

# Relocating resource peripheries to the core of economic geography's theorizing: rationale and agenda

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Revised manuscript received 26 October 2002

*Theorizing in economic geography has focused on core regions, industrial and non-industrial, old and new. Indeed, contemplation of the idea of globalization has reinforced this quest. This paper disputes this blinkered thinking that peripheralizes resource peripheries, and seeks to re-position and emphasize resource peripheries within economic geography's theoretical agenda, specifically that associated with the new 'institutional' approach. A truly 'global' economic geography cannot afford to ignore resource peripheries. In particular, we argue that characterizing resource peripheries, and making them distinct from cores, is the intersection of four sets of institutional values or dimensions which we summarize in terms of industrialism (economic dimension), environmentalism (environmental dimension), aboriginalism (cultural dimension) and imperialism (geopolitical dimension). This admittedly preliminary framework underlies our hypothesis that resource peripheries around the world have become deeply contested spaces, much more so than those found in cores.*

**Key words:** theorizing, economic geography, cores, peripheries, contested space

## Introduction

The news media provides constant reminders of the deep-seated problems facing resource peripheries around the world (Table 1).<sup>1</sup> Examples include: the destruction of rainforests in Brazil's Amazonian Basin, Borneo, British Columbia and Burma; the depletion of fishery stocks offshore of Newfoundland, the Iberian peninsular and the North Sea; the pollution of Lake Baikal by Soviet-era pulps, and so on. At the root of many of these problems is the economic geography of resource production: the extraction of a mineral, biotic or animal resource, which is often processed only to a limited

degree and then sold elsewhere. On the face of it, this economic geography is straightforward. Immobile resources, once delimited and deemed commercial, are removed *in situ*, and mobile ones systematically sought out and appropriated (harvested). Further, large-scale exploitation depends upon the existence of, and access to, distant markets. Providing production and transportation costs are covered by market prices, resource exploitation is viable (Hay 1976). Scratching below the surface, however, soon reveals a set of difficult questions that complicate these simple economic geographical precepts (Auty 1993 1995 2001). How much processing should occur *in situ* prior to export?

**Table 1 Resource peripheries in conflict: illustrations from *The Guardian* 2001**

Author/title (day/month)	Territory, resource exports (and actors) at centre of conflict
R. Norton-Taylor, The new Great Game (05/03)	Caucasus (notably Caspian Basin). Oil and Gas. (Various local governments, US, Russia, separatists, guerrilla groups, Islamic groups, MNCs).
J. Astill <i>et al.</i> , Gorillas face doom at gunpoint (04/03)	Congo (notably Kahuzi-Biéga Park). Coltan (hardening agent for high tech applications). (Congoese and Cameroon government, warring factions from neighbouring countries, park rangers, ENGOs, villagers, miners, loggers, Western interests, especially US).
J. Flint, Oil revenues fans flames of Sudan's civil war (15–21/03)*	Sudan (notably in south). Oil. (MNCs, villagers, Sudanese government, liberation army, local militias).
J. Steele, Miners put multinationals in the dock (21/05)	South Africa. Asbestos. (Miners, MNCs. English courts, Human Rights Group, US courts, House of Lords).
S. Millar and T. Macalister, Tibetan pipeline row dents BP's new image (19/04)	Tibet (Tsaidam Basin). Oil. (City investors, BP, human rights campaigners, PetroChina, Tibetan Government in exile, pro-Tibet campaign groups, China, shareholders).
T. Macalister, Island's illicit tin miners send markets into a spin (26/10)	Indonesia (Bangka Island). Tin (and copra and chromium ore). (Freelance miners, Indonesian government, local authorities, PT Timah, Peru, London Metals Exchange, green campaigners).
I. Osborn, British oil firms accused of Burma abuses (12/10)	Burma (Burmese soldiers, British companies, labour MP, Earth Rights International, European Parliament, forced labour).
K. Laidler, Trust in giant pandas (16/08)	China (notably Wolong panda reserve). Timber, crops (poaching). (WWF, panda researchers, poachers, Panda trust).
P. Barkham, Bleak Pacific landscape awaits asylum seekers (20–26/09)*	Nauru. Fertilizer (from bird droppings and fossilized undersea life). (Australian government, Nauru government, UN, asylum seekers, villagers).
G. Monbiot, Bush's dirty government, little war (31/05–6/06)*	Colombia. Oil (and coca). (US government, Colombian farmers, MNCs, army, guerrillas, democratic movements, EU).
H. Girardet, Obituary: Darrel Posey (5–11/05)*	Amazon. Timber (and minerals). (Aboriginal peoples, Brazilian government, MNCs, World Bank, UN, universities).
Falola, In Bolivia's drug war, success has a high price (15–21/03)*	Bolivia (notably Chapare jungle region). Coca. (Bolivian and US governments, army, peasants, UN).

Notes: These articles were selected in an ad hoc way to reveal the geographic scope of contested resource peripheries among developing countries. Many other examples are mentioned in the text (while the many articles related to the Afghan war since September are excluded.).

\* Story is in the *Guardian Weekly*.

Can and should resources be used to diversify the economy by moving to upstream or downstream activities? What level of rents should the government charge for resource appropriation? Should governments subsidize domestic production to maximize national self-sufficiency and/or support the exploitation of resources in 'friendly states'?<sup>2</sup> To what extent should individual states become dependent on others for supply of energy and other strategic resources? Finally, what is the place of locally embedded resource peripheries within a wider global system of capital, markets and power? The

reality is that the economic geography of resource production is far from straightforward and seldom just an economic matter.

There is a dearth of answers to these questions, and the many more that could be asked, because resource peripheries are treated not only as peripheral places, but peripheral to disciplinary theorizing (Barnes *et al.* 2001; Hayter 2000a). The debates in economic geography and elsewhere over industrial restructuring, flexible specialization, industrial districts and globalization, are structured by a discourse that is rooted in the experience

of industrial cores, old and new. An economic geography dominated by post-industrial, service-oriented economies has no interest in what is perceived as 'old fashioned' resource geography. In this discourse, to use Markusen's (1996) metaphor, agglomerations, cores or districts are conceived as 'sticky places' that are diverse, interesting and whose existence is at the explanatory heart of economic geography. They are also the comfortable places where most universities and academics are located. The other side of this metaphorical coin casts peripheries in the role of 'slippery spaces', unstable, ephemeral and, while potentially interesting illustrations of uneven development, scarcely relevant to a basic understanding of processes underlying spatial unevenness, and which ultimately are seen to reside in the core. Equally, most of these resource peripheries, by definition, are remote, elsewhere, foreign, uncomfortable, expensive to reach and sometimes dangerous.<sup>3</sup>

In this paper, we dispute the blinkered thinking that peripheralizes resource peripheries and, in particular, we challenge the globalization literature's pre-occupation with the experience of cores. Even on economic terms, the narrow concentration on cores is unwarranted. Three of the ten largest global corporations specialize in resource production (ExxonMobil [2], BP [4], and Royal Dutch/Shell [8]), collectively earning half a trillion US dollars in revenue ([www.fortune.com/G500/index](http://www.fortune.com/G500/index)). Furthermore, an UNCTAD (2002) analysis of the world's leading 100 largest economic entities, ranking both countries and trans-national corporations (TNCs), ranked ExxonMobil 45th with a 2000 turnover of US\$63 billion (first among all TNCs), Royal Dutch Shell 62nd with a 2000 turnover of US\$36 billion and BP 68th with a 2000 turnover of US\$30 billion. Or again, over the period 1990–2001, mining companies invested over US\$90 billion, often in resource peripheries (the global share of South America and Africa increased from under 40% to over 60%; Bridge forthcoming). Or yet again, 46 per cent of Canada's total exports in 2001 were either raw or processed natural resources. The point is that even on the same economic terms used to judge core economies, resources and resource peripheries are big business.

But there is also another reason for studying them. Studying resource peripheries can provide new insights into the global economy that cannot be derived from the experience of cores, and which then act as a catalyst for new forms of economic geography theorizing. It is also for this reason that the analysis of resource peripheries should be re-positioned and emphasized. For the global economy to function, the core must constantly

seek out new sources of the resources it consumes in ever increasing quantities, and increasingly those resources must come from peripheral regions (Bradshaw 2001a). A truly global economic geography cannot exclude the larger part of the world that comprises the periphery. Theorizing from the core, or using the experience of the core as a conceptual template, which is Markusen's strategy, is inadequate. As Harold Innis put it, 'we need fresh interpretations not the same interpretations' (quoted in Parker 1983, 148).

Methodologically, our paper subscribes to the new 'institutional' economic geography (Martin 1994 1999; Barnes 1999). Admittedly, the emergence of such geography has not brought immediate redress to 'the relative neglect of resource issues in contemporary economic geography' (Agnew 2002, 585). Yet, 'This more multi-dimensional, multiperspectivalism and multi-vocal approach' (Martin 1994) has particular potential for understanding resource peripheries where there is a high degree of conflict among competing value systems and 'voices'. Our argument also reflects the new economic geography's celebration of theoretical diversity and the need to integrate into a single account issues that hitherto have been separated such as the economic, the cultural, the political and the environmental (Thrift and Olds 1996; Lee and Wills 1997; Barnes 2001). This also means recognizing diversity among resource peripheries (Gibson 2000), and the sometimes-crushing asymmetrical relation between them and cores.

In particular, we argue that characterizing resource peripheries, and making them different from cores, is the intersection of four sets of institutional values or dimensions which we summarize in terms of *industrialism* (economic dimension), *environmentalism* (environmental dimension), *aboriginalism* (cultural dimension) and *imperialism* (geopolitical dimension). These four dimensions, each of which features internal variation and tension, constitute the principal modalities through which conflict occurs within resource peripheries. In some of them, such as in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, conflicts remain bounded by conventions of civility and the rule of law, although even in these places protests, civil disobedience and occasional gun shots are reminders of how much democratic practice is stretched. Elsewhere, in places such as Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Colombia, Indonesia and Russia, contestation in resource peripheries is less civil, and can be deadly (Renner 2002). Furthermore, the plight of these resource peripheries is a key platform for the anti-globalization protests in core places such as Seattle, Washington DC and Genoa.

The bulk of the paper highlights the contested nature of resource peripheries, and defines and elaborates the main institutional perspectives found there and which, following our argument, are rarely recognized in core economies and theories of globalization. We conclude by emphasizing the need to give greater priority in research to the analysis of resource peripheries. We do this not just for their own sake, but also as an essential component of a more 'global' approach to economic geography. This paper is far from the first to appeal for cores to listen to the voices of the peripheral regions (Brookfield 1975; Bradshaw 1990; Barnes *et al.* 2001; Potter 2001), and we appreciate an already vast literature on resource peripheries in a variety of contexts and from a variety of perspectives (see Auty 1993). Our argument is that economic geography as a discipline needs to pay greater attention to that literature so that it becomes less insulated and parochial; that is, that it becomes more geographical. There is a whole world out there and not just a few core regions or clusters. The contested nature of resource peripheries, if not central to economic geography theorizing, is an important theme in 'global' news. For some within the wider academic discipline (Cutter *et al.* 2002), issues related to resource production and consumption are among the 'big questions' in geography; they are also probably issues that the public perceive as centre-stage in geography's supposed concern for environment–society relationships.

### **Resource peripheries as contested places: an alternative view on the globalization debate**

Globalization continues to be a central theme in economic geography (Amin and Thrift 1994; Cox 1997). Despite impressive studies by economic geographers, globalization remains a problematical concept defying easy definition. Capital, conceived as extremely mobile, even hyper-mobile, is represented as hegemonic, and the power of labour as diminished (Drache and Gertler 1991).

For our purposes, the significant feature of the globalization literature is in remaining pre-occupied with the experience of cores or centres of economic activity. One might even argue that contemporary discussions of globalization were stimulated by, perhaps even originated in, the unexpected deindustrialization of the world's most powerful (industrial) cores. Thus, Bluestone and Harrison's (1982) and Fröbel *et al.*'s (1980) influential studies directly linked core deindustrialization with a new international division of labour.

Even though the causes of deindustrialization are now recognized to be more complex than implied by a simple mobility of capital thesis, the crises of the former world centres of industry effectively framed geographical thinking about the new, globalized economy. For example, elaboration of Scott's (1988) 'new industrial spaces' has sought an anatomy of new core regions, variously interpreted as expressions of flexible specialization, learning processes, trust, relation specific skills, untraded interdependencies and cooperation (Piore and Sabel 1984; Cooke and Morgan 1998; Storper 1997; Patchell 1993). But, it is also noteworthy that this process of deindustrialization was prompted, in part, by the geopolitical manipulation of energy supplies by peripheral states that interrupted supply and inflated the cost of energy production; that is, core industrial economies were resource intensive, and consequently highly sensitive to supply and price movements of staple goods.

The theoretical pre-occupation of economic geography, in representing and analysing globalization, is to focus on cores, presented most recently as 'sticky places'. Likewise, the response by economic geographers to the 'end of geography thesis' – the idea that boundaries and local policy have become virtually meaningless in age of hyper mobility of capital and information – has been also to privilege the role of core places as the key nodes in the network of the space of flows. Geography still matters, it is argued, because cores are needed to organize production, finance or other activities (Leyshon and Thrift 1996; Clark and O'Connor 1997). In this way, the literature comes dangerously close to conflating the rationale for economic geography with the existence of cores. While we are not criticizing the substance of this work, we want to emphasize that a fascinating geography lies beyond the cores in resource peripheries, which for too long have been neglected.

### **Resource peripheries and globalization**

The crux of our argument is that globalization has different meanings, implications and history for resource peripheries than for cores. With the geographical expansion of capitalism – globalization – from the sixteenth century, resource peripheries were typically created by European settlement and control. The process involved force, establishment of new forms of governance operating frequently from a distance, and the economic and political disenfranchisement of the indigenous. Such a process historically and geographically took various forms, ranging from what Baldwin

(1956) terms the 'immigrant entrepreneur' of European settler societies, to the colonial plantation system, to the operation of large foreign-based corporations. Booms, busts, dependence, exploitation and vulnerability are recurrent themes of resource peripheries (Auty 1993; Freudenberg 1992; Watkins 1963).

If globalization reflects the power of exogenous or non-local forces on local development, then resource peripheries are on its leading edge. It is especially chilling to recall in light of the events of September 11 2001, that in 1953 at the beginning of the Cold War the American and British governments, supported by oil companies, replaced the existing government of Saudi Arabia with a totalitarian monarchy, primarily because of fears of loss of oil supply. The Gulf War of 1991 shared similar motivations. Between these crises, in the 1960s and early 1970s, widespread economic nationalism among developing countries around the globe was rooted in concern over exploitation by MNCs of a wide range of resources, not just oil (see O'Dell 1963). There were similar concerns (and similar examples of resource-based nationalization) in western-based resource peripheries, such as the Canadian Prairies (Richards and Pratt 1979). Essentially, these fears were that resource exploitation directed by outside powers was not in the best local interest. Equally, those powerful outsiders did not want to find themselves overly dependent on potentially hostile states for the supply of strategically critical resources. In geopolitical terms at least, resource peripheries are some of the most contested parts of the world.

But our case for relocating resource regions within economic geography's research agenda does not rest solely on their historical importance within globalization. Rather, we argue resource peripheries are significant for understanding globalization as a contemporary stage in capitalist development. In particular, within globalized resource peripheries there is a clash of industrial, environmental, cultural and geopolitical dimensions not found in cores, and as a result not theorized in mainstream economic geography.

First, while resource peripheries experience industrialization, it frequently takes a different form than that found in the core. Moreover, it is a form that often creates instability, crisis and dependence. For example, during the post-war Fordist period, a version of Fordism was installed in the resource margins. Production was undertaken by MNCs controlling large, unionized factories producing large volumes of standardized output and seeking economies of scale (Hayter 2000c). But it was a bastardized form of Fordism characterized by much higher levels of exports and external control than

found in the Fordism of core manufacturing regions. Jane Jenson (1989), for example, uses the term 'permeable Fordism' to describe the Fordism of Canada's resource periphery because both its investment capital and its primary markets lay outside the country, primarily in the United States (Hayter and Barnes 2001). In addition, resource industries, but not secondary manufacturing, experience the effects of a resource cycle (Mather 1990; Clapp 1998). Because resource industries typically exploit initially the best, most accessible supplies, their costs inevitably rise over time, which results eventually in crisis and eventually abandonment.

Second, marking the resource peripheries and their industry are environmental concerns rarely discussed in the economic geographical literature on globalization. Particularly important in resource peripheries are environmental non-government organizations (ENGOS) that see themselves as spear-heading, and as watchdogs over, environmentalism. Moreover, in fighting the excesses of global capital and intransigent governments, ENGOS have become global actors capable of mounting and coordinating campaigns in the most remote places (O'Riordan 1976; Ekins 1992; Taylor 1996; Soyeze 2002). Indeed, with their activities based on the dissemination and manipulation of information, in efforts to shape public opinion, lobby governments and sway corporate decisionmaking, ENGOS are remarkably geographically mobile, maybe more so than even their major adversaries.

Global in scope, ENGO strategies have given particular priority to resource peripheries around the globe where they have mounted a variety of highly publicized campaigns and tactics that are primarily designed to reduce or stop fishing, logging, mining and oil drilling. As sites of resource exploitation, resource peripheries are legitimate targets. One recent strategy of contestation by ENGOS is to propose new names for areas within resource peripheries to reflect their conversion from economic to conservation values. For example, there is an ENGO proposal to replace existing resource industry license designations in British Columbia's central coast with the name of 'The Great Bear RainForest' (Hayter 2000b). Such 'remapping' is itself contested within resource peripheries, especially by groups who see their jobs threatened, and who see ENGOS as another external institution representing the values of distant, urban elites rather than local interests. But whether their influence is considered positive or negative, ENGOS cannot be ignored in resource peripheries. In the case of oil and gas projects offshore of Sakhalin Island in the Russian Far East, ENGOS have followed the oil majors and now protest their actions. They have

supported the creation of local ENGOs and have used their global reach to lobby the international funding agencies that are bankrolling the projects. This has resulted in a hostile reaction on the part of the local political elite of Sakhalin that sees the ENGOs jeopardizing their only hope for economic recovery (Wilson 2000).

Third, the economies of resource peripheries, to varying degrees, have become subject to the cultural concerns of Aboriginal Peoples (Anderson and Huber 1988; Nietschmann 1997; Posey 1999; Ribot 2000). Indeed, the voices of the surviving vestiges of Aboriginal Peoples, once so comprehensively ignored, have become increasingly loud, and indeed 'global'. Overwhelmingly, surviving Aboriginal Peoples are in remote resource regions, but regardless of their isolation, their ways of life have become threatened by various forms of resource-industry based exploitation. Aboriginalism in this context refers to a complex range of sometimes-contradictory requests by Aboriginal Peoples to maintain their way of life, maintain identity and self-control, and achieve economic development. However, aboriginal control over resource exploitation can also result in cultural renewal. For example, the Republic of Sakha, in the Russian Far East, has gained control over a portion of the rents from its diamond industry and has used the income to promote a rebirth of aboriginal culture; unfortunately this has been at the expense of other aboriginal minorities in the republic. Nonetheless, aboriginal peoples realize that they too can play the global card to gain greater leverage when it comes to the division of resource revenues. Again, the case of Sakhalin is instructive. A small, but vocal, indigenous population has realized that it can use sympathies to its cause in the home markets of the MNCs (Europe and the US) to gain a level of financial compensation that they could never obtain in Moscow. Consumer concerns about the environment and 'human rights' soon translates into real bargaining power; witness Shell's problems in Nigeria.

Until the 1970s, it was widely assumed that aboriginal ways of life would inevitably succumb to industrialization, that aboriginals would simply disappear (Moore 1963). To the contrary, in recent decades the fight for aboriginal rights has become more forceful, frequently involving resistance to plans for industrial development (Posey 1999). Moreover, aboriginal opposition to resource development has increasingly been taken to world forums, in part relying on ENGO networks but also networks created solely by Aboriginal Peoples, and sometimes in conflict with ENGOs (Nietschmann 1997).

Cultural issues facing resource development have therefore become remarkably complex. In some white

settler colonies, debates over aboriginal rights have become framed within a wider discourse of post-colonialism. However, as yet that term is not used within Eurasia, for example with respect to Russian expansion in Siberia, Scandinavian expansion into Lapland or Japanese expansion into Hokkaido, but in all these regions aboriginal concerns are evident. Perhaps the most intractable problems, however, exist in the most isolated resource peripheries of poor countries where farming and industry, providing jobs for poor people, is extending into territories once the sole purvey of self-subsistent tribal cultures. Here the clash is harsh and often without sympathy. Recent cases in point, ironically both stimulated by China's 1998 ban on logging following disastrous flooding, is the rapid escalation of logging in Cambodia and Burma that is undermining the livelihoods of local villagers and destroying ecological values. In these cases, the jobs created are given to outsiders because of local opposition to logging – some villagers even have been murdered (see Fullbrook 2001).

Finally, the geopolitical situation of resource peripheries has changed considerably in the past decades, especially since the end of the Cold War (Agnew and Corbridge 1995; Taylor and Flint 2000). From colonialism through to the Cold War (and Fordism) to the post-Cold War period, patterns of resource exploitation have been closely connected to imperial and geopolitical ambitions. During the Cold War, and concurrent Fordist expansion, the global resource periphery boom was extended and enjoyed relative stability, even if recessions and political upheaval remained apparent. However, with the end of the Fordist growth, and especially since the end of the Cold War, a remarkable number of resource peripheries have experienced increased political volatility. In many parts of Africa, and in some parts of Latin America and Asia, resource extraction – logs, oil, diamonds, coltan (or colombo-tantalite, a mineral mined in the Congo and use as a hardening agent in various high tech applications) and poppies, for example – is associated with extremely violent behaviour, and even war. Contestation among competing groups is all too evident. The break-up of the Soviet Empire has led to systemic instability and a dash to gain control of the region's resource riches. In Russia, competing industrial groups – the so-called oligarchs – have sought to carve up the countries' resource industries among themselves. For example, the consolidation of control of Siberia's aluminium industry has resulted in many violent deaths and a great deal of crime and corruption. So much so that it is the stuff of pulp fiction (Campbell 1998) and James Bond movies. The oil industry has also been carved up in a similar fashion, although the gas industry

remains a form of quasi-state monopoly. Many hapless foreign investors have found themselves, quite literally, caught in the crossfire. Echoing a previous age of imperialism, conflict over the energy resources of Central Asia and the Tran Caucasus is described in terms of a new 'great game' (see Table 1).

Even in the 'West', economic conflicts have emerged, especially around trade. Across Canada, for example, the signing of a free trade agreement has led to sustained protectionist attacks against the country's exports by US lumber interests. During the Cold War, prior to the free trade agreements, Canadian lumber exports to the US were duty free. Indeed, resource-based trade conflicts between Canada and the US appear to have increased over the last 20 years, again pointing to changes in the forces driving geopolitics that pertain to resource development.

### The contested resource periphery hypothesis

For resource peripheries around the globe, environmental, cultural and geopolitical factors are intersecting with industrial dynamics in unique ways. Each resource periphery is different. The main point of our paper, however, is to argue that resource peripheries are collectively distinctive from cores. Specifically, our contention is that resource peripheries have become deeply 'contested spaces'. Moreover, this contestation needs to be understood in terms of global–local dynamics that are not experienced or understood in cores and not simply the result of the manipulations of global actors upon powerless locals.

Unfortunately, in the theoretical horizons of economic geographers, resource peripheries are a *terra incognita*. Yet, resource sectors are critical to many peripheral regions and developing countries around the world and are key components of global processes of uneven development (Auty 1995). A truly 'global' economic geography cannot afford to ignore resource peripheries. As recent events have highlighted, the inhabitants of global cities rely on the resource economies of the world to (literally) fuel their own economies and lifestyles. Further, as our paper has emphasized, resource peripheries are unique. Processes occur there that are not found in the core. But this doesn't mean that they should be ignored, or deemed unimportant.

If economic geography is to understand the globe as a mosaic of regions (Scott and Storper 1986) or as regional worlds of production (Storper 1997), much greater effort needs to be made to understand the processes shaping the 'local models' (Barnes 1996, 206–28)

of resource peripheries. Our plea is for just such an effort. Indeed, one might make the argument that by studying the confluence of contending voices and interests found in resource peripheries enriches economic geography as a discipline, and also provides another perspective on what happens within the core itself. On resource peripheries, the restructuring of embedded economic geographies reveals remarkably complex and fragmented global–local dynamics in ways not found in cores. A comprehensive interpretation of globalization needs to incorporate their experiences.

### Notes

- 1 The authors are particularly familiar with the conflicts occurring in the resource peripheries of British Columbia (BC) in Western Canada (Barnes and Hayter 1997; Hayter 2000b) and in Siberia and the Russian Far East (Bradshaw 1998 2001b; Bradshaw and Lynn 1998). In the case of BC, media reports have referred to conflicts over forest policy as 'the war in the woods' for over 20 years. But resource 'wars', literal as well as figurative, are widespread; for example, the problems created by new export-oriented logging in the tropical and sub-tropical peripheries within the developing countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia. This 'list' can be readily expanded to include other resource sectors and peripheries across the globe.
- 2 For example, the Bush Administration is considering supporting energy exploration in Russia to provide a counter to Middle East energy supplies.
- 3 For a discussion of similar concerns in the context of development geography, see Potter (2001). In this regard, we appreciate Smith's (2002, 210) criticisms of 'categorical discourses'. However, our discussion is not meant to reify core–periphery distinctions but to help highlight economic geography's theoretical pre-occupations with the former.

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