

Cloaks and Veils: Countervisualizing Cigarette Factories In and Outside of China

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ABSTRACT

In this article, I consider what a casual observer can see of a notorious product's primary place of fabrication. Few products have been criticized in recent years more than cigarettes. Meanwhile, around the world, the factories manufacturing cigarettes rarely come under scrutiny. What have been the optics helping these key links in the cigarette supply chain to be overlooked? What has prompted such optics to be adopted and to what effect? I address these questions using a comparative approach and drawing upon new mapping techniques, fieldwork, and social theory. I argue that a corporate impulse to hide from public health measures, including those of tobacco control, is not the only force to be reckoned with here. Cigarette factory legibility has been coproduced by multiple processes inherent to many forms of manufacturing. Cigarette makers, moreover, do not always run from global tobacco control. Nor have they been avoiding all other manifestations of biopolitics. Rather, in various ways, cigarette makers have been embracing biopolitical logics, conditioning them, and even using them to manage factory legibility. Suggestive of maneuvers outlined by Butler (2009) and Povinelli (2011) such as "norms of recognizability" and "arts of disguise," cigarette factory concealment foregrounds the role of infrastructural obfuscation in the making of what Berlant (2007) calls "slow death." Special focus on

manufacturing in China illustrates important variations in the public optics of cigarette factories. The terms cloak and veil connote these variations. Whereas tactics currently obscuring cigarette manufacturing facilities generally skew toward an aesthetic of the opaque cloak in much of the world, there are norms of recognizability and arts of disguise applied to many factories across China that are more akin to a diaphanous, playful veil. I conclude with a discussion of how this article's focus on factory legibility gestures toward novel forms of intervention for advocates working at tackling tobacco today, offering them an alternative political imaginary in what is one of the world's most important areas of public policy making. [Keywords: Biopolitics, infrastructure, global health, tobacco control]

The hidden abode of production, on whose threshold there hangs the notice 'No admittance except on business'.

— Karl Marx (1992:279-280)

Tandem cycling became part of my life during the fall of 2003 as my family and I were settling into ten months of field research in Kunming, China. Each morning, my then four-year-old daughter, Asa, and I would cycle from our neighborhood near Green Lake Park to the Yunnan University nursery school. Our route would take us past the city zoo, an opera house, a hospital, and the Provincial Minority Studies Institute, where we'd take a left and continue past a string of stores marking post-Mao China's embrace of consumer culture, selling everything from trendy garments to electronics.

Autumn quickly turned to winter and then to spring. My wife, two children, and I were only a few weeks away from returning to California. My study of smoking behavior had certainly kept me busy, and the Yunnan University's Montessori program had kept Asa no less immersed, especially given her novelty then as the nursery school's only foreign student. Good food also helped the passage of time progress. The culinary smells and tastes of Yunnan are some of the finest anywhere. One of Asa's favorite things to do that year was stop on the way home from school for a banana-chocolate crepe. She'd usually smell the cart of our favorite itinerant crepe maven well before we'd spot it.

On a Monday morning that spring, Asa and I had a very different kind of aromatic encounter, one that stands out today as a symbol, as much as any, of a turning point in my research. That morning as I helped her dismount from a plastic seat bolted to the back of my bicycle, Asa and I were overcome by the pungent smell, at once earthy and fruity, of recently cured tobacco leaf. The aroma saturated the nursery school. Yunnan produces more flue-cured tobacco leaf at present than any province in contemporary China, and micro-plumes from unlit and lit cigarettes are a common part of aromatic existence in Kunming, as is the case for much of China. But this was the first time that I had ever stumbled into a fog of recently toasted golden tobacco leaf in all my years traversing urban Chinese environs. What was the source of that cloud?

The first parent of Asa's classmates that I asked had no idea. The second pointed a finger and gestured for me to crane my neck and look back over the nursery school's rarely used rear gate. Hiding in plain sight I saw a set of aging buildings. Hanging from the tallest façade were gold-painted Chinese ideograms, each a meter tall. Designed in calligraphic style, the ideograms cheerfully proclaimed *Yunnan Spring City Cigarette Factory*.

I was dumbfounded reading those ideograms for the first time. Here I had been researching tobacco in Kunming for some nine months, and I was caught unaware that a facility capable of producing billions of cigarettes per annum was on the edge of my daughter's Montessori classroom. Thinking back now, I read my blindness to that factory all those months as having several sources.

The facility was rarely operational by then, having been eclipsed in notoriety by newer, larger factories owned by the same manufacturer. This was also a time, the spring of 2004, when Internet cartography was in its infancy, a time when maps of Chinese cities, if available, rarely displayed more than major tourist destinations. Occluding my vision further were decisions regarding research design that I had made prior to starting that first stint of fieldwork on tobacco, decisions that fixed smoking behavior as my primary object of inquiry. So, whereas I had arrived in Kunming in 2003 ready to ask people around me questions about how, why, and what they smoked, I was less inquisitive about the structures that inundated their worlds with cigarettes.

Ordinariness also had something to do with the epistemology at the nursery school that day. Since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, most large- and medium-sized cities of China have come to have

cigarette factories operating in their midst. And during the last two decades of economic growth, many older cigarette factories have been replaced with new ones. It was not that my Kunming neighbors, the parents of Asa's classmates, or my colleagues at Yunnan University had purposely avoided mentioning to me anything about the aging factory behind Asa's school. Rather, for them, and for anyone living in that particular environment, such buildings quickly came to be commonplace. They seemed, if not indiscernible, unremarkable. How does something so large, producing something so harmful, become unremarkable? I explore that question here by examining the visibility and invisibility of cigarette production in the world today, with a special focus on cigarette factories in China. I draw upon new mapping techniques, fieldwork, and social theory to propose novel approaches for understanding cigarette manufacturing. My analysis of visual legibility develops the following points.

Around the world, a range of optics regularly envelop cigarette factories, obscuring much of what transpires within the facilities. The optics are not immaterial to the ongoing ability of the parent companies to manage public consternation about tobacco-induced harm, diverting ire away from manufacturing and onto the behavior of smoking. Yet, a corporate impulse to hide from public health, particularly from recently created global mechanisms of tobacco control, is not the only force defining the optics. Cigarette factory legibility everywhere is coproduced by multiple processes, many common to all forms of manufacturing. Moreover, makers of cigarettes do not always run from global tobacco control. Nor have they been avoiding all other manifestations of biopolitics (Foucault 2008). Rather, in various ways, cigarette makers have been embracing biopolitical logics, conditioning them, even using them to conceal their factories. The shrouding of manufacturing in the tobacco industry foregrounds the role of infrastructural obfuscation in the making of human harm. But this shrouding is not the same everywhere. China highlights important variation in the management of cigarette factory legibility. The optics surrounding cigarette factories in much of the world today skew toward an aesthetic of the opaque cloak. Other optics, however, are frequently operating in China, more akin to a diaphanous and playful veil, helping citizens there to experience the presence of cigarette factories as everything from congenial, to commonplace, to unremarkable facets of urban landscapes.

Cigarette Citadels

Before continuing, I need to introduce a research project that this article's line of questioning spawned in 2009. It started with a piece of curbside refuse lying a few feet from my Stanford University office. I was walking into my departmental building when I spotted the ephemera out of the corner of my eye. I recognized it immediately, something so commonplace in much of the world, at least where smoking remains normative among large swaths of people, but increasingly unusual on the grounds of my manicured university. It was a discarded pack of Marlboros, empty and crumpled. Where in the US could that signature enclosure of the global tobacco industry have been manufactured? I wondered.

That riddle would take less than five minutes for me to solve, I imagined while I was turning on my office computer. After all, it was 2009. Internet search tools offered by companies like Google were already well-developed. Philip Morris (PM), the manufacturer of Marlboros, was one of the biggest consumer products companies in the US. Few parts of the world then were more carefully mapped than North America. And public relations teams at PM would have likely long played up their flagship US manufacturing site as a way to hype their product, much like Hershey and Coca-Cola have, for decades, with their factories in Pennsylvania and Georgia. Also, surely there would be frequent mention of factory locations in the thousands of easily searchable publications written by public health scholars about tobacco.

An hour went by as I sat at my desk and searched online through news media, corporate reports, maps, academic databases. I found enough information for me to feel confident that, with another five to ten minutes, I'd soon end my query. PM, I read, had come by the end of the 20th century to consolidate nearly all of its US cigarette production into one factory located in Richmond, Virginia, perhaps the largest of its kind in the world. A PM web page stated that, by 2008, that factory was producing upwards of 170 billion cigarettes annually, while another page specified that the Richmond Manufacturing Center was comprised of "six connected buildings that cover a total of 43 acres, equating to 1.6 million square feet under one roof." So, my prey was clearly huge. Rather than a few more moments of Internet research, though, it took half a day to pinpoint the facility. No doubt, if I had friends living in Richmond I would have phoned them for help. As one of the biggest employers in the city, PM's factory is invariably well-known by many residents there. But how could that factory be so

hard to locate through more remote forms of media? How could something so large be so difficult to find?

Based on this experience, I started looking for other factories in the US. PM's competitors did not make it much easier. Nonetheless, by early 2010, I had come to locate another 45 factories operating in the US owned by dozens of companies. Along the way, I launched the Cigarette Citadels Map Project (see *Cigarette Citadels: The Map Project* 2013). This is an empirical venture, using new mapping tools to investigate the seen and the unseen. Its initial aims are to provide a cartographic accounting of one layer of the world's vast cigarette infrastructure—that is, the industrial facilities in which cigarettes are manufactured—and to offer interactive links to information such as textual descriptions and photos which come to light while mapping the factories. Researching this one layer, the project affirms Larkin's insights that "infrastructures operate on differing levels simultaneously, and that any particular set of intellectual questions will have to select which of these levels to examine" (2013:330).

Thanks to help from correspondents around the world, the project has progressed significantly during its first six years, charting a capacious level of the tobacco industry. Its main map now shows that cigarette factories operate in over half of all countries, and pinpoints the exact location of over 480 facilities. It also displays approximate locations for an additional 150 factories which remain elusive at the time of this writing.

Approaches for contemplating human action which undergird the Cigarette Citadels project, however, are limited. At best they produce fragments of information, capacious in geographic breadth, but each partial and situated within a set of cartographic technologies. My intent in this article is not to summarize the array of facts that the Cigarette Citadels project has gathered or exposed. Instead, I consider some of what I have learned from the project to conjure a different kind of meditation and a different politics than one usually finds in academic literature regarding the cigarette, especially in my sub-disciplinary roost of medical anthropology. In helping to build the Cigarette Citadels site, I have found mapping tools, particularly a newer generation of tools—typified by Google Maps—to be generative for problematizing the cigarette in novel ways. I have also found them useful for contemplating and supplementing branches of social theory which have fortified medical anthropology and allied areas of scholarship in recent years. These branches of thought are frequently

titled bio- and thanato-politics, because they question in detail how life and death are understood, produced, and differentially politicized.

Optics of Concealment

Medical anthropologists have given scant attention to Internet mapping tools to date (cf. Nichter 2007), even though they have been thinking deeply in recent years about space and spatial metaphor (e.g., Biehl's [2005] "zones of social abandonment" and Kleinman's [1997] "writing at the margin"). The broader discipline that is anthropology, though, has always been entangled with mapping tools, if only implicitly. Maps were central to the discipline's early self-definition as one that studies people living in faraway places. Maps have long helped demarcate one practitioner from another—he an anthropologist of China, she an anthropologist of Africa. Graduate students in nearly all corners of the discipline have historically been encouraged to refer to maps when selecting field sites and to sketch maps on arrival, diagrams of everything from residential patterns to kinship trees and religious activity. And, of course, mapping technologies were central to the birth of anthropology as an appendage of both colonial rule and post-colonial nation-building, the violent proliferations of which were so profoundly responsible for the globalization and standardization of many of the cartographic optics still prominent today. During the last 20 years, scholars from many parts of the academy have frequently interrogated those technologies, to disclose not simply colonial and nationalist complicity but also to better understand other overlapping contemporary logics of control and knowing (Anderson 1991, Wood 2012).

Tortured origins notwithstanding, tools of Internet mapping offer opportunities to "countervisualize" (Mirzoeff 2011) key nodes in a worldwide supply chain, one that has profoundly influenced the human condition for well over 100 years. By directing Internet mapping tools at contemporary cigarette factories, we are able to identify and analyze some of the logics of control that have helped this industry keep its operations running in an age of mounting anti-tobacco sentiment. These tools cannot put us inside factories. They cannot describe the lived experiences of factory employees, their families, and neighbors. They cannot divulge the procedures for producing an impeccably rolled and boxed pack of Lucky Strikes. But, then again, those are not the topics of inquiry here. The question animating this article is what discursive practices condition the political legibility

of factories—whether it is the one which my daughter and I stumbled upon in Kunming, China, the goliath in Richmond, Virginia, or the hundreds of others operating around the world today—that produce a notoriously dangerous item.¹

What might new mapping technologies reveal about these discursive practices? Something they illuminate is that factories producing cigarettes are similarly skinned in many parts of the world, such that someone standing outside sees a common set of features. Whether one is standing at the front gate of a cigarette factory owned by Japan Tobacco in St. Petersburg, Russia, Dubek near Tel Aviv, Israel, Zakłady in Lublin, Poland, or many others, what is visible from street-level are security perimeters, often comprised of walls or thick foliage with embedded fencing. Also visible are guard houses, strategically located along factory perimeters. Just beyond those perimeters, architecture looms, usually designed with a nod to the generic. Factory buildings in much of the world—cigarette factories among them—are typically nondescript, opaque structures that appear unobtrusive in their local built environs.

Cigarette factories constructed within the last three decades are also often located in areas unappealing to a lingering public. Industrial zones—nearby, yet out of immediate sight from highways, rail lines, and airports—seem to be favored. Signage, sometimes visible by mapping services like Google Street View, is usually laconic, communicative of little more, generally, than a company's name or acronym (e.g., JTI for Japan Tobacco International). Phrases like “manufacturing center” or “production facility” may appear near a gatehouse, but rarely is the signifier “cigarette” used to demarcate factories, let alone signage consisting of white sticks or colorful packs. Rather, the practices of corporate self-representation deployed through architecture, signage, and landscaping at such factories are akin to a cloak—a visual barrier of dense concealment—allowing the factory to be largely illegible and meaningless to the outsider but recognizable and significant to the knowing viewer, including those who work inside and in close proximity. The opacity of the cloak is no less present when it comes to devices of conveyance, vehicles which transport material and product, from trucks, to railway cars, to shipping containers. These seldom have markings denoting that they contain anything related to tobacco.

Not all cigarette factories are concealed to the same degree or in the same way. This will become clearer in a moment when I return my

discussion to China. Nor is the hiding of manufacturing novel to cigarette companies. All manufacturing sectors, not just those tied to tobacco, conceal to varying degrees and in various ways. What explains this broad tendency? What facilitates it across manufacturing sectors?

Protecting corporate capital from theft is one answer. Concealment thwarts those wishing to abscond with proprietary techniques for fabricating a product or to steal goods once assembled. The commodity fetish is another explanation (Marx 1992). The success of commercial goods (everything from ready-to-wear clothing, mobile phones, and grocery store items) depends on disconnecting shoppers from production. The allure of a good is the brand, the feel of the finished item, the convenience of use, and one's ability to incorporate that product into one's persona. For some products today, communicating limited information about origins adds value—such as in the case of local organic foods, watches made in Switzerland, fine wines—but in most instances, it does not (Hudson and Hudson 2003).

Factory concealment, no matter the industry, has been further facilitated by what in much of the world is a flourishing forest of commercial buildings. Consider the global abundance of warehouses and industrial parks, granaries and storehouses, office buildings and strip malls. Even governments known for their obsession with data management, like that of the US, have a hard time keeping track of what buildings they own. So numerous are federally owned edifices in the US that the national agency in charge of them has recently admitted it does not know where they are all located or even how many exist (Sullivan 2014).

Factory concealment in large parts of the world has likewise benefited from logics of national governance. Although nearly all nations strive to monitor manufacturing, if for no other reason than to tax it, few today rigorously require producers to disclose factory locations, particularly in ways that make it easy for average people to glean what is made where. Few countries have rules that require manufacturers, whatever the market sector, to broadcast to the public via product labels exactly where items are made. And few governments demand that factories must present on their front gates unambiguous signage of what is produced within. Factories are commonly allowed to be like brown paper bags, generic and opaque.

The role of governance in factory concealment has not just been that of omission, however. Understanding this requires reminding ourselves of the truism that, for a cloak to work, it must cover something. And that

something which we are discussing here, the factory, has been nurtured by governments ever since the industrial revolution. In the tobacco realm, hand-in-glove industry–government coproduction of factories abounded during the 20th century, as much in places where cigarette manufacturing was ostensibly run by private enterprise as in those where tobacco monopolies reigned.

As with other realms of manufacturing, the government's hand in the building of cigarette factories has not simply been a domestic practice. The most obvious case in point here has been the US. Under the cover of international assistance programs and foreign diplomacy, US government agencies have quietly pressed other governments to open up their markets to production and sales. As early as the Marshall Plan after World War II, Washington helped US tobacco corporations build up American cigarette manufacturing capacity in western European countries (Proctor 2011:48). That practice did not end with public health milestones like the 1964 US Surgeon General's Report (US Public Health Service 1964), which declared unambiguous causality between cigarettes and fatal disease. Washington's furtive diplomacy on behalf of US tobacco firms has been active as recently as 2007, when the US State Department pressured the Serbian government to permit Philip Morris to expand its production in the city of Niš, something I learned while helping the Cigarette Citadels project map Eastern Europe.² Cut from the same cloth that conceals factories producing other products, the cloaks that cover factories producing cigarettes in much of world are frequently rendered impermeable and generative by pro-business governance policies.

Biopolitical Concealment

As most readers are well aware, cigarettes have become increasingly notorious as fonts of health endangerment, thanks to complex moves of biopolitical mobilization over the last 50 years. Why have these moves not noticeably frustrated cigarette manufacturers' efforts to obscure their factories? The launch of the Cigarette Citadels project was born, in part, out of my amazement that a half century of biopolitics since the 1964 Surgeon General's Report had not pulled at cigarette factory cloaks. My surprise probably had something to do with the litigious environment that I inhabit. Lawsuits have cast critical light on cigarette companies in the US, especially since the 1990s when 40 state governments initiated suits. Such

judicial jostling, I presumed, must have subjected US cigarette factories to thorny inquiry. On the contrary, lawsuits at the end of the 20th century generated scant scrutiny of the cigarette's supply chain in general, and its factories in particular. In fact, the opposite might be the case. Rising tides of litigation paralleled a process whereby cigarette factories fell even further from most Americans' purview. Big US tobacco companies had long encouraged people to take guided tours of some cigarette factories, with the idea of making manufacturing integral to marketing. But, by the 1990s, that practice had changed. Beset by private lawsuits and with scores of state suits looming, companies curtailed factory tours.³

The Case of Europe

Analyzing cigarette factory illegibility as simply a corporate rear-guard action against a meddlesome public health gaze would be a mistake, however. The relationship here between concealment and biopolitics is more complex, and not simply because factory cloaking has long existed and been common across many industries. A key argument of this article is that cigarette factories have not run from the biopolitical gaze in many parts of the world. Rather, in some circumstances, the opposite has been the case. Companies have actively cohabitated with the gaze, transmogrifying it into a useful aspect of concealment, one that provides their factories cloistered sanctuary in the most unexpected of places.

Contemporary Europe illustrates this point. Like China, Europe today has an especially high density of cigarette factories. Traveling by commercial airline from Paris for only two hours would put one within easy reach of over 80 cigarette factories. Most of these factories display the attributes of cloaking already described, including parsimonious signage, visually impenetrable edifices, nondescript architecture, perimeter fencing, guarded gates, and unmarked trucks and train cars. Factory obfuscation in Europe, however, does not just occur by generating, in the eye of the viewer, banal attributes of opacity. Obfuscation also seems to include locating factories in close proximity to hubs of humanitarianism and public health promotion.

Consider northwest Europe. Within a radius of 250 kilometers around The Hague, one can see more than a dozen factories on the Cigarette Citadels project map—spanning west into England, east into Germany, and south across Belgium into France—owned by large multi-nationals and small,

little-known firms like Heintz van Landewyck, Flandria, Torrekens, and Heupink and Bloemen. These factories cluster around a city, The Hague, that over the last half century has become a harbor for institutions promoting global health, humanitarianism, and international governance, including the International Criminal Court (ICC), whose founding mission has been identifying, calling to task, and impeding human carnage on any scale remotely similar to that wrought by Europe's World War II death factories.

Consider another region of Europe, near Lake Geneva in Switzerland. What the Cigarette Citadels project illuminates is that if today you were to drive by car three hours from Lake Geneva, you could easily arrive at any one of seven cigarette factories. Four of these are enormous, each producing tens of billions of cigarettes per year, owned by Imperial Tobacco, Philip Morris, British American Tobacco, and Japan Tobacco International. The Lake Geneva factory cluster is especially notable because of the global institution that is headquartered along the lake. There, on the southern shore, sits the head office of The World Health Organization (WHO), arguably the international institution working most volubly to roll back the "tobacco epidemic" over the last two decades.

Why have companies chosen to put so many factories in locations proximate to biopolitical hotspots such as The Hague and Geneva? Why have countries like Switzerland and the Netherlands become "Nirvana for the Tobacco Industry" (Dutch Cancer Society 2012)? Not only do they provide favorable tax terms for cigarette manufacturers (BOM Foreign Investments n.d.) and encourage state officials to coordinate closely with industry representatives (Dutch Cancer Society 2012). They also provide cigarette companies, from conglomerates to small manufacturers, a comforting aura of public health propriety in which to nestle production facilities. They offer another layer in industry obfuscation—an ethics of life promotion.

The factories clustered around The Hague and Geneva are especially diagnostic of this layering effect, but they are not alone in Europe. Again, over 80 cigarette factories are operating within a short flight from Paris. Many of these factories sit in close proximity to and fund hospitals, clinics, and nursery schools. A German factory that I have trekked around, one of Europe's largest, has a kindergarten and a Red Cross donations box located immediately across the street, and it underwrites various forms of philanthropy including programs fighting domestic violence. Another in the Czech Republic (producing over 30 billion sticks a year) that I have strolled around has a nursery school a block away and has

made charitable donations in recent years to everything from care facilities for the elderly to a maternal health program, to local agencies working on behalf of the hearing-impaired and mentally disabled. Factories can blend in amidst and sponsor surrounding institutions of health promotion because of a tobacco-friendly governmental assemblage—a mixture of norms and practices that have come to predominate in much of Europe and around the world. On the biopolitical front, this assemblage across western Europe entails state investment in the biological well-being of citizens, ensuring easy access to medical care. It exposes people heavily to logics of health enhancement, promoting self-study of biological risks within a free market of ideas and commodities, and encourages everyone to become self-regulating managers deciding what and how much risk to live with at any given moment (O'Malley 1996). It also involves, indeed enlists, corporate sponsorship of biopolitical programming to minimize state budgets. Regarding tobacco, the assemblage posits that adults should have ready access to rolled or roll-your-own tobacco, should make informed decisions on whether to purchase these products, and should enjoy government services funded by taxes generated from the tobacco industry. The political and visual illegibility of cigarette factories across Europe has been facilitated by this governmental assemblage, as much as people on the continent have been saturated by it.

Global Health Concealment

What programmatic role have institutions of global health had in conditioning the illegibility of cigarette factories across Europe and elsewhere? The most important here has been the World Health Organization, in particular its Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).⁴ The first global health treaty, the Convention was developed in the 1990s and launched by the WHO shortly after the turn of the millennium. It deserves much admiration. It has helped place “tobacco control” on the agenda for the very first time in many countries of the world. How it defines tobacco control, however, must not be overlooked. The FCTC skews far to one side of the market supply-and-demand binary. This bias is patently apparent in the treaty’s foundational text, the Convention. That text is relatively compact, shorter in English-language word length than this present essay of mine. It consists of 38 sections. Of those, most emphasize issues of cigarette consumption. Only two sections (Articles 17 and 18) directly address tobacco

production, and these are some of the vaguest and most brief sections of the Convention, together consisting of fewer than 100 words. This textual disequilibrium between supply and demand has conditioned in profound ways what the dominion of expertise known as “tobacco control” now typically sees in many parts of the world.

One way that I have observed firsthand how such conditioning works has been by participating in international tobacco-control conferences. Thousands of experts from across the globe now attend such conferences each year to discuss research findings and determine new lines of inquiry. The objective that animates most of the experts is predetermined: pursuing knowledge which helps their home countries fulfill FCTC milestones. To wit, these researchers study the cigarette consumer. They survey his behavior, scan his neurobiology, assay his DNA, quantify his cotinine levels, and experiment with his surroundings, parsed into smoking and non-smoking quadrants. Very few carry out research on cigarette manufacturing. Nor, while roaming conference venues, do they think about the existence of nearby cigarette factories. At the 2005 Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco Conference held in Prague, I caught no mention of the Philip Morris factory located only 80 kilometers from the conference venue. At the 2008 Asia Pacific Conference on Tobacco or Health held in Taipei, attendees went about their business without acknowledging that a factory owned by Taiwan Tobacco was located a ten-minute taxi ride away. And at the 2012 World Conference on Tobacco or Health in Singapore, titled “Towards a Tobacco-Free World: Planning Globally, Acting Locally,” participants were nonplussed to learn from a paper I presented that a British American Tobacco factory was operating across town.

Curiously, when first proposed, the FCTC had no such blinders. The FCTC was conceived in the early 1990s by a small group of public health activists with professional ties to the WHO. Those activists aspired to create the first global health treaty and have it formulated to confront directly what they saw to be an “enemy”: tobacco companies. A few years later, however, after negotiations had begun on the treaty’s actual terms, the “starting-point” for the accord had shifted. Pressured by representatives from major cigarette-producing countries such as the US, the “common will” for the treaty morphed from constraining manufacturing to a different agenda: encouraging “limits to the consumption of tobacco” (WHO 2010:3, 13). The treaty’s final language now clearly codifies that turn. It problematizes tobacco producers far less than it does cigarette

smokers—everything from the biology they possess to the knowledge they are provided and the spaces in which they are able to light up. And to that degree, the FCTC has been an optic of industrial concealment.

Looking back, I can now recognize how blinders inherent to the FCTC helped shape my initial tobacco research in China. I should have been tipped off by how easily that research got off the ground. In 2002, I successfully landed a multiple year grant from the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), something rarely issued for research outside of North America and even less so for anthropological inquiry. The NIH awarded me funds to study smoking behavior in China, specifically the validity of a behavior-modification theory, for which the Institutes had underwritten the original design two decades earlier (Prochaska and Di Clemente 1982). My grant proposal and subsequent year in Kunming were warmly endorsed by government health officers of the PRC. Officials at China's Centers for Disease Control in Beijing and at various Yunnan provincial health agencies in Kunming encouraged colleagues to assist me. As one of the more senior officials explained to me when I later asked why they were so supportive of my NIH-funded work,

Why wouldn't we welcome it? We need researchers to help us better understand our smoking culture and provide our citizens tools so they can be masters of their own biology and choose not to smoke. The behavior-modification theory you were interested in studying...was very hot back then. The WHO was promoting it. It was going global. Even here, it was becoming influential in public health thinking about smoking. Is it relevant to China, though? That's a good question. We need that kind of science, and there is nothing controversial about it.

What would have constituted more controversial science for this official? "Well, certainly anything focusing on our domestic tobacco industry. That's always sensitive. I would've been far more cautious with you, especially back then when we first met, if you were proposing to study the industry."

Media Concealment

Corporate messaging tactics have, of course, also been central to cigarette factory obfuscation. These tactics run the gamut from moves of

relative opacity to ones of translucency. Outside of China, many tobacco companies divulge nothing about their cigarette factories. Some offer a few morsels of knowledge buried in annual reports. Others actively broadcast via web pages and press releases small proscribed packages of information. Philip Morris International (PMI) is particularly practiced at such package delivery. For most of the countries in which it manufactures cigarettes, PMI hosts web pages providing a highly circumscribed window onto its operations. Consider the web page it hosts for its factory in Portugal.⁵ That web page lists how many people the factory employs, enumerates brands produced, and notes beneficiaries of “corporate responsibility” spending (unnamed local Portuguese programs fighting hunger, social exclusion, and domestic violence). Since the launch of the Cigarette Citadels project, PMI has even begun to disclose some factory whereabouts, notably in countries where Internet mapping giants like Google have already indexed most commercial entities. But for many other countries, it still releases no such information. On the website it hosts for Indonesia,⁶ for example, PMI does not disclose a single address for the dozen facilities spread across the island nation.

Media concealment does not mean that questions of health endangerment are simply vacated, though. Most companies now acknowledge aspects of endangerment on factory-related websites. They usually state the following. The behavior that is “smoking” (as opposed to the product made by the factory) is addictive and unsafe. Smoking should be avoided by children and only enjoyed by responsible consumers making informed decisions. Manufacturing under our aegis follows the principles of “harm reduction,” always striving to use innovative techniques to make “safer” cigarettes.

Acknowledgments like these are ubiquitous across the industry, no less so on websites hosted by Chinese tobacco enterprises. They are public relations tactics, carefully calibrated to help divert attention away from an infrastructure that fabricates a hazardous product and redirect it toward consumer decisions about managing a risky habit. They are techniques of obfuscation, designed to tell people little about the daily workings of a supply chain engendering large-scale human carnage and, instead, wrap companies and their constituent brands in an aura of public health respectability.

Bio- and Thanatopolitical Considerations

In all its forms, cigarette factory concealment allows us to reflect in novel ways on ties between, on the one hand, built environments and, on the other, biopolitics (that is, dynamics wherein life promotion is politically generative). It also allows us to reflect in new ways on thanatopolitics (dynamics wherein death promotion is politically generative). There has been no shortage of social theorists working at the intersection of biopolitics and thanatopolitics in recent years (Agamben 1998, Berlant 2007, Butler 2004, Foucault 2003, Mbembe 2003, Murray 2006, Povinelli 2011), though few have considered that intersection together with architecture.

Certainly the most influential theorist of this group has been Foucault. He posited that the ways in which biopolitics operates, what it sees and acts upon, are inseparable from market logics, particularly those of liberal and neoliberal economics, principles and methods which obey “the internal rule of maximum economy” (Foucault 2008:318). And he showed that buildings have been generative for the ways seeing has related to power: the panopticon and surveillance in the case of “discipline,” the clinic and the medical gaze in the case of “biopolitics.”⁷

Unfortunately, during his career, Foucault rarely discussed how optics influenced the legibility of the architectural form’s exterior. Rather, he gave priority to the ways the architectural form functioned internally and the ways it conjured heuristic metaphor, how it worked as a domain of observation and subjectification, how it suggested processes inciting the disciplined or medicalized subject. Even more rarely did Foucault explore thanatopolitics and its relationships to architecture. Some of his clearest discussion of thanatopolitics came during a 1976 lecture at the Collège de France. But nowhere in that discussion did he bring up built space (2003:239-264).

Someone writing about architecture and bio/thanatopolitical intersections, of course, is Giorgio Agamben (1998, 2000). I must admit, I have been tempted to draw upon Agamben’s ideas ever since I began trying to make sense of cigarette factories. A particular attraction has been the way he pushes readers to think about architectural forms as important for the coproduction of not just biopolitics, as Foucault did, but also mass death. The built space he continually brings us back to is the Nazi death camp, an intriguing provocation when contemplating tobacco companies and their cigarette factories.

There are several hurdles here in applying Agamben, however. First, his analytical approach gives almost no attention to how the realm of business and profit is generative for thanatopolitics, that is, how economic rationalities might be significant for producing death. Second, he has rarely written about techniques of visual representation enveloping thanatopolitical institutions; much like Foucault, he is mostly interested in what we can extrapolate from the internal workings of the architectural form. Third, Agamben's primary case study, Nazi Germany, implicitly leads his audience to prioritize military crisis, something we have certainly seen occur within anthropology recently (Caton 2006, Fassin and Vasquez 2005, Scheper-Hughes 2013). The problem with such a prioritization is that it can all too easily prompt us to overlook the ways that, under more quotidian political economic conditions, unmarked by acute language of crisis, death en masse unfolds. Prioritizing military events can all too easily prompt scholars to overlook the persistent mechanisms that bring about what Berlant has termed "slow death," "phenomen[a] of mass physical attenuation" that do not necessitate war and crisis but rather unfold gradually, from day-to-day "under global/national regimes of capitalist structural subordination and governmentality" (2007:754).

Facilitating slow death, I would suggest, are the many mechanisms that render its infrastructural sources unremarkable. For making sense of those mechanisms, I have found two theorists—Judith Butler and Elizabeth Povinelli—especially helpful. Although neither pays much attention to the built environment that is infrastructure, their attention to visual legibility allows us to view infrastructural edifices in a new light. Their approaches help us to consider the ways that hulking fountains of slow death, such as cigarette factories, can hide in plain sight, and how they can be curated as commonplace, unremarkable, and apolitical. In their recent books, Butler (2009) and Povinelli (2011) each encourage us to place questions of recognition at the intersection of bio- and thanatopolitics. Butler (2009:5) directs our attention to "norms of recognizability" and their role in shaping "schemas of intelligibility." She prompts us to decipher the hegemony of the visual frame, "the frame that seeks to contain, convey, and determine what is seen," and to question what sits inside and outside the frame (2009:10). Processes of framing are vitally important, she posits, because ultimately they allow the public to "decide which lives will be recognizable as lives and which will not" (2009:12). Only somewhat less abstract, Povinelli (2011:78-79) directs us to consider discursive modes of

“concealment” and “camouflage,” what she calls the “arts of disguise.” By allowing “objects to remain indiscernible,” arts of disguise are indispensable to the smooth working of market logics in biopolitical contexts, she argues, because they make it possible for the market to generate slow, “cruddy” forms of suffering and death with little to no public consternation resulting (2011:78-79).

The obfuscation of cigarette factories that I have outlined thus far seems to be a strong example of “norms of recognizability” and “arts of disguise” in action. At this point, something remaining to be clarified is the spectrum—the optical range—that these norms and arts can take. For this, I suggest we now turn more fully to China and that we foreground two terms: the *cloak* and the *veil*. In the sartorial realm, both the cloak and the veil condition what we see, and therefore what we understand of that which lies behind them. But they are not the same. Whereas the cloak conceals and diverts attention through physical and discursive techniques of relatively blunt opacity, the veil does so through a somewhat different array of material and discursive aesthetics, ones using allurements and translucence. Rather than a fixed binary, what I want to posit here is a continuum for our consideration of cigarette factories. Contingent on everything from historical context to cultural conventions, architectural customs, laws, and strategies of public relations, factories may be cloaked in aesthetics of greater opacity in one instance and veiled in aesthetics of greater translucence and allurements in another. To gain a better appreciation of this continuum, let us now focus more on manufacturing facilities in China. For, if tobacco companies that I have discussed so far in places like Europe and the Americas have been inclined recently to deploy dense cloaks, cigarette manufacturers in China today regularly also opt for optics more akin to bedazzling veils.⁸

Chinese Cigarette Factories

To be clear, cigarette factories in contemporary China draw upon numerous norms of recognizability, some highly opaque. Opacity is especially operable among illicit factories, those producing counterfeit branded cigarettes, a phenomenon also frequently found beyond the borders of the People’s Republic (Kaplan 2009). Among the rest of the country’s factories, meaning those run legally under the auspices of China’s State Tobacco Monopoly Administration (STMA), a more diaphanous, alluring

set of aesthetics is also commonly at work. These aesthetics enable many of the STMA factories to be called up effortlessly on the latest versions of Chinese Internet maps, helping the Cigarette Citadels project to have pinpointed quickly well over 125 factories across China. Signage outside most of these facilities unambiguously states “Cigarette Factory” in large Chinese ideograms. In some instances, architectural form is used in highly demonstrative ways, with factory office buildings at the end of the 20th century even being designed to look like cigarettes, towering 20 to 30 stories in the air.⁹ Also, Chinese media databases are peppered with images of the country’s cigarette factories, both interiors and exteriors. These photos are regularly deployed didactically in news pieces, extolling the value of cigarette manufacturing. Public tours of cigarette factories are uncommon today, and most factories are as tightly guarded as any in Europe or elsewhere. But innumerable photos (and videos) continue to be released to the media showing groups of people, from government officials to young students, being guided inside and past production lines.¹⁰

Owing to these luminous optics, the existence of cigarette factories—aging ones in city centers, newer ones on urban peripheries—has become so conspicuous that few urbanites think to mention them in casual conversation. These optics, I should emphasize, do not necessarily divulge much more in the way of concrete information about the managerial workings of cigarette factories than the cloaks discussed in the first half of this article, but they do seem far more oriented toward piquing the attention of outsiders than quashing it. This veiling is not ironic when juxtaposed to Beijing being a signatory of the WHO’s Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Rather, it is illustrative of a form of industrial normalization present in China, one hatched during the age of Mao and well-adapted to the neo-liberal logics of the FCTC. This was brought home to me when, in 2012, I asked the director of Pioneers for Health, China’s first tobacco-control NGO, where exactly Kunming City’s newest and largest cigarette factory was. A 30-year public health veteran who has lived in Kunming her entire adult life, Professor Li Xiaoliang founded Pioneers for Health to help China implement the FCTC. Still, more than a year after the city’s newest factory was opened, at a price tag of over USD \$800 million, Li was unaware of its location. When I told her it sat less than five kilometers from her home, she quipped, “There’s been much in the media about that factory. I understand it is very beautiful and modern. Government officials are always going there to have their photos taken. But another cigarette factory, with so

many existing in China already, why would this one be important to me?” In the remaining pages of this article, allow me to outline other aspects of factory veiling that have helped insinuate a banal view of cigarette manufacturing across China.¹¹

Juanyanchang

Three ideograms have been core elements of the veil. These are the Chinese characters that my daughter and I saw painted in gold that day behind her nursery school. Promotional media served up by cigarette manufacturers in China has come in many forms over the decades, from billboards, to print ads, to point-of-sale marketing. Whatever the form, such media has usually stated the brand name of the cigarette product being promoted. It has also consistently and boldly played up something else, the ideograms for “cigarette factory,” 卷烟厂 (*juanyanchang* in Mandarin). Consider the most common form of tobacco media anywhere in the world, the colorful graphics placed upon individual packs of cigarettes. Prominently displayed on nearly all packs manufactured in contemporary China is *juanyanchang*, usually preceded by ideograms for the city in which the factory is located. Such a practice is not common for packs produced elsewhere in the world. Nor has it always been the case for packs made in China. *Juanyanchang* occasionally appeared on packs manufactured during the initial decades of cigarette sales in the early 20th century. By the late 1950s, however, almost all packs made in China declared their place of production, typically printed on their front and back sides in elegant Chinese fonts. This aesthetic feature has proved relatively stable ever since. Whereas pack designs in the PRC changed frequently over the latter half of the 20th century, often playfully in concert with the Party’s shifting political winds, the inscription “cigarette factory” remained on packs. Those words are today sometimes consigned to sides of packs, but rarely are they absent. Printed atop eye-catching graphics, they draw one’s attention to the cigarette’s material production, while telling us almost nothing about how it occurs or to what effect.

The pride of place allotted to “cigarette factory” on packs and other cigarette media highlights the tremendous cultural authority that, as the 20th century unfolded, China attached to machine manufacturing, joining other countries in championing urbanized, industrial production. With the rise of modernist, developmental discourses, a number of Chinese reformers

pinned new hopes on Chinese cities in the early 1900s, touting them as promising engines of positive social change against a specter of rural backwardness (Faure and Liu 2002). After the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, the Chinese Communist Party's dream of transforming China into an industrialized country catapulted factories from sites of likely capitalist exploitation into imagined wellsprings of utopian revolutionary nationalism (Kaple 1994). Of course, people's actual experiences working inside factories after 1949 never kept up with any utopian, patriotic ideal (Rofel 1999). And the term "factory" in many industrial sectors has more recently been treated with renewed ambivalence across China, as a referent that may just as likely signal underpaid toil as it does decay, injury, and environmental harm. But the promise of ever-more mechanized fabrication continues to buoy the "factory" as a source of life enhancement, human development, and even fantasy.

Pride and Patronage

That *juanyanchang* became a mainstay of smoking media is also rooted in how Beijing reorganized China's tobacco industry during the 1950s. It nationalized cigarette manufacturing, hitherto mostly privately owned and based in a few regions. It consolidated closely located factories, typically merging them into a single manufacturing facility named after each region's largest urban hub and assigning oversight to the hub's newly appointed Communist Party committee. Beijing also encouraged Party authorities to build factories in regions of the country where they had never existed before. By the mid-1960s, nearly all major municipalities and provincial capitals possessed a cigarette manufacturing facility, usually walled off behind an imposing guarded perimeter adorned with signage proudly declaring host city fidelity to the public, with names like Changsha Cigarette Factory, Tianjin Cigarette Factory, Shanghai Cigarette Factory, and Kunming Cigarette Factory.

Manufacturing cigarettes during the Mao era (1949–1976) served to shore up popular allegiance to local government. Regional leaders with cigarette manufacturing in their midst could influence who received coveted factory jobs. More broadly, leaders had the ability to issue (or withhold) cigarette ration tickets, *yanjuan*. Between the late 1950s and the 1970s, families with permits for urban residency in cigarette-producing regions were eligible to receive *yanjuan*, much as they were eligible to

receive ration coupons for other goods. Families could either redeem their cigarette coupons for packs, considered quite a luxury during the most difficult periods of the Maoist era, or they could swap the coupons on a gray market for other goods. What was the source of all this luxury, the origin of its exchange value? It was emblazoned on every pack: “cigarette factory.” After the chaos of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) subsided, cigarette manufacturing’s role as an engine of taxation blossomed anew. Since then, Beijing has siphoned off most of the revenue but has left enough behind for local authorities to provide themselves and other citizens possessing requisite residency permits all kinds of indirect benefits, from new schools to more robust sanitation and social services.

Inspection Tour Media

After 1949, domestic news outlets began carrying stories and images of cigarette factories, at first infrequently and then, as the 1970s progressed, more often. A common trope under which these communiqués have appeared has been the “tax story.” Local authorities have been happy to extoll tax windfalls in regional media, enveloping their factories in an aura of congratulation. Another highly visible trope has been the “inspection tour,” a mainstay of Chinese Communist–public relations. The typical protagonists of inspection tours have been municipal and provincial officials. But higher ranking leaders—including nearly all of China’s Party luminaries, from Mao Zedong to Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, Li Peng, Jiang Zimin, Hu Jintao, and China’s current paramount leader Xi Jinping—have also made cameo appearances. Over the last decade, marketing arms of the tobacco industry have been especially eager to reproduce images and stories of officials on tour, recirculating them via websites, exhibition displays, and public relations proxies.

For instance, at present, Yunnan province’s Hongyun Honghe Tobacco Group proudly circulates photos of a 2008 inspection that Xi Jinping made of cigarette manufacturing in Kunming. 2008 was an outstanding year for state-owned cigarette enterprises in China such as Hongyun Honghe: all told, nationwide, the industry delivered USD \$72 billion to government coffers, then an all-time high and an increase of 16 percent from the year before (*Xinhua* 2009). It was no less a salubrious year for Xi Jinping. He became Vice President of the PRC, and he solidified his trajectory as likely successor to President Hu Jintao, a succession which was completed

early in 2013. Commemorating Xi's 2008 inspection, the caption below a photo on a website co-sponsored by the Hongyun Honghe Group and the China Tobacco Corporation reads, "Vice President Xi Jinping and the Group's factory employees shake hands." Text just below explains that the visit "reflects the care and attention that the national leadership gives the Group and its employees." Populating the banner atop the website is an image of two young employees in a hyper-modern factory control room peering over computers toward eight large wall-mounted LCD screens which show ongoing high-speed cigarette production; at the far left of this same banner, a white dove appears every few seconds, landing on the words "Group News: attentive, timely, and honest" (Collective Party Administrative Office 2008). This carefully woven Internet veil of Yunnan's Hongyun Honghe Group, as bedazzling as it appears, discloses little about the inner workings of manufacturing. Instead, we are incited to look, to experience a spectacle of celebrity and factory façade, and to feel as if we have seen something significant about cigarette production even though we have not.

Competitive Veiling

Competition amongst domestic producers has also played a role in encouraging veiling as opposed to more opaque forms of concealment. Over the last two decades, China's geographically based cigarette manufacturers have been vying fiercely to claim larger pieces of China's massive and growing market. This market is not only horizontally capacious, with at least 300 million smokers living across China today, but in recent years has taken a vertical turn, with pricing expanding to well over a 100-fold differential between the most affordable and most expensive brands. China's cheapest cigarettes today cost as little as USD \$0.60 for a pack of 20 cigarettes, whereas the priciest run to over USD \$30 (with some of the most expensive brands known to triple in price over the Chinese New Year period).¹²

To justify these price differentials and to compete for brand recognition, domestic manufacturers frequently deploy the factory as a source of distinction, as a fount of product quality, taste, and ironically, safety. Through visual media, under highly circumscribed optics, manufacturers usher us inside factories, especially those recently built or retrofitted, to see how local excellence is generated. Their preferred media include

websites, marketing brochures, and Internet videos. Few people appear in the more formal variety of these visualizations, with special exception given to the lab-coat-wearing “scientist” fine-tuning blends, providing an aura of modern learning to the entire process. In largely depopulated scenes, the stars of the show are the many categories of machine that it takes to transform flu-cured tobacco leaf into a cellophane-sealed pack ready for shipping. The spotlight shines on the leaf slicer, conditioner, cutter, dryer, dust aspirator, stem feeder, flavor cylinder, filter rod maker and distributor, as well as the cigarette maker, buffer, packer, wrapper, boxer, and palletizing robot.

This is high theater in service of a specific message. With great machines, the country’s finest factories are offering discriminating consumers a superior and safer smoking experience. The impossibility of producing a “safe” tobacco-filled cigarette is never mentioned. Neither is it mentioned that the worldwide attempt to manufacture “light” cigarettes—containing less tar and nicotine—has been a health disaster because the average consumer will smoke them in greater number and deeper into the lung. Instead, the viewer is offered a cleansing shower of imagery, all designed to ignite consumer feelings of allegiance to factory, locality, and country, and to encourage citizens to calmly step forward and smoke.

Industrial futurism has likewise been a dominant theme in the countless visualizations of Chinese factories that I have come across. Images of manufacturing facilities planned or currently being built are especially illustrative. Cigarette production might be on the decline in many parts of the world, but in China there is currently a factory building boom. The China Tobacco Monopoly Administration, as of the 1990s, indicated that it wants old factories shuttered, with a smaller number of modern mega factories to take their place, causing competition to become rife among regional authorities over who will be awarded the right to host the replacements. Much like the line of imagery mentioned above featuring machines, visualizations of future factories articulate an aesthetic of modernist longing. These visualizations are often embedded in highly didactic celebratory public relations stories about the proposed manufacturing facilities. Frequently appearing in this line of communication are photos of elegantly crafted scale models of proposed factories. Via the Internet, we see models set upon alter-like tables with government cadres studiously walking around them. The faces of the cadres beam with a mixture of admiration, awe, and solemnity.

Playful Aesthetics

It is not simply earnestness, however, that the veil uses to normalize cigarette manufacturing. One also finds more playful, even seemingly zany, aesthetics at work. In still and video imagery released by tobacco companies, we are shown factory employees participating in amusing group exercise. These include everything from volleyball and basketball games to tug-of-war, aerobics, taekwondo, and relay races. They also include quirky events such as swatting balls with tennis racquets to knock over supersized mock-ups of cigarette packs. We further see factory personnel dabbling in the performance arts, from choral programs to holiday dance routines, drum recitals, and electro-acoustic band performances. Some of these events are staged inside factories; more often they are set in performance halls and sports facilities which a tobacco enterprise has built for its local community and named after its factory. Whether relay races or dance shows, the events often occur during national holidays, allowing the cigarette factory to showcase itself as being richly involved in the flow of public life. In recent years, because of FCTC-mandated restrictions on formal cigarette advertising, tobacco enterprises in China have curtailed soliciting TV outlets to broadcast these holiday events and have turned increasingly to the Internet for coverage.

One of the more playful iterations of factory visualization which I have come across while conducting research for the Cigarette Citadels Map Project is a music video, uploaded to China's top Internet site, Youku. The video is set within the Sui Hua Cigarette Factory, an older lack-lustre plant located in China's far northeast region of Manchuria. Sui Hua staff, in tune with worldwide pop culture, released their polished production "Sui Smoke Style" in early 2013, a parody of the global music video phenomenon, "Gangnam Style." The parody features a plump lookalike of the Korean musician PSY accompanied by young, lithe, female factory employees, dancing and strutting as they tour an Internet audience in-and-out of various parts of the manufacturing complex. Other Sui Hua employees, from food service staff to bus drivers, join the choreography along the way. Uniformed manufacturing personnel dance PSY's signature "horse step" in front of their machinery. Sui Hua's senior management, seated behind their desks, wave to the camera as it pans by. The video ends with a lingering full-screen shot of a red and orange 2013 Chinese New Year greeting card addressed to the factory's supervisory agency, the Heilongjiang Province

Industrial Tobacco Corporation, wishing it a “beautiful tomorrow” and a “happy New Year” (Sui Hua Cigarette Factory 2013).

This parody can be interpreted as an effort by a weaker enterprise, possibly in danger of being absorbed by a larger one, to generate a public relations windfall. And to that extent, it draws upon and pushes the envelope of veiling that cigarette makers in China use. The film provides the viewer greater yet still highly limited access to an enterprise’s manufacturing processes. It acknowledges but mostly trivializes the labor involved in making millions of rolled tobacco products per day, effectively transforming what is a pivotal site in a production chain generative of enormous rates of disease, into a source of humor, joy, and hijinks. The video also introduces an anthropomorphizing element to the veil. This is particularly clarified in the final shot, where a governing rationale of the parody is divulged. The film is a communication of New Year’s ethics—of a form typically transmitted between two people who share common affective ties—but here it is a missive of affection, appreciation, and playfulness between a factory and its supervisory agency. We the viewers are freely welcomed into these structures of feeling, allowed to participate in what is a public communication of intimacy between two institutional actors in China’s vast cigarette manufacturing apparatus, and invited to relish in their creativity, congeniality, and moral rectitude.

Conclusion

Over the last decade, global health leaders have gone so far as to represent the cigarette as a “weapon of mass destruction” designed and pushed upon people by rapacious corporations (Gorlick 2008). My analysis has highlighted an array of tactics by which infrastructural apparatuses that undergird this ignominious industry have been depoliticized. My analysis supports Larkin’s (2013) assessment that infrastructures are never simply undetectable or indiscernible until they break down. Rather, when it comes to infrastructure, we must strive to understand “how (in)visibility is mobilized and why” (Larkin 2013:336). The tobacco industry carefully endeavors to manage the (in)visibility of its supply chain around the world, enabling this global business to make triple the number of cigarettes today as it did in the 1960s, with such disease-inducing practices generating little public consternation toward manufacturing itself. Irrespective

of national boundary, the tobacco industry discloses little regarding what transpires inside its factory compounds, and in many parts of the world it occludes public awareness of where factories even reside. A corporate impulse to hide from public health, particularly from its recently created global mechanisms of tobacco control, has not been the only cause of factory illegibility in the cigarette business. It has been coproduced by multiple processes, some common to all forms of manufacturing. Research contributing to the Cigarette Citadels Map Project indicates that makers of cigarettes have not simply been running away from global tobacco control, nor have they been avoiding all other manifestations of biopolitics. Rather, in various ways, cigarette makers have been embracing biopolitical logics, conditioning them, even using them to conceal their factories. Cigarette manufacturing highlights important variations in how industrial illegibility can work. In much of the world today, the tactics obscuring a cigarette factory from public scrutiny, allowing it to hide in plain sight, often skew toward an aesthetic of the opaque cloak. Other optics, however, are sometimes deployed, more akin to a diaphanous, playful veil. The rise of such optics of veiling in China has helped to normalize cigarette manufacturing in the PRC by encouraging many citizens today to experience the presence of cigarette factories as commonplace, congenial, and often unremarkable facets of urban landscapes.

In and outside of China, the health and social sciences have given little priority to researching cigarette factories over the years, though both have long histories of investigating other aspects of tobacco. Most often, they have studied “usage,” probing why, how, and to what biological and social consequence people smoke. For the social sciences, this has come under such rubrics as “smoking cultures,” “indigenous identity,” and “religious healing,” while for the health sciences it has come under organizing terms like “pathogenesis,” “addictive behaviors,” and “intervention science” (Kohrman and Benson 2011).

That cigarette production in general and factory (in)visibility in particular have been understudied is likely predictable to historians of the cigarette like Allan Brandt (2007), who has chronicled that Big Tobacco long ago began hiring public relations experts to divert academic scrutiny. Less predictable, perhaps, is that the academic subfield of tobacco control has contributed to these oversights while its leaders have been increasingly castigating cigarette companies as rapacious traffickers of harmful products. Because of logics of governance, including those

undergirding the WHO's Framework Convention, little effort has been made within the tobacco-control community to either question or countervisualize industry infrastructure. For instance, despite public health's obsession with death and statistical projections, no one in that field has problematized linkages between mortality and numbers that have been easily collected by the Cigarette Citadels project: the manufacturing outputs of factories. No one has fixed upon a factory such as the one run by Philip Morris USA in Richmond, Virginia, and connected that facility's manufacturing output to death. Doing so is not difficult. It only requires using basic formulas of public health itself.¹³ Today, leading tobacco-control advocates commonly turn to just such formulas. They calculate estimates regarding how many people worldwide will die from cigarettes—in 2030, in 2050, or during the entire 21st century—and then they disseminate those estimates to the public through various charts and graphs. But what of the nitty-gritty that is the factory form, sitting as it does in a specific locale, at a fixed address, rolling truck-loads of cigarettes out of its gates daily? Why not consider that infrastructural form when calculating and visualizing death? The factory that Philip Morris USA operates in Richmond opened in the early 1970s. It recently celebrated its 40th year in operation. What is its death toll to date? Based on conservative estimates, this one North American factory alone will have contributed to the premature death of over two million people by 2015.¹⁴

Two million people. Imagine life-sized drawings of these lost souls, laid head to foot. The drawings would create a chain so long that, if visualized on a map, could run from the city of Miami, Florida, north to Richmond, Virginia, loop around the Philip Morris factory, and continue on north all the way to Bangor, Maine. Imagine another optic regarding the "Richmond two million": personal items contributed by bereaved families of North American smokers who were Marlboro loyalists and who have died from lung cancer over the last two decades. Laid in memorial at the gates of the Richmond factory, these personal items would create physical and emotional barriers across which company trucks would need to traverse.

One goal of this article and of the Cigarette Citadels project has been to encourage a new politics for tobacco control, a politics that does not shy away from death but recognizes that, when confronted and creatively visualized, it can be generative for innovative social action. Such a politics will find greater footing, I believe, only when people around the world scrutinize more vigorously the global tobacco industry's supply network,

including facilities where cigarettes are manufactured. This supply network can be overlooked no longer. It can be countenanced no further. The cloaks and veils that sustain cigarette manufacturing and condition “tobacco control” must be problematized, and in their place new, more critical optics must be fashioned. Time has come for the tobacco industry’s supply chains to be seen and shaken...sharply. ■

Endnotes:

¹Examples of other anthropologists recently researching the cigarette market’s supply chain include Belson (2012), Kingsolver (2007), and Otañez (2009). For a review of anthropological research regarding tobacco, see Kohrman and Benson (2011).

²In 2007, US Ambassador to Belgrade Michael Polt lobbied Serbia’s government to relax restrictions so that Philip Morris could more easily produce cigarettes at a factory it purchased and retrofitted in the city of Niš after the breakup of Yugoslavia (BETA 2007).

³This point was brought to my attention by my Stanford University colleague, Robert Jackler, and is supported by corporate documents. For example, the introductory pages of Philip Morris’s 1975 annual report proudly state that, that year, the company welcomed 22,000 visitors into its main US cigarette factory, providing “the general public with the opportunity to witness at firsthand our scientific quality control and our modern, high-speed, highly efficient operations” (Philip Morris Incorporated 1975:2). Such visits in the early 1970s were regularly in the form of scheduled “tours,” provided to business associates but just as often to local groups from primary and secondary schools, scout packs, community centers, and even youth guidance programs. By the early 1980s, discussion of factory tours had largely vanished from Philip Morris’s annual reports, and scheduled visits were becoming fewer and farther between. And as the 1980s came to a close, Philip Morris had begun deploying the term “tour” for forms of marketing utterly disconnected from any factory. It had begun running “Marlboro Tours,” opportunities for tourists to participate in packaged “adventure” travel in southwestern parts of the US (IDE 1990). All eyes were directed toward the brand experience, “Marlboro Country,” allowing the public to largely forget manufacturing.

⁴See <http://who.int/tobacco/framework/text.final/en> (last accessed on July 22, 2015).

⁵Accessed from http://www.pmi.com/marketpages/pages/market_en_pt.aspx on April 7, 2014.

⁶See http://www.pmi.com/marketpages/market_en_id.aspx (last accessed on July 10, 2015) and http://www.sampoerna.com/id_id/pages/homepage.aspx (last accessed on July 10, 2015).

⁷We should not forget that one of the architectural forms Foucault so often turned to—Bentham’s panopticon—was originally designed for a factory, one to be constructed in Russia, with the intention that the new building would allow a small number of managers to monitor a large unskilled workforce. One can imagine a number of ways Foucault’s ideas about the panopticon could be applied to cigarette factories, especially in terms of labor management, but they seem limited for my present concerns. Whereas I am trying to better understand the external legibility of factories, Foucault’s idea of the panoptic gaze sprang from the internal logics of Bentham’s design as it was applied to prisons. Within such panopticons, the guard is able to look into any number of inmates’ rooms at once while prisoners are unable to determine when the guard is watching them.

⁸I am indebted to Aaron Hames for helping me conceptualize the distinction that I am making here between the cloak and the veil.

⁹One possible example of such an architectural flourish, the only that I have seen outside of China, is at the southern end of the Philip Morris factory outside of Richmond, Virginia. There is a small monochromatic tan building near the perimeter fence along highway Interstate-95 that has a molded cement edifice comprised of what to some viewers might appear to be vertical cylinders of varying diameters that resemble cigarettes; to other viewers it might appear to be a messy stack of books.

¹⁰One can also find this congratulatory and idealized disclosure of factories in a few instances outside of China (for example, pertaining to the Yesmoke factory in Northern Italy and Adris TDR factory in Croatia).

¹¹Another approach to thinking about the visual culture of contemporary Chinese factories is provided by Stefan Al and his co-editors (2012). Rather than providing an illustrative guidebook to factories, as they so effectively do, my emphasis here instead draws from radical ontology, questioning how tobacco enterprises present their factories to outside observers.

¹²Foreign brands, which comprise less than five percent of cigarettes sold in contemporary China, usually sell for little more than USD \$3–6 per pack.

¹³These formulas were devised, tested, and validated years ago by epidemiologists in order to quantify the relationship between: a) numbers of cigarettes smoked within a population over a 20-year duration and b) the resultant rates of death. Stimulated by the mapping work of the Cigarette Citadels project and after a query of mine about how to calculate deaths produced by a cigarette factory, a colleague of mine at Stanford, the historian Robert Proctor, published a table in which he has used such epidemiological formulas to calculate annual deaths produced by several of the world's largest cigarette factories, including Altria's plant in Richmond, Virginia (Proctor 2012:90).

¹⁴This calculation is based on the following facts. The Richmond factory opened in 1973. It was already producing at least 105 billion cigarettes per year in 1975, 175 billion per year in 2007, and 134 billion per year in 2012 (Altria 2009:97, 2013:30; Philip Morris 1975:2). I have used the lowest of these production rates (105 billion cigarettes per year) as a constant. I have applied that figure to the epidemiological finding that, after 20 years of consumption, a billion cigarettes per year causes approximately 1,000 premature deaths annually among any population (Proctor 2012). So, by 1995, the Richmond factory would have been contributing to at least 105,000 premature deaths per year. And between 1995 and 2015, the total number of deaths would have well exceeded two million.

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Cloaks and Veils: Countervisualizing Cigarette Factories In and Outside of China
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[关键词：生命政治，基础设施，全球健康，烟草管制]

Плащи и вуали: Ответная визуализация табачных заводов внутри и вне Китая
[Ключевые слова: биополитика, инфраструктура, глобальное здравоохранение, контроль табака]

Mantos e Véus: Contravisualização de Fábricas de Cigarros Dentro e Fora da China
[Palavras-chave: Biopolítica, infraestrutura, saúde global, controlo tabagístico]

الْحُبِّي وَالْحِجَاب: مكافحة تصور مصانع السجائر في داخل وخارج الصين
 كلمات البحث: السياسة البيولوجية، البنية التحتية، الصحة العالمية، مكافحة التبغ

