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History, Zomia, Closure

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It is difficult to expound in any pithy fashion on the imprint that James C. Scott's work has had on writing history in the orbit of Asia. Where to start? From *The Moral Economy of the Peasant* all the way to *Against the Grain*,[1] Scott's work has found receptive and fertile ground among his peers in Asian studies, who have often proudly pointed out to their non-Asianist colleagues that Scott is "one of their own." This has certainly been true "internally" as well, in the ways that Southeast Asianists have spoken to their fellow professionals in the larger, allied subdisciplines of South and East Asian studies. It does not matter that Scott's books have touched on a wide variety of subjects: the central concerns with power, agency, space, and the essence of a shared humanity have all resonated with his professional interlocutors.

In this contribution, I consider some of the ways that the notion of Zomia—as elucidated most forcefully and completely in Scott's *The Art of Not Being Governed*—has inspired work in Asian studies by thinkers across a range of disciplines.[2] Most of the scholars mentioned here have written on historical themes, even if not all of them are card-carrying historians. Because a number of us have been asked to write for the *Journal of Asian Studies*, I will focus only on Zomia here, though one easily could orient a piece toward any number of other topics, vis-à-vis Scott and his outsize influence on the field.

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You might realize that a book of yours has "arrived" when an entire issue of a journal—in this case the *Journal of Global History*, not even in Scott's purported discipline of political science, or even his "adopted" discipline of anthropology (although who adopted whom is up for debate)—is devoted to your monograph. Yet this is what happened in July 2010, roughly a year after *The Art of Not Being Governed* was published, when scholars working across different Asian geographies were asked to weigh in on Scott's new book. One of these scholars, an anthropologist, looked at Scott's notions of Zomia (developed in discussion with Willem van Schendel, a nod that Scott rarely, if ever, forgets to make) in the Himalayas and asked whether his ideas worked there, in a mountain range seemingly to the west of the Zomia massif.[3]

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[1]James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1976); Scott, *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2017).
[2]James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009).
[3]Sara Shneiderman, "Are the Central Himalayas in Zomia? Some Scholarly and Political Considerations across Time and Space," *Journal of Global History* 5, no. 2 (2010): 289–312.

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Another queried the function of the main lines of the argument in Wa mining country in northern Burma, an enclave of notorious "lawlessness" on the China frontier.[4] Still another penetrated further into China, taking the argument into Sichuan and Yunnan, across Southeast Asia entirely, and into a Sinic sphere of action.[5] Finally, a fourth lost sight of the specifics of geography entirely and asked whether a new term needed to be invented for the patterns that Scott elucidated, since the minority populations he studied stretched across all of these landscapes.[6] The range of the essays gives some sense of what was at stake: how could Scott possibly be applied across all of this mountainous topography?

That query may, in fact, be one of the main points of reading *The Art of Not Being Governed*; it is destabilizing to its very core. Scholars have called Scott's musings a "Post-Modern History of Nowhere,"[7] while other academics have noted that his book interrogates what we think we know about the notion of "place" and may in fact have hastened the decline of area studies, which was already suffering at the time Scott was writing in the wake of new forms of globalization and transnationalism.[8] Scott's ruminations on the uplands of Southeast Asia called into question long-accepted categories of regional classification and led to fretting about where parts of Asia should be located, if his deep-seated historical ethnography was correct.[9] One could almost feel the map of Southeast Asia, and parts of adjacent southwest China and northeastern India (both of which I will talk more about in a moment), heaving, twisting, almost churning on a slow boil. The *Routledge Handbook of Asian Borderlands* needed to create a new chapter—"Zomia and Beyond."[10] The author of that essay asked elsewhere, "What's (Written) History For?," when it was clear that the act of inscribing many of these upland peoples into lowland knowledge—what is called "history," in other places—was clearly an act in and of itself that needed serious explaining.[11]

A lot was moving in these Scottian landscapes, several hundred meters above sea level. One of the most important of these things was opium; Zomia and what has often been called the "Golden Triangle" nicely overlap on many maps. The transit of illicit commerce such as opium, local and translocal politics, and frontiers all influenced each other organically as the nineteenth century unfolded, especially as imperialism came to the

[4]Magnus Fiskesjo, "Mining, History, and the Anti-State Wa: The Politics of Autonomy between Burma and China," *Journal of Global History* 5, no. 2 (2010): 241–64.
[5]C. P. Giersch, "Across Zomia with Merchants, Monks, and Musk: Process Geographies, Trade Networks, and the Inner-East-Southeast Asian Borderlands," *Journal of Global History* 5, no. 2 (2010): 215–39.
[6]Jean Michaud, "Editorial: Zomia and Beyond," *Journal of Global History* 5, no. 2 (2010): 187–214.
[7]T. Brass, "Scott's 'Zomia,' or a Populist Post-Modern History of Nowhere," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 42, no. 1 (2012): 132–33.
[8]J. K. Gibson-Graham, "'After' Area Studies? Place-Based Knowledge for Our Time," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 34, no. 5 (2016): 799–806; Shane Barter, "Area Studies, Asian Studies, and the Pacific Basin," *Geographical Review* 105, no. 1 (2015): 105–19.
[9]Jonathan Saha, "Is It in India? Colonial Burma as a 'Problem' in South Asian History," *South Asian History and Culture* 7, no. 1 (2016): 23–29.
[10]Jean Michaud, "Zomia and Beyond," In *Routledge Handbook of Asian Borderlands*, ed. Alexander Horstmann, Martin Saxer, and Alessandro Rippa (New York: Routledge, 2018), 73–88.
[11]Jean Michaud, "What's (Written) History For? On James C. Scott's *Zomia*, Especially Chapter 6½," *Anthropology Today* 33, no. 1 (2017): 6–10.

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region.[12] Britain was particularly interested in these landscapes, in its colonial contest with France, but also in the mercantilist idea of a "backdoor" route to the riches of China. But the Burmese and Siamese courts were also, of course, implicated in these processes, as each of these state actors tried to bring highland peoples to heel, and to use them for their own purposes. Zomia became a vast upland arena where commodities and people and contraband flowed in larger and larger quantities, circulating up and above the clouds, and above the reach of many lowland states as well, at least to tax or control.[13] Arjun Appadurai's elegant phrase "the social lives of things" helps us understand how opium, munitions, and (yes) slaves as human commodities helped make this world-at-altitude function for a long period of time.[14] The fact that this was a liminal space was absolutely crucial to the functioning of the whole system; Zomia was born out of this sort of dissident history. It managed to maintain this outlaw quality in a world more and more governed by rules for a far longer period of time than most other places.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, however, the rules around Zomia being Zomia started to change. Thongchai Winichakul has shown how state fascinations with mapping and territorial control—almost unknown in this part of the world—began to give way to more Western, Westphalian notions of command and control.[15] Earlier concepts of "mandalas" and overlapping jurisdictions were no longer tenable in the age of High Imperialism; land grabbing and extraction, not to mention the establishment of routes to greater riches, such as Yunnan Province in China, made these earlier spatial "ways of being" obsolete.[16] Though lowland Southeast Asian courts participated in these transvaluations reluctantly at first, they were quick learners, and they understood the utility of some of these concepts in advancing their own power in relation to the upland peoples of the region. What had been relationships of "give and take" became less give, more take; mapping could be used to try to force exclusive claims—on rice and other crops, on sons (for military use), and on daughters (for royal harems).

Zomia's quixotic existence as a free space among what were, in fact, larger closing spaces began to change. By the late nineteenth century, after a series of three punitive wars in the 1820s, 1850s, and 1880s, there was precious little Burmese territory left

[12]James Rush, *Opium to Java, 1860–1910* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990); Carl Trocki, *Opium, Empire, and the Global Economy: A Study of the Asian Opium Trade* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Timothy Brook and Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, eds., *Opium Regimes: China, Britain and Japan, 1839–1952* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Diana Kim, *Empires of Vice: The Rise of Opium Prohibition across Southeast Asia* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2020).

[13]David Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate: Islam, Ethnicity, and the Panthay Rebellion in Southwest China, 1856–1873* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005); C. P. Giersch, *Corporate Conquests: Business, the State, and the Origins of Ethnic Inequality in Southwest China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2020).

[14]Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[15]Winichakul Thongchai, *Siam Mapped: The History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997).

[16]Eric Tagliacozzo, "Ambiguous Commodities, Unstable Frontiers: The Case of Burma, Siam, and Imperial Britain, 1800–1900," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46, no. 2 (2004): 354–77; Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders: Smuggling and States along a Southeast Asian Frontier, 1865–1915* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005).

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that had not been reached by advance agents of colonial British rule, be they missionaries, scholars, statesmen, or soldiers.[17] Northern Vietnam and Laos were also being pressed from the opposite direction, by Gallic soldiery and civil servants eager to expand the bounds of French Indochina.[18] Through the early twentieth century and up until World War II, these processes continued more or less unabated, in a widening embrace of landscapes and people who had previously operated almost with impunity in regional patterns of politics and exchange.

These were not just artifacts of historical relationships in this arena, however. Alfred McCoy was one of the first to call global attention to the modern history of this region, and to the convoluted material and political pathways of the poppy in our own lived histories, writing at the time of the Vietnam War in the 1970s. McCoy's seminal work, which went beyond the academy in its scope and readership, was followed by that of Bertil Lintner, Edith Mirante, and others.[19] It immediately became clear that these were not simply historical pathways, though the trade in poppies in this part of the world goes back quite a long time, as we have seen, to an era of mule caravans that crisscrossed Zomia into the political spaces of kingdoms that were far outside of Southeast Asia proper.[20] It is also clear that opium is still an enduring part of the historical present in many of these landscapes, despite vigorous attempts at its suppression. This is the case in places such as Omkoi, an enclave in northwestern Thailand, where opium is still the principal crop that people cultivate to survive, despite eradication regimes.[21] It has also been vital to the rise and fall of warlords, such as Burma's Khun Sa, who used the highland crop of Zomia as a form of arbitrage in dealing with the differentials (political, economic, developmental) of neighboring massif societies, and the Burmese lowlands as well.[22]

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Biota—both flora and fauna—have also been in widespread circulation in Scott's Zomia. The notion of this highland space as a "region of refuge" holds not just for people, but for all manner of plants and creatures from the natural world that have

[17]Thant Myint-U, *The Making of Modern Burma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[18]Andrew Walker, *The Legend of the Golden Boat: Regulation, Trade and Traders in the Borderlands of Laos, Thailand, China and Burma* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999); Grant Evans, Chris Hutton, and Kuah Khun Eng, eds., *Where China Meets Southeast Asia: Social and Cultural Change in the Border Regions* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000); Christian C. Lentz, *Contested Territory: Dien Bien Phu and the Making of Northwest Vietnam* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2019).
[19]Alfred McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972); Bertil Lintner, *Burma in Revolt: Opium and Insurgency since 1948* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1999); Edith Mirante, *Burmese Looking Glass* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994).
[20]Anne Maxwell-Hill, *Merchants and Migrants: Ethnicity and Trade among Yunnanese Chinese in Southeast Asia* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998).
[21]Bobby Anderson and Patamawadee Jongruck, "Forestry, Illegibility, and Illegality in Omkoi, Northwest Thailand," *Forest and Society* 1, no. 2 (2017): 98–109; Bobby Anderson, "People Land and Poppy: The Political Ecology of Opium and the Historical Impact of Alternative Development in Northwest Thailand," *Forest and Society* 1, no. 1 (2017): 48–59; Bobby Anderson, "Zomia's Vestiges: Illegible Peoples and Legible Crimes in Omkoi, Northwest Thailand," *South East Asia Research* 26, no. 1 (2018): 38–57.
[22]Ariel I. Ahram and Charles King, "The Warlord as Arbitrageur," *Theory and Society* 41, no. 2 (2012): 169–86.

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found a kind of sanctuary in the hills from the depredations of state-making processes and "development" more generally. Traditional knowledge of biodiversity, crop-yielding regimes, and usufruct of the forest all survive in the Southeast Asian massif. These are cognitive holdovers of a different time, when sedentarization was less common and people moved rhythmically with the seasons in unbounded highland spaces.[23] Perhaps nowhere is this more apparent than in the ways in which Asian elephants have been kept by Zomian peoples, used in the transit of cargo across wide spaces, but also in the passage of people across putative boundaries. At night, many of these "kept elephants" are let out to mate with their wild cousins in the forest, however, showing a kind of kinship between the imperatives of freedom for both people and animals that would make the theorist Bruno Latour proud.[24] With elephants as with people, colonial agents of the state could only shake their heads; what seemed to be "controllable" by day would disappear into the forest at night. American patrols during the Vietnam War faced a similar logic as these colonial administrators half a century earlier. Their frustrations were perhaps given most eloquent voice by George Orwell, British civil servant in Burma, in his classic essay "On Shooting an Elephant."[25]

Scott admitted in a telling interview how important the Burmese start to his career as a Southeast Asianist was to the progression of his thinking, not only about the region but also his larger conceptual ideas that eventually sprang from these experiences.[26] In Orwell's classic essay, written as the Englishman faced up to a rogue elephant in musk in the 1930s (the high tide of British repression in that country), Scott learned something not only about the dynamics of colonialism in Burma, but about how power worked generally. Scott was already reading widely, and as he made his way through some of the classics of political science and sociology (Barrington Moore and many others), one can see the imprint of some of these thinkers on his sensibilities as a young academic. Michel Foucault's articulation of "power/knowledge" may have still been on the horizon as published work, but Scott was already thinking in some of these terms.[27] Later on, and perhaps more centrally for any discussion of Zomia, Scott was also beginning a conversation with Willem van Schendel, a Dutch anthropologist, the majority of whose work had been on West Bengal and Bangladesh, two places outside the rubric of "Southeast Asia proper."[28] Both scholars had been thinking within larger concerns about where South

[23]Christoph Antons, "Asian Borderlands and the Legal Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expressions," *Modern Asian Studies* 47, no. 4 (2013): 1403–33.

[24]Jacob Shell, "Elephant Convoys beyond the State: Animal-Based Transport as Subversive Logics," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 37, no. 5 (2019): 905–23; Shell, "The Enigma of the Asian Elephant," *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 109, no. 4 (2019): 1154–71.

[25]George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant," in *Eight Modern Essayists*, ed. William Smart (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1936).

[26]Gerardo L. Munck and Richard Snyder, "James C. Scott: Peasants, Power, and the Art of Resistance," in *Passion, Craft, and Method in Comparative Politics*, ed. Gerardo L. Munck and Richard Snyder (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 351–91.

[27]Colin Gordon, ed., *Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980).

[28]Willem van Schendel, "Geographies of Knowing, Geographies of Ignorance: Jumping Scale in Southeast Asia," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 20, no. 6 (2002): 647–68.

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and Southeast Asian "normative patterns" began and ended, in the shared landscape between their field sites. Both also had unorthodox ways of seeing their "own" regions, and they sought answers over horizons that seemed to suggest more continuity than any real, definable separations in history and culture.

The key to this shared vision was in some senses a simple one: altitude. The Zomia massif was a concept that was borne of geography stretching across putative boundaries. This was something that both scholars were seeing (from opposite sides of a landscape) drawn with lines that seemed to exist only tenuously in real space. Culturally, however, this outstretched topography seemed to have remarkable similarities over 300 meters or so, one of the most important being that the more one retreated to "remote" places, as least by the reckoning of lowland states, the more the patterns seemed to stand out.

The "frictions" of these spaces, which seemed to be forever moving away from valleys and centers, was something that later authors who sharpened the toolkit of "Zomia" continually alluded to in their writings.[29] In this sense, places almost always described as "marginal" (the confederation of sparsely populated landscapes known as "Laos"; Hmong areas up in the hills of various parts of the region) became "central."[30] Eventually, these ideas, so radical and oppositional at their genesis, became acculturated into contemporary transfigurations of these landscapes in our own times by a variety of authors.[31] Some even began to talk about such spaces "seeking the state," rather than fleeing it, as a kind of postmodern twist on the original idea.[32] This did not happen everywhere. But it did show the continuity and coherence of a notion that stretched clear across the confines of mainland Southeast Asia, from Burma to Vietnam, with every interconnected landscape of a certain altitude in between.

Indeed, Burma and Vietnam are often represented as the bookend states of mainland Southeast Asia—the nominal polities that keep Zomia "in." Yet, of course, the Zomia paradigm moves the boundary markers even further afield than the traditional designations on modern political maps. Both northeast India and southwest China have been included in the spatial terrain of this conceptual massif, both by Scott and by his admirers and critics. Northeast India figures historically, with scholars looking at specific events, such as the 1826 British treaty with the Khasi in the hills of this

[29]Oliver Tappe, "Introduction: Frictions and Fictions: Intercultural Encounters and Frontier Imaginaries in Upland Southeast Asia," *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 16, no. 4 (2015): 317–22.
[30]Oliver Tappe, "Frontier in the Frontier: Sociopolitical Dynamics and Colonial Administration in the Lao-Vietnamese Borderlands," *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 16, no. 4 (2015): 368–87; Tran Thi Ha Lan and Roy Huijsmans, "Experiencing the State and Negotiating Belonging in *Zomia*: *Pa Koh* and *Bru-Van Kieu* Ethnic Minority Youth in a Lao-Vietnamese Borderland," in *Children and Borders*, ed. Christou Spyrou (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 27–46; Vatthana Pholsena, "State Formation, Social Hierarchies, and Ethnic Dynamics: A Case from Upland Laos," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41, no. 7 (2018): 1294–1311; Seb Rumsby, "Rumours, Sects and Rallies: The Ethnic Politics of Recent Hmong Millenarian Movements in Vietnam's Highlands," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 46, no. 7 (2019): 1346–67.
[31]Alessandro Rippa, "Zomia 2.0: Branding Remoteness and Neoliberal Connectivity in the Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone, Laos," *Social Anthropology* 27, no. 2 (2019): 253–69.
[32]Nicholas Herriman and Monika Winarnita, "Seeking the State: Appropriating Bureaucratic Symbolism and Wealth in the Margins of Southeast Asia," *Oceania* 86, no. 2 (2016): 132–50.

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region,[33] but there are also more recent formulations of resistance and independence in the easternmost extremities of the Indian geo-body.[34] At least some scholars saw the absence of any systemic cartography of this region as emblematic of its status as part of the Zomia paradigm.[35] Others have taken the argument farther west, beyond the accepted confines of what northeast India is considered by most academics today.[36] We will return to that impulse in a moment, but it is safe to say that the tiny and often tumultuous states of eastern India are often associated with these ideas in ways that have made intellectual sense to many scholars working on these problems.

In southwest China—north rather than west of Southeast Asia "proper"—the parameters of inclusion have been even more complex. This has been so from the Miao Rebellion in Guizhou in 1795,[37] to local variants of extension in the Sino/Vietnamese highlands, to Ruili on the Sino/Burmese frontier.[38] On the remote and seldom-traveled corridor of China and Laos, there seems to be a particular affinity for seeing Scott's notions in local lifeways, precisely because of the relative remoteness of the location.[39] Much of this has to do with movement and the ability of populations to cross the lines on maps that are put there by hopeful civil servants in faraway capitals. Yet even more sedentary arrangements such as marriages come into the equation here, particularly in border landscapes such as the Sino-Vietnamese frontier, where ethnic groups have been marrying across international divides (putative or actual) for generations upon generations.[40] The point is that Zomia seems to have caught on in the literature, both as a utilitarian example of how "peripheries" deal with states and as a concept that might be applied widely if local circumstances fit larger theoretical designs. In both of these ways, it has been a formative idea in how praxis and the abstract can be brought to bear on the far-flung places where states meet.

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[33]Andrew May, "Homo in Nubibus: Colonisation and Political Order in the Khasi Hills of Northeast India," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 42, no. 1 (2014): 41–60.

[34]B. G. Karlsson, "Evading the State: Ethnicity in Northeast India through the Lens of James Scott," *Asian Ethnology* 72, no. 2 (2013): 321–33; Rrun Bennike, "Governing Landscapes: Territorialisation and Exchange at South Asia's Himalayan Frontier," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 40, no. 2 (2017): 217–22.

[35]Rila Mukherjee, "India's North-East: An Enigmatic Absence in History and Cartography," in *Playing with Nature: History and Politics of Environment in North-East India*, ed. Sajal Nag (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 33–47.

[36]Arik Moran, "God, King, and Subject: On the Development of Composite Political Cultures in the Western Himalaya, circa 1800–1900," *Journal of Asian Studies* 78, no. 3 (2019): 577–600.

[37]Daniel McMahon, "Were the Miao Kings 'Prophets of Renewal'? The Case of the 1795–1797 Hunan Miao," *Frontiers of History in China* 12, no. 2 (2017): 301–27.

[38]Junxi Qian and XueQiong Tang, "Dilemma of Modernity: Interrogating Cross-Border Ethnic Identities in China's Southwest Frontier," *AREA* 49, no. 1 (2017): 52–59; Jinba Tenzin, "Contesting Border/Frontier Studies in China and Beyond: The Prospects and Pitfalls of Zomia as a Metaphor," *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review*, no. 24 (2017): 192–99.

[39]Pal Nyiri, "Enclaves of Improvement: Sovereignty and Developmentalism in the Special Zones of the China-Lao Borderlands," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54, no. 3 (2010): 533–62; Guido Sprenger, "Transcultural Communication and Social Order Comparison in Upland Southeast Asia," *Asian Ethnology* 72, no. 2 (2013): 299–319.

[40]Elena Barabantseva, "When Borders Lie Within: Ethnic Marriages and Illegality on the Sino-Vietnamese Frontier," *International Political Sociology* 9, no. 4 (2015): 352–68.

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These vast dimensions of Zomia, almost accordion-like in their flexibility, make one wonder, perhaps, "is there a Zomia too far?" Do Scott's ideas really climb all hills and apply to all terrain? Would this all work on the Andean altiplano in South America, or in the Pyrenees (where France meets Spain), or in highland Ethiopia (where Christianity separates itself from the Muslim coasts of Eritrea)? It is an intriguing question, and one for an army of researchers—true believers and agnostics both—to try to ascertain. Even just staying in Asia, as we have been told to do in this forum, in the central Himalayan frontier of India with Nepal, arguments have been made for inclusion; maybe this is a district akin enough to Zomia, and close enough, too, to be included?[41] Afghanistan—where opium, altitude, and the invasions of successive lowland "civilizations" (British, Soviet, American) indicate patterns similar to Zomia in "greater Southeast Asia"—has certainly been referenced as an analogous space.

Yet Scott's arguments have also been tabled to look at similar processes in the Punjab, a mostly arid (and largely flat) landscape all the way on the other side of India, bordering Pakistan.[42] They have also been used in central India, far from any international frontier, to deal with the question of Maoist revolts on the Deccan. Sure, this is hilly country, and sometimes lawless country, but are the paradigms really the same?[43] An argument has even been made to extend Zomia to the Amur River, in Russia's frozen Far East. This was attempted by two authors who felt that Zomia's characteristics worked even there, far from the monsoon south of Asia, and further still from the hilly massif whose topography Scott said helped dictate the norms of this region.[44] It might *not* be that Zomia's teachings work everywhere, and at every time in history, despite the keen insights of the model. But I suspect that Scott would say, in characteristically generous fashion, that this is okay. It is the possibility of the notion, and the fertile ground of its applicability, that takes our collective breath away in thinking about what this concept has bequeathed to us all.

[41]Christoph Bergmann, *Himalayan Border Region: Trade, Identity and Mobility in Kumaon, India* (Geneva: Springer, 2016), 1–21, 185–89.
[42]Mahesh Sharma, "The Frayed Margins of Empire: Early Nineteenth Century Panjab and the Hill States," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 54, no. 4 (2017): 505–33.
[43]Michael Spacek, "Internal Borderlands: Architectures of Force and State Expansion in India's Central 'Frontier,'" *Conflict Security and Development* 17, no. 2 (2017): 163–82.
[44]L. E. Bliakher and M. L. Bliakher, "Zomia on the Amur, or State Order against the Order Outside of State," *Politeia: Journal of Political Theory and Political Philosophy and Sociology of Politics* 88, no. 1 (2018): 148–71.

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