

## ***Incorporation as an Interactive Process: Cherokee Resistance to Expansion of the Capitalist World-System, 1560–1763\****

---

**Wilma A. Dunaway, *Colorado State University***

Like capitalism itself, incorporation is a dialectical historical process that involves both social structure and human agency. On the one hand, transformations are determined by hegemonic forces in the capitalist world-system itself. Incorporation is the long-range civilizational project of capitalist colonizers. This historical process is best understood not as a cultural conflict between indigenes and European invaders, but as an economic conflict between precapitalist or communal modes of production and capitalist modes. Driven by the cultural logic of historical capitalism, the intruders mythologize their economic domination as a lofty mission to implant civilization on savages. On the other hand, indigenous people are not passive recipients of Western civilization. In sharp contrast to the imperialistic goals of the interlopers, the indigenous group seeks to safeguard its established way of life. The devastating effects of change are ameliorated because the impacted people act, react, and resist. As a result, the dominated disrupt the agenda of the colonizers and create a historical window by which they prevent their cultural annihilation.

Incorporation is the historical process by which noncapitalist zones are absorbed into the capitalist world-system. The inhabitants of territories that have been outside are brought into the system through colonization, conquest, or economic and political domination (Hopkins and Wallerstein 1986). Quite often, incorporation unfolds on frontiers, those land areas where global capitalism is pushed into external arenas, causing alien civilizations to collide.

Usually, one of the societies is indigenous to the region, or at least has occupied it for many generations; the other is intrusive. The frontier 'opens' in a given zone when the first representatives of the intrusive society arrive; it 'closes' when a single political authority has established hegemony over the zone. (Lamar and Thompson 1981, p. 7)

Yet incorporation is "not a monologue, but a dialogue" between these competitors; it is "a story of contestation, of mediation and negotiation" (Gutierrez 1991, p. xvii) between cultures and between economic and political antagonists (Hopkins and Wallerstein 1986). In short, it is an interactive process between natives and colonizers. Indigenous people "are not passive receptacles of Western political, economic, and cultural domination" (Taylor and Pease 1994, p. 217).

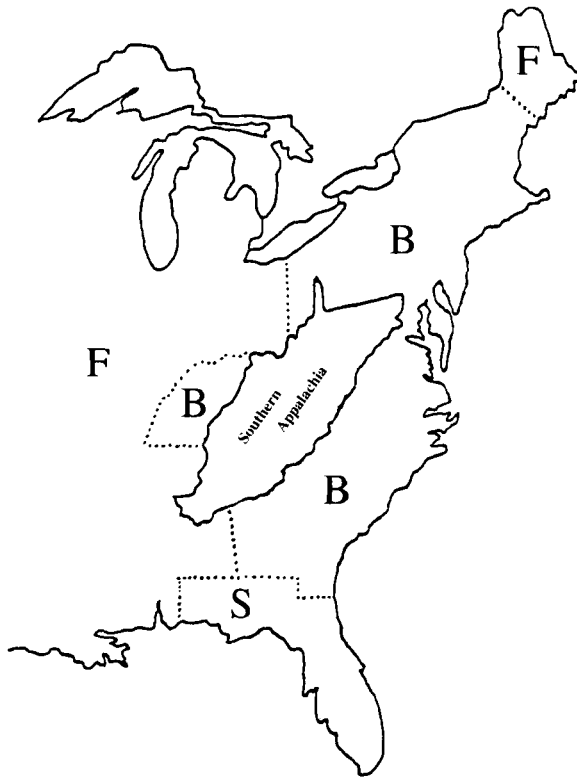
However, the balance of power between the struggling groups is uneven—usually tilted in favor of the invading forces.

Because of their technological edge and their reliance on unfamiliar weapons like horses and guns, Europeans have prevailed when they have invaded frontiers occupied by non-Western peoples (Taylor and Pease 1994). Europeans have also succeeded at thrusting social change upon indigenous populations after the transmission of epidemics and alcohol addiction to the frontiers of capitalist expansion (Dobyns 1983). Colonizers have used four mechanisms to bring indigenous people under their control. For those groups they do not annihilate, they pose three options: assimilate into the intruding culture; amalgamate and commingle traditions to create compromised traits; or accommodate to external demands in order to coexist separately from the colonizer (Nagel and Snipp 1993).

Clearly, these frontier rivals are playing out very different historical agendas. Incorporation is the long-range “civilizational project” (Wallerstein 1983) of capitalist colonizers. This historical process unfolds over several generations, requiring fifty years or longer (Hopkins and Wallerstein 1986); and it is best understood not as a cultural conflict between indigenes and European invaders, but as an economic conflict between precapitalist or communal modes of production and capitalist modes.<sup>1</sup> Driven by the cultural logic of historical capitalism (Wallerstein 1983), the intruders mythologize their economic domination as a lofty mission to implant “civilization” on “backward barbarians” (Abdel-Malek 1981).<sup>2</sup> In sharp contrast to the imperialistic goals of the interlopers, the indigenous group seeks to safeguard its established way of life (Champagne 1989; Taylor and Pease 1994). Consequently, incorporation, like capitalism itself, is a dialectical historical process that involves both social structure and human agency (Marx 1852).<sup>3</sup> On the one hand, transformations are determined by hegemonic forces in the capitalist world-system itself (Hopkins and Wallerstein 1986). Incorporation into the world-system “is largely beyond the will and control of the members of indigenous societies” (Champagne 1989, p. 7). On the other hand, change is deterred and its devastating effects are ameliorated because the people affected act, react, and resist (Merrell 1989; Gutierrez 1991). As a result, the dominated confound and disrupt the agenda of the colonizers (Fanon 1965). The outcome is dialectical.

Culture has always been a weapon of the powerful. . . . But culture has always cut both ways. If the powerful can legitimate their expropriations by transposing them into “customs,” the weak can appeal to the legitimacy of these same “customs” to resist new and different expropriations. This is an unequal battle to be sure, but not one that has had no effect. (Wallerstein 1991, p. 193)

By redirecting the theoretic lens from the vantage point of the indigenous population, we see that incorporation cannot be unilaterally imposed by the core. Instead it is shaped by adversaries on peripheral frontiers. Despite the dominating



**Nation holding colonies, pre-empted territory, or Indian alliances:**

**B = British    F = French    S = Spanish**

*Fig. 1.* International rivalry on the first North American frontier, early 1700s.

presence of the colonizers, the indigenous people oppose capitalist transformations (Champagne 1989; Dunaway 1996), participate in the construction of blended forms (Kardulias 1990; Ray 1993), and formulate strategies for survival (Merrell 1989; Champagne 1992; Taylor and Pease 1994). As a response to externally imposed change, Native American groups have persisted through “ethnic reorganization” of their cultural traditions, economies, political structures, and community boundaries. While revision and blending does occur, the indigenous populations have resisted domination through warfare, political mobilization, and cultural revitalization of traditional practices (Nagel and Snipp 1993).

Using as the focal point the first western frontier to open after the Revolutionary War (see Figure 1), I shall illustrate the utility of a conceptual vantage point that opens up a “ground-level” view of the structural change that occurs

when indigenous people are incorporated into the capitalist world-system. The incorporation process is traced, beginning with early exploration and culminating with the era of the French and Indian War, when the British achieved hegemonic control over eastern North America. First, I will describe the stages by which the Europeans penetrated the isolated southern Appalachian Mountains, transforming this external arena into a peripheral fringe of the capitalist world-system. Second, I will examine the processes by which the Europeans attempted to dominate the indigenous people. Third, I will analyze Native American resistance to capitalist restructuring of their civilization, indigenous counteractions to safeguard their endangered culture, and the interactive compromises that resulted from their opposition to European hegemony.

### **Early Stages of Incorporation**

Incorporation should be thought of as a continuum that begins with initial contact between an invading capitalist colonizer and the indigenous society and culminates with the complete articulation of the frontier with the capitalist world-system (Hall 1987, 1989). Significant social change occurs long before the beginning of "nominal" or "effective" incorporation (Arrighi 1979). However, those earlier stages of exploration and preemptive colonization (Osgood 1904) are prerequisites to the transition to capitalism (Hall 1987). The core can stimulate significant cultural and environmental change long before an external arena is economically or politically dominated. In the case of Southern Appalachia, two major reorganizations of this historic environment set the stage for subsequent incorporation. First, the existing precapitalist world-economy degenerated into disparate, inimical groupings that no longer acted in concert (O'Brien 1992). Second, the indigenous societies were weakened by political decentralization and internal cultural diversity.

Dramatic social change occurred in the inland Appalachian Mountains long before the Europeans had settled the Atlantic seaboard. During this period, the North American Southeast was the periphery of the Mesoamerican world-system (O'Brien 1992), where the Spanish had already discovered vast mineral wealth (Hall 1989). By the mid-1500s, the Spanish were attempting to solidify their control over land holdings that stretched from Central America to the North American Southeast (Weber 1992). In the hope of opening a borderland trail that would connect Mexico to the Florida coast, the Spanish conducted three sixteenth-century forays into the southeastern interior of North America. Their expedition journals catalogued frequent use of gold and silver by the Appalachian Indians (Dunaway 1996, p. 23).

Even though the seventeenth century brought only sporadic contact between Southern Appalachia and the Europeans, there was a steady flow of foreign goods into the isolated mountains through the aboriginal trade networks from coastal

areas. Until after the 1670 founding of South Carolina, however, Southern Appalachia remained an external arena of the world-system; and there were no permanent European trade linkages with the Cherokees (Dickens 1976). Nevertheless, earlier explorations set in motion a series of historical transformations that dramatically altered the indigenous Appalachian culture and ecology long before effective incorporation (Arrighi 1979) had occurred. Prior to European contact, Southern Appalachia was inhabited by several strong chiefdoms organized around leaders with ultimate religious and political power. With far-reaching trade and political mechanisms, this area during the Middle Mississippian period was the periphery of a precapitalist world-system that was powerful enough to resist external domination (Peregrine 1991). Within a forty-year period after Spanish infiltration, these chiefly organizations began to erode. In the face of European-transmitted epidemics, the powerful precapitalist world-economy degenerated into five disparate, inimical groupings that no longer shared common cultural or political structures (O'Brien 1992).

Essentially, these transformations occurred while Southern Appalachia was still an external arena of the capitalist world-system. However, that restructuring was triggered by the intrusion of capitalist nations that mapped this area for development a century before beginning to exploit its resources. That era of preemptive colonization (Osgood 1904) facilitated the next stage of effective incorporation (Arrighi 1979) that would begin after the founding of permanent British settlements along the Atlantic coast. During the eighteenth century, England, France, and Spain rivaled for the position of hegemonic world power (Wallerstein 1980, p. 241). As part of that international rivalry, all three nations established settlements along the eastern seaboard of the North American continent (see Figure 1). The colonizations of Virginia, Carolina, Florida, and Georgia and the subsequent incorporation of their mountainous hinterlands ensued as part of the creation of this large new peripheral region (Dunaway 1994).

Each of the colonizers sought to take hold of the Southern Appalachians, out of fear that one of the other powers would capture those crucial mountains; for this vast region formed a geographical barrier between the Atlantic coast and the rich inland valleys of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. All three colonizing powers knew that whoever was master of the Appalachians might hold the key to further advancement into the continent, for the Cherokees occupied sixty towns of 22 thousand people and claimed much of the land area of the North American Southeast. Indeed, Cherokee country was "the key" to the continued existence of four of the British colonies.<sup>4</sup> The Southern Appalachians were important to the colonizers for two reasons. First, their geographical location situated the Cherokees at a focal point for movement of French-allied Indians to the north and of Spanish-allied Indians to the south. Second, Cherokee towns provided strategic frontier defense for the coastal settlements of the British (Dunaway 1994).

### The Construction of Economic and Political Dependence

Incorporation into the capitalist world-economy bore a high cost. The Cherokee economy was transformed into a putting-out system that generated dependency upon European trade goods and stimulated debt peonage. Within a few decades, Cherokee village activities were restructured from subsistence production into an export economy in which hunting for slaves and deerskins and gathering marketable herbs assumed primacy. Beginning in the late seventeenth century, slave raiders, fur traders, and land speculators carried capitalism into the inland southeastern mountains. In the early 1700s, Charleston merchants exported as many as 121,355 skins annually; and that number rose steadily to 255,000 skins by 1730 (Dunaway 1994).

The cultural collision between the Cherokees and the Europeans stimulated serious repercussions for the communal-subsistence economy. The average trading company received 500 percent to 600 percent profit on the goods advanced in exchange for skins (Dunaway 1994), yet the Cherokees became "perennial debtors to the traders who staked them in their winter hunts" in order to meet "the faraway demands of European society" (Corkran 1962, p. 6). In 1711, the Cherokees owed British debts amounting to 100,000 deerskins (Dunaway 1994). As commercial hunting expanded, the Cherokees became less self-sufficient in agriculture. By the early 1700s, the British were supplying corn, pork, and beef to Cherokee settlements that once produced their own subsistence (Dunaway 1996, p. 38).

Several techniques were utilized by the traders to keep the Cherokees in debt peonage. The unpaid debts of any single member of the town became the obligation of the entire settlement. Because Cherokee consumption of manufactured goods was relatively inelastic, British traders identified a commodity that would be in more constant demand. Introduced to the Cherokees by 1700, rum spurred the abandonment of subsistence production in favor of expanded deerskin exporting (Dunaway 1996, pp. 36–37).

By the mid-1700s, the British boasted that trade goods had supplanted Cherokee reliance on indigenous crafts. Only twenty-five years after external trade had begun, elders taught a new generation of young Cherokees to utilize imported tools, making them unable to live independently of the Europeans. Commercial hunting, population declines, and frequent warfare lowered production in those indigenous activities that were essential to the autonomous survival of the villages. Local craftsmen further weakened Cherokee self-reliance by reorienting their manufacturing toward items that could be traded to other Indians for deerskins to be exported. Moreover, such trade-induced acculturation provided the leverage needed by the British to manipulate the Cherokees into land cessions and war alliances (Dunaway 1996, pp. 38–39). The greater their export of deerskins, the

more deepened was Cherokee dependency upon external trade. Once the Europeans generated indigenous demand for imported merchandise, native industries were abandoned. The introduction of every new import left indelible prints on the communal culture, and a moratorium on trade was the favored strategy of the British for breaking local resistance (Eliades 1981).<sup>5</sup> By 1765, European commodities were necessities of survival for Cherokee villages, where so much social change had occurred that young warriors no longer were knowledgeable about traditional tools or weapons (Dunaway 1996, pp. 39–40).

The expansion of capitalism is accompanied not only by economic reorganization but also by the reformulation of the local political structure. Before an area can be incorporated into the network of world production processes, the first major stumbling block that must be overcome is political resistance. In order to be fully integrated into the world-system, a new zone must develop rationalized and centralized structures of governance characterized by three features. First, the new local-state assumes “jurisdictional responsibility within the interstate system for a defined geopolitical area.” Second, this new local government must be strong enough to overcome any internal resistance to the flows of people and commodities from outside its border. Finally, this local-state must remain weak enough in relation to other jurisdictions to be incapable of blocking cross-national flows (Hopkins and Wallerstein 1986).

Consequently, the British consistently pressured the loosely knit Cherokee towns toward secularization and centralization of their nonstate political traditions and structures (Champagne 1992, pp. 56–58). By 1725, the British colonies behaved politically as though there were four Cherokee leaders in control of all the scattered, independent settlements. The British also pressured the Cherokees toward centralization by establishing regional storehouses that were to be utilized by several towns, thereby displacing the traditional food caches in each village. Moreover, it became advantageous for the Cherokees to relocate their towns closer together in order to come to the aid of the British more rapidly in times of war (Dunaway 1996, pp. 30–31).

Global trade necessitated a political structure that permitted the Europeans to manipulate the Cherokees as a single corporate entity. It was more rational and more efficient to collect trade debts, make treaties, arrange war alliances, and seek reparations from one leader. Thus, the British sought to deal with one elite who would make agreements that were promised to be binding upon all the separate villages. The British sought to hold the entire community responsible for the actions of each member, and to keep the disparate villages accountable as a group for the violations of any one town or clan. Ultimately, the British coerced the Cherokees to “elect” a puppet government. In 1730, the colonial authorities orchestrated a structural reorganization of the Cherokees under a single hand-picked ruler—a change that permitted the British to co-opt key town elites more easily.

Subsequently, the loose confederacy operated under nationalistic policies that established universally applied sanctions against violators (Champagne 1992, p. 58). In the treaty that followed, the Cherokees acknowledged their subjection to the King of England, agreed to keep the trading paths peaceful, and relinquished legal authority to the British in cases of murder. Even though they surrendered key aspects of their political autonomy and their village cultures, the Cherokees remained loyal to this treaty for more than thirty years (Dunaway 1996, p. 31).

### **Cultural Accommodation to Capitalist Incorporation**

The historical development of merchant capitalism among the Cherokees involved a societal thrust toward "the commodification of everything" (Wallerstein 1983). By the early 1700s, the Cherokees had taken on the European style of fighting, with emphasis upon fortified settlements, guns, territorial expansion, mass annihilation, and selling of prisoners into slavery. Small war parties and sudden raids gave way to political alliances with the British and the permanent restructuring of village governance around its warriors. Communal hunting during one season was expanded into year-round production of deerskins for export, thereby disrupting the seasonal rhythm of traditional economic activities and of village spiritual customs. Beginning with the 1730 treaty, the Cherokees relinquished traditional clan revenge customs to permit the British to punish both Cherokees and whites for crimes in their villages. Before European contact, the Cherokees designated a "town of refuge," where any violator could seek sanctuary. To avoid colonial reprisals, the Cherokees abandoned even this sacred tradition (Dunaway 1996, pp. 28–40).

Prior to the development of a profitable market for war captives, slaves remained only a by-product of conflicts waged primarily for vengeance. Cherokee clans frequently adopted prisoners of war to replace kinsmen who had died, or captives could be ransomed by the enemies. Once the traders began exchanging goods for war captives, the market value of the captured slaves intensified the frequency and extent of indigenous warfare. Just as far-reaching in impact was the cultural redefinition of trade. Prior to European linkages, the Cherokees engaged only in localized redistribution and long-distance exchange of rare products. Southeastern Indians were interconnected through itinerant traders who transported goods throughout the region. Because these Indian traders never engaged in warfare, they could move freely to transact exchanges (Eliades 1981). With its emphasis on exchanges of presents and little reliance on pricing, the precontact trading process was of a communal nature (Dunaway 1996, pp. 40–41).

After European linkages, trading developed as an individualized exchange relationship rather than the communal activity it had once been (Eliades 1981). The development of trade relations with the Europeans restructured hunting from



a part-time subsistence function into an endeavor for profit that became the central focus of most villages. Like hunting, agricultural production was also commodified. By 1750, Cherokee agriculture had been modified to reflect European patterns: larger parcels, intensive cultivation, abandonment of communal farming, and the production of surplus livestock in the forests (Dunaway 1996, p. 41).

Practically every aspect of Cherokee life was impacted by European trade. Beads for the sacred wampum belts, native tobacco, and the ceremonial "black drink" were displaced by European imports. Once given presents as tokens of respect, conjurers, myth tellers, and musicians were now paid for their services, in the European fashion. In violation of ancient taboos, the dead were left unburied during epidemics. Increasingly, the Cherokees substituted European commodities for the traditional items left with the body after death. Even traditional dress gave way to European fads (Dunaway 1996, pp. 41–42).

For the Cherokees, trade was transformed from a friendly relationship among equals into a racist exchange. By distorting indigenous spiritual notions, the British acculturated the Cherokee elites to idealize European material productivity as a sign that the capitalists were more "favored" by the Great Spirit. British paternalism cast the Cherokees into the role of "children of the King," who were reminded, during treaty negotiations, of the grim conditions of their precontact civilization.<sup>6</sup> There were two main motives behind this push toward cultural hegemony: economic efficiency and political security for the Europeans. By dealing only with selected comprador leaders, the British hoped to prevent dissidence and to manipulate indigenous politics (Dunaway 1996, pp. 43–44).

### **Capitalist Incorporation and Environmental Competition**

The environment constitutes another conceptual layer that we must peel back if we are to understand the long historical process through which an external arena is incorporated. Disruption of traditional ecological relationships hastens indigenous economic vulnerability and compounds cultural instability. Articulation with the European world-economy stimulated slavery, warfare, famines, and alcoholism, causing depopulation of the Cherokees. During the 1700s, a total of ninety-three epidemics spread among the southeastern Indians from the coastal European settlements; and a devastating disease was transmitted to the Indian towns about every four years. Because of their lack of natural immunity to new infections and due to increased warfare, the Cherokees experienced an eighteenth-century life expectancy of only twenty-one years. In fact, the Cherokee population declined by ninety percent during this period (Thornton 1990).

Significantly, there could be no expansion of the capitalist world-system without rivalry over environment. Land and territory are the basic impetus for exploitation of the peripheral zones, for it is the capture of their raw materials that propels the growth of core manufacturing. Thus, economic restructuring

around commercial hunting endangered or wasted the pool of natural resources upon which the Cherokees relied. Reckless slaughtering extinguished this frontier's buffalo and elk in the early 1700s and endangered the deer population by the mid-1750s. Moreover, many Appalachian forests were burned annually to attract deer herds to fresh meadows and to support commercial agriculture. In similar fashion, the region's ginseng was depleted for trading on the world-market (Dunaway 1996, p. 46).

Articulation with the capitalist world-system also generated radical changes in Cherokee settlement patterns. Prior to European contact, Southern Appalachia's residents were sedentary urban dwellers concentrated in palisaded villages. As their dependency on European trade magnified, the Cherokees became more nomadic in order to follow the game, to escape diseases, to deter attacks by other tribes, and to move their settlements closer to British traders and forts. As the direct result of depopulation and land losses, Cherokee settlements diminished from sixty towns in 1715 to thirty-nine in 1755 (Thornton 1990). Nucleated villages along rivers were replaced by loosely grouped houses arranged in linear patterns in the foothills. As the Cherokee populations became more dispersed in their land usage, their communities diminished in size and complexity, further weakening their institutions and clan networks (Dunaway 1996, p. 47).

Nevertheless, the most dooming articulation between Cherokee environment and European world-system was the commodification of land that accompanied capitalistic expansion. Within little more than fifty years, the British extinguished Cherokee title to 43,872,000 acres of their ancestral lands through four tactics. Colonists squatted and speculated illegally behind the official treaty lines, and the British repeatedly pressured the Cherokees to narrow their territorial boundaries. The British threatened the Cherokees with the cessation of trade if land were not relinquished for the establishment of forts, stores, or white settlers, and they confiscated Cherokee lands in payment of trade debts. As a result of repeated settler intrusions, the boundary lines were renegotiated five times, culminating in the cession of 34,138,240 acres of Cherokee land to the British (Royce 1884). At the rate of one matchcoat per hundred acres, the Cherokees lost 2,528,640 acres for trading debts between 1765 and 1777. By the Revolutionary War, the Cherokees had lost more than half of their ancestral lands (Royce 1884).

### **Indigenous Resistance to Cultural Hegemony**

Despite the imperialism of the Europeans, the Cherokees were not quiescent toward the invading culture. Because of their central location and because of their strategic importance to the Europeans, the Cherokees were able to maintain a degree of control over trade and diplomacy. Indeed the indigenous Appalachians benefited from two layers of rivalry that occurred between the invading capitalists. On the one hand, the political vulnerability of the British permitted the Cherokees

to play between the three European nations in order to trade extensively, and, if forced out of this state of neutrality, to side with the strongest. On the other hand, the Cherokee towns maintained autonomy by capitalizing upon the internal competition between the colonial proprietorships of South Carolina, Virginia, and Georgia to secure their demands (Corkran 1962).<sup>7</sup>

Accessibility to European goods was “the first essential interest of [Cherokee] politicks” and “the only real and permanent motive of their attachment” to any of the three European powers. The British were careful not to “disgust the Cherokees by stopping all Trade to that Nation, for they [would] certainly throw themselves into the Arms of the French” (McDowell 1958–1972, vol. 1, p. 53). As a diplomatic strategy, the British treated their Cherokee allies as though they had favored nation status and were entitled to cheaper prices than the less faithful Creeks. Even in the face of low profits by the mid-1700s, the British protected their political ties with the Cherokees by sustaining trade (Dunaway 1994).

While the Europeans may have dominated the Cherokees economically, they were politically vulnerable to the disaffection of these Native Americans. Three instances of indigenous resistance will demonstrate that the core never effected complete control over this periphery. In the 1730s, a mysterious European, Christian Priber, influenced the Cherokees to assume a neutral role in their dealings with all three powers. Despite numerous schemes by the British to eliminate this threat, the Cherokees successfully protected Priber for seven years (Dunaway 1996, p. 35). The gravest indigenous threat to the colonies occurred in the early 1700s, when several southeastern groups allied to attack the British. The Yamassee War erupted at a point when the British were unwilling to send sufficient military aid. The very existence of South Carolina hung in the balance until the Cherokees realigned themselves with the British. Because the Indians struck when the British were preoccupied with the French and Indian War, the Cherokee War of 1760-1761 was the most aggressive expression of Appalachian resistance to European domination. To put down the rebellion, South Carolina had to drain its forces away from the international rivalry, to adjust its trade regulation, and to relinquish demands for a Cherokee monarch (Corkran 1962).

Because of their importance as political allies, the Cherokees also resisted a number of repressive trade policies without any retaliation by the British. When diplomatic matters were to be negotiated, the colonial governments summoned a few co-opted elites to Charleston or designated sites. Moreover, they tried to institute a centralized pass system that would prevent unexpected Cherokee travel to their coastal settlements. Because of their decentralized political structure, the Cherokees continued their practices of sending large entourages; and individual elites traveled to Charleston without official permission when the interests of their towns demanded it.<sup>8</sup> Cherokee leaders frequently violated protocol by refusing to follow the speaking order prescribed by the British. Even though the British set

one scale of prices on trade goods for all the Cherokees, villages pressured successfully for differential pricing, a carry-over from the ancient exchange custom in which traders recognized noneconomic contributions of the individuals with whom they were trading.<sup>9</sup>

To create efficient bureaucratic procedures, the British attempted to treat the Cherokees as a single "nation." However, the Cherokees confounded British attempts to dominate them by adhering to their own decentralized political customs. The Cherokees were a loose ultrademocratic confederacy in which power and decision making was decentralized into the separate villages and clans, each characterized by slightly different customs and dialects (Eliades 1981). This political dispersion and internal cultural diversity strengthened the capacity of indigenous Appalachians to resist subsequent incorporation into the capitalist world-system. The British may have mandated a leadership pattern in treaties or "commissioned" certain Cherokee warriors to control their settlements; but these elites were powerless to keep their promises (Dunaway 1996, p. 43). Even after the Cherokees had moved toward state-building, the head chief could not speak for the entire population until he had negotiated consensus with representatives from all the villages (Champagne 1992, pp. 56–58).<sup>10</sup>

Cherokee emissaries frequently pledged conciliatory actions, then some villages would refuse to comply (McDowell 1958–1972, vol. 1, pp. 105–110, 43). To exacerbate the predicament of the British, the Cherokee comprador bourgeoisie did not consistently represent the goals of external capitalists. Quite often, their interests lay with the political and economic lot of Cherokee towns and clans.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, Cherokee villages courted the Spanish or the French anytime the British threatened to slow the supply of manufactured commodities to their towns (Eliades 1981).

Traditional factions contested political and economic domination by co-opted elites. Despite European manipulation, some Cherokee factions always resisted trade, corruption of traditions, war alliances, or land cessions (Corkran 1962). Ironically, trade dependence produced among the Cherokees strong currents of ideological resistance, especially among the Overhill settlements (Eliades 1981). Disillusioned by the inability of recognized elites to resolve the crises that came in the wake of contact with the whites, some Cherokees reverted to traditionalism in the late 1700s. Hard-core anti-British sentiment was reflected in the alignment of three western North Carolina villages with the French-allied northern Indians (Dunaway 1996, pp. 42–43).

Despite the self-derision reported in British archival records, the Cherokees did not view the British culture as superior to their own. When told in the 1720s of the benefits of Christianity, a Cherokee religious leader responded sarcastically that "these white men that live amongst us a trading are more debauched and more wicked than the beatest [sic] of our young fellows. Is it not a shame for them

that has such good priests and such knowledge as they have to be worse than the Indians?" (Long 1969, pp. 19–20). During annual ceremonies, the Cherokees executed the "booger dance" to express their disdain for the peculiar cultural weaknesses of invading whites (Hatley 1993, p. 235). One powerful chief even warned that the European way of life was "a tree that may fall and bury [us] under it" (Logan, 1859, vol. 1, p. 463).

The British also learned that treaties promising them peaceful ownership of indigenous territory were meaningless. Individual clans frequently resisted external control over hunting lands and continued to follow the ancestral prescription that natural resources were provided by the Great Spirit for use by all. When denied such access, dissidents attacked British forts, harassed and killed white settlers, stole trade goods or livestock, and exacted blood revenge from colonists. Indeed, factions like the Chickamauga continued to raid ceded areas and to resist settler encroachments throughout the eighteenth century (Dunaway 1996, p. 43).

### **Theoretical Reprise**

Like capitalism itself, incorporation is a dialectical historical process that involves both social structure and human agency. On the one hand, transformations are determined by hegemonic forces in the capitalist world-system itself. Incorporation is the long-range civilizational project of capitalist colonizers. This historical process unfolds over several generations, requiring fifty years or longer; and it is best understood not as a cultural conflict between indigenes and European invaders, but as an economic conflict between precapitalist or communal modes of production and capitalist modes. Driven by the cultural logic of historical capitalism and by their ethnocentric sense of superiority, the intruders mythologize their economic domination as a lofty mission to implant civilization on backward barbarians.

On the other hand, social change is never imposed unilaterally from the top down when the core incorporates external arenas into the capitalist world-system. Incorporation is a multifaceted struggle at several antagonistic levels. Capitalist factions rival among themselves, as well as against the territories they seek to dominate. As we can see from the Appalachian case, three broad levels of rivalry can occur simultaneously. At the global level, England, France, and Spain rivaled for hegemony; but there were also clashes between the interests of the British empire and the colonial proprietorships. Within the North American Southeast, there was intercolonial competition between the Carolinas, Virginia, and Georgia; there was ongoing rivalry between the numerous Native American groups; and there was intermittent coalescing of the indigenous populations to resist the Europeans. Within Southern Appalachia, the Cherokees engaged in outward struggle against other Indian groups and against the three European nations. However, the

Cherokees also were caught up in internal rivalry among their autonomous villages, and even among quarreling factions that composed individual towns. Consequently, domination over a captured frontier is never total; and change does not always advantage the core.

Moreover, indigenous people are not passive recipients of Western civilization. While they may be economically dependent and politically oppressed, indigenous peoples on frontiers of the world-system do not lack agency entirely. In sharp contrast to the imperialistic goals of the interlopers, the indigenous group seeks to safeguard its established way of life. Change is deterred and its devastating effects are ameliorated because the impacted people act, react, and resist. As a result, the dominated confound and disrupt the agenda of the colonizers. As evidenced by the Cherokee example, the push by the dominant core for cultural hegemony can spawn indigenous resistance. Even when they do not stop incorporation, antisystemic dissidents can create political obstacles and financial costs that slow the process greatly. It was this lack of total domination on all fronts that permitted the Cherokees a historical window by which they prevented their own cultural annihilation for two centuries.

#### ENDNOTES

\*Funding for this research was provided by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation and by an Appalachian Studies Fellowship from Berea College, Kentucky.

<sup>1</sup>Moore (1993, p. 15) argues that "the important fact about the invasion of North America is not so much that the invaders were European foreigners, but that they were capitalist foreigners. It was the capitalist mode of production which determined the form of the conflict, not religion, culture, or ethnicity."

<sup>2</sup>Because the "cultural logic" of capitalism is grounded in racism, sexism, and universalism, capitalist interlopers exhibit an ethnocentric sense of superiority toward the society they are invading. Wallerstein (1983, p. 83) argues: "The concept of a neutral 'universal' culture to which the cadres of the world division of labour would be 'assimilated' . . . came to serve as one of the pillars of the world-system as it historically evolved."

<sup>3</sup>Marx (1852) contends that "men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves" (p. 437).

<sup>4</sup>One governor reported that the British settlements had little to fear "while we retain the affection of the Indians around us; but should we forfeit that by any mismanagement on our part, or by the superior address of the French, we are in a miserable situation. The Cherokees alone have several thousand gun-men. . . . Their country is the key of Carolina" (*Virginia Gazette*, August 18, 1751).

<sup>5</sup>For example, when the Cherokees permitted French-allied Indians among them, South Carolina ended the flow of commodities to bring the rebellious villages to terms. At the end of subsequent treaty negotiations, the most prestigious Cherokee warrior celebrated the promise of reopened trade. "We are a poor people and can make nothing ourselves," he lamented. "We know we cannot be supplied with anything but what comes over the Great Water, from the Great King George" (McDowell 1958–1972, vol. 1, pp. 196–197).

<sup>6</sup>During 1730 negotiations, Chief Katagustah described the Cherokees as "naked and poor as the Worm of the Earth" while the Europeans had "every Thing, and we that have Nothing must love

you, and can never break the Chain of Friendship which is between us" (Mereness 1916, pp. 142–143).

<sup>7</sup>For instance, the Overhill towns secured price concessions from South Carolina after sending a 1751 trade delegation to Virginia (McDowell 1958–1972, vol. 1, pp. 105–110).

<sup>8</sup>Merrell (1991, p. 139) contends that "Native diplomacy shaped formal intercultural contacts. . . . Natives set the tempo and tenor of diplomatic encounters. They came when they pleased, and in delegations larger than the cost-conscious crown officials liked. They insisted on preliminary rituals."

<sup>9</sup>Often the indigenous elites defined themselves as having higher status than the governor at Charleston; consequently, they considered it a social affront when the European official spoke first or interrupted their "talks." Numerous examples of these interaction patterns appear in the early British trade journals (Dunaway 1996, p. 43).

<sup>10</sup>At 1721 treaty negotiations, for example, little more than half the towns were represented. Those villages could not guarantee total compliance with new agreements about Cherokee political structure, trading methods, or territorial boundaries (Dunaway 1996, p. 43).

<sup>11</sup>Cherokee elites were racially mixed; European traders married Cherokee wives, who retained control over land and children (Eliades 1981).

## REFERENCES

- Abdel-Malek, Anouar. 1981. *Civilisations and Social Theory*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Arrighi, Giovanni. 1979. "Peripheralization of Southern Africa. I: Changes in Production Processes." *Review* 3(2):161–192.
- Champagne, Duane. 1992. *Social Order and Change: Constitutional Governments among the Cherokee, the Choctaw, the Chickasaw, and the Creek*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1989. *American Indian Societies: Strategies and Conditions of Political and Cultural Survival*. Cambridge, MA: Cultural Survival.
- Corkran, David. 1962. *The Cherokee Frontier: Conflict and Survival, 1740–1762*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Dickens, Roy S. 1976. *Cherokee Prehistory: The Pisgah Phase in the Appalachian Summit Region*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.
- Dobyns, Henry F. 1983. *Their Number Become Thinned: Native American Population Dynamics in Eastern North America*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.
- Dunaway, Wilma A. 1996. *The First American Frontier: Transition to Capitalism in Southern Appalachia, 1700–1860*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1994. "The Southern Fur Trade and the Incorporation of Southern Appalachia into the World-Economy, 1690–1763." *Review* 17(2):215–242.
- Eliades, David K. 1981. "The Indian Policy of Colonial South Carolina, 1670–1763." Ph.D. dissertation, University of South Carolina.
- Fanon, Frantz. 1965. *Studies in a Dying Colonialism*, translated by H. Chevalier. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Gutierrez, Ramon A. 1991. *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Hall, Thomas D. 1989. *Social Change in the Southwest, 1350–1880*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

- \_\_\_\_\_. 1987. "Native Americans and Incorporation: Patterns and Problems." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 11(2):1-30.
- Hatley, Tom. 1993. *The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians through the Era of Revolution*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hopkins, Terence K., and Immanuel Wallerstein. 1986. "Patterns of Development of the Modern World-System." *Review* 10(2):111-46.
- Kardulias, P. Nick. 1990. "Fur Production as a Specialized Activity in a World System: Indians in the North American Fur Trade." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 14(1):25-60.
- Lamar, Howard, and Leonard Thompson. 1981. *The Frontier in History: North America and South Africa Compared*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Logan, John H. 1859. *A History of the Upper Country of South Carolina from the Earliest Periods to the Close of the War of Independence*. Charleston, SC: S. G. Courtenay.
- Long, Alexander. 1969. "A Small Postscript of the Ways and Manners of the Indians Called Charikees, 1725." *Southern Indian Studies* 21:3-49.
- Marx, Karl. 1852. "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte." Reprinted, pp. 436-525 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker. New York: W. W. Norton, 1972.
- McDowell, W. L., ed. 1958-1972. *Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, 1750-1765*. Columbia, SC: State of South Carolina, Archives Department.
- Mereness, N. D., ed. 1916. *Travels in the American Colonies*. New York: Macmillan.
- Merrell, James H. 1991. "'The Customes of Our Country': Indians and Colonists in Early America." Pp. 117-56 in *Strangers Within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire*, edited by B. Bailyn and P. D. Morgan. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1989. "'Our Bond of Peace': Patterns of Intercultural Exchange in the Carolina Piedmont, 1650-1750." Pp. 196-222 in *Powhatan's Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast*, edited by P. H. Wood, G. A. Waselkov, and M. T. Hatley. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Moore, John H. 1993. *The Political Economy of North American Indians*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Nagel, Joane, and Matthew Snipp. 1993. "Ethnic Reorganization: American Indian Social, Economic, Political, and Cultural Strategies for Survival." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 16(2):203-235.
- O'Brien, Patricia. 1992. "The 'World-System' of Cahokia within the Middle Mississippi Tradition." *Review* 15(3):389-418.
- Osgood, Herbert L. 1904. *The American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century*. New York: Macmillan.
- Peregrine, Peter. 1991. "Prehistoric Chiefdoms on the American Midcontinent: A World-System Based on Prestige Goods." Pp. 193-211 in *Core/Periphery Relations in Precapitalist Worlds*, edited by C. Chase-Dunn and T. D. Hall. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Ray, Arthur J. 1993. "At the Cutting Edge: Indians and the Expansion of the Land-Based Fur Trade in Northern North America, 1550-1750." Pp. 317-26 in *The Early Modern World System in Geographical Perspective*, edited by Hans-Jürgen Nitz. Stuttgart, Germany: Steiner.
- Royce, Charles C. 1884. *Cherokee Nation of Indians*. Washington, DC: Bureau of American Ethnology.
- Taylor, William B., and Franklin Pease, eds. 1994. *Violence, Resistance, and Survival in the Americas: Native Americans and the Legacy of Conquest*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Thornton, Russell. 1990. *The Cherokees: A Population History*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1991. *Geopolitics and Geoculture: Essays on the Changing World-System*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1983. *Historical Capitalism*. London: Verso.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1980. *The Modern World-System. II: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600-1750*. New York: Academic.
- Weber, David J. 1992. *The Spanish Frontier in North America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.