

## Sept 30 class notes, Comp Politics, Marx and Sassen on Race, the State, and Globalization

**Anthony W. Marx, “Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of the United States, South Africa, and Brazil”** (i.e., “why was Brazil the dog that didn’t bark?”)

- What is Marx’s core point in this article? Why do you think I assigned this piece?
- Marx states that “imposed exclusion inadvertently may serve as a unifying issue, mobilizing the excluded group.” (54) Can you think of any other examples of this?
- What does Marx mean when he says that institutionalized racial domination hurts the excluded group in the short run but “in the longer run, institutionalized exclusion may further consolidate subordinate identity and encourage self-interested mobilization and protest.” (54)
  - In a similar vein, “the preferable absence of such exclusion also may deprive informally subordinated peoples of an unavoidable demarcation unifying them as a group.” (54)
- Marx is using the US, South Africa, and Brazil both because they have a “common history of racial dynamics” but “their differences make comparison fruitful”. (55) This is the classic comparativist “most different case” model.
- What’s the point of this study? Why is it worthwhile? In part, to remind us that “legal racial domination was not inevitable.” (55)
- What is a key event that happened both in the US and SA that didn’t happen in Brazil? A nasty civil war.
  - What argument does Marx make about postwar developments that he says explains much of the differences in race between US/SA and Brazil? (p. 56)
- How was Brazil different? Marx points to at least three distinct developments that differ from those in the US (p. 57)

**Saskia Sassen, “The State and Globalization”** (core phrase which needs a lot of unpacking: “globalization is partly endogenous to the national” (93-94)

- This article may be confusing for multiple reasons beyond its jargon: it is responding to a series of articles arguing that corporations and other ‘nonstate actors’ are weakening the power of central governments (‘states’) around the world
- Why are so many scholars arguing that the internationalization of financial and other legal systems is undermining national sovereignty? And how is Sassen’s take on the issue slightly different?
- The core of Sassen’s argument is that “the state can be seen as incorporating the global project of its own shrinking role in regulating economic transactions and giving it operational effectiveness and legitimacy.” (90) What on earth does this mean?
- What is Sassen talking about when she references various “highly specialized types of [international legal] convergences?