

The idea behind using the Atlantic World as an academic lens stems from scholars pointing out the regional commonalities of this time (early modern era) that brought together Western Europe, Africa, and the Americas within specific and somewhat shared contexts. As you may have noticed in some of the articles and course materials, some scholars question the validity of the Atlantic World as a useful lens of history. Undoubtedly, the Spanish, Portuguese, French, English, Dutch, and especially the Africans and Native Americans never considered themselves inhabitants of the Atlantic. Critics of the field say it is just a new term for old perspectives, namely colonial or maritime history. Some point out that it is too broad to do service to any of its subjects, while others suggest it is too narrow and neglects the global connections (consider the roles Asia and the Middle East have played in the historical narrative of this course). Finally, as you have seen, some scholars advocate ignoring regions altogether and thus create an analytical framework around world systems.

Defenders of Atlantic History point to the uniqueness of time and place (think of our earlier discussion on why we immediately focus on this era and region when considering piracy). Others suggest that Atlantic history is not a regional history, but rather a theoretical lens to interpret events. For example, we have studied piracy in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans through an "Atlantic" lens. How different would chapter 6 be if its scope and topic appeared in a book written about the Ottoman Empire, the Ming Dynasty, or the Tokugawa Shogunate?

With all this in mind, is there justification for doing "Atlantic" history? Why or why not? If not, what is the better approach (national, colonial, maritime, global, world systems, etc.)? Be sure to keep your answers grounded within the context of the course (early modern piracy), and be sure to cite the articles.

There appears to be validity to several different approaches and the traditional framework of the "Atlantic World" does represent, at the very least, a point in time when the expansion of the Atlantic to include the American continents represented a more inclusive global shift, a true world changer that required all of the nations and parties involved to shift how they viewed the world and their place in it. Indeed, to not acknowledge that in some significant way would be irresponsible. But the reality is, as it seems to me, it does seem a too narrow in light of this week's readings.

I'm wondering, prior to 1492, what this class would have been called and what framework/lenses we would have studied piracy through? Piracy in the Mediterranean World? The Pacific and Indian World? Is the Atlantic World just a corollary to how it was previously viewed?

The context of Maritime or Global systems would be adequate, but I'm inclined to believe a World Systems approach might be the best lens/context. One consistent system that all of our authors addressed was the role of economics and trade in expansion and the development of empires and national identities, monopolies over trade networks (or the disruption of them), religious/ideological/cultural expansion, and local and national *reactions* to these factors. These

were geographically and culturally diverse... each people added their own cultural and national flourishes, yet no nationality having seemed exempt from these systems. It does appear, however, that trade is a driving factor in the development of these dynamics, systems and views regarding piracy.

Several of the readings seemed to share this common lens of trade and expansionism. Lane describes the Buccaneer's move to the South Seas as logical development considering the crackdown on Piracy in the Caribbean as piracy became a threat to European colonial trade structures (Lane, pg. 123). His presentation of Indian Ocean and Western Pacific piracy described similar themes to Atlantic piracy was the "an aspect and a response to European overseas political claims, either of control of trade routes, ports and landmasses" as it was attached to various cycles of boom and bust in trade and economic expansions and contractions and attempts to monopolize Asian markets (Lane, 171-172).

While taking a different subject to illustrate the interconnectivity of these nations, Tremml's piece, while not ostensibly about piracy, does show the considerable impact of culture, political motivations on trade and the rise and fall of Manila's economic potential by focusing on the silk and silver trade. Her approach challenges traditional narratives regarding the subject, by individually examining each of the three major players: Spain, China, and Japan. In her essay, her treatment of the local population's role, while present, seems flimsy. This consideration seemed more significant to me in light of the other readings who emphasized the significance of local polities and peoples. I'll admit, however, her piece was fairly dense and I may have missed a message.

Andrade's work was an engaging and fascinating piece, again from mostly from the perspective of the VOC and the Dutch traders in their struggles against a very different political and cultural view of trade in China and Japan that frustrated their attempts to accomplish what they and other Europeans had in the Atlantic. Chinese isolationism played a substantial role here, and the conflicting Ming Chinese view of the ocean as a barrier rather than the European view of the ocean as an economic superhighway and the reactive and fickle economic policies and its connection to the rise and ebb of piracy (Andrade, Pg. 417-419). Yet, inherently connected to trade would agree with Lane's assessment regarding these different views and motives and the role local piracy played in these interactions and struggles for the VOC to maintain their trade connections to China.

Casale's work from a distinctly different, in this case Ottoman, point view was equally fascinating and implied a kind of "what if" story. Also, founded in potential expansionist futures for the Ottoman empire, Casale describes a compelling story of attempts to oust Iberian interlopers from their holdings in the Indian ocean and potentially expand from the Mediterranean through the red sea to the Indian ocean, while in the framework more aligned with privateering, the story of the ill-fated Mir Ali expedition betrays how some Ottoman officials felt about the potential of expanding their trade networks, to the point of hatching a complicated conspiracy to achieve their imperialist goals (Casale, Pg. 293).