonies permanently, forcing them to accept the sovereignty of their colonies.[85] The new anti-colonial consciousness also meant that withdrawal was far from the end of the affair, Fanon argued. Colonial

[80] Oropeza, *Raza Sí!, Guerra No!*, chapter 5.

[81] Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, *Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism During the Vietnam War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 7–8.

[82] Ibid., 3.

[83] In the late 1960s and early 1970s, scholars studying dependent development and imperialism echoed these concerns about alliances among elites, though without considering the transnational politics of solidarity that Fanon and King consider and I reconstruct here. Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, *Dependencia y Desarrollo en América Latina: Ensayo de Interpretación Sociológica* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 1996 [1967]), Andre Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (New York: New York University Press, 1967), Johan Galtung, "A Structural Theory of Imperialism," *Journal of Peace Research* 8, no. 2 (1971), Ruy Mauro Marini, *The Dialectics of Dependency* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2022 [1972]).

[84] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 31.

[85] Ibid., 31, 34.

subjects would not be fooled or fed by "moral reparation for national independence," knowing that the "wealth of the imperialist nations is also [their] wealth," and Europe itself their creation.[86]

Reading Fanon and King jointly reveals the convergence in the transformative effect of Vietnam on colonial subjects and US racialized groups, which pushes against Fanon's perhaps excessive zeal to historicize and nationalize US struggles and separate them from colonial ones.[87] It shows that racialized groups within the United States were energized by the engagement with anti-colonial resistance and indebted to dynamic spaces located at the margins in the metropole.[88] While Fanon addressed the "European masses" as complicit with "our common masters" and potential allies in the task of re-habilitating "man,"[89] the joint reading proposed demonstrates that dissident groups within the United States were ready for alliances of this kind, and had found in Vietnam a cause that echoed their own situation of racial injustice and provided imaginative fodder in their emancipatory struggle.

5.4 AN EMPIRE OF OLIGARCHS

The juxtaposition of King and Fanon not only identifies the masses whose affinities can ground transnational solidarity, but also diagnoses the symbiotic relation between western and Global South capitalist elites, who emerge as the main obstacle to the deepening of democratic peoplehood in the world. This means that an anti-imperial notion of popular sovereignty must contain an anti-elitist critique that conceptualizes and condemns the transnational elite alliances and regimes that facilitate exploitation and requires the sacrifice of the most vulnerable members of

[86] Ibid., 53, 55, 58.

[87] Valdez, "Cosmopolitanism without National Consciousness Is Not Radical: Creolizing Gordon's Fanon through Du Bois."

[88] Even before Vietnam, marginal spaces such as Black churches and colleges in the United States were crucial for the transformation of Black political consciousness that Du Bois envisioned in the aftermath of the Great War, which emerged from a staunch critique of US ideals and developed in reciprocal conversation with oppressed subjects abroad. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Does the Negro Need Separate Schools?," *The Journal of Negro Education* 4, no. 3 (1935), W. E. B. Du Bois, "A Negro Nation within the Nation," *Current History* 42, no. 3 (1935). For further discussion, see Valdez, *Transnational Cosmopolitanism: Kant, Du Bois, and Justice as a Political Craft*, 138–47, and "Du Bois and the Fluid Subject: *Dark Princess* and the Splendid Transnational in the Harlem Renaissance," in *Expecting More: African American Literature in Transition, 1920–30*, ed. Rachel Farebrother and Miriam Thaggert (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

[89] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 62.

political communities. Such a mode of popular sovereignty would activate resistance to imperial exploitation by western polities, but it also targets authoritarian postcolonial governments who prevent the stimulation, revival, and acceleration of the democratic consciousness of their citizenry.[90]

This radical reconsideration of popular sovereignty in both the metropole and the postcolony is Fanon's "final stage of a dual consciousness" and it requires the renewal of the terms of exchange between these sites. In this new era the underdeveloped world no longer receives European "aid to the unfortunate" with trembling gratitude, but rather understands that "*it is their due*." The capitalist powers, in turn, are ready to acknowledge that "effectively, *they must pay up*."[91] There is a complementary call in King for US citizens to abandon their "proneness to adjust to injustice" out of "comfort, complacency, and a morbid fear of Communism."[92] Instead, a compassionate look is required, but one that goes beyond the actions of a Good Samaritan toward interventions that transform "the whole Jericho Road," to avoid men and women "being constantly robbed and beaten as they make their journey on Life's highway."[93]

In other words, the revolution of values that King calls for not only departs from the pre-political moral stance with which he is often identified, but also explicitly singles out structural deficiencies ("the whole Jericho Road") and systematic processes of dispossession and injustice ("constantly robbed and beaten"). The juxtaposition between Fanon and King again highlights the underemphasized "materialism" of King, whose anti-imperialism identifies structural injustice, creates uneasiness and indignation at the connections between wealth and poverty, and ties them to US capitalists' unscrupulous financial maneuvers overseas.[94] Thus, if for Fanon the work of self-definition of the *colonized* needs to be accompanied by restitution, as Jane Gordon notes,[95] restitution requires in turn that the *colonizing* society undergoes a complementary process of self-definition. This parallel self-definition of the colonizer is what King articulates as the "ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit" by declaring

[90] Ibid., 72, 128, Jane Anna Gordon, *Creolizing Political Theory: Reading Rousseau through Fanon* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 131, 50, 85.
[91] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 59, my emphasis.
[92] King, "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence," 215.
[93] Ibid., 214.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Gordon, *Creolizing Political Theory: Reading Rousseau through Fanon*, 158.

"eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism," changing unjust mores, and bringing closer a day of brotherhood.[96]

King's call for transformation – led by racialized minorities and the poor, who are left behind or conscripted into dehumanizing militaristic projects – opposes the reactionary alliances that capitalism pursues with postcolonial bourgeoisies. These are the postcolonial authoritarian leaders that Fanon's project of radically democratic national consciousness targets, and which maintain the masses in a lethargic state through western-trained and -funded military and police. The radical democratic politics put forward by King and Fanon demands peoples position themselves in world history as a transnational collective willing to intervene to expand the revolutionary potential of the moment in which they live. The world historical account that these two approaches put forward traces the entwined character of reactionary politics in the west and the Global South, and outlines the radical intermediary spaces of anti-imperial popular sovereignty where transnational solidarity can be nurtured.

This emancipatory project is necessary to counter the ideological and material power of symbiotic global oligarchic politics, in which both western and Global South regimes are complicit. This military-backed forms of economic extraction require the political demobilization of the citizenry, either by privileging bland materialism as the goal of collective self-governing in wealthy countries or by repressing dissent and radical democratic contestation by racial minorities and the populace in the Global South.

The transnationalism of these democratic visions could not be more distant from the approach of multilateralism, which has an elective affinity with the imperial popular politics described in the first two parts of this book, because it brings together states whose peoples recoil from facing history and taking responsibility for the peoples they interfere with. Such popular politics are incomplete political forms, as long as they do not come to terms with the transnational entanglements of the elites that they face domestically and reject side deals that betray emancipatory causes elsewhere. *Democracy and Empire* makes clear that these deals were intimately entwined with formative moments of white democracy, and they are still at play in authoritarian outbursts fueled by the desire of white citizens to appropriate the increasingly meager gains that financial capitalism leaves to the middle classes. The sheltering of this group

[96] King, "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence," 215, 16.

depended on self-and-other-determination, the destruction of nature, and the degradation of the racialized subjects and families that ensure the social reproduction of western polities.

Juxtaposing Fanon and King, however, also reveals convergences between the oppressed actors targeted by racial capitalism and their radically democratic projects. This suggests a research agenda that relocates the politics of popular sovereignty in intermediary realms of politics, both *below* the level of nation-states, through anti-elitist democratic groups that can lead processes of democratization from the bottom up; and *above* this level, through transnational coalitions that target global capitalist elites that sustain domination. This is popular sovereignty in an anti-imperial form, a public will opposed to the brutal solidarity of capitalist elites that opens two theoretical pathways. First, it creates a conceptual space for thinking about popular sovereignty without leaving out the space of the global as a realm of political responsibility. Second, it diffuses binaries between well-ordered liberal democracies and violent/corrupt regimes that implicitly or explicitly organize inquiry in analytical philosophy and political science more broadly, by tying both kinds of polities to a global regime of domination and by understanding domestic struggles as necessarily entwined. In other words, the proposed account claims that for domestic politics to be truly democratic, it ought to be transnational.

For this research agenda to progress, however, it is necessary to reflect further on the political relations with Indigenous peoples, on whose land this politics of solidarity takes place. The preceding chapters have touched upon settler colonialism by locating the immigration regime as an accessory of this political form (Chapter 2), and by theorizing the annexation, settlement, and the labor exploitation of Indigenous Mexicans in the lands of their ancestors (Chapter 3) and the destructive stance toward the land and communities of African natives (Chapter 4). The concluding chapter centers North American Indigenous political thinkers to further specify an emancipatory politics that aims to undo settler colonialism and assimilation, while remaining in solidarity with other subjects violently conscripted into this process and attentive to regenerative relations with nature.

Conclusion: Empire, Settler Colonialism, and Grounded Solidarities

> The counterrevolution, feeding itself on the fears, ignorance, and deep-seated racism of the white workers and middle classes, and with millions of dollars at its disposal, can come to power almost overnight. The revolution needs time and patience to escalate the struggle and vision of the revolutionary forces to the point of no return.
>
> James Boggs, *Manifesto for a Black Revolutionary Party*, 226

Democracy and Empire theorizes the material dependence of popular sovereignty and self-determination on the labor of racialized others, appropriated in conjunction with nature. The book contests the theorization of popular sovereignty in exclusively domestic terms by tracing the violent roots of the common wealth distributed among members of privileged collectives, a wealth that depends on the destruction of other peoples' collective projects, social reproduction capabilities, and community/family worlds. I reconstruct these features of popular sovereignty by tracing their entanglement with capitalism and empire, and theorize further the complex, contingent, but nonetheless structural racial formations and institutions through which privileged peoples rule over racial others and make their labor and land available for accumulation. I pay particular attention to moments of transition, in which the emancipation of white workers results in the fastening of racial rule to ensure the abundance of resources to satisfy their demands, as well as access by this group to land to settle, which depends on the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and the forced labor of Black and brown groups, whose fates intersect and mutually influence each other.

Democracy and Empire makes a case for theorizing together concepts and institutional orderings often studied in isolation, including the imperial government of mobility, immigration regulations of self-governing states, conquest, modernizing projects in the Third World, the racialization of kinship, and militarized surveillance of migrants. These processes have in common that they successfully segregate workers and create vulnerable populations for expropriative labor conditions. These workers are conscripted to work on expropriated nature in ways that are justified through racial ideologies that locate western societies atop the technological frontier, construct nonwhite peoples as naturally confined to dirty and strenuous work performed close to nature, and posit nature as an expendable and inert resource, existing only to be utilized and mastered by machinery. These forms of subjection were entailed by collective political projects led by the demands of white working classes for enfranchisement and of middle classes for upward mobility and a privatized family life. These trends gave popular sovereignty particular meanings and made self-determination into self-*and*-*other*-determination. The affective attachments and forms of rule that accompanied this trajectory reverberate in the reactionary forces gaining ground in the Anglo-European world today, a world still characterized by a racially unequal distribution of freedom and material benefits and dependent on nature and racial others globally.

In response to this diagnosis, the last substantive chapter interrogates the emancipatory remainders of popular sovereignty. It asks: if popular claims have historically involved a claim to appropriate resources that depend on the destructive treatment of racialized others and the land on which they dwell, what alternative collective claims for emancipation can be envisioned to eschew this dark side? King's "Beyond Vietnam" suggests that peoples (and theorists of popular sovereignty) need to grapple with the global exploitation and expropriation they authorize, and that its legitimacy depends on actively contesting projects of domination led by Western elites that coopt and shield oligarchs in the postcolonial world from radical anti-colonial democratic politics. If polities do not decidedly position themselves behind anti-colonial revolutionaries, they risk debasing their own ties of solidarity, making them "brutal," in King's words. Fanon's concern with the national consciousness of peoples in the postcolonial world joins King's call by explicitly singling out both colonial powers and coopted postcolonial elites as the strongest obstacles to deep democratization in these regions. Hence, reading King and Fanon together gives us an account of symbiotic imperial oligarchies who rely on state violence to lay the groundwork for capitalist accumulation,

stunting nonpossessive and solidaristic formations of the people who could have found common cause. The emancipation Fanon and King put forward to counter these alliances depend on a clear-headed understanding of peoples' positionality within global systems of oppression and the demands posed by the historical trajectory in which they find themselves.

The anti-imperial popular sovereignty that emerges from the joint reading of King and Fanon suggests the possibility of political kinship between differently located subjects who recognize and oppose a racial and capitalist project of accumulation supported by colonial and neocolonial relations of land dispossession and natural and human resource extraction. Few areas within political theory have been more active in theorizing relationality and difference within solidaristic relations than Indigenous political thought. Because of this, and because the political relations I theorize occur *on* settled land as the ground where the connected trajectories of mobility and domination of differently racialized groups occur, this conclusion turns toward Indigenous political thought to further flesh out a politics of solidarity that can face such oppressive structures. In so doing, my goal is to avoid what Max Liboiron (Red River Métis/Michif), following Unangax̂ scholar Eve Tuck, calls "extractive readings," which look for material to use, unidirectionally. Instead, this is an effort to engage the field of Indigenous political thought humbly, without the pretense of mastering this broad and dynamic area,[1] and with a recognition of my indebtedness to the richness of their ethical accounts, critical assessments, and contestatory action. The insights I incorporate, moreover, both echo and occasionally challenge the framings the book puts forward, a productive and reciprocal tension that performs the very account of solidarity I construct with their help.

A core tension emerges when Indigenous political thought is read alongside popular sovereignty to theorize solidarity. The notions of popular sovereignty that have been theorized and criticized in *Democracy and Empire* for their imperial indebtedness presuppose a territory (i.e., the stolen land) and the definition of a people, even if iteratively and never unproblematically so. The demands of white settlers and the exclusions

[1] Liboiron, *Pollution Is Colonialism*, 35, Eve Tuck, "To Watch the White Settlers Sift through Our Work as They Ask, 'Isn't There More for Me Here?'," in *@tuckeve*, ed. Eve Tuck (Twitter, 2017). On reading humbly across fields, I follow Jared Sexton's account of "amateur" exchanges between Black and Native studies, as recounted in Tiffany Lethabo King, Jennell Navarro, and Andrea Smith, "Introduction: Beyond Incommensurability: Toward an Otherwise Stance on Black and Indigenous Relationality," in *Otherwise Worlds: Against Settler Colonialism and Anti-Blackness*, ed. Tiffany Lethabo King, Jennell Navarro, and Andrea Smith (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 6.

of Black subjects and brown migrants take *place* in this space. Moreover, this grounded imperial people launches further claims on faraway lands and peoples' labor to obtain resources through force and distribute them at home, as Chapters 1 and 4 make clear. While King's critique of imperial popular sovereignty leaves out the settler colonial project to focus on class, racial, and global injustice, Black thinkers who were his contemporaries, such as James Boggs, open avenues for theorizing differentiated injustices, as does Fanon's own analysis of colonial space.[2] Boggs connects the prosperity of British America with the captivity of Black people, but further notes that this system was grounded in land "taken from the Indians," making all sections of the United States a party to defrauding Indigenous peoples or enslaving Black people.[3] Fanon sees the violence of French colonization in Algeria in the *spatial* immediacy of empire, which collapses the geospatiality of the metropole and the colony in place and time.[4] Rephrased, this means that, in settler colonies, on the very same land, one finds "white immunity and racialized violation, non-Native desires for freedom, Black life, and Indigenous relations."[5]

Engaging with Indigenous political thought allows for further theorization of these multiple positionalities, which include Indigenous, settler, slave, forced refugee, diaspora settler, migrant settler, and other statuses.[6] These multiple statuses do not make the constitution of a people impossible but instead orient us to make the interrelations between these subjects the core of the "whole" that we should conceptualize. These interrelations include the widespread use of military force to both dispossess and exploit labor and land overseas and clear land domestically, or the use of similar mechanisms of confinement, forced labor, and destruction of kinship to target differently racialized groups in the metropole (Chapter 3). Chapter 4's Duboisian account of the subjection of land and labor in the colonies, upended by global integration into capitalist circuits of global

[2] Boggs, "Manifesto for a Black Revolutionary Party," 202.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Allison Guess Eve Tuck, and Hannah Sultan, "Not Nowhere: Collaborating on Selfsame Land," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society* June 26 (2014), Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), all cited in la paperson, *A Third University Is Possible* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2017), 3, 6–7.

[5] paperson, *A Third University Is Possible*, 3.

[6] Byrd, "Weather with You: Settler Colonialism, Antiblackness, and the Grounded Relationalities of Resistance," 209, Candace Fujikane, *Mapping Abundance for a Planetary Future: Kanaka Maoli and Critical Settler Cartographies in Hawai'i* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 14, paperson, *A Third University Is Possible*, 8–10.

accumulation, echoes how Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg thinker Leanne Simpson frames the interrelation between land and bodies upended by settler colonialism.[7] If, for Simpson, subjects in settler space are "always already simultaneously positioned as both subjugated by settler state power and as settlers who often unwittingly support the state,"[8] this book extends the spatial realm to consider the defrauding and devastation of overseas peoples, adding to the positionalities and interrelations inaugurated by the redirection of societies toward capital accumulation for the benefit of the metropoles.

To theorize popular sovereignty in this complex picture that maps waves of enrichment, oppression, dispossession, and partial emancipation across the globe, it is inadequate to center a collective defined by a common belonging and those demanding inclusion. It is instead necessary to trace a collective whose different belongings, trajectories, and struggles for emancipation overlap, bend, and spread out like the waves I referenced in opening this book. Another natural metaphor orients Potawatomi botanist Robin Kimmerer in her effort to face this quandary by focusing on a "round-leafed plant" that arrived with the first settlers and followed them wherever they went.[9] With time, the gifts of this plant became clear: it could be cooked and eaten, the leaves could be made into a poultice to use as first aid for cuts, burns, and insect bites, and the seeds made good digestive medicine. While it is not possible to "become indigenous," this plant, for Kimmerer, "became naturalized to place" by giving gifts and meeting its responsibilities.[10] Thus, it is indeed possible to become *naturalized* to place: it requires contributing and taking responsibility in return for the provision of food by the land and the drinking water provided by the streams, both of which build one's body and nurture one's spirit.[11] This applies both to us as subjects that inhabit a place and to ecological relations that operate at the global level, which may be oriented toward giving and responsibility or may reproduce settler logics by consuming land and natural resources without concern for their regeneration or the deprivation of natives.

[7] *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 43.
[8] Fujikane, *Mapping Abundance for a Planetary Future: Kanaka Maoli and Critical Settler Cartographies in Hawai'i*, 14.
[9] Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2013), 214.
[10] Ibid., 214–15.
[11] Ibid., 214.

This discussion suggests that the problem with popular sovereignty as currently theorized is that it assumes both too much and too little. It assumes too much by taking for granted that the ground on which politics take place and the ground from which the wealth is obtained are not themselves a matter for interrogation. This means that popular sovereignty disavows its founding and continuous dependence on stolen land and wealth extracted from land and labor abroad, even though they are its conditions of possibility. But popular sovereignty also assumes too little by restricting its concern to the people, rather than interrogating how the people themselves are sustained, their lives made possible, and their societies shaped by the land, the water, the animals, and the wind that surround them.[12] In this sense, popular sovereignty is "forged *on* the land, not *with* the land," a distinction introduced by White Earth Ojibwe scholar Winona LaDuke that has important political and conceptual implications.[13]

ECOLOGICAL POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY AND THE UNDOING OF ITS IMPERIAL AVATAR

The narrowing of popular sovereignty to "the people" excludes recognition of the dependence on nature that must be reciprocated. This recognition is blocked by the enchantment with technology and the myths of superiority and self-sufficiency it engenders, described in Chapter 4. The alienation that follows from this process blocks the potential for reciprocity because it depoliticizes nature as primitive and unsophisticated, a characterization that extends to the racialized laborers who work the land and justifies their devaluation. In contrast, an account of popular sovereignty that politicizes the relation to the occupied ground, its natural riches, and its inhabitants allows us to judge politically the behavior of newcomers or existing actors within communities: do they become naturalized or do they conquer, dispossess, and lay waste by overexploiting both the land and the labor of those they encounter? Do visitors aim to exchange fairly and reciprocally, and make sure to leave enough or produce anew for those who *are* indigenous to place? Or do they overexploit and transform "wastelands" into cropland to fulfill their needs while imperiling the ways of life and subsistence of the natives?

[12] See, however, Paulina Ochoa Espejo's recent work, which considers territories as watersheds, i.e., systems where institutions, people, the biota, and the land are interrelated and create civic duties that are overlapping, *On Borders: Territories, Legitimacy, and the Rights of Place* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

[13] LaDuke, "Natural to Synthetic and Back Again," ii.

This new construct, an *ecological* popular sovereignty, corrects the narrowness of popular sovereignty by recognizing the essential dependence of communities on nature, requiring relations of reciprocity toward nature, and caring for it by giving, sustaining, and regenerating it. Moreover, joining *anti-imperial* and *ecological* as modifiers of popular sovereignty finally allows for the theorization of this concept without disavowing or actively obscuring its material underpinnings. In particular, this way of theorizing popular sovereignty shifts the meaning of settler from an identity to a way of relating to other humans and to land,[14] and provides parameters for evaluating political action for their (in)justice implications. It allows us to judge politically the act and quality of "settling" into a land, the underpinnings of our wellbeing and enjoyment of material and symbolic goods, and the character of the exchanges into which we enter. This kind of political judgement underlies Charlene Carruthers's claim that "after more than three hundred years of labor" Black groups have a claim to steward US land, but not to extractive ownership.[15] Stewardship of land figures as well in Winona LaDuke's (White Earth Ojibwe) account of Indigenous relationship to land as open to "the possibility of relationality with all peoples," rather than exclusive.[16] This is consonant with Rob Nichols's account of Indigenous peoples' claim that the earth, which was stolen from them through the establishment of property, "belongs to no one in particular." This because the act of stealing Indigenous land replaced the relationality between humans and the earth with control over "all objects and activities within that zone."[17] In contrast to this model of control, an ecological popular sovereignty that scrutinizes the forms of relationality underpinning its politics obtains through a solidaristic joining of wills to become naturalized to place wherever one goes, temporarily or permanently.

This work of scrutiny is also required to undo the racial constructions which determine what we see and what is occluded, and what power is able to do to subjects, making the dismantling of racial ideologies necessary for the undoing of settler occupation and the regeneration of land-based relations. Settler forms locate Indigenous peoples, slaves,

[14] Fujikane, *Mapping Abundance for a Planetary Future: Kanaka Maoli and Critical Settler Cartographies in Hawai'i*, 15, paperson, *A Third University Is Possible*, 14.

[15] Charlene Carruthers, *Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements* (New York: Beacon Press, 2018), 136–37.

[16] Winona LaDuke, *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2005), 8, in King, Navarro, and Smith, "Introduction: Beyond Incommensurability: Toward an Otherwise Stance on Black and Indigenous Relationality."

[17] Nichols, *Theft Is Property!: Dispossession and Critical Theory*, 31, 115.

forced diasporic settlers, and refugees in situations of anti-relationality that intensify the control of nature and its destructive use. But these interconnected forms of subjection can also lead to coalitions in opposition to extraction and the assimilation of land and humans to the goal of capitalist extraction.[18]

This brief discussion already opens new paths for thinking about a *we* that overcomes the trappings of imperial popular sovereignty. This *we* is constructed by tracing how particularly located subjects are imbricated in violent systems of settler or extractive colonial relations in "profoundly uneven and often complicit" ways.[19] This work of clarification is at once the process of construction of a people, one composed of various groups that have been displaced, segregated, conscripted, bribed into compliance, and fastened to these roles and places through myth. This people constructs itself by re-cognizing its place and role in the imperial machinery and its capitalist goals of accumulation, without seeking salvation in assimilation or becoming blinded to solidarity with others by the morbid desire to partake of imperial wealth.

In this process of re-cognition and exchange, common imperial technologies are discovered, including the shared techniques of confinement of Indigenous peoples, Japanese-American, and Central American refugees, as well as the space of the Indigenous, Black, and Latino family as a site of intervention that facilitates accumulation and consolidates the white privatized family, both by making possible its social reproduction and by providing an opposition by which to define its normative shape. The stolen land paradigmatic of Indigenous dispossession reappears in the uprooting of Africans from their land and their trafficking as slaves; in the use of Black women's bodies as land marked for settlement, industry, and waste; in the transformation of proletarian women into "basic means of reproduction" to make up for men's land lost to the enclosures;[20] and in the land dispossession of Indigenous peasants in Mesoamerica, sent north to assimilate and bring back the "modernity" of settler colonial society. These joint readings make it apparent that the delimitation of Black political thought from Indigenous political

[18] Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*, 75.

[19] Michelle Murphy, "Against Population, Towards Alterlife," in *Making Kin Not Population*, ed. Adele E. Clarke and Donna Jeanne Haraway (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2018), 120.

[20] See Chapter 3 and Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," 73, Tiffany Lethabo King, "Interview with Tiffany Lethabo King," *Feral Feminisms* 4 (2015): 65, cited in paperson, *A Third University Is Possible*, 16, Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 97.

thought, Asian American political thought, and Latinx political thought, and of all of these fields from the political theory of peoplehood and empire, prevents us from asking questions about the complex relations between these systems of domination, the struggles of emancipation different collectives enact, and the making and re-making of the subjects and political spaces involved in these relationships.[21]

This process of reciprocal recognition requires locating the physical points of encounter, but also the historical trajectories that brought these groups into contact. Hence, the demand by Martin Luther King and Frantz Fanon for peoples to face world history and locate themselves vis-à-vis revolutionary anti-colonial waves applies more generally to processes of people-making that must grapple with the distinct historical trajectories of groups in solidarity and joint struggle and with the overlaps and tensions within these trajectories. The fall of Dien Ben Phu and the US war against the Viet Cong, as noted earlier, motivated King, Fanon, and Boggs to reflect both on the continuities of oppression and the possibility of overpowering colonial powers. These continuities did not escape the Lakota (Standing Rock Siux) thinker Vine Deloria, who saw in the "search-and-destroy missions in Vietnam" the bloody character of Indian dispossession repeated.[22] These moments connect the present to historical events in ways that endanger accepted truths and commonsensical accounts of the past. They allow political actors to "seize hold of a memory as it flashes up," before both the memory and its receivers are coopted by imperial ideologies of domination.[23] Yet this demand must further account for what LaDuke (White Earth Ojibwe) calls "the history of the land itself," that is, "the land and its relationship to all the peoples who live, have lived, or will live here," and how standard history both indelibly marked and disavowed the land.[24]

Such a genealogy can expose and condemn demands of inclusion by the oppressed that presuppose a settler state as arbiter, or a focus on

[21] This discussion is indebted to Tiffany Lethabo King, Jennell Navarro, and Andrea Smith's superb consideration of the politics of the separation of the academic realms of Indigenous Studies, Ethnic Studies, and Black Studies, "Introduction: Beyond Incommensurability: Toward an Otherwise Stance on Black and Indigenous Relationality," 2–6. While I have more explicitly covered thinkers from the Black radical tradition and, in this conclusion, Indigenous political thought, for Asian American and Latinx political thought see Fred F. Lee, "Contours of Asian American Political Theory: Introductions and Polemics," *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 6, no. 3 (2018): 506–516, Raymond A. Rocco, Inés Valdez, and Arturo Chang, "Tradition and Disruption in Latinx and Latin American Political Thought," *Manuscript on file with the author* (2023).

[22] Vine Deloria, *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988 [1969]), vii.

[23] Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," 255.

[24] LaDuke, "Natural to Synthetic and Back Again," ii.

Indigenous land sovereignty that does not attend to the lack of "place" for the descendants of slaves and forced migrants of color.[25] Such an approach depends on an articulation of history that wrests tradition away from the ideology of the elites, and refuses empathy for the victor, decidedly negating the imperial spoils and cultural treasures, whose origins are entangled with horror.[26] A similar call is contained in Du Bois's short essay "Americanization," which appeals to Irish, Hungarian, Jewish, Asian, and South Sea Islanders arriving in the United States to not "surrender their will and deed to the glory of the 'Anglo-Saxon'!" who rules through brute force.[27] Kindred calls emerge from Indigenous thinkers highlighting the need to recognize multiple positionalities, meaning that in addition to those who are subjugated by the settler state and those who are settlers supportive of that state, there are also possibilities to break "the category of settler wide open by taking our places on the front lines of movements for deoccupation and decolonization."[28] This is not to minimize the power of structures of domination, the entrenched character of particular positionalities, and the tensions within anti-colonial priorities. Instead, it is to note that this difficult task cannot follow without understanding history and the constant work of examining and learning about our and others' positionalities. This is the realization that motivates Lee Maracle (Stó:lō Nation) to include in Indigenous peoples' "sense of justice" oppressed subjects such as undocumented migrants and colonial subjects without access to certain privileges that Indigenous peoples do enjoy, despite the denial of nationhood and their being surrounded by settlers.[29] This is the same impulse behind White Earth Ojibwe Winona LaDuke's recognition that

[25] Glen Sean Coulthard, "Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the 'Politics of Recognition' in Canada," *Contemporary Political Theory* 6, no. 4 (2007), Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*, vii–viii, King, Navarro, and Smith, "Introduction: Beyond Incommensurability: Toward an Otherwise Stance on Black and Indigenous Relationality," 3.

[26] Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," 255, 56.

[27] W. E. B. Du Bois, "Americanization," *The Crisis* 24, no. 4 (1922): 154.

[28] Fujikane, *Mapping Abundance for a Planetary Future: Kanaka Maoli and Critical Settler Cartographies in Hawai'i*, 14–15.

[29] Chantal Fiola, "Transnational Indigenous Feminism: An Interview with Lee Maracle," in *Transnationalism, Activism, Art*, ed. Kit Dobson and Áine McGlynn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 162. See also Astrid Fellner's account of Maracle's work as being in productive dialogue with "border thinking" traditions, "'To Live in the Borderlands Means …': Border Thinking and the Transcultural Poetics of Lee Maracle," in *Le Canada: Une Culture De Métissage/Transcultural Canada* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2019).

citizens of the inner cities and citizens of traditionally colonized peoples both suffer from the exploitation of nature that fuels synthetic reality.[30]

An emancipatory project emerging out of this historical scrutiny requires collective claims that reintegrate nature and the communal and self-determining projects of natives, while eschewing circuits of capitalist exploitation and accumulation that depend on settlement, forced and exploited labor, and accumulation abroad. This reframing requires what Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg thinker Leanne Simpson calls an anticapitalist grounded normativity, that is, "fundamental values and ethics regarding how we relate to each other and the natural world" that is necessarily anti-capitalist because it gives priority to values and eschews the creation and adoption of technology for the mere goal of accumulation.[31] This grounded normativity entails, for Potawatomi philosopher Kyle Whyte, the vitality, cultural flourishing, and political self-determination of communities, which follow from the relationships established with "the plants, animals, physical entities, and ecosystems" of the places they live in.[32] This means that as we imagine alternative societies, the relationship between nature, on the one hand, and culture and politics, on the other, should be a central realm of political debate. This grounded normative wisdom has affinities with Marx's attention to the metabolism of labor and nature, and his stance against land ownership, which favors instead a vision of humans as merely temporary beneficiaries of the land, ones who must bequeath it in an improved state to succeeding generations.[33] Lastly, Simpson's grounded normative critique converges as well with Du Bois by critiquing the glorification of technology and the devaluation of manual work as central to imperial capitalism.[34] Like Du Bois's critique of the liberal arts education that paves the way for Black subjects to escape manual labor, Simpson condemns education that simply "shift[s] our children into the urban middle class" without embedding the means

[30] LaDuke, "Natural to Synthetic and Back Again," v.

[31] Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*, 73, 78.

[32] Kyle Whyte, "The Dakota Access Pipeline, Environmental Injustice, and US Settler Colonialism," in *Contemporary Moral Issues*, ed. Lawrence M. Hinman (New York: Routledge, forthcoming), 8.

[33] David M. Temin, "Custer's Sins: Vine Deloria Jr. and the Settler-Colonial Politics of Civic Inclusion," *Political Theory* 47, no. 3 (2018): 374, Marx, *Capital Volume III*, 911.

[34] Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*, 79–80.

of production in alternative economics and ways of living for humans and nonhumans.[35]

These tasks of imagining alternative political arrangements must occur in tandem with processes of disalienation, including through the detachment from the all-powerful technologized mindset that Du Bois criticizes, and remains at play in the settler politics of tech-led green capitalism and the reliance on racialized labor for reconstruction after climate disasters.[36] Disalienated subjects would recognize, alongside LaDuke (White Earth Ojibwe), that technological catastrophes cannot be forever addressed by technological fixes, and ask anew, with Indigenous or land-based peoples, what the relationship of society to the land should be.[37]

This process of disalienation and undoing requires a collective self-definition that posits humans as members of a minor species "badly in need of assistance from other forms of life,"[38] and requires another history, a proper "history of the land itself" which can ground the rethinking of emancipation as having to do with the land, not just the people.[39] This redefinition would shift societies away from political pledges of loyalty to particular governmental entities ("the Flag") toward the expression of gratitude and acceptance of duties toward all of life.[40] Declaring loyalty to one another and gratitude to the Earth, water, animals, wind, plants, and other nonhuman forms of life is a political stance preferable to pledging allegiance to the US Flag and to a republic whose promises of liberty and equality are at best unfulfilled, at worst hypocritical,[41] and are in every case dependent on settlement and overseas extraction. Ultimately, the question to center in enacting solidarity and searching for an anti-imperial collective *we* is how to conceive of a democratic politics of species and a declaration of allegiance to the natural sources of life,[42] rather than a possessive attachment and demand for wealth

[35] Ibid., 80.

[36] Sarah Stillman, "The Migrant Workers Who Follow Climate Disasters," *The New Yorker*, November 1, 2021, Isabel Altamirano-Jiménez, "'The Sea is our Bread': Interrupting Green Neoliberalism in Mexico," *Marine Policy* 80, no. June (2017), Bruce Erickson, "Anthropocene Futures: Linking Colonialism and Environmentalism in an Age of Crisis," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 38, no. 1 (2020).

[37] LaDuke, "Natural to Synthetic and Back Again," iv, vi.

[38] Vine Deloria, *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion* (Golden: Fulcrum Publishing, 2003), 151.

[39] LaDuke, "Natural to Synthetic and Back Again," ii, iix.

[40] Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*, 112.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

grounded in the systematic destruction of these sources of life and the racialized subjects who labor alongside them.

The caretaking relation to land and all forms of life need not be a return to a romanticized past. Instead, as Du Bois's ecological account makes clear, what is required is a disalienated recognition of the inescapable dependence on nature that characterizes life as it is today and a contestation of the distribution of value so that it is rebalanced to reorient relations to nature and racialized labor toward the sustenance of life rather than accumulation.

This project dwarfs the technical matter of making sustainable use of natural resources within a capitalist system, in the sense that it presupposes a radical critique of private ownership of land, itself the basis of settlement and the transformation of nature into a resource. Without such a stance, there is no possible democratic project, neither in settler colonies nor in other territories whose land and labor are exploited to feed accumulation in the Global North. To the extent that imperial capitalism remains able to charge humans for the very right to occupy the Earth,[43] constructive relations with land and the attendant social relationalities must be sacrificed to capitalist accumulation.[44] To the extent that a joint political project can be envisioned among these groups, the different locations vis-à-vis regimes of settlement, (post)colonial extraction, and racial capitalist accumulation must be acknowledged, a process that will produce not one *we* but many,[45] for each of which the different tasks and implications of the dismantling of these structures and the repairing or reconstruction of relations must also be faced.

In many corners of the world the effort today is the opposite of this critical reconstruction of oppressive regimes and their interrelations. The tendency in the United States is one of closure to difference and to history, demanding the banning of books that might enlighten us about land-based relations, denying the legitimacy of the Black and Latinx vote that defeated Trump, and declaring the mobilities produced by imperial political projects in the Middle East and Central America *illegal*. This book traces the roots of these trends in the entangled character of democracy and empire, but it contains a parallel diagnostic of the possibilities for solidarity and coalition among those at the receiving end of imperial power, which emerges even more clearly in the actual solidaristic linkages

[43] Marx, *Capital Volume III*, 908.
[44] Ruth Wilson Gilmore, "What Is to Be Done?," *American Quarterly* 63, no. 2 (2011): 261.
[45] Liboiron, *Pollution Is Colonialism*, 24–25.

among activists struggling for Black lives in many areas of the metropole and connections drawn between anti-neoliberal revolts in Chile and Lebanon.[46] Or between anticapitalist, antiracist movements and Indigenous peoples resisting further encroachment of their land for fossil fuel extraction,[47] and between Indigenous peoples and anti-deportation activists.[48] In the many overlaps of these groups and their ability to bring their struggles together lies the basis of a collective language that can escape the fate of an imperial popular sovereignty.

[46] The Guardian, "The Guardian View on Black Lives Matter Worldwide: A Common Cause," *The Guardian*, June 7, 2020, Declan Walsh and Max Fisher, "From Chile to Lebanon, Protests Flare over Wallet Issues," *The New York Times*, October 23, 2019.

[47] Leah Donnella, "At the Sacred Stone Camp, Tribes and Activists Join Forces to Protect the Land," *National Public Radio*, September 10, 2016, IEN, "Indigenous Peoples Led Shutdown at Ft. Sill Immigration Detention Center," *Indigenous Environmental Network Blog*, July 21, 2019.

[48] Lenard Monkman, "'No Ban on Stolen Land,' Say Indigenous Activists in U.S." *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*, February 2, 2017.

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