

VS: Civilization is Always Re-Arriving

“Civilization” arrived in Europe too—even though that’s supposedly the origin of all civilization. Really “civilizing” meant taking over land, destroying communal life, turning self-sufficient people into wage-dependent, subservient workers. This occurred simultaneously with the colonization of the New World, and it especially involved the suppression of women, and ultimately, across time, their subjugation as inferior to men, but economically subservient to them, and locked within homes doing labor that is socially devalued as “not real work.”

Federici, as you should recall, views the whole period from say 1500-1800 as a process of “**proletarianization**” and the “**primitive accumulation**” of land, wealth, and labor.

Capitalism/the spread of colonization... systematically involves the **PRODUCTION OF SCARCITY**

While its ideology boasts of its superior productivity, it actually means **increased starvation for all the working class**, especially because so much production is done for the international market, and capitalism incentivizes hoarding. In the 1600s in particular there is intense resistance especially on the part of women.

STATES also grow more and more powerful and violent through this period.

Armies grow 10x in size

They go from temporary and unprofessional to permanent and professional

Wealthy CAPITALISTS INVEST IN WAR

Large scale use of foreign mercenaries with no connection to people in their localities.

WAR CHANGES THE LANDSCAPE... later in the book Federici shows how war opens land to privatization. This is one of many (capitalist) factors driving war in the global south today.

It all starts with PRIVATIZATION OF LAND (typically by force)... But it really means the DESTRUCTION OF COMMUNITY, DEMOCRACY, SOLIDARITY

Europe: 1480→

- Evictions of tenants
- Rent increases
- Increased state taxes→ debt and sale of land...
- Then the ENCLOSURES (1500s – 1800, repeatedly): pushing people off common land—loss of access to meadows, ponds, woods, open spaces... mutual ability for subsistence, cooperation of workers, collective decision making

Removal of the COMMONS = removal of the MATERIAL FOUNDATION OF SOLIDARITY AND SOCIALITY... especially for women

*(**Perhaps this is what is needed again? A material foundation for solidarity and sociality. That is: COMMON SPACE / COMMON LAND.)*

Once people are robbed of common land, and the practices of joint work and joint decision-making are made impossible, competition between them emerges
The social-ethical fabric is attacked and destroyed.

1500s-1600s Europe... families disintegrate

Guilds are broken, as is artisanal independence

... WORKERS BECOME DEPENDENT

Then their pay is cut

Their days are lengthened

They have to work 2x as many days... as Saints' days are removed

Production (of products for market → of capital) now becomes "men's work"

BECAUSE to have wage labor work, you have to have somebody at home to

REPRODUCE that labor, as well as the labor force across time.

Now REPRODUCTION (of the worker, of children)... is "women's work."

So check out this interesting opposition. It looks a lot like the "Society vs. State"-
Primitive Society vs. "Society for the State"- "Civilization" opposition we saw before,
and the opposition of anti-colonial-indigenous vs. "Western" values from earlier:

PEASANT EUROPE 1500-1700... But also pockets of "subsistence" economy TODAY... in Africa, Asia, Latin America... <i>still being</i> homogenized, privatized, displaced, migrantized... oh, and raped, and subjected to Witch Trials	CAPITALISM IMPOSED... LAND PRIVATIZED... PEOPLE TRANSFORMED INTO WAGE LABORERS/HOUSEWIVES... and new STATE forms of organization
"Open-Field" system: all community families have strips in multiple places, beside the strips of other families. Planting and harvesting decisions made as a group. Work done as a group. Protection from crop failure, manageable work schedules, regular enrichment of soil. Plenty of food for local people on a local basis.	"Modernized" agriculture: larger scale mono-cropping. Production for market and export. Eventually, specialization of whole countries to fit into global market. Consequent shortages of food.
COMMONS available to all, with resources both for living and for being social: meadows, ponds, woods, open spaces	TOTAL REMOVAL OF COMMONS. All spaces now privatized; all resources now out of reach without money.
Communal/Assembly self-government. DEMOCRACY	Government from above/without
Web of cooperative relations	DESTRUCTION OF ethical-social web.
Production and Reproduction unified (taking care of the house, and producing food, etc., is done by all, and all work, relatively, is valued equally.)	Production and Reproduction separated, with "productive" work for a wage rewarded by money, but "reproductive" work unwaged. Consequent economic dependence and social servitude of

	women on/to men.
Half of the days of the year are "Saints Days"... No work. Relatively short days of work. Community parties in the commons.	Twice as many days of work. Longer days of work. No more place for the community to party... and with shortages, family break-ups, competition and antagonism... eventually little in the way of community too.
But this is called	And this is called
"Subsistence" living... and is supposed to suck. A lot of food, a lot of leisure, a lot of friends, and self-determination... but it's supposed to suck.	"Civilization," and is supposed to be awesome. Hunger, poverty, overwork, systematic subservience... but we're supposed to call it great.
What it really sucks at is	What it's really great for is
Making money for a few off the imprisonment of the many.	Capital accumulation.