Capital, State, Empire

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Notes

1 Data collected by the Centre for Responsible Politics, https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1-7PdCI2NawSgP1QE-cGYVYedetYqepR-4jBweajyqF0/edit#gid=1782600961. Since 9/11, less than 150 Americans have been killed by terrorist attacks, while 450,000 have been killed in domestic gun violence. In 2015, there were about 165,000 separate gunshots recorded in 62 different urban municipalities (Frankel, 2016).

2 Uber, Airbnb, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, Fitbit, Spotify, Dropbox, WhatsApp, Tumblr, Pinterest are examples of billion dollar companies created after 2005.

3 In March 2016, Google had 32 billion visitors, while Facebook had 30 billion (See Eavis 2016).


5 By no means are these contradictions universal. Nor are they ‘necessary inconvenient truths’ or general empirical facts about the unfortunate by-product of economic development, but rather specific features of rule by capital.

6 The DoD also manages 826,000 in the National Guard and a benefits program that serves over 2 million persons.

7 It is worth remembering that ‘Capital is dead labour that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks. The time during which the labourer works, is the time during which the capitalist consumes the labour-power he has purchased of him.’ (Marx 1977, 342).
The mechanisms for producing this wealth, accumulation and inequality involve a diverse number of causes. An abbreviated list includes how the fall of the Soviet Union allowed capitalism to unilaterally dictate global trade conditions, the deindustrialization of North America paired with outsourcing to the Global South, the displacement of labour by automation, intensifying work concurrent with a general suppression of wages, the developmental state capitalism of China with its vast cheap and unorganized labour pool lowering production costs, the induction of demand for products through consumerism, re-regulation to create corporate financial rentierism, and the creation of new markets in information and communicative technologies as the rate of profits fell in established sectors. Common to all of these mechanisms is widespread domination and exploitation, oppression and coercion which comes at the expense of a more stable and equitable economy. This points towards how production is controlled.

Although as Supreme Command of the Allied Powers, General Douglas MacArthur, during the Occupation of Japan, can be considered as a Viceroy – as can Paul Bremer in his role as Presidential Envoy to Iraq at the Coalition Provisional Authority.

Genuine free labour implies: first, that workers chose their jobs voluntarily; second, that the terms are specified and well understood by each party; third, that workers have unrestrained exit rights; and fourth, incentives are financial rather than coercive. This is a standard that most jobs in capitalism fail to meet, because as Marx notes, almost all work in this social structure is really exploitation or subordination. What appears to be ‘freedom’ is essentially coercion. But this coercion is mystified by the rise of a bourgeois ideology.

Historically, dispossession was a feature of colonized territories were destroyed by the forced labour or indigenous people, or importing slaves; in Europe, industrialism required the destruction of traditional ways of life to force a migration from rural areas to cities to create a new factory labour force. Overall, colonialism and commodification were intertwined with the continued strengthening in European societies creating new means for subjugating and governing populations all in the pursuit of profit.

The moral sanction and badness of theft hinges on depriving a person of the means to reproduce their life, and this is particularly acute in circumstances where a person’s labour was vital in producing the item. But the moral harm is reduced with digital items because as they can be easily reproduced, no thus one is deprived. Digital ownerships rights then are more a matter of law, and less a moral bad.

Much of this theory develops out of the study of European polities. While Tilly cautions against universalizing the European state-formation modal for other spaces and times ‘our ability to infer the probable events and sequences in contemporary states from an informed reading of European history is
close to nil’ (1975, 82)—he nevertheless thinks it is useful for regional and historical comparative and contrastive work. He writes that ‘the European historical experience, for all its special features, is long enough, well-enough documented, and a large enough influence on the rest of the world that any systematic conclusions which did hold up well in light of that experience would almost automatically become plausible working hypotheses to be tried out elsewhere.’ (Tilly, 1975, 13–14).

Notwithstanding the value that Polanyi offers by correctly rendering reciprocity and redistribution as social, he incorrectly fails to label the market economy as stemming from the same social system. Instead he views it as disembedded and distinct and so able to devour the social.

The ‘end of monetary policy history’ was a commitment was to price stability above all else using inflation targeting at around 2 per cent to lower market volatility. This was accomplished using an operationally politically insulated central bank using one instrument (the short-term interest rate,) for one objective (controlling inflation via a consumer price index,) over a medium term (six to eight quarters,) using assert prices to detect emerging financial imbalances thereby minimising excessive fluctuations. Transparent communications was deemed importance around the uses and rationale of that instrument as a way to smooth out micro-fluctuations.

Abstractly, the Great Recession was just another partial capitalist economic crisis that comes from the contradiction between the individual desire for profit and the necessity of a social division of labour. Specifically, it was caused by Wall Street using digital technical to implement 24-hour trading, improve records management, and invest into emerging markets due to better oversight. Aside from the rapid inflows and outflows of capital causing economic and social instability, the speculative investment into new online businesses and enterprises eventually led to the 2000 dot.com crash that in turn heralded a new regime of low interest rates. Bankers took advantage of these conditions and invested into property speculation and debt, deliberately using sub-prime mortgages to financed people unlikely to pay them. Returns on investments were good because of a high interest rate on the debt. When defaults occurred, assets could be seized or refinanced, thus yielding better returns. These financial instruments were bundled with other loans and packaged as investment funds. While selling these products to clients, banks themselves insured against these debts. Being so exposed to these risks, when one financial house fell it had a cascading effect across the financial sector leading to a good portion of the economy falling into recession.

This is why from about 1915 onwards solders were equipped with metal helmets to protect them from head injuries. This was one of many military changes that states made to adapt to the circumstances and conditions of modern industrial warfare. A modern soldier’s personal equipment still more or less reflects this concern.
Comparatively, in the Second Boer War, 1899–1902, it is estimated that the British Army fired 273,000 rounds. One outcome of the war was a rapid modernization program to design and equip artillery as a good portion of the guns fielded in the conflict had been in service in the Crimean War. The new specifications were for a gun that could fire a 12.5lb shell 6,000 yards (Norris, 2000, 164-165).

Petraeus was then appointed to command in Iraq, where he had some success. He was later appointed to command in Afghanistan to replace General Stanley McChrystal, before making his way to the CIA.

Roberto Gonzalez (2015) argues that the program had an internal ideological function in that it sought to do public relations work with American citizens to convince then that there were humanitarian motivations attached to the occupation, and that social science was being enrolled to limit the use of force and limit cultural conflicts that might lead to unnecessary casualties. It sought to counter the narrative and images of the US occupation as brutal that emerged after Abu Ghraib.


See http://www.apa.org/news/press/statements/interrogations.aspx – also see Senate Select Committee on Intelligence published a voluminous account of the CIA’s program.

When Risen initially drafted the article in 2003 for the New York Times, he asked the CIA for comment. In April 2003, George Tenet and Condoleezza Rice, the director of the CIA and the National Security Advisor respectively, met with Risen and Jill Abramson, the Times Washington bureau chief. Appealing to national security and the possible endangering of a CIA agent’s life Tenet and Rice requested that the Times hold the article. The Times complied.

The Senate Judiciary Committee passed, by a bipartisan margin of 13–5, such a proposed law, but it did not receive a Senate vote.

There is also something to be said about the latent presumption that Black integrate and adapt the behavioural norms associated with ‘whiteness.’

Granted, the 1033 program does also include the distribution of items like blankets, office furniture, computers and so on. See http://www.dla.mil/dispositionservices.

Relatively smaller compared to the great Recession, but still nevertheless still worth noting, due to justifiable affirmative action the 2013 US government shutdown disproportionately affected Blacks. The shutdown was due to a showdown over funding the Affordable Care Act (2010), legislation
which would have dramatically improved the conditions for at least 16 million people, most of whom are persons of color (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services 2015).

29 One result of an unfree labour regime is that it generates a crisis of under-consumption, usually because it drives down wages or leads to job losses in other contexts; thus the consumption practices of workers are affected by this capitalist restructuring of the labour regime. In this respect, unfree labour is a contributing factor in a capitalist economic crisis.

30 The US redacted 8,000 pages prior to non-permanent Security Council member states viewing the report on Iraq’s weapon’s program.


32 Normatively, a coercive imposition of democracy is an intellectual contradiction in orthodox democracy theory.

33 With a combined profit of $16.2 billion, in 2014, the combined sales of Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, Northrop Grumman and General Dynamics, five of the world’s largest arms manufacturers defence companies, amount to $125 billion out of global combined arms sales of $401 billion, account for about 0.001 per cent of the US $16.77 trillion Gross Domestic Product (2013). Together they employ 450,000 people in the US and abroad. While each company has multiple business lines ranging from electronic systems, to aeronautics, and naval systems, all aside from Boeing, receive the majority of their business from arms sales, both domestic and foreign.

34 Few other heads of state did.

35 Special Forces have also supported the Drug Enforcement Agency in Latin America (Scahill 2010) as well as conducting independent operations. For example, in Honduras Special Forces use Forward Operating Base Mocoron to train counter-narcotics Honduran troops in counter-insurgency tactics (Turse 2012). Even more worrying in some respects is that using military forces in an international policing capacity, involves the militarization of police forces and other government agencies. For instance, there is little to differentiate a DEA Foreign deployed Assistance & Support Team agent from a Special Forces operator. The same has held for tactical units in domestic policing for some time (Kraska and Kappeler 1997, Shank and Beavers 2013).

36 Although discretionary spending is set to increase by approximately $109 billion, see [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2013/assets/defense.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2013/assets/defense.pdf).

37 Regional commands could appeal to the Pentagon for adjudication, but given that Special Forces are shielded by Presidential authority, the Pentagon’s scope for discretion is it is not yet clear.
While there are few critical, sociological engagements with the social shaping of neuroscience (cf. Pickersgill 2013), this is not to downplay or diminish the achievements of neuroscience research and its medical treatments. It is the opposite. Efforts to treat neuroscience seriously involve ensuring it does not become a discursive pawn to supplement ideological claims that techno-shaman sell as they misinterpret medical research in an effort to peddle their intellectually unsatisfying speculative philosophy.

The similarity I want to stress is disagreement as to whether the cognitive can be understood either through reforming models of cognition to become more computational, or rather to pursue a better understanding of the mind’s abilities.

One could quibble here and point to random numbers included in calculations and so on. However, this pseudo-randomness must be written into code. If pseudo-random numbers were the same, the output would be the same.