Zones of Accumulation Make Spaces of Dispossession: A New Spatial Vocabulary for Human Geography

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Abstract

Human geographers, scholars in other disciplines and the wider public use outdated spatial vocabulary to reference inequality and divergent geographic histories. Most spatial heuristics in wide use (1st world, North/South, etc.) essentialize progress, homogenize entire nations, obscure inequality at multiple scales and deny the processes of creating difference via imperialism, colonialism and capitalism. In this paper we elaborate on a new spatial vocabulary using geographic theory to identify *zones of accumulation* and *spaces of dispossession*. We then address what theories inform this naming convention, what it means and critically reflect on some of its weaknesses, such as its binary nature and relative lack of geographic specificity. We conclude by encouraging wider adoption of these spatial heuristics because they take their logic from geographical theory, actual existing inequality on multiple scales and present-day processes of capitalism.

Introduction

According to Doreen Massey (2005), the failure of spatial imagination, is a product of and driving force in harmful mythologies of modernity and space. Similar to the use of the Mercator map projection during and after the Cold War to naturalize the hegemony of many northern hemispheric states, terms such as Global North and South, or East-West divides do important discursive work. These naming conventions, which we refer to as spatial heuristics, are inaccurate and inadequate at best and at worst, normalize and reproduce spatially unequal power relations. Spatial heuristics are widely used unreflexively by scholars, writers and students and in so doing reinforce naturalized notions of progress, inequality and hierarchies. When unpacked, spatial heuristics are based on wealth and levels of development that are products of colonialism and dispossession, and masquerade as neutral signifiers that are emptied out of their actual work. While many of us use these spatial heuristics, some of us with more comfort than others, we have a general frustration with these terms and a reluctance to use them.

In the writing of a book on gender and development, we (Trauger and Fluri 2019) developed a new terminology for communicating about spatial inequality and geographic differences. We aimed to identify a language that does not essentialize progress, homogenize entire nations, obscure inequality at multiple scales or evacuate the processes of creating difference via imperialism, colonialism and capitalism. In the writing of our book we came to refer to the capitalist and formerly imperialist economies of Europe, North America and other neocolonial governments such as South Africa, Saudi Arabia or China as *zones of accumulation*, where capital is hoarded by wealthy elites. We argued that these zones are connected to other places through the extraction of capital from *spaces of dispossession*. We identified these spaces as territories within current or former colonies in many African or Asian states, current Caribbean colonies and territories of dispossessed Indigenous or racially marginalized people within the boundaries of wealthy countries and settler states such as China or the US.

In what follows we briefly elaborate on the intellectual histories of the four principal spatial heuristics used by human geographers and others: East vs West; 1st, 2nd and 3rd worlds; core and periphery; and Global South and North, in chronological order of their appearance in the literature. Following this, we comment on how these heuristics naturalize power relations, primarily settler colonialism and racial capitalism, problematically advance teleological notions of progress and development and discursively dissipate the violence of colonialism. In the last section, we elaborate on our own naming convention, what it means and critically reflect on some of its weaknesses, such as its binary nature and relative lack of geographic specificity. Nevertheless, we conclude by encouraging wider adoption of this spatial heuristic because it takes its logic from geographical theory, actual existing inequality on multiple scales and present-day processes of capitalism.

Spatial Heuristics: An Intellectual History

Spatial heuristics such as East-West or North-South are geographic shorthand for identifying places based on some perceived quality or characteristic, primarily related to political economic processes known broadly as economic development. They are widely used outside of scholarly geographic work, including by journalists, who persist in using those that academics have deemed less useful, such as the "3rd world." These naming conventions are more than just shorthand, they do important discursive work in our publications, our teaching and in the wider social world. We found that none of the existing spatial heuristics were adequate for our work, and for writing a geography textbook. Therefore, we sought to find language that is contemporary, more specific to process, and grounded in geographic theories of capitalism. We elaborate on our language and our reasoning below, but first, we provide brief intellectual histories of some of the most commonly used spatial signifiers.

East-West

Largely shaped by European expansion via imperialism into Asia, the East-West divide came into common usage during and after World War I and II as European hegemony was increasingly disputed and repulsed by Asian countries. With its roots in imperialism, the view of the East by writers in the West, was unflattering and shaped by what it is not: i.e., the West. Said (1978) writes that the view of the East is a largely European invention, created through geopolitical conflict and designed to paint non-westerners in the least flattering light. The discursive work of such spatial divisions of the world by language thus justified, in European minds, the conquest, dispossession and annihilation of entire cultures. While the East-West divide is often thought to be a cultural schism, based primarily on religion and other practices, the East-West gloss obscures the way imperialism worked (and continues to work) to naturalize white supremacist notions of what constitutes civilization and progress.

The Cold War brought new meaning to the East-West divide with global superpowers attempting to annex territory in the name of their political-economic systems, with a firmer boundary emerging in Eurasia between the democratic socialist states in Europe and the communist bloc to the East. Mao Zedong, in a famous 1957 speech, reinscribed this schism discursively by proclaiming that the Cold War was "a war between two worlds. The West Wind cannot prevail over the East Wind; the East Wind is bound to prevail over the West Wind." After the fall of the Soviet Union, the West has become synonymous with power and wealth in the late 20th century, and with the advent of globalization the East is isolated neither economically nor culturally from the West (if it ever was). The events of 9/11, 2001 underscored a new kind of East, known as the Islamic East, that ushered in a new era of neo-orientalism characterized by intolerance, separation and xenophobia (Altwaiji, 2014).

Writers and scholars in North America use the language of "triumphal exceptionalism" to characterize the West; this orientation persists even as the economic center of gravity in the world is steadily shifting to the east (Quah, 2011). For students in particular, using this or reading this language reinscribes, or at the very least, does not challenge the views that many have of American exceptionalism or righteousness in the Middle-Eastern military campaigns. When we, and our students, unreflexively use this nomenclature, we are supporting and consenting to power relations that dehumanize the other and reflect a view of Euro-centric exceptionalism that is unhelpful for fostering understanding and resolving conflicts. The East-West divide was never very accurate outside of large-scale geopolitical conflict such as the World Wars. And even in that case, Australia was always an outlier, politically considered part of the "West" (due to its history as a settler colony) but geographically part of the "East." Perhaps on a regional scale, East-West divisions once made sense between the communist bloc countries and European social democracies until the fall of the Soviet Union. However, this spatial heuristic remains widely used even though the cultural, political and economic conditions that might have contributed to its existence have changed considerably in many ways.
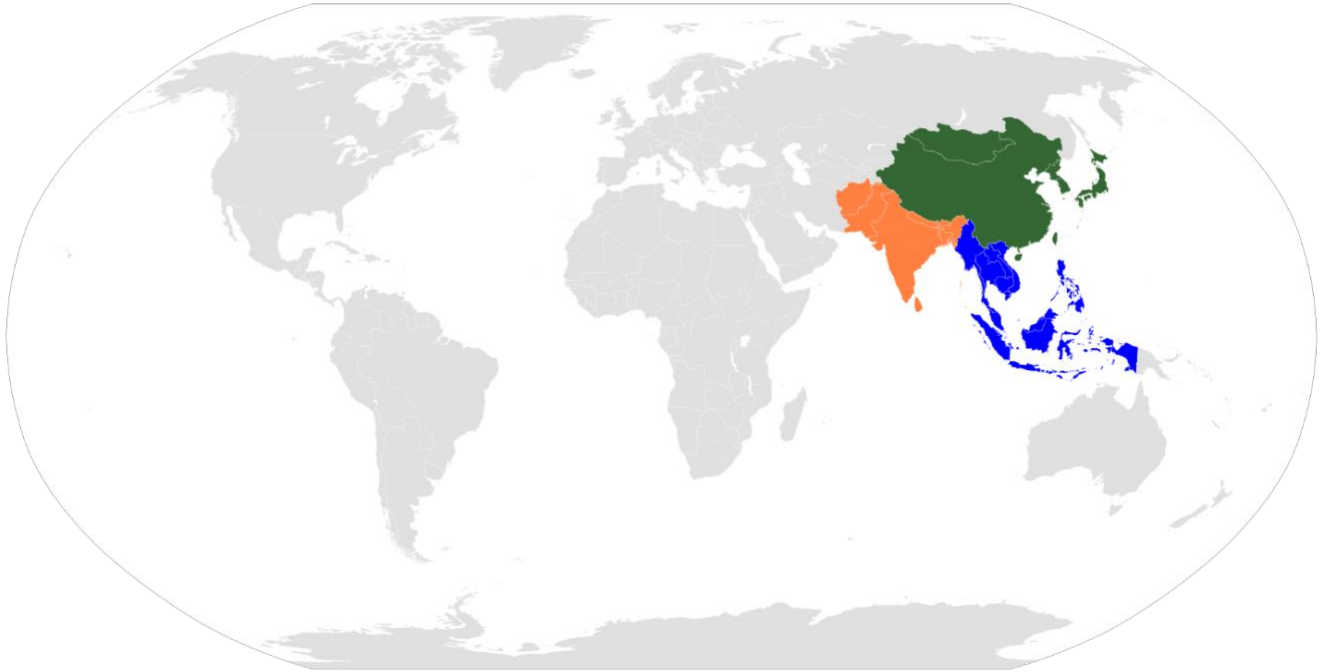
Figure 1: The Eastern World (source: Wikimedia Commons)

1st, 2nd and 3rd World

The power that western European nations had gained through colonialism was significantly challenged after World War II as European powers concentrated on rebuilding their own countries and economies. Subsequently, as colonialism began to fade, or take on new forms through supranational institutions, independent countries (newly emerging nation-states) took more dominant roles in managing their own domestic economies and populations. However, at the same time, a new reorganization of political and economic power unfolded through the respective (and oppositional) leadership of the United States and the Soviet Union, fomenting the Cold War in the post-World War II era. By 1955, new allegiances were formed between independent countries and the global superpowers which became known as the 1st, 2nd and 3rd worlds.

The capitalist economies of Europe and the United States were referred to as the "1st World", while the socialist countries of the Soviet Union, China and their respective allies were known as the "2nd World". The "3rd World", or the "non-aligned" countries, which sought a third way or alternative paths for their economic development. Both capitalist and socialist powers sought to influence these countries through economic development programs and proxy wars. Former allies, the United States and Soviet Union, as new "superpowers" competed for economic and political influence throughout the globe. The divergent political economic ideologies of these powers (capitalism and socialism) sought influence through development projects in various countries.
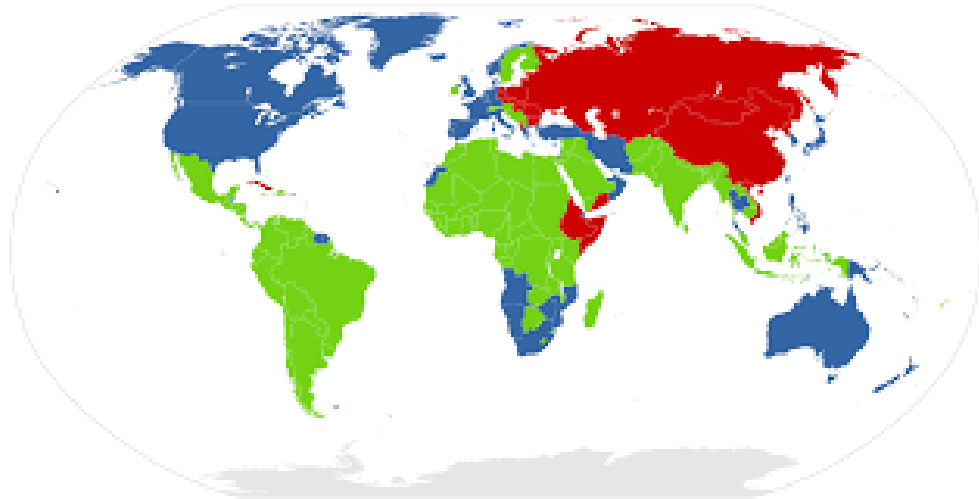
Figure 2: 1st, 2nd and 3rd World *(*source: Wikimedia Commons)

The fall of the Soviet Union eliminated the category of 2ⁿᵈ World and the typology stopped making sense, although its usage persists to this day. Also, the "3ʳᵈ World" never really referred to poverty as its connotations now might suggest, but rather at the time the typology was developed, it meant simply "non-aligned" or not affiliated with either of the super powers of the US and Soviet Union. Over time, wars and proxy wars (especially in Southeast Asia, Central and Western Asia and Latin America) directed the political-economic orientation of the non-aligned countries one way or another (i.e., capitalist or communist). The superpowers often decimated non-aligned economies through occupation, debt or underdevelopment as punishment for not agreeing to demands, leaving the association with poverty and the 3ʳᵈ World uncontested.

Core-Periphery

The core-periphery division of space arose from the work of Egyptian-French economist Samir Amin (1974) and U.S. sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein (1979). Both scholars independently developed theories of capitalism as a global economic system (Sheppard et al, 2009). Both focused their analyses on how economic development differs from place to place, and how some places and not others were differently articulated with capitalist processes. Amin identified a core and a periphery in the global economy, roughly equivalent to metropole and hinterland, which reflects, but does not name, its roots in colonial history. This spatial heuristic also rests heavily on Frank's (1967) dependency theory, in which former colonies remain in neoimperial relationships with their former colonizers. Wallerstein identified "processes" that operated in the core and the periphery and identified a "semi-periphery" in which previously marginalized countries or regions could develop core processes or stagnate into the periphery depending on their relationships with other regions.
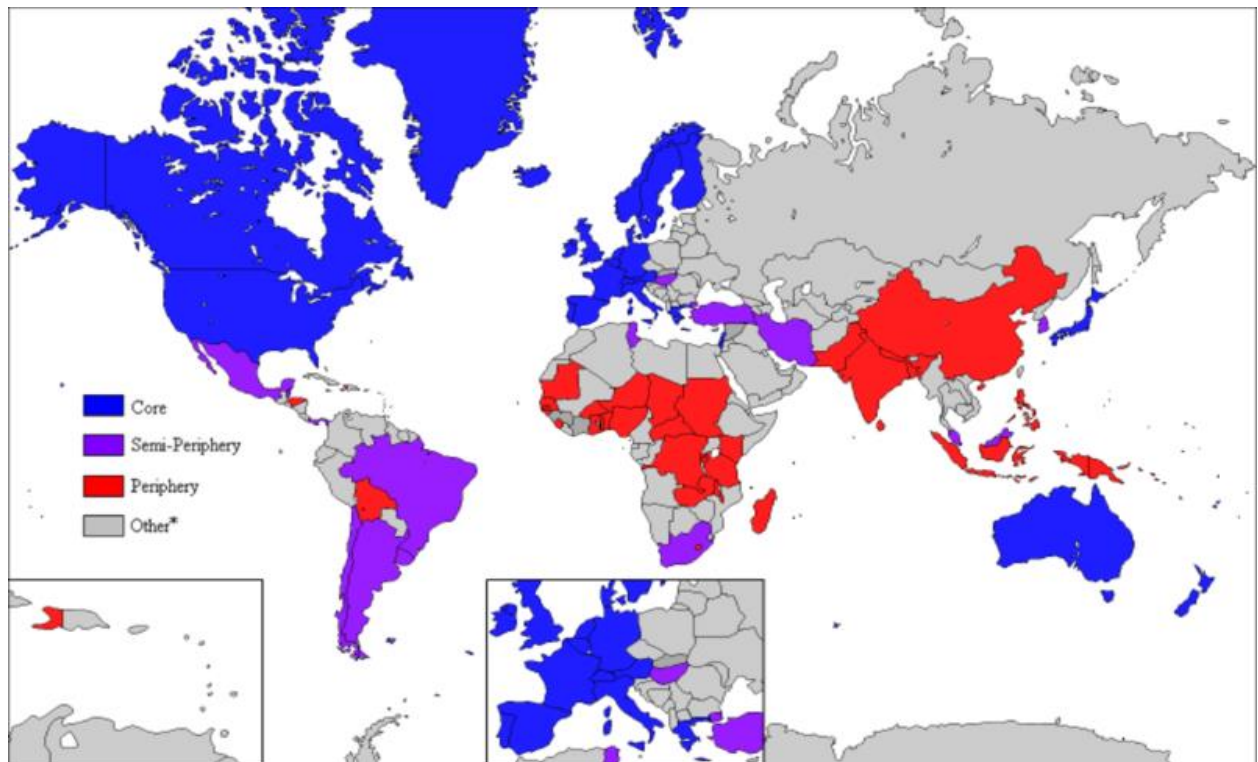
Figure 3: Core-Periphery and Semi-Periphery (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

In short, world systems theories posit that there is a core, a region (or regions) that dominate trade, control the most advanced technologies, and have high levels of productivity within diversified economies. The United States, Canada, Europe, Australia and New Zealand are commonly identified as "core countries." The periphery is composed of regions with underdeveloped or narrowly specialized economies with low levels of productivity. Much of Latin America, the interior of Africa, Central Asia and parts of Southeast Asia are frequently included in maps of the periphery. The semi-periphery— regions that are able to exploit peripheral regions, but are themselves exploited and dominated by other regions, such as Brazil's relatively weak global trade position in spite of the rich resources of the Amazon. These countries may be able to climb to the core or fall into the periphery, depending on their success or failure in the global capitalist economy. Brazil and Turkey are identified as the semi-periphery.

The idea that places, regions or countries are shaped by colonial and capitalist processes is a welcome change from the static categorization of places based on former colonial relationships, but is still highly correlated with economic indicators such as gross domestic product or productivity. However, the world-systems approach remains somewhat totalizing in its logic. For example, there are "core countries" which are presumed to be monolithic without peripheries within them. This spatial heuristic is also teleological (there's only one way to develop) and normatively developmentalist (i.e., capitalist economic development is desirable). With the exception of the "semi-periphery" this theory of the world still retains a binary logic, in which one kind of place is characterized by seemingly "good things" such as high productivity, and the other is characterized by undesirable things, such as underdevelopment. It also obscures peripheries within the core, and cores within the periphery within which processes of accumulation and dispossession play out (Petras 1981). In short, the discursive work that core-periphery heuristics do is reductive and functionalist, and reifies capitalism as the only desirable system, or at the very least, does not overtly critique the system. And Australia remains an outlier.

Global North and South

Originating in writings from the late 20th and early 21st centuries (Rigg, 2007), the terms Global North and Global South came to signify a social, economic and political divide between the wealthy northern hemisphere countries of the "Core" (or previous 1st World and "the West") and the poor, underdeveloped and former colonies of the southern hemisphere (periphery, 3rd World, the East). The recession of the 1980s and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the 1990s led to a deepening global divide between rich and poor countries, particularly acute for former colonies struggling with structural adjustment, civil unrest and massive debts. The dividing lines along income and other measures of development in this era suggest a trend more along latitude, instead of longitude, reflecting new geopolitical and economic realities, somewhat removed from the imperial origins of the East-West binary. Like core and periphery, Global North and South are based on economic measures, such as GDP. The North is "developed" and the South is "developing." (Figure 4).

In this naming convention, the colonial origins of underdevelopment are obscured, while spatially underscored by such devices as the "Brandt line." The Brandt line, developed by former German Chancellor Willy Brandt in 1980 to assert a vision for a new form of global security, in which the Global South is brought up to the standard of living as the North. The Brandt line divides the world into two pieces, roughly along the line of latitude at 30 degrees north. The North is composed of G8 Countries, UN security council members and the emerging economies of the semi-periphery. The South is composed of the former colonies of Latin and South America, Africa and much of South and Southeast Asia.
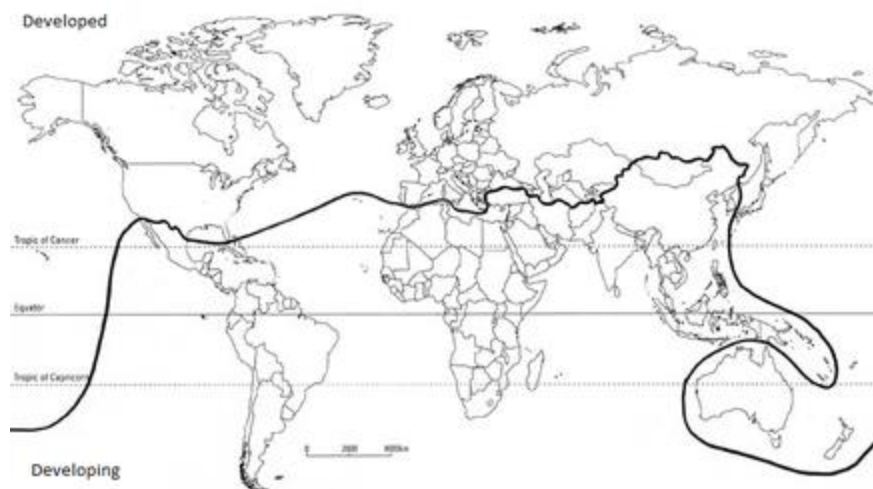

Figure 4: Brandt Line (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

While now the most commonly accepted spatial heuristic in academia, this naming convention still has its problems (Rigg, 2007). The primary problem is that the model assumes a monolithic South, which is characterized by uninterrupted underdevelopment. This could not be further from the truth, and using this convention obscures emerging economies as well as the rise of China as a global superpower. Relatedly, globalization and economic development are bringing parts of the South into the North through export processing zones, technology sectors and trade agreements in ways that are three-dimensional and cannot be captured with a flat ontology. Australia and New Zealand continue to resist conformity to this system of organizing space, and are grouped with the North as the Brandt line takes a tortured path through Polynesia. Their high levels of development are premised on dispossession of

Indigenous people and an ongoing settler state by people of European descent, much like North America. Therefore, what is a reasonable replacement for macro-economic naming conventions?

New Spatial Vocabulary

Anecdotal evidence suggests that few people are satisfied with the current spatial heuristics available to us as geographers that attempt to capture the complexity of the entire world into two or three categories. If we can agree that this is even a good idea, and we would argue there are some merits to it, particularly gesturing toward large-scale processes quickly, communicating with broad audiences and contextualizing a complex situation succinctly, then we need a better, fresher spatial metaphor. The current ones available to us reflect a world that does not exist anymore, or never did. Furthermore, the discourse that shaped the existing heuristics was always shaped by white supremacist/racist ways of viewing the world and obscured the way that power worked on the landscape. Continuing to use such spatial imaginaries naturalizes colonialism and a teleological notion of development and progress. Geographic metaphors or cardinal directions imply things existed prior to the processes that produced them and ascribe traits to places that are misleading or falsehoods: The West, North, and core heuristics are not homogenous, nor are they free from the things that are supposedly characteristic of their opposites, such as low productivity and poverty. In fact, one could argue that the power and wealth of the one part of the binary act as drivers of poverty and displacement in various places, and are thus far more interconnected that the spatial divisions would make them seem.

Cardinal directions imply a global perspective that is historically and spatially reductive ensuring the erasure of diverse experiences. The creation of innocent categories such as "East" or "3rd" allows us to look away from inequality and the violence of colonialism and capitalism that produces those spaces, as well as the ways in which we think about them (Rajagopal, 2000) We argue that a focus on the nation-state for determining who belongs in which category is an inappropriate and ineffective scale of analysis. Globalization, export processing zones, global assembly lines, supranational organizations and the like, make it necessary to shift the scale of analysis away from the nation-state and toward the scale of experience. Last, aside from Wallerstein and Amin, most spatial metaphors are not grounded in geographic theory, but rather capture a passive acceptance of history shaped primarily by views from the metropole. What results from the use of this inward-looking logic are haphazard lines on a map that are drawn to convince, while actually drawing attention to the outliers.

With our book *Engendering Development*, we wanted to do more than apologize for and complain about the use of unhelpful and potentially damaging naming conventions, so we set out to identify different characterizations of development and global capitalism. We identified one process in particular that was central to our argument: *accumulation by dispossession* (Harvey, 2005). It appealed for a variety of reasons. It was something that could be felt and thus helped focus our naming of place and space on experience. It was also something that every country through policy formations, sometimes simultaneously, engages in and resists. This concept has been taken up and reworked by a number of critical scholars grappling with the histories of colonialism and contemporary forms of neoliberal economics along with sociopolitical and identity-based forms of oppression, abuse, and marginalization (Ahlers and Zwarteveen, 2009; Cahill et al., 2016; Collard and Dempsey, 2018; Cravey et al., 2015; Desai, 2020; Katz, 2018; Mollett, 2017; Wright, 2014).

As such, we wanted to highlight that there are wealthy and poor countries but also wealthy and poor individuals within each of the territorial spaces associated with countries, thus drawing our attention away from the scale of the nation-state. Last, accumulation by dispossession identifies processes that both shape the capitalist world system (something we certainly wanted to keep from Amin and Wallerstein) but link spaces and individuals to each other both within countries and across countries.

Why we chose the language we did

Spatial imaginations do important work in the world. Modernization, globalization and neoliberalism (re)produce totalizing discourses of space and place through obscuring the history of white supremacy, colonialism and dispossession. Ideas of progress implicit in discourses of modernization suggest a uniformity of political, economic and cultural imperatives across space (i.e., the narrative that developing countries are just going to catch up eventually), and render people and places as passive pawns to the sweep of globalization. This has the effect of producing—in our imaginations—a place where nothing ever changes. This, ultimately, is paralyzing to political possibilities. In developing a new spatial language that is responsive to places, processes, difference and change, we took inspiration from radical, feminist and Indigenous scholars to frame our new language, being particularly inspired by the "One-third/two-thirds-world" terminology. This was chosen to "represent what Esteve and Prakash [1998] call social minorities and social majorities—categories based on the quality of life led by people in both the North and the South" (Mohanty 2004: 227). This approach avoids fetishizing place or creating monolithic hierarchies and is specific about the way inequality characterizes the global economic system.

According to Harvey (2005), Rosa Luxemburg identified a trend in capitalism that required keeping some territories in non-capitalist states. Harvey disputes this interpretation (although we do not), but he engages it by arguing that "capitalism necessarily and always creates its own 'other'. The idea is that some sort of outside is necessary for the stabilization of capitalism…" (141). Harvey suggests that this happens through

> commodification and privatization of land and the forceful expulsion of peasant populations…the commodification of labor power and the suppression of alternative (indigenous) forms of production and consumption…the slave trade; and usury, the national debt, and ultimately the credit system (145).

In short, ongoing, intentional, and state-supported dispossession of the "other," reproduces the global capitalist economy. From this standpoint, development operates through and because of dispossession, or the enclosure and seizure of collectively held resources. Harvey (2005) refers to this as "accumulation by dispossession" a process where the Indigenous commons is divested of resources and wealth, such as land or water, which is then *commodified* and concentrated in the hands of a few private individuals or corporations.

Because European imperialism laid the groundwork for capitalism and the global financial institutions that arose after World War II, the "other" is disproportionately colonial or post-colonial, with settler colonial states (i.e., South Africa, Australia) being one exception to this rule. Former colonies of European powers, settler states violently dispossessed their Indigenous people in a process that Indigenous scholars argue is ongoing (Coulthard, 2014). In this story of development, we see a clear and necessary intersection with colonialism, which is the direct control of people through settlement, land theft, military intervention and/or enslavement. Widely practiced by European empires in the 1400-1800s, colonialism set the stage for capitalism by dispossessing Indigenous people of their lands, enslaving workers on multiple continents and using plundered imperial wealth to build an industrial economy for Western elites in the 19th century. Thus, drawing on Harvey's theory of "accumulation by dispossession," we identify two general kinds of processes that can and often do occur in the same place: zones of accumulation and spaces of dispossession.

Zones of Accumulation

Given that dispossession and accumulation are necessarily spatial processes, we chose widely used geographic concepts to signify these spaces. One particularly important space to capitalist economic processes is the export processing zone (EPZ). Ong (2006) argues that these extra-territorial spaces

carved out of a national-state's territorial bounds operate under a "state of exception" that is exempt from the laws and governance of the territorial state within which the EPZ is located. The state of exception generates new kinds of power relations that circumvent and undermine the role of state sovereignty. Ong argues that the point of this is to accumulate value for capital in specifically constructed "zones" as sites of political-economic experimentation with neoliberalism. McCarthy & Prudham (2004) define neoliberalism as a form of governance that facilitates the development of markets and Ong argues that zoning technologies are "political plans that rezone the national territory…" in order to subject it to this "market-driven rationality" (103). EPZs are established within the territorial bounds of a nation-state but are not subject to its laws due to the technologies of zoning that Ong identifies.

Zoning technologies make it clear that accumulation operates at a scale above, below and sometimes parallel to the nation-state. It is not commensurate with it nor is it equivalent to the state. Ong (2006) calls the zones carved out of territorial nation-state space for neoliberalism "enclaves" that form an "archipelago" of "variegated sovereignties" (103). This theoretical framing of space operating at various scales and subject to multiple governing regimes is consistent with a world shaped by global capitalism instead of empires or nation-states as the other spatial heuristics often presume. We view a zone of accumulation operating in much the same way as an EPZ. They are circumscribed areas, often small, which are spatially and socially separated from their geopolitical surroundings, sometimes through legal means (i.e., corporations as people, TNCs). They are often economically connected with certain zones in cities, such as a central business district dominated by corporations. These zones serve as sites where capital is accumulated and are characterized by social exclusion and regulatory mechanisms designed to segregate people and facilitate the accumulation of capital.

Spaces of Dispossession

Massey (2005) suggests that space must be viewed as a "product of interrelations" (p. 9), not merely a slice of time, or a surface, but rather a process of a "multiplicity of trajectories" coming together and passing through one another. Secondly, and following from this, space must be seen as a "sphere of co-existing heterogeneity" (9). The trajectories that configure space are different, sometimes radically so, and no understanding of space will ever approach completeness without considering the diversity of impulses, influences and inclinations from which space is produced. Lastly, because of the heterogeneity and interaction at its heart, space is "always under construction" and we only view it as "a simultaneity of stories so far" (9). When space is viewed as open, not bounded, fixed or static, it holds the potential for emancipatory politics, and opens possibilities for agency, especially for those constructed as "others" through hegemonic ontologies of space, modernity and globalization.

Dispossession begins with the enclosure of the commons (Patel 2005), often, through the events and structures of settler colonialism (Coulthard, 2014) and proceeds via privatization and commodification. Coulthard writes that "settler colonialism is territorially acquisitive in perpetuity" and that dispossession has one goal: to acquire territory "for the purposes of state formation, settlement and capitalist development" (125). Hallenbeck et al (2016) identify settler colonialism as "the disruption, dislocation, and elimination of ways of being, systems of governing, and forms of life of Indigenous peoples and nations." (112). The perpetuation of settler states as capitalist powers belonging with the "West", "North" and the "Core" in the incongruent logic of spatial heuristics requires that the ongoing, present-day dispossession of Indigenous people in settler states such as Canada, the US, Israel, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand remains invisible. We identify spaces of dispossession as dynamic social constructions shaped by the process of territorial acquisition for the purposes of furthering capitalist accumulation of land, resources, labor, etc.

The wealthy often live and work in zones of accumulation and the economic policies that ensure this wealth rely on spaces of dispossession. As such, people are regularly dispossessed from their access

to land, water, and resources in order to allow for the unfettered flows and growth of capitalist production and wealth generation for global and local elites. At the same time, local elites in poorer countries benefit disproportionately from development projects than their less economically secure contemporaries. Thus, spaces of dispossession and zones of accumulation can and do exist within every country, regardless of its economic orientation, and some sites and situations such as export processing zones operate at different scales. By using this terminology, we resist the temptation to root places and entire countries within a hierarchical structure, often teleologically presuming a progressing from "less developed" to "more developed" status. We also seek to orient our understanding of contemporary development in ongoing capitalist processes that move capital and labor around the world, often to the disadvantage of the poor and vulnerable, further inscribing differences that perpetuate the political-economic marginalization of populations.

Examples of how we used it in the book

In what follows we demonstrate how we used this spatial vocabulary in our book *Engendering Development*. The first example is from a section on migration in Chapter 6 about Work, Mobility and Uneven Development. This spatial heuristic links accumulation and dispossession in a way that disrupts stereotypes and calls attention to the injustice that shapes much policy around migration. We write:

> An intersectional gender analysis of these processes indicates that women are disproportionately affected by limits placed on migration for economic, asylum and family reunification. Women from spaces of dispossession are the least likely to commit acts of terrorism and are the most likely to contribute to the capitalist accumulation of surplus through their suppressed wages in zones of accumulation (89).

A second example is from a section from Chapter 1 on gender and agriculture, in which we make the case to study masculinity and capitalism. We use this spatial heuristic to demonstrate that men and masculinity are blind spots in the literature, in a way that calls attention to inequality within and between countries. It includes an implicit critique of capitalism and the way that it benefits individuals in gendered ways, without resorting to national scale spatial references or easily identifiable individuals such as Bill Gates. We find that this only obscure differences and attempts to erase the agency of people.

> It is widely recognized in recent years that men and masculinity are missing pieces to the study of gender and development, as well as the interventions that such an analysis might inspire, such as the masculinity and militarism, or the paternalism of philanthropy…However, little has been done to include men (particularly men in zones of accumulation) into an analysis and discussion of development and its impacts. This could include, for example, research and inquiry into the relationship between hegemonic masculinity, capitalism and the production of inequality (14).

A third example, focusing on alternative development, uses our spatial heuristic to link poverty, space and global service work. This calls attention to how climate mitigation strategies, while well-intentioned, can perpetuate the process of dispossession that settler colonialism initiated. In this way, we posit an unbroken chain between European expansion from the 15th Century onward, to the persistence of settler colonialism today, in ways that work to continue to dispossess people of their land, autonomy and prosperity.

> Service work is also done by entire countries. For example, spaces of dispossession are involved in providing environmental services, such as climate mitigation strategies. These often involve planting non-native species as carbon sinks or planting trees in grasslands and disrupting agro-ecological systems (Osborne, 2017). In this way, those least responsible for climate change do the most work and bear the costs of mitigation (146).

In summary, we wanted this spatial vocabulary to allow us to 1) identify economic processes that operate across space (Harvey, 2005) 2) link process to space and spaces to each other in ways that Massey (2005) identifies as vital 3) connect capitalism to colonialism in ways that Indigenous scholars demand (Coulthard, 2014). As we invoke in the title, zones of accumulation create spaces of dispossession. In ways that cardinal directions, world and core-periphery relations cannot approach, our naming convention identifies and renders visible the processes that create unequal access to resources within and across differentiated spaces. In so doing, we can make visible the people, processes and places that benefit from capitalism at a far finer scale. Our spatial heuristic does not obscure the historical processes that have produced and perpetuated the global economy. Last, but not least, Australia does not remain an outlier.

Critique of our approach

We anticipate critiques of our work, and we have some of our own. In what follows we acknowledge that our naming convention is still far too reductive of capitalism and binary in its logic for our post-structuralist tastes. It obscures too much variation for us as qualitative researchers accustomed to fine-grained empirics. It also lacks geographic specificity and a clear-cut set of criteria for inclusion in one category or the other. It is also relatively static in terms of what happens in these different spaces and does not overtly reflect that spaces are dynamic, contradictory, and heterogenous social constructions (Massey, 2005). In what follows we elaborate on and attempt to respond and rectify for future reference some of these gaps and flaws. Any macro-scale term will by definition be flawed by its inability to capture or address in-depth analyses of the dynamic complexities, complications, and specificity of a given place.

Our primary self-critique regards how places will be or could be identified as a zone of accumulation or a space of dispossession. We can think of obvious examples of both (United Nations headquarters, an Indigenous reserve in Australia), but beyond being exemplary what can they tell us about classifying the entire world into this binary logic? We counter this critique with a question of our own. What purpose does it serve to identify whether and how a space is characterized? In other words, does identifying the corporate headquarters of a major multinational do anything for us beyond identifying it as a site of accumulation of capital? We argue that it does, but only when it is connected to the spaces of dispossession from where capital has been extracted. These spaces could be individual bodies in a maquiladora (Wright, 2013), small towns and communities dispossessed of their water resources (Jaffee and Case, 2018), nation-states through climate mitigation strategies (Osborne, 2017) or entire regions of vital water resources (Latorre, Farrell and Martínez-Alier, 2015). The point is that these spaces and zones must be understood relationally as we follow the commodity chains or state policy that shapes and benefits from them.

In the case of Trauger's (2014) work on organic banana supply chains, for example, the zone of accumulation is the ex-patriot plantation owner and exporter who benefit the most from the organic banana supply chain. Those who do not benefit, in the spaces of dispossession include Haitian banana workers on small-hold farms and the Haitian economy. This language requires us to be more specific, while suggesting an anti-racist, anti-imperialist, non-Euro-centric and more nuanced language for discussing the spatial dynamics of capitalism. In many ways, we prefer this non-specific language to something more geographically categorical. It cannot and perhaps should not be used without context, and underscores the processes that produce spaces, rather than the outcome of said processes or spaces. It implicates and names capitalist processes in ways that other spatial naming conventions fail to do.

As mentioned, we find this heuristic to still be excessively binary. It is meant to be used for explanatory purposes and to show the interdependence between places and processes that shape them. Additionally, this binary suggests a dialectic rather than obverse function as part of Marxian theory and

Harvey's (2005) analyses of accumulation by dispossession. We are advocates for 3rd spaces, non-binary modes of thinking and hybridity, while simultaneously recognizing the that simplistic language conventions have a significant impact on language and its meaning and mobility. We are calling attention to a particular spatial dynamic that disempowers, dispossesses and privileges certain groups in a world that is overwhelmingly shaped by binaries. If we were talking about the multi-valent and various ways that people resist, counter and undermine capitalism, we would use a less binary logic to capture the multiple, overlapping and variegated non/anti-capitalist practices that proliferate in spite of this predominantly binary framing of the world economy.

In many ways, we are also discouraged by the how this naming convention is reductive of Marxism/capitalism and points back to overly structuralist accounts of the world. As such, this naming convention is relatively static in terms of talking about processes and actors in both spaces of dispossession and zones of accumulation. According to these dominant accounts, only one process happens there, even though accumulation and dispossession may be happening dialectically, in a multitude of ways and with varying impacts at multiple scales in the same place. In the same way that binaries become restrictive to emancipation, we find that an over-reliance on Marxist accounts of capitalism narrow our view of the world to the purely economic or the merely political-economic. It does not and cannot account for how culture, identities (i.e., race, gender, class, sexuality, etc.) the environment, human actors and the dynamism of spaces themselves counter these overly deterministic ways of thinking about the world. That said, as we argue above, we live in a world structured, and some would go so far to say increasingly determined, by capitalism, with few opportunities for alternatives to be realized (Povinelli, 2011). We therefore, encourage thinking on how best to characterize the alternatives in non-reductive ways that do not render them vulnerable to capture by states and capital. Our primary purpose is to call attention to process and we encourage further work in this vein.

Conclusions

The geographic conventions that are widely used to name, categorize and understand the world are outdated. East-West binaries emerged out of an imperial era that no longer exists in the same form. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd worlds no longer make sense to use after the fall of the Soviet Union. The Global North and South awkwardly point us to the legacies of colonialism and globalization, but draw our attention to anomalies and obscure more than explain history and the present day. World systems theory brings us closest to an understanding of process, but does so in a teleological and awkwardly geographic way. As writers, thinkers and teachers, we became increasingly frustrated with spatial heuristics that did more to confuse than to enlighten, and reproduced normalized and naturalized ways of knowing the colonial, unequal and capitalist world in which we live, act, write and teach. We wanted something better for our own work, one that called attention to process and required political-economic and historical specificity.

While imperfect, we argue that geographers and other should replace geographic binaries and developmentalist models of understanding the world for a system of naming and knowing that calls attention to the unequal and disempowering dimensions of global capitalism. Drawing on Harvey's (2005) reworking of Marx's primitive accumulation as "accumulation by dispossession" and paying attention to feminist and Indigenous contributions to geography, we advocate for identifying spaces within which the powerful live and benefit as zones of accumulation that are made from spaces of dispossession. We borrow from Ong's (2006) use of "zoning technologies" for capital and Massey's (2005) "dynamism" of space, to describe a world structured by capitalism, but not determined by it, which leaves room for alternatives, yet requires us to identify and explain the processes by which some benefit from capitalism, while others do not.

In writing this article, we expand on the naming convention we used while writing our book *Engendering Development* (2019), where we examined many different approaches to simplifying the global economic processes for our readers. We settled on an approach that paid as much attention to political-economic processes as it did to contemporary political-economic processes and geographic theory. We found the other naming conventions to be too static, too mired in colonial histories that do not include the theoretical interventions by Marxists, feminists and scholars of color. We extend an invitation to our readers and students to use, expand upon and critique this approach to knowing and naming the world. We identified and anticipated some critiques in the body of this article, but we are certain that more will arise. We welcome them in the spirit of inquiry and collaborative knowledge production.

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