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## **Sexing Capitalism: Condoms And Industrial Change**

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# **Sexing Capitalism: Condoms And Industrial Change**

## **Abstract**

In the late 1700s, condoms were luxury items for the affluent in Western Europe, but by the 1970s, the US government gave free condoms out to poor women in Third World areas. Moreover condom availability has increased dramatically since the global emergence of the AIDS pandemic in the 1980s, adding to the already fervent social stigmatization and political contentions on morality, sexuality, and wellbeing that condom use brings. This paper focuses on the strategically joint-relationship between manufacturing firms and governments to foster distinct profit-oriented condom social relations and moral-symbolic regimes of sexual cultures. Proposing a sex-situated theory of capitalist firms, the paper examines the crucial social aspect of condom production, focusing on the changes in the condom manufacturing industry from its initial colonial-“warfare” period (1880s-1930s), its period of massive welfare-state expansion (1940s-1970s), and its recent neoliberal consolidation (1980s-2000s).

## **Keywords**

Capitalist Institutions, Sexual Cultures, Condom Commodities;

Social Aspects of Production; Economic Neoliberalism

## **Sexing Capitalism: Condoms And Industrial Change**

In the late 1700s, condoms were luxury items for the affluent in Western Europe, but by the 1970s, the US government gave free condoms out to poor women in Third World areas. Moreover condom availability has increased dramatically since the global emergence of the AIDS pandemic in the 1980s, adding to the already fervent social stigmatization and political contentions on morality, sexuality, and wellbeing that condom use brings. This paper examines one crucial aspect of condom social relation: the changes in the condom manufacturing industry from its initial period (1880s-1930s), its period of massive expansion (1940s-1970s), and its recent consolidation (1980s-2000s). Arguing for a sex-situated theory of capitalist firms, this paper focuses on the strategically joint-relationships between manufacturing firms and governments to foster distinct profit-oriented condom social relations and moral-symbolic regimes and explores the everyday tendencies for many men and women to challenge and resist these distinct firm-state relations.

### **Sexual Cultures and Capitalist Firms**

While one of US sociology's initial core focus was industrial relations, theories of firms as capitalist remain under-explored (Reed 1996). When sociologists do analyze business firms, they engage with theories of such firms as organizations to counter claims of rationality and efficiency offered by neoclassical economic theories. Recent organizational theories in sociology such as neo-institutionalism (DiMaggio and Powell 1991) place greater emphasis on the role of agency and culture in shaping institutional

life without much examination of the meanings and structuring of capitalist life. That is, they take the existence of capitalism and capitalist social relations for granted and dismiss the variety of analysis that can be offered by Marxist and power-centered analysis of capitalist firms. By focusing changes in the US condom industry, this paper therefore re-orientes (however momentarily) the terrain of organizational studies toward a sociology of capitalist firms.

Yet this analysis of capitalist condom firms also seeks to understand how sexuality and sexual culture are *constitutive* in the politics and relations of production. Conventionally prior analyses of capitalist firms (see Dicken 1998, Wright 2002) provide very little attention to sexuality and sexual culture (with the notable exceptions of worksite sexualized identities and harassment activities). This paper takes as a starting point of condom as a highly sexualized commodity and examines the seemingly unrelated practices producing profit and market relations.

In particular, condom may provide an interesting *exceptional* case to explain the potentially dialectical social relations between capitalism and sexual cultures. These dialectical relations might highlight how capitalism – with the joint action of firms and states – actually needs to rely on sexuality rather than repress it for the continual growth of profits and markets. That is, a sex-situated theory of condom firms might provide an important account of the historical and sociological aspects of sexual-embedded network relations necessary to structure national and global capitalism.

And yet why a exceptionalist and contingent analysis of capitalist firms? This paper does not simply assert that condom commodities are like all other objects in today's market. Indeed the focus on condoms as we will see dictates the necessary social,

political and historical analysis of the changing role of the state and the changing moral symbolic regimes.

As such, this paper sets out to show – using corporate briefings and media reports – how firm-state practices organize, in contingent ways, condom production relations. It is through these practices – out of many others -- that I seek to show how, why, to whom, condoms as commodities come to matter. While this particular paper focuses on industrial change, it is part of larger research project that includes an analysis of condom social relations involving workplace relations, international distribution processes, and community-oriented condom advocacy practices.

Since 2000, three major companies have had condom-manufacturing facilities in the United States: Carter-Wallace (U.S.), Pacific Dunlop (Australia), and SSL International (U.K.). This paper hence charts the beginnings of these modern firms (1880s-1930s), the move into the World War Two period (1940s-1970s), and finally, the first twenty years of HIV/AIDS crisis (1980s to the 2000) to examine condom production through the changes in the industry as manufacturers attempt to make profits through condoms.

### **Condoms and Colonial Capitalism: Starting the Business, 1880s-1930s**

In 1882, Julius Schmid started a business in Long Island, New York (U.S.), making bottle seals out of animal skin membranes. Looking to expand his business in 1888, Schmid began to make natural skin condoms using animal membranes. While his company was not the first to make and sell such condoms, the condoms the company produced had a reputation for quality. In 1904, J. Schmid registered a trademark in the U.S. for Fourex

(XXXX) brand for their natural skin condoms. Schmid bought, in the early 1920s, a latex condom-producing plant in Germany and moved the machinery to Little Falls, New Jersey (U.S.). Ten years later as natural latex condom production became more prominent, J. Schmid registered the following condom brand-trademarks: Sheik (1931), Non-Slip (1932), and Cadets (1934).<sup>1</sup>

Briefly, there are six major simultaneous events affecting the condom industry globally during this 50 years period. First, natural skin condoms were mainly available. Although the first natural latex condoms were mass-produced in 1844 after Thomas Hancock and Charles Goodyear found ways to masticate and vulcanize (the “curing” process) tough rubber into chemically usable form, making natural latex condoms had not yet been perfected. In 1921, Burkhardt Killian patented an automated condom dipping process to produce reliable natural latex condoms. So, Schmid started it business during a period of technological change (from skin to latex) and bought machines to follow with these technological advances.

Second, the contestation between skin and latex production was intrinsically linked with the expansion of the global rubber plantation industry before and during the 50 years period. Companies, relying on the vulcanization process and making rubber products such as tires, condoms, and weatherproofing clothing, had to find sizable and consistent amounts of raw rubber. With the increased need for rubber, large-scale rubber plantations were formed in Asia (Malaysia, Singapore, and Sri Lanka) and Africa (Nigeria) in the late 1870s, away from the previous Brazilian and central African supply. The British India Office, who transplanted rubber seeds from the Amazon valley to the British colonies in Asia, instigated the rise of these cash-crop rubber plantations.<sup>2</sup> The

U.S., British, and German firms needed this solidification of the rubber supply to make certain a continuous supply of rubber would be available and there would be minimal fluctuations in the wholesale price of rubber. For firms such as J. Schmid, producing latex condoms could not be a core part of its operation until the rubber supply became certain. These firms' embrace of latex solely depended on the growth and violent containment of the Southeast Asian rubber plantations from the 1880s onward. The linkages between U.S. and British condom makers with their rubber suppliers in Asia resulted from British *colonial rule*, the later change from colonial rule to post-British independence, and the present form of these rubber plantations. Importantly, the transnational trade and market networks have been forged even for a New Jersey-based company such as J. Schmid since the early 1900s.

The third simultaneous event involved many smaller regional U.S. companies making male prophylactics. Schmid's main competitor was Youngs Drug Corporation, based nearby in New York city. Youngs Drug is historically known for its 1926 legal victory challenging the federal 1873 Comstock Law, which prevented the sale, distribution, and promotion of contraceptives across state boundaries. Because of its victory, Youngs Drug could expand its market by selling its product through pharmacies and drug stores across the country and providing condom-related information. In 1927, Youngs Drug trademarked its Trojan-brand condoms; it trademarked its Naturalamb-brand for natural skin condoms in 1932. In the 1934, Youngs Drug began producing its own natural skin and latex condoms in Trenton, New Jersey. As such, the condom market began to enlarge across the U.S. The legal victory of Youngs Drug set the context for the consolidation of the U.S. condom manufacturers including Killian Latex, J. Schmid,



Shunk Latex (maker of Sultan-brand condoms in the 1930s), and Youngs Drug from many smaller regional firms.

Fourth, while U.S. condom producers were solidifying their business, manufacturers in other countries were also beginning to mass-produce condoms during this same period. Two firms remain important today developed out of their own national markets. Near Melbourne, Australia, an English immigrant founded Ansell in 1905 to produce condoms, balloons, and gloves by dipping wooden shapes into a solvent solution of rubber. In Britain, L. A. Jackson started the London Rubber Company in 1915 and sold German-made condoms; in 1929, it trademarked the brand “Durex.” And in 1932, London Rubber built its own latex condom-manufacturing plant in Cambridge, U.K.

Fifth and a highly significant point, condoms were luxury products during this period. They were used and sold mostly to wealthy men as a prophylactic to prevent getting sexually transmitted infections.<sup>3</sup> The best-known example can be seen in a line drawing of Casanova, in the 1750s, inflating a condom and his recorded boasting of its use.<sup>4</sup> Up to the early 1900s, condoms were costly and marketed in tin box containers as a hygiene product, in the same way as perfumes and body powders during a period when most did not bathe regularly. Simultaneously men of the newly emerging middle-class in Europe and the U.S. could not afford to buy natural skins condoms even if they considered using them. In this way, the initial consumer base of condom manufacturers was heavily restricted to a limited group of wealthy men who wanted to avoid sexually transmitted infections. *Particularly the national wars during this period greatly booster governments’ purchasing of bulk condoms.*

The sixth and final point involves the processes by which to develop a broader base of condom users: the spread of contraceptive advocates and the control in population growth.<sup>5</sup> Margaret Sanger in 1921, for instance, the American Birth Control League, which was involved in increasing the awareness and availability of contraceptives such as condoms to a broader sector of the U.S. population, mainly to the urban poor.<sup>6</sup> The League and other social reform organizations in U.S. and Europe began to focus attention from condoms as a luxury product to them as birth control as a way to reduce urban crime and poverty.

Consequently, from the 1880s to the 1930s, condom manufacturers with their new acquired latex dipping machines had a new expanding source of users, particularly since these companies were restricted for an extended period to advertise their products. Notably key to the development of the early condom “industry” was the joint alliances between firms and states doing through an uneven period of war activities and imperialist rivalries and colonial territorialization, particularly for the U.S. (Spanish-American War, World War One, colonialism of Philippines, Puerto Rico, Cuba, islands in the Caribbean and the Pacific),

### **Welfare Capitalism and Making the Condom Market: 1940s-1970s**

During the period of 1940s to the 1970s, which includes World War Two up to the emergence of the global AIDS pandemic, there are two crucial moments in the condom industry. First, condom manufacturers solidified their national operations and worked to expand globally. Second, the growth of these manufacturers resulted from an internationalizing of the birth control and family planning movements. In short, the

Second World War gave the industry its first boost and the family planning movements its second.

The Second World War provided an expansive new market for condoms. Many U.S. working class and middle-class young men had, for instance, their first exposure to condoms as part of an aggressive military educational program against “venereal diseases” that promoted prophylactics use, particularly through training films (Eberwein 1999). During the First World War, 70 percent of U.S. soldiers in Europe were infected with sexually transmitted diseases because the U.S. military prevented condom use, although such use was allowed for European armed forces. With the new war, the U.S. government provided soldiers with condoms and urged soldiers: “Don’t forget—put it on before you put it in” (Tanquary and Witte 1990). The U.S. military became the largest purchaser of condoms. Such procurement practices were not restricted to the U.S. but involved other countries as well. U.S. soldiers were given condoms during their landing in Dunkirk to protect their rifle barrels from saltwater as the soldier went ashore in 1942. Further, given the rubber supply shortages during the war, condom users had the tendency of washing and reusing them, which they also did before the war. Moreover, given the shortage, U.S., British, and German governments during the war funded research on the production of synthetic rubber to find cost-effective substitutes to natural rubber, which helped spur the interests of synthetic products including condoms.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, the Second World War provided a much broader consumer base and new technology development for condom manufacturers.

Two events involving condom manufacturers happened after the War. First, U.S., Australian, and European manufacturers could rebuild their firms by buying up-to-date

equipment and promoting to their broader consumer base. In 1945, Ansell moved to a larger and different production facility with newly designed automated dipping machines to make condoms and gloves. They hired more personnel to meet the growing need for products in Australia. In 1951, London Rubber Company completed its first fully automated production dipping line to speed up the work; in 1953, the company began to use electronic testing machines for quality control. After the war, Youngs Drug Company introduced “Kling-lite” and “Roldskins” condoms in the U.S. market; in 1954, it introduced “Trojan-Enz,” an innovative condom with a reservoir tip. In Akron, Ohio, Shunk Latex became Akwell Corporation and, in 1959, it introduced its Prime-brand condoms.<sup>8</sup> In 1973, Akwell, bought over by G. D. Seale and Company, moved its condom-manufacturing facility from Ohio to Dothan, Alabama and went from a unionized to a non-unionized plant. Once these companies solidified their national markets, some began to export condoms and to acquire smaller condom manufacturers.<sup>9</sup>

During the 1960s London Rubber Company (U.K.) began to export to other European countries and bought Schmid Laboratories (earlier J. Schmid), closing the New Jersey plant while keeping its natural skin condom processing facility in Humacao, Puerto Rico. As a result, London Rubber gained access to North and Latin American markets. Also, it established a joint venture company with an Indian corporation to make condoms in India. In the 1960s, Ansell acquired a Sydney-based condom-manufacturing firm and began exporting condoms from Australia to Britain, particularly for Boots pharmacies, and the U.S. In 1969, Dunlop Australia acquired Ansell. With all these mergers, condom manufacturers expanded their ability to make also latex, which relies on a similar dipping technology and distribution networks.

Another major effect of the Second World War was modern Japanese condom manufacturers such as Okamoto and Fuji Latex came into existence. With support from the U.S. government, Japan rebuilt its national economy and manufacturing industries. The Japanese government fostered the growth of one of the largest national condom markets (now around 80 percent) by also preventing the sale of contraceptive pills during this period. After the War, the government distributed free condoms and saleswomen for manufacturers sold condoms door-to-door, targeting “housewives” (Butts 1987).

While companies solidified their national markets and explored export opportunities during this period, growing domestic and international “welfare” and state-intervention debates around family planning and birth control led to the further growth of, as well as challenges to, the condom industry. In 1962, the London Rubber Company took part in such activities by opening its own Family Planning Clinic. Many birth control organizations rallied support around abortion rights in the U.S., Britain, and other countries, placing condom use advocacy within the discourse of reproductive rights. Further, government-led national family planning programs and projects started in countries such as India, Egypt, Jamaica, Korea, Mexico, and Thailand; condoms were central components in such programs.<sup>10</sup> The main challenge to the condom industry came in the “sexual revolution” of the late 1960s. The contraceptive pill and the intrauterine device became widely used by women in different parts of the world and so condom use began to decline, especially for the sexual revolution generation in many First World areas. This decline was also connected to the newly available medical treatment for the most prevalent sexually transmitted infections such as gonorrhea and syphilis.

With these two crucial moments, the international business of making condoms became solidified with a core generation of military men experienced in using condoms and an expanding base of users to curtail pregnancy in many parts of the world. With such a foundation, the industry began to face direct competition from other birth control products as well as new medical treatment of sexually transmitted infections. This was the social welfare context globally for the expansion of production in Dothan, Alabama and the coming of the AIDS pandemic.

### **Neoliberal Capitalism and the Consolidating and Legitimizing the Condom Industry: 1980s-2000s**

During this period, the two big international condom producers further consolidated their manufacturing through a series of acquisitions and plant closures. In 1981, Ansell, a subsidiary of Pacific Dunlop (Australia), acquired Akwell Industries for its condom and glove-manufacturing facility in Alabama, augmenting Ansell's other production plants in Australia and New Zealand. During this period, Akwell did not dominate the U.S. commercial condom market; Ansell's interest in Akwell was to get the lucrative condom procurement contract with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Five years after the acquisition, a group of previous senior employees at Ansell (Dothan) started their own condom-manufacturing company, Aladan Corporation, also in Dothan, to compete for the USAID condom procurement contract ("What's Luck Got to Do with It?" 1993:90). After acquiring Akwell Industries, Ansell Healthcare entered a joint venture with the Raymond Group (India) to create JK Ansell (1997) in Aurangabad, India to make Kama Sutra premium-brand condoms for Asian and European markets; Ansell

Healthcare also made acquisitions of condom manufacturers for distribution networks and production facilities: Laboratoire Degan in France (1991: plant closed) and Suretex in Surat Thani, Thailand and Bangalore, India (1998).<sup>11</sup> In 1999, Ansell Healthcare stopped making condoms in Dothan, Alabama, yet the plants continue to make latex gloves, since it did not have the USAID contract anymore. While Australian-subsiary, Ansell Healthcare, stopped U.S. condom production, its global headquarter remains in Red Bank, New Jersey in 2001.

USAID awarded Aladan Corporation in Dothan its condom procurement contract in 1996, The London International Group, earlier London Rubber Corporation, acquired Aladan a few months later.<sup>12</sup> The Aladan acquisition happened after the Group had already bought several brands, distribution networks, and companies: Hatú in Casalecchio, Italy (1987: closed plant laying off 180 workers), Protex-brand in the U.S. (1990), TTK-LIG in India (1990: a joint venture with TTK), London Royal Company (1991) in Thailand, National Sanitation-brand in the U.S. (1991), Profamilia-brand in Mexico (1993), Mister-brand in Malaysia (1995), and Androtex-brand in Spain (1996). During this period, the Group stopped making natural skin condoms and closed its Puerto Rico facility. Further, in 1998, the Group established a joint-venture premium-condom factory, Qingdao London International Latex Co, with a mainland Chinese firm, Qingdao Latex Co. to be in East China. While establishing itself as an international firm with its global Durex brand, the Group itself became a target for a corporate merger with another British firm. In May 1999, Seton-Scholl and London International Group merged to form SSL International. Since the merger, SSL International has been moving to close its Dothan plant (laying off 450 employees), to maintain condom production for the USAID

contract in Eufaula, Alabama, and to move all glove production to Kalim, Malaysia (“London International Group to Phase...” 1999). Its commercial condoms, sold in the U.S., are now made in its Thailand facility.

Briefly, Dothan had two large manufacturing facilities during the peak of their production—Ansell and SSL International. After this period of consolidation in the 1990s, condom production moved away from the U.S. as they streamlined their global condom-manufacturing capacities by bringing them closer to supplies of rubber latex, low-wage workers, and new potential markets in Southeast Asia.

A new company, Alatech, started operation near Dothan in late 1999, and is vying for the USAID condom procurement contract. Alatech is headed by Robert Martin, an industry veteran who was a previous senior executive at Akwell, Ansell and Aladan. In a trade publication, Martin talked about its new automated equipment:

We got two custom-built, state-of-the-art continuous-lined CPR latex dipping machines that were made in Germany.... It took three weeks to install them. We had already installed our other equipment—such as tumblers to dry condoms, electronic testing machines to test for holes, rapid strip packaging machines to seal condoms individually into a film (or foil) packet, and a plethora of quality control and laboratory testing equipment. (McNutly 1999:1)

Starting from five employees, the firm hopes to hire 500 workers in five years making condoms and latex gloves.<sup>13</sup>

Less internationally active is Youngs Drug Corporation; yet its Trojan brand condoms continue to lead the U.S. commercial condom market. In 1985, the corporation was acquired by Carter-Wallace, a New York-based health and personal care company. Carter-Wallace has focused on keeping its U.S. market position, and has not marketed its condoms more globally. Its condoms have entered the Mexican and Canadian markets



with minimal success. With growing pressures in the U.S. market from other condom makers, Carter-Wallace decided in 1996 to close down its unionized Trenton, New Jersey plant, terminating about 410 workers, and moved to a more up-to-date non-unionized production facility in Colonial Heights, Virginia. Wages were cut almost in half. In the new location, Carter-Wallace worked to expand its Trojan-brand condoms and has started to mass produce synthetic condoms. Additionally, Carter-Wallace also closed its New Zealand plant in 1995 where animal membranes were processed first, thereby ending making natural skin condoms.

These global condom-manufacturing consolidations intensified during the beginning of the AIDS crisis. There are three brief points about this consolidation.

First, because of public health campaigns around HIV/AIDS, there was a perceived need to make more condoms.<sup>14</sup> With such potential growing demands, condom producers increased their capacity; they saw an opportunity to increase their sales in previously saturated markets and find new markets for their products, both of which would increase profits and expand the welfare-state activities.

Second, as the consequence of AIDS, the condom industry could advertise condoms more publicly in the U.S. Condom companies followed the public health campaign discourse on using condom for safer sex and AIDS prevention during the 1980s and 1990s. Recently, condom advertisements focus more on images of youth and sexuality instead of the conventional “hard-reality” messages of HIV and AIDS (see Miller 1994:12). In this way, because the public health messages of the condom remain in the background, advertisements of the companies can legitimately promote their products beyond AIDS prevention, providing ways to get more consumers.

Third, despite local, national, and international fiscal crises, many governmental institutions have been appropriating money directly or indirectly for the free distribution and subsidized purchase of condoms. While very heated political debates over morality and sexuality occurred in the early period of the AIDS crisis, the normalizing of AIDS crisis management has led public health agencies and other organizations to buy condoms with governmental money. With governments as major condom purchasers, the condom industry has enjoyed guaranteed earnings for an extended period from their contractual arrangements.

Simply put, the global commercial condom industry has become a legitimated and less stigmatized industry that is seen to provide a solution to medical crises. During this period, many debates and negotiations over this legitimacy, however imperfect at present, have happened as the result of the AIDS pandemic, and not in the context of advocacy in family planning or conventional prevention for sexually transmitted infections. Compared to the nineteenth century, condoms are no longer seen as a luxury product or attached with stigma; they are now perceived as a life-saving product. Consequently, they have a wider outlet for access and distribution globally, yet through neoliberal economic practices (such as privatizing public health activities).

In short, the condom and its industry have been a social product of modernity at its technological, ideological, and progressive best. So, any ecological, economic, or social disruptions generated in the daily lives of people and communities by the industry becomes tolerated.

### **Continuing Challenges and New Directions?**

One of the many continuing social challenges to condom production involves the limits of industrial consolidation and the market dominance of natural latex condoms. This social challenge to condom production involves the continual consolidation of the industry with its socio-economic complementary problems of over-production, and therefore, of the consequent under-consumption. These problems are about production and not trade; it is about which corporation(s) will get profits from condom production. Making condoms will continue to be ever more automated as a way to limit labor costs (in wages, training, and unproductive expenditures) and to remove human employees in the direct process of production. With the squeeze on profits, condom manufacturers will seek new technology and raw materials (as in latex dipping, packaging, and testing machines and in proprietary chemical processes), new locations (by buying smaller state-of-the art production facilities and building new facilities across the world, mainly so far in Thailand and India), and new markets (by bringing new generation of consumers, acquiring regional commercial distribution networks, and entering into governmental and nongovernmental procurement contracts). Industrial consolidations will continue to happen even as smaller and newer firms enter the industry for their first time.

The question remains to what extent such consolidation will continue and what industrial configuration such consolidation will create. The condom industry has certainly been oligopolic in structure, and in order for firms to continue to grow, certain firms have become part of larger conglomerates, whose portfolios contain a diverse set of products.<sup>15</sup> As a consequence, the modern condom industry has insulated itself by being part of these conglomerates, in the hopes of remaining globally competitive. The future of conglomerates is to break apart and reorganize themselves for future economic

environments; this version of for-profit strategic growth results from competition in the global marketplace, all the while governing further condom production activities. As such, workers and communities are placed in a growing disadvantage to negotiate their share that made the industry prosper.

In closing, this paper looked at social aspects of condom production, particularly the meanings of industrial organization. It stressed how a politics of strategic advantage shaped capitalist accumulation, and thereby, fostered economic inequalities. The looming acquisitions, breakups, and re-organizations potentially wreak destruction on many more workers, communities, regional economies and ecologies, and possibly aggravate social inequalities in many dimensions that result from a simple fact of for-profit business activities.

One could view these processes as a simple continuation of the long historical march of capitalism or of a new form of economic globalization. Yet substantively this research attempts to construct a sexually-driven theory of capitalist firms, highlighting several key previously under-explored aspects of such firms:

- That *joint* firm-state activities – involving sexualized commodities and in varying contexts of inter-firm rivalries and cooperation – from colonial wars (1880-1930s), to “welfare” activities (1940-1970s), to neoliberalist practices (1980-2000s) sought to booster profit-oriented market infrastructures, rather than the dominant claims that such activities are non-existence or only occurred very recently. Many prior organizational studies ignore how economic firm activities actually create capitalist market structures.

- That *joint* firm-state activities sought not only produce markets for condoms but also to produce contingent desires, needs, and wants: for men the armed forces, for poor Third World women, and for people practicing “risky” sexual behavior. Such contingent desires underlie the moral-symbolic regimes of condom capitalism.
- And that challenges (as measured by the industries’ effectiveness to sustain profitable markets) by workers and “consumers” to these industrial (joint firm-state) activities involving condom production occur in the organizational levels of households, firms, markets, and civic societies, highlighting their actions (sexual, political, and social activities) that simultaneously support and oppose capitalist ways of life. Further inquiries need to explore these processes in greater detail.

The larger question remains, not how groups can resist such economic processes, but rather, how can groups and communities globally reorganize economic production by usurping market institutions from capitalists without structuring workplace and economic inequalities.

A more limited framing of this question would ask whether it is possible for a for-profit health-care industry not to produce social inequalities, inequalities that often have unhealthy consequences. Or does it create only its own market? To delve into this question, further analysis needs to examine the condom industry beyond the consolidating manufacturers, moving into the realm of international development projects in Third World places, and the *recurring* linkages between condom producers and distribution practices by nation-states.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> By this period, the naming of condom brands in the U.S. reflected two distinct consumer pools. Brands such as “Sultan,” “Ramses,” and “Sheik” drew on the generalized images of North Africa and the Middle East as the exotic “Orient” and its sexually-viral and powerful men. On the other hand, brands such as ‘Cadets’ reflected increasing condom use by young male soldiers since the First World War and other military expeditions since the beginning of the twentieth century.

<sup>2</sup> Bauer (1948) provides an overview of the British role in the development of and labor conditions in rubber plantations in Asia as well as early international attempts to standardize and regulate the quality of natural rubber.

<sup>3</sup> See Quine (1996) for cost barriers of condoms.

<sup>4</sup> See Bernstein (1940 [1973]) for linguistic mythologies of the word “condom” and the possible genealogy to the name of particular men. See Himes (1963) for an historical overview of male and female contraceptive sheaths and their increasing use as medical devices.

<sup>5</sup> See Draper (1965) and Fryer (1965) for early accounts of U.K. and U.S. birth control movements. Also see Fout (1992), Fout and Tantillo (1993), Quine (1996), Mort (2000) for social historical accounts of U.S. and European sexualities and social regulation since the 1800s.

<sup>6</sup> See Angela Y. Davis (1981) on Margaret Sanger’s role within the 1920s eugenics contingent of the Birth Control Movement and its racist tendencies to control the bodies of poor and working Black and Puerto Rican women living in New York City (U.S.).

<sup>7</sup> For a brief technology-oriented account of the global dominance of Germany’s rubber and chemical industries from 1860-1945, see Stokes (1994). He also details its rubber manufacturing activities during the Second World War and the post-war transformations in Western Germany.

<sup>8</sup> See Love and Giffels (1999) for a journalistic account of the development of Akron, Ohio (U.S.) as the nation’s “Rubber Capital” since the 1870s with the growth of tire companies such as Goodyear and Firestone. This growth resulted from Akron’s access to regional waterways, allowing the movement of raw materials and final

products. The book also provides details of the shift of rubber commodity production from Ohio to weakly unionized Southern states like Alabama in the 1980s as the result of corporate restructuring and the strength of labor unions in Akron. Since manufacturing shifts, Akron remains a site for research and development on rubber manufacturing technology. The book reports “A healthy number of shops remain in the area, from Killian Latex, which makes condoms, to R.C.A. Rubber Company, which makes floor mats” (p. 290). Also see French (1992:143) for a general history of the U.S. tire rubber industry and its pre-World War One use of British-owned natural rubber from Southeast Asia. In order to stabilize the price of natural rubber after the First World War, the U.S. rubber/tire industry invested in rubber plantations in Asia (Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia), Africa (Liberia, Ghana), and Latin America (Brazil, Costa Rica, Guatemala). During the Second World War, the industry developed synthetic rubber with monetary assistance from the U.S. government. With the present International Natural Rubber Agreement, commodity prices are set within target ranges. This Agreement provides for the continual predominance of natural rubber over synthetics in raw materials in producing rubber production.

<sup>9</sup> For details on the standardization of ocean transport of natural rubber as well as the transport ports of origin and destination, see UN Conference on Trade and Development Secretariat (1970).

<sup>10</sup> Contact author for further related analysis of international family planning programs. Also see “Babies’ Revenge” (1978:58) on pre-AIDS discussion of India and condoms.

<sup>11</sup> For examples of Ansell’s consolidation activities, see “Pacific Dunlop’s Ansell Int’l Buys...” (1996) and “Pacific Dunlop” (1998).

<sup>12</sup> See “Aladan Lands Contract with U.S. Government” (1995:7), “LIG to Acquire Aladan for \$69.5 Million” (1996), Ahmad (1997:28) and Taylor (1997:20). For London International Group’s other acquisitions and partnerships, see “Barriers to Entry” (1991:71), “LIG: Optimism in Asia.” (1994:57), Guthrie (1998:27), O’Neill 1998:8), Kazmin (1998:504) and Marsh (1999:36).

<sup>13</sup> Another condom manufacturer got a small portion of the USAID condom

contract during the interim period before the next ground of procurement bids (see Moore 2000:5).

<sup>14</sup> For instance, see Scales (1987), “Preventive Measures” (1995:25), “Condoms in Indonesia” (1996:167) and “AIDS Driving Condom Sales” (1994:10).

<sup>15</sup> See “Monopolies Commission: Durex Too Dear” (1975:79) on an earlier challenge to London Rubber Company’s monopoly on condoms.



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