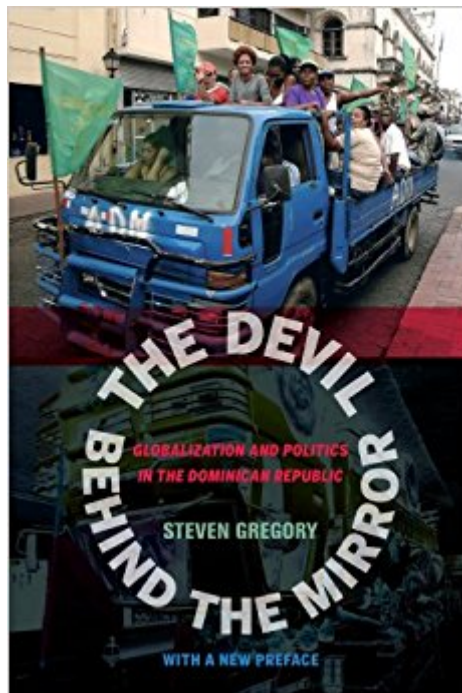




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The Devil Behind The Mirror: Globalization And Politics In The Dominican Republic



Synopsis

In *The Devil behind the Mirror*, Steven Gregory provides a compelling and intimate account of the impact that transnational processes associated with globalization are having on the lives and livelihoods of people in the Dominican Republic. Grounded in ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the adjacent towns of Boca Chica and Andrács, Gregory's study deftly demonstrates how transnational flows of capital, culture, and people are mediated by contextually specific power relations, politics, and history. He explores such topics as the informal economy, the making of a telenova, sex tourism, and racism and discrimination against Haitians, who occupy the lowest rung on the Dominican economic ladder. Innovative, beautifully written, and now updated with a new preface, *The Devil behind the Mirror* masterfully situates the analysis of global economic change in everyday lives.

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Customer Reviews

"In his stunningly vivid picture of communities grappling with the demons of economic globalization, Gregory shows how peoples' livelihoods are devalued and torn asunder when they are exposed to the rough justice of the market. An absorbing case study and an ethnographic tour de force."—Andrew Ross, author of *Fast Boat to China: Corporate Flight and the Consequences of Free Trade* "Steven Gregory has done it again. Globalization, tourism, citizenship, gender, work, media, urban development—no topic is left untouched in this gifted and much awaited ethnography. This work is sure to illuminate and teach us much about the contemporary workings of

neoliberalism and power in the Caribbean and Latin America."#151;Arlene D'Ávila, author of *Barrio Dreams: Puerto Ricans, Latinos, and the Neoliberal City*"For small countries, globalization glitters with the promise of deliverance from entrenched poverty. But in the Dominican Republic, Steven Gregory finds a crazy quilt of tourist development that fixes labor, racial, and gender inequalities in place. With wit and flair, ordinary folks mock and challenge the deceptive surfaces of globalization. Gregory has written an important account of how globalization creates hope and yet hurts people in poor countries."#151;Aihwa Ong, author of *Buddha Is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America*, and *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*"The Devil behind the Mirror is a truly great book. Steven Gregory powerfully reveals the myriad ways in which poor#151;but always resourceful#151;people in one particular place live in, through, and against the effects of globalization. In the process, Gregory demonstrates the continuing, and indeed increasingly urgent, value of on-the-ground ethnographic research in the contemporary world. Linking global dynamics with real people's lives, the book is both brilliantly argued and beautifully written."#151;Sherry B. Ortner, author of *New Jersey Dreaming* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Steven Gregory is Professor of Anthropology and African-American Studies at Columbia University. He is the author of *Santería - a in New York City: A Study in Cultural Resistance* and *Black Corona: Race and the Politics of Place in an Urban Community*. He coedited *Race* with Roger Sanjek.

I have been living in Santo Domingo for a little over a year and found this book extremely helpful in providing insights into the lives of the working poor in the Dominican Republic. It goes a long way in dispelling myths and stereotypes that are so easily fabricated by ignorance, prejudice and fear. Everyone knows that the Haitians occupy a narrowly defined place in Dominican society and Steven Gregory does a good job explaining in cultural and historical terms why this is so. Also particularly interesting was the discussion about Dominican women's place in society and the extremely complex and shifting nature of their struggle for survival and identity. I agree with another reviewer here that the author relies too heavily on esoteric academic language. In his efforts to place the Dominican experience in a global framework, his analyses tend to resemble an anthropological PhD. dissertation instead of a book aimed at a wider audience. Not being an anthropologist nor being very familiar with the language of "Globalization Theory", I found myself having to reread whole paragraphs two and three times to understand what he was saying. Despite this challenge, I highly recommend the book for those interested in the subject who have the wherewithal to wade

through some difficult passages.

Gregory did a fine job demonstrating how globalization influences the daily lives of Dominicans. He seemed to critique neo-liberalism by highlighting displaced citizens and how they must cope. But while I am no apologist for capitalism, one thing crossed my mind...this could be helping the Dominicans it displaced. For instance, he mentions how the local sugar plant closed and now there are hundreds of underemployed workers. He said they are now forced to open shops like salons and bars in order to survive. While this may have less state-guaranteed benefits and pay, it creates an entrepreneur spirit which ultimately creates more small business and wealth. So in that regard, it seemed un-balanced. Also I couldn't help but wonder how in-depth the ethnography was. It read to me shallow...like skimming the surface of situations. His friend towards the end of the book who died of AIDS. Gregory was never able to explore the circumstances that created this event. Did the informal economy of prostitution, drugs, etc...place this person into an environment which forced many Dominicans to face: The sacrificing of personal safety for the benefit or desires of tourist? To me, something truly revealing could have been uncovered by a deeper penetration of this man's life. Overall, I gained insights from the book. It was interesting and educational to see how the dynamics of globalization are affecting the lives of Dominicans (and everyone throughout the world). There is little doubt that any person who reads Gregory's book will gain valuable insights. My only critic is that it seems to scratch the surface of how globalization really affects the lives of the people it taunts to benefit.

I just spent a short time with a Church mission in a small Dominican community. So much of this study rings true, from injuries in motor scooter/car accidents, hair braiding, punitive power blackouts, and the constant concern about getting enough money to live on. On the plus side he also shows the engaging personalities of so many people and their ability to live in a civil fashion despite the poverty. My one criticism might be the abstract terminology that the author uses to link the events and people he observes to world systems theory. It does not quite work and gets in the way of an otherwise excellent characterization of Dominican society. Given the paucity of authentic studies of Dominican society, it is fortunate that we have this work to enhance our understanding.

You hit the nail on the head. This book encompasses a lot of what goes on in the dark corners in DR. It made me sad because I know of a few people who live that life. I truly loved this book.

I recommend that this book be rewritten in layman's terms, it would sell much better. Until then, it will continue in obscurity. If the purpose of this book is academic then scholars won't care much about the personal stories, if the purpose is informative, then your average reader doesn't care much about anthropological terms. Also, the author bungles regular Dominican phrases, it's almost like he didn't even really live there. Last and most important of all, the author is an obvious leftist academic who is trying really hard to persuade everybody that privatization policies are ruining Dominican Republic, but he has little to back up his claim. Blackouts have been a daily occurrence in Dominican Republic since I was born in 1979, it didn't come with privatization. And wages below a "living wage" didn't originate with Free Trade Zones, there was never a "living wage" in the DR. These policies haven't improved anything but haven't made anything much worse either. A year or two hanging out at a world famous resort town does not make you a Dominican economic expert.

This book brilliantly shows the structures in which people in tourist towns in the Dominican Republic today find themselves, and the different ways people cope with such structures. It continues the solid tradition that Gregory established with his other works, like Black Corona.

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