1/ Intro: trajectories of peasant transformation

The rise of historical capitalism has subjugated and (re)created peasant societies for centuries now. Different concepts such as de-ruralization, de-agrarianization and de-peasantization have been utilized to define and understand this process, albeit in an ultimately unsatisfactory manner. As vectors of modernization they tend to ignore the diversified effects of capitalist expansion on rural societies. Peasantries are no archetypical social formation; they are the historical outcome of agrarian labor processes that are constantly adjusted to surrounding conditions. The gradual incorporation of peasant worlds has put increasing pressure on their base of existence through the alteration of access to their essential means of production, land, labor, and capital.

The position of the rural zones in the modern world cannot be understood in a singular manner. Peasantries over the world have followed different trajectories of change and have developed divergent repertoires of adaptation and resistance. The expansion of the global division of labor triggered different paths of both de-peasantization and re-peasantization. This paper is based on an ongoing collective research program that aims to understand the divergent paths of peasant transformation in modern world history. The central focus is the diversification of work and income strategies that always have been part of peasant survival strategies (individual, in the household and in the village). This paper serves a triple goal. It questions the concept of peasantry as a social category, it introduces the analytical notion of peasantries as a social frontier and it formulates some the strategies to research the divergent strategies that peasant populations have developed to secure access to their essential means of production: land, labor, capital and knowledge. These elements compile a research framework that aims to describe and understand divergent ways of peasant transformation and labor organization in the last few centuries, related to different patterns of internal social structures and different paths of external incorporation.

This is an ‘ongoing’, by definition unfinished discussion paper, debating central concepts and insights in a running collaborative project. Within this project we investigate four cases via a comparative research design, looking for similar or divergent processes of peasant transformation, both in space (zoning within the world-economy) and over time (phases of incorporation): Northwestern Europe (North Sea Basin), Middle Africa (East

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Congo), Latin America (Central Andean Highlands) and the East coast of China (Yangzi River Delta). These four regions reflect divergent historical roads of peasant incorporation: a/ core-model (market oriented family farm); b/ peripheral model 1 (core oriented plantation agriculture); c/ peripheral model 2 (core oriented peasant agriculture); d/ hybrid model (‘independent’ peasant agriculture).

2/ Peasantries as a social process

The peasant is still with us. When we look beyond our premises of westernized development, we still see vast worlds of family- and village-based agricultural societies that combine diversified production chains and multiple strategies of risk minimization with locally and regionally anchored income and exchange systems. In nineteenth and twentieth century modernization thinking, the peasant -as a kind of archetypical rural producer- represented the left (starting) point on the axis of evolution, the traditional community and the opposite of modernity. (Western-based) historiography has long developed and described the ‘anti-modern’ model of a ‘familistic’, family-based society, as a relatively undifferentiated economy of family farms and rural crafts and services, structured by internal agencies such as family, kinship and village. In the 1960’s and 1970’s rural anthropologists and sociologists Eric Wolf and Theodor Shanin moved the debate beyond this a-historical and dichotomist picture. The question is not whether peasants were naturally conservative, values-rational, safety-oriented investors of their land and labor or whether they tended to be risk-taking, market-oriented maximizers. They were and are both, responding socio-political and economic pressures. They are “rural cultivators whose surpluses are transformed to a dominant group of rulers that uses the surpluses both to underwrite its own standard of living and to distribute the remainder to groups in society that do not farm but must be fed for their specific goods and services in return.” Peasants only exist within a class relationship, read: the external subordination to state authorities and regional or international markets which involve surplus extraction and class differentiation. “Measuring peasant capitalism lies at the heart of the major concerns of

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2 In general, we define peasants as members of rural, agricultural households who control the land they work either as tenants or as smallholders. They are organized in family bonds and village communities that meet a large part of their subsistence needs (production, exchange, credit, protection) and they pool different forms of income (from land, labor, and exchange). They are ruled by other social groups that extract a surplus either via rents, via (non-balanced) market transfers, or through control of state power (taxation). Key terms are (a degree of) household and local autonomy, flexible strategies of income-pooling, household-based village structures, and surplus extraction outside local control.


5 Wolf, 1966, pp. 3-4.
contemporary social science. It has to do with capitalism as a process; it relates the understanding of the origins of our time to the characterization of the essential tenets of the global system we live in.”

As every social formation peasants are sets of social relationships. The household is the basic economic unit and the gateway to the wider world. They are engaged in economic transactions for the main purpose of securing a level of subsistence, within the framework of a broader market economy. The gradual incorporation of peasants within in a polarizing capitalist world-economy has transformed them to producers of export crops, of food staples for domestic markets, and of labor power via (free or indentured) labor systems. This created a large variety of systems of labor regimes, land tenure and differential forms of access to markets of land, labor and credit. Peasants, according to Bernstein, became petty commodity producers “when they are unable to reproduce themselves outside the relations and processes of capitalist commodity production, when those relations and processes become conditions of existence of peasant farming and are internalized in its organization and activity.” Within this framework, peasantry is an open concept that interacts within multiple forms and scales of action and conflict and leaves room for different levels of autonomy. “Like every social entity, peasantry exists in fact only as a process.”

Over time, the combined process of overburdening, restricting and reducing peasant spaces has considerably weakened their material basis. The concept of de-peasantization has to be understood as a multi-layered process of erosion of an agrarian way of life, the increasing difficulty to combine subsistence and commodity agricultural production with an internal social organization based on family labor and village community settlement. This includes a diversification of rural coping mechanisms, such as petty commodity production, rural wage labor, seasonal migration, subcontracting to (multinational) corporations, self-employment, remittances, and income transitions. What is often regarded as ‘de-peasantization’ is, in essence, part of more diversified labor and income strategies of the peasantry. On a global scale, processes of de-agrarianization in the core zones often created new peasants in the periphery. For example, nineteenth (India) and twentieth century (Africa) colonialism engendered processes of peasantization that facilitated the colonial government’s agricultural commodity export aims. Spurred by colonial taxation, African agrarian producers increasingly produced agricultural commodities in conjunction with their subsistence production, or alternatively exported male labor on the basis of circular migration. Recent forces of de-agrarianization are triggered by the enforcement of neo-liberal policies and Structural Adjustment Plans. In many peripheries vulnerability has switched from a temporary to a structural state of being. This is countered by the intensification of old and the introduction of new forms of livelihood diversification such as taking up non-farm activities and relying on non-farm income transfers.

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6 Shanin, 1980, pp. 89.
9 Bernstein, 2003, p. 4.
3/ Peasantries as a social frontier

The process of agrarian change in the last few centuries refers to an agrarian-rural-agricultural world that has been absorbed in the context of other sectors and geographies. That is why ‘agrarian change in the modern world centers on the analysis of capitalism and its development’. In capitalism, incorporation equals processes of commodification, “through which the elements of production and social reproduction are produced for, and obtained from, market exchange and subjected to its disciplines and compulsions.”

This processes have never been absolute neither complete. The central tendency of capitalism towards generalized commodity production has created immense disparities on a global level; uneven or semi-commodification always has been at the heart of historical capitalism. Since the twelfth century the densely populated and highly urbanized regions around the North Sea Basin initiated a strongly commercialized agriculture, an interregional and intercontinental trade system and intensive industrial production. This triggered transformations in the rural societies, generating strong regional differentiation. Zones with capitalist agriculture, dominated by commercial farms and wage labor, developed in the regions bordering the North Sea. These zones were bound by two types of peasant societies. The first combined small-scale family farming with an expanding proto-industry, thus creating a commercial subsistence economy. More distant, but still integrated in a regional division of labor, we find more autarchic peasant zones with a significant labor surplus. From the 1870’s, with the birth of the first global food regime, the expansion of grain and meat production in the settler economies and of tropical export crops in colonial Asia and Africa went hand in hand with massive de-peasantization and more diversified farming in Europe. Twentieth century globalization of farming and food consumption also had differential impact on societies in North and South, shaped by new international divisions of labor and trade in agricultural commodities. The commodification and marginalization of peasant subsistence in the South went along with expanding export crops like coffee, cocoa, tea, sugar, cotton and palm oil, promoting high value commodities as horticultural products and expanding large-scale production of soy, sugar and grains. The working poor of the South were increasingly forced to pursue their reproduction through insecure and oppressive wage employment and/or a range of precarious small scale and ‘informal economy’ survival activities, including marginal farming. Additionally livelihoods were pursued across different sites of the social division of labor: urban and rural, agricultural and

18 Bernstein, 2010, p. 87.
non-agricultural, wage employment and marginal self-employment. In the early 21st century agriculture still provides the main basis for employment and income for 1.3 billion people worldwide, 97 percent of them in so-called developing countries. Two billion more gain additional resources from work on the land. Regional and gender differences are substantial:

Agrarian self-employed (main profession), % of adults in 2000 (exclusive nonactive and not reported)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia (excl China)/Pacific</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East/North Africa</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe/Central Asia</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America/Caribbean</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Peasantries fed former civilizations and empires, they fuelled the expansion of the capitalist world-economy. We consider them as vital frontiers within the globalizing world. What do we mean with that? Frontiers are constantly shifting processes of contact between different social spaces and social systems. They materialize in contact zones between social systems, they disappear when the interaction ends or when one system is fully incorporated by another system. Capitalist incorporation and expansion has been fuelled by the opening of the ‘Great Frontier’, as a metaphor for an interconnected set of shifting frontiers, in the 16th century. Frontier expansion provided an astounding wealth of nature that reduced production costs and increased profitability for centuries to come. Jason Moore defines these frontiers not as fixed geographical places, but as socio-ecological relations “that unleash a new stream of nature’s bounty to capital: cheap food, cheap energy, cheap raw materials, and cheap labor”. They generate shifting sets of ‘localized’ activities to secure access to labor and land for ‘globalised’ commodity production (of, in the first place, agricultural, forest and mining goods). They disclose via processes of incorporation new supplies of land and labor, to be mobilized in new production processes. The sites where this happened become frontier zones. This process and these zones have been crucial to the expansion of the global capitalist system of production and consumption. They also have often been associated with problems of social, economic and ecological sustainability. This results in the apparent need for them to be continually shifting into new areas once those that are being exploited become exhausted. The 21st century will witness the closure of this

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20 World Development Report 2008, p. 77
22 Thomas Hall, “Incorporation into and merger of world-systems”, in Salvatore J. Babones and Christopher Chase-Dunn (eds), Routledge handbook of world-systems analysis, London and New York, Routledge, 2012, p. 51. Frontiers are thus ‘concerned with the creation, transformation and elimination of boundary zones’
type of frontier expansion, blocking the central way that capital has dealt with the rising costs of production up to now.

Frontiers can be external and internal. Both incorporation and differentiation create frontiers, such as the delineations between social groups and the extent to which they are included or excluded. Frontier zones are permanently reproduced by converging and dialectical processes of homogenization (the reduction of frontiers) and heterogenization (the creation of new frontiers). History is made by permanent shifts in and between frontier zones. They originate, shift, and disappear.²³ New forms of colonization and imperialism from the sixteenth century instigated a gigantic expansion and shift of peripheral frontier zones. This expansion connected large rural populations to the European world economy, and often gave them means for new forms of production, identity and resistance (for example via new forms of peasant agriculture and so-called ‘informal economies’).

Along the borders of social and economic systems, hybrid cultures originated; social groups and social zones were incorporated or excluded. The movement of frontiers and the (re)creation of frontier zones is inherent to the expansion of historical capitalism. Peasantries and rural zones have been primary frontiers and frontier zones since the European Late Middle Ages. Constituting a wide range of social groups of ‘partial’ incorporated people, Eric Wolf’s ‘people without history’, peasantries appear to be inundated by the tidal wave of the modern world. This apparently vanishing of the peasant hides mixed, complex and often opposing processes of restructuring, generating a multiplicity of frontier zones.

Capitalism actually creates frontiers, in order to expand, it needs frontiers. They supply Jason Moore’s ‘four cheapss’, cheap food, cheap energy, cheap raw materials, and cheap labor. The frontier perspective grasps the imbalances of incorporation processes, emphasizing the role of the margins and friction zones. Because of the incomplete nature of incorporation frontier zones are the prime locus of negotiation processes about (socio-economic) commodification and (socio-cultural) assimilation.²⁴ This insight has created a proliferation of frontier-related concepts, moving it from the edges to the center of ‘modernity’.²⁵ Walter Mignolo for example developed the concept of “colonial difference” as a conflict of types of knowledge and structures of power.²⁶ This interpretations have

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²⁶ W.D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000. As the system expands, Mignolo explains, the local histories of subaltern groups become structured by the single logic of “global designs,” that is, to reinforce the coherence and expansive course of the modern world-system (Mignolo 2000, 43). These designs refer to multiple and globalizing hegemonic projects, such as Christianity, Western
revealed frontiers as the locus of both contestation (war, resistance, lawsuits, intolerance, plunder, extraction, sabotage, ecological degradation, segregation) and alliance (biological symbiosis, marriage, economic partnership, political bonds and treaties, celebration, conversion, gifts). Frontiers and frontier zones can be differentiated on basis of intensity (open-closed, informal-formal), location (on the edge of a world-system or within the system) and the links and transfers that connect them to the system (bulk goods, luxury goods, political authority, military power, labor, information...). Through their interactions with overarching systems (civilizations, world-systems) peasantries constitute a social frontier of ‘incomplete’ incorporation or, borrowing the concept of Kardulias, of ‘negotiated peripheralities’, spaces of exploitation, negotiation and opportunities.27

3/ Peasant regimes of land and labor

How do we study peasantries as a social-historical frontier process? How do we integrate comparative, global and long-term perspectives?28 The gradual incorporation of peasant worlds has put increasing pressure on their base of existence through the alteration of access to their essential means of production, land, labor, and capital. This has pushed further diversification of work and income strategies that always have been part of peasant survival strategies (on individual, household- and village-level). The incorporation of rural zones in the capitalist world-economy has thoroughly redefined and recreated the spaces and boundaries of peasant survival systems. The alteration of its agrarian organization and its family and village basis has fundamentally changed the strategies of livelihood diversification. The uneven nature of the processes of incorporation and commodification

civilization and the global market, that operate both in countries “that devised and enacted global designs” as in those that are pushed “to accommodate themselves to global designs” (Mignolo 2000, 21). This is closely related to the “coloniality of power”, defined as a power-binding medium to channel knowledge production that operates in a space structured by coloniality and modernity, which are each other’s reverse (Mignolo 2000, 16-17). The operations of this ‘matrix of power’ are constitutive to the history of capitalism and can be summarized as 1) the (re)classification of the planet population, 2) an institutional structure in function of this classification, 3) a spatial organization functional to this classification and 4) an epistemological perspective that disseminates this classification. As these structures consolidated between the 15th and 18th century, people have been labeled into the group of citizens, indigenous, peasants or any other socio-economically or culturally distinct group through the operations of a state apparatus, a university system, a clerical hierarchy and other institutions that were thereto created. The development of this matrix of power has implied processes of urbanization, road infrastructure, border control and other mechanisms of relocation of these people and is underpinned by a hegemonic discourse—often metaphorically described with Eurocentrism—that propagates the objectives and contours of this knowledge-channeling medium.

27 Kardulias tested ‘negotiated peripherality’ in two settings, ancient Cyprus and contact-era North America. The concept refers to “the willingness and ability of individuals in peripheries to determine the conditions under which they will engage in trade, ceremonial exchange, intermarriage, adoption of outside religious and political ideologies, etc. with representatives of expanding states” (P.N. Kardulias, "Negotiation and Incorporation on the Margins of World-Systems: Examples from Cyprus and North America", in: Journal of World Systems Research, 2007, 13, p. 55).

has fuelled divergent trajectories of peasant transformation and created new social and ecological frontier zones. All world regions encountered between the 16th and 20th centuries new and more intensive forms of social and geographical polarization, albeit in strongly different manners.

We analyze this process via three interlocked dimensions that constitute the trajectories of transformation of rural zones: 1/ the (re)constitution of peasant societies (household organization, village systems, regional networks); 2/ their relations within broader societal structures (trade and commerce networks, fiscal systems, power and property relations); 3/ the transformation of these societies and the effects on social relationships and survival and income positions. To understand the interaction between these three dimensions, we gather information on three thematic clusters: 1/ political and economic organization and social power relations (including extraction and control of surpluses); 2/ regulation of and access to land and natural resources, labor, markets, goods, and capital; 3/ households and the village community, including strategies related to reproduction, control, resistance, social groups and social (in)equality.

An integrated analysis of these themes allows us to address the following questions: What were the trajectories of incorporation of rural zones in the capitalist world-system? How did this incorporation affect the spaces and edges of peasant survival systems? How did peasantries evolve from external to internal frontiers, and how did this feed new trends of heterogenization? We selected four cases that illustrate the basic models of incorporation of peasantries in the history of capitalism: as internal frontier zones in the core of the modern world-system (core processes of incorporation; North Sea Area), as newly incorporated frontier zones in the periphery of the modern world-system (peripheral processes of incorporation via plantation agriculture or via peasant agriculture; Kivu Region and High Andes), and as external zones to the modern world-system (hybrid processes of incorporation; Yangzi Delta). In the North Sea region the expansion of zones of capitalist agriculture initiated strong processes of regional and social differentiation. Core processes of incorporation could eventually absorb the impact of uneven economic and social growth. Peasant zones differentiated in a small fraction of commercial farmers and a large non-agricultural labor force. The violent incorporation of the Andes and Congo peoples created new intra-regional and inter-regional relationships as part of a process of peripheralization. Peripheral processes of incorporation had a disastrous impact on the regional rural systems, brutally redirecting them towards the needs of the metropolis. This process was not unilinear and equal. It gradually affected the capacity of peasant livelihood diversification, but at the same time created new frontiers of interaction and survival. In the highly commercialized Yangzi River Delta, the trend of growing differentiation was slowed down by the redistributive state system and the persistence of kinship and clan networks. The ‘protective’ policies of both the Chinese empires and the 20th century Chinese state could not prevent new forms of social tension, and, ultimately, the breakdown of peasant production and survival systems.

The minimum social conditions of farming include ‘direct’ access to the means of production: land, labor, capital (tools and seeds) and knowledge. Historically the principal social units through which the means of farming have been secured and farming conducted were the rural household and the village household system. As indicated, the expansion of the ‘Great Frontier’ was based on abundant new supplies of both land and labor. 29 The new colonial expansion from the 1870’s forced control over new colonial subjects, which

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29 Barbier, 2011, p. 418.
required direct intervention in their institutions and practices of allocation and use of land and labor.\textsuperscript{30} This frontier-based development of exploiting relatively abundant resources necessitated a permanent restructuring of agrarian land and labor regimes, generating significant differences over space and time. Access to land and labor are strongly interrelated, as are the household, regional, state and interstate dimensions, as we show by two examples.

Hanne Cottyn centers her research project about peasant societies on the Bolivian Altiplano on a threefold set of ‘moving frontiers’: the commodification of communal land ownership of land, the contractization/intermediation of community-based exchange networks of labor and commodities, and the assimilation of indigenous peasants into loyal subjects of an aspired nation-state.\textsuperscript{31} The formation, transformation and recreation of these frontiers entails processes of interaction and negotiation. Guiding questions are:

1/ (commodification of land rights as a first moving frontier: privatization) which transformations in access to collective land rights? how were these rights negotiated throughout cycles of land reform?,

2/ (commodification of exchange relations as a second moving frontier: contractization/intermediation) which transformations in access to transnational commodity and labor markets? how were inter-communitarian mobility and trade patterns negotiated in face of increasing state control and local trade elites?,

3/ (commodification/assimilation of sovereignty relations as a third moving frontier: national integration/state-building/expansion of citizenship) which transformations in access to the state? how was ancestral territorial and institutional autonomy negotiated in face of the pressures for assimilation and emancipation? It is clear that even the remote and apparently highly disconnected communities on the Altiplano have become an incorporated frontier zone, via land legislation installed by the central state through the processes of land reform, via the integration of trade and labor relations between indigenous peasants into the (international) markets and via the interiorisation of national citizenship, replacing the boundaries of community identity.

The proposed frontier perspective is necessary to track out and analyze the movements and interconnections of these frontiers and how these movements and interconnections have shaped the historical regional trajectory of Andean (indigenous peasant) incorporation, but also its rhythm has been broken, new dynamics been inserted, new roads have been opened, while others might have been blocked. Both in the agrarian as in the indigenous question, land rights are the prime subject of expropriation and negotiation. Regulations on land use have been a primary tool for opening access to labor and commodity production. The most fundamental challenge to capitalist expansion has been communal ownership of resources because it denies the overarching dominance of private property rights.\textsuperscript{32} As is shown in this case the shared land question is a prime conflict zone for the simultaneous adoption of strategies of adaptation/assimilation and strategies of resistance. Grafted on the land question are negotiations on access to labor, market and trade relations and legal-political integration. Claims to participation do not back an aim for

\textsuperscript{30} Bernstein, 2010, p. 43.

\textsuperscript{31} PhD project Peasant transformation and land reforms in the High Andes: Carangas (Bolivia), 19th and 20th centuries; Hanne Cottyn, “At the frontier of land commodification. The land reform process in Bolivia’s indigenous highland communities (19\textsuperscript{th}-21\textsuperscript{st} centuries)”, submitted article.

fully fledged incorporation. On the contrary, they are part of the strategy of safeguarding (a minimum of) autonomous control over vital resources and secure (a minimum of) involvement in broader structures. This accounts for their multifaceted, apparently contradictory, but above all alert attitude towards globalization processes.

The struggle about land rights and land reforms has been central in large parts of the world in the 19th and 20th centuries, including confiscation, collectivization, redistribution and collective peasant action. In some regions the prime crowbar of incorporation was the imposition of collective labor regimes, as is illustrated in a case study on labor relations in coffee plantations in the Kivu region. The opening of the ‘Tropical Frontier’ from the 1870’s necessitated the incorporation of new colonial peasantries as producers of export crops, of food staples and of labor power. In most sub-Saharan regions peasants were not dispossessed but ‘encouraged’ (through taxation and forced crops) to enter the capitalist economy as producers of agricultural commodities and/or labor force. Variations in labor regimes - systems of recruiting, organizing and reproducing labor- have been an essential feature of the capitalist world-system. Most combine subsistence with commodity production; fully proletarianized wage labor is still a minority. In the 19th and 20th century colonial context, Bernstein differentiates between forced labor (by tribute, taxation and forced labor service; indirect force: peasant way; direct force: slavery, tribute labor) and semi-proletarian labor (wage labor plus subsistence production). Both imply a partial separation from the means of production, the first one mainly through extra-economic coercion, the second one mainly through economic coercion (‘the dull compulsion of economic forces’). Van der Linden stresses the centrality of coercion in the massive group of ‘subaltern workers’. Every person whose labor power is sold or hired out to another person under economic or non-economic compulsion belongs to this class of subaltern workers, regardless he or she is a free laborer, regardless he or she owns/controls the means of production. The degree of autonomy/coercion is determined by two sets of relations, first the worker and his or her labor power, means of production, and labor product; secondly the worker connected to other household members, to employers, and to the other workers. Within the variety of labor regimes, boundaries are flexible and sometimes vague. Moreover, individual relations are embedded in household- and group-based networks. ‘The partiality of wage labor’ becomes especially clear from a household perspective, the big majority of households have never been dependent solely on wage labor income. Non-wage labor has been essential to capitalist reproduction by producing ‘cheap labor’ and creating part of the surplus, and by absorbing part of the costs (of care and

33 Eric Vanhaute and Sven Van Melkebeke, “Resisting the natural law of their development? Forced labor and rural agency in the coffee plantation-economy of the Kivu in the Interwar years”, submitted article.
36 Bernstein, 2010, pp. 52-55.
37 Van der Linden, 2008, pp. 33-35.
reproduction). This process of incorporation has created dynamic frontier zones where new peoples have been absorbed in the capitalist system, but at the same time have developed strategies of adaptation, differentiation and resistance. Sometimes peasant agency has created relative prosperity when they were able to mobilize land and labor for export commodity production that could be integrated in subsistence farming.\footnote{Bernstein, 2010, p. 52; Thomas Hall, “Incorporation into and merger of world-systems”, in S.J. Babones and C. Chase-Dunn (eds), p. 51; Eric Vanhaute, “Peasants, peasantries and (de)peasantization in the capitalist world-system”, in S.J. Babones and C. Chase-Dunn (eds), pp. 317-318.}

Until the middle of the 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries, the overall majority of labor recruitment for the Kivu coffee plantations remained unfree. A forced labor input serves three goals: sufficient and flexible supply, low costs and social discipline. Local and colonial forces organized labor recruitment, at the same time blocking alternative possibilities from market production or migrant labor. This way colonial investors and administrations squeezed the local population in an economic deadlock: underpaid forced wage labor or underpaid market production, buffered by the burdened household- and village-based subsistence economy.\footnote{Barbier, 2011, p. 513-514. Barbier calls this a process of ‘inward looking’ frontier-based development. The crisis of the 1930’s stimulated local farming in the colonies, mainly to produce food for subsistence and local markets. This absorbed redundant supplies of labor.} This strategy reached its limits in the late 1930s. The increasing supply of free wage labor eased the need for direct coercion. At the same time the rural household economy, together with the existing social relations, became more and more subverted. Private entrepreneurs, public authorities and the rural poor, all had to adapt to the shift from a forced (extra-economic coercion) to a semi-proletarian (economic coercion) labor regime.

4/ Conclusion: research strategies

Since the origins of historical capitalism peasantries have been vital frontiers, supplying ‘cheap’ land, labor and commodities, and absorbing social costs. Processes of incorporation or frontier making were centered on appropriation/controlling access to land and labor. The strategies of incorporation and control differed highly over space and time, as does the outcome of this process. The strategy to research this long-term and interconnected process has to follow three interrelated research routes:

1/ integrated research: incorporation, alienation, interaction, negotiation affect all aspects of peasant life: family, land, labor, capital, knowledge, production and reproduction; strategies to secure or block access to them are interrelated.

2/ comparative research: an incorporated and reciprocical comparative framework looks for differences and similarities in trajectories of peasant change.

3/ systemic research: processes of change are part of systemic transformations, the growth and transformation of a capitalist world-system.

This research model has to focus on two dominant story lines:

1/ the interconnection between frontiers, fields of action and negotiation (land, labor, knowledge etc) and the interconnection between scales of action and negotiation (household, village, transregional, transnational).

2/ the differentiation in peasant trajectories and the links between them.
In the North Sea Area (long term core integration) peasant production (including all kinds of proto-industrial production) lived apart/together for centuries with capitalist farming. The High Andes peoples (long term periphery integration) became after the end of silver mining largely delinked from core processes, but remained part of the new global and national society through long-term trade, land reforms and state formation. Peasantry around the Kivu Lake (short term periphery integration) encountered brute interventions in their land and labor systems, in order to redirect labor (plantations, in Congo region) or commodities (peasant production, in Ruanda region) to the needs of the metropolis. The peasant/village system in the Yangzi Delta (from empire-based to state-based integration) was incorporated in imperial networks of exchange and protection. The destruction of this production system in the second half of the 20th century by the communist state completely altered the land/labor relations of the rural populations.

The “long twentieth century” corporate food regime globalized through waves of imperialist and neo-liberal intensification the North Sea geo-model of a core of capital intensive market production with peasant-based export cum survival zones at the edges. This restructuring and intensification of core-periphery relations created new divergences both in the rural economy as in peasant societies. The disappearance of peasantries in Europe, the forced neutralizing of rural societies in China, and the struggle to formulate new peasant responses to peripheral positions in Africa and Latin America are all part of the changing global geo-system of the early twenty-first century. This has greatly strengthened global inequality. Contrary to the (semi-)urbanized labor force in the North, the rural workers of the global South have to pursue their reproduction through increasingly insecure, oppressive, and scarce wage employment and/or a range of precarious small scale and ‘informal economy’ survival activities, including marginal farming. Peasant livelihoods strategies towards land and labor remain a central part of 21st century global capitalism, both as means of survival, and as hotbeds for resistance.