

Capitalism & Dispossession

Corporate Canada
at Home and Abroad

*Edited by
David P. Thomas
& Veldon Coburn*

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EXCERPT

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Acronyms/Initialisms

| | |
|---------|---|
| ASM | artisanal and small-scale mining |
| BIT | bilateral investment treaty |
| CALAS | Centre for Legal, Environmental and Social Action |
| CANCHAM | Canadian Guatemalan Chamber of Commerce |
| CCIC | Canadian Council for International Cooperation |
| CEO | chief executive officer |
| CIBC | Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce |
| CICIG | International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala |
| CIDA | Canadian International Development Agency |
| CIP | Canadian Institute for Planners |
| CIRDI | Canadian International Resource and Development Institute |
| CORE | Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise |
| CSR | corporate social responsibility |
| DFAIT | Department of Foreign Affairs & International Trade |
| DIDO | drive-in/drive-out |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of the Congo |
| EA | environmental assessment |
| FIFO | fly-in/fly-out |
| GIS | geographic information system |
| IAMGOLD | International African Mining Gold Corporation |
| ICMC | International Cyanide Management Code |
| ICSID | World Bank's International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes |
| IFC | International Finance Corporation |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| JCAP | Justice and Corporate Accountability Project |
| KMKNO | Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative |
| LSM | large-scale mining |
| MID | mining-induced displacement |
| MIGA | Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency |
| NGO | non-governmental organization |

| | |
|--------|--|
| NWT | Northwest Territories |
| OAS | Organization of American States |
| ODA | official development assistance |
| OHCHR | Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| OPPI | Ontario Professional Planners Institute |
| PDAC | Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada |
| RAID | Rights and Accountability in Development |
| SAMAO | Semaine des activités minières de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (Burkina Faso's West African Mining Week) |
| SCC | Supreme Court of Canada |
| SCAIT | Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade |
| TCS | Trade Commissioner Service |
| TML | Taseko Mines Ltd. |
| U of T | University of Toronto |
| UNHRC | UN Human Rights Commission |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| WB | World Bank |

Corporate Canada, Capitalism, and Dispossession

Veldon Coburn & David P. Thomas

Early in 2020, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that a Canadian corporation — Nevsun Resources Ltd. — could be sued in a Canadian court for its alleged abuses at a mining project in the country of Eritrea. In one of the world’s most authoritarian and repressive states, mine workers alleged that they were “forced to provide labor in harsh and dangerous conditions for years” (Bader 2020). Eritrea runs a “national service” program that a United Nations Commission of Inquiry labelled “enslavement.” Also in early 2020, six Indigenous land defenders were arrested in northern British Columbia for trying to block the construction of the Coastal GasLink pipeline (Cecco 2020). The land defenders were acting in support of the Wet’suwet’en hereditary chiefs, who are opposed to the construction of a massive pipeline through their territory.

While these two cases are very different, they are both symptoms of a broader problem with contemporary capitalism and with the activities of Canadian corporations acting both at home and abroad. This book makes a rare attempt to critically examine the activities of Canadian corporations domestically and internationally and, more importantly, to draw connections between processes of corporate accumulation in both realms. Rather than treating them as fundamentally different, we suggest that both exist within a global capitalist market that is creating dispossession for many. Canadian corporations, with the direct and indirect assistance of the Canadian state, are profiting from these acts of dispossession across jurisdictions. Moreover, we argue that the problems associated with Canadian corporations around the world are not due to a few bad corporations acting poorly but, rather, an economic system that prioritizes the accumulation of profit over the well-being

of people and the planet. The abuses committed by Canadian corporations abroad are normally analyzed and discussed in isolation from that which takes place within the borders of the Canadian state. We aim to demonstrate that there are important connections between the two and that we can deepen our understanding of global capitalism by making these connections.

This project seeks to contribute to the growing body of literature that critically analyzes the role of Canadian corporations and their destructive paths toward capital accumulation. For example, many scholars and activists have written extensively on the activities of Canadian mining companies abroad and the dispossession that often follows in their wake.¹ Scholars such as Todd Gordon (2010) have placed this dispossession within a broader context of global capitalism, while others such as Paula Butler (2015) have used critical race theory to investigate the colonial nature of Canadian corporate plunder internationally. Still other texts have effectively deconstructed the myth that Canadian actors abroad are benevolent, generous, and helpful (Shipley 2020; Engler 2009). Scholars have also done extensive work documenting and critiquing the many cases of corporate abuse within Canada. However, with few exceptions, most of this work has separated the two jurisdictions — domestic and international. Instead, this book collects cases from both within Canada and abroad, and it asks important questions about the connections between them. Our work is thus grounded in an understanding of Canada as a settler-colonial state, which has implications for how the Canadian state and Canadian corporations engage in processes of accumulation within and beyond these colonial borders.

Contemporary Capitalism and Dispossession

It is tempting to believe that the global economic order of things has reached the end of history, that capitalism triumphed in the closing decades of the twentieth century, and that we are living a kinder, gentler mode of wealth generation. According to this narrative, quite apart from the extensive inequalities and inequities that ensue from capitalism, the world has long since left an economic state of nature and capitalism has taken humankind into civil society. We are a long way, in other words, from that nebulous and fabled time where land and labour were liberated from feudal autocracy, and now workers freely mingle in contract with the owners of capital. According to this story, the state moderates

any tendency to pre-capitalist oppressions or brutality — the state guarantees individual liberties to secure workers from servitude and the state similarly extends protections in the form of property rights to owners of capital stock.

In the origin story of capitalism, we are told there was an initial distribution of land and natural resources — which set into motion all future capital exchanges and relations with labour. Depending on who you ask, this mythic moment — where the natural capital stock was enclosed and distributed — was more or less a peaceful arrangement. In his *Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith glosses over the necessity of this pre-capitalist event — what he called “previous accumulation” — in order to exit “that rude state of society, in which there is no division of labour, in which exchanges are seldom made” (1776: 175). Smith makes no mention of any coercion or violence that might accompany the genesis of capitalism, merely the assertion that “the accumulation of stock must, in the nature of things, be previous to the division of labour.” Karl Marx, however, was much more skeptical about the removal of people from the commons and the violence that process entailed.

Reflecting on capitalism’s moment of original dispossession and suspicious of Smith’s account, Marx (1867) pointed out that this rhetorical imagery was a familiar trope, used as a moral justification for the current order of things: “Primitive accumulation plays approximately the same role in political economy as original sin does in theology.” There was a moment, to be sure, of violent separation of people from their common holdings and claims to nature’s stock. In *Capital*, Marx speaks to the violence of primitive accumulation in the colonial periphery:

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation. (1867: 533)

Part of the story of capitalism that we tell ourselves relies upon our ignorance of these sort of events and what happens in far off places. The modern liberal state shores up the veneer of capitalist security and welfare at home, but the situation of distant others is much less known.

As Rosa Luxemburg remarked, “at least formally, peace, prosperity, and equality may prevail in the metropolitan centers of capitalist states”; Luxemburg goes on to point out that “it is a different story in colonized nations” (Luxemburg 2003: 432).

Any number of mainstream accounts of contemporary capitalism will depict this original moment of capital division as either an ahistorical juncture of human development, as Smith would have it, or downplay these injustices as tragic yet historically distant. Viewed in this way, the brutality of historic dispossession — capitalism’s original sin — has no moral claim on the present. But as David Harvey has observed, the processes at the heart of primitive accumulation never subsided into a historical memory of early capitalist development. Primitive accumulation was not just the historic labour pains of the birth of the capitalist order of things, but rather a sustained mode of capital accumulation that continues to our current day of advanced capitalism. Below the surface of sophisticated legal and economic institutions, and buried in the technical arrangements of financialization and exchange, are the same processes of primitive accumulation.

According to Harvey, the process that transitioned society from feudalism to capitalism — primitive accumulation and the violence that it involved — has morphed into an integral feature of contemporary capitalism. For Harvey, contemporary capitalism relies upon what he terms “accumulation by dispossession,” a process that entails the same practices and impulses for dispossession of the natural capital stock that characterized early stages — “predation, fraud, and violence” (2003: 144). As Harvey points out, “all the features of primitive accumulation that Marx mentions have remained powerfully present within capitalism’s historical geography up until now” (145). Sylvia Federici similarly observes that “the most violent aspects of primitive accumulation have accompanied every phase of capitalist globalization, including the present one” (2004: 12). This view is often clouded from the vantage point of Western society. Our spatial myopia blurs the hallmarks of primitive accumulation; much of what falls within the ambit of “accumulation by dispossession” occurs on the margins of capitalist society or, as Rosa Luxemburg observed, in the non-capitalist “outside.”

Indeed, it is in places far from the developed metropolitan centres of capitalism that displacement of peasant and Indigenous Peoples continues, leaving their lands unoccupied and unencumbered for the

exploitative prerogatives of organized capital. While advanced economies operate by way of modern features that would be unrecognizable in Smith's or Marx's time, such as increased financialization and monetization mechanisms, these traits redirect our attention away from physical dispossession of territory and natural resources (Hall 2013). Land grabbing and other rent-seeking behaviour may be viewed as a relic of a more basic and uncivil era long behind us, but it remains a contemporary reality for Indigenous Peoples on the periphery of some of the most advanced states. Dene scholar Glen Coulthard (2014) has similarly challenged the historical assumption of primitive accumulation, noting that violent dispossession of territory and natural resources underwrites ongoing colonial endeavours in Canada and other settler societies. Far from reinvesting profits for expanding economic production, contemporary capitalism has increasingly replicated its emergence from feudalism by way of "accumulation by dispossession" and its attendant violence.

Though formally separated from the economic sphere, the state is thoroughly ensnared in capitalist imperatives and often not far removed from the violence involved in the processes of dispossession. As David Harvey remarks, "the state is not innocent, nor is it necessarily passive, in relation to these processes" (2003: 105). This view is not out of step with Marx's view of the bourgeois state in *The German Ideology* and later in *The Communist Manifesto*. It was in the latter that Marx identified the state as the administrative committee for the management of the bourgeoisie's economic affairs and securing their economic interests. The state's monopoly on violence and coercion that guarantees capital property rights and individual liberties is the same institution that legitimizes forced displacement and dispossession of land and resources.

In recent times, violent expropriation of the territory and natural resources held in common by Indigenous Nations and international peasantry populations has been carried out under the pretence of state legality. To be sure, all three branches of the modern state — the judiciary, legislature, and executive — in addition to a complex administrative bureaucracy, are profoundly oriented to facilitating capitalist expansion. Since the 1970s, states in the developed world have reoriented and transformed the machinery of government to lubricate the wheels of capital accumulation. At the same time, these same governments have rapidly discarded any vestiges of population welfare functions.

The Role of the Canadian State

Since the mid-1970s, most developed states have undergone profound reorientation towards neoliberal and structural reorganization to facilitate neoliberal imperatives and corporate economics — Canada is no exception. For several decades preceding this sharp divergence, what has been called the “Golden Age” of welfare state capitalism in the postwar era, running from 1945 to the early 1970s, the public sectors of many advanced states were structured to provide robust social security. In addition to civil and political rights, the welfare state also guaranteed a set of social rights that were supported by state programming and expenditures. But by the 1970s, many of the advanced capitalist states took an abrupt turn for neoliberal imperatives. This new tack in governance implemented austerity measures to curb social protections and intensely sharpened the focus on economic priorities such as production growth. In Canada, the last decades of the twentieth century saw significant decline in generous social support from the state; during the same period, there was an expansion of the machinery of government designed to sustain the neoliberal economy, coupled with a transfer to corporations and other market entities of traditionally state-held functions.

There are several ways that the Canadian state directly and indirectly funds and assists corporate Canada in its accumulation both at home and abroad; consequently, the Canadian state is deeply implicated in the many forms of dispossession that result from this corporate activity. One way the Canadian state assists Canadian companies abroad is by engaging diplomatically with other states where there is interest in trade and investment. This can take the form of negotiating bilateral or multi-lateral free trade agreements. The government also sends trade missions to visit other countries in order to promote Canadian businesses, which typically involve bringing politicians, corporate executives, and others to visit important political players abroad.

In addition to diplomatic support, there are several government funds or agencies that directly support Canadian corporations abroad. For example, Export Development Canada (EDC) and the Canada Account both enable Canadian firms to pursue their production, sales, and research activities internationally. As a Crown corporation, EDC is “dedicated to helping Canadian companies of all sizes succeed on the world stage” (EDC n.d.a). This means providing loans, insurance, knowledge, and other material support to Canadian firms operating abroad.

In addition, further government assistance through the Canada Account is available for some firms if the risk is deemed to be too high for EDC. The Canada Account is administered by EDC, but decisions to dispense funds rest with the federal Cabinet. According to EDC (n.d.b),

Canada Account is used to support export transactions which we are unable to support, but which are determined by the Minister for International Trade to be in Canada's national interest. This is usually due to a combination of risks, including the size of transaction, market risks, EDC's country capacity, borrower risks, and/or the financing conditions. We negotiate, execute and administer these transactions on the same basis as Corporate Account activities but the risks are assumed by the Federal government.

According to the EDC (n.d.b), the Canada Account has dispensed billions of dollars to Trans Mountain, which was a private firm purchased by the Canadian government in order to build a deeply polarizing expansion pipeline in western Canada.

For Indigenous Peoples, the imperative of organized capital incursions into their jurisdictions has remained largely unchanged from the early days of colonialism. Increased financialization, David Harvey (2003) explains, has been the primary vehicle for accumulation by dispossession as the manoeuvres of high finance generate liquidity and credit crises; however, rentier capitalism continues to thrive by way of dispossessing Indigenous Peoples of their territory. Like their early colonial forebears, contemporary land grabbers, both at home and abroad, are a significant driver of economic activity in Canada. Sadly, these rent-seeking behaviours come at the expense — and dispossession — of Indigenous Peoples. Primitive accumulation — the likes and political modes described by Marx — continues to transpire unchanged: the Crown encloses the territory of an Indigenous people that is held in common; Indigenous Rights to access and use their territory are circumscribed; and exclusive rights of property are granted to organized private capital. And like much earlier times, capital interests enjoy the protection of the state and its monopoly on the use of coercion and violence.

Colonial dispossession in the service of the capitalism is an intensely racial project. From the inside looking out, foreign acquisition and unilateral development of Indigenous territory would suggest a mat-

ter for international law. Indigenous Peoples have long maintained that Crown-Indigenous relations are only correctly understood on a nation-to-nation basis. But settler colonialism reduces Indigenous identities to subalterities, to sub-national collectivities that are viewed as incapable of holding sovereignty in the modern global order of nation-states or without the requisite capacity to exercise jurisdiction over territory. In the imperial hierarchy of power, racial subalterity is installed to divide the rulers from who and what will be ruled (Goldberg 2002). From the time of colonial contact with Indigenous nations in what would become Canada, the settler state and society have been impelled by what Patrick Wolfe has termed the “logic of elimination,” the settler-colonial impulse to replace the Indigenous inhabitants with settler fragments of the colonial power. At its base, settler colonialism is the drive to acquire land. The settler-colonial logic of elimination, as Wolfe observes, “is premised on the securing — the obtaining and the maintaining — of territory” (2006: 402). Disposed to this logic, the Crown has constructed a vast authoritative edifice for the sole purpose of racial administration of Indigenous Peoples and regulating their occupation or usage of land and other natural resources. Explicitly enshrined directly into the *Constitution Act, 1867*, the colonial state has retained for itself the prerogative to legislate and execute laws concerning “Indians, and lands reserved for the Indians.”

The exclusive privilege and right of the settler state to enact legislation and regulations over Indigenous Peoples and their territories, to carry these laws out, and to interpret them according to colonial legal traditions continues to be a powerful instrument to serve capital interests. Territorial title that Indigenous nations have held and, in many cases, have not ceded, surrendered, or extinguished has a long history of being ignored by the state as it grants rights of access, withdrawal, alienation, and income to corporations (Ostrom 2000). When Indigenous resistance to corporate encroachment and dispossession emerges, the state deploys two broad strategies to ensure Indigenous Peoples are divested and extricated from their territory: consent and coercion. Treaties and other legal arrangements that transfer territorial rights and title to the colonial state are tactics that have been used since European contact and continue to this day. For example, the Algonquins of Ontario modern treaty has been under negotiation since the early 1990s; through these negotiations, a treaty agreement-in-principle was reached in 2016 and

will leave the Algonquins with 475 square kilometres out of an original 36,000 square kilometres. And not incidental to the capitalist imperative of the state, the Crown will set aside \$300 million for economic development in the region.

But when the state fails to obtain a “consensual” agreement for dispossession, it will avail itself of coercive recourse. Brutality and oppression in colonial endeavours is also as old as peaceful agreements, and the state has shown that it will marshal its monopoly on violence and force when Indigenous Peoples will not accede to capital interests to their territories and, by extension, the abundant natural resources therein.

Numerous recent examples of Indigenous resistance to corporate ventures come to mind — Elsipogtog’s refusal to allow fracking on its land, Wet’suwet’en rejection of oil and gas pipelines through their territory, the Algonquin blockades against logging companies — which were met by the state’s militarized police authorities vigorously shoring up corporate desires for unfettered access to and income from Indigenous territory (Crosby and Monaghan 2018). Journalistic coverage of these events has accustomed observers of Canadian current affairs to graphic imagery of militarized police forces descending on Indigenous people asserting their rights and title.

At the same time that Indigenous resistance to corporate dispossession has been criminalized, the Canadian state has furnished corporations with novel assurances that their own wrongdoings and harms created in the pursuit of capital accumulation will be delicately pacified and given near amnesty. In 2018, the Trudeau government introduced a new instrument to shield corporations from prosecution for economic crimes. Canada’s *Criminal Code* was amended and revised to entail a “Remediation Agreement regime” that would relieve corporations of criminal liability. This approach to corporate economic crime — replete with the “deferred prosecution agreements” used in the United States and United Kingdom and which entered the Canadian public lexicon during the SNC-Lavalin scandal² — is justified on the basis that pursuing criminal proceedings would entail negative collateral consequences for innocent parties (Marland 2020). Prosecuting corporations for their economic crimes, it is argued, would harm others such as employees and company shareholders.

Overview of the Cases

One of the more predominant currents in Canadian political economy has maintained an innocent, sometimes virginal, image of Canada as a new country emerging in an established and hardened world order. In contrast to the ancient nations of Europe and Asia, Canada is a relatively recent arrival on the international community of states. And as a very happy accident, Canada was birthed into the cradle of immense natural endowment — the territory was well-stocked with resources that were in considerable demand in economies around the world. As a nascent actor in an otherwise established arrangement of international powers, the path forward for Canada's emergence and prosperity was almost self-evident. In an undated address, celebrated political economist Harold Innis reflected on Canada's place in the global economy. Innis observed that, as a national project, it was imperative for Canada, as a fledgling country, to undertake a protectionist scheme of economic development, to construct a future built on exporting the vast natural endowment of staples and other desirable commodities:

A new country, especially Canada, cannot afford to rely on the theory borrowed from old industrialized countries but she must attack with all the skill and industry she can command the task of working out a theory adapted to the situation in which she is able to defend herself against exploitation, against the drawing off of her resources and against the violent fluctuations which are characteristic of exploitation without afterthought. (1972: 149)

Innis's observations depict an insecure — almost fearful — country and an equally precarious economy, protective of its resources from the threat of outside expropriation. But at the same time, Innis's comments are prescient of how Canada would eventually nourish its own economic growth — through extraction-intensive, rent-seeking behaviour both within its borders and internationally.

The irony of Innis's theory for a Canadian economic future is not lost on the contributors to this collection. A noticeable strand of thought running through each chapter in this volume — in varying degrees — is the critical indictment of Canadian state power in support of organized capital's exploitation in distant places. The diverse set of authors were assembled, in fact, to disturb the mythology of the benevolent Canadian

state in domestic and international political economy. Although outdated, and setting aside the glaringly colonial framing of Canada for the moment, Innis's view of Canada — the image of an innocent and vulnerable, sometimes infantile country in need of protection — still retains some cachet in domestic and international political audiences. The pristine and uncorrupted likeness resonated when US president Barack Obama addressed Canada's House of Commons in 2016, declaring that “the world needs more Canada.” Behind this benevolent façade, however, is a state that is deeply entwined with corporate capital, jointly carrying out the very dispossession and exploitation that induced anxiety among Innis and his contemporaries.

Dispossession of Indigenous nations and Peoples is woven deeply into the historical and contemporary fabric of the Canadian state and settler society — this is true both at home and abroad. In Canada, economic relations between European and Indigenous nations braced mercantilist economic imperatives in the early days of contact with the British and French; colonial impulses, however, spurred outright thievery and other modes of deceitful, all too often violent, dispossession. One of the most important goals of this book is to demonstrate that these processes of corporate accumulation resulting in various forms of dispossession and destruction occur both within Canada and around the world. Moreover, rather than addressing the two in isolation, it can be productive to analyze the similarities and connections between the cases. This helps us understand how global capitalism works and pushes us to address its failures across jurisdictions. It also helps to shatter the perception that the most violent forms of capitalist accumulation only occur in “foreign” or Global South contexts. In this light, it is instructive to notice that corporate impunity for these harms appears to be a universal phenomenon across the cases covered in this book.

Fundamentally, the logics of settler colonialism have remained unchanged under advanced capitalism. As the chapter by Rebecca Hall reveals, the state remains committed and coupled to propensities for accumulation of resources and dispossession of Indigenous Peoples. Hall's contribution sharpens our view of contemporary capitalism, underscoring the overlooked gendered distribution of colonial violence in extractive industries. The idyllic image of Canada as a model for peaceful modern nationhood is called into question as Hall examines how the yields and profits from extractive ventures are subsidized by

Indigenous women. Hall's incisive analysis of workers in remote fly-in/fly-out mining "towns" demonstrates how capitalist productive labour depends upon the devalued feminized obligations of social reproduction; transient workers undertake the masculinized mode of work on mining sites, and the homelike accoutrements of camp life for the men are maintained by Indigenous women from the region who are concentrated in "housekeeping" responsibilities. At the same time, Indigenous women are objectified in spectacles of corporate social responsibility. Colonial violence is concealed as corporations are furnished with social licence to carry out further Indigenous dispossession by absorbing Indigenous women into the workforce. Employment is packaged and promoted as empowerment, particularly when cast as a way of lifting Indigenous people — especially Indigenous women — out of colonial poverty.

The cases studied in this volume trouble the seemingly benign state processes that lubricate the dispossession. Aedan Alderson delves into the technocratic profession of land use planning to show how a vocational specialization is instituted to organize the usage and consumption of Indigenous land by corporate interests. Exploring the emergence and development of technical expertise in land planning and the professionalization of planning authorities, Alderson illustrates the outwardly depoliticized appearance of dispossession by way of benign and presumptively impartial bureaucracy. Formulated as the preserve of expertise and specialized competency, urban planning and land management has emerged as a profession that is deeply implicated in the regulatory and administrative manoeuvres to categorize and control Indigenous territories. Much like Marx's view of the bureaucracy, these appendages of the state merely control and regulate how capital accesses Indigenous territory and resources — not in any wealth-creating manner, but rather in classic rent-seeking conduct.

For their part, Dawn Hoogeveen and Russell Myers Ross critique the environmental assessment process as they explore efforts by the Tsilhqot'in Nation to resist the tightly braided alliance between the Crown and corporate interests to develop a copper-gold mine on Tsilhqot'in territory. New Prosperity, as the mining initiative was branded by Taseko Mines Limited, was a brazen proposal to dispossess the Tsilhqot'in of Teztan Biny, a site of considerable cultural and profound spiritual significance. Teztan Biny — known also by its English name, Fish Lake — was to be extricated by Taseko Mines for the purposes of

tailings disposal and other mining waste containment from an eventual copper-gold mine. Hoogeveen and Myers Ross tell simultaneous and parallel stories of Tsilhqot'in resistance and rejection alongside state-corporate coordination through bureaucratic mechanisms, namely the environmental assessment process. Viewed from one angle, the environmental assessment lends the impression that Adam Smith proffered when he spoke of "original accumulation" in regard to the peaceful enclosure and civil negotiations that characterize the transfer of land and resources from the commons into the possession of capitalists. Here, Taseko made a proposal for mining — and the attendant environmental degradation — of Tsilhqot'in territory and the state's bureaucratic representatives paid a visit to the Tsilhqot'in people to conduct public consultations on what Taseko had hoped would close the deal. But, as Hoogeveen and Myers Ross show, these bureaucratic mechanisms are merely administrative pretences that gloss over the violence of primitive accumulation, facilitating dispossession of the Tsilhqot'in commons on behalf of Taseko Mines.

Ingrid Waldron brings us to the nexus of these perspectives with an examination of the anti-colonial movement of the Grassroots Grandmothers' resistance to the Alton Gas project in Mi'kma'ki and the colonial environmental assessment process that helped usher it along. Like other Indigenous spaces that have been subjugated to the racist whims of settler society, the Alton Gas project induced a liberatory resistance from Indigenous feminist stewardship over the environment — this is particularly the case with water. In Mi'kmaw philosophy, women are morally invested with a set of duties and obligations owed under the auspices that they are the "givers of life" and the protectors of the same. These obligations extend not only to human relations, but also to non-human moral agents that sustain and share in reciprocal modes of existence. This moral order is, moreover, noticeably absent in a number of Western epistemologies and ontologies, particularly those that underwrite the close relationship between the state and capitalism. Waldron walks us through the discord between these two modes of existence, highlighting the often violent incongruity of state/capitalist institutions with Indigenous justice — here, Waldron shows us how capitalist interests have trouble-free access and recourse to state coercion, such as the police, the courts, and other bureaucratic mechanisms, in order to secure extractive gains.

In the same way, Veldon Coburn shows how the Canadian state cleared a path for corporate dispossession of the Ojibwe of Grassy Narrows in northwestern Ontario. The colonial story of Grassy Narrows is inflected towards the Marxian account of primitive accumulation — the violently brutal removal of people from the commons — tacking away from Adam Smith’s version of events. Treaty 3 was the instrument of “consent” that transferred Ojibwe sovereignty and title over more than 142,000 square kilometres of land to the Crown, but the colonial authorities were quick to displace the Ojibwe and enclose the commons for corporate plunder, particularly mining and forestry. With very few substantive rights in their ancestral territory, the Ojibwe were eventually removed to a reserve of slightly more than 41 square kilometres. Virtually confined to the colonial poverty and deprivation of the reserve, the Ojibwe of Grassy Narrows subsided on their right to access the wildlife of the region, the last rights to the commons. But the Ojibwe commons — the English-Wabigoon River system and the fish it provided the Ojibwe — was surreptitiously dispossessed of the people at Grassy Narrows. Using the concept of “accumulation by contamination,” Coburn looks at how, for nearly a decade, the Dryden paper mill devalued one of the last common assets of the Ojibwe. By dumping nearly ten tonnes of mercury into the waterway over the course of the 1960s, the Dryden paper mill subsidized its earnings and profits by offloading its mercury disposal costs into those spaces Luxemburg described as the non-capitalist “outside.” The state, which had looked the other way until it could no longer ignore the scale of mercury poisoning among the people at Grassy Narrows, eventually settled legal claims — but the damage to Grassy Narrows had been done and the corporate gain made.

The second half of the book opens with a chapter by Sakura Saunders, which addresses the important domestic political context within which Canadian mining companies and civil society actors operate. Saunders documents the struggles of civil society actors within Canada to hold Canadian mining companies accountable for their activities abroad, as well as the resistance by corporate Canada and the political status quo. This historical context is crucial in terms of understanding how Canadian mining companies continue to evade accountability despite decades of activism attempting to change this climate of impunity. Saunders details how corporate actors manipulate and capture certain state and civil society actors in order to maintain unfettered access to profits overseas. We

are still waiting for meaningful steps to be taken by the Canadian federal government to hold Canadian companies responsible for the social and environmental damage they cause abroad, and this chapter sheds light on why this has been such a difficult challenge.

The following three chapters each examine important case studies of Canadian mining activities in three distinct geographical spaces. The first looks at a project in Guatemala where a multinational mining company — Tahoe Resources — was at times aided by the Canadian state and considered a Canadian company, while at other times Canadian officials distanced themselves from the company and referred to it as American. Authors Caren Weisbart, Jennifer Moore, and Charlotte Connolly compellingly explain how the company's activities reinforced forms of structural violence and racism in relation to the mine and how the Canadian government exercised various forms of diplomacy to support the company. Using valuable information gathered through a series of access to information requests to Global Affairs Canada, the authors demonstrate how the Canadian state plays the role of risk manager for Canadian capital internationally.

The second mining case brings us to the island of Sulawesi, in the archipelago state Indonesia. Author Tracy Glynn presents her photovoice project, which documents the plight of dozens of women who are affected by a Canadian mining project. The photovoice research methodology combines feminist inquiry with visual ethnography to provide the reader with a first-hand account of the dispossession and structural violence of mining from the perspectives of fourteen women. Glynn draws on the work of Silvia Federici to convey the gendered and colonial aspects of this case. Furthermore, she highlights how the women who shared their stories engage in acts of resistance based on empathy and solidarity, despite the odds against them.

The third and final case examines the operations of a Canadian mining company in the West African state of Burkina Faso. Nadège Compaoré and Tongnoma Zongo focus on the country's largest gold mining operation, run by the Canadian International African Mining Gold Corporation (IAMGOLD). At the heart of this chapter is the conflict between large-scale mining by Canadian companies, such as IAMGOLD, and artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) by local people. This case provides an important example of how large-scale mining often results in displacement and dispossession for many people across the continent

of Africa. In the Burkina Faso context, artisanal miners have been displaced in order to accommodate IAMGOLD's large-scale operations. Moreover, the authors argue that there is a tripartite capitalist alliance between the host Burkina Faso state, the mining company, and the Canadian state that operates to delegitimize ASM actors and facilitate their displacement. This form of structural displacement is further normalized due to the fact that ASM actors are typically the least accounted for in corporate social responsibility (CSR) measures as well as in the policies and approaches of home states such as Canada.

The next chapter shifts away from the mining sector to analyze the role of Canadian banks in Latin America and the Caribbean. Authors David P. Thomas and Tyler Shipley critically examine the regional expansion of Canadian "big banks" within the broader context of Canadian imperial interests. Facing saturated domestic markets at home, Canadian banks began aggressively expanding abroad over 120 years ago. This expansion into Latin America and the Caribbean worked in tandem with both British colonialism and American imperialism. With a specific focus on Scotiabank, this chapter highlights the accumulation of capital by Canadian banks in the region while also documenting the role of the Canadian state in facilitating this expansion.

An important similarity across the cases involves the complicity of the Canadian state in supporting corporate plunder at home and abroad. Rather than holding Canadian companies accountable for the environmental and social harm they cause, the Canadian state is shown in these chapters to be actively supporting these companies and preventing any attempts to bring them to justice. This is demonstrated convincingly in the chapter on mining in Guatemala, where Canadian consular resources were deployed to defend the mining company. In the first half of the book, all the authors detail the various ways that the Canadian state attempts to offer unfettered access for corporations to Indigenous land.

There is also an important theme regarding race and racism that connects many of the cases in the volume. Waldron uses the framework of environmental racism to accurately describe the unfolding Alton Gas scenario in Nova Scotia, while Weisbart, Moore, and Connelly demonstrate the racist underpinnings of Canadian state support for mining in Guatemala. Scholars such as Michael Dawson argue that in order to fully analyze the injustices occurring against Black and other marginalized communities, we must understand "simultaneously the intersections of

the logics of capitalism and white supremacy” (2016: 157). What scholars refer to as racial capitalism (Robinson 2005) describes the reality whereby capitalism initially developed in Western states that depended on colonialism, slavery, genocide, and other forms of violent dispossession against Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC). These building blocks of racial capitalism fundamentally shaped the form of capitalism that exists today, and thus this book seeks to remain cognizant of how this operates across domestic and foreign contexts.

Notes

- 1 For example, see Gordon and Webber (2016), Abadie (2011), Butler (2015), and Campbell (2008).
- 2 For a good explanation of the deferred prosecution agreements in the context of the SNC-Lavalin controversy, see Abedi (2019).

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