Global Power and Local Struggles in Developing Countries

An introduction

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Paul Stacey

This volume explains how global political and economic power influences local struggles and social organization in diverse sites in developing, or Global South, countries. It is inspired by the fortieth anniversary – 2022 – of the first publication of the seminal *Europe and the People without History* (EPWH) by Eric R. Wolf (Wolf 1982), while 2023 marks the centenary of Wolf's birth. The title '*Europe and the People without History*' immediately provokes. When published, it challenged dominant contemporary thought that history was only made by powerful Europeans and forced answers to questions like: How can people not have history? What people are we talking about? And what role do people without history play in the making of our own understandings and histories of the world? The phrase 'People without History' consequently serves to alert and chastise established understandings, which for Wolf were enacted and supported by generations of public officials, traders, opportunists, and scholars across the social sciences. This mixed group tended to share a view that people in peripheral lands – a long way away from their own perceived centres of civilization – simply did not contribute to global progress and were thus insignificant in world history. Moreover, such people were not only geographically peripheral but occupied overshadowed and lesser positions in evolutionary terms than those enjoyed by their Western counterparts – who, in turn, enjoyed the privilege of writing history from their own perspectives. The title thus directly challenged ideas of modernization and global development that remain popular today, of 'the West versus the Rest' and the 'North versus the South', where the West and North are understood as engines of global development, while the 'Rest' need to mimic the North/West developmental trajectory to reach desirable Northern or Western levels of 'progress'. A key aim of this volume is to challenge such perspectives with a range of original ethnographic investigations from the Global South, and to explain how local, national, and global political and economic development produces, and is dependent on, diverse groups of 'People without History'.

EPWH was a ground-breaking scholarly enterprise for many reasons, not least because it situated local contexts and the agency of people in peripheral

countries, which today would be termed marginalized, developing-country, or Global South contexts, at the centre of a multi-sited anthropological and historical study of global processes (Hylland Eriksen 2010). Consequently, this volume situates localities of struggle and differentiation, and local forms of social organization and processes of 'People without History' into contemporary contexts of global political and economic development. The volume is not a *festschrift* for Wolf nor a decidedly anthropological investigation but selects different aspects of his rich theoretical and conceptual framings to support interdisciplinary explanations for the varied examples, which are mainly based on in-depth analysis of localized social change.[1] As such, the book aims to appeal to an audience not only of anthropologists and Wolf-aficionados, but also of students and researchers, practitioners, activists, and policy makers from other social science backgrounds, including international development studies, political economy, global studies, geography, cultural studies, political ecology, and history. This wider audience can use the book to develop critical insights into their own areas of work, deepen knowledge about processes of global development, inequality, and local struggles for rights, while all the while developing understandings of the usefulness of Wolf-based perspectives. It is in this vein that the introduction also serves to outline EPWH as well as other Wolfean works. At the same time, it is hoped that it will prove useful for readers without prior knowledge of Wolf's scholarship.

EPWH demolished a slew of dominant theoretical and conceptual understandings about global powers' impact on localized groups around the world and particularly perceptions of peripheral social and cultural organization as fixed, bounded, isolated, and homogeneous. In EPWH, Wolf explored an extensive historical period from about 1400 to 1900 to investigate a recognized conundrum. This was between, on the one hand, received wisdom about global homogeneity and drivers of progress as rooted in core countries, and on the other, widespread evidence of local differentiation and agency around the

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1   We use 'Global' to cover the realities of power relations and the 'relational totality' of everyday social life extending beyond spatial interconnections, networks, and flows (Neveling and Steur 2018: 5). The term Global South broadly covers countries that share histories as former colonies; are categorized as developing economies or emerging industrial nations; are situated in the developing world, or that, previously, were categorized as Third World countries or in the periphery. The use of the term has increased together with acknowledgement of the complexity of relationships between development, continuity, change, structure, process, and agency. Its use is also related to recognition of unresolved colonial injustices around the world, and subaltern resistance to inequality and structural positioning in the capitalist system. For a useful overview of the concept of Global South, see Kalb and Steur 2015. For a discussion of the concept of globalization, see the introduction in Beynon and Dunkerley (eds).

world as shaped by historical relations between core countries and local actors in peripheral countries. The subsequent analysis elaborated on understandings of world systems that typically divided the world into core and peripheral countries and took the nation-state as a main unit of analysis (Wallenstein 1974).[2] Instead, it situated globalization processes at the centre of investigation and focused on variability and difference Although EPWH was well received, it is not without its faults.[3] Critical reviews pointed out, among other things, that it endeavoured to cover too much, geographically and historically; that the investigation fails to provide adequate voice to the numerous social groups named (Chirot 1984); that it theoretically affirms Eurocentric visions of modernity (Taussig 1989; McNeill 1984); and that the application and discussion of capitalist modes of production tend to centre on the economic domain and to disregard the role of the state and the political sphere (Abbink 1992, 97).[4]

The aims of this collection are not as bold as those of EPWH, but take as a point of departure some of the main issues it raised. As such, this collection is based on concrete, micro-historical cases drawing on extensive ethnographic fieldwork. Most chapters additionally frame the making of each case of 'People without History' in the context of state formation, politics, political development, and models of contemporary market-based growth, and provide voice to local actors. The rationale for limiting the book to the Global South reflects the research and disciplinary backgrounds and interests of the contributors, and the wish to develop new perspectives about marginalization processes in the Global South. The theoretical contribution of the anthology is therefore its foregrounding in original, in-depth empirical analysis of contrasting

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2   For an elaboration of Immanuel Wallenstein's world system theory, see Robinson 2011. For a useful overview of development debates, see Edelman and Haugerud (2005), Chapter 6.

3   Following publication, EPWH attracted more than 20 – mainly positive – reviews in leading social science journals between 1983 and 1987. For a reappraisal of EPWH's positive legacy and influence, see Hämäläinen 2018, and particularly Schneider and Rapp 1995. For bibliographies, see Schneider and Rapp 1995; Wolf 2001. Many other writers refer to and discuss EPWH and Wolf's legacy, for example Asad 1987; Gould 1979; Marcus 2003; Hecht 2018; Susser 2016; Whitehead 2004; and Schneider and Rapp 1995. Critical reviews include Chirot (1984), who recognizes the book's originality but depicts the empirical material and narrative as 'full of mistakes', and the theoretical framework as 'seriously deficient'. Michael Taussig (1989) raised several objections, including that the book affirmed Eurocentric visions of capitalist modernity and exaggerated capitalist modes of production power, and which, among other issues raised were taken up in replies by Sidney Mintz and Eric Wolf (Mintz and Wolf 1989). Other critics point to an overt focus on material dimensions of periphery–core relations and a neglect of histories of ideas. See McGee and Warms 2013. Abbink (1992) provides a very useful elaboration of key points of critique against EPWH.

4   See also Asad (1987).

contemporary contexts of exclusion, mobilization, and crisis, all explained and discussed in relation to Wolf's theories and concepts.[5] As such, the collection offers a range of cases of shifting political and economic relationships across local, national, and global scales (Horner and Hulme 2019; Palmer 1990). Broadly, the volume aims to contribute to knowledge of these processes while revealing unseen and otherwise neglected dimensions of power within human agency and organization around the world – precisely those dimensions so often overshadowed and neglected by normative and overriding narratives of development (Saitta 2005).

For Wolf, power is fundamentally relational, concerns 'all relations among people', and where actors' positioning shapes their social settings 'so as to render some kinds of behaviour possible, while making others less possible or impossible' (Wolf 1990, 587). Positioning, agency, and manoeuvrability are accordingly conditioned not only by force and coercion but by language, discourse, and everyday interactions, and by their impact on thought, culture, ideas, and social life (Heyman 2003; Barrett, Stokholm, and Burke 2001; Weber 1978). Thus, the mobilization and organization of social groups, together with the language they use and forms of culture and identity they develop, are all manifestations of power in an open and unfinished process that is conditioned, enabled, and limited by broader forces (Hall et al. 2011; Procter 2004).

Several reviews of EPWH underscore a paradox between, on the one hand, the book's under-utilization, and on the other its substantial and sustained relevance for social sciences since its initial publication. One account states for example, that EPWH has 'irrevocably changed how we see and make sense of the world', and was 'strikingly timely and relevant', yet also concludes that we 'owe him [Wolf] another look' (Hämäläinen 2018). Another similarly states that the naturalization of EPWH into critical studies makes it 'almost impossible to assess' (Hecht 2018), while another notes that 'The more we read and re-read Eric Wolf, the more ahead of his time he seems …' (Gledhill 2005, 37). Another response comments that 'Wolf's influence is too little acknowledged in most histories of agrarian studies' while noting that EPWH was an 'unparalleled work of theory and history' (Bernstein et al. 2018).[6] The consensus about the

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5   For *historical* case studies based around Wolf's work, see Abbink and Vermeulen (eds) 1992. For a discussion of the development of peasant studies in which Wolf played a key role, see Bernstein et al. 2018.

6   There is a noticeable divergence between, on the one hand, the wide influence of EPWH and its contribution to critical studies, and, on the other, its actual citation history. In December 2021, for example, Google Scholar registered EPWH with some 11,300 citations. By contrast, *'The Invention of Tradition'* edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983) had clocked

book's paradoxical legacy of underusage despite its considerable significance found echo in the foreword of the 2010 edition, where it is described as an 'unsurpassed survey of comparative global anthropology' despite the fact that Wolf's legacy is a 'large, untapped potential' (Hylland Eriksen 2010). With this ambivalence in mind, another humble aim of the present volume is to develop an awareness of the applicability and relevance of Wolf for investigations of contemporary local struggles against a backdrop of global connectivity.

The remainder of this introduction will provide an overview of *Europe and the People Without History*, followed by an outline of the main developments in Marxist anthropology over the last forty years. After this, I discuss contemporary developmental contexts in the Global north and Global South that produce different kinds of people without history. Finally, the structure of the book is detailed, including a summary of the empirical context in each chapter and how Wolf is utilized in each.

1   An Overview of EPWH

It is worth noting as a point of departure that EPWH resists summary due to its combination of theoretical ambition, historical depth, and geographical breadth. The emphasis is on many different social groups living outside different political and economic centres around and in Europe from about 1400 to 1900, and their diverse and changing relations with different cores. The investigation establishes the idea of the world as an interconnected whole made possible by the development of long-distance trade and the consolidation of political entities. In so doing, it exemplifies in detail global capitalistic expansion – with the circulation of commodities and development of labour relations – in the long-term historical trajectory of diverse core–periphery relations (Hecht 2018). In EPWH, Wolf accordingly 'developed an anthropologically grounded global history of capitalism' that rejected ideas of a medley of differentiated, fixed, and bounded societies dotted all over the world, whose role in history was theretofore often understood as independent from the developmental trajectories of 'core' countries (Neveling and Steur 2018, 6).

As a global historical anthropology EPWH subsequently traces how peripheral groups' labour and developing capitalist modes of production contributed to the development of core countries' political economies and helped shape the

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over 32,000, the *'The Interpretation of Cultures'*, by Clifford Geertz (1973) nearly 82,000, and *'Imagined Communities'* by Benedict Anderson (1983) over 126,000 citations.

contours of a wider, modern, political, and economic world system. In a related way, Wolf demonstrates that processes of global integration and local connectivity produce social and cultural differentiation at local levels in the peripheral countries. Differentiation developed because local forms of organization met, challenged, adopted, and struggled with developing capitalist production methods in different ways. An unravelling of the diversity of local interests, resources, and power relations within and between different and changing groups of actors and across spatial levels therefore provides explanations for processes of social and cultural difference at local levels and the diversity of local–global interconnectedness. Wolf's investigation takes as a point of departure a deceptively simple and single research question posed early in the book. This contains a direct scholarly critique of contemporary social science methodologies and lays the ground for the ensuing comparative global anthropology: 'Why do we persist in turning dynamic, interconnected phenomena into static, disconnected things?' (Wolf 1982, 4). The question poses a recognized and long-standing challenge to Marxist anthropology and Marxist dialectical approaches more generally, of how to reconcile a common theoretical significance assigned to fixed structures when confronted with mounting empirical evidence of agency and change. Put another way, the challenge was how to 'imbue societal structure with motion' within the 'unfortunate rubric[s]' of Marxist anthropology (Gould 1979: 92–3). The ensuing investigation focuses on global connectivity between, on the one hand, the core powers of the Roman empire and Greek civilization, European powers, and non-European empires, and on the other, a considerable number of non-European groups and actors in peripheral areas. The latter are in various outposts, colonies, and trading sites and occupy a slew of positions such as merchants, middlemen, traders, producers, entrepreneurs, warriors, subjugated workers, peasants, and labourers. EPWH thus provides a panoramic, holistic, and Marx-inspired materialist investigation with a mass of empirical yet often brief examples of historical relationships, dynamics, and transformation processes.[7]

Wolf shows that peripheral-groups' social-cultural systems relate directly to the economic processes that generate surplus and commodities destined for the various and changing historical centres. Hence, Wolf's explanation that local forms of social and cultural organization are shaped by their interactions with much broader forces rejected the dominant social science understanding of fixity and isolation. Conceptually, Wolf developed three types of mode of

7   Charles Tilly (2002) suggests that Wolf's anthropology was *Marxiant*, rather than Marxist. For Marcus, Wolf was a founder of American Marxist anthropology, publishing both 'Marxist, Marxian and crypto-Marxist' analysis from 1952 until 2001 (Marcus 2003).

production to explain historical contexts for local differentiation and global interconnectivity, and more broadly, dynamics between ideology and power (Hecht 2018). Through the 1970s Marx's concept of mode of production had anyway invoked major scholarly debate as anthropologists moved away from French structuralist accounts and applications that invariably offered teleological understandings and which categorized societies in terms of one specific mode of production or another. Countering this trend, Wolf in EPWH developed an open mode of production concept to undertake the anthropological inquiry and to situate societies' changing forms of organization around labour into broader contexts of uneven and contingent processes of global capitalism (Neveling and Steur 2018, 7). Subsequently, Wolf developed an anthropological usage of Marx's mode of production, eschewing assumptions of permanence and situating cultural phenomena in 'a specific, historically occurring set of social relations through which labour is deployed to wrest energy from nature by means of tools, skills, organization, and knowledge' (Wolf 1982, 91).[8] To avoid the connotations of fixity always present in Marxist 'superstructure' Wolf used instead terms such as 'vectors', 'fields', 'webs', 'weblike' and 'forces', which enabled understandings of change and contingency (Schneider and Rapp 1995, 4). Modes of production are (variously) *kin-ordered*, which is based on interpersonal relationships and obligations based around affinities including for example, age, gender, ethnicity, and marriage; *tributary*, where politico-military powers extract produce directly from producers; and *capitalist*, where, following Marx, unequal relationships of value develop as a result of the selling of labour by those without the means to control production and enjoy consumption, to those that enjoy the means to do so (Wolf 1982, 76). For Wolf, the modes of production comprise concepts that 'underlie, orient, and constrain' relations between man and the environment, and which form social, cultural, and socio-political relations, livelihoods, and labour mechanisms. Moreover, each mode constitutes a particular kind of unequal power and identifies how 'mutual interpenetration in a colonial and capitalist world formed and reformed specific social and cultural formations' (Bernstein et al. 2018, 698). Compared to earlier usage the open application of the concept enabled a better understanding of changes around the appropriation of labour, the production of class, and power relations. Similarly, the modes served as heuristic tools for explaining shifting social, political, and economic relations on local levels in the context of the broader production of ideas that justified such

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8   For a much-discussed critique of Wolf's application of modes of production, see Asad 1987. For an overview of the mode of production debate more broadly, see Neveling and Steur 2018; Fogel 1988; Boesen 1979.

relations (Schneider and Rapp 1995, 8). The modes should then be understood as 'internally varied and dynamic, replete with [their] own engines of power and wealth accumulation, structures of social inequality, and ideological justifications' (McGee and Warms 2013, 942). And they are articulations of the extent of the commodification of land and labour at a given place and time, and as capitalist relations expand, and impact, on precapitalist forms of organisation. As strategic relationships of labour, the modes of production application subsequently challenged contemporary functionalist accounts explaining local social change in terms of environmental or demographic factors (Saitta 2005). It also contrasted with accounts which invariably assumed differences in social organization between localities as based in local determinants and idiosyncrasies (Nugent 2002). In earlier works (for example Wolf 1959), Wolf had already prepared the methodological ground for EPWH by rejecting environmental deterministic interpretations of local underdevelopment and pinpointing instead how deep historical and political-economic forces shape local cultural processes (Hecht 2018).

One contemporary reviewer described EPWH as 'a critique of anthropology [and an] anthropological critique of world history' (Cole 1985). This is because EPWH demonstrated the variability of historical processes, and the relativity of social and cultural trajectories that shape the peripheral groups' lives and forms of organization. By so doing, EPWH highlighted that recognition of the complexity of local differentiation amidst changing translocal forces demanded interdisciplinary research methodologies. Thus, EPWH established the idea of social and cultural organizational diversity and complexity as shaped by multiple, changing, and contemporaneous processes of contestation, consensus, crisis, and connectivity across spatial levels. It affirmed the idea of the world as an interconnected whole and the 'relational totality' which influences everyday social life (Neveling and Steur 2018; Hylland Eriksen 2010). Like earlier as well as later Wolf works, EPWH debunked received anthropological reasoning on numerous fronts by exposing fundamental weaknesses of essentialist, primitivistic, reductionist, atavistic, and relativistic methodologies, and dualist, deterministic, and reifying explanations. In a related way, EPWH exemplifies a scholarly shift away from traditions of evolutionism, exoticism, particularism, primordialism, romanticism, structural functionalism, subjectivism, and deconstruction (Laclau 1992; Dhawan 2018; Portis-Winner 2006). Not least, Wolf's EPWH situates history as central to anthropology – a stance which was widely denied by existing anthropological approaches – and demonstrates that explanations of context must consider both local and global components (Whitehead 2004).

2 Changing Perspectives for Marxist Anthropology since EPWH

The aim of this section is to outline shifts in Marxist anthropology since the writing of EPWH and together with the following section, it serves to contextualize the processes of development and struggle in focus in the empirical chapters. Although Marx focused predominantly on capitalist structure and not on paths towards social justice, a main thread running through Marxist anthropology from the late 1960s is the aim that scholarship contributes to social transformation and that scholars partake as active agents. In turn, this yielded critique aimed at the social role and obligations of anthropological inquiry itself. The pursuit of activist objectives was evident throughout Wolf's long career, during which a substantial scholarly production accompanied political engagement in, for example, anti-Vietnam War effort teach-ins and opposition to the use of anthropological field data utilized by the American state to achieve its war objectives in South-east Asia (Marcus and Menzies 2005).[9] Wolf played a key role in a generation of scholars around the late 1960s defined as enjoying the confidence to change society and producing scholarly work focused typically on Third World struggles in newly independent countries, for example in Sub-Saharan Africa. Together with active engagement there, there was widespread sympathy for campaigns of resistance and organized opposition to the numerous proxy wars and insurgency movements playing out at the time in different Central American countries as supported by the warring Cold War superpowers (Hecht 2018). Moreover, the social realities on the ground in far-flung locations provided Western-based scholars with empirical evidence to openly challenge received anthropological understandings of isolated social groups around the world (Neveling and Steur 2018). Still, the pursuit of justice and better futures for the many, ostensibly primitive groups also received critique for romanticizing and exoticizing these social groups and for lacking contextualization (Susser 2016). Through the 1970s these realizations spilled over to spark debate about anthropological inquiry, raising questions such as whether analysis should concentrate on the 'unravelling of the history of mankind' which alluded to a focus on fluid and indeterminate processes, or whether it should be a 'critique of […] new forms of exploitation in the traditional bastions of capital' and which spoke more to structural explanations with connotations of fixity (Gould 1979, 93). Indeed, much Marxism-based analysis from the 1960s and 1970s soldiered on applying theoretically heavy explanations despite the increasing evidence to the contrary flowing in from

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9 For bibliographies of Wolf's work see Schneider and Rapp 1995; Wolf 2001.

activist scholars' first-hand experiences (Gould 1979: 92). In turn, local actors' increased access to tertiary education in newly independent countries – which had been unavailable to parents or grandparents who may themselves have been objects of classical anthropological study a decade earlier – forced researchers to radically adjust how they studied and understood 'local' and 'traditional' forms of organization and culture (Marcus and Menzies 2005). Inevitably, such developments eroded both real and perceived boundaries between researchers and the individuals of study, as well as the received wisdom about the drivers of global growth and the roles and cultures of peripheral groups.

In Peasant Wars in the Twentieth Century (Wolf 1969), which is seen as a forerunner of EPWH, Wolf developed new ground by giving ascendancy to agency and process in specific developing country locations to explain the workings of broader forces, including the Cold War. In so doing, Wolf contributed significantly to the development of critical peasant studies and after EPWH to critical post-colonial and agrarian studies.[10] Wolf's work after EPWH continued to develop a realist epistemology and critiqued post-modern and post-colonial theorizations as ahistorical. The focus in *Peasant Wars* is on liberation struggles in countries as diverse as Mexico, Russia (Soviet Union), China, Vietnam, Algeria, and Cuba. This provided explanation of broader processes of peasant opposition to capitalism, showing that capitalist pressures shape peasant organization for justice and autonomy and influence national political trajectories (Hecht 2018; Wolf 1969; Susser 2016). Besides opposing rigid Marxist framings, the exposition marked a break from mainstream methodologies depicting localities as ahistorical backwaters populated by social groups with primitive traits structurally detached from wider political-economic forces (Gledhill 2005; Hecht 2018). Similarly, Peasant Wars contributed to the dissolution of assumed dichotomous relationships between forces 'internal and external' to given social groups, understandings of drivers of 'continuity and change' and explanations in terms of 'structures and events' (Burke 1992, 159). The methodological shift was from studies of 'traditions and their tribes' to the actual, complex, and changing social realities of lived lives (Moore 1978). Subsequently, Marxist analysis itself underwent various convolutions because

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10   Wolf was a long-standing member of the *Journal of Peasant Studies* Editorial Advisory Board. After his death, an annual, International Eric Wolf Lecture series was established in Vienna, hosted jointly by the Austrian Academy of Sciences' Institute for Social Anthropology (ISA); the Linz University of Fine Arts' International Research Center for Cultural Studies (IFK); and the University of Vienna's Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology.

of the new insights and historical process: first, the earlier, rigid understandings of class, labour relations, and application of taxonomic modes of production were rejected. In their place came the so-called 'cultural' turn in studies of history and anthropology, which Wolf himself critiqued for 'analytical deforestation' due to an overt focus on culture at the expense of much else. This reflected Wolf's point of departure that 'all paradigms are mortal and likely to be superseded' and that there is a need to approach concepts and models with a professional suspicion (Gledhill 2005). Subsequent approaches developed conceptualizations of class beyond economic notions alone. This led to a return of sorts to previous understandings of dynamic relationships between class and culture as had been taken up by, for example, by E. P. Thompson, Raymond Williams, and Eric Hobsbawm (Kalb and Herman 2005).

The ending of the Cold War in 1991 and subsequent global shifts of power marked changes in the character of local political struggles around the world and ushered in increased scholarly recognition of the multi-level complexity of supposedly localized and isolated social struggles (Marcus and Menzies 2005; Hobsbawm, 1994). Numerous one-party states that were established after African countries had gained independence from colonial power started to collapse. Pressure for democracy increased, and multi-party politics spread. Many African, Latin American, and Asian nations also undertook ambitious programmes of local government reform as dimensions of a so-called third wave of democracy (Huntington 1991; Harvey 2001). Nevertheless, combinations of market-based growth models, as influenced by neo-classical economic theory, and liberal-democratic reforms did not convincingly reduce societal inequalities as otherwise envisaged (Fukuyama 1989). Rather, the end of the Cold War enabled the rise of neo-liberalism epitomized by the UK's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and the USA's President Ronald Reagan from the early 1980s. For numerous Western countries this meant a dismantling of welfare state systems established in the post-World War II period; an ascendancy of economic methodological individualism; emphasis on market-based growth; the liberalization and privatization of state industries; the dismantling of Keynesian economic systems; and the weakening of organized labour.[11] For many countries in the Global South, neoliberalism meant the implementation of Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes, monetarism, and waves of

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11   Neoliberalism is itself a slippery concept and often name-dropped fleetingly in popular, public, and academic usage and debate. Scholarly definitions range, in brief, from a subjective emancipatory project (Rose 1990); to a form of economic organization (Harvey 2005); to an all-encompassing governmentality (Foucault 2008). Here from Smith 2018: 248.

privatization and liberalization as conveyors of 'economy stability' that had very mixed results (Mohan 2009). In recent decades, moreover, the neoliberal turn in Western and Global north countries has influenced democratic crisis and new forms of struggle, with a general eroding of political ideologies and legitimacy. This has accompanied a rise in populist politics with shifts to the political right that, despite numerous economic crises around the world since 1990, seems to offer no realistic alternatives to capitalist expansionist logics and models of limited state intervention in markets that have gradually taken precedence over previous, state-driven forms of social development (McRobbie and Levitt 2000; Kalb 2015).[12] Consequently, there has been renewed attention in the Global north to the negative impacts of capitalism and market-driven growth with impacts on for example, living conditions, household debt, austerity, housing, employment, and education. One broad conclusion is that formal liberal-democracy and market-based growth models have not delivered on promises of societal stability, a trickling down of wealth, and more inclusive political and economic improvement (Stepan and Linz 2013; Standing 2011; Susser 2016; Graeber 2012). On a global level therefore, the conjunction of capitalistic expansion together with old and relatively new experiences with democracy and democratization has produced a whole new palette of 'People without History' and social groups without rights. This means that the need for critical studies is as relevant as ever.[13]

3   Contemporary Developmental Contexts for 'People without History'

Clearly, the developmental contours of the world today differ considerably from when Wolf set up to write EPWH in the late 1970s, and vastly so from the times lived by the excluded groups around the start of the period taken up in

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12   Including for example, the international debt crisis from 1981–9; the East Asian crisis of 1997; the global financial crisis of 2008–9; the European sovereign debt crisis 2009–19.

13   Space limitations do not permit an assessment of the current state of Marxist anthropology or the many different contributions to the field. For a discussion of influential Marxist anthropologists over the last forty of so years and relations to Wolf's scholarship, see Marcus and Menzies 2005, and Schneider and Rapp 1995. Although new technology has undoubtedly increased scholars' ability to access empirical data over the last 40 years, there is also a recognition of new challenges that activist scholars face. For ethical challenges faced by anthropologists, for example, see Edelman and Haugerud 2005: 45. For discussions about (new) pressures on academic freedom see Carvalho and Downing 2010; Donlevy, Gereluk, and Brandon 2018; Enyedi 2018; Rhoades and Slaughter 2004.

EPWH, and where, in Hobbes's words, there was 'continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short' (Hobbes 1651, I.XIII.9) Indeed, the processes of how power, politics, and capital interact and influence social life across local, national, and global scales appear increasingly complex, fluid, contrasting, and elusive, and clearly validate Wolf's presentation of the social world as a 'totality of interconnected processes' (Wolf 1982, 3). The aim of this section is therefore to provide a broad, yet necessarily limited, historical overview to situate local-global connectivity and the present day making of 'People without History' in the context of significant global and international developmental processes and capitalistic expansion since the writing of EPWH.

To start with a few examples, the recent Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, founded in 2013 in the USA to counter institutionalized racism, and which gained further momentum and spread to other countries following the death of United States citizen George Floyd on 25 May 2020 under custodial violence inflicted by a Minneapolis police officer, has raised both public and scholarly attention about systemic race inequalities and exclusion. In turn, it has rallied civil mobilization against public meanings assigned to prominent Western historical political figures and resulted in the toppling and defacing of public statues.[14] Related action by the BLM calls into question how combinations of self-righteous and dominant national narratives and historiographies, and mass media depictions, smooth over past injustices; the relationships between political development and the marginalization of social groups; how the accumulation of extreme private, business, and corporate wealth elides any problematic origins and the human costs of such wealth; and highlights continuity and durability between historical and present-day race-based institutionalized inequalities (Beckett and Rockman 2016). Broadly, the BLM has publicly disclosed otherwise hidden relationships between oppression, capitalism, and inequality, and highlighted racism as a major and persistent social, institutional, and structural challenge in many Global north countries.

In the United Kingdom the so-called *Windrush* scandal exemplifies something similar with the political production of a 'problematic' group that was subsequently criminalized: a group of otherwise heterogeneous black individuals whose categorization as having an inferior legal status justified their deportation from the UK after many decades spent living and working there. The *Windrush* generation, named after the passenger ship on which migrants

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14 Including the toppling of statues of Christopher Columbus, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson, in the USA, Edward Colston in the UK, and King Leopold II in Belgium. See https://www.lifegate.com/black-lives-matter-statues (accessed 25 November 2021).

arrived in the UK from the Caribbean between 1948 and 1970, experienced that they had no residency rights and faced criminalization and subsequent deportation by the British government (Hewitt 2020). A similar campaign for citizenship rights in the UK developed in 2004 when the UK government denied status to retired Gurkha soldiers who, having served in the British armed forces, were denied residency. France likewise has experienced drawn-out struggles by soldiers of former colonies to gain rights after years of active service.[15] Meanwhile, histories of the plights of Sami in Northern Scandinavia and the Greenlandic people under different Danish governments in Greenland as well as in Denmark, call into question dominant narratives of Scandinavia as politically progressive and inclusive (Chatterjee 2021; Nygaard-Christensen and Bjerge 2021). Romani groups in Europe are more widely known as marginalized. Their contemporary struggle developed together with the construction of a 'Gypsy Question' in Nazi Germany; today they continue to contest for international recognition as 'a people without a country' and experience thinly veiled racist and Orientalist characterizations as fundamentally different to 'normal' Europeans (Richardson 2020; Jabeen 2020).

The long struggle of gypsies and Roma people in Europe reverberates moreover with the widespread, post-9/11 creeping criminalization and derogatory categorization of migrants, stateless persons, refugees, asylum seekers, and other more-or-less-distinct – and less distinctly tolerated – groups of people. Their categorical fate lies in the construction of understandings and definitions of them by others with greater power, for whom they emerge as inherently non-integrable. In other cases, categorizations are used as evidence of unreconcilable relationships between liberal democracy and the seeming unchanging cultural traditions of said groups (for example, the Muslim world). Narratives produce ideas of a migration and a refugee 'crisis' and of existential threats to European and national cultures. Yet they deny outright the role of migration and migrant labour in histories of capitalism, national economic development, and legitimize the suspension of inclusive rights (Wall et al. 2005; Trumpener 1992; Krzyżanowski, Triandafyllidou, and Wodak 2018). The discursive, popular, and legal construction of groups without rights feeds into broader processes that elide certain groups from the history books and popular imagination because they are inconvenient to dominant and politically produced narratives. In turn, the making of exclusive (and often binding) categories of people with disparate rights reproduces inequalities in new and more sophisticated forms, and with increasingly blurred lines as to who or what

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15   See 'Gurkha vs government', *The Economist* 30 April 2009. https://www.economist.com/ britain/2009/04/30/gurkhas-v-government (accessed 15 November 2021).

is accountable or responsible for such groups not enjoying rights. This takes place as rationalizing and objectifying political, administrative, and bureaucratic decision-making processes produce less worthy categories of people, who are subsequently moved socially, geographically, politically, and discursively to the margins of state formation. Hence, the expansion of the European Union has not necessarily reduced processes of exclusion within member countries, even though national idiosyncrasies related to inclusion and exclusion have become more streamlined across member states (Samers 1998). This is because processes of 'labelling' and categorizing constitute both domestic, national, and translocal power relations. So, the social categories themselves are objectified to enable the governance of practice and the reproduction of power and dominant ideas over time (Eyben and Moncrieffe 2007; Bourdieu 2005). And in turn, the construction of discourses around the social categories dissolves avenues of responsibility, fairness, and accountability.

The plight and historical trajectories of the above groups, as well as many others such as Uyghur, and Mongols in China; Palestinians in Israel and the occupied territories; and Rohingya in Myanmar, Aborigines in Australia, and native Indians in Brazil and the USA are of course very different – but they nevertheless share common experiences of marginalization and invisibilization as elements of state formation and power accumulation, and as subjects of propaganda which denies autonomous rights. In some cases, subjugation involves negating the history of a country, as well as a people, as with for example President Putin's depiction of Ukraine as a 'fake' country and as an inherent part of 'southwest' Russia (Applebaum 2022). Other examples of denying agency in both Global north and Global South countries are more clearly related to labour markets and capitalist modes of production. These include disparate groups of informal workers such as street vendors, factory workers, lorry and taxi drivers, seasonal fruit pickers, trafficked sex workers, gig economy workers, domestic servants, traveller communities, petty traders, artisanal miners, and residents of designated 'ghetto' areas, informal settlements, and slums (Stacey 2019). Conversely, the largely unrecognised contributions of female domestic work (including house-cleaning, and caring for elderly and children), reveals the long term, discursive production of a huge worker group across the world as outside of, and unrelated to, national economic growth, despite the obvious and immense contributions female domestic labour provides to all societies (Garbes 2022). Such 'groups' of people and categories of worker are invariably depicted with inferior traits, made 'invisible' and taken for granted, or provided with token recognition (Simonsen 2016). Some are relegated to 'social' history (as interesting but not important population elements).

Meanwhile, consumer-driven desires for commodities blinker consumer classes all over the world to processes of interconnectivity and the social lives of the actual people who assemble the commodities we all want and whose level of worker rights and recognition derive from corporate board strategies as influenced by the vagaries of market forces (Esposito and Pérez 2010). Hence, workers' life stories, histories, and roles in global economic development persistently lose out to the dominant, glossy media campaigns of household-name multinational and transnational conglomerates. Here, progress and success are explained in terms of unequalled technological ingenuity and unyielding entrepreneurial finesse (see Chapter 10). And here we see disjuncture between, on the one hand, the economic and financial imperatives of modern production forms to develop global interconnectedness, and on the other, the logic of corporate imperatives to discursively separate the market value of goods at the end of the supply chain, from their problematic origins and forms of production. In the meanwhile, popular, consumerist, and political narratives emphasize ever-increased participation in ever-more-competitive markets as prerequisites for national prosperity. This demonstrates the power of global capitalism to project itself as a source of social betterment, influence ideas of progress, and prioritize human wants over needs (Migone 2007). As such, one is immediately reminded of Wolf challenging presentations of national history as a series of incremental developments resulting in democratic societies and of history as a moral success story which elides the role of the disenfranchised. The contemporary making of 'People without History' then emerges from diverse combinations of political imperatives and capitalistic expansion, and necessarily involves a kind of historical amnesia that not only denies agency in the creation of essential 'inputs', but rests on societal acceptance of becoming blind to, and renouncing, the vulnerability of the social formations around production, to which globalizing modernity connects us (see Chapter 6).

The corollary is the denial of agency and rights of social groups despite their contributions through labour and their facilitating accumulation and capitalistic expansion. As such, the making of diverse 'People without History' continues unabated across all forms of political regime, and as conditioned by ever-sharper and contradictory process of social, economic, and political development. Indeed, that debates and struggles about rights and the social categories who should enjoy them are near-universal today, reveals how the rendering of people without rights and histories of their own is not only a by-product of global capitalism but is an inevitable condition for capitalist expansion and global interconnectedness. Related, the ballooning of civil society movements, charities, and NGOs across the world which advocate and define, defend, and claim rights for marginalized groups and increase political pressure for the

implementation of progressive developmental norms (Grandia 2020; Lai 2011), is itself a symptom and 'indicator species' of the devastating effects neoliberalism has had over the last 40 or so years (see Chapter 2, this volume; Roy 2004). This speaks to the need to study processes of exclusion across spatial levels and political and economic contexts to 'understand exploitation [which] is important for understanding unjust reality because it opens possibilities for envisioning a just reality' (Chatterjee and Ahmed 2019, 367).

Combinations of newly acquired political and economic power, elite capture, and historical institutional and political positioning in global power structures (to name but a few drivers) have both hackneyed democratization and stymied broad-based social and economic improvements for the masses in countries as diverse as Brazil, India, Venezuela, Mozambique, and Russia. Numerous challenges to the relatively newly won political freedoms in the Global South are evident across different countries and have contributed to a faltering faith in 'third-wave' democratization theory in recent years (Stepan and Linz 2013; Neveling and Steur 2018). And the wavering experiences of Arab Spring movements for democratic reform that followed initial protests in Tunisia in 2010 have similarly cast doubt on the ability of multi-party elections, and social and progressive political movements, to bring about effective democracy. What of the social movements taken up by Wolf in *Peasant Wars* (Wolf 1969)? The revolutions in Cuba and Algeria seem now to have stalled indefinitely; China has transitioned to a centralized and non-consultative capitalist state; Russia, under the banner of United Russia, is a belligerent, authoritarian *de facto* one-party state; and Vietnam's ostensible transition to socialism with Đổi Mới is marked by extensive liberal-market-orientated reforms as directed by an authoritarian regime.

Over the last forty years, however, most developing countries *have* experienced sustained improvements across a wide range of human development indicators, including access to health services, standards of living, decreases in multi-dimensional poverty, increased income growth and access to education. And yet there is strong evidence, too, that social, political, and economic inequalities within many developing and developed countries have increased. Total global wealth today is concentrated in fewer and fewer pockets and there are increasing numbers of people needing humanitarian assistance (Piketty 2014*;* Standing 2011; Ourworlddata.org; OECD.org).[16]

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16   At the time of writing the richest 1 percent of people in the world had accumulated more than double the wealth of some 6.9 billion others. See Oxfam: https://www.oxfam.org/en/5-shocking-facts-about-extreme-global-inequality-and-how-even-it.org.   ReliefWeb writes that in 2021 one in 33 people around the world needed humanitarian assistance.

Parallel to such diverse and often contradictory processes played out both within and between Global north and Global South countries is the proliferation of simple narratives and descriptions of social organization and global development, to which Wolf took exception decades ago. Synchronic explanations assume and claim long-term convergence between all nations; media may depict 'Africa' as a wholesale problematic entity or even as a single country;[17] developmental unevenness, non-linear trajectories, and the divergent histories of individual countries are negated; the contributions of marginalized groups from the Global South to the political and economic development of the Global north are perfunctorily smoothed over or erased; evidence of developmental divergence is explained in terms of malfunctioning governance, failed states, and anomaly; 'culturalist' explanations with 'shared world visions' and 'based on collective traditions within a discrete social community' remain commonplace (Olivier de Sardan 2016); and deep-rooted myths about the positive effects of capitalism as broadly inclusive continue to provide legitimacy for the universalization of capitalist relations as *the* solution to the world's societal ills (Cole 1985; Smith 1986). Yet, as Wolf writes in the essay *Cycles of Violence* (Wolf 1987, 147): 'If capitalism has a special relation to the development of political freedom as we know it, it also exercises an extraordinary destabilizing power in its continuous search for higher profits and sustained capital accumulation'. Aspirations towards global economic and social homogeneity continue to situate the West as the model for the 'rest' to imitate, and narratives of development and inequality continue to take the nation-state as the unit of analysis (see Chapter 6). Despite widespread evidence to the contrary, therefore, we remain confronted and influenced by conventional and outdated ideas of linear development and homogeneity, where growth equates success, progress equates unabated economic expansion, and where democratization and capitalism are equal partners.

In the Global South relatively new bureaucratic forms of human categorization that deny or bestow rights and agency may merge with older, colonially based social categories that underpinned political structure (Stacey 2015). These include designations of people as natives, non-natives, citizens, subjects, migrants, foreigners, landless, casteless, or settlers; categories which, together with age, gender, ethnicity, religion, and social status, typically condition the

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See https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/GHO2021_EN.pdf. Accessed 19 November 2021.

17   For example: President Donald Trump's description of Haiti and African countries as 'shithole countries' in January 2018. For other examples of depictions of 'Africa' in popular media, see Mediaimpactproject.org/Africa-in-media.html.

everyday status that individuals or corporate social groups enjoy in a given polity, and which can easily override formal rights and political developmental objectives (see Chapter 3, this volume; Said 1978; Mamdani 1996; Boone and Duku 2012; Lund 2016; Stacey 2016; 2019). Thereby, struggles by excluded groups can involve the invention, reinvention, smudging, or affirming of versions of the past to legitimate the claims they lay in the present, to claim history for one's own group, and to render other versions inaccurate or unjust (Rabasa 2005; Hobsbawm and Ranger 2012). Processes of social mobilization may be influenced, moreover, by protection assigned to indigenous rights and self-determination by global organizations and NGOs. A case in point is the United Nations and the UN General Assembly Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007, which, together with the proliferation of social media, has both increased awareness of rights, claims of indigeneity, and influenced forms of mobilization across local, national, and global levels (Gagné 2015; Pelican 2013; Morton 2019). Still, it should be recognized that contemporary struggles for indigenous rights and the claiming of history based on global discourses and languages of rights have long roots (see Chapter 7).

Global political and economic development since the publication of EPWH has therefore provided for, and resulted in, an array of new and more complex ways by which 'People without History' are produced. An understanding of such processes demands consideration of the multifaceted changes in political and capital formation that locations have experienced historically and are presently undergoing. Shifts from national and state-driven forms of heavy industrial production to capitalist, neo-liberal, translocal, and post-Ford strategies, for example, have had substantial, diverse, and often negative implications for local work forces. In turn, excluded ethnic and social groups have both sought the retrieval of lost rights through political mobilization, learned how to use social media, and 'imagined', 'invented' and written histories of their own as part of the process of gaining access to education. The use of social media to define, promote, and defend collective rights moreover provides a reminder of the Hegelian perspective of the centrality of *writing* for social mobilization (Klein 1995). Further, whereas historically the destination for capital was typically labour and investment in the means of production in the Global north, more recent decades have witnessed an increased role of financial markets, financialization, and the availability of cheap money. This has had significant repercussions for land use changes and rural communities in the Global South. For example, widespread and new capital investments in land in the Global South enable the acquisition of large areas of land and lead to new forms of landlessness, alienation, expropriation, and dispossession (Borras et al 2012). This involves both local, national, and global stakeholders

and defies explanations in terms of the North or West taking over land in the South (Adnan 2013; Borras et al. 2012; Wachira, Stacey, and Adela 2020). In turn, processes of finance-driven resource accumulation result in changes in land ownership from small-scale producers under customary land tenure systems with negotiated access to land, to more restrictive, exclusive, and expansive forms of private land ownership (see Chapter 4). Here, land may be controlled by assemblages of private and often obscure, unaccountable stakeholders (Joshi 2020; Zhang 2018; Harvey 1989), but may also involve local elders, leaders, and community members who find new avenues to benefit from formerly 'communal' land. Finance-based development is itself traceable to the financial crisis of 2008, which sparked investor interest in financing land and where, encouraged by rising commodity prices, investors sought land in the Global South to offset lower returns from financial markets (Fairbairn 2014). In a related development, the industrialization of large-scale agriculture and food production has increased the power of market-based agri-business, while market-based reforms have meant the withdrawal of the state from direct involvement in agricultural production (see Chapters 4, 5, and 8).

Market-based growth has thereby dissolved distinctions between economy and social life in rural areas and demanded the reshaping of local forms of organization around production methods and access to means of production, for example land (Schouten 2008). Furthermore, climate change mitigation efforts, ranging from conservation and protection of land masses to green energy transitions, reflect new extractive frontiers and drive new processes of violence and alienation (see Chapter 8 this volume; Allan, Lemaadel, and Lakhal 2021). Such vicissitudes have increased the availability of cheap food to urban areas and in much of the world but also rearranged relations between and within rural, land-based societies, between these and the state, as well as between localities of production, urban political environments, and global stakeholders (Stacey, Grant, and Oteng-Ababio 2021). As such, there are now new pressures on diverse rural communities of smallholders as they are incorporated into capitalist circuits of agricultural production and consumption (McMichael 2006; Hecht 2018; Hall et al. 2011; Vijayabaskar 2020).

The relatively new processes of producing people without history emerging from the increased role of finance and changing forms of capitalist production and exclusion are also conditioned by the historical compression of time and space, and the multiple and radical advances in technology in recent decades (Gross 1982; Harvey 1990). These have significantly reduced the transaction costs of travel, trade, communication, the production of information and knowledge, and market exchanges. Technology in combination with beneficial judicial and ideological developmental frameworks has created an enabling

space for the ever-hungry movement of capital to occupy quickly. This often outmanoeuvres grassroots objections and democratic objectives in a seemingly ceaseless commodification of natural resources, land, labour, and organization (Chapter 2; Tsing 2003; Borg and Lund 2018; Smith 2018). Broadly, the opening and expansion of commodity frontiers in different locations all over the world demonstrates close relationships between an increased destruction of environmental and ecological systems, labour exploitation, and the globalization of capitalist production systems (Joseph 2019). Such processes exemplify the work of the *Capitalocene* and the '*age of capital*' where unabated destruction and accumulation, and 'putting Nature to work' organizes markets and production as a 'system of power, profit, and re/production in the web of life' (Moore 2017, 594–606). The corollary is often increased risk and uncertainty for already marginalized social groups of land-based producers, as ostensibly 'unused' lands come under the control of new global actors (Chapter 4). Diverse processes of commodification and alienation are manifest all over the Global South through extractivism, agrarian transformations towards cash-cropping, climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, conservation and environmentalist drives, and infrastructural mega-projects. Thus, land use changes driven by finance and wider structures of economic power integrate local groups into broader power hierarchies over which they often have limited influence, and which contribute to spatial unevenness and social, cultural, economic, and political polarization. Subsequently, capitalism facilitates and acts as a proxy for the reproduction of uneven power relations in society and societal unevenness (Smith 2001; Tilly 2005). In this process, non-state forms of sovereignty may develop with a spatiality and influence that transcend the reach of nation-states and cause local material loss and alienation (Kalb 2015). Hence, in addition to James Scott's authoritative exploration (Scott 2010), of how and why states benefit from recording and ordering complex societies in the name of governance, there is a need to recognize how economic and capitalist power simplify complex and unpredictable social realities to reduce uncertainty and risk and to increase economic gains from investments (see Chapter 10). In other words, economic power directs and orders otherwise indeterminate social realities towards specific and planned institutionalization processes with the aim that local actors will follow concrete and predictable actions (Blundo 2015).

The stories of 'People without History' in focus in this volume exemplify some of the disparate processes sketched above in the Global South. Many tell of how social groups experience a reduction and erosion of their political and economic manoeuvrability as they continue to confront both historical institutions of political marginalization and as they adjust to increased immersion

in economic and market-based power rationales (Hardt and Negri 2000). From the above, we see that the question posed by Wolf forty years ago at the start of EPWH (*Why do we persist in turning dynamic, interconnected phenomena into static, disconnected things?*) will certainly provide a different set of answers today, but the question itself has not only retained but increased its significance and relevance. The next section now outlines the empirical chapters and their developmental and Wolf-inspired contexts.

4   Structure of the Book, and Framing of the Chapters

The book comprises nine empirical chapters with micro-histories of struggle and local development employing Wolf's insights to explain broader, contemporary contexts of economic and political power. Overall, the aim is that the analysis of such micro-perspectives and quotidian experiences provide for what Wolf termed 'macroscopic history'. A common realization is that investigation of everyday lived lives and focused 'histories of the present' (Wolf's term) reveal otherwise hidden dimensions of agency to counter dominant explanations (Schneider 1995; Schneider and Rapp 1995, 6; Whitehead 2004). From Geertz, the chapters provide valid reminders of the methodological usefulness and significance of not to study villages or localities, but to study *in* a village or a locality (Geertz 1973, 22). One can add the imperative of studying *with* local people. Overall, the chapters demonstrate contrasting developmental trajectories that defy monochrome depictions of economic modernization and proclamations of a post-industrial, post-Ford, and post-material age inhabited by *homo economicus* and governed by democratic market forces (Kalb 2015). Most provide explanations of political relevance by making known the struggles that ordinary people face in their confrontations with unfavourable positioning in wider political and economic power configurations, and show local agency in defining the local political trajectories (Neveling and Steur 2018; MacLeavy, Fannin, and Larner 2021). Collectively, the chapters strive to overcome recognized limitations of anthropology and globalization literature by historicizing local experiences with global forces. Several contextualize analysis to consider the impact and workings of neoliberalism in given localities (Graeber 2002; Edelman and Haugerud 2005, 97) and incorporate the role of the state in analysis of struggle and relations between ideas, ideology, and power (Wolf, 1999). To paraphrase Marx, they provide insights not only into how man does not control the conditions under which history is made, but they also make known the conditions under which history is denied. Many chapters moreover provide original insights into anthropologies and processes of development as

different forms of resistance (Mosse, 2004), and provide critical depictions and power-oriented perspectives of people's experiences of upheaval and uncertainty. Importantly the idea of fixed vertical hierarchies of power across spatial scales is rejected (Darian-Smith and McCarty 2017) as the volume brings together seemingly unrelated processes showing the 'universal pertinence of power variously manifested' around the world (Portis-Winner 2006).

The chapters take as a common point of departure investigations addressing broad questions related to the making of people without history today; How do contemporary dynamics of global political and economic organization shape local processes of social exclusion? Who are the present-day *People without History* and what role do they play in global forms of accumulation and production? And how do contemporary and historical economic and political power relations influence the production of local cultural and social norms?[18] Broadly, the contributions attest to the making of people without history today from combinations of two forces: struggles against unfavourable historical positioning in power relations which limit present-day avenues for social, political, and economic certainty; and destabilization and conditioning of social organization due to current imperatives of developing capitalism. The conjunctures of history and contemporary power mean that engrained processes of marginalization are often reproduced in new forms, which, in turn, give rise to new avenues and expressions of social struggle and organization as dimensions of political development and state formation (Escobar 1991; 1995; Stacey 2015). Empirically, the chapters cover processes in Latin America (Haiti, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Brazil); Sub-Saharan Africa (Ghana, Mozambique); Asia (Indonesia), and finally the Pacific Islands (Samoa) respectively.

In Chapter 2 Joshua Steckley, Nixon Boumba, and Marylynn Steckley examine post-disaster development in Haiti, where, following the devastating earthquake in 2010, billions of dollars of reconstruction funding flooded the domestic economy. They take a point of departure in Haiti's peasant movements of the 1980s, which were rooted in communal activism and ideals of rural populations as agents of change. This is traced to contemporary social movements and negative influences of developmental funding. The chapter examines from Polanyian perspectives how international funding results in the commodification of radical, rural-based social movements in the country in processes of 'counter-movement commodification'. This compellingly elaborates on Wolf's observation that social contestation is often a reaction to the forces of capitalism. It shows how countermovement itself adapts to and adopts capitalistic

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18   These questions were posed in the original call for papers.

and commodifying forces by itself taking on characteristics of a commodity. Here, self-reliant peasant networks with vibrant community leaders experience division and competition through different funding requirements, project plans, pre-designated aid dollars, the introduction of salaries, and a subsequent blurring of distinctions between 'peasant movements' and 'local NGOs'. As such, the chapter illuminates how power influences local organization and processes of commodification, and acts to undermine prospects for collective resistance that have been central to Haitian history.

In Chapter 3 Ismael García Colón analyses the migration of Puerto Ricans to the United States from 1948 and how local, regional, and global power relations shape migrant farmworkers as colonial subjects within agriculture. This builds on Wolf's concept of structural power and elaborates on Wolf's first fieldwork experiences in Puerto Rico, including his considerations about conditions within both the sending and receiving states that make migration amenable. The chapter convincingly shows that Puerto Rican workers' experience of migration only partially reflect what Wolf hypothesized. This is because continental US growers resisted Puerto Rican workers because legislation meant they were difficult to deport. Hence, settlement was only made possible through state institutional designs that deployed, supported, directed, and shaped migration. The categorization of migrant farmworkers is showed to relate to dominant definitions of citizenship in terms of cultural and racial homogeneity as migrant workers' long-term experiences resonate with similar, open-border policies playing out elsewhere in the world today. Here, a capitalist mode of production demands a regular supply of dispensable labour but simultaneously negates migration's role in capitalist successes and national development. As such, the chapter argues convincingly that to understand Puerto Rican migration one needs to turn to Wolf's understandings of power, the role of government agencies and labour migration in capitalism, and the connections between local and global processes that demand a flexible work force while denying agency.

In Chapter 4 Inge-Merete Hougaard explores through a lens of historical political ecology the transformation of the landscape in the Cauca Valley, Colombia, from a *hacienda* economy to that of a sugarcane plantation and cash crop economy. It explains how the distribution and usage of land and resources for capitalist production, and legitimating processes of governing and controlling land and people, are based around discourses of 'empty space' and 'labour shortages', which develop together with counter-movements by disposed groups. The latter organize to overcome enslavement and forced labour bought about with the land encroachment and occupation by forming independent settlements, establishing labour unions, and striking. Hougaard

consequently traces a dual process of contemporary agrarian transformation, capitalist forms of production, and dominant discourses that provide legitimacy for land use change, against the persistent negation of local actors' agency and their forms of organization to offset precariatization. In a Wolfean perspective the chapter draws attention to the production of 'People without History' as emanating both from the pursuit of purely economic and capitalistic objectives together with political and '*patronage democratic*' processes that shape broader dimensions of Colombian state formation.

In Chapter 5 Gustavo S. Azenha analyses dynamics of 'traditional' peoples' struggles over nature in the 'Discovery Coast' of Brazil in the context of historical as well as emergent processes, and in dialogue with anthropological value theory and political ecology. It draws on Wolf's work with its foregrounding of historicization, attention to global political and economic currents, and dialectic processes of connection and exclusion. Following Wolf, it emphasizes that global social forms are thoroughly transcultural articulations. Brazilian ruralities are consequently explained as socio-environmental hybridities as frontiers areas are shaped by global understandings of nature, humanity, and liberalism. The hybridities are both acknowledged and imagined through contradictory politics of revelation and concealment that obscure the histories and human subjectivities related to their creation. This demonstrates the interplay of heterogeneous social forms in moments of crisis and utilises Wolf's insights into crisis and differentiation in conversation with anthropological understandings of liminality and fetishism. One important result is forms of historical amnesia and affirmations of radical social difference. Hence, by approaching Brazil's 'traditional' peoples and the 'wild' spaces they inhabit as creative spaces in the shaping of contemporary frontiers, Azenha provides a rich and comprehensive understanding of the interplay between the expansion of global markets and the making of frontier people and places.

In Chapter 6 Ioannis Kyriakakis takes up the pertinent question of whether class theory is still relevant and operational for explaining the contemporary world structure. This returns to a key argument made by Wolf concerning the paucity of adopting the nation state as the unit of analysis and which is particularly relevant considering the predominantly transnational and global character of capitalism. Taking a point of departure in current global inequality, Kyriakakis investigates the methodological and theoretical implications of studying the world in terms of a unified conceptual space. It argues that an adoption of a global class system perspective or categorization would be beneficial because understandings of labour-related exploitation would not only be deeper and wider, but ultimately more realistic and aligned with the current workings of the global capitalistic system. The chapter utilizes data about

occupation distribution and status from Ghana national statistics in combination with local understandings, experiences, and viewpoints to exemplify the making of a global underclass. This shows how the impact of the expansion of global capitalism lays bare our outdated yet persistent theoretical framings of class and class relations with the nation state as the focal point of analysis. The chapter subsequently provide a vivid reminder of how the production of knowledge about the world and our understandings of it reproduces unequal power relations.

In Chapter 7 Paul Stacey examines dynamics in the Gold Coast and Ghana between, on the one hand, the shaping of a local polity based on versions of tradition as asserted by colonial institutions, global organizations, and successive national governments, and, on the other, the production of 'alternative' versions by groups excluded from this process. Building on Wolf's understanding of power as orchestrating and conditioning social settings, influencing agency, and enabling and limiting societal organization, the chapter traces the exclusion and making of institutions around chieftaincy by the Nawuri from about 1930 to the present in East Gonja. Stacey follows how the excluded Nawuri develop social organization around ceremony, traditional leadership, and historical narratives to compete with their 'traditional' opponents, and shows how the group continue their struggle for recognition and a history of their own in the contemporary context of democratization. The Nawuri struggle is accordingly framed as a case of structural power in which 'the people who claim history as their own and the people to whom history has been denied emerge as participants in the same historical trajectory' (Wolf 1982). As such, the Nawuri are shown to continue to organize and struggle to thrive along ethnic lines in order to gain recognition from a system that long ago defined the group as unequal. This draws attention to how colonially established relations of unequal power are reproduced within new political developments, conditioning new crises, forms of organization, and differentiation along ethnic lines.

In Chapter 8, Raquel Rodrigues Machaqueiro investigates how internationally conceived efforts to address climate change in rural areas of Mozambique lead to the reproduction of colonially established processes of exclusion and rural marginalization. Solutions to the adverse impacts of climate change include conservation agriculture, the intensification of cashew production, and the industrial plantation of eucalyptus, plans that all carry the promise of local development. Yet the immersion of local sites within a larger system of agriculture that enables capitalistic expansion is convincingly shown to bear another product: a 'people to whom history has been denied'. The chapter subsequently interweaves ethnographic data from Mozambique with archival research about Portuguese colonial practices in the forestry sector, agrarian

transformation, and marginalization. This provide for a multi-level and historical analysis of the political implications of developmental interventions as they are conceived internationally and implemented and experienced locally. Accordingly, the chapter builds on insights by Wolf to explain processes of global capitalist connectivity and social exclusion, showing how current developmental discourses and interventions legitimize a new political economy that perpetuates forms of colonially based capitalist accumulation and exclusion.

In Chapter 9 Tirza van Bruggen investigates historical and contemporary political and economic processes resulting in the overrepresentation of Chinese Indonesians in Indonesia in business, and their underrepresentation and social exclusion in politics – a phenomenon with a long history that has continued in new forms in the post-Suharto era of democratization after 1998. The chapter builds on Wolf's pioneering observation that contemporary social differentiation and inequality emerge from processes of global and local connectivity over time. Specifically, we see how the contemporary division of labour influences the making of, and knowledge about, social categories and exemplifies what Wolf terms a 'totality of interconnected processes' (Wolf 1982, 3). Bruggen traces the persistent exclusion of Chinese Indonesians from a combination of the historical organization of Indonesia's labour force by the Dutch to the social reproduction of naturalizing boundaries that discursively circumscribe social identities in the present-day labour market. Today, it is these which define who is appropriate for what job through processes of othering. With this, the chapter demonstrates how the historical and social construction of the division of labour limits the availability of occupational choices for Chinese Indonesians and denies political influence to this diverse group. Historical political rationalities are shown to have driven Chinese Indonesians into the economic sphere, and the process continues today with perceptions of mainland China's meddling in Indonesian affairs.

Last, but certainly not least, in Chapter 10 Masami Tsujita explores labour relationships between a powerful Japanese-owned multinational car parts supplier, the Yazaki Corporation, and its low-paid factory workers on the Pacific Island of Samoa. The chapter takes up key assertions in EPWH about the totality of interconnected global development processes, multidimensionality, and interdependencies with local forms of organization, and convincingly demonstrates dynamics between the making of a capitalist mode of production and local forms of socio-cultural organization. Yazaki opened a labour-intensive plant in Samoa in 1991 and was courted by the Samoan government with tax breaks and land concessions. The establishing of Yazaki occurred at a critical economic juncture for Samoa and played a key role in national development, with a total turnover of over 60,000 mainly rural Samoans out of a total country

population of about 200,000. Yet in 2017 market-based logics forced the corporation to cease production and vacate Samoa. Tsujita's analysis of worker experiences and their agency contrasts sharply with structural perspectives and typical framings of low-paid factory workers as powerless victims of global capitalism and multinational corporations. Instead, and marking a key contribution to studies of relationships between core and peripheral economies, the chapter traces how, in diverse and ingenious ways, the Samoan workers used factory employment to expand choices in their lives and gain influence and leverage over the corporation, while taking advantage of the long working hours to develop social relations.

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