

# The Second Age of the Third World: from primitive accumulation to global public goods?

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**ABSTRACT** *The post-cold war era of neoliberal globalisation is the ‘Second Age of the Third World’. No longer defined by comparisons with advanced capitalism and state socialism, or by attempts to chart a non-aligned path between liberal and Marxist utopias, which characterised the ‘First Age of the Third World’, the Third World’s identity is now constituted by its re-entry into the protracted process of primitive accumulation. Neoliberalism simultaneously accelerates and aggravates the uneven, destructive and creative route towards proletarianisation and private property. This prospect throws contemporary development theory into disarray, especially when confronted with the ever-present but usually hidden role of the increasingly internationalised state. The idea of global public goods has arisen out of this impasse. This article discusses primitive accumulation and global public goods, offering ‘public accumulation’ as an alternative.*

Can primitive accumulation complete its task in the ‘Third World’? This question lies at the root of the development debate. Dependency theory says no. Modernisation and classical Marxism say yes. Neither side of the debate can be reliably tested, because production relations in most of the Third World have not been fully transformed through primitive accumulation’s trials.<sup>1</sup> During the cold war heyday of Third Worldism, outlined in the introduction to this special issue, theories and practices of development were framed by ‘third way’ utopias, while benefiting from the politics of non-alignment, nationalist muscle flexing, and variations of Keynesian and Stalinist planning models. Third World ideologies of difference and autonomy, combined with the politics of negotiating between two powerful global blocs, meant that the task of primitive accumulation was never acknowledged by name—except, misleadingly, by those casting doubt on state actors pursuing more primitive consumption than primitive accumulation. Nevertheless, the process was in motion. States were heavily involved.<sup>2</sup> Gains were made.<sup>3</sup>

Such state activity meant that Third Worldist development projects directly addressed a second question central in the development debate. To what extent

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can ‘intentional development’<sup>4</sup> in the Third World hasten the process of primitive accumulation and simultaneously soften its devastating effects? In this era of so-called globalisation, that question is now: can ‘development’—in both its accumulative and welfarist guises—be labelled a ‘global public good’ deserving the transfer of material resources from richer segments of the global political economy to poorer ones and the construction of public institutions to further its end?

The conjuncture that marked development’s golden age wound down with the end of the West’s (or First World’s) equally gilded age of capitalism and the demise of the East’s (or Second World’s) state-led ‘primitive socialist accumulation’. Neoliberalism’s apostles—victors in the battle against socialism, Keynesianism and Third World amalgams thereof—proclaimed that development could emerge in the Third World only with the removal of what they called state impediments. Deliberately or not, they ignored primitive accumulation’s history of state assistance and argued that it would ‘take-off’ if the prices were right, the state stayed in the backseat, and foreign trade and investment were encouraged more than ever.

Yet now there are tensions within the dominant development discourse about the role of the state in primitive accumulation processes, even though neither dare reveal their name, as either analytical constructs or empirical referents.<sup>5</sup> For over a quarter of a century, neoliberalism has delegitimised Third World states as agents of primitive accumulation, deriding them as repositories of ‘rent-seekers’—protective cabals for ruling classes capable only of conspicuous consumption.<sup>6</sup> However, now the promise of the immediate post-cold war era has not materialised and the problems of this inherently conflict-ridden process have become increasingly evident. Nevertheless, those crafting the contours of development debates are reluctant to reintroduce the Third World state into the discourse. Thus a transnational state looms in its place.<sup>7</sup> Its legitimising language is that of global public goods. Its contradictions are similar to those constituting theories and justifications for the role of the state in any process of primitive accumulation. Be it ‘local or global’ the contemporary developmental state must simultaneously promote the bloody process and ameliorate its many devastating consequences. Advocates of global public goods believe that their global state can perform both tasks.

As well as discussing the concept of primitive accumulation and its relevance in the Third World today, this article assesses the idea of the re-emergence of an increasingly transnationalised or globalised state pursuing capitalist development under the new rubric of ‘international’ or ‘global public goods’. It may also serve as warning that unless the stark realities of contemporary primitive accumulation on a global scale are accounted for, the global public goods panaceas will be less productive than those of their predecessors decades ago. Indeed, given that the problems they address are more likely to be better resolved by state structures with a modicum of subsidiarity than by global structures attending footloose financial capital, development specialists might better return to real questions of ‘intentional’ development and its legitimacy raised by the problems of primitive accumulation in their classical and Third World manifestations.

### **Past and present problems of primitive accumulation in the three worlds of development**

Development is no more and no less than the always ‘original’—and always bloody—but structurally similar process of primitive accumulation. With the end of the Cold War and the simultaneous passing of the First Age of the Third World, the Second Age of the Third World finds the globe divided as follows. The First World now consists of those geopolitical spaces, or state–society complexes, that have gone through the historic process of primitive accumulation.<sup>8</sup> In the First World—where most of the global rulers live—proletarians are fully separated from the means of production and power and make up the majority. Many have organised themselves well enough to influence those at the peaks of economic and political power to concede political and socioeconomic rights to them. Some of these ‘rights’ are also the ideological expression of the ‘freedom’ that comes from shaking off feudal and other pre-capitalist obligations,<sup>9</sup> and others have come from working class and other subaltern struggles. They have produced democracy. Serendipitously, many of these victories have forced capital to become more and more productive and expansionary—even imperial.<sup>10</sup> It is often redistributive enough to make many proletarians think they are ‘middle class’, many to think that they might be rich but for the demands of the poor,<sup>11</sup> and many to work for the state.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, the societies that endured ‘primitive socialist accumulation’ under Soviet development strategies continue to constitute the Second World.<sup>13</sup> The post-communist nation-states are becoming capitalist again, but under different conditions from those in the First and Third Worlds.

There are at least three reasons—aside from the sheer poverty and huge inequality between ‘South’ and ‘North’,<sup>14</sup>—for retaining the category ‘Third World’ for the part of the world so labelled during the Cold War. First, it is composed of social formations still locked in primitive accumulation’s embrace, but in an altered phase, partially accelerated and more devastating than before. Its statist political economy during the Cold War simultaneously pushed and muted primitive accumulation: now it is doing more of David Harvey’s ‘dispossession’<sup>15</sup> and less of Scott MacWilliam’s ‘attaching’.<sup>16</sup> It is also re-entering world history in ways oddly reminiscent of the pre-colonial period. The (shaky) mantle of global hegemony has now passed from an imperial Britain of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the post-cold war imperium of the USA as if the Bolshevik experiment and its offshoots had never existed. Second, the global hinterlands are still the Third World because they are rejoining the world economy from a different platform than the former Second World. Finally, they share a history of subjugation to global capital’s first *belle époque* and other conditions of ‘post-coloniality’, not least their state structures.<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately, admitting the continuing possibility of a Third World does not mean a ‘third way’ can accomplish history’s most unpleasant task, be it generated in global development institutions or ‘national’ planning departments. Although it takes place in many forms—and there are no guarantees of its completion—the process of primitive, ‘primary’ or original accumulation cannot be avoided. The creation of new capitalist classes and the transformation of

property and production relations—including all accompanying political and cultural–ideological changes—are long and protracted in the best global contexts. In the worst—wherein dominant classes and states are not in favour of primitive accumulation processes threatening competition—it may even be permanent. However, the issue of ‘stagnation or transformation’ cannot be resolved until private property rights are universalised and full proletarianisation is achieved. Neoliberal globalisation may be quickening this process, but it is also exaggerating its unevenness.<sup>18</sup> The contradictions of primitive accumulation—exacerbated by the problems inherent in all the booms, busts, cycles and crises of profitability in full-blown capitalism—are bound to structure the current era’s political struggles (including wars). Those hoping to ease the process by expanding global public goods must grasp primitive accumulation’s nettle. They must recognise that only states (or suitable international substitutes) can both push the process to its limits and ameliorate some of its dislocations. They must realise that the world’s most powerful states and classes—not only ‘anti-globalisation’ activists—will resist.

So what is primitive accumulation? It consists of three closely related elements. First are the methods by which an emerging bourgeoisie accumulates its first stock of capital in the midst of a disappearing mode of production. Second are the means by which a ‘free’ proletariat is created, tearing people from their ties to pre-capitalist tenure, their work relations and modes of authority. The ‘stock’ gained by the new bourgeoisie, partly from the old modes of production it is replacing and from parts of the world other than its ‘home’, enables the construction of the means of production with which the new proletariat labours to produce surplus value for its new—sometimes re-invented—rulers. In return for this labour the working class is paid money wages, enabling its reproduction through the consumption of some of the commodities made for capitalists—products (for example, food and shelter) alienated from it during primitive accumulation.

The third component of this process allocates members of society the ‘right’ to buy their independent means of subsistence. The ‘collective’—and poorly documented—rights to land in previous modes of production, largely taken by force by the emerging bourgeoisie, are transformed into ‘private’ rights ‘freely’ transferred by monetary exchange. This opportunity only benefits a minority of the displaced peoples at the same time as ideologies accompanying primitive accumulation deceptively celebrate small yeoman-type farmers replacing feudal landowners<sup>19</sup> and the gaining of these individual liberties, including the right to enter and exit employment. With land and labour’s commodification comes the ‘freedom’ for their purchase and sale, celebrated by those bemoaning the coercion inherent in these relations in previous systems of production. Those less enamoured with removing the ‘dead weight of previous generations’, as Marx put it, are more prone to remember the communal rights and privileges of the ties to the land and the guarantees of work therein.

In fact, the vast majority of the new dominated classes cannot afford to buy land. They are forced to work for a wage to subsist. This is so even when new forms of work are slow in arriving as the new means of production take time to develop—as the emerging bourgeoisie is sluggish in investing its wealth in these

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new means, or turning it into 'real' capital. Thus much labour is unemployed and more sells below its reproduction rate. The alienated classes are often forced into what are now called 'informal' income gaining activities including theft and vagabondage.<sup>20</sup> For most people in the world's 'periphery' this process is much longer and bloodier than it was for the relatively small number of people in the core who started the global process and now benefit from developed capitalist forms.

The destruction of old modes of production and the emergence of new ones is by definition disruptive. It is also creative. Class forces within these mixtures of social relations create new collective organisations, augmenting beneficial processes, resisting harmful ones, and reinventing 'traditional' ones. These struggles transform states. Sometimes states are used as instruments of war and plunder against other countries.<sup>21</sup> Under pressure from subaltern social forces and their allies within new strata of 'organic intellectuals',<sup>22</sup> states will sometimes produce variants on 'poor laws'<sup>23</sup>—but ameliorative forms of 'intentional' development will be pulled away with 'liberal' capitalism's emergence. Whether these changes are dominated by the emerging bourgeoisie or moderated by a relatively strong proletariat—or 'disappearing' classes—they will be justified in the name of the public, often under the rubric of 'development'.<sup>24</sup> 'Public goods' are the resources and conditions constructed through these struggles and utilised by enough people so they benefit more than 'special interests'—from sanitation facilities to rules on banking, and from colonial states hastening 'civilisation's' progress to environmental legislation. 'Public bads' are the negative effects of primitive accumulation, from crime to pollution and international war—even dictators. Sometimes they call forth the creation of public goods; at others they are ignored.<sup>25</sup>

The main difference between historical and current epochs of primitive accumulation is that the world's ruling classes are now more 'globalised',<sup>26</sup> and they work with (and sometimes against, albeit less than before) states ranging from the municipal to the global level.<sup>27</sup> These classes are still made up of people who own actual means of production and are compelled by the exigencies of competition to innovate and expand them—and to cheapen labour and commodity supplies. Their political intellectuals change local and global state structures with varying degrees of co-ordination and conflict. Their property is exchanged on 'the market', ie their capital, including land, is bought and sold for money. These transactions are legally recognised and recorded by states and their international adjuncts. They usually—still—try to make the parts of the world that are not 'property' just that: they try to privatise and commodify them.

This essential part of the primitive accumulation process is often termed the 'enclosure of the commons'.<sup>28</sup> It is not easy to turn these parts of the world into easily bought and sold chunks, so various fractions of the bourgeoisie often exploit and simultaneously transform modes of production in which 'the commons' produce goods and reproduce labour power and nature: they often appear to subsidise the capital's costs. Some writers classify this process as 'permanent primitive accumulation' as if it is a 'conscious' strategy of capital, part of a well planned world division of labour.<sup>29</sup> Yet the contradictions of these transformations are more severe than this perspective allows, and there are simultaneous

processes of ‘pre-capitalist preservation’ *and* transformation wherever capital meets its predecessors or cohabitants. Where these processes conflate with ‘nation building’ and its micro-processes—often shaping war—to talk of ‘control’ stretches the concept. Nevertheless, the apparent permanence of the process in the Third World separates it from the First.

Privatisation or commodification, and transformation or dispossession, *can* make proletarians and small farmers out of serfs and subsistence producers, as well as capitalists out of feudal lords, village chiefs, and perhaps members of former ‘state-socialist’ ruling parties. The hurdles of primitive accumulation *can* be mastered: capitalist development *can* take off. Capitalists and states may synergistically produce industrialisation—to meet the by no means spontaneous demands of local and global markets—and landless urbanised proletarians may become unionised working classes that democratise states and force capital to raise wages.<sup>30</sup> However, if the processes stall, permanent primitive accumulation ensues. Unwieldy articulations create stagnating social formations with small enclaves of compradorial activities feeding into the global accumulation process. Workers may be ‘semi-proletarian’, casually employed for a pittance a few months every year and eking out an existence from the soil or familial networks for the rest of the time, while petty entrepreneurs can only fit into ‘informal’ categories.

Undoubtedly peripheral processes of primitive accumulation leading to capitalist development co-exist with other modes of production around the world. Those past the formative stages of capitalist development augment their endogenous accumulation strategies with debt, diamonds and oil<sup>31</sup> and—not least—labour from their hinterlands. Thus they benefit from the form of primitive accumulation that does not necessarily change into capitalist relations of production. Wealth is garnered from this ‘permanent’ or stalled form ‘outside’ the loops of profit and productivity engendered solely by the augmentation of relative surplus value based on the struggles within the capital—labour nexus: the former adds to the latter but does change into it. Old modes of production incorporated into capitalism sometimes undergo the full extent of primitive accumulation; at others they are only incompletely subsumed. The nature of the process depends on factors ranging from the resources in various regions through to the nature of local ruling classes and the tempo of global capital flows.

Most of the Third World can be situated somewhere between the process of permanent primitive accumulation on the one hand or accelerating primitive accumulation on the other hand. *How* it fits is conditioned by the ways in which global capital is expanding or contracting, how ‘nationalist bourgeoisies’ are emerging (or contracting) out of the transitions, and how global and local variations of states manage the contradictions arising therefrom. Much of the process is shaped by how both the good and the bad sides of primitive accumulation are made public.

The foundation of the difference between Third World and First World state–society complexes rests in this incompleteness of capitalism and in the flows of huge amounts of wealth—including money<sup>32</sup> as well as pure labour, its products and other resources—from periphery to core. Most of the Third World is on the cusp of various ‘local’ permutations of primitive accumulation: its

many ruling classes are becoming more and more capitalist, its property relations are becoming more and more private, while the subaltern classes are losing their modalities of sustenance rooted in non-capitalist land tenure and work relations and becoming more and more proletarianised. If they are not becoming 'industrialised' they are, as Bryceson puts it, certainly undergoing 'de-agrarianisation'.<sup>33</sup> The ideological and political aspects of these processes—including religion, nationalism, racism and ethnocentrism—accentuate their inherent violence within their territorial spaces and increasingly into the heart of capital (as 11 September 2001 exemplified).<sup>34</sup>

As at the end of the 19th century, when capital reached unprecedented global heights and depths, so now does it span the world at the threshold of a new *belle époque*. Now, as then, the intense flows of capital and its simultaneous subsumption and extension of other modes create unprecedented catastrophe in the hinterlands. As observers such as Karl Polanyi put it during colonial times, neither the peoples in the periphery nor the colonial states could protect their societies against the 'ravaging international trade and imperialism' that 'destroys precapitalist communities of kinship, neighbourhood, profession and creed ... all forms of indigenous, organic society'.<sup>35</sup> Can they do so now? Perhaps, during the short interregnum of the development decades (roughly from 1950 to 1980) their states at least were beginning to manage what both Marx and Schumpeter might have called 'creative destruction': but that was when one could utter the word 'state' in polite company.

Only after global depression and wars did the myriad sovereignties of the Third World replace colonial rule with 'passive revolutions'.<sup>36</sup> For a few decades thereafter, Keynesian compromises promised to bring states, their subsidised national bourgeoisies, and civil societies to developmental heights. Primitive accumulation was helped along by states and what by Silver and Arrighi call 'developmentalist and labor-capital social contracts' promoted by the USA to meet anti-imperialist and cold war challenges.<sup>37</sup> By the end of the 1970s, however, neoliberalism broke that fragile consensus as global capital escaped its fetters once again. By then, the Third World challenge had almost disappeared with the coup against Allende in Chile, the stillbirth of the New International Economic Order and the coercion and compromise of the southern African liberation wars. A decade later, state socialism's collapse meant the end of another bulwark for those fearing the destabilising effects of state-less peripheral development. Now the notion of 'global public goods' has made a tentative appearance while the designers of post-cold war development worry about Asian-style financial crises, and Seattle-style demonstrators and Puerto Alegre-style social forums.<sup>38</sup> The Third Worldist and statist experiments in managing the contradictions of primitive accumulation seem to have failed, so softer organic intellectuals of global capital search for solutions with enough scope to link charitable humanitarian agendas to those more concerned with the extraction of absolute and relative surplus value.<sup>39</sup>

The essential questions about Third World development, however, have not changed. They still revolve around whether the 'global' processes of primitive accumulation hinder the 'local' ones or not? Does the 'global bourgeoisie' and its widespread practice of wealth extraction halt the creation of a landless

proletariat and peripheral capitalists' accumulating practices? Does it distort the dynamic and developmental dialectics of the latter groups' relations with emerging workers and intermediate classes as pre-capitalist social formations merge with local and global variations of capitalism? Do local ruling groups freeze the development of subaltern classes in favour of alliances with global forces promoting extractive over expansionary processes? These have been the problems of 'development and underdevelopment' ever since dependency theory—or its Leninist precursors<sup>40</sup>—challenged the comparative optimism of both modernisation theory and orthodox Marxism. On them hinge the issue of whether or not 'real' capitalist development on the periphery is possible. The question of whether the Third World still exists (or for how long) must be resolved within this nexus: 'postcolonial identity' issues or chimerical third ways will not answer it. History has not settled it. Its sheer magnitude—brought back into focus after the pitfalls of premature and voluntarist socialism and their Cold Wars have been forgotten—still constitutes the cornerstone of the Third World's condition and of ways of improving it. Attempts to deny primitive accumulation's centrality, in its local and global manifestations, will founder on utopia's shoals or the shifting sands of piecemeal social engineering, leaving the social stagnation festering in peripheral capitalism's bottom layers. So will shying from the role of the *state*—in its global and local manifestations—in this process.

To contend that the current epoch of world history is characterised by a renewed phase of primitive accumulation is far from arguing that this is a purely 'economic' process. One must maintain that it involves much state 'intervention', congruent with Marx's conceptualisation. The newly materialising bourgeoisies forming at 'local' and 'global' levels need both force and legitimacy for their transformational accumulation projects. They must coerce and/or persuade millions of people off their various 'commons' provided by their multitudinous modes of production. They must offer a modicum of material and ideological recompense to incorporate old ruling classes and accommodate subaltern resistance. They must provide the means of production to which freely floating labour power must be attached: primitive accumulation cannot proceed without this last half.<sup>41</sup> When 'nations' are not emerging from colonial boundaries local and global bourgeoisies attempt to change them. There are no guarantees new ones will gel. In these cases states and their armies, amid warlords and theirs, are the accumulating actors.<sup>42</sup> Different sections of these classes—or their upper caste servants and idealistic young NGO workers—often come to repair war's damage: this branch of 'international public goods' is what is quaintly referred to as 'peacekeeping' and 'humanitarianism'. These actors have generated a global public goods discourse. Before discussing it, however, a comparison of old and new conceptions of primitive accumulation is in order.

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### **The three worlds of development and classical, modern and postmodern modes of primitive accumulation: from Marx and Engels to Hardt and Negri and ... the World Bank**

Some of the confusion surrounding the meaning of primitive accumulation may lie with Karl Marx's words about capitalism's homelands. Although he was



fairly certain ‘progress’ depended on the bourgeoisie fulfilling an historic mission to eliminate pre-capitalist social formations, he never really decided whether the capital propelling the bourgeoisie to global dominance was ‘internally’ or ‘externally’ generated.<sup>43</sup> If the former, as Brenner suggests,<sup>44</sup> agrarian revolution and proto-industrialisation were the prime generators of the ‘original capital’—including, in its guilds, many aspects of the ‘training’ of a skilled and disciplined working class<sup>45</sup>—carrying Western European capitalism forward. Strong proletarians and competition pushed capitalist industrialisers towards innovations and productivity increases. Profit came from relative surplus value—that is, gains from technological invention and better divisions of labour, Taylorism, Fordism and the practices of post-Fordism such as ‘lean’ and ‘just in time’ production—rather than from the absolute surplus value gained by forcing people to work faster for longer hours, or from cheap labour in Third Worlds of permanent primitive accumulation.

However, if that original stock of capital could not have been garnered without Britain increasingly taking over the oceanic commercial and extractive networks built up by Genoese, Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch hegemony, nor without the slave trade, the Opium Wars, and India’s industrial obliteration, then perhaps capitalism in the world’s core was dependent on wealth taken from other modes of production in other parts of the world—and still is. It relies on the destruction of the Third World, not its development, on monopoly rather than competition, on dictators not democrats, on war instead of peace. All the West’s developmental co-operation shibboleths are empty excuses for the continuing subjection of the Third World’s people to classes who only want the extraction of their natural resources and their forms of labour that have not advanced far beyond slavery. In this view, primitive accumulation processes are permanently stalled because capitalists need other modes of production. When they are completed in some parts of the world they are reinvented in others. Yes, public commons and mutual solidarities (or repressive obligations) are destroyed, but rational capitalists, vigorous proletarians and productive yeoman do not arise in their place. They are denuded and supplanted by capricious compradors dominating a paralysed populace with no bourgeois freedoms superseding the rights and compulsions of ‘communal’ social formations. Rhetoric of growth and expansion aside, the game of capitalism remains ‘zero-sum’.

A latter-day Marxist might be able to get away with this type of ‘neo-Marxism’, but would be confronted with variations of locally and globally initiated primitive accumulation: proletarians working in real industries, peasants as well as plantations growing and selling agricultural commodities, capitalists combating and collaborating with their metropolitan peers. Empirical patterns of primitive accumulation would be uneven, not uniform, conditioned as much by indigenous modes of pre-capitalism (or by forms of ‘state socialism’, as in China) as by currents emanating from the centre. Can classical Marxists argue coherently on these issues?

Contemporary theory further confuses the empirical mayhem. The writers of what has been dubbed this century’s *Communist Manifesto* seem as perplexed as their progenitors. Is it coincidental that Hardt and Negri’s *Empire* is the first work to raise the issue of primitive accumulation in years? Is it serendipitous that

the new apostles of global revolution are even more puzzling on primitive accumulation than Marx and Engels? To both questions the answer is ‘no’. First, the issue is raised again while the 21st century ushers in a new phase of global primitive accumulation, sometimes called ‘globalisation’. The second ‘no’ is different. Hardt and Negri’s mystification magnifies Marx and Engels’ because the Third World has reached an ideological plane in which its various modes of production, which are articulated into the global political economy, are considered *equivalent* to any other social formation.

Hardt and Negri also have a political reason to reduce the theory of primitive accumulation to ashes: their notion of the ‘multitude’ as the source of global revolution includes *all* groups of people in any relation of subordination to capital and states, so they cannot privilege workers who have gone through the fire of a protracted process of classical primitive accumulation. If they did, they might have to wait forever. Instead, they have posited a new universal class. All members contribute equally to the global gathering of value—but some of them are subjected to ‘post-modern primitive accumulation’.<sup>46</sup> Others may be NGO mendicants or computer nerds. The result of their wishing away primitive accumulation’s travails is their proposal for the ultimate and utopian global good: a global social wage, a ‘guaranteed income for all’.<sup>47</sup>

Marx and Engels, as steeped in the project of capitalist development as any captain of industry, did not hesitate to say that the non-capitalist world was ‘backward’—and that it would soon disappear. Hardt and Negri are not as eager to pass civilisational judgement. They censure ‘postcolonial’ thought for uncritically celebrating ‘non-Western’ cultural modalities, they criticise forms of ‘localism’ attempting to ward off the tempests of global informational capitalism, and they nearly authorise Marx’s notes on colonial India.<sup>48</sup> This may signal an advance for Third World ideologies of equivalence and representational efficacy, but by placing all modes of production around the globe within the ‘highest levels of productivity’ just because they are linked through a process of ‘informational accumulation’ that ‘destroys or at least destructures ... [and] immediately integrates [them] in its own networks’<sup>49</sup> Hardt and Negri just about negate the fact that they have brought the concept of primitive accumulation—along with nation-state formation and democratisation—to prominence again.<sup>50</sup> To clarify this problem, Marx’s and his heirs’ notion of primitive accumulation will have to be further investigated, along with its modernist reincarnations.

As noted, Marx’s perception of capitalism’s blood-soaked birth is dualistic. Some of the blood is from the slaves who crossed the Atlantic, where their labour augmented the capital of plantation owners and textile, tobacco and sugar manufacturers, amid scores of other forms of mercantile plunder around the world. The rest of the spilled bodily fluids and lopped-off limbs were from those in capital’s core who lost their land and feudal rights as they gained their ‘freedom’ to enter labour contracts with those who owned the means of production, or who were shipped off to capital’s outposts in the ‘new worlds’ of North America and Australasia to undertake more forms of primitive accumulation (often resulting in genocide). Yet, in spite of this dualism, Marx spent more time analysing the conditions for capitalism’s emergence and development in Europe than in capital’s global appendages. Thus his emphasis was on the

process's internal rather than external components. His analysis of 'the pre-history of the bourgeois economy' points to an intrinsic relation between the 'internally' generated transformation of a specific form of feudalism and the emergence of industrial capitalism. For example, he discusses how money became a 'highly energetic solvent' as feudalism was dissolving, how urban artisans' guilds and rural outputting were transformed into 'objectified labour' during the 14th and 15th centuries, how trading networks contributed to the dominance of exchange value over use value, and how the governments of 'Henry VII, VIII, etc' removed 'begging, vagabondage and robbery' off the list of alternatives to waged labour,<sup>51</sup> while those of the Reformation gave the ecclesiastical domains of the Roman Catholic church to 'rapacious royal favourites ... [and] speculative farmers and townsmen' and William of Orange's 'glorious revolution' sold crown land at 'knock-down prices' to the new large scale agricultural bourgeoisie.<sup>52</sup> These factors, combined with the expropriation of most people from their land rights—the essential condition, lest we forget—were the unsavoury precedents to what Amartya Sen calls the economic system allowing 'free seeking of employment'.<sup>53</sup> They were performed 'previous to' capitalism, often by a strong state; they cost 'capitalism' nothing and benefited its new leading members. Perhaps one could even think of them as a 'public good' for this new mode of production.

When one reads of the internal preconditions for capitalism's original phase, it is hard to accept the statement by Hardt and Negri that 'the *central* motor for the creation of capitalists ... came from outside England, from commerce—or really from conquest, the slave trade and the colonial system'.<sup>54</sup> Here Hardt and Negri confuse the wealth from trade and plunder with the social aspects of the creation of the *relationship* between labour and capital, without which there can be no capitalists. Hardt and Negri appear to accept this notion when they state that primitive accumulation is a '*social* accumulation'<sup>55</sup> (their emphasis) primarily based on the separation of the subaltern classes from their means of subsistence and production. However, their enthusiasm to give equal weight to the Third World's contribution to capital's origins forces them to write that the formation of capitalists *contrasts* with that of proletarians because the former are constituted by "the treasures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement and murder".<sup>56</sup> They quote Marx as if this proves their point. They fail to emphasise, even though they quote some of the phrase, that this wealth could only be "turned into capital" in Europe if the social conditions were propitious. Instead, they write that 'the enormous inflow of wealth overflowed the capacity of the old feudal relations of production'.<sup>57</sup> This almost quantitative phrasing of the process ignores the many changes within European feudalism that paved the way for this wealth to be turned into the capital relation. It also allows them to state that even now 'the productive relationship with the "dark continents" serves as the economic foundation of the European nation-states'.<sup>58</sup>

This formulation allows them to proceed to the assertion that the whole planet is subject to forms of 'post-modern primitive accumulation' even if it has not *quite* gone through the process of primitive accumulation and all its labourers are not exactly proletarianised. All are 'integrated in some way into the networks of informational production' so are 'immediately' rather than 'sequentially'

incorporated into a mode of production newer even than capitalism.<sup>59</sup> A centuries-long process of primitive accumulation is leapfrogged and all of the world's producing peoples who are subordinated to global capital in any way are equal before the universalising dictates of the 'information mode of production'.

Hardt and Negri stumble over the problems of discerning whether state-society complexes with a majority of producers only partially subjected to the discipline of full proletarianisation and the wage—that is, who are not 'really' but only 'formally' subsumed by capitalist production relations—have passed through the crucible of primitive accumulation. In an elliptical and complex passage Hardt and Negri write that the 'globalisation of markets' comes from 'the desires and demands of ... disciplined labour power across the world'. As the global core's 'desiring subjectivities forced the development to go forward' they also generated 'conditions of liberation and struggle' controllable only by the forces of 'real subsumption', that is, all the disciplines and satiations of advanced capitalism, hastened by the information revolution. These modes of control have flipped back to discipline core proletarians, too. Thus the spread of their desires may have dug their own graves with a global surveillance state. However, this fusion of formal and real subsumption—or primitive and disciplinary accumulation—also fuses the world's workers into one class and, with the global state, gives them an instrument for further liberation.<sup>60</sup> With full subsumption, global labourers are uncontrollable. A new apparatus of global power fusing economic and political control is created. Indeed, with the material reality of the protracted processes of primitive accumulation overcome (they are *dissolved* into a 'virtual reality'<sup>61</sup>) we are propelled on to the stage of pure politics. That purity allows Hardt and Negri to create a new class—the multitude—and posit a global social wage as its goal. Little problems such as the relationship of the multitude's poorer elements to the land are left to World Bank technocrats, hurrying to catch up with internet capitalism.

Hardt and Negri's predilections for proletarian desires and cyberspace collectives conjure the Third World away. However, more pedestrian analyses such as the World Bank's 2003 Deininger Report on *Land Policies for Growth and Poverty Reduction*, prescribe 'private property' as the 'answer' to the 'land question' in what they still identify as the Third World.<sup>62</sup> Meanwhile, the populist Peruvian philosopher Hernando de Soto proffers related strategies to establish secure private property rights in urban and rural settings alike.<sup>63</sup> De Soto claims poverty could be eliminated if states in the Third World (undoubtedly helped by World Bank experts) would codify the 'extralegal' social contracts for property recognised by billions of more-or-less informal shantytowners and agriculturalists. Then the capital embodied in their physical wealth could be invested again and again: credit based on the collateral of property could resurrect dead capital. De Soto implicitly recognises that many Third World residents have lost their rural land rights through primitive accumulation. They are proletarians (although he says Marx would be surprised to discover that the Third World's 'teeming mass does not consist of oppressed legal proletarians but of oppressed extralegal small entrepreneurs with a sizeable amount of assets'<sup>64</sup>) but are not sufficiently 'attached' to industrial means of production. Rather than wait for the factories or public works programmes he suggests that

the *de facto* private properties of huge informal urban settlements be legally recognised so their residents can become capitalists, investing in means of production with the money they borrow based on their titled property.

De Soto ignores the initial process of primitive accumulation that forced people into the cities, thus sidestepping questions about who owns capital now, and what they are doing with it. He also masks the problems of proletarianisation with his fantasy of millions of small businesspeople. Nevertheless, he inadvertently draws attention to the fact that questions concerning the permanence of primitive accumulation cannot be ‘tested’ unless property rights are universalised. Capital will never be fully rooted in the social formations of the world unless a landless proletariat has emerged and has ‘formal’ rights to purchase the land it has lost.

De Soto’s populism also avoids the ideological issues linked to the universalization of private property rights by attempting to incorporate ‘tradition’ with modernity. He advises state or NGO workers to research grassroots institutions and ‘folk conventions’ around property rights.<sup>65</sup> These conventions can then be incorporated into a state-system of property law, enabling the land-holding masses to be represented in a system of credit. It sounds simple, and fits with the influential notions of ‘good governance’, community development, popular participation, ‘market empowerment’, and other obfuscating buzzwords. However, if de Soto is correct, his ignorance of the primitive accumulation process is not problematic. (One wonders though: can we take seriously someone whose generous recognition of Marx’s rendition of primitive accumulation describes the people thus usurped as ‘small proprietors’?<sup>66</sup>) However, the informal property titling processes he charts happen *after* the initial stage of the subalterns’ separation from the ‘commons’ and other pre-capitalist forms of land rights and labour obligations, and after they have moved into cities. He has prematurely bid ‘farewell to the peasantry’<sup>67</sup> and predicted their welcome to Braudel’s capitalist bell jar.<sup>68</sup>

Furthermore, de Soto’s reliance on the roughshod settling of the American frontier as a guide to wealth creation is wrong. There one observes the concurrence of land settlement with the settling of land titling problems. The frontier of the American west was opened up through genocide, gold rushes and the contradictory relationship between cheap land and the need of industrialists for cheap labour.<sup>69</sup> Are those frontiers of land and industrialisation there in the Third World? Can the relations of production left behind by de Soto’s very modern (he says) urban citizens fuel an agricultural revolution accompanying the freeing of ‘dead capital’ stored in informal/extralegal forms of property recognition? Can it be true, as de Soto asserts without equivocation, that:

Former communist nations and the Third World are exactly where Europe, Japan and the United States were a couple of hundred years ago. Like the West, they must identify and gather up the existing property representations scattered throughout their nations and bring them into one integrated system to give the assets the fungibility, bureaucratic machinery and networks required to produce capital.<sup>70</sup>

While also promoting this urban vision, the World Bank offers encouragement to ‘small proprietors’ in rural areas where primitive accumulation’s first stage

has yet to gestate, places where, as the Bank notes in rural Africa, over 90% of the land has no state-recognised (or formal) tenure, be it ‘customary’ or capitalist, as well as in the ‘second-stage’ peri-urban areas in Africa and Asia wherein between 40% and 50% of residents have only informal land rights.<sup>71</sup> Maybe the assumption is that, if de Soto’s work is done in the cities, when rural residents are bought out of their access to the land they can carry their property rights—transformed into cash—into urban areas so larger and ‘more efficient’ capitalists can have their rural ways. Undoubtedly the Bank’s renewed emphasis on land is inspired by primitive accumulation’s requirements, in spite of populist language favouring the smallholder. As the 2003 World Bank–Deininger report notes, mechanisation and the ‘scope to collateral ... to overcome imperfections ... inherent to the credit market ... will favour farmers who own larger amounts of land’.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, formalisation of land tenure just might lead to a 50% increase in the supply of labour to the market, as in Peru.<sup>73</sup> This can only indicate a desire to create a large land-owning bourgeoisie—with lots of room to rent to a yeoman class and to sharecrop to tenants with even fewer rights<sup>74</sup>—and a landless proletariat.

The Bank recognises that this task is far-reaching; it knows that ‘changes in land relations have generally been confined to major historical transitions’ and that transformations from collective to individual forms of tenure are ‘not automatic ... [but] will be affected by political and economic factors, and thus will often coincide with major conflicts, upheavals, or power struggles’. The latter can ‘challenge traditional authorities and institutions that previously had unquestioned authority over land allocation’, they may ‘coincide with land claims by outsiders and ... race and ethnicity issues’, and they can ‘lead to serious crises of governance, including civil war’.<sup>75</sup> The report even acknowledges a less than productive ‘ruling class’.<sup>76</sup> It also knows land tenure reform is a public good for *states* to provide—although avoiding the word ‘state’ whenever possible. It advises that land rights need ‘public provision, or [hesitating to invoke straightforward provision for the notion of a ‘public’] at least regulation’ because:

1. the process is expensive; its benefits are largely ‘nonrival’;
2. it ‘facilitate[s] abstract representation and impersonal exchange of rights’ thereby providing a ‘necessary, though by no means sufficient, condition for participation in a modern economy through mechanisms such as mortgaging’;
3. tenure rights need standardisation and clear boundaries; and without a state’s monopoly on force people will waste resources protecting their claims or fighting for redress in cases of deprivation.<sup>77</sup>

Deininger acknowledges that ‘all economically and politically advanced societies [have] ... state-managed systems for regulating land ownership and land transfers’.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, although the Bank is clear that ‘individual title’ is by far the preferred route, such titles can never be unrestricted: they must be ‘limited by the need to have rights holders contribute to the broader public good’.<sup>79</sup> In cases where ‘customary’ forms of tenure are to be formalised, or to be changed to more capitalist forms, it is necessary to have an ‘authoritative interpretation of past norms’.<sup>80</sup>

It is thus clear that careful consideration of the process of primitive accumulation involves the development of adequate public goods. Marx's marauding bourgeoisie made full use of the state, while Hardt and Negri's multitude must establish systems of governance to implement its global wage. De Soto and Deininger's catalogues of collateral must be started and maintained by states. It is necessary, then, to investigate the discourse of global public goods before summarising the connections between them and the seemingly disparate realm of primitive accumulation.

### **Global public goods: the saviour of the Third World?**

The need for a variety of local and global state-like activities in the post-cold war interregnum has called forth the 'global public goods' discourse. Sometimes this language refers to the collective activities needed to pave the way for original accumulation. This could be the universal legalisation of property rights, ie private property,<sup>81</sup> creating 'freedom' for yeoman capitalists as well as their well established global peers/competitors—and forcing the majority to 'freely' sell their labour to the highest bidder. Given the absence of the guilds and rural proto-industries in the latter stages of feudalism that created a 'certain level of skill'—ready for picking by emerging capitalists—within an embryonic proletariat in the early days of classical capitalism,<sup>82</sup> perhaps the 'international community' must also provide the 'public good' of education. Indeed, where 'feudal' preconditions for capitalist development do not exist in the Third World, would the establishment of their functional equivalent—something like an 'absolutist state'<sup>83</sup>—be a 'public good'?

If, as many theorists of public goods suggest, 'the market' is a global public good—a carefully constructed ensemble of institutions rather than a spontaneous eruption—should global managers create it with what are effectively states of their own? Perhaps the notion—already acronymed IPG or GPG—reflects the admission that there is no longer a chance for a 'national bourgeoisie' in the Third World to pull off Smith's, Marx's and Weber's grand historical mission, even in tandem with its state. Maybe this class can only carry out 'primitive consumption', not 'original accumulation'. The 'accumulation' goes elsewhere while a few international soldiers and NGO mendicants—IPGs incarnate amidst IDPs (internally displaced persons) and the other flotsam of primitive accumulation—maintain a modicum of security and mop up the mess around the enclaves of wealth extraction. Frantz Fanon's pessimism about the pitfalls of the 'national middle class' thus merges with radical civil society's scepticism, and perhaps even with those espousing a dose of 'liberal imperialism' through reinvented colonial trusteeship or plain and simple invasions of places like Iraq.<sup>84</sup> The chorus chants: better us than the unruly behaviour of nasty national capitalists. Better us than a concept of a state delegitimised and distorted by the short but triumphant hegemony of neoliberalism and a slightly longer chronicle of kleptocrats, human rights abusers and fundamentalist fanatics. Let us construct the collective preconditions for capitalist development. We can do primitive accumulation the modern way.

In the absence of such overt declarations, global public goods are said to involve everything from ‘research’ and vaccine provision to ‘global coordination mechanisms’, such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative.<sup>85</sup> They include ‘good governance’ and sometimes even the whole gamut of development itself. The GPG is gaining credence as a soft alternative (or accompaniment) to classic neoliberal ‘development’. It is embodied by the *Gestalt* of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) rather than the World Bank and the IMF, and could represent a stronger version of the ‘post-Washington consensus’.<sup>86</sup> Still in an early phase, its ‘real’ meaning is unclear: like the earlier rise of the notion of ‘sustainable development’, GPG is ideologically unmoored and will continue to be until one or the other forces of global hegemony bring it into their ambit.<sup>87</sup>

Nevertheless, one can still attempt to strip its meaning to a core. What is a public good, and what makes one global? We are led to believe that public goods and conditions are ‘nonrival and non-excludable’—if one person consumes or enjoys them, others can too, and it is difficult to stop people from sharing their benefits. The definition of the concept has never been precise, changing over time with political and ideological shifts. As Meghnad Desai puts it, the historic development of public goods has had less to do with technocrats ‘gauging the preferences of consumers’ and more to do with politicians ‘guessing what was needed to keep them from revolting—an elite response to democratic but extra-parliamentary pressure’.<sup>88</sup> The notion’s inclusiveness could be considered a barometer of hegemony. If accepted discourse contends that public goods are the ‘key to prosperity and social wellbeing’, extending from health and housing to a pristine environment, and from education to ‘relatively balanced distributions of wealth’—and that governments, by taxing the rich, or through First World to Third World transfers, are primarily responsible for their expenses<sup>89</sup>—one might conclude that the world is on its way to a form of global social democracy.

On the other hand, if one is exposed to constant reiterations that the private sector or ‘public–private partnerships’ can supply public goods, or that public provision of public goods should be restricted to the establishment of ‘efficient markets’ (possibly with strong defence added on), one would be warranted in assuming that neoliberalism holds sway. That the language of public goods is taking up more and more space within development discourse at least indicates there is uncertainty within this realm’s hegemonic arbiters.

Thus the ideological disputes over the extension of public goods will impinge on what has often been taken as their defining factor—their ‘nonrival’ and ‘nonexcludable’ status. Education, for example, is mostly defined in this discourse as a ‘nonrival’ good. One person getting educated does not stop someone else from gaining knowledge. It is also seen as ‘nonexcludable’, because it is difficult to stop people from sharing it. Closer examination reveals more conflict behind such definitions. If a state subsidises universities more than primary schools, probably fewer young students will enter the system: it will be subject to both rivalry and exclusion. Market or NGO provision will exclude students without financial resources or who live far from the global nomads’ fleeting location. Indeed, as the global tendency towards the privatisation of water



illustrates, what were once almost universally considered state provided public goods could soon be taken under capitalist wings.<sup>90</sup>

The controversies and conflicts involved in identifying and provisioning public goods are multiplied at the global level. There is no central state to mediate hegemonic conflicts over the nature of these resources and conditions. Yet, with issues ranging from the environment to cross-border health concerns like HIV/AIDS,<sup>91</sup> and from war and crime to the contagion of financial crises, 'globalisation' brings the public goods debates to the world stage.<sup>92</sup> That the early 2002 Monterrey Consensus meetings were slated to discuss global public goods, but did not suggest ideological tension around their conceptualisation. French, Swedish and UNDP responsibility for a GPG task force indicates a 'European' flavour to the notion and little enthusiasm by the Anglo-Saxon unilateralist and its junior partner.

While global politicians prevaricate, academic architects scribble, hoping their ideas will see power. Thus reformist development discourse displays the harsh symptoms of uneven development (its reports are a litany of everything wrong with the world), but hesitates to confront their causes. GPG discourse may be a new attempt to disguise the necessity of confronting the foundations of Third World primitive accumulation and how current processes and policies aggravate it. As usual with the varieties of dominant development discourses at the edges of 'reform', when the main model malfunctions, GPG discourse can be dismissed as wallowing uncomfortably between poles of romantic and technocratic wishful thinking. It may just be the window dressing allowing the Third World to continue on paths of primitive accumulation leading to the dead ends of crony consumption at best, or war modes of production at worst, while the already well ensconced cores of capital continue their relatively virtuous cycles of wealth generation and expansion.

On the other hand, the idea of global public goods may signal that a segment of transnational capital's 'organic intellectuals' installed in global bureaucracies, universities, think-tanks and world civil society organisations are aware that the post-1970s ways of dealing with the contradictions of the international political economy are deepening rather than ameliorating them. The tentative emergence of GPG discourse—in such popular-academic texts as Amartya Sen's *Development as Freedom* and the UN-speak of the Commission on Human Security (a phrase stretching a concept well beyond its original meaning, a process seemingly inherent in such a field) he co-led<sup>93</sup>—may imply a slow turn from global structural adjustment programmes to global 'public goods'. The timidity of the public goods alternative, however, suggests otherwise. Even the most philosophical expression of the 'true interests' hinted at by a concept of global public goods retreats from the consequences of its potentially radical democracy: as Lawrence Hamilton observes, Sen sidesteps the logical extension of his capabilities approach when it threatens to challenge the 'rights' embedded in his much stronger liberalism.<sup>94</sup> In the face of such a contest Sen retreats to ethics. He hints that 'democracy' be considered a public good, but hesitates to say it will take a highly robust form of democracy to ensure a modicum of more material public goods. Rather than that—and the state that might arrive in its wake – a notion of ethics is called on.

For efficient provision of public goods, not only do we have to consider the possibility of state actions and social provisioning, we also have to examine the part that can be played by the development of social values and a sense of responsibility that may reduce the need for forceful state action. For example, the development of environmental ethics can do some of the job that [often] ... is done through compelling regulation.<sup>95</sup>

One wants to ask, 'from where do environmental ethics come?' and 'will those whose profits environmental protection curtail have the same ethics as those for whom relying on oil company owners' ethics is risky?' Will not the poor in heavily polluted areas have an 'ethic' including states implementing their needs? Will they not need an 'ethic' of direct action to display their needs and their power to ensure the state pays them attention? Sen's slipperiness within such realms suggests the intellectual promiscuity allowing the World Bank to invent myriad meanings for such phrases as 'social capital'.<sup>96</sup> If we all had an 'ethic' of public goods there would be enough 'social capital' so we could all trust one another's generosity and ensure that the elimination of poverty would be a 'public good' of such importance that states would no longer exist. There would be no need for social protest to remind capitalists of their 'ethics' and to pressurise states to regulate them when they are less than 'ethical'. Rather than rely on ethics to encourage the supply of public goods, it would be wise to remember that:

because it is difficult or impossible to exclude people from enjoying the benefits of public goods it is difficult to make money from them. This means there is little incentive for the private sector to produce them. As a result governments generally have to play a role in securing the production of public goods.<sup>97</sup>

The 'freedoms' envisioned at the end of primitive accumulation, but often denied by its pursuit and its realisation, stall the promulgators of public goods from stemming its brutality or hastening its progress—if either involves concerted state action. Unless such worldly philosophers genuinely share Hayek's fear that social welfarism and other state activity leads to Stalinism, these cul de sacs either expose their own (true) interests or their display of fealty to their overlords. Even the concept of 'mutual vulnerability'—showing that 'human security' benefits rich as well as poor, so global welfare issues are a 'public good' more than a drain on the former's resources<sup>98</sup> (validated by '9/11')—fails to move the latter's neoliberal steamroller from its path. Instead, a pernicious mix of an inherently statist, militarist neo-conservatism with a pretence of a 'non-statist' economic philosophy (that only stems welfare costs in the core and stops the subsidised emergence of Third World bourgeoisies and industrialisation) has taken root in empire's heart. In the midst of this ideological meltdown, the sages and technocrats of global public goods muse about a watered down version of an already drastically diluted New International Economic Order, to be implemented when the world experiences another depression like the 1930s.

### **Conclusion: from primitive accumulation to public accumulation?**

Perhaps development on the periphery during the cold war period was not much better than it is in the post-cold war period, but the Third World's First Age, unlike the Second Age that it has now entered, did see economic and political 'development'. Third Worldism's utopian nationalism and global Keynesianism, inspired by the catastrophes of the first and second world wars, the depression and the threat of state socialisms, combined to create capitalism's golden age and hide the problems of primitive accumulation.<sup>99</sup> In the wake of the depression, wars and decolonisation, a few 'development decades' allowed their Marxist celebrator, Bill Warren, to chronicle Third World capitalism's successes.<sup>100</sup> Could a particularly devastating historical path have been averted if the management of 'primitive accumulation' had been considered a public good at an earlier conjuncture?

Today, if the USA does not manage its hegemonic decline gracefully, much of the world will go down with it.<sup>101</sup> Liberian and Congolese warlords will demonstrate how accumulation takes place in the 'hinterland'. China illustrates the brighter but not very libertarian lights of state capitalism following 'primitive socialist accumulation'. Americans will invade more Iraqs. Yet those articulating notions of 'global public goods' beyond the merely technocratic to restart distorted primitive accumulation processes (alongside nation-state formation and democratisation) just might be able to steer a fragile trajectory to a different path. The idea of full employment as a public good, justifying sophisticated industrial strategies to absorb primitive accumulation's new proletarians, and involving new capitalist classes in productive instead of wasteful pursuits, could take root.

As this article illustrates, history's lessons and the theoretical impasse concerning primitive accumulation's permanence lead one to believe that the first stages of capitalist development cannot be accomplished without significant state involvement. At the height of globalisation, and with the threat of unilateralism when it falls, the apparatuses of a nascent 'global state' must make primitive accumulation 'public'. The ideology and practice of public accumulation must catch on. In the interregnum, breath should not be held. Even global meltdown will probably just see slightly reformed institutions crafted in Bretton Woods-like resorts. The process of primitive accumulation and the provision of (some) global public goods will circle around each other in perpetuity, only sometimes joining to dance the dialectic of democratic development on the world stage.

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### **Notes**

Thanks to Mark Berger (again) for comments, extraordinary patience, encouragement and tolerance; and also to Brett Bowden for comments.

<sup>1</sup> This very abstract article has its empirical base primarily in Africa, where primitive accumulation is more protracted than in other parts of the Third World. D Moore, 'Neoliberal globalisation and the triple crisis of "modernisation" in Africa: Zimbabwe, The Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Africa', *Third World Quarterly*, 22 (6), 2001, pp 909–929; Moore, 'Zimbabwe: twists on the tale of primitive accumulation', in M Smith (ed), *Globalizing Africa*, Trenton, Ontario: Africa World Press, 2003. Nevertheless,

- there are many other Third World, socioeconomic spaces where the tasks of primitive accumulation are not yet complete.
- <sup>2</sup> For a reminder that classical methods of primitive accumulation required much state activity, and that it was kept secret, see M Perelman, *The Invention of Capitalism: Classical Political Economy and the Secret History of Primitive Accumulation*, Durham, SC: Duke University Press, 2000.
  - <sup>3</sup> For example, Arrighi notes that until 1975 African growth was impressive. G Arrighi, 'The African crisis: world systemic and regional effects', *New Left Review*, 2 (15), 2002, pp 1–32.
  - <sup>4</sup> M Cowan & R Shenton, *Doctrines of Development*, London: Routledge, 1996.
  - <sup>5</sup> Mainstream development theory seldom mentions 'states' and never mentions 'primitive accumulation'.
  - <sup>6</sup> The 'primitive' forms of accumulation demonstrated by Third World elites, including corruption, are frequently not productive because the wealth gained in these processes is not attachable to 'freed' labour, or employable labour, or available means of production. For Marx, 'what enables moneywealth to become capital is the encounter, on one side, with free workers; and on the other side, with the necessities and materials, etc, which previously were in one way or another the *property* of the masses who have now become object-less, and are also *free* and purchasable'. K Marx, 'The *Grundrisse*', in R Tucker (ed), *The Marx–Engels Reader*, New York: Norton, 1978, p 269.
  - <sup>7</sup> W Robinson, 'Social theory and globalization: the rise of a transnational state', *Theory and Society*, 30 (2), 2001, pp 157–200.
  - <sup>8</sup> On state–society complexes, see RW Cox, 'Social forces, states, and world orders: beyond international relations theory', in RW Cox with T Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp 85–123.
  - <sup>9</sup> J Townsend, *CB Macpherson and the Problem of Liberal Democracy*, Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2000.
  - <sup>10</sup> For Hardt and Negri capital's innovations—even global expansion—are forced on it from below. M Hardt & A Negri, *Empire*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.
  - <sup>11</sup> JK Galbraith, *The Culture of Contentment*, Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1992.
  - <sup>12</sup> In the USA government employees exceed those in manufacturing by 5 129 000. 'Harper's Index', *Harper's*, July 2003, p 11.
  - <sup>13</sup> Some former Second World countries—especially Central European—were mainly capitalist before becoming part of the 'Soviet bloc'. They should not be considered part of today's Second World. Perhaps China should, in spite of its split with the USSR and later attempts to lead/join the Third World.
  - <sup>14</sup> JS Saul, 'Globalization, imperialism, development: false binaries and radical resolutions', in L Panitch & C Leys (eds), *Socialist Register 2004: Imperialism*, London: Merlin Press, 2003.
  - <sup>15</sup> D Harvey, 'The new imperialism', in Panitch & Leys, *Socialist Register 2004*.
  - <sup>16</sup> S MacWilliam, 'Plenty of poverty: the development of the World Bank', in D Moore (ed), *Banking for Hegemony: Critical Essays on the World Bank*, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, forthcoming.
  - <sup>17</sup> BJ Silver & G Arrighi, 'Polanyi's "double movement": the *belles époques* of British and US hegemony compared', *Politics and Society*, 31 (2), 2003, pp 325–355.
  - <sup>18</sup> P Bond, 'Potentials for African anti-capitalism: uneven development and popular resistance', *Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Policy Paper*, 1, 2003.
  - <sup>19</sup> Dominant development discourse confuses the 'yeoman' stage of transition with 'full' capitalism. Marx's primitive accumulation account allows 'free peasant proprietors' to exist under many forms of feudal title. His teleology suggests, however, that eventually they will disappear under the pressure of agrarian capitalists. K Marx, *Capital*, Vol 2, London: JM Dent, 1930, p 794.
  - <sup>20</sup> Brett Bowden notes in correspondence that armies soak up many 'new entrants' to the labour market, as in the classical age of primitive accumulation. Think, also, of child soldiers in many Third World wars.
  - <sup>21</sup> B Teschke, 'Theorizing the Westphalian system of states: international relations from absolutism to capitalism', *European Journal of International Relations*, 8 (1), pp 5–48. Teschke's analysis of changing modes of production in Europe and war has applicability to contemporary Zimbabwean international primitive accumulation. See M Nest, 'Ambitions, profits and loss: Zimbabwean economic involvement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,' *African Affairs*, 100 (400), 2001, pp 469–490.
  - <sup>22</sup> A Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, New York: International Publishers, 1971.
  - <sup>23</sup> F Block & M Somers, 'In the shadow of Speenhamland: social policy and the old poor law', *Politics and Society*, 31 (2), 2003, pp 283–322.
  - <sup>24</sup> To exercise hegemony, 'the leading group should make sacrifices of an economic–corporate kind ... in the decisive nucleus of economic activity ... the development and expansion of the particular [ruling] group [must be ] conceived of, and presented, as being the motor force of a universal expansion, of a development of all the "national" energies'. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp 161, 182. Hegemony is not made through culture and ideology alone.
  - <sup>25</sup> I Kaul, I Grundberg & M Stern (eds), *Providing Global Public Goods: Managing Globalisation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp 3, 8 on public goods, conditions and bads.

- <sup>26</sup> L Sklair, 'Social movements for global capitalism: the transnational capitalist class in action', *Review of International Political Economy*, 4 (3), 1997, pp 514–538.
- <sup>27</sup> See D Moore, 'The World Bank and global hegemony: the Gramsci effect', in Moore, *Banking for Hegemony, on the World Bank as part of an emerging global state*.
- <sup>28</sup> Midnight Notes Collective, 'The new enclosures', *The Commoner*, September 2001, pp 1–15.
- <sup>29</sup> W Bonefeld, 'History and social constitution: primitive accumulation is not primitive', *The Commoner*, March 2002, pp 1–8; Bonefeld, 'The permanence of primitive accumulation: notes on social constitution', 2001, at [www.rcci.net/globalizacion/2001/fg176.htm](http://www.rcci.net/globalizacion/2001/fg176.htm); and C von Werlhof, 'Globalization and the "permanent" process of primitive accumulation: the example of the mai, the Multilateral Agreement on Investment', *Journal of World Systems Research*, 7 (3), 2000, pp 728–747. Cf P Zarembka, 'Primitive accumulation in marxism: historical or trans-historical separation from the means of production?', *The Commoner*, March 2002, pp 1–9.
- <sup>30</sup> D Rueschemeyer, E Stephens & J Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- <sup>31</sup> See J Bell & T Sekine, 'The disintegration of capitalism: a phase of ex-capitalist transition', in R Albritton, M Itoh, R Westra & A Zuege (eds), *Phases of Capitalist Development: Booms, Crises and Globalizations*, London: Palgrave, 2001, pp 44–46 for the specificities added to 'capitalism in general' by petroleum since the 1920s—and consider one of the reasons the USA invaded Iraq.
- <sup>32</sup> JK Boyce & L Ndikumana, 'Is Africa a net creditor? New estimates of capital flight from severely indebted Sub-Saharan African countries', *Journal of Development Studies*, 38 (2), 2001, pp 27–56.
- <sup>33</sup> DF Bryceson & V Jamal, *Farewell to Farms: De-agrarianisation and Employment in Africa*, Aldershot: Avebury, 1997.
- <sup>34</sup> D Moore, 'Hardt and Negri's *Empire*, real empire, and the "Third World" after 9/11', *Acme*, 2003, forthcoming.
- <sup>35</sup> M Burawoy, 'For a sociological marxism: the complementary convergence of Antonio Gramsci and Karl Polanyi', *Politics and Society*, 31 (2), 2003, p 219, quoting K Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, Boston, MA: Beacon, 1957, pp 163, 182–183; and Silver & Arrighi, 'Polanyi's "double movement"', p 328, quoting Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, pp 182–183, 207–208.
- <sup>36</sup> J-F Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, London: Longman, 1993.
- <sup>37</sup> Silver & Arrighi, 'Polanyi's "double movement"', p 329. American and other 'free-world' support for such processes was often condemned as imperialistic and supportive of dictators. Later, Foucauldians criticised the development industry in totality as but an apparatus of power. One cannot disagree with either perspective, but an empirical look at rates of growth, industrialisation and welfare before and after the age of neoliberalism can ascertain whether the age of Keynesianism or Hayekianism has been more beneficial for the material lives of most people in the Third World, and thus more conducive to the construction of critical human capabilities—presumably a basis for postmodern sensibilities.
- <sup>38</sup> M Hardt, 'Today's Bandung?', *New Left Review*, 2 (14), pp 112–118.
- <sup>39</sup> M Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security*, London: Zed, 2001; and J Macrae, *Aiding Recovery: The Crisis of Aid in Chronic Political Emergencies*, London: Zed, 2001.
- <sup>40</sup> B Warren, *Imperialism: The Pioneer of Capitalism*, London: Verso, 1980.
- <sup>41</sup> S MacWilliam, 'Plenty of poverty'.
- <sup>42</sup> United Nations, *Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and other forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, UN Security Council, S/2001/357, 12 April 2001.
- <sup>43</sup> He indicated that capitalism's benefits would never reach all the way into the Third World until its 'productive powers' were appropriated 'by the people'. In India this would not be until the 'Hindoos themselves shall have grown strong enough to throw off the English yoke altogether'. Is this populist or nationalist support for productive Third World bourgeoisies? Marx, 'The future results of British rule in India', in Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p 662.
- <sup>44</sup> R Brenner, 'The origins of capitalist development: a critique', *New Left Review*, 1 (104), 1977, pp 45–92.
- <sup>45</sup> Marx, 'Grundrisse,' p 269.
- <sup>46</sup> Hardt & Negri, *Empire*, p 258.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, p 403.
- <sup>48</sup> Hardt & Negri, *Empire*, pp 137–146, and 118–120, agree with Marx that 'capitalism can ... be a force of enlightenment' but they criticise his failure to note alternatives and forms of resistance within pre-colonial Indian society. They fail to specify what he has missed. On the local and the global, see pp 44–46, 362, where the former is seen as being potentially 'regressive and even fascistic' when isolated and 'pure'.
- <sup>49</sup> Hardt & Negri, *Empire*, pp 258–259.

- <sup>50</sup> D Moore, 'Africa: the black hole at the middle of empire?', *Rethinking Marxism*, 13 (3–4), 2001, pp 100–118.
- <sup>51</sup> Marx, 'Grundrisse', pp 271–274.
- <sup>52</sup> See Marx, *Capital*, Vol 2, pp 799, 801–802, 804–813 for details of expropriation from communal lands in England, Scotland, Ireland and Germany; and pp 813–822 for laws against vagrancy and crime because 'it was impossible that those who had been thus hunted off the land could be absorbed by the rising system of manufacture as quickly as they were "set free". Nor could [they] ... be expected, all in a moment, to submit themselves to the discipline of their new condition'.
- <sup>53</sup> A Sen. *Development as Freedom*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp 7, 113.
- <sup>54</sup> Hardt & Negri, *Empire*, pp 115, 257.
- <sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, p 256.
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, p 257.
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, p 257, quoting Marx, *Capital*, Vol 1, London: Vintage, 1976, p 918.
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, p 115.
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, pp 258–259.
- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, pp 255–256.
- <sup>61</sup> Hardt and Negri contend an 'international or multinational proletariat' moved towards unity in 'one common attack against the capitalist disciplinary regime' during the 1960s and 1970s, which 'decreed the end of the division between First and Third Worlds and the potential political integration of the entire global proletariat ... Third Worldist perspectives ... were now completely useless ... blind to the real convergence of struggles across the world'. *Ibid*, pp 262–264.
- <sup>62</sup> For the Bank, 'private property' now includes renting. K Deininger, *Land Policies for Growth and Poverty Reduction*, Oxford: World Bank and Oxford University Press, 2003, pp xxx–xxxvi, xlv.
- <sup>63</sup> H de Soto, *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*, London: Bantam, 2000; and Deininger, *Land Policies for Growth and Poverty Reduction*.
- <sup>64</sup> De Soto, *The Mystery of Capital*, p 168.
- <sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, p 163.
- <sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, p 198.
- <sup>67</sup> H Bernstein, 'The "peasantry" in global capitalism: who, where and why?', in C Leys & L Panitch (eds), *Socialist Register 2001: Working Classes, Global Realities*, London: 2001.
- <sup>68</sup> De Soto, *The Mystery of Capital*, pp 1, 58, quoting F Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce*, New York: Harper and Row, 1982, p 248.
- <sup>69</sup> See Perelman, *The Invention of Capitalism*, for extracts from Wakefield and Rae on the USA and Canada, pp 326–329, 340, 349–351.
- <sup>70</sup> De Soto, *The Mystery of Capital*, p 165.
- <sup>71</sup> Deininger, *Land Policies for Growth and Poverty Reduction*, pp xxi, xxiii, xxv.
- <sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, p xxx.
- <sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, p xxvi.
- <sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, pp xxx, xxxi. Many references to the integration of 'traditional' forms of tenure (eg pp 62–65) suggest a desire to preserve aspects of pre-capitalism compatible with either permanent or accelerated primitive accumulation. For an indication of problems raised by these issues in South Africa, see B Cousins, 'Labour pains plague land reform's *laatlammetjie*', *Mail and Guardian*, 13–19 June 2003, pp 28–29; and L Ntsebeza, 'Traditional authorities and rural development', in JK Coetzee, J Graaff, F Hendricks & G Wood (eds), *Development: Theory, Policy, and Practice*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp 317–329. More generally, see J W Bruce, 'African tenure models at the turn of the century', *Land Reform*, 1, 2000, pp 17–27.
- <sup>75</sup> Deininger, *Land Policies for Growth and Poverty Reduction*, pp xviii, xxiv. Perhaps the Bank wishes such predictions into self-fulfilment: its 1997 *World Development Report*, while 'bringing the state back in', advises technocrats to implement reforms during times of external threat or economic crisis—'when the normal rules of the game are in flux'—or during a new regime's honeymoon. World Bank, *World Development Report 1997: The State in a Changing World*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, p 144, quoted in D Moore, "'Sail on, O ship of state": neoliberalism, globalisation and the governance of Africa', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 27 (1), 1999, pp 61–96.
- <sup>76</sup> Deininger, p 15. He also notes that often only large asset holders get credit for their titles, p 50.
- <sup>77</sup> The term 'nonrival' means 'one person's enjoyment will not reduce others' ability to benefit from the system'. Deininger does note that establishment of property rights 'exclude[s] some individuals or groups from access to these benefits'. Deininger, *Land Policies for Growth and Poverty Reduction*, pp 23, 24.
- <sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, pp xxii, 22–25.
- <sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, p 28.
- <sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, p 35.
- <sup>81</sup> De Soto, *The Mystery of Capital*, is this religion's bible, preached fervently and cited profusely by those who mean 'good governance' to be the construction of private property rights.

- <sup>82</sup> Marx, 'Grundrisse', p 269.
- <sup>83</sup> P Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolute State*, London: Verso, 1974.
- <sup>84</sup> P Bond (ed), *Fanon's Warning: A Civil Society Reader on the New Partnership for African Development*, Trenton, Ontario: Africa World Press, 2002; and B Bowden, 'Reinventing imperialism in the wake of September 11', *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, 1 (2), 202, pp 28–46.
- <sup>85</sup> R Kanbur, 'ifi's and ipg's: operational implications for the World Bank,' paper presented at the G24 Technical Group Meeting, Beirut, 1–2 March 2002.
- <sup>86</sup> See B Fine, C Lapavistas & J Pincus (eds), *Development Policy in the Twenty-First Century: Beyond the post-Washington Consensus*, London: Routledge, 2003, for critical analyses.
- <sup>87</sup> See D Moore 'Development discourse as hegemony: towards an ideological history, 1945–1995', in D Moore & G Schmitz (eds), *Debating Development Discourse: Institutional and Popular Perspectives*, London: Macmillan, 1995, pp 1–53 for an effort inspired by the co-option of sustainable development discourse. See also T Wanner, 'The power of *greenspeak* and the power of knowledge: the World Bank and *sustainable development*', in Moore, *Banking for Hegemony*.
- <sup>88</sup> M Desai, 'Public goods: a historical perspective', in Kaul, Grundberg & Stern, *Providing Global Public Goods*, p 68.
- <sup>89</sup> T Homer-Dixon, *The Ingenuity Gap: How Can We Solve the Problems of the Future?*, New York: Knopf, 2000, pp 244–246, 326, 358.
- <sup>90</sup> L Mehta, 'Problems of publicness and access rights: perspectives from the water domain', in Kaul, Grundberg & Stern, *Providing Global Public Goods*, pp 556–575; and F Lumsden & A Loftus, 'Inanda's struggle for water through pipes and tunnels: exploring state–civil society relations in a post-apartheid informal settlement', Centre for Civil Society Research Report, Durban: University of Natal, 2003. On the essential notion of basic needs decommodification, see P Bond, *Against Global Apartheid: South Africa Meets the World Bank*, IMF and International Finance, Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2001.
- <sup>91</sup> A de Waal, 'How will hiv/aids transform African governance?', *African Affairs*, 102 (402), pp 1–23.
- <sup>92</sup> The International Commission on Intervention and Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect: International Commission on Intervention and Sovereignty*, Ottawa, 2001, expands on security, the classic GPG.
- <sup>93</sup> A Sen, *Development as Freedom: Human Security Now*, New York: Commission on Human Security, 2003. Sadako Ogata is the commission's co-chair. Her former post as UN High Commissioner for Refugees indicates the 'band-aid' roots of human security discourse. South Africa's Speaker of Parliament, Frene Ginwala, is another commissioner. The Deputy Director and project co-ordinator for the report's 'development' half ('conflict' was the other) was Vivienne Taylor, chair of South Africa's Taylor Report on the Basic Income Grant. The South African government's hesitation to implement a 100 Rand monthly 'BIG', fearing the creation of 'dependency', illustrates the contradictions of human security discourse.
- <sup>94</sup> L Hamilton, 'A theory of true interests in the work of Amartya Sen', *Government and Opposition*, 14 (4), 1999, pp 516–546.
- <sup>95</sup> Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 1999, p 269.
- <sup>96</sup> B Fine, 'The developmental state is dead—long live social capital?', *Development and Change*, 30 (1), pp 1–21.
- <sup>97</sup> South African Poverty Network, 'What good are global public goods?', *Poverty Briefing 3*, October 2002, p 3.
- <sup>98</sup> J Nef, *Human Security and Mutual Vulnerability: The Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment*, Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1999.
- <sup>99</sup> MT Berger, 'The rise and demise of national development and the origins of post-cold war capitalism', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 30 (2), 2001, pp 211–234.
- <sup>100</sup> B Warren, *Imperialism: Pioneer of Capitalism*. 'Imperialism and capitalist industrialisation', *New Left Review*, 81, 1973, pp 3–45, on which the book was based, was published just before opec's and neoliberalism's effects were felt. For reconsidered optimism on Kenyan capitalism triggered by recent global trends, see C Leys, 'Learning from the Kenya debate', *The Rise and Fall of Development Theory*, London: James Currey, 1996, pp 143–163; and JS Saul, 'Afro-pessimism/optimism: the antinomies of Colin Leys', in AB Bakan & E Macdonald (eds), *Critical Political Studies: Debates and Dialogues from the Left*, Montreal and Kingston: McGill–Queen's University Press, 2002, pp 94–112. For Sender, Warren's Marxism is not 'Chicago Marxism', ie supporting neoclassical policies and condemning state intervention. J Sender, 'Reassessing the role of the World Bank in sub-Saharan Africa', in JR Pincus & JA Winters (eds), *Reinventing the World Bank*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002, pp 185–202.
- <sup>101</sup> I Wallerstein, 'America and the world: the twin towers as metaphor', *After September 11*, New York: Social Science Research Council, 2001, at www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays; and R Greenhill & A Pettifor, *The United States as a HIPC—How the Poor are Financing the Rich*, London: Jubilee Research and the New Economics Foundation, 2002.

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