

election bid by a conservative, a strong probability exists of a federal law or constitutional amendment making abortions illegal. An explosive situation would surely result as members of the public and pro-choice groups react to the constitutionality of abortions.

Concerning public opinion, Craig and O'Brien point out the problems with the numerous polls that seek to predict American views on abortion. Despite the many problems with public opinion polls, a heavy reliance is placed on their results. The authors state it thusly, "Ironically, the public opinion survey has become so commonplace in our society that questions about its utility and validity in the democratic process are all but ignored.... Polling is at best inexact because error can creep in at many points." Since the various polls often have differing results, Americans are even further confused and divided on the abortion issue. The probability may also exist of polls being manipulated to support the author's biases. In addition, the question arises as to ways to analyze views on abortion other than polls and whether these problems can be avoided.

In *Abortion and American Politics*, Barbara H. Craig and David M. O'Brien provide a thorough analysis of the relationship between abortion and American politics. The inclusion of clear and accurate tables and other useful information aids in making their text one of the most comprehensive ones written to date on the subject of abortion. It also leaves many research questions open for further discussion of one of the most divisive issues in American life.

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Gary Gereffi and Miguel Korzeniewicz, eds. *Commodity Chains and Global Capitalism* (Westport, CT: Praeger Press, 1994), xi + 334 pp.; ISBN 0-275-94573-1 (paper); 0-313-28914-X (cloth).

*Sweet Honey in the Rock* have an interesting song, "Are My Hands Clean," in which they trace the production path of a typical shirt from a Venezuelan oil field to Sears sales counter. This book is an extremely uneven effort to do the same from an academic perspective. The book is organized around three concepts appropriated by Wallersteinian world systems analysis from other disciplines: commodity chains, the constancy of change, and the importance of a systemic (i.e., international) perspective.

Commodity chains (CCs) are the interorganizational networks structuring the production of discrete final commodities. The textiles chain, for example, connects agriculture (fiber production) with a variety of chemical and mechanical industries (dyeing, spinning, weaving, garment assembly), with designers, advertisers, and wholesalers and retailers. The great strength of the CC approach is that it permits the analyst to evaluate precisely who has the economic upper hand in a given production process, and which organizations, to steal a phrase, control the commanding heights and by doing so the distribution of profits in a given chain. This focus on power and unequal distribution of profit distinguishes CC analysis on the one hand from typical business school analysis of the "value chain," like that of Michael Porter, and on the other hand from typical industrial policy research centered on manufacturing per se, like that of Laura

Tyson. These days, in the textiles chain, for example, manufacturing turns out not to be the dominant step in the chain. Current consumers are buying ephemeral image as much as concrete fabric. So control over information about the semiotic values consumers wish to consume, accumulated via proprietary retail outlets and realized via in house design, conveys control over the entire chain. In contrast a Porter-esque analysis would only provide a listing of those factors contributing to competitiveness, and a Tysonian analysis would focus too closely on manufacturing itself.

The various articles in the book also stress the constancy of change and the need for historical perspective. In any given chain the production processes, technology, or organizational form that convey control change in response to changing technologies, labor movements, political intervention, and so forth. After all, through the nineteenth century manufacturing, not distribution, dominated the textiles chain.

Finally, the articles all stress the degree to which production is a global phenomenon, with production and distribution steps dispersed globally even if they are often concentrated in specific industrial districts. The book's strengths are geography, history, and the CC approach itself, which shows that "competitiveness," already recognized as something that cannot be accurately attributed to nations, hardly applies to sectors either. Instead, a great variety of regions, using a great variety of organizational approaches, have created competitive advantages in specific parts of the production process, sometimes with outside help or pressure, and sometimes endogenously. Looking at CCs thus al-

lows for a more finely tuned appreciation of who stands to win and lose from trade and trade policy.

The articles themselves lay out the CC approach, then turn to a set of explorations focused on the organization of CCs, their geographical span, and the relationship between consumption and especially the deliberate organization of consumption and CCs. The strongest articles are by Gereffi, reiterating his work elsewhere on buyer-driven CCs; Erica Schoenberger, condensing—too much so—her fine work on how space and time increasingly affect competition; Hyung Kook Kim and Su-Hoon Lee on the South Korean automobile industry's place in the global auto industry; and Korzeniewicz on the Nike shoe company's metastasis inside the shoe chain. All of these demonstrate how control over design, distribution, and desire—the *shaping* of consumer preferences—mesh in ways that allow firms with no manufacturing capacity per se to extract the lion's share of profits from sales of a given commodity.

The book's major weaknesses emerge from the mechanical application of the world systems and commodity chain models. World systems writing has a tendency to substitute often ill-defined labels for analysis. And CC analysis sometimes falls into a narrow analysis of the value chain even though the whole purpose is to highlight the importance of politically constructed economic power. All these flaws characterize the weakest articles: a pair of extremely mechanical applications of world systems logic to the grain trade and ship building in the period before 1800; analyses of the service sector's role and the applicability of "fordist" and "post-

fordist" production methods in agriculture which analysis got lost in jargon; and a statistical effort to assess the global distribution of six different commodities that seems to miss the whole point of the CC approach, namely, that the relationships among different organizations in the chain are what matter. These papers also display a very uneven level of research and writing, with some reading like little more than graduate student exercises. The grain and shipping chapters, which build off a research effort launched in 1986 by Immanuel Wallerstein and Terence Hopkins, are particularly disappointing.

The book has a failing generic to edited volumes, lacking cross-connections among chapters. It takes too much of a middle-of-the-road approach in its choice of cases. Rather than trying to pick one or at most two sectors and analyze all sides in order to show the connections between organizational formats, political structures, and international trade in-depth, or to analyze a wide variety of commodities to show the utility of CC analysis, the book does a bit of both. It concentrates on garments and autos, respectively buyer- and producer-driven chains, but also throws in services, shoes, drugs, and fresh fruit. The book also contains a number of grammatical and factual inaccuracies. For example, GM's Saturn factory in Tennessee is described as a Japanese transplant factory.

Overall the book seems like an effort to apply and confirm mechanically assertions made by Wallerstein, Hopkins, and Gereffi in previous (and better) work. At best it is suited for classroom use, as there is neither much original research here, nor enough elaboration of the conceptual apparatus involved in CC analysis to

allow an uninitiated scholar to incorporate these techniques in his/her own work. In many ways it might be better to go back not only to the original articles on CC analysis but also to the original insights of Christian Palloix on the internationalization of capital and to Nicos Poulantzas's insightful, if turgidly formulated, analysis of how internationalization generated different types of bourgeoisie with very different politics and policy preferences.

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Thomas M. Callaghy and John Ravenhill, eds. *Hemmed In: Responses to Africa's Economic Decline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), xviii + 573 pp.; ISBN 0-231-08229-0 (paper).

When the subject of sub-Saharan Africa's (SSA) economic decline is broached, inevitably the question is asked: Who is responsible for such decline? Critics of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), often put the blame on these institutions as well as the economically powerful Western industrialized nations. On the other hand, IMF and World Bank supporters and Western governments tend to put the onus on inefficient and corrupt political and economic structures in Africa. In *Hemmed In: Responses to Africa's Economic Decline*, the IFIs, the Western nations, and the African governments all share partial responsibility for the predicament in which Africa finds itself. Similarly, if the decline is to be reversed, all must be involved in helping Africa to become less "hemmed in."