

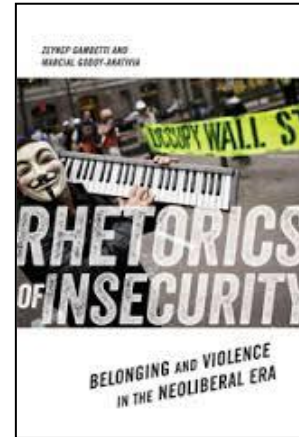
Zeynep Gambetti and Marcial Godoy-Anativia (Eds.), *Rhetorics of Insecurity: Belonging and Violence in the Neoliberal Era*. New York, New York: New York University Press, 2013, 258 pp., \$45.00 (hardcover).

Reviewed by

Allison Schlobohm

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Zeynep Gambetti and Marcial Godoy-Anativia's edited volume, *Rhetorics of Insecurity: Belonging and Violence in the Neoliberal Era*, is a fascinating collection of essays from prominent researchers in political science, security studies, and anthropology. It engages global forces of capitalism in their specifically localized manifestations, successfully contextualizing the oft-homogenized concept of neoliberalism. The text sits well alongside influential works such as Aihwa Ong's (2006) *Neoliberalism as Exception*, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's (2005) *Friction*, and John Clarke's (2008, 2010) essays on neoliberalism.



*Rhetorics of Insecurity* began in 2007 at a Social Science Research Council (SSRC) workshop showcasing work on “the relationship between the production of different types of localized conflict and violence, and various processes at the global level” (p. x). Presentations there eventually became the chapters of this volume, and the SSRC is to be commended for its collection of such thought-provoking work around a topic of growing importance: the shifting terrain of global politics that seems to be accompanying an international turn towards neoliberal economization. While each chapter can stand on its own, several themes tie the text together, including neoliberalism, globalization, global capitalism, citizenship, subjectivity, and belonging.

As would be expected from a text on neoliberalism, David Harvey is influential to many of the included authors, as are theorists of subjectivity (including Foucault, Agamben, and Rose) and political economy (most notably Marx and Gramsci). However, given the disciplinary variation represented, *Rhetorics of Insecurity* should not be read from cover to cover as a means of developing a particular theoretical perspective. Instead, each chapter should be taken up on its own or as part of a larger project to understand the multitude of ways in which neoliberalizing projects appear in local contexts.

In their introduction, editors Zeynep Gambetti and Marcial Godoy-Anativia use the language of political theory to set out the goals for the text. They point out two binaries that structure the volume: insecurity/security and neoconservatism/neoliberalism. Few of the chapter authors take up these binaries directly, and it took some effort for me to find evidence of their inclusion in each essay. Contributing to this is the format of the book, which is a succession of chapters and not a series of editorialized sections.

The chapters are arranged loosely in terms of geographical regions and shared questions about the relationship between the world, the nation, the community, and the individual. Following the introduction, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's chapter one uses ethnography and historical analysis to describe a

"popular culture of freedom: commercial mushroom picking in the national forests of the US Pacific Northwest" (p. 20). The result is an impressively personal tale of global supply chains, neoliberalism, and the lasting effects of the U.S.-Indochina War on both veterans and refugees.

In the next two chapters, Peter Geschiere and Stephen Jackson explore contemporary deployments of autochthonous discourse in Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, respectively. Autochthony, or "the claim to come from the soil itself" (Geschiere, p. 42), is an ancient Greek term that is both flexible and potent when used by politicians to disqualify their opponents' abilities to truly represent the people. Next, Yasemin Ipek Can's chapter four examines the rise of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Turkey. Ipek Can uses interviews and postmodern theorists of subjectivity to argue that a "shared field of collaboration" between the Turkish state and CSOs has emerged (p. 94). Key to this emergence is the role of the "volunteer" and its subjective positioning opposite a "premodern/needy population" (p. 115).

In chapter 5, Zeynep Gambetti focuses on (violent) Turkish responses to the Kurdish minority since 2005 and argues that liberal political ideals are increasingly undermined in Turkey as groups of citizens are encouraged to take on violence as a means of response to both political dissenters and Kurds. These citizens are urged toward violence since the state is "incapable of penetrating fully into society" (p. 136). As a result, the boundaries between the state and civil society are unclear. Nandini Sundar's chapter 6 also addresses the blurred boundaries between public and private organizations, explaining that public-private partnerships have become increasingly responsible for the suppression of dissenting opinions in India. Drawing on Agamben, Sundar explains that the Indian state creates a specific image of the poor and political dissenters as threats to safety and then either elicits private vigilantism or funds the creation of local militias. As a result, a state of "widespread public insecurity and lack of accountability" is re-created and multiple forms of violence become acceptable in this state of exception (p. 170).

Georgi M. Derlugian's chapter 7 explores the relationship between local groups and global political economic processes, arguing that an increase in ethnic violence following the collapse of the former Soviet Union was related to, but not caused by, market globalization. Referencing prominent Marxists such as Bourdieu and Wallerstein, Derlugian argues that the specific role of nationalism in Soviet Russia and "ethnically formulated networks of bureaucratic patronage" prior to the dissolution of the U.S.S.R. combined with waves of Western-led democratization to produce the possibility for fundamentalist ethnic violence in the region today (p. 191). Rosana Reguillo Cruz also traces local forms of belonging as they relate to larger social structures. She outlines a notion of "rhetorics of security" in relationship to the role of *violencias* in paralegal border spaces, pointing out tropes of meaning-making without developing either the concept of rhetoric or trope. Drawing from theorists of political liberalism, she explains that multiple forms of violence in Mexico are associated with the drug trade and heavy gang presence, resulting in the use of fear to "sow the seeds for a 'zone free of human rights'" (p. 207).

In the text's final chapter, Nicholas De Genova uses Debord's society of the spectacle to argue that contemporary U.S. rhetorics of terrorism enable securitarianism and quell critique of government interventions into everyday life. In producing the ultimate other—the terrorist menace—the U.S. government has positioned itself as beyond critique, ushering in "the irradiation of the everyday by the

security state as our savior and redeemer" (p. 231). Together, the chapters create a nuanced look at the contemporary global relationship between violence, securitization, and neoliberalism. They suggest that the global move toward neoliberal markets is complicated and generally accompanied by violence and political upheaval.

Cumulative decades of research come together in *Rhetorics of Insecurity* to provide readers with a wide-ranging collection of ethnographies, historical analyses, political theories, and discursive critiques. As many scholars who study neoliberalism will attest, there is an academic tendency to homogenize its effects, and the breadth of this text is one of its key strengths. The authors all provide compelling and unique perspectives, and each essay is well-written. Their diversity sometimes produces the sense that neoliberalism is being talked around and not about. Few of the authors define what the term means in their work, and in a moment where neoliberalism has become something of a buzzword, I would have appreciated a more concentrated editorial engagement with the term outside of its binaried relationship with neoconservatism.

I found the anthology's investigation of the contemporary global moment appealing, and it was compelling to read about events that were, most often, no more than a decade or two past. Spanning both the 1990s and 2000s, the text is a solid contemplation of current economic flows and global processes. Still, a lot seems to have changed in our global landscape since the 2007 workshop that inspired the book. Puzzlingly, the book's cover image of the Occupy Wall Street movement and an #anonymous protester is not indicative of the books' contents, as neither is discussed by any of the authors or the editors. Of course, such is the risk of publishing a book dedicated to both theoretical engagement and current events.

In all, I found the book very useful and would recommend it to those within communication studies. While the anthology's authors rarely acknowledge the impact of communication studies on their work, communication researchers will be interested to see ample employment of the tools of rhetoric, social movement analysis, ethnography, and critical organizational studies. Additionally, some of the case studies included would be useful tools for upper-level communication studies courses seeking to supplement theoretical work from a variety of perspectives with thick descriptions of multiple contemporary, international contexts.

### References

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