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**Market, Europeans, and natives during early colonial encounters:**

**A hypothesis and cross-cultural evidence**

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## Abstract

When modern markets first collided with tribal economies at the start of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, tribal reactions varied. Here I present a hypothesis – and cross-cultural evidence -- to explain why some tribals got close to the market while others fought it. The equality of first market transactions was driven by the quiddities of the resource coveted by Europeans. Natural resources that displayed random variation over time and space (e.g., animal wildlife) which required local knowledge and skills, forced Europeans of any nationality, of any background, of any culture, of any military might, anywhere, anytime to prostrate themselves at the feet of locals of any culture in mutually beneficial exploratory contracts. Europeans had to renegotiate the contracts every time they wanted a fresh supply of wildlife. I call this, unapologetically, natural resource primordialism. No mincing words. The culture of locals and competition between European traders could shift the initial bargaining power flowing from the properties of the natural resource to tribals or Europeans. Locals seared in a tradition of warfare, adroit at forming alliances before the arrival of markets, had the psychological sinew to stand up to European traders, while rivalry between foreign traders made it easier for locals to drive hard bargains against their guests. When Europeans with their superior military might focused their gaze and efforts overseas on fixed, visible resources, such as large deposits of precious minerals, lands for permanent settlement, or cultivated crops, natives had little bargaining power in market transactions. They lost.

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When at the dawn of the Christian era Roman legionaries marched toward northern Italy and the Alps into much of today's Germany, they viewed the people they encountered as uncouth and primitive, albeit pristine and independent, at least in the prelapsarian ethnographies of Tacitus and Caesar (Benario, 1990; Krebs, 2011; Schulze, 1998; Wolfram, 1990). And when the village rubes saw the Praetorian guards sweeping over their forests, swamps, and villages, they did what most people have done when facing invaders: many fought (Wells, 1999, p. 57), some fled, and the biddable ingratiated themselves with the interlopers to become "servants of the empire" (Wolfram, 1990, p. 50). About fifteen centuries later, 1405-1433, when the eunuch admiral Zheng He, who ruled the oceans of the southern hemisphere on behalf of the Middle Kingdom's Ming Dynasty, furlled the sails of his redoubtable Chinese treasure junks on the shores of East Africa, Sumatra, and India the people he met did what their cousins in Europe had done earlier: some escaped abjuring the intruders, the recusants fought, while others sidled up to the mariners with ambivalent feelings of fear and effrontery to meet and swap ivory, pearls, precious stones, spices, and medicines for Chinese porcelains and silk (Fernández-Armesto, 2006; Levathes, 1994). Elsewhere – among the pastoral nomads in the steppes of Central Asia (Kwanten, 1979), foragers in northern Mesoamerica and the Canary Islands (Mercer, 1980), horticulturalists in the Andes (Earle, 1997, pp. 104-142; 2002, pp. 375-376) (Salomon, 1987, p. 67) -- one finds overhangs of these three forms of dealing with armies or bandits cum traders arriving unannounced at the gates of remote villages: sullen retreat, truculent resistance, or ineluctable conversion -- sometimes willing, sometimes coerced -- into the lifestyle of foreigners (Bentley, 1993, pp. 19, 25-26).

These three portentous forms of treating outsiders resurfaced atavistically when the modern price-making market [*sensu* (North, 1981)] first traveled in the sixteenth century from Europe to the New World, Asia, the Pacific Islands, and Africa. As the first wave of the modern market economy with its fardel of money, credit, private property rights, and traders collided with indigenous people, locals fought the intruders and destroyed their wares, escaped into the hinterlands, or hurtled to the bearded White men with an irenic desire to satisfy curiosity, swap goods, and, in some cases, to seal alliances and achieve political goals they had been unable to reach on their own before the meeting of the two worlds<sup>1</sup>.

Bringing the story closer to the present one finds echoes of the past, but now as part of a tendentious, acrimonious debate about the effects of globalization on indigenous people (T. D. Hall & Fenelon, 2009; Linden, 2011; Stewart-Harawira, 2005; Vertovec & Posey, 2003). As today's juggernaut market economy expands at a madcap pace to blanket remote corners of the world, some say, indigenous people at "the ragged edge of the world" escape father into the backlands or protest, while the guileless get closer to market towns and peripatetic peddlers to truck for gain and to acquire the necessities and the bibelots of the industrial world.

We have many finely-wrought accounts of how natives dealt with the arrival of markets, but what we lack so far is a tauter, more ecumenical explanation for why some native peoples resisted, why others ensconced themselves within the protection of bunkers and coves, immured by the wilderness surrounding their villages, and why some on their own, perhaps piqued by nameless emotions, moved closer to the market. The explanation matters because without a grip at the different forms indigenous people use to handle the arrival of markets it is hard to assess how markets affect indigenous people. The flinty natives who make markets work for them profit from markets both because trade offers new opportunities for work, leisure, and consumption and because they have the mettle to achieve more. Their contumacious cultural backbone shapes how they deal with markets and what they do with life irrespective of markets.

I focus on indigenous people because, some say (Posey, 2003)<sup>ii</sup>, they make judicious stewards of natural resources and because they are presumably the most sessile indigent of the globe (H. G. Hall & Patrinos, 2012). Equally important, contemporary tribals merit attention because once gone they will take with them to the grave forever our last chance to see how things worked before the Great Transformation.

Thus, the first task consists in explaining why contemporary indigenous peoples and their near ancestors behaved in different ways to the advent of the Leviathan market economy. But crafting a plausible story is hard because the price-making market arrived with heavy baggage, full of turpitude, obloquy, avarice, and probity. The luggage included warring armies, officious missionaries, importunate settlers, and pestilence; it included rape and raids, plunder and genocide (Belich, 1996). Indeed, traders, like early explorers, were cultural stevedores, vectors of sorts, you might call them – they carried much else besides themselves (Fernández-Armesto, 2006). Of course, with markets came not just misdeed, European impudence, molestations, and curses, but also boons, such as freedom from monopolies and prestations from chiefs, freedom from early death and starvation, and wider horizons from new technologies, new institutions, and science (Dalton, 1978; N. Ferguson, 2011). As Kant, Ricard, and eighteenth and nineteenth-century liberals via the economist Albert Hirschman (Hirschman, 1977) and psychologist Steven Pinker (Pinker, 2011, pp. 77-78, 165, 285) have recently taught, markets act as ballasts, harmonizing and mollifying the interests and passion of rivals. Being so trussed with other institutions and events, how can one explain native people's reaction to the market without being dragged down by the market's extra luggage?

There is no simple answer to the query, but we can start inching toward an answer by turning to history in search of plots where the modern price-making market arrived after light travel, ideally with few missionaries, permanent settlers, or soldiers. We are searching for cases where the modern market landed skimmed, only with European traders wanting to exchange meretricious and utilitarian goods -- the proverbial beads, mirrors, ironmongery, and cloth -- for goods demanded by Europeans – peltry, timber, precious minerals, and the like.

Ancient empires and our Paleolithic ancestor traded with potentates or peers in distant lands (Smith, 2004). Trade and inchoate markets go back to Assyrian times, but the modern price-making market as an independent institution from the state with buyers and traders moving with freedom and alacrity dates back only to about 1000 AD, when it emerged in parallel, protean fashion in China, the Middle East, much of south Asia, and Europe (McNeill, 1982; North, 1981, pp. 41-42; M. Wolf, 2004). After a slow incubation of nearly five centuries with spasmodic ups and downs (Abu-Lughod, 1989), the silhouette of the price-making market emerged in recognizable shape during the Age of Mercantilism or the long sixteenth century as European entrepreneurs-explorers joined with their monarchs to expand overseas trade (E. R. Wolf, 1982). In England, Holland, and France merchant-adventurers commanded overseas expansion through nationally-chartered companies, but in Spain and Portugal the Crown took the upper hand (Furber, 1976).

Since we are looking for a convincing natural experiment – the first arrival of light modern markets in distant lands -- we must be chary when selecting evidence. Clearly, we need to start around the Age of Discovery, but must exclude places conquered by Iberians for the well-known reason that encounters with Spaniards and Portuguese, whether in the New World, Africa, or in the Pacific Islands were Crusades spearheaded by an inflexible bureaucracy producing social and biological maelstrom (Bobrick, 1992; Crosby, 1972; Diamond, 1997; Kiernan, 2007; Viotti da Costa, 1985). We also need to exclude Russian trade in furs of sables, foxes, and ermines with

native Siberians in the Land of Darkness across the Polyarny Ural owing to the heavy hand of the Great White Tsar (and Tsarina). Restrictions throttling trade in animal wildlife took the form of state monopolies, limits on migration and goods people could exchange, and tributes, or *yasak*, tithes, and obligatory gifts (*pominki*), all in “soft gold”, a gloss that initially covered luxury furs, but which later came to include ersatz materials from critters such as rabbits and squirrels (Bychokov & Jacobs, 1994; Fisher, 1943; Lincoln, 1993). We need to omit the slave trade in Africa, the New World, and Asia because it fueled internecine tribal warfare, as Europeans and chiefs armed and enlisted one tribe to enlarge the slave coffles with people from other tribes (Sommers, 2005). And we need to elide the first palaverous flirting between European explorers and natives when each, unable to understand the other (Curtin, 1984), showed only their best side, as Hawaiians did with Captain Cook’s crews of the *Resolution* and *Discovery* in 1778-1779 (Sahlins, 1985, pp. 7, 105, 136)<sup>iii</sup> or as Amazonian Indians (sometimes) did with Francisco de Orellana during 1541-1542 as he rafted down the Napo and Amazon rivers with his phalanx of swashbuckling explorers searching for the chimerical ‘land of cinnamon’ (Fernandez-Armesto, 2001, p. 154; Medina, 1988; Whitehead, 1999)<sup>iv</sup>.

For substantive and for practical reasons, we put aside places with a deep history of far-flung trade before the arrival of the modern price-making market. Such areas befog the ideal natural experiment. Long before the Age of Discovery, people in the Africa-Middle East-Asia axis had traded promiscuously with each other and with Europeans through a cobweb of direct and indirect linked paths (Herbert, 1974; Iliffe, 1995; Krishna, 1924, pp. 1-36). The ancient history of tangled trade makes it hard to pinpoint when modern markets arrived, and also biased the attitude of tribals to their first meetings with Europeans. Chiefs and sultans in Mozambique scorned the “beads, bells, strings of coral, and washbasins” Vasco da Gama brought on his way to India in 1498 because, African rulers felt, Portuguese trinkets could not match the quality and beauty of porcelains, silks, and Chinoiserie traders from the Ming Dynasty had brought a century earlier (Ames, 2005, p. 35; Levathes, 1994, pp. 20-21). Hindu rulers in Calicut likewise looked down on European goods because they compared them with better-quality merchandise from Muslim traders (Ames, 2005, p. 56). On a more practical note, we exclude the economies along the axis because we know little about how nomads, farmers, and foragers dealt with early traders (McNeill, 1982, pp. 56-57, 62). The cultures of the New World and the Pacific Islands provide better economic *tabulae rasae* to study tribals’ reaction to the advent of modern markets (Curtin, 1984, pp. 225,253) because they were more insulated from the rest of the world thanks to “natural fissures” and poor transport technologies, and, among Andean empires, thanks to an obsession with autarky (Fernández-Armesto, 2006, p. 98; Smith, 2004).

So what are we left with after sifting the evidence through colanders? The joint private-state stock companies of the British, French, Dutch, and, to a lesser extent, late imperial Russia provide some of the most antiseptic examples for understanding the reactions of indigenous peoples – mainly in the New World and in the Pacific Islands -- to the advent of modern markets.

The early history of the crown-chartered cartel companies – Hudson’s Bay Company (1670), Dutch United East India (1602) and West Indian Company (1621), English East India Company (1600), French East India Company (1664), the Russian-American Company (1799) – provide reasonable evidence because, initially at least, and despite variation in the way they operated, in their capital stocks and in the goods they sought, they worked overseas without luggage, without bargaining power over locals, and with a fixation in profits pure more than in pursuing a noble life style, receiving seignorial homage, proselytizing, or in collecting taxes (Ekelund & Tollison,

1980). As one observer in early Colonial America put it, the companies took “Great Care not to Offend the naturals” [Quoted in (Axtell, 1995, pp. 9,15)].

True, joint-stock companies were the law, the army, the navy, and much else; they signed treaties, minted currency, defined units to measure sales and purchases, imposed a *lingua franca*, and arrogated to themselves the right to construct ports and roads (Rodrik, 2011). When they could, they pillaged with impunity and the backing of the Crown (Andrews, 1984). In effect, they were the franchised, quasi-independent, generally ecclesiastical, commercial, autocratic overseas European state writ small (Glamman, 1958; Steensgaard, 1973). But without sizable permanent settlers, armies, and missionaries to help them, expatriate agents or factors as they were called, resembled free agents who had to fend for themselves, and buy, sell, and swap, galvanized mainly by financial incentives, hemmed in by local mores and the environment, and, to a lesser extent, by the rules of their company and employers back in Europe. They could beguile their employers and use stratagems against their peers, but they could not use wily subterfuge with the natives (Chaudhuri, 1965; Krishna, 1924, pp. 77-79)<sup>v</sup>. During the early stages, before some of the companies in the Far East cultivated their own pepper, cloves, nutmeg, tea, and cotton, they did not have enough people or power to tax, resettle, or confiscate. Except for some direct Dutch rule in Batavia, Ceylon, and in some of the smaller Spice Islands, the companies worked through small indirect representation (Furber, 1976, p. 191). If their commissioned agents annoyed the Naturals, agents faced retaliation or, worse for their coffers, local workers unwilling to explore, seek, and find the goods Europeans coveted. Overseas European comers could engage in brigandage, piracy, skullduggery, and privateering against each other (Steensgaard, 1973, pp. 121-123) and switch employers at will (Jennings, 1984, pp. 62-64, 70), but they could not directly<sup>vi</sup> abuse Lilliputian tribal explorers and producers. Companies relied on tribals, the purveyors of food and credit when European ships arrived late or natural calamities struck colonies (Saum, 1965, pp. 42-43) and bedmates for lone European merchants tarrying in entrepôts and truckhouses (O'Meara, 1968)<sup>vii</sup>. European traders had to comply with local mores in arbitrating price differentials, or else<sup>viii</sup>. And these aspiring monopolists had to behave with probity in spite (or because) of the profits they earned (Irwin, 1991; Moloney, 1931, pp. 57-59). As Furber notes when writing about the relations of European traders with Asians during 1600-1800, the foundations “depended to a very large extent on bargains struck under conditions of mutual respect rather than fear and violence” (Furber, 1976, p. 314). Forced spice contracts, massacres, and procrustean monopolies over goods, as in eighteenth-century Malabar, were the exceptions.

So I next explain what shaped the responses of tribals when the price-setting market came embodied in joint-stock companies. In particular, I try to make sense of why some locals were refractory to the market while others got closer to the market, or, put differently, why some locals made the market work for them but others could not, or did not.

### **The prime arteries of first encounters: Nature first, then culture**

When markets arrived to the lands of tribals a play unfolded in which Nature and Culture shaped the quality of the economic transactions that would unfold. At the center stage was Nature: the physical properties of the resources Europeans wanted and the amount of space tribals had to escape if they disliked foreigners. The two aspects of Nature – the quiddities of the resource and the amount of hiding grounds -- tilted the bargaining power to or away from indigenous people. The extraction of some types of natural resources forced Europeans of any nationality, of any background, of any culture, of any military might, anywhere, anytime to

prostate themselves at the feet of locals of any culture. I call this, unapologetically, natural resource primordialism. No mincing words. But standing on Nature's shoulders stood the Culture of locals and competition between European traders, which could shift the initial bargaining power of Nature to tribals or to Whites. Locals seared in a tradition of warfare, adroit at forming alliances before the arrival of markets, had the psychological sinew to stand up to the suppurating condescension and chicanery of White cozeners, while rivalry between foreign traders made it easier for locals to drive hard bargains against their guests.

***Desultory versus visible, fixed resources.*** We start with the properties of the contested natural resource and use the Iberian experience in Latin America and the Caribbean to concretize ideas.

When Spaniards first moved into temperate South America, they could relocate natives and impose corvée labor (*mitas*) because the natural resources they most cared about – gold, silver, and land (perhaps in that order) – were visible, fixed, known, and large. Many of the large underground ore bodies in the Andes were either known before the arrival of Spaniards or would be discovered soon thereafter (Lockhart & Schwartz, 1983, p. 101). Once found, a large ore body, whether below or above ground, whether uniform or splintered, required only more and more laborers to exploit, so the bargaining scale tipped – though never entirely (Stern, 1988) – toward Spaniards, who could take over the management of the mines<sup>ix</sup>. The Spanish Crown with its *encomenderos* had plenary power, and could enslave or hire Indians to enter the adits of the silver mines of Potosí and Zacatecas to crack, carry, crush, and clean ores of lower and lower quality because the mineral deposits were large, visible (albeit underground), and fixed<sup>x</sup>. As the ore quality declined, owners could put more Indians, indentured servants, or slaves to toil at processing ores of thinner quality. At the time of this writing (2014), hardscrabble rural Bolivians still eke out a living from the tailings and dross of underground mines discovered more than 500 years ago.

The same logic applies to placer deposits. Whether in nineteenth-century California, Dakota, Alaska, north eastern South America, or in the sixteenth-century Caribbean islands, alluvial reserves, once discovered, gave foreigners the upper hand in the ownership of the mineral. Foreigners could either force locals to pan known sluices, as Iberians did in the Caribbean, or they could pan the gold themselves, ignoring locals, as did gold prospectors in the USA. In the fringes of the Spanish empire, in much of northern Mexico and the southwest of the USA, in Chile, and in northeastern South America, once rural prospectors found mineral deposits they lost the upper hand. If they died, dragged their feet, or refused to work Spaniards could replace them with outsiders, typically slaves from America or Africa (Lockhart & Schwartz, 1983, pp. 276-277, 290, 299) (Hämäläinen, 1998, pp. 496-497; Whitehead, 1999, p. 436).

And roughly the same plot unfolded during the colonial era in the Middle Atlantic and northeast seaboard of North America. Here Swedes, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, Pilgrims, and French arrived looking for, first, whales and fish, then for furs, but above all and eventually for farmlands and places to set up permanent settlements (Brebner, 1937, p. 260; Moloney, 1931, pp. 48-49). Farming villages followed on the heels of explorers and fur traders (Moloney, 1931, p. 114). In their quest for land the European farrago viewed Indians as a hurdle to be removed by land purchases, “just wars”, trickery, and terror (Kraft, 1989), particularly after the decline in the European market for beaver pelts during the late seventeenth century (Starkey, 1998) and the demographic sundering of Indian societies (Axtell, 1995, p. 33) when lands took the form of *terra nullius*. In 1755, Edmond Atkin, the future superintendent of Indians affairs for the



Southern Department, self-servingly noted that “the Indians generally chuse to withdraw, as white People draw near to them” (Merrell, 1991, p. 106)<sup>xi</sup>.

But now consider what happens when the resource Europeans coveted was scattered and hidden, moved, and when outsiders lacked the knowledge or the tools to find it. Large ore bodies, salt pans (Goslinga, 1971), farmlands, and annual or perennial crops do not fit the bill. If Europeans craved for hidden, scattered, and moving natural resources, they had few options but to enter into informal exploration contracts with native foragers or their chiefs. One can chain natives to dig, tap, or farm, and one can even evict them from their land because at the center stage of the economic play lies a fixed, palpable, valuable, known resource and the might to enforce one’s will. But one cannot indenture an explorer because prospectors must enjoy the freedom to take risks as they please and move untrammelled, knowing that if they hit a lode or find a wild animal, they will receive full compensation for drudgery and risks. The *conquistadores* who brought down the sedentary but mighty Inka and Aztec empires had no luck forcing Amazonian Indians to prospect for gold, wild cotton, or for cinchona bark (Lockhart & Schwartz, 1983, pp. 276-277). The extraction of some natural resources required mutual respect between trading partners. The properties of the natural resource -- and almost nothing else -- dictated how the two parties treated each other<sup>xii</sup>.

For a short time Iberian sharpers in the Amazon tried taking villagers hostage until locals paid them back with gold or with wild rubber, and in Siberia and in some of the islands in the North Pacific, Muscovites, drawing on the Eurasian tradition of hostage taking and ransom payment, kept native trappers captives until their families paid back with boreal furs of squirrels and sables. But confiscations did not last long in the Amazon,<sup>xiii</sup> and in Siberia and in parts of the North Pacific Muscovites could confiscate only because foragers also had farms which conquerors could sequester until natives paid the ransom. What’s more, tribal explorers in Siberia paid ransoms to protect themselves against raiders from other empires (Miller, 2010, p. 12). Europeans seem to have divided natives into “haves” and “have-nots” – those who had access to hidden, movable natural resources with whom Europeans had to collaborate because natives could flee, unencumbered by physical possessions or by attachment to land, and those whose lands lacked the natural resources coveted by Europeans, or who had the resource, but who were also mortgaged to their land -- and these last, foreigners found easier to abuse (Saum, 1965, pp. 47-49)<sup>xiv</sup>.

If I am right in this line of thinking, then markets worked best for buyers and sellers – and natives moved to the price-making market to engage in smart international trade (Rodrik, 2011) – when the good demanded by Europeans had a pell-mell distribution, when it was randomly, unevenly, and invisibly distributed, changing and movable across time and space. The classic examples of resources with a willy-nilly spatial and temporal distribution include pelts and furs from terrestrial animals, and, to a lesser extent, wild plants. Terrestrial animal wildlife fits best the category of goods which would give natives the upper – or at least an equal -- hand in market transactions because wild animals have a fickle temporal and spatial distribution. Wild plants and lichen fall somewhere in between animal wildlife and fixed, visible resources. Like animal wildlife, wild plants require prospecting before use, but unlike animal wildlife, wild plants, once found, become available for subsequent exploitation by others because plants do not move, with the degree of exploitation linked to the quality, size, and re-growth of the stock and the demand for the good, as shown by the nineteenth-twentieth century rubber boom in the Amazon and Congo (Vallvé, 2010, pp. 236-237) (Stanfield, 1998) (Gheerbrant, 1988, pp. 92-103), the eighteenth century sandalwood trade in the Pacific south-west (Hill, 1999;

Shineberg, 1967), and the fifteenth century extraction of resins from plants and lichens in the Canary Islands (Mercer, 1980, p. 157).

By way of examples, consider first what happened to trade in wild brazilwood during the early sixteenth century, a time when European tapestry and cloth makers prized natural dyes from plants (Lockhart & Schwartz, 1983, pp. 181-182). During the first three decades (1500-1530) of European exploration of the Brazilian coastline, before the permanent presence of the Crown or missionaries, Portuguese factors and French sailors fought each other over brazilwood, but however much they quarreled over logs, they treated their ferocious trading partners, the semi-sedentary Tupian-speaking Indians and nomadic Tapuyas, “with great circumspection” (Marchant, 1941, p. 20), tendering them metal tools and cloth in condign payment for brazilwood and, to a lesser extent, jaguar pelts and live parrots (Whitehead, 1993, p. 204), all of which only natives –indifferent to the rancorous arguments between their European buyers -- knew how to find in the bush and carry to French ships or to Portuguese forts. As the economy switched from the extraction of randomly-distributed natural resources to the cultivation of sugar in plantations and as permanent settlement of outsiders grew, enslavement, famine, epidemics, forced religious conversions, and pillage – predictably -- took off (Lockhart & Schwartz, 1983, pp. 182-183; Marchant, 1942; Whitehead, 1993, pp. 206-207) (Schwartz, 1978, pp. 47-48).

Next, consider a parallel example from the early history of French, Dutch, and British attempts to fetch furs in North America. During the early Colonial period, 1620-1676, Pilgrims, Dutch, and French quarreled and fought each other trying to carve monopsonies in the market for beaver furs. Limning the relation between Indians and European fur traders in the Great Lakes regions during 1650-1815, historian Richard White (White, 1991) calls this the “Middle Ground” owing to the amiable relations between Whites and Indians. Traders lived amphibiously between a European and an Indian world. Dressed like Indians, French trappers and traders moved west searching for pelts, often taking Algonquian wives as companions while British colonists roamed west as families, establishing personal and commercial ties with Iroquois trappers (Snow, 1994, pp. 119-120). In exchange for furs, White traders gave Indians strouds, alcohol, kettles, and metal tools, but rarely during the early period did Europeans impose their prices on Indians (White, 1991, pp. 95-97). Indians and European traders negotiated fur prices on the ground, without following the official prices of the chartered companies. Until the fall of Canada to the British in 1763, “an honest (French) trader did not steal, did not use false weights, did not knowingly sell damaged goods” (p. 97). When trading, Indian and Whites abandoned “ordinary constraints”, mingled intimately, and though Indians, as one eye-witness put it, resembled “a party of drunken savages”, this did not prevent White traders from offering their guest food and shelter (Bailyn, 2012, p. 240). Chained by bonds of mutuality and interdependence, fur traders gave Fox, Sauk, Menominee, and Winnebago Indians free goods during periods of hardship (Kay, 1984, pp. 282-283).

Last, consider commercial sandalwood trade in the Pacific Islands during the nineteenth century. Often showcased as an example of White piracy against hapless colonial victims, the history of trade in wild sandalwood shows quite the opposite. Since sandalwood trees have a willy-nilly distribution (Shineberg, 1967, p. 84) they require periodic prospecting and, by my account, should have elicited mutual respect between trading partners. With the depletion of sandalwood stocks in Hawaii and Fiji, European and Australian traders during 1841-1865 moved to New Hebrides, Loyalty Islands, and New Caledonia. Here initial tribal veneration and fear of Whites soon disappeared as locals realized they could rule trade. They killed unscrupulous traders (pp. 143-144), refused to work when sandalwooders offered inferior commercial goods,

and during the busy farming season shunned sandalwood collection because their gardens absorbed their attention (p. 145). Pacific historian Dorothy Shineberg says that “judged from a purely economic viewpoint the sandalwood trade was as happy a situation of mutual gain as any free-trader could invent” (p. 144).

I shall have more to say about these natural resources, but for now I summarize the pith of the argument that **(a)** with terrestrial natural resources randomly distributed over time and place and **(b)** without the technology or the knowledge for tapping the resources, Europeans had to treat natives with respect, as economic equals<sup>xv</sup>. To paraphrase historian William McNeill, the extraction of some natural resources stood recalcitrant to command and force (McNeill, 1982, pp. 21-22). Depended on locals, chartered companies had to hire brokers, freelance traders-prospectors you might call them (Jennings, 1984, p. 70), such as the legendary *coureurs de bois* in Canada or the *uitlopers* (out-runners) and *uitleggers* (outliers) in the Dutch “wild coast” of South America, Guiana, to prospect for wild natural resources, or to take commercial goods farther into the wilderness to swap with tribal prospectors for furs, dyes, woods, oil, and balsam (Goslinga, 1971, p. 428). Of course, in private Europeans could view natives with contempt (Axtell, 2000; Saum, 1965), and vice versa (Hämäläinen, 2008, p. 8) (Axtell, 2000, pp. 89-90, 101-102), each thinking it was bilking the other (Belich, 1996, p. 154). But ideology had no bite. Nature laid the rules on which market transactions between different cultures took place. The culture of the foreigner or the native did not matter -- up to a point.

Having made a bald case for natural resource primordialism, let me temper the claim, and do so by asking: Why did Europeans overseas not learn the skills to forage, develop the technologies to find the terrestrial wild fauna they coveted, and, thus, circumvent the natives? Some did. A few Europeans in the Canadian arctic and in the continental USA learned hunting skills, as *coureurs de bois* did in the Canadian arctic, as Nathaniel did in the Last of the Mohicans, and as Métis in the Middle Ground of the Great Lakes region did during the late seventeenth century (White, 1991), but the number of European woodsmen was never large enough to satisfy all European hunger for pelts. Eventually, by the nineteenth century, Whites mastered hunting skills and worked side by side and even displaced Indians trappers in the continental USA (Bailyn, 2012, p. 217; Saum, 1965, p. 48)<sup>xvi</sup>. But even during the nineteenth century relations between White fur traders and Indian trappers “all over the West... was essentially benign... generally the two got along quite well. Neither tried to dispossess or remake the other” (Utley & Washburn, 1977, p. 157)<sup>xvii</sup>.

In some cases – all of them having to do with maritime rather than with terrestrial natural resources – such as mid-nineteenth-century whaling expeditions to Polynesia, or early sixteenth-century European reconnoitering of the northeast coast of North America, or late eighteenth-century Russian explorations to fetch sea otter pelts in Kamčatka and the Aleutian Islands (Wheeler, 1966) -- foreigners brought their ships and fishing gear. In so doing, they could sidestep the natives, except to acquire victuals for the return trip (Sahlins, 1992), to barter for beaver pelts which European sailors could sell on the side back home to supplement their income (Kraft, 1989, pp. 77-78; Snow, 1994) (E. R. Wolf, 1982, p. 160), (Biggar, 1901, pp. 28-29), or to pick up straggling natives to “complete the crew” (Wheeler, 1966, p. 486). Unlike the skills to hunt, which seem anchored to a specific place, the skills and technology to fish seem to travel with greater ease across space. Seafarers from Nantucket, Massachusetts, could whale unaided in Polynesia (Salmond, 1997, pp. 316-321), just as in the sixteenth century sailors from Navarre, Bristol or Plymouth, West Country, England, could fish in the New World without the help of locals (Andrews, 1984; Morison, 1971, pp. 478-480)<sup>xviii</sup>. European fishermen hired natives, if at

all, as salaried employees; they did not need to hire tribals as explorers<sup>xix</sup>. Europeans did not need exploration contracts with locals when Europeans had the knowledge, technology, and skills to find the resource. This was more likely to happen with marine resources than with terrestrial animal wildlife<sup>xx</sup>.

The properties of the natural resources stressed so far – invisibility, mobility, and haphazardness – gave locals more bargaining power in trade, but only when vast expanses separated villagers from Western monarchs. The physical distance and oceanic barriers between colonial outposts and Europe militated against recruiting and stationing many permanent European foragers overseas. Had the Canadian arctic or New Zealand abutted London, Amsterdam, or Paris, Europeans would have found it easier to replace Huron or Maori hunters with White foragers and exploited them, as Russians bullied Siberian foragers abutting Kievan Rus'. Physical propinquity between Europe and the outposts would have contributed to greater European knowledge of wildlife in the outpost, eroding the need to rely on tribal foragers. As the distance between the metropolis and the outpost grew, European's knowledge and skills grew thinner, forcing them to rely on locals. This is why in North America, European fur traders and Indians found themselves enmeshed in suffocating ties of bilateral economic interdependence, exchange, and mutuality (Carlos & Lewis, 2010; Kay, 1984, p. 69) to the point Whites worried about the fate of Indian widows to keep good relations with local trappers (Saum, 1965, p. 42). It is instructive to turn briefly to Tsarist Russia to see how geographical contiguity between the homeland of the invaders and the lands of indigenous people attenuated the protective effect that random distribution of animal wildlife afforded locals.

Tsarist Russia beginning in the sixteenth century is the only known case of a central government progressively handcuffing native trappers in its backyard to accumulate animal wildlife or, as Rasputin colorfully put it, to “scoop everything out” [Quoted in (Lincoln, 1993, p. 67)]. No “Middle Ground” here, no dialogue between cultures, no amicable search for mutual terms of trade. Here we find only the well-known story of one-sided wrenching of rural people by the State in a landscape flecked with sporadic native rebellions (Lincoln, 1993). Coercion could take place, partially, because Siberia – despite its distance from Moscow – was known and reachable to Muscovites by a great system of rivers and portages. The area had been known to Russians since the Mongol invasion, if not earlier, and so was not as unknown as the New World was to the Old. Over the centuries, Muscovites had built ostrogs, portages, and monasteries across Siberia in their thrust to occupy the outskirts with colonizers (Fisher, 1943; Kerner, 1942, pp. 86-88). Populated by a diverse group of small, warring nomadic societies, Siberia lacked a unified cultural fortress to stop the Russian thrust, an advance that dated back to the of the Kievan state. The pursuit of fur-bearing animals native to Eurasia had animated Russian expansion to the north and east to “meet the sun” at least since the first Russian settlements in ninth-century Kiev (Bobrick, 1992, pp. 67, 211). Tsarist Russia took over trapping in Siberia in a slow albeit heavy-handed manner. The Tsarist government plundered for pelts, relied on merchant-princes and small traders to swap pelts for “knives, swords, axes, and cheap trinkets”, and kept their own professional trappers from northern Russia to take furs “without recourse to the natives” (Fisher, 1943, pp. 7, 153) (Bychkov & Jacobs, 1994). Yakut horsemen facilitated trade, moving furs and supplies between the foraging frontiers and entrepôts (Curtin, 1984, p. 209). During the nineteenth century, as Russian turned its attention to deal with problems in the west, the Tsarist government allowed groups of fractious colonists made up of Cossacks, fur traders, peasants, and merchants to step in and push the Russian frontier eastward (Wheeler, 1966). Of this bevy, geographer James Gibson has said that “Some sought adventure or solitude,

many craved free farmland, others fled conscription or serfdom, and still others were exiled” (Gibson, 1980, p. 127). Despite the diversity of their backgrounds they all shared a fever for furs. So far, so good, as the fur rush took place in a vast but known adjacent neighborhood (Bobrick, 1992).

However, when the Tsarist government crossed the Bering Strait with its army of reprobate soldiers and thugs – those “moral parasites” who had “gone through fire and water” back West (Golovin, 1862, pp. 13-15) – and turned its attention from the collection of terrestrial furs in Siberia, which Russians historically knew well how to capture, often better than native Siberians, to the collection of furs from sea otters, which, being new, they did not, things initially went well as long as the landlubberish Russians had to deal with the more docile and affable tribes, the Aleut and Koniag, and could arm-twist them to hunt for the elusive sea otters scattered throughout the north Pacific (Gibson, 1980). The early *promyshlenniki* companies of independent trappers and fur traders, and their successor, the monopolistic Russian-American Company in the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century, realized they did not have the knowledge and skills to catch sea otters and needed to rely on the nonpareil traditional human capital of Aleuts and Koniags. As Russian historian Ilya Vinkovetsky (Vinkovetsky, 2011) puts it:

Aleut and Koniag men trained from childhood to become proficient in the sea otter hunt; it was deemed physically unrealistic and economically foolish to expect grown Russian men to develop this set of skills. Consequently, the Russians with a stake in the marine fur business needed these Native laborers to mine the colony’s chief resource. The Russian-American Company had a strong incentive to devise and operate a labor system that would take advantage of specialized Native skills (pp. 23).

Asymmetric knowledge and skills between tribals and foreigners in the North Pacific should have produced a piece-rate contract between equals, if not one with locals taking the upper hand. Instead, a bizarre labor market akin to slavery sprung up. In the barren, unprotected, treeless Aleutian Islands (p. 21) and in the Kodiak Islands, Russians drew on the well-established Eurasian tradition of taking captives and using hostages -- the women and children of the noble class in the tribe -- as leverage to recruited fathers, brothers, and husbands, and send them in flimsy kayak flotillas in search of sea otters (p. 35)(Miller, 2010, pp. 25, 40-41, 63). Thus, Russians arm-twisted Aleut and Koniag to forage owing to traits unique to a place: a noble class of tribals which Russians could hold for ransom, few hiding places, and wan competition between European traders in a forlorn corner of the world. Problem is that things went quite athwart when Russians tried coercing the splenetic Tlingit, Chukchi, and Haida, who made Russians colonists cower at their sight. And intimidate these groups could for reasons the Aleut and Koniag could not: a belligerent spirit that drew nourishment from ample hiding grounds and from competition between European merchants.

Thus, the distance separating the outposts from European centers made it hard for European Argonauts to accumulate and hand down the skills and knowledge to extract animal wildlife in foreign lands. It made it hard to hector fractious locals. Russian eastward expansion did well as long as Russians limited foraging to the capture of continental animals indigenous to the familiar taiga of Eurasia, contiguous to the heartland of the Kievan-Muscovite empires, but crumbled with unfamiliar maritime resources in more distant places. As a result, Russians were pushed to enter into mutually beneficial, contractual, exploratory arrangements with North

American Indians, with much of the pushing coming from the attributes of the natural resource demanded by Europeans, who knew little about local wildlife.

To summarize: If Europeans wanted elusive terrestrial natural resources and if they lacked the technology and knowledge to exploit the resources, most likely to happen as they moved farther away from the metropolis, then Europeans had to genuflect to locals and establish informal contracts with them. The contracts took many forms, from patron-client, buyer-seller, piece-rate payments, to creditor-debtor relations but -- quite aside from the outer contours of the contract and from what each party thought privately about the other -- the two sides had to treat each other as equals, with outward deference, because tribals could walk out of the pact at any time.

Of course, other factors besides the quiddities of the resource and the foraging aptitude of Europeans colored the quality of first experiences with modern international trade. The Aleut and Koniag examples hint at the idea that -- besides the idiosyncrasies of the resource -- availability of refuge zones, a warring spirit, and competition between European traders also mattered. The Aleut and Koniag outliers aside, we can apodictically conclude that the market for terrestrial animal wildlife leveled the playing field between Europeans and indigenous people because it required Europeans and locals to periodically renew their vows. Each hunt provided a new opportunity to redraft or rescind the last contract. But when international trade centered on wild plants, then Europeans gained the upper hand. In international trade for wild plants, room to hide and natives' brawn evened the playing field, as we shall see in the next two sections.

***The environment: Room to hide when international trade centered on wild plants.*** In a celebrated article published in 1970 cultural anthropologist Robert Carneiro (R. Carneiro, 1970) put forth the idea that states arose in temperate pockets among people facing environmental circumscription. Population growth in pre-state societies, he noted, initially induced horizontal distention of settlements, but eventually expansion met a natural limit in lands less and less suitable for farming, and stopped when people reached walls of dense forests, oceans, and deserts. Locked, unable to move farther, people intensified farming and foraging and fashioned institutions to cope with scarcity. States developed as those at the top of crowded places imposed their will on those at the bottom, with tyrants and vanquished condemned to share the same place. Cornered and bewildered, the vanquished had to acknowledge the suzerainty of the powerful, or of those whom Mancur Olson called autocratic "stationary bandits" (Olson, 2000).

Environmental circumscription, whether natural or anthropogenic, contributed not only to the formation of states, but also to how natives reacted to the arrival of modern markets. The amount of land available to natives has much to do with the abundance of wildlife and exit options. In the Andes and in Mesoamerica, Spaniards could take mineral deposits by eminent domain not only because ore bodies were large, visible, fixed, and thus easily expropriable, but also because natives lived in nucleated settlements, surrounded by inhospitable landscapes. No emergency exit, no porous borders. As in much of North America, European fur traders treated Indian trappers (or their chiefs) as *primus inter pares* not just because they had to depend on local explorers to find furs, but also because Indians had backwaters to flee when things went sour. As Emperor Powhatan reminded a party of hungry English traders in Colonial Virginia during the seventeenth century, strong-arms tactics against Indians would only encourage Indians to "hide our provisions and flie to the woodes, whereby you must famish" [Quoted in (Axtell, 1995, p. 13)

Environmental circumscription shaped the quality of market transactions when market demand centered on wild plants, such as wild cotton, wild rubber, sarsaparilla, cinchona bark, or sandalwood. In those markets, room to escape strengthened the bargaining power of natives. Unlike the search for terrestrial animal wildlife, the search for wild plants undermined the bargaining power of natives because -- once found -- wild plants lend themselves to re-harvesting and cultivation, without necessarily needing more prospecting. In contrast, the search costs of finding animal wildlife recur day after day, so European buyers needed to continuously import local woodsmen to find animals. Not so with commercial wild plants. The exploration costs to find wild plants occur sporadically; once exploration costs have taken place and once prospectors have found a patch of useful plants, buyers face incentives to seize the patch and use locals as workers to cream the finding. When market demand centered on wild plants, Europeans found it easier to chain locals to tap the same grove of plants over and over again, unless locals could vanish, and this they did if they had hinterlands to flee.

The commercial extraction of wild rubber in the Amazon during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century provides an apt example of what is meant here. Comity prevailed between native prospectors and buyers until prospectors found patches of rubber trees; thereafter, entrepreneurs usurped the groves and Indians escaped (Hemming, 1987, p. 277). The history of the rubber boom in the Amazon has been told many times (Barham & Coomes, 1994; Gheerbrant, 1988; Stanfield, 1998; Taussig, 1980; Weinstein, 1983), with the trope of mistreatment of Indians by rubber barons. True, rubber barons in Peru recruited at gunpoint Witoto, Ocaina, Bora, and Andoke Indians (Gheerbrant, 1988, pp. 94-95). In Venezuela Tomás Funes chained Yekuana Indians to tap rubber (Frechione, 1990, p. 120), and in Bolivia the Suárez brothers (Fifer, 1970, p. 136) poisoned and enslaved Indians to build their empire of rubber (Vallvé, 2010, pp. 263, 311-312, 316) (Grann, 2009, pp. 74, 78).

However accurate these narratives might be, they nonetheless require subaltern interpretations and equipoise to understand fully the record of what happened. Principally, the standard tale misses the frustrations of Whites in hiring Indians after Indians found rubber trees. In Venezuela most Yekuana fled to the hinterland to avoid Funes' holocaust (Frechione, 1990, p. 120). In Brazil, tribes "retreated from the rubber frontier" and deserted their villages by moving "to the headwaters of the Amazon tributaries", deep forests, swampy lakes, or sandbanks, to escape the rubber madness (Hemming, 1987, pp. 252, 291, 297, 301). The Achuar of Ecuador, protected by great distances from the rubber boom, chose to participate in it as traders rather than as laborers, and still look at the rubber boom as the halcyon days of prosperity (Taylor, 1981, p. 648). In Bolivia, the Yuracaré, Tsimané', and many Moxos, Movima, Itené, and Toromona Indians retreated into distant forests bereft of rubber trees or away from trade routes to avoid the onslaught of merchants (Vallvé, 2010, pp. 296-297, 306, 321, 333-334). The Cayuvava Indians of Bolivia "flatly refused to work for ... [rubber tappers] and willingly accepted" fugitive Indians (p. 307).

In fact, after finding patches of rubber trees, Indians often declined to work as tappers. Most of the tapping ended up done by "foot-loose" Creoles, Europeans, and deracinated Indians brought in from elsewhere (Hemming, 1987, pp. 313-314)(Fifer, 1970, p. 127) (Vallvé, 2010, pp. 132, 285-286, 323; 2012). Rubber companies shunned hiring local Indians as rubber tappers "because as superb woodsmen they could easily escape" (Hemming, 2008). In Bolivia some rubber companies treated Indians surrounding the concessions with deference because companies worked in uncharted lands, afraid of poisoned missiles from bows and blowguns from natives hiding behind the veil of forests (Vallvé, 2010, pp. 285, 315), (Grann, 2009, pp. 79, 85, 87, 112,

129-133). Captain Joaquim Firmino who went to the upper Rio Negro in 1857 to supervise the construction of a fort wrote that “...all the Indians have fled: they have gone to the forests or fled into Venezuela because of bad treatment they have received and the miniscule daily wage they are paid” (Hemming, 1987, p. 320). The inability to attract permanent Indian tappers produced Kafkaesque proposals. In Peru, one company toyed with the idea of enslaving Indian women for breeding so that the company could have a handy supply of future rubber tappers (Gheerbrant, 1988, pp. 92-93)<sup>xxi</sup>.

Because natives could flee into backlands, Europeans had to cajole them to trade, at first in “silent” trade and later with gentle face-to-face interactions. Early in the history of modern international trade, Europeans in North America, Africa, Siberia, and the Amazon left wares hanging from trees or in open spaces, then waited for locals to come, inspect the goods, and either reject or accept the offers (Fisher, 1943, pp. 154-155). If locals disliked the goods tendered by Europeans, they would leave, forcing Europeans to replace or to increase the offers if they wanted to seal transactions (Axtell, 2000, pp. 86-87, 89). Take Giovannie de Verrazano’s first impression of trade with New England Indians in the 1500’s:

...if we wanted to trade with them...they would come to the seashore on some rocks where the breakers were most violent, while we remained in the little boat, and they sent us what they wanted to give on a rope, continually shouting to us not to approach the land (Quoted in Axtell, p. 87).

de Verrazano goes on to lament that after the arms-length exchange, Indians, instead of gratitude, showed “all the signs of scorn and shame that any brute creature would make, such as showing their buttocks and laughing” (ibid.). Through laughter, Indians bragged to Europeans about who controlled barter (Merrell, 1991), and in control they were because of their exit options.

True, silent trade characterized early experiments in international trade and, true, also, some have questioned its existence, at least for parts of Africa (de Moraes Farias, 1974). But even later, once periodic face-to-face exchanges between Europeans and natives took place, European traders did not know the whereabouts of their trading partner, lost as their partners were in the forests of the Amazon (B. R. Ferguson & Whitehead, 1992, p. 19) or Congo (Coates, 2004, pp. 113-114), or the wilderness of North America (Axtell, 2000, p. 108).

The drivers of equitable market transactions identified so far – great temporal and spatial unpredictability of the natural resource pined by Europeans and ample room for sallies, sorties, ambush, and retreat – tell only part of the story. After all, not all North American Indians rushed to the fur trade, nor did all Amazonian Indians accosted by rubber merchants fled to the backlands; some did, some did not. Two missing links round out our story: the pre-contact martial spirit and political organization of native societies and competition between European buyers. In exploring these drivers we leave Nature and enter Culture.

***Tribal martial spirit and political organization.*** Tradeable animal wildlife found over large expanses of lands gave natives more control in market transactions with Whites if tribals came to the trading counter imbued with a gladiatorial mien. Tribal political organization and military technology mattered, but less. Refractory natives from small-scale, mobile, scattered, acephalous, stateless societies in the Amazon or their peers in centralized chiefdoms in the Pacific Islands or in the Northwest Coast both did well in international trade if they stood on the right natural endowments and if they had grown up seared in a tradition of internecine tribal



warfare. Poisoned missiles from bows and blowguns put nimble, lightly-clad tribals on a level warring field with soldiers dressed with morions and mails firing clumsy arquebuses and muskets (Elbl, 1992; Hennessy, 1993, pp. 12-13; Langer, 2009; Lockhart & Schwartz, 1983, p. 53; Starkey, 1998, p. 6).

But unlike the drivers discussed so far, political organization and an indomitable spirit are only suggestive when invoked as shapers of the quality of market relations. One stands on firmer footing when arguing that the random distribution of animal wildlife colored the quality of market transactions because causality cannot run from the quality of market transactions to the temporal and spatial distribution of animal wildlife. It is harder to tell a convincing causal story that goes from tribal truculence or political organization to the tone of market transactions. The contumacy of native societies at the time of contact might have ensured fair play between the two parties when they met in the market, but trade with Whites affected natives' belligerence. Markets becalm passions, as noted earlier, yet the ethnohistorical record is peppered with examples of how trade with Europeans heightened the martial spirit of some tribals<sup>xxii</sup>. Furthermore, the belligerence and political organization of natives on the one hand, and market transactions on the other, could be linked with each other through environmental circumscription (R. L. Carneiro, 1988), endowment of natural resources (B. R. Ferguson, 1984b; Gibson, 1996; Gross, 1975; Moran, 1991), charismatic belligerent leaders (Lear, 2006, p. 47), and so on<sup>xxiii</sup>. For instance, some native leaders may have been both feistier (even without international trade) and more open to barter (with any outsider, not just Europeans). Making a compelling case for how a fighting spirit and native political organization at the time of contact affected the quality of market transactions requires the removal of an empirical thicket, only partly visible and measurable, so I relegate belligerence and political organization to a secondary role and take their variation as given when markets arrived.

I next present examples from tribal societies in the Pacific Islands, the Northern Pacific Ocean, and the New World to buttress the idea that brawn and tribal political organization aided natives in market transactions and -- sometimes -- even replaced the pivotal role of natural resources.

*Pacific Islands.* In the Pacific Islands chiefs ensured that European and tribal trading partners treated each other as equals, irrespective of the oddities of the natural resource coveted by Whites. One of the world's most stratified societies (Earle, 1997), native Hawaiian chiefdoms had a complex irrigated farming economy, and an equally complex social tapestry, with deep segmentary lineages, human sacrifices, a vast archipelago of paramount and subordinate chiefs, enfeoffed commoners paying homage to their lords by ritually tendering them prestations, and perennial warfare within a menagerie of islands and kingdoms (Earle, 1997; Sahlins, 1985, 1992). During the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century when American sailors carrying sea otter pelts from North America to Canton moored their ships to provision themselves with pigs, salt, water, root crops, pearls, fresh produce against scurvy, and enjoy fleeting one-night stands with Hawaiian women (Salmond, 1997, p. 396) (Sahlins 1993, p. 38, 43), they supinely did what chiefs told them to do. The chiefs it was who dictated to foreigners how many knives, scissors, adzes, ornaments, and, later, ammunitions and weapons Europeans had to hand over to get goods and services from islanders. The Big Men, acting as autocratic monopolists, imposed "exorbitant exchange demands" on Whites, interdicted commerce at whim, and turned a blind eye to spats with foreigners, the stealing of anchors from trader's ships, and the occasional killing of sailors (pp. 39-40). Chiefs told their guests to leave the islands if they

disliked their merchandise. When the modern market arrived in one of the world's most stratified chiefdoms, foreign traders and villagers truckled to the whims of paramount chiefs<sup>xxiv</sup>.

During the 1820s when sea otter pelts gave out in the New World, and the Pacific Islands stopped serving as a port of call for Canton-bound vessels, the economy of the islands turned to the export of wild sandalwood trees. In the new economy chiefs continued to engross commerce, monopolized the export of timber, take out loans from traders playing deaf to their dunning, and satisfied their boundless desire for conspicuous consumption of manufactured and deluxe goods (Sahlins, 1992)(Sahlins 1993, pp. 58, 65-66) while tabooing *hoi polloi* from trading with outsiders<sup>xxv</sup>.

Chiefs played similar roles elsewhere in the Pacific. In Polynesia and Fiji, hegemonic chiefs coordinated trade in sandalwood over large areas. Merchants sought out Big Men who acted as “diplomatic partners” (Salmond, 1997, p. 397) because they could supply workers, raw materials, and protection, all at once (Shineberg, 1967, pp. 26-27). If the chief's power ended at the edge of small valleys, as in New Hebrides and New Caledonia, international trade turned dissonant (Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1997); friendship and trade with one valley bespoke hostility from traders in other valleys (ibid.).

Until Europeans enlisted the cooperation of Maori chiefs, the anthropophagous Maoris clubbed to death European buccaneers who arrived to their shores (Fernández-Armesto, 2006, p. 264). Only after receiving the chief's backing could Europeans settle to fetch goods and workers. Chiefs distributed European goods to Maoris (Belich, 1996, pp. 123, 143-127) and orchestrated market transactions. Shielded by local strongmen, Maoris rushed to “embrace European trade and technology with fervor” (Belich, 1996, p. 148), whaled and captured seals with verve, and became “aggressive consumers and traders, demanding fair returns from ... storekeepers” (Coates, 2004, p. 114). As in Hawaii, so to in New Zealand: Maoris imposed their terms of trade on Europeans and told them what goods to bring (Belich, 1996, p. 149).

*Russia.* The second example comes from Russia's intrusion into the Aleutian Islands and the Northwest Coast of North America and California during 1804-1867. Our main source is the official evaluation of the operations of the Russian-American Company in 1861. Written by inspector Captain Pavel N. Golovin six years before Russia sold Alaska to the United States, the report rests on direct observations of native societies the company dealt with as it chased mammon in pelts and furs. Pavel begins his report by describing the “lazy” and “humble” Aleuts and Kurils, then modulates *pari passu* to portraits of the semi “independent” Chugach and Kenais, and the “completely independent” nomadic Mednovtsky, Alegmiuts, Ugolens, Kolchans, Kuskovyms, and reaches the coda with sketches of the “savage” Kolosh or Tlingit – courageous, stoic, cunning, with “an in born passion for haggling” who “merely tolerate the Russians” (Golovin, 1862, p. 27). Russians enslaved the Aleut and Koniag, as noted earlier, but they blanched at the Tlingit. Because Russians feared the intransigent Tlingit could “easily conquer our settlement and kill all the Russians” (p. 27), he wrote, Russians kept them at arm's length from Russian redoubts and had to pay them three to five times more than “they did the enserfed Aleuts for the same furs” (Gibson, 1996, pp. 27-29)<sup>xxvi</sup>. All the groups described by Pavel belonged roughly to the same culture area, inhabited roughly the same ecology, were exposed to roughly the same weather, had access to roughly the same natural resources, used roughly the same native technologies, had roughly the same type of social stratification (Vinkovetsky, 2011, p. 20) and faced roughly the same buyers, yet they displayed astonishing variation in their orneriness, which influenced how Russians treated them<sup>xxvii</sup>.

*New World*. The last examples come from South and North America. While some native Amazonian societies fled the rubber boom of the nineteenth century, the Mundurukú, ruthless traditional warriors and headhunters in Brazil (R. F. Murphy, 1960), rushed to trade and ended controlling most of the rubber tapping in the upper Tapajós River (Hemming, 2003, pp. 68-69):

The Mundurukú were a cohesive tribe ...and they enjoyed an enviable reputation as warriors. Traders therefore treated them with respect, bringing their wares – cotton clothing, axes, knives, and *cachaça* [fermented juice from sugar cane] – and waiting for weeks or months to get rubber in exchange (Hemming, 1987, p. 288).

Well into the twentieth century, the Mundurukú killed Creole rubber tappers who wronged them (Hemming, 2008, p. 199) (Burkhalter & Murphy, 1989, p. 104), and attacked Indians who tried to upset the Mundurukú stronghold on rubber trade (Y. Murphy & Murphy, 1974, pp. 29-30). Not far from the Mundurukú homeland, in the middle Madeira River, the Parintintín, sport cannibals and headhunters [(Lowie, 1948) **quoted in** (B. R. Ferguson, 1984a, p. 14)], frightened Creole rubber tappers. “No settler”, wrote a traveler in 1872, “dares to set up a hut on their territory, although it contains very rich growths of rubber trees” (Hemming, 1987, pp. 297-299).

At the interstices of European empires in North America, such as the Great Lakes, the Lower Missouri Valley, and Greater Rio Grande (Adelman & Aron, 1999), where the tentacles of British, Spanish, and French empires collided in a bramble of competing interests, the martial spirit of native peoples -- the Powhatan in seventeenth century Virginia, the Iroquois confederacy in the seventeenth century northeast (Snow, 1994), the Lakotas in the nineteenth century northern plains, the Sioux during the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries (White, 1978), and the Comanches in the Southwest and northern Mexico – stopped the intromission of Whites (Hämäläinen, 2008, pp. 3, 365). Indians capitalized on the rivalries between European empires and upended the rules of international trade, making Europeans the tribute-paying vassals of Indians. In the borderlands, Indians -- those whom Lewis and Clark called “miscreant,” “savage,” “pirates” --- robbed, raided, killed, burned, mutilated, divided, conquered, and imposed their rules, whims, and, even a *lingua franca* on timorous Whites (Hämäläinen, 1998; White, 1978, p. 327). In the borderlands of North America, White traders followed Indians, not the other way around (White 1978, p. 334).

We end with an example from the northeast of South America. To tap the riches of the Amazon and Rio Negro Rivers, plunder the Spanish Indies, protect itself against Portuguese, British, Irish, and French competition, and, more generally, to expand its economic watershed, the Dutch West India Company and its predecessor during the seventeenth century enlisted the help of the Caribs of northwest Guiana. A recent arrival to the South American mainland from the Caribbean islands, the Caribs excelled in warfare and trade before the arrival of Europeans (Edmundson, 1904, p. 11). Few in numbers and orphaned from the motherland while in the New World, Dutch traders learned that good Indian warriors made good emissaries and bodyguards, and so befriended Carib commoners and their chiefs. Building on ancient trade networks, Caribs “regularly and systematically” took iron axes, knives, and mattocks to the tribes of the interior in exchange for goods Dutch most wanted: at first wild cacao, tobacco, red dyes, oils, and balsam, and, later, “red slaves” (Edmundson, 1903, 1904; Goslinga, 1971). Carib brokers left a few of their own upriver as overlords or factors to organize trade and stockpile forest goods for the next pick up. Loyalty between Carib warriors and Dutch ran deep and lasted for two centuries,

crystallizing in exogamic marriages between Carib women and Dutch men, ties of fictive kinship, and joint military raids against other Europeans.

Together, these examples underscore the point that a cultural mosaic made up of tribal pugnacity and tensile political organization helped equalize bargaining power in market encounters and created a halo of respect around natives. The tapestry yielded richer dividends when the natural resources demanded by Europeans had a random distribution across time and place. Cannibalism, scalping, headhunting, and warfare tempered the avarice of foreign traders searching for sandalwood in the Pacific Islands, rubber in the Amazon, sea otter pelts in the Northwest Coast, or buffaloes, deer, and beavers in the plains and Southwest, but did little to curb European greed to plunder lands for permanent settlement in the Atlantic coast of North America<sup>xxviii</sup>.

For at least two reasons tribal warfare and political organization brought the two parties to the table as equals in their mutual interest to trade in wildlife. Overseas trade in wildlife forced European to depend on locals to find, process, and periodically bring fresh new samples. With built-in European economic dependence on tribals, the feistiness of locals by itself probably added little to the quality of inter-cultural trade relations, except that it stood as a latent signal to White for the penalties of financial legerdemain. European merchants knew well how to interpret the symbols of tribal martial spirit because during the early stages of modern international trade, European merchants themselves worked overseas with soldiers, mercenaries, corsairs, and merchant ships (McNeill, 1982, pp. 40, 80, 102-104) (Fernandez-Armesto, 2001, p. 318; Kennedy, 1987; Khan, 1923, pp. 42, 44) (Andrews, 1984). Merchants and soldiers marched in lockstep along the same path where the business of war was the war of business. Call it “free trade under the gun” if you will (Steenstaad, 1973, p. 135). European merchant-warriors understood and respected the role of native warriors in trade because European armies had to pay for themselves (McNeill, 1982, p. 108); merchant-warriors had learned that the net gains from trade stemmed from the value of goods swapped and from the military might of trading partners. In much of Colonial North America, Europeans used trade to leverage military alliances with Indians (Curtin, 1984, p. 219), whom they treated as their equals (Bailyn, 2012, p. 56; Starkey, 1998, p. 3), if not their superiors (Hämäläinen, 2008), never as their subordinates.

If tribal thew acted as a deterrent to unfair trade, tribal political organization ensured that the benefits of trade trickled to the ruck. As the vignettes from the Pacific Island suggest, chiefs acted as colanders in international trade, keeping the overpluss and distributing the rest to their underlings. Elsewhere chiefs took an Empyrian view of their group, crafting policies to improve the well-being of all, not just of their kin and satraps. Historian Pekka Hämäläinen (Hämäläinen, 1998) notes that Comanche chiefs set the time and place where trade would take place, and also set the amount of goods Comanches had to give and the price they had to accept when exchanging goods with Whites. Chiefs’ control over the organization of trade curbed the flow of alcohol into Comancheria, and swept away attempts by foreigners to manipulate prices or to undermine Comanche trading and political power (pp. 510-511). Irrespective of how Comanche chiefs distributed commercial goods inside their group, European traders sought them out because chiefs lubricated trade.

Pulling together the thrums of the argument, we can say that idiosyncrasies of the natural resources demanded by foreigners, environmental cornering, and aspects of native social organization, particularly a fighting ethos and strong chiefs, could shift the bargaining power to natives in first market encounters. Foreign traders might have wanted to act as “roving” or as

“stationary bandits” and rob as much as they could, but natural and social constraints curbed passions and put the two sides on the same footing.

*The emulous world of white traders.* The tale told so far has only two groups: homogenous outsiders and homogenous insiders. I have argued I have argued that White traders who arrived overseas looking for wildlife had to treat locals as equals because they depended on them to search and find the coveted wildlife. Yet such a reading of the record glosses over a Babelic text between natives and Europeans each, splintered into different groups. When writing about the history of Huron Indians before 1600, the late archaeologist and ethno-historian Bruce Trigger noted that in Canada:

.... Indians and Europeans rarely constituted two homogenous interests groups, or even lined up as two opposing teams. Groups of Europeans traders, government officials, and diverse orders of the clergy often competed with each other rather than with the Indians (Trigger, 1975, p. 53).

Indian tribes shivered into internal rival factions when Europeans arrived, with fur trade merely the chiasmic lynchpin pulling together the different interest groups of natives and outsiders.

Our interest is not a finer-grained understanding of first trade encounters between two fractured groups on each side of the fence, but delving into the narrower question of what short-term economic effects the presence of factious European groups had on tribals. And here the evidence seems irrefragable. Stiffer competition between European buyers inflated wildlife prices and tribal pocketbooks.

The canonical example comes from the fur trade in colonial North America (Brebner, 1937; Curtin, 1984, p. 218; Moloney, 1931, pp. 32-33, 44; Rollings, 1992, p. 94). Competition in the Canadian arctic between French and British traders until 1763 and between British and American traders after 1776 gave Hurons and Iroquois greater bargaining power in the fur market (Fernandez-Armesto, 2001, p. 137; White, 1991, p. 119; E. R. Wolf, 1982). With only a few lonely White traders “sleeping by the frozen sea”, Indians at first faced a market resembling at once a monopsony and a monopoly, with fur prices skewed in favor of Europeans. But as the number of buyers rose so did the prices received by Indian trappers (Bryce, 1900, p. 22) (Carlos & Lewis, 1993, p. 466). Where French and British buyers competed, Indians bought European goods at 30% lower prices than where Indians faced few traders (Carlos & Lewis, 2010, pp. 9, 11). The Hudson Bay Company displaced independent fur traders west of the Rockies because it could supply manufactured goods at lower prices than independent traders (Mackie, 1997, pp. 107-111). The presence of many fur buyers and their inability to control the entry and exit paths to foraging grounds made it hard to win customer loyalty from Indians, who merely walked out or refused to repay loans if they did not get what they wanted (Ray, 1974, p. 138; Saum, 1965, p. 160; White, 1991, p. 119). The Aleuts and Kodiaks fared worse than tribes in the Northwest Coast because the latter could sell to British, Bostonian, Russian, and the occasional Spanish trader. For the same sea-otter pelts, Indians in the Northwest Coast got prices two to three times higher from British or American traders than from Russian traders (Gibson, 1980, p. 131; Vinkovetsky, 2011). The poor Aleuts and Kodiaks were stuck selling only to the Russian-American Company (Bobrick, 1992, p. 227).

Combat between foreign traders allowed Indians to exploit European rivalries and get the most out of the fur market (Krech, 1999, p. 158); (Axtell, 2000, pp. 107-108, 122-123) (Carlos &

Lewis, 2010, p. 5; Ray, 1974, pp. 61, 65). As the price of deer skins rose relative to the price of commercial goods during the mid eighteenth century, “the Creek obliged traders to accept undressed skins in place of dressed ones” (Krech, 1999, p. 108). Since they benefitted from European economic dueling, Indians fought foreigners’ attempts to create monopsonies-monopolies in the fur market. When fur traders colluded to lower the value of merchandise given for buffalo robes, Indians near Fort Gary, Winnipeg, burned grasslands to keep buffaloes away and starve traders (Krech, 1999, p. 108). And it follows that when fur buyers left en masse, straggling traders could increase prices of commercial goods offered for furs, reduce gratuities, and stop offering potations to seal bargains (Axtell, 2000, p. 120).

Moving beyond the canonical examples, one finds other, more intriguing instances of how rivalry between European merchants empowered locals. In 1609 British Captain Unton Fisher was nonplussed when an old Yaio man in a canoe in the Marawini River, Guiana, refused to part with an ingot of gold and copper in exchange for metal tools because the old man had already promised the ingot to his absent Dutch trading partner. Here is Fisher:

Hee showed mee, before his departure from mee, a piece of metal fashioned like an eagle, and as I ghesse, it was about the weight of eight or nine ounces troy weight; it seemed to be gold, or at leastwise two partes Gold and one Copper. I offered him an Axe, but he refused; to which I added foure kniues, but could not get it of him: but I imagine the Dutch at Selinama [Suriname] haue bought it of him, for their only coming was for Axes, as he said, hearing that the Dutch were at Selinama (Edmundson, 1906, p. 237).

Besides improving the terms of trade for natives and empowering them, competition between European traders turned tribals into fastidious consumers. In the permeable borders of the Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, and British outputs in the lowland tropics of South America, Indians learned that some European goods were of better quality than others. In 1695 the headman of a tribe in the Anauinas River, not far from Rio Negro, told a Portuguese administrator, Antonio de Miranda, that they preferred Dutch to Portuguese merchandize because Dutch goods were of finer quality and Dutch traders were more willing to go native. Distressed, Antonio de Miranda wrote back to the Crown an unctuous note brimming with insights about constraints and options opened to the Portuguese for enforcing economic compliance from Indians who chose to barter with other Europeans. The note is worth quoting because of what it says about how European competition helped locals:

...they told me that the strangers [Dutch] were in the habit of bringing them [“iron implements, knives, and other like commodities”] from the head waters of the river; and that such were in the habit of coming and trafficking with their gossips (*compadres*; fictive kin); and that by their contracts with the same Indians they used to distribute these commodities among them...which they esteem ... more because they are much better than ours, for which cause they never want any of ours, and any that they have they attach small value to. On this particular I warned them that they should not trade with the strangers that one presumes to be Hollanders, since your lordship so commanded it, and that as vassals of his majesty they ought to keep his laws and order, which they promised to do; but it seems to me that never will they dispense with this convenience, unless they be prevented by other means, because, as they find the commodities of these strangers better than ours, they are always sure to stick to those they value most, and unless we put

a stop to this commerce, by other means, it is impossible that they should ever cease to keep up their communication, which is much to our prejudice [Quoted in (Edmundson, 1904, p. 21)].

The Dutch, it seems, intentionally deflected tribal goods away from other European buyers by offering finer merchandise and by mortgaging themselves to Indians through bonds of fictive kinship<sup>xxix</sup>. From the lenses of Indians sellers, a gaggle of European buyers from different nationalities, offering different types and quality of goods, each group with a different propensity to enter into the kinship universe of Indians through affinal or fictive kinship ties, all made it possible for Indians to pick the best buyers, and the best they picked to the chagrin of the Portuguese. Facing such stubborn tribal consumer preferences, Antonio de Miranda recommended in true imperial fashion that only through forceful coercion could the Crown ever hope to graft dominion over this remote trade enclave<sup>xxx</sup>.

Competition between European buyers produced picky, scornful, and stropky tribal shoppers beyond South America. In the southern United States, the Choctaw, Creek, and other tribes “unhesitatingly refused to trade when they thought goods were inferior or not to their taste” (Krech, 1999, p. 158). Around the Great Lakes where French and British traders vied with each other for furs, a Recollect priest noted that Indians “are rather shrewd and let no one outwit them easily. They examine everything carefully and train themselves to know goods” [Quoted in (Axtell, 2000, p. 108)] See also (Richter, 1992, p. 84). Economic historians Ann Carlos and Frank Lewis found that the British Hudson’s Bay Company in Canada sent

...firearms that met English standards, but the Indians were not satisfied and demanded better. The problem was that because metal becomes brittle in sub-zero temperatures, gun barrels could explode...once Indians began refusing some guns, the company sent armorers to the posts to ensure that only guns free of flaws were offered in trade (Carlos & Lewis, 2010, p. 10).

The Hudson’s Bay Company had a customer service desk of sorts to ensure customer satisfaction. The annual reports from Canada to Britain ranked European merchandise by how much Indians valued goods received from the company, with the intention that vessels returning from Europe would bring only cargo prized by Indians. With luxury goods such as beads, Carlos and Lewis say that “there was extraordinary specificity as to the varieties Indians wanted”. For utilitarian goods, such as knives, the reports stressed that Indians cared more about blade quality than about handle color, “and messages relating to kettles dealt with the most suitable weight and shape” (ibid.).

In North America, British traders got the upper hand over French traders because they could supply Indians with a wider, sturdier, and cheaper range of commercial goods, such as kettles and metal tools (Aquila, 1983, pp. 112-114, 118-120; Jennings, 1984, pp. 79, 284; White, 1991, pp. 120-121). Only the British made and supplied red woolen strouds, an iconic luxury good among some of the tribes. French traders responded by supplying blacksmiths and gunsmiths and supporting wives and children of absent men, but Indians “constantly reminded the French that the English offered better bargains and better goods than the French” (White, 1991, pp. 122, 127). If the British outdid the French, the French outdid the Dutch. An angry Oneida chief called a party of Dutch traders from Fort Orange “scoundrels” “worth nothing”

because they arrived at the village empty handed and because the Dutch could not match the diversity and value of the goods supplied by French traders (Richter, 1992, pp. 90-92).

In the antipodes of North America, European whalers and settlers tried giving Maoris second-hand guns, but Maori chiefs insisted “on more and better weapons” (Belich, 1996, p. 150). Like their peers in North America, Maoris played European traders against each other; “if one trader did not supply the required goods on the required terms, another one would” (p. 151). In Melanesia and Polynesia, tribals spelled out the “shape, size, color, and quality” of goods traders had to bring; no compliance, no sale (Shineberg, 1967, p. 157). As the novelty of cloth, beads, tobacco, pipes, muskets, and powder wore off, tribals in the south-west Pacific Islands by the mid-nineteenth century had turned into “hard bargainers”, forcing traders to give them traditional forms of wealth (e.g., pigs, shells) (Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1997, pp. 143-144). European traders’ angst in the south Pacific Islands reflected keen competition between each other and the prospect of facing “exacting bargainers”. By the mid nineteenth century, European traders realized that “the days of the string of beads and the handful of nails” were gone forever (Shineberg, 1967, p. 157). Sometimes European ships returned bereft of sandalwood because they had not brought “the right sort of trade...Tommahawks and any kind of red cloth” most coveted by natives, as Captain Abby wrote ruefully after an unsuccessful trading expedition to the coast of New Caledonia (ibid.).

### **Conclusion: Some missing cogs**

Tight as the tale might be, it has some loose threads, as all tales do. Because we had to rely on imperfect natural experiments we do not know whether we are missing cogs that could be shaping the narrative. So to some of the cogs I turn by way of conclusion.

The spatial and temporal randomness of natural resources coveted by Whites had much to do with the observed equality between Whites and natives in initial market transactions; more randomness, more equality, I have said. Trouble is that the randomness of wildlife and horizontal market relations in the outposts likely went hand in hand with traits that we cannot see, measure, or divine. Take demography. In the Canadian arctic, in the Amazon, and in the Pacific Islands outsiders were few and natives more, if not many, relative to outsiders. The demographic imbalance no doubt contributed to fairer market play, but makes it hard to tease apart the independent contribution of demography from the properties of the natural resource in shaping the quality of international trade.

Or take the trade savviness of natives during first trade encounters. When Europeans first arrived to North America, some groups, such as the Huron (Starkey, 1998, p. 9; Trigger, 1976, p. 622 vol. 2 ), Cree, and Assiniboine (Krech, 1999, p. 138) already had experience bartering with tribes in distant lands. Experience allowed them to bring more sophistication and a touch of haughtiness to the bargaining table.

Last, consider the strength of the European imperial arm. Unlike international trade in commercial crops or precious minerals, the economics of international trade in wildlife attracted little attention from European Crowns because – Tsarist Russia aside – trade in animal wildlife represented pocket chance to European monarchs (Andrews, 1984, p. 50; Bentley, 1993, p. 177; Curtin, 1984, p. 218; E. R. Wolf, 1982, p. 158). Thus, in trying to identify the determinants of equitable trade between natives and Whites across the world -- Mundurukú rubber tappers in Brazil, trappers in the Canadian arctic and the Northwest Coast, sandalwooders in the Pacific Islands – some might argue that it was a weak imperial European outreach bordering on harmless



neglect rather than the type of natural resources which inadvertently wrought equality between trading partners of different cultures. Perhaps, but here the omitted cog works in our favor. By erasing the footprint of European policies on the outposts, a weak imperial presence allows us to see with greater sharpness how natives reacted to international trade itself more than to European imperial trade policies.

In any case, one can easily enlarge the list of elisions. Some will strengthen our tale, some will weaken it, and some will leave it unchanged. This said, our tale has the advantage of stressing how the randomness of goods coveted by Whites might have shaped the quality of first market encounters. When European merchant with their superior military might focused their gaze and efforts overseas on large deposits of precious minerals, lands for permanent settlement, or cultivated crops, natives had little bargaining power in markets. They lost. In riposte the skeptic might say this is almost everything, everywhere, most of the time. We have explained little of what happened at the dawn of modern intercultural international trade. True, but the outliers clarify the average. In the search for wildlife things differed. With wildlife the same merchant-soldiers who killed, raped, and robbed had to read and act a different script. They had to bend to native wills and whims. Some went native: dress like them, marry them, learned their language and etiquette (Salmond, 1997, p. 397). The randomness of the natural resource formed the cornerstone of a horizontal dyadic contract between natives and White, but natives had an even stronger upper hand in the contracts when they had room to flee, brawn, and many customers.

## End note

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<sup>i</sup> The cultures of Papua New Guinea provide a recent example of the diversity of reactions to the arrival of Westerners. During 1935 an expedition headed by two Australians, Hide and O'Malley, with 42 local policemen from the coast of Papua New Guinea travelled over 1800 km of wilderness and reached several indigenous groups without prior exposure to Westerners. When they reached the Huli, a leader “sought to assert his authority over the *dama* [technically, spirits or ghosts, but also a term applied to the strangers whom they mistook as spirits], bravely confronting them and making speeches apparently telling them that their gifts of axes, beads and cloth were not wanted, and trying to advise them which route they should take. His motive was apparently to show leadership and win renown, by deflecting the patrol from populated areas where they might bring disaster. In contrast, a younger aspiring leader sought to befriend the patrol leaders, perhaps to win status and spiritual gifts” (Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1997, p. 137). da Costa provides examples of the reaction of Africans to the arrival of the first Portuguese (da Costa, 1985, p. 51).

<sup>ii</sup> The “Noble Savage” hypothesis says that tribals make judicious stewards of natural resources because of their conservation values. For a dissenting view of the Noble Savage hypothesis and for a review of the debate see (Hames, 2007; Krech, 1999).

<sup>iii</sup> For other examples of proper behavior during first encounters in the Pacific Islands see (Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1997). For an example of initial friendly peace overtures between Portuguese and West Africans in the late fifteenth century see (Elbl, 1992). Writing about Amerigo Vespucci and Christopher Columbus, Felipe Fernández-Armesto impugns the veracity of their narratives about an Edenic New World inhabited by friendly locals interested in trade because, he says, such accounts were tropes to encourage European investments and patronage (Fernández-Armesto, 2007). See also Landes (Landes, 1998, p. 75).

<sup>iv</sup> On the role of language in shaping first encounters between Portuguese explorers and West Africans at the end of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries see (Elbl, 1992). For the range of reactions – mostly positive, but some acerbic -- to first encounters in modern times see (Schieffelin & Crittenden, 1991).

<sup>v</sup> The British East India Company initially prohibited the ship’s crew and employers from trading, but gradually relaxed the interdiction because it could not enforce it. See (Krishna, 1924), pp. 77-79.

<sup>vi</sup> I say “directly” because indirectly they could enlist some groups to enslave others. For instance, the Dutch West Indian Company in Guiana bought Indian slaves from its allies, the “ferocious” Indian Caribs, but Dutch slave trade in Guiana did not match the importance of Dutch trade in dyes, woods, oil, and balsam (Goslinga, 1971, pp. 409, 428).

<sup>vii</sup> As O’Meara notes (pp. 130-132), some Indian groups enslaved women and traded them to Europeans, who kept them as bedmates. However, much of his book deals with voluntary unions between Indian women and White men. Indian women valued unions with Whites because it

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lessened their work load, and traders, besides sexual companionship, saw in their Indian mates a way of cementing alliances with locals.

<sup>viii</sup> For instance, in early Colonial New England, Indians were known to murder unscrupulous traders of beaver furs (Moloney, 1931, pp. 38, 42-43).

<sup>ix</sup> During the first 30 years after the discovery of the Potosí silver mines in Bolivia, the local labor force included independent workers and workers whom the Spaniards had forced to work in the mines, but after the 1570s the predominant form of employment consisted of forced *mita* laborers (Stern, 1988, pp. 850-851).

<sup>x</sup> The Spanish Crown could have done the same in Mexico, except the silver and gold deposits were smaller (Lockhart & Schwartz, 1983, p. 100).

<sup>xi</sup> More broadly, European thirst for land for permanent settlement, whether to build towns, as in North America, or gaols, as in Australia, eroded the need for permanent dialogue with locals. On Australia see Broome (Broome, 2002).

<sup>xii</sup> My idea resembles historian William McNeill's insight that lords from ancient empires could use their armies and claims to the divine to subjugate locals, but that they had to treat distant trading partners with respect because it was harder to force the latter to pay tribute or produce goods for the empire. I would add that it was not merely the distance, but the property of the resource that demanded respect. He writes: "Commands were incapable of compelling populations to dig the ore, smelt it into ingots, and then carry it across the sea and land to the place where kings and high priests wanted it" (p. 5). The Spanish Crown did just this in the Andes and Mexico starting in the sixteenth century (McNeill, 1982).

<sup>xiii</sup> For example, during the fifteenth century when Ivan the Great annexed Siberia to Muscovy, his armies captured and brought back native Siberians along with pelts, then much in demand in China, Central Asia, and Europe (Fernández-Armesto, 2006, p. 187). Russians would take hostages from villages until villagers paid tribute in pelts. Russians would torch villages and take livestock, women, and children until villagers paid back. The use of force to extract pelts soon gave way to migration by Muscovite traders, convicts, and soldiers, who settled and became the new hunters of Siberia, displacing the need for native trappers. In part because they were sedentary part or full-time trappers, the Tsar could impose tributes in fur from the new migrants (Borbrick, 1992).

<sup>xiv</sup> During the 1820s Westerners came to Hawaii to buy sandalwood to export to China. A feral good in the upland forest, sandalwood had to be found, cut, and transported to ports. The extraction of sandalwood hurt villagers, not because of European avarice, but because traditional chiefs with mana-like power also controlled lands and irrigation and thus had the levers to force villagers to prospect for and process sandalwood on their behalf (Sahlins, 1992, pp. 83-84).

<sup>xv</sup> My explanation suggests that because native peoples moved and hid to avoid enslavement, Europeans in search of slave had to enter into contractual arrangements with local tribes, which

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would prospect for slaves on behalf of Europeans. Because the slave trade went hand in hand with inter-tribal warfare, it provides a noisy natural experiment to assess how native peoples reacted to the arrival of the modern market. As noted, we exclude the slave trade, but if my reasoning is right, then one would predict relatively egalitarian relations between Europeans and tribal slave raiders.

<sup>xvi</sup> Curtin notes that in North America, “all-European” attempts to capture furs without help from Indians took place only briefly during the early nineteenth century in the Western USA (Curtin, 1984, p. 217). The so-called “rendezvous” system lasted only about two decades (1820-1840) and arose in part because Indians in the Rocky Mountains were unwilling to hunt on behalf of White traders. The system consisted of European-Americans and Indians trapping beavers and swapping pelts with trading companies at designated points (Wishart, 1979).

<sup>xvii</sup> During the first half of the nineteenth century, west of the Rocky Mountains, trappers working for the British Hudson’s Bay Company had a more enlightened policy toward Indians than trappers working for American firms (Mackie, 1997, p. 113).

<sup>xviii</sup> European fishermen in eastern North America during the sixteenth century came in contact with Native Americans mainly when they landed on shore to dry fish with salt before returning to Europe. Fishermen brought their own commercial goods from Europe to trade with native for pelts. The swaps were a side activity, a “capricious by-product” of fishing to supplement fishermen’s income (Morison, 1971, p. 477). Besides pelts, fishermen also traded for fresh food (Brebner, 1937, p. 139).

<sup>xix</sup> Thanks to the skills of an able manager who worked in the Northwest Coast for 27 years during the early nineteenth century, the Russian-American company developed good relations with skilled Aleut hunters, who were sometimes subcontracted to trading companies from Boston. Aleut hunters were presumably better hunters than native Alaskans (Wheeler, 1971, pp. 425-427). See also (B. R. Ferguson, 1984b, p. 274).

<sup>xx</sup> Writing about the native populations of the Northwest Coast and the Bearing Strait, Gibson notes the superiority of native over European fishing technology, and that for this reason Russians relied on native foragers (Gibson, 1996, p. 23).

<sup>xxi</sup> A less bizarre proposal consisted of encouraging immigration from Spain to ease labor bottlenecks (Fifer, 1970, p. 132).

<sup>xxii</sup> Several researchers have argued that the martial spirit and skills of native peoples who engaged in international trade with most success developed as a result of international trade, rather than pre-dating it. Their examples include the Asante of West Africa, the Miskito and Kuna Indians of Central America, and the Iroquois and other groups in North America. Some of these groups created confederacies to “muscle and palaver their way to the center of European attention” (Axtell, 2000, p. 103)(Olien, 1988; Wesler, 1983). More recently, historian Pekka Hämäläinen shows how the Comanche in the eighteenth century travelled quickly from a humble,

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defeated hunting and gather society of Shoshonean stock in the plains and moved to the Southwest in search of slaves and horses to form a vast territorial empire that terrorized and dominated much of the Southwest after coming into contact with Europeans (Hämäläinen, 2008).

<sup>xxiii</sup> Of course, one could say the same about the randomness of natural resources. Randomly-distributed animal wildlife might have contributed to the formation of a particular type of socio-economic organization, such as small, mobile, independent bands, which, in turn, could have shaped a type of cultural personality that encouraged independence and that would have abhorred mistreatment from European traders. Thus, scattered wildlife could have shaped the tone of market transactions through various paths and to the extent that one cannot control for the various paths, inferences about the role of animal wildlife in shaping the quality of market transactions could be biased. I return to this point in the conclusion.

<sup>xxiv</sup> For examples in Latin America of how native chiefs and kings regulated international trade with customers from Europe, the Caribbean, and the United States see Olien's discussion of Miskito Kings regulating trade with inland groups in Central America and Kuna chiefs regulating trade within their territory (Olien, 1988).

<sup>xxv</sup> For examples elsewhere in the Pacific Islands of how chiefs and commoners dominated and imposed their terms on the exports of sandalwood see (Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1997, pp. 143-145).

<sup>xxvi</sup> Historian Benson Bobrick (Bobrick, 1992, p. 251) notes that even by the middle of the nineteenth century, the Tlingit "still .... controlled the land beyond the [Russian] settlements...No Russian dared go 50 paces out from the fortress, unarmed". He goes on to note that the Tlingit "seldom attended church except out of curiosity, laughed out loud on occasion in the middle of the service...or got up and walked out. A special church had been built for them, but in a revolt they attempted in 1855 they merely occupied it as a vantage point from which to inflict damage on the Russian garrison" (pp. 252-3). The independent martial spirit of the Tlingit was directed not only at the Russians, but at any European trying to curb fur trade. Anthropologist Eric R. Wolf notes that when the Hudson's Bay Company built a fort on the Stikine River to halt Tlingit fur trade with the Russians "the Tlingit threatened to destroy it...In 1854 the Chilkat Tlingit sent a war party 300 miles inland to the Yukon Valley to destroy the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Selkirk, which they felt interfered with their trade". (E. R. Wolf, 1982), p. 190. Vinkovetsky (2011, p. 87) notes that Golovin's depiction of Tlingit belligerence might have been exaggerated to justify the sale of the Russian-American Company.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Inter-cultural differences in native belligerence in the Aleutian Island and the Northwest Coast did not descent randomly from heaven. One can trace them to micro-level differences between cultures in population size, weather, reliability of access to natural resources, geography, and settlement pattern. (Gibson, 1980) (Gibson, 1996; Vinkovetsky, 2011, pp. 20-21).

<sup>xxviii</sup> Local political organization protected tribals irrespective of the goods traded, and this applied to states and to empires, not just to tribals. During the seventeenth century when the British, Dutch, and French reached Indonesia, India, and Japan they cared about fixed visible resources, such as tree crops (e.g., cloves, mace, nutmeg, tea), annual crops (e.g., cotton, sugar),

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and silk, indigo, and saltpetre. Unless they fell under the protection of powerful local lords, such as the Mogul emperors of India or the emperor of Japan, the natives in Asia were in a weak bargaining position vis-à-vis Europeans. When trading for these types of goods in India, the British East India Company had to comply with the wishes of the Mogul emperor, and when trading with Japan the Dutch East India Company had to follow the trade dictates of the Emperor. Powerful local potentates attenuated European lust for profits. In the Maluku Islands, Portuguese and Dutch could mistreat locals and uproot their clove trees because the indigenous political organization was weak (Khan, 1923, pp. 17-18, 22).

<sup>xxix</sup> One can find other examples of the use of kinship to bring in outsiders into one's universe. The Iroquois brought in Dutch traders into their kinship universe through bonds of fictive kinship. (Dennis, 1993).

<sup>xxx</sup> Antonio de Miranda might have overstated Indian attachment to the Dutch and the need of force to create a monopoly cum monopsony because he had gone to South America to assess European intrusion into Portuguese lands and the need to build forts to protect Portuguese interests (Edmundson, 1904).

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