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NECROCAPITALISM

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I develop the concept of necrocapitalism, defined as contemporary forms of organizational accumulation that involve dispossession and the subjugation of life to the power of death. I examine how different forms of power – institutional, material, and discursive – operate in the political economy and the violence and dispossession that result. I describe some contemporary forms of organizational accumulation that involve dispossession and death and could therefore be described as necrocapitalist practices – for example, the impact of the resources industry in developing countries and the privatization of war and the military. I conclude by discussing some possibilities of resistance and outlining directions for future research.

Keywords: Necrocapitalism, imperialism, colonialism, resources industry, private military forces.

NECROCAPITALISM

Trade must be driven and maintained under the protection and favor of your own weapon. Trade cannot be maintained without war, nor war without trade. The times now require you to manage your general commerce with your sword in your hands.

Jan Coen, Governor General, Dutch East Indies Company, 1775.

In 1757 the English East India Company fought a battle with French forces capturing the fort of Chandannagar in the province of Bengal. Several hundreds were killed and thousands injured. When news of the capture reached London, the company's stock price rose 12% in the London stock exchange. In December 2004, the share price of Armor Holdings, a U.S.-based multinational corporation and one of many private military subcontractors in Iraq reached an all time high in Wall Street after the U.S. government announced reconstruction contracts in Iraq (Singer 2004). How are we to theorize these two events occurring nearly 250 years apart? War profiteering is too simple an explanation. Both events are markers of a colonial encounter and the political fact of the end of direct colonialism in Iraq in 1932 and its subsequent 'sovereignty' makes no difference whatsoever. Both cases involve military power, violence and the taking of life. Both cases also involve specific capitalist relations of accumulation in what was a chartered corporation of the 1700s and its evolution to the multinational corporation of the 1900s. Both cases are examples of corporate colonialism where the internal governance mechanisms of states were disrupted and controlled by a corporate imperial center.

The above quote is from a memo Jan Coen wrote to his staff after being appointed as Governor General for the Dutch East Indies Company. Coen offers a prescription on how to manage trade during the glory days of what was probably the world's first multinational corporation – I refer of course to the infamous East India Company. In an era of European

colonial expansion, the company was engaged in conquering markets, eliminating competition, securing cheap sources of raw material supply, building strategic alliances: in short everything management textbooks tell us to do 200 years later. Colonial expansionist practices of the British empire in the 1800s involved both capital appropriation and permanent destruction of manufacturing capacities in the colonies – the ‘technological superiority’ of the British textile industry for example, was established as much by invention as by a systematic destruction of India’s indigenous industry including some innovative competitive strategies that involved cutting off the thumbs of master weavers in Bengal, the forced cultivation of indigo by Bihar’s peasants as well as the slave trade from Africa that supplied cotton plantations in the US with free labor (Dutt 1970; Shiva 2001: 34). Private capital operated British and Dutch colonial empires in Asia for more than 200 years and the enabling conditions of wealth creation for Company and Empire often included violence, slavery, torture and death (Hansen and Stepputat 2005).

In this paper I explore the implications of ‘managing general commerce with a sword’ in today’s global economy. Drawing on the works of Agamben (1998, 2005) and Mbembe (2003) I develop the notion of necrocapitalism based on Achille Mbembe’s concept of necropolitics which he defined as ‘contemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of death’ (Mbembe 2003: 39). I argue that some contemporary capitalist practices contribute to dispossession and ‘the subjugation of life to the power of death’ in a variety of contexts, for example in the organization and management of global violence through the increasing use of privatized military forces and conflicts over resources between transnational corporations and Indigenous communities. If the symbol of past sovereignty was the sword, I want to examine the effects of the sword of commerce and its power to create life worlds and death worlds in the contemporary

political economy. The fundamental question I explore in this paper is what practices in contemporary capitalism result in the subjugation of life? The paper is structured as follows: first, I describe the theoretical basis of necrocapitalism drawing on Agamben's notion of states of exception and Mbembe's concept of necropolitics. Second, I describe some contemporary forms of organizational accumulation that involve dispossession and death and could therefore be described as necrocapitalist practices – for example, the impact of the resources industry in developing countries and the privatization of war and the military. I conclude by discussing some possibilities of resistance and outlining directions for future research.

Theorizing Necrocapitalism: Colonial and Imperial Formations

While I acknowledge the existence of different types of capitalism in today's global economy, in this paper I describe specific capitalist practices that are undertheorized in the management literature – practices of organizational accumulation that involve violence, dispossession and death that represent what I call necrocapitalism. Before we proceed with developing the concept of necrocapitalism a few clarifications about terminology are required. Theoretical insights from imperialism and colonialism inform my conceptualization of necrocapitalism. While the terms imperialism and colonialism are often used interchangeably in the literature, rather than restrict ourselves to simple definitions it might be more useful to examine the historical processes that constitute imperialism and colonialism. Mudimbe (1988) highlights three characteristics of colonialism: the domination of physical space, reformation of the natives' minds (particularly in terms of knowledge systems and culture), and incorporation of local economic histories into a western perspective. Modern colonialism, which underpinned the expansion of European capitalism, involved the establishment of settlements on outlying

territories. Apart from extraction of resources from conquered territories colonialism also involved complex relationships between the colonizer and colonized including a reconfiguration of the latter's economies resulting in a dependency relationship that often continues to this day.

Classical theories of imperialism have also centered on its capitalist origins. Lenin for example described imperialism as a particular stage of capitalism, or rather 'the highest stage of capitalism'. Resources of other nations were crucial to the accumulation process and the emergence of capitalism as a 'world system' reflected its expansionist features in the 19th century setting up new forms of international divisions of labor and dependency relations between 'core' and 'periphery' nations (Magdoff 1979). Imperialism (sometimes described as 'the highest stage of colonialism') described theories and practices developed by a dominant metropolitan center to rule distant territories. For example, Doyle (1986: 45) defines empire as 'a relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be achieved by force, by political collaboration, by economic, social or cultural dependence'. Colonialism, which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, involves the annexation and governance of territories, which is not a necessary condition of imperialism. The end of direct colonial rule did not mean the end of imperialism and its traces can be observed in 'the general cultural sphere... in specific political, ideological, economic and social practice' (Said 1993: 8). As Said (1993) argues, accumulation and acquisition are not the only actions of imperialism or colonialism. Their ideological formations assume that certain territories and people actually 'require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination'.

Imperialism operates in economic, political and cultural guises. In terms of its relevance to the political economy imperialism can be described as 'an economic system of external

investment and the penetration and control of markets and sources of raw materials’ (Williams 1976: 159). Thus, if imperialism is to be viewed as a fundamental set of economic relations, then examining the range of relations (such as the relationship between nation states, international institutions and transnational corporations) becomes an important task in order to uncover the presence of imperialism in current institutional structures and processes.

Imperialism is operationalized through different kinds of power: institutional power (agencies such as the IMF, WTO and the World Bank), economic power (of corporations and nation states) and discursive power that constructs and describes uncontested notions of ‘development’, ‘backwardness’, ‘subsistence economies’ while disallowing other narratives from emerging. As Said (1993: 8) points out, ‘the rhetoric of power all too easily produces an illusion of benevolence when deployed in an imperial setting’. Contemporary political discourse appears to reflect this illusion of benevolence and the consensus rather than coercive nature of postmodern empire – the United States for example, has been described as a ‘benevolent empire’, a ‘new liberal empire’, or ‘a cooperative empire’ because its foreign policies and military engagements are framed as a ‘better international arrangement than all realistic alternatives’ (Stoler 2006: 129).

States of Exception and Transgressions of Sovereignty

Locating imperialism and the legacies of colonialism in contemporary forms of capitalism is central to the theoretical development of necrocapitalism. Violence, dispossession and death that result from practices of accumulation occur in spaces that seem to be immune from legal, juridical and political intervention where permanent transgressions of sovereignty seems to more the rule than the exception. In the modern era the democratization of sovereignty is still fundamentally determined by and grounded in mechanisms of disciplinary coercion

(Foucault 1980) – coercion that was more apparent and visible during colonial times but is more sophisticated in its operation in the postcolonial era. Drawing on Carl Schmitt's definition of sovereignty as one 'who decides on the state of exception', Agamben (1998: 17) argues that through the state of exception, the sovereign 'creates and guarantees the situation that the law needs for its own validity'. Agamben describes the Nazi state, the current status of Palestine and 'legal civil wars' as examples of states of exception in the modern era. The U.S. Naval Station at Guantánamo Bay is perhaps one of the latest examples of a state of exception where 'enemy combatants' that are incarcerated there are not legal subjects or prisoners of war but have become 'legally unnameable and unclassifiable beings entirely removed from the law and from judicial oversight' (Agamben 2005: 4). Violence, torture and death can occur in this space of exception without the political or juridical intervention. The state of exception thus creates a zone where the application of law is suspended but the law remains in force. Agamben (1998: 27) develops the ancient Roman legal notion of *homo sacer* or sacred man– 'one who may be killed but not sacrificed'. In ancient Roman law, *homo sacer* referred to people whose deaths were of no value to the gods and thus could not be sacrificed but could be killed with impunity because their lives were deemed be of no value to society. *Homo sacer* occupied a space both outside (and hence inside) divine law and juridical law; they were objects of sovereign power but excluded from being its subjects; 'mute bearers of bare life deprived of language and the political life that language makes possible' (Gregory 2004: 63). A sovereign decision to apply a state of exception invokes a power to decide the value of life, which would allow a life to be killed without the charge of homicide. The killings of mentally and physically handicapped people during the Nazi regime was justified as ending a 'life devoid of value', a life 'unworthy to be

lived'. Sovereignty thus becomes a decision on the value of life, 'a power to decide the point at which life ceases to be politically relevant' (Agamben 1998: 142).

Sovereignty has always been a moving target and despite Westphalian notions of the independence and 'supreme authority' of nation states, the jurisdiction of borders have been routinely transgressed as 'sovereignty has become progressively unbundled from territoriality' (Raustiala 2005). Far from being a fixed political and legal category sovereignty was always a 'sociological praxis full of exceptions, fissures and fractures' (Shenhav and Berda 2008). Benton's (2002: 10) analysis of legal politics during the colonial era reveals what she calls the 'jurisdictional politics' of conflicts arising from multiple legal procedures and authorities. 'Jurisdictional fluidity' and 'legal jockeying' enabled the creation of a space to govern the colonies in India and Africa while expanding European claims to sovereignty. In the historical praxis of colonialism the state of exception in the colonies was more the rule resulting in multiple and interrupted sovereignties that were used to govern the natives. However, in both Foucault's formulation of sovereignty and the production of the biopolitical body and Agamben's deployment of *homo sacer* and states of exception the omission of the colony is notable. The colony as Mbembe (2003: 14) points out represented a permanent state of exception where sovereignty became an exercise of power outside the law, where 'peace was more likely to take on the face of a war without end and where violence could operate in the name of civilization'. In fact, as Anghie (2005) points out colonialism and imperialism (Anghie uses these terms interchangeably) were constitutive of European notions of sovereignty, international law and development. Discourses of 'civilization' and 'development' for example, created and sustained the binary categories of civilized-barbaric and developed-underdeveloped where sovereignty always remained on the side of the 'civilized' and 'developed'. Once

sovereignty was established along the dimensions of civilization and development in the postcolonial era the key ‘universal’ problem was how to create order among sovereign states by developing techniques to ‘normalize the aberrant society’ (Anghie 2005: 4). As Hussain (2003) argues, the historical formation of colonialism reveals the self-generative epistemic space of the West in its ability to create the rule and the exception. Thus, European notions of sovereignty that became the basis of international law has its roots in colonialism and tends to reproduce and reinforce colonial modes of control even in the present era.

While transgressions of sovereignty were common in the colonial era where the colony marked a permanent state of exception, there are different levels of sovereignties in today’s neoliberal political economy. In contemporary political economy states of exception, uneven sovereignties and gradations of rights are produced and maintained by what Stoler (2006: 128) calls ‘imperial formations’ which she describes as ‘states of becoming, rather than being’. Imperial formations in today’s political economy do not reflect a ‘steady state’ enclosed by national sovereign boundaries but have more to do with how the economy and polity are organized. The organization of the political economy is enabled through the deployment of colonial agents, local militaries, relocations, reterritorialization and a redistribution of populations and resources (Stoler 2006). States of exception created by imperial formations are not restricted to the former colonies ‘out there’ but include ‘the West’. The ‘West’ operates not so much as a particular set of geographical locations, or indeed a specific collection of locationally defined peoples but is a discursive space formed by a network of economic and power relations (Banerjee and Linstead 2001). Spaces of imperial exception also occur in metropolitan contexts – for example the migrant bodies, the ‘illegal’ or ‘undocumented bodies’

that labor in the ‘ethnic enclaves’ that contain the sweatshops of New York, London and Paris (Ong 2006).

The American brand of neoliberalism that seems to be embraced by the supranational institutions that govern the global economy and adopted by several countries in the developing world represents a type of ‘radicalized capitalist imperialism’ (Ong 2006: 1) that is increasingly tied to military action, often in the name of maintaining ‘security’. The imperial formations that create states of exception and multiple sovereignties in the postcolonial era are enabled and sustained by the formation of economic states of exception created by neoliberal policies. Thus, ‘neoliberalism as exception’ produces specific arrangements of sovereignty and citizenship that are enabled by the ‘infiltration of market logic into politics’ while constructing subjectivities that reflect market citizenship and a ‘reconfiguration of relationships between governing and the governed, power and knowledge and sovereignty and territoriality’ (Ong 2006: 6). If the sword of commerce was most visibly active in the days of empire its activity in the postcolonial era continued the violence in a more covert manner, often with the complicity of the political elites in the former colonies. Ong (2006) develops the notion of ‘graduated sovereignty’ to describe how some countries in South East Asia, notably the so-called ‘Asian tigers’ embraced the global market with a combination of governmental political strategies and military repression. Her research on globalization in Indonesia and Malaysia showed that the interaction between states and transnational capital resulted in a differential state treatment of the population already fragmented by race, ethnicity, gender, class and region as well as a reconfiguration of power and authority in the hands of transnational corporations operating in special export processing zones. The neoliberal turn in these regions follows a different trajectory where the interplay of market versus state results in differing levels of sovereignty: some areas of the economy have a very

strong state presence and in other areas, markets and foreign capital rule. State sovereignty is dispersed because global markets and capital with the collusion of governments create states of exception where coercion, violence and killings occur. State repression against rebel populations and separatist movements is often influenced by market forces: as Ong (2006) argues territories are cleared of rebels ('outlawed citizens') to make way for logging concessions, petroleum pipelines, mines and dams. Thus, necrocapitalism creates states of exceptions where 'democratic rights are confined to a political sphere' while continuing forms of domination, exploitation and violence in other domains (Wood 2003: 80).

Accumulation by Death and Dispossession

Violence, death and dispossession and their relationship with capitalism is not new: in Volume I of *Capital*, Marx (1867: 926) wrote: 'If money comes into the world with a congenital blood stain on one cheek, then capital comes dripping from head to toe, from every pore, with blood and dirt'. Early capitalist practices of recruiting labor involved violence, often sanctioned by law. The legislation against 'vagabondage' for example transformed peasants who were driven off the land into vagabonds to be 'whipped, branded, tortured by laws grotesquely terrible, into the discipline necessary for the wage system (Marx 1867: 899). Colonialism added a racial dimension to the exploitation of labor – for example Marx describes the colonial capitalist practices in Africa as 'extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population... and the turning of African into a warren for the commercial hunting of black skins' (Marx 1867: 915). In his analysis of death metaphors in Marx's work, Neocleous (2003) draws parallels between capital and death arguing that Marx's critique of political economy is ultimately a 'political economy of the dead'. At various points in *Capital* Marx refers to capital as 'dead labor' in opposition to 'living labor' where capitalist rule is the

‘independent conditions of labor over the worker... the rule of things over man, of dead labor over living’ (Marx 1867: 989).

However, rather than reduce death to distinctions between labor whether in a colonial or a metropolitan context, it is necessary to understand necrocapitalism as a practice that operates through the establishment of colonial sovereignty, and the manner in which this sovereignty is established in the current political economy where the business of death can take place through states of exception. In the postcolonial era the imperial prerogative as Chatterjee (2005: 495) argues is the ‘power to declare the colonial exception’. Thus, while the ‘international community’ agrees that nuclear proliferation should be stopped, it becomes an imperial right for some to decide that while India and Israel may be allowed to have nuclear weapons, it is unacceptable for North Korea or Iran to do so. The entities in this colonial space of exception must either be disciplined by violence or ‘civilized by culture’ to become normalized. The colonial state of exception is also the space where more profits accrue whether it is through the extraction of resources, the use of privatized militias or through contracts for reconstruction. In this sense, it is necessary to read the manner in which colonial sovereignty operates to create states of exception conducive to the operation of necrocapitalist practices.

Mbembe (2003) extends Foucault’s notion of sovereignty as power that produces and regulates a biopolitical body, or the power to ‘make live or let die’ (Foucault, 1978) to develop his concept of necropolitical power that involves the subjugation of life to the power of death. These forms of necropolitical power literally create ‘*death worlds*, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of the *living dead*’ (Mbembe 2003: 40). Situating necropolitics in the context of economy, Montag (2005: 11) argues that if necropolitics is interested in the production of death

or subjugating life to the power of death then it is possible to speak of a necroeconomics – a space of ‘letting die or exposing to death’. Montag explores the relation of the market to life and death in his reading of Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* and *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. In Montag’s reading of Smith, it is ‘the dread of death, the great poison to the happiness..... which while it afflicts and mortifies the individual, guards and protects the society’ (cited in Montag 2005: 12). If social life was driven solely by unrestrained self-interest then the fear of punishment or death through juridical systems kept the pursuit of excessive self-interest in check, otherwise people would simply rob, injure and kill for material wealth. Thus, for Smith the universality of life is contingent on the particularity of death, the production of life on the production of death where the intersection of the political and the economic makes it necessary to exercise the right to kill. The market then, as a ‘concrete form of the universal’ becomes the ‘very form of universality as life’ and requires at certain moments to ‘let die’. Or as Montag theorizes it,

Death establishes the conditions of life; death as by an invisible hand restores the market to what it must be to support life. The allowing of death of the particular is necessary to the production of life of the universal. The market reduces and rations life; it not only allows death, it demands death be allowed by the sovereign power, as well as by those who suffer it. In other words, it demands and required the latter allow themselves to die. Thus alongside the figure of homo sacer, the one who may be killed with impunity, is another figure, one whose death is no doubt less spectacular than the first and is the object of no memorial or commemoration: he who with impunity may be allowed to die, slowly or quickly, in the name of the rationality and equilibrium of the market (Montag 2005: 15).

Montag, therefore, theorizes a necroeconomics where the state becomes the legitimate purveyor of violence: in this scenario, the state can compel by force by ‘those who refuse to allow themselves to die’ (Montag 2005: 15). However, Montag’s concept of necroeconomics appears to universalize conditions of poverty through the logic of the market. My concern however, is the creation of death worlds in colonial contexts through the collusion between states

and corporations. If states and corporations work in tandem with each other in colonial contexts, creating states of exception and exercising necropower to profit from the death worlds that they establish, then necroeconomics fails to consider the specificities of colonial capitalist practices. I argue that necrocapitalism emerges from the intersection of necropolitics and necroeconomics, as practices of accumulation in (post)colonial contexts by specific economic actors - transnational corporations for example - that involve dispossession, death, torture, suicide, slavery, destruction of livelihoods and the general management of violence. It is a new form of imperialism, an imperialism that has learned to 'manage things better'. The fundamental feature of necrocapitalism is *accumulation by dispossession and the creation of death worlds* in colonial contexts. Land privatization and the subsequent forceful expulsion of peasants, conversion of public property into private property, restrictions on public use of common property resources, neocolonial practices of asset appropriation, control over natural resources in the former colonies and the suppression of alternate, indigenous forms of consumption and production are some forms of dispossession in contemporary political economy (Harvey 2005: 145).

In contemporary forms of accumulation, the corporation is a powerful actor and in conjunction with nation states, supranational bodies and international agencies contributes to a necrocapitalist privatization of sovereignty. The transformation of European colonialism to a new 'imperialism without colonies' also required coercive power and brute force often with the collusion of post-colonial political elites in the former colonies where local states emerged as sites of power for capitalist accumulation. Thus, rather than marking the 'death of the nation state', the globalization of markets is dependent on a system of multiple states which required 'a new doctrine of extra-economic, especially military coercion. An endless invisible empire, which has no boundaries, even no territory, requires war without end, 'an infinite war, and a

new doctrine of war to justify it' (Wood 2003: 161). And to further clarify the relationship between markets and war, President George W. Bush, in an attempt to address concerns about the dramatic decline in tourism and air travel in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, told airline employees that 'one of the great goals of this war is to tell the traveling public: Get on board' (cited in Gregory 2004). Thus, for the American tourist to 'get on board' to enjoy a holiday, stimulate the tourism market and save airline jobs it becomes necessary for some people to die, as *homo sacer*, in a state of exception outside national and international law.

The creation of new spaces of exceptions is a weapon for the ideological arsenal of empire where the imposition of an economic relationship becomes paramount, using force if required. Thus, the right to rule is justified 'by the right, indeed the obligation, to produce exchange value' (Wood 2003: 157). Economic domination where markets manage much of the imperial work extends the powers and reach of colonial states. New economic doctrines require new military doctrines as well. War without end does not necessarily mean endless fighting: the coercive mechanisms of capital require an endless possibility of war. 'War without end' has an impressive genealogy in the west. Woodrow Wilson wrote in 1907:

Since trade ignores national boundaries and the manufacturer insists on having the world as a market, the flag of his nation must follow him, and the doors of the nations which are closed against him must be battered down. Concessions obtained by financiers must be safeguarded by ministers of state, even if the sovereignty of unwilling nations be outraged in the process. Colonies must be obtained or planted, in order that no useful corner of the world may be overlooked...The seed of war in the modern world is industrial and commercial rivalry (cited in Katz 2006).

The nexus between economic interests and military power, which characterized the colonial project, continues to operate in the new imperial formations that constitute the contemporary neoliberal project and is another enabling condition of necrocapitalism. Political

sovereignty becomes subservient to corporate sovereignty and economics rather than politics determines war zones. In imperial formations power is deployed to repress ‘symptoms of despair’, and to establish behavioral and economic norms in ‘a system for regulating disorder’ (Joxe 2002: 14). The involvement of U.S. multinationals along with the CIA in fomenting military and political coups in Latin America notably United Fruit Inc. in Guatemala and Colombia, ITT in Chile and Brazil is well documented (Dosal 1993; Grandin 2006). Millions of dollars were spent by the U.S. government to destabilize Chile in the 1970s – on learning that Chile had elected a Marxist president in 1970, Nixon instructed the CIA to ‘make their economy scream’ in an effort to ‘smash Allende’ (Grandin 2006). Corporate strategies to ensure ‘safe havens’ for their investment included obtaining U.S. government support for dictatorial regimes, violent reprisals using state military and police to suppress dissent, bribes and kickbacks to political elites. Because violence was deployed in these states of exception both governments and corporations were able to kill with impunity: Colombia in 1929 when the military gunned down striking United Fruit workers killing at least 400 (Kepner and Soothill 1935), and the U.S.-backed military coup in Guatemala in 1954 where more than 200 union leaders were killed are two of the more widely publicized cases involving violence and multinational capital (Chomsky and Herman 1979).

Privatization of the commons through corporate control of natural resources is another ‘sword of commerce’ that subjugates lives and destroys livelihoods by creating states of exception in many developing regions. In Latin America for example it is estimated that more than 2000 government industries were sold off between 1985 and 1992, many of them below their market value to private buyers ‘with connections’ to the military and US corporate and government interests (Grandin 2006). The collusion of local states is instrumental in the battle

over natural resources: a 1975 Philippine government advertisement placed in *Fortune* magazine declared: 'To attract companies like yours....we have felled mountains, razed jungles, filled swamps, moved rivers, relocated towns...all to make it easier for you and your business to do business here' (cited in Korten 1995). The effects of creating a 'business friendly climate' are often violent, leading to loss of life and the creation of death worlds. For instance, a combination of trade liberalization in agriculture (agriculture is 'liberalized' in the Third World and protected in the First) and the failure of genetically modified seeds have been linked to a 260% increase in suicide rates of farmers in India (Milmo 2005). More than 4000 farmers committed suicide in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh since the imposition of agricultural reforms. Roy (2001: 46) claims that

India's rural economy which supports 700 million people, is being garroted. Farmers who produce too much are in distress, farmers who produce too little are in distress, and landless agricultural laborers are out of work as big estates and farms lay off their workers. They're all flocking to already overcrowded cities in search of employment.

Roy (2001) has also documented the displacement of villagers in large-scale dam projects in India. She estimates that between 30 to 50 million people have lost their traditional lands as a result of dam projects. A single project, the Sardar Sarovar dam project will displace 400,000 tribal peoples once it is completed. As is the case in all developing countries the dispossessed do not participate in any of the benefits: the electricity generated by the dams are for use by city dwellers and the water for irrigating large industrial agriculture farms.

Necrocapitalist practices deny people access to resources that are essential to their health and life, destroy livelihoods and dispossess communities. The privatization of water in Africa and South America is a case in point: in almost every case where water was privatized the poorer segments of society ended up paying not only higher prices for water but paid with their

lives as well. In South Africa during 2002-2003 more than 100,000 people were infected with cholera leading to the deaths of 200 people after the South African government (following World Bank 'recommendations') denied water and sanitation services to thousands of citizens in KwaZulu-Natal province who were too poor to pay their water bills (Barlow and Clarke 2002). World Bank water policies encourage 'cost recovery': however, the problem is that corporate costs are recovered at the expense of people who are denied access to clean water and sanitation. Race and class also determine who suffers, who lives and who dies: in South Africa 600,000 white farmers consume 60% of the country's water supplies for irrigation while 15 million black people have no access to clean water (Barlow and Clarke 2002). A similar situation exists in the *maquiladoras* of Mexico where clean water is scarce because it is mainly reserved for use by foreign owned industries in the region. And when Bolivia's economy was 'structurally adjusted' by the World Bank, one of the conditions was to sell off the national water company, which the Bolivian government did to Bechtel. Not long after the purchase water bills rose by 200% for an already impoverished citizenry with the government even attempting to charge citizens for collecting rainwater for personal use. Extended protests by the people forced the Bolivian government to take over water supply again leading Bechtel to exit Bolivia, albeit with a \$25 million payout (Grandin 2006). Other contemporary cases of accumulation by dispossession that can be seen as necrocapitalist practices are the privatization of war resulting from the increasing use of privatized military forces and conflicts over natural resources between transnational corporations and indigenous communities in the Third World, which I will discuss in the next section.

Outsourcing the ‘War On Terror’: Corporate Warriors and the Privatized Military

Industry

Imperial power, military might, economic interests and capital all converge in the so-called war on terror: while it may be true that the oil may not have been the sole reason for the invasion of Iraq, it is no accident that in the mayhem and looting in Baghdad that followed the first few days of the invasion, the only two buildings guarded by American troops were the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Oil. Flows of capital in and out of Iraq leave a trail of death and destruction followed by reconstruction: one of several key decisions in post war had to do with the establishment of ‘Operation Adam Smith’ involving the privatization of Iraq’s state industries and the allocation of reconstruction contracts to mainly American and British corporations. (Grandin 2006; Gregory 2004). While the entire country is declared a state of exception colonial cartographies have redrawn Baghdad into zones. The ‘Green Zone’ where the Coalition Provisional Authority is based is a state of exception within a state of exception – ‘America’s Baghdad’ as an interpreter worker in the Green Zone described it an interview with the *Washington Post*: ‘Its like I never left America. They serve peanut butter, lobster and ice cream. The cell phones have a 914 area code (White Plains, New York). The television sets show Monday Night Football. The people speak English’ (cited in Gregory 2004: 247). Life and death for people unfortunate enough to live outside the Green Zone yet governed by its operations is very different. Colonial cartographies in rezoning Baghdad based on levels of security have differential effects on human bodies that occupy these zones. The ‘war on terror’ operating in a neoliberal economy has created a type of sovereignty that has profound implications for those whose livelihoods depend on the war on terror as well as those whose lives become constituted as ‘bare life’ in the economy of the war on terror.

Outsourcing is a key strategy used in the so-called war on terror. There are currently over 160,000 American troops in Iraq. The next highest group of soldiers is hired by privatized military firms (PMFs) and number 21,250 compared to 8500 British troops which is the second largest national contingent (Singer 2004). Private contractors operate prisons in Guantanamo Bay and Iraq. Haliburton, Bechtel and other major U.S. hired contractors have received million dollar contracts to provide security services and work on reconstruction projects. These contractors in turn bring in thousands of workers (often illegally) from the Philippines, Nepal, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka to do what one American supervisor calls ‘grunt jobs’, meaning dirty and dangerous work that American employees are not willing to do (Phinney 2005). Hundreds of these ‘Third Country Nationals’ (TCNs) have been killed and while the Pentagon keeps an exact body count of American soldiers killed, they do not keep records of TCN deaths or civilian deaths. Working conditions are also described as being abusive with contractors doing their best to minimize costs by providing minimal service: TCNs do not get overtime or other benefits like American employees, they eat their very basic meals outdoors in 140 degree temperatures while their American counterparts enjoy culinary delights in air conditioned mess halls along with U.S. soldiers. A racialized international division of labor is a profitable strategy for corporations involved in outsourcing the war on terror and reconstruction efforts in Iraq. The practice of necrocapitalism is embodied in these bodies of the living and dead Third Country Nationals by their invisibility in statistics of body counts or media coverage of soldiers in Iraq. Their labor profits imperial sovereignties yet their deaths are as disposable as the deaths of Iraqi civilians who are also evidence of the costs of necrocapitalism (or ‘collateral damage’ in Pentagonspeak). A racialized system of counting the dead also operates in Iraq. At the time of writing 4,259 coalition soldiers have died in Iraq since the invasion comprising 3,953 Americans,

two Australians, 174 Britons, 13 Bulgarians, one Czech, seven Danes, two Dutch, two Estonians, one Fijian, one Hungarian, 33 Italians, one Kazakh, one Korean, three Latvian, 22 Poles, three Romanians, five Salvadoran, four Slovaks, 11 Spaniards, two Thai and 18 Ukrainians (www.cnn.com). Numbers of Iraqi civilians killed as a result of the conflict are not as precise: various agencies put the total number of civilian dead between 81,032 and 88,479 (www.iraqbodycount.org). When General Tommy Franks infamously said ‘We don’t do body counts’ he of course meant that they only do the bodies that count.

Recent years have seen an increasing trend in the outsourcing of war and the global rise of the privatized military industry (Singer 2004). Privatized military firms (PMFs) are business corporations that offer a variety of military related services including combat operations, strategic planning, asset protection, support and training. PMFs have been active in Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Sudan, Algeria, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Uganda, Liberia, Cameroon, Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Congo-Brazzaville, Senegal, Somalia, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Croatia, Bosnia, Albania, Macedonia, Kosova, Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Chechnia, Georgia, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, several other Gulf states, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Indonesia, Haiti, Colombia, and several Latin American countries (Singer 2004). While these regions, many of them former colonial outposts, mark the theater of operations for PMFs, their corporate head offices are, not surprisingly, based in metropolitan centers of London, Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam and New York.

Modern nation states have drawn from the ‘private violence market’ to build their public power resulting in a privatization of sovereignty in territories where PMFs operate today. (Singer 2004: 20). PMFs owned and operated by transnational corporations have the right to take life or let live, ‘protect’ assets and even claim mineral rights, as is the case in several

African states. Given the nature of their business, there is a lack of transparency about the actual operations of PMFs. Singer (2004) estimates that the industry has an annual revenue of \$100 billion, which is expected to double by 2010. PMFs sell their services to the highest bidder: nation states, other multinational corporations, international organizations and even non-governmental organizations. This can have some ironic consequences: a PMF can be hired for military combat operations in a particular region to kill the ‘enemy’ and can subsequently be hired by another bidder at another time in the same region to ‘protect’ the people they were engaged in killing earlier. This has happened in Angola (Singer, 2004). Some industry lobbyists are even attempting to privatize UN peacekeeping systems invoking the neoliberal mantra of delivering services, faster, cheaper and more efficiently than the public sector. The privatization of war and the privatization of peace are now business decisions: governments and corporations will choose either strategy based on profitability and efficiency. Joseph Heller must have been prescient when he wrote *Catch 22*, where Major Milo Minderbinder remarked: ‘Frankly, I’d like to see the government get out of war altogether and leave the whole feud to private industry’.

Private contractors have also been implicated in the torture of prisoners that took place at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq (McKelvey 2005). If the state can torture and kill because of its sovereign ability to create a state of exception status, what implications arise from the sanctioned violence used by private corporations? I argue that a state of exception created by the war on terror results in a privatization of sovereignty, which is another enabling condition of necrocapitalism. The global organization and management of violence blurs the distinction between public and private providers of security. The state of course is a key funder of and protector of necrocapitalist practices. But the war on terror has been used strategically by several

U.S. multinational corporations to obtain generous tax breaks from their government as part of a ‘stimulus package’ which in turn is attempting to restrict the legal avenues for foreign citizens to sue multinational corporations for human rights abuses in U.S. courts. The ‘integration’ of public forces such as the police by private security firms for the protection of foreign capital results in the creation of new states of exception where violence can be used with impunity.

Corporations and violence have a long and troubled history, especially in the Third World. Colonial modes of development where resource rich but cash poor countries export their natural resources to industrialized countries often lead to armed conflict between government soldiers, mercenaries, warlords, separatist groups and private interests. Civil wars and military coups in Africa, Asia and South America have been financed by revenues from resource extraction – in Angola for example, factions fighting government forces used revenues from illicit diamond trafficking to buy procure weapons while the government used their legal oil revenues for the same purpose (Klare 2001). A recent World Bank study of internal conflicts between 1960 and 1995 found that the greatest risk factor for civil war was not ethnic tensions but ‘natural resource predation’ or the availability of easily ‘lootable resources’ (Collier 2000). In all these bloody power struggles involving the deaths of thousands of civilians, transnational corporations profited from access to resources, cheap sources of labor, sales of weapons, protection of assets and use of privatized military forces.

The rise of the privatized military industry in recent years means that nation states can no longer claim a monopoly on violence. Mbembe (2003) develops Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of ‘war machines’ to show how military manpower is bought and sold in the market in many African states. War machines do not just exercise violence and the right to kill – they also play a crucial role in resource extraction from the territories in which they operate by either obtaining

mining and oil concessions or providing protection to the multinational corporations engaged in resource extraction. In several postcolonial African states, the territoriality of resource extraction combined with the necropolitics of war making and the necrocapitalism of war machines have resulted in new technologies of destruction and new forms of governmentality. War in Africa as Mbembe points out no longer requires sovereign states but is increasingly waged by armed groups of militias often using transnational privatized military forces to control territories and by means of a privatized sovereignty, obtain monopoly access to natural resources and minerals in the region. Violent conflicts over land use and natural resources between transnational corporations, governments and Indigenous communities are common in the developing regions of the world and reflect forms of accumulation that can also be described as necrocapitalism as I will discuss in the next section.

Accumulation by Death and Dispossession in the Energy and Resources Industry

Perhaps no other commodity has such a long and bloody history involving dispossession, colonial conquest, military coups, wars, corruption, global politics and power as oil. Starting from the end of the 19th century oil has consistently been one of the biggest businesses in the world. In 2007, six of the 15 largest corporations in the Fortune 500 Global list were oil companies. One of the first truly multinational corporations of the modern era, corporate strategies of oil companies are inextricably linked with national strategies of governments as well as global politics and power. Watts (1999: 1) has documented numerous cases of ‘petro-violence’: Violence that often accompanies the extraction of oil arising from the ‘intersection of environment and violence: both biological violence perpetrated upon the biophysical world, and the social violence, criminality and degeneracy associated with the genesis of petro-wealth and

with its ecological destructiveness'. Oil has been the cause of civil conflict and war in so many regions of the world with ongoing conflicts in Nigeria, Ecuador, Colombia, Myanmar and the Caspian basin where petroleum has become central to what the Azerbaijani president calls 'armed conflict, aggressive separatism and nationalism' (Watts 1991: 1). Transnational oil companies, governments, private security forces are all key actors in these zones of violence and the communities most affected by this violence are forced to give up their sovereignty, autonomy, and tradition in exchange for modernity and economic development which continues to elude them. Oil has played a key role in the tragedy unfolding in the Middle East today, beginning from the carving up of the region into nation states to satisfy the needs of colonial and imperial powers in the 1930s to the so called war on terror in Iraq and elsewhere that is increasingly resembling a permanent state of exception.

The state of exception also blurs the distinction between public and private providers of security. For example in Nigeria, private security firms in the words of one oil company director act as a 'buffer between the state security forces and the oil companies' (Abrahamsen and Williams 2005). There are also significant differences in labor conditions between guards, soldiers, and police employed by the state and private contractors – while workers in both sectors risk injury and death those employed by the latter tend to be better armed and trained as well as better paid. In many countries in Africa, private military forces have both material and symbolic significance – from protection of foreign assets, security of employees to the perceived collusion between local governments and multinational corporations. The 'integration' of public forces like the police by private security firms for the protection of foreign capital results in the creation of new states of exception where violence can be used with impunity.

The case of Shell in Nigeria is well documented: a single company that generates 75% of the Nigerian government's revenues and nearly 35% of the country's GNP. Despite millions of dollars in royalties local communities most affected by Shell's operations continue to suffer dire levels of poverty and have seen their traditional sources of livelihood disappear (Hertz 2001). And while government corruption is a major cause of the problem several environmental and human rights activists have questioned Shell's role and relationship with the government. The corporation has contributed to building roads, schools, hospitals, and power utilities in the Niger Delta where its main operations are based. As a Shell manager put it: 'Things are back to front here. The government's in the oil business and we are in local government'. (Hertz 2001: 173). However, despite the rhetoric of corporate social responsibility oil companies operating in the region find that the money they contribute to the local economy does not benefit local communities. The notion of 'responsibility' is also contested: when a local village leader complaining about the clinic's inability to deliver health care in the village was told that Shell's executives were not 'responsible' for his government's corruption, he asked, 'but is it Shell's responsibility to take our resources?' (Maas 2005).

Many indigenous communities all over the world are fighting against economic, social and cultural marginalization at different levels and their struggles are against their own governments, multinational and domestic corporations, international agencies and supranational organizations. The primary victims of the structural violence of necrocapitalist practices are the poor of the world. As Farmer (2005: 50) points out, not only are the poor 'more likely to suffer, they are also less likely to have their suffering noted'. The Zapatista uprising in the Chiapas district of southern Mexico is one case where the suffering of the poor received worldwide media attention. Indigenous communities in Chiapas rose up against the Mexican government in an

armed insurrection and temporarily took over the regional capital of San Cristobal. The Mexican government responded with military action and after several conflicts offered conditional pardon to the rebels. On January 18, 1994 Zapatista leaders responded to the Mexican government's offer of conditional pardon with the following letter, entitled 'Who must ask for pardon and who can grant it?' suggesting that the Mexican government ask the Chiapans for a pardon instead, which they would consider:

Why do we have to be pardoned? What are we going to be pardoned for? Of not dying of hunger? Of not being silent in our misery? Of not humbly accepting our historic role of being the despised and the outcast? Of having demonstrated to the rest of the country and to the entire world that human dignity still lives, even among some of the world's poorest peoples? (Marcos 1995).

In Chiapas, 14,500 people die every year. 71.6% of the Indigenous population in the region suffers from malnutrition (CIEPAC, 2001). The region has the highest infant mortality rate in the country, the third highest maternal mortality rate highest death rate in the country. Most of these deaths are caused by curable diseases: respiratory infections, gastroenteritis, parasites, malaria, breakbone fever, tuberculosis, conjunctivitis, typhus, cholera and measles. While there are 7 hotel rooms for every 1000 tourists there are 0.3 hospital beds for every 1000 Chiapans (Farmer 2005). A region that produces 54% of the country's hydroelectric energy, 21% of its oil, 47% of its natural gas also contains the country's most impoverished people where 36.2% of the population do not have running water and 35.2% do not have electricity (CIEPAC, 2001). Transnational corporations extract wealth from Chiapas by mining their land, felling their forests, and selling a tourist experience at the expense of local communities who have the misfortune of 'inhabiting' the region. One of the leaders of the movement, Subcomandante Marcos, described their struggle:

When we rose up against a national government, we found that it did not exist. In reality we were up against financial capital, against speculation, which is what

makes decisions in Mexico as well as in Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania, North America, South America – everywhere. (Zapatista, 1998).

‘Financial capital’ here refers to the World Bank’s structural adjustment program where a World Bank loan to Mexico was conditional upon the country undertaking ‘land reforms’. Basically these reforms meant that agricultural land used by indigenous communities in Chiapas was to be deployed to raise cattle for fast food markets in the U.S. while locking out local communities from participating in the benefits (there is no McDonald’s in Chiapas). The corporate response to the Zapatista rebellion typifies necrocapitalist practice: in an internal memo the Chase Manhattan Bank, one of the major financiers of the Mexican government stated ‘the government will need to eliminate the Zapatistas to demonstrate their effective control of the national territory and security policy’ (Mexico, Political Update, Chase Manhattan Bank, Zapatista 1998). If communities have to be ‘eliminated’ for economic development to occur one can only wonder what corporate social responsibility means in this context. Violence used by authoritarian regimes to suppress dissent may well involve creating a state of exception for that violence to be deployed and is easily identifiable. The violence, dispossession and death that often follow the imposition of ‘open markets’, ‘land reform’ and free trade’ in the poorer regions of the world however marks another state of exception that escapes political scrutiny. To quote Karl Marx: ‘between two rights, force decides’.

Often, the multinational corporation escapes liability when it partners with repressive regimes: the gray area of corporate complicity in violence marks a state of exception where despite continuing to extract economic benefits through human rights violation corporate culpability is difficult to prove in an international court of law. Transnational corporations appear to operate with impunity in states of exception as far as the realm of international law is

concerned. For example, Ramasastry (2002) has documented several legal cases against multinational corporations ranging from a legal claim filed by the Herero community in Namibia against German industry seeking reparations for ‘the enslavement and destruction of their tribes’, Holocaust related cases of slave labor to the more recent case against Unocal’s use of slave labor in constructing an oil pipeline in Myanmar and its complicity with the brutally repressive practices of the Myanmar military government. Every legal case was dismissed either on ‘grounds of nonjusticiability’ or because the statute of limitations had expired or as in the case of Unocal, ‘mere knowledge’ that the corporation’s business partner (Myanmar’s military government) used slave labor was insufficient to penalize the corporation (Ramasastry 2002).

Cases where incursion of capital has led to ‘elimination’ of people including dispossession, violence, death and destruction are numerous: generating corporate profits through slavery by 19th century American banks who traded in slaves as collateral for loans (New York Times 2005); the use of slave labor by multinational corporations during World War II (Ramasastry 2002); the biotechnological redefinition of bare life through the Human Genome Project and the use of genetic information by governments and corporations (Cunningham and Sharper 1996); intellectual property rights regimes on biodiversity conservation (Banerjee 2003); displacement and dispossession of tribal people because of mega dam projects in the Third World (Roy 2001); the rise of ‘disaster capitalism’ where corporations profit from, control resources and reshape economies of regions devastated by natural and human made disasters as was the case during reconstruction efforts after the Boxing Day tsunami, Hurricane Mitch, Hurricane Katrina and the Gujarat earthquake of 2001 (Klein 2007; Sharma 2003); the struggles fought by Indigenous groups against mining and resource corporations (Banerjee 2000); the ‘clinical trials’ conducted by transnational pharmaceutical corporations on the bodies of the

world's poorest patients causing disfigurement and death (Shah, 2006) and a 260% increase in suicide rates by farmers in India as a result of 'liberalization' in agriculture (Milmo 2005). In 2005 there were 520 suicides by farmers in Vidarbha, the largest cotton growing region in India. The story received scant attention the press and was covered by 6 journalists. That same week more than 500 journalists were jostling for space at the Lakme Fashion Week in Mumbai where models were exhibiting the chic new dresses made from cotton grown by impoverished farmers who were killing themselves less than 300 miles away. Needless to say there are no theories in the organization and management literature that allow us to understand such phenomena – stakeholder theory, agency theory of the firm, supply chain management, transaction costs, resource based view of the firm all represent a collective failure of the imagination.

Along with the destruction of economies comes the inevitable reconstruction involving the usual coterie of corporations, construction companies, government aid agencies, UN agencies, and international financial institutions. Wars and natural disasters have left several countries with little power to govern their economies and these regions end up being defacto subjects of World Bank and private construction companies' sovereignty. All loans to impoverished countries come with neoliberal strings attached: privatize or die seems to be the directive (or in some cases privatize *and* die). Natural disasters like hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes become enabling conditions of disaster capitalism, for example, reconstruction efforts after Hurricane Mitch hit Central America were contingent on the selling off of public enterprises and facilities like airports, seaports, highways, telephone companies, utilities and water sectors. Thousands of small fishing communities devastated by the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami have permanently lost their livelihood and relief efforts are not aimed at reconstructing their lives but rather expanding the tourist sector and industrial fisheries. Entire coastlines are

being rebuilt on the bodies and lost livelihoods of displaced peoples: corporate hotels and beaches for tourists, casinos and resorts, and industrial fishing boats serviced by newly privatized airports and highways (Klein 2007). India's worst recorded earthquake which shook Gujarat in 2001 killed 20,000 people, injured hundreds of thousands, left more than 600,000 people homeless and destroyed or severely damaged more than 1 million houses. Amidst the rubble one of the first to arrive with a 'relief package' was a large partly state owned mining company which was trying for years to obtain access to lignite mining on traditional Indigenous land, and because of the earthquake was successful in 'relocating' the villagers and get access to their land. The displaced people were left without their traditional sources of income and minimum wage, casual and environmentally dangerous employment in the mines or prostitution as their only means of income (Sharma 2003).

Conclusion and Future Directions

In their vision for global economic development in 1951, a report from the United Nations Department of Economic Affairs (cited in Escobar 1995) stated:

There is a sense in which rapid economic progress is impossible without painful adjustments. Ancient philosophies have to be scrapped; old social institutions have to disintegrate; bonds of caste, creed and race have to burst; and large numbers of persons who cannot keep up with progress will have to have their expectations of a comfortable life frustrated.

The 'painful adjustments' for 'large numbers of persons' appear to continue unabated after more than 50 years of 'development'. The regime of development makes large numbers of people invisible, mainly the poor, the disinherited, and the dispossessed. As Agamben (1998: 177) notes, the use of the term 'for the people' denotes a dialectical relationship between an

inclusive, constitutive political subject and the class of people that is excluded from politics: ‘at one extreme the total set of integrated and sovereign citizens, and at the other, the preserve – court of miracles or camp – of the wretched, the oppressed and the defeated’. The imposition of neoliberal regimes in Third World sites allows people to enter political life only as consumers, often excluding the poor from participating in any benefits and leading to even more impoverishment of the rural poor as a result of environmental degradation and loss of access to natural resources. Who gets included, who is left out and multiple meanings of ‘people’ are no better exemplified than the words of the then Prime Minister of India who in a speech introducing economic reforms distinguished between three types of people in India:

..the crust consists of about six crore (60 million) people, who do not need to be canvassed about economic reform. The next layer contains about 25-30 crore (250-300 million) people belonging to the middle class, who are beginning to appreciate the benefits of liberalization. It is the next segment, of 55-60 crore (550-600 million) of lower income and poor people who remain unappreciative of the changes in the economy (Kothari 1997: 51).

The ‘unappreciative’ people, comprising the majority are the rural and urban poor, tribals, traditional fisherfolk, artisans, and small farmers. As Kothari (1997) argues, it is ‘no longer the poor that are being taken for granted, but rather deliberately excluded and considered dispensable under a political and economic regime that legitimizes poverty and destitution’. Kothari (1997) also argues that these reforms were essentially undemocratic in that they were imposed by bypassing a majority in the citizenry. One of the key theoretical implications of my critique is to highlight the inadequacy of current approaches like corporate social responsibility and stakeholder theory to reveal the material effects of discursive power regimes that create ‘dispensable’ people.

To return to the questions I posed at the beginning of the paper: a theory of necrocapitalism requires us to pay attention to the specific practices that result in the subjugation

of life to the power of death. These are the practices that create states of exception that enable accumulation by dispossession. To quote Agamben (1998: 180).

Today's democratico-capitalist project of eliminating the poor classes through development not only reproduces within itself the people that is excluded but also transforms the entire population of the Third World into bare life. Only a politics that will have learned to take the fundamental biopolitical fracture of the west into account will be able to stop this oscillation and to put an end to the civil war that divides the peoples and cities of the earth.

Studying the rise of new social movements and livelihood struggles is a direction for future research that may allow us to take into account the 'fundamental biopolitical fracture of the west' and perhaps change the normative framework of political decision-making. The World Social Forum (WSF), an annual meeting organized as a challenge to the World Economic Forum meetings, represents one such movement. According to Sen et al. (2004: 17), the WSF is 'not an organization but an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and inter-linking for effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neo-liberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism, and are committed to building a society centered on the human person'. A critical perspective in analyzing social movements might yield valuable insights on how social problems are articulated along with the contradictions, modes of resistance, struggles and tensions between social movements and neoliberal agendas (Grewal 2005).

New theoretical perspectives are required to rethink the relationship between the economy, the polity and the corporation as alternatives to necrocapitalist practices. Emerging insights from a postcolonial critique of management and organizations can offer new theoretical avenues to explore less repressive regimes of management (Prasad, 2003). These new

perspectives may allow us to envision a future where sustainable development does not mean sustainable corporations, where the poor are not structurally adjusted by tightening their belts while loosening the belts of the rich, where biotechnology does not reduce the diversity of life into a replication of uniformity, where food exports do not lead to an increase in a nation's GNP while their children starve, where billions of dollars are not spent developing drugs to cure balding, and impotence while millions die elsewhere of malaria and tuberculosis. Perhaps the questions asked by the African novelist Ayi Kwei Armah provides a fitting end to this paper:

How have we come to be mere mirrors to annihilation? For whom do we aspire to reflect our people's death? For whose entertainment shall we sing our agony? In what hopes? That the destroyers aspiring to extinguish us, will suffer conciliatory remorse at the sight of their own fantastic success? (Ayi Kwei Armah, *Two Thousand Seasons*, p. xiii).

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