

CHAPTER 27

World-Systems Theorizing

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The intellectual history of world-systems theorizing has roots in classical sociology, Marxian revolutionary theory, geopolitical strategizing, and theories of social evolution. But in explicit form the world-systems perspective emerged only in the 1970s when Samir Amin, Andre Gunder Frank, and Immanuel Wallerstein began to formulate the concepts and to narrate the analytic history of the modern world system. Especially for Wallerstein (1974), it was explicitly a perspective rather than a theory or a set of theories. A terminology was deployed to tell the story. The guiding ideas were explicitly *not* a set of precisely defined concepts being used to formulate theoretical explanations. Universalistic theoretical explanations were rejected and the historicity of all social science was embraced.¹ Indeed, Wallerstein radically collapsed the metatheoretical opposites of nomothetic ahistoricism/ideographic historicism into the contradictory unity of “historical systems.” Efforts to formalize a theory or theories out of the resulting analytic narratives are only confounded if they assume that the changing meanings of “concepts” are unintentional.² Rather, there has been sensitivity to context and difference that has abjured specifying definitions and formalizing propositions.

Yet it has been possible to adopt a more nomothetic and systemic stance and then to proceed with world-systems theorizing with the understanding that this is a principled difference from more historicist world-systems scholars. Indeed, world-systems scholars, as with other macrosociologists, may be arrayed along a continuum from purely nomothetic ahistoricism to completely descriptive ideographic historicism. The possible metatheoretical stances are not two, but many, depending on the extent to which different institutional realms are thought to be lawlike or contingent and conjunctural. Fernand Braudel was more historicist than Wallerstein. Amin, an economist, is more nomothetic. Giovanni Arrighi’s (1994) monumental work on 600 years of “systemic cycles of accumulation” sees qualitative differences in each hegemony, while Wallerstein, despite his aversion to explicating models, sees rather

¹But see Hopkins and Wallerstein (1982).

²Thomas Richard Shannon’s (1996) *Introduction to the World-Systems Perspective* remains the most valuable tool for introducing the main ideas to undergraduates. But Shannon displays a misplaced exasperation when he encounters apparently inconsistent terminological usages in Wallerstein’s work. This is because Shannon’s effort to explicate assumes a single and unvarying set of meanings, while Wallerstein allows his vocabulary to adapt to the historical context that it is being used to analyze.

more continuity in the logic of the system, even extending to the most recent era of globalization. Gunder Frank (Frank & Gills, 1993) now claims that there was no transition to capitalism, and that the logic of “capital imperialism” has not changed since the emergence of cities and states in Mesopotamia 5000 years ago. Metatheory comes before theory. It focuses our theoretical spotlight on some questions while leaving others in the shadows. No overview of world-systems theorizing can ignore the issue of metatheoretical stances on the problem of systemness.

In this chapter I will provide an intentionally inclusive characterization of the late 20th-century cultural artifact that is designated by the words “world-systems/world system scholarship” (with and without the hyphen). Some reflections on the intellectual ancestors of this artifact are included in the discussion below. An earlier overview of the several heritages that provoked world-systems theorizing is to be found in Chase-Dunn (1998, Introduction). I also will outline my own view as to where world-systems theorizing ought to be going. In his instructions to the chapter authors of this *Handbook of Sociological Theory*, Jonathan Turner (personal communication, January 8, 1999) said “... I am less interested in summaries of a theoretical orientation per se than in what you are doing theoretically in this area.” Thus the theoretical research program I have been constructing with Tom Hall (Chase-Dunn & Hall, 1997) and my foray into praxis with Terry Boswell (Boswell & Chase-Dunn, 2000) will loom large in what follows.

WHAT IT IS

The hyphen emphasizes the idea of the whole system, the point being that all the human interaction networks small and large, from the household to global trade, constitute the world-system. It is not just a matter of “international relations.” This converts the internal–external problem of the causes of social change into an empirical question. The world-systems perspective emphatically does not deny the possibility of agency because everything is alleged to be determined by the global system. What it does is to make it possible to understand where agency is more likely to be successful and where not. This said, the hyphen also has come to connote a degree of loyalty to Wallerstein’s approach. Other versions often drop the hyphen. Hyphen or not, the world(-)systems approach has long been far more internally differentiated than most of its critics have understood.

The world-systems approach looks at human institutions over long periods of time and employs the spatial scale that is necessary for comprehending whole interaction systems. It is neither Eurocentric nor core-centric, at least in principle. The main idea is simple: Human beings on Earth have been interacting with one another in important ways over broad expanses of space since the emergence of ocean-going transportation in the 15th century. Before the incorporation of the Americas into the Afroeurasian system there were many local and regional world-systems (intersocietal networks). Most of these were inserted into the expanding European-centered system largely by force and their populations were mobilized to supply labor for a colonial economy that was repeatedly reorganized according to the changing geopolitical and economic forces emanating from the European and (later) North American core societies.

This whole process can be understood structurally as a stratification system composed of economically and politically dominant core societies (themselves in competition with one another) and dependent peripheral and semiperipheral regions, some of which have been successful in improving their positions in the larger core–periphery hierarchy, while most have simply maintained their relative positions.

This structural perspective on world history allows us to analyze the cyclical features of social change and the long-term trends of development in historical and comparative perspective. We can see the development of the modern world-system as driven primarily by capitalist accumulation and geopolitics in which businesses and states compete with one another for power and wealth. Competition among states and capitals is conditioned by the dynamics of struggle among classes and by the resistance of peripheral and semiperipheral peoples to domination from the core. In the modern world-system the semiperiphery is composed of large and powerful countries in the Third World (e.g., Mexico, India, Brazil, China) as well as smaller countries that have intermediate levels of economic development (e.g., the East Asian newly industrialized countries). It is not possible to understand the history of social change in the system as a whole without taking into account both the strategies of the winners and the strategies and organizational actions of those who have resisted domination and exploitation.

It also is difficult to understand why and where innovative social change emerges without a conceptualization of the world-system as a whole. As with earlier regional intersocietal systems, new organizational forms that transform institutions and lead to upward mobility most often emerge from societies in semiperipheral locations. Thus all the countries that became hegemonic core states in the modern system formerly have been semiperipheral (the Dutch, the British, and the United States). This is a continuation of a long-term pattern of social evolution that Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997) call "semiperipheral development." Semiperipheral marcher states and semiperipheral capitalist city-states had acted as the main agents of empire formation and commercialization for millennia. This phenomenon arguably also includes the semiperipheral communist states as well as future organizational innovations in semiperipheral countries that will transform the now-global system.

This approach requires that we think structurally. We must be able to abstract from the particularities of the game of musical chairs that constitutes uneven development in the system to see the structural continuities. The core-periphery hierarchy remains, though some countries have moved up or down. The interstate system remains, though the internationalization of capital has further constrained the abilities of states to structure national economies. States have always been subjected to larger geopolitical and economic forces in the world-system, and as is still the case, some have been more successful at exploiting opportunities and protecting themselves from liabilities than others.

In this perspective many of the phenomena that have been called "globalization" correspond to recently expanded international trade, financial flows, and foreign investment by transnational corporations and banks. The globalization discourse generally assumes that until recently there were separate national societies and economies and that these have now been superseded by an expansion of international integration driven by information and transportation technologies. Rather than a wholly unique and new phenomenon, globalization is primarily international economic integration, and as such it is a feature of the world-system that has been oscillating as well as increasing for centuries. Chase-Dunn, Kawano, and Brewer (2000) have shown that trade globalization is both a cycle and a trend.

The Great Chartered Companies of the 17th century already were playing an important role in shaping the development of world regions. Certainly the transnational corporations of the present are much more important players, but the point is that "foreign investment" is not an institution that only became important since 1970 (nor since World War II). Giovanni Arrighi (1994) has shown that finance capital has been a central component of the commanding heights of the world-system since the 14th century. The current floods and ebbs of world money are typical of the late phase of very long "systemic cycles of accumulation."

An inclusive bounding of the circle of world(-)system scholarship should include all

those who see the global system of the late 20th century as having important systemic continuities with the nearly global system of the 19th century. While this is a large and interdisciplinary group, the temporal depth criterion excludes a large number of students of globalization who see such radical recent discontinuities that they need know nothing about what happened before 1960.

A second criterion that might be invoked to draw a boundary around world(-)systems scholarship is a concern for analyzing international stratification, what some world-systemists call the core–periphery hierarchy. Certainly this was a primary focus for Wallerstein, Amin, and the classical Gunder Frank. These progenitors themselves were influenced by the Latin American dependency school and by the Third Worldism of *Monthly Review* Marxism. Wallerstein was an Africanist when he discovered Fernand Braudel and Marion Malowist and the earlier dependent development of Eastern Europe. The epiphany that Latin America and Africa were like Eastern Europe—that they all had been peripheralized by core exploitation and domination over a period of centuries—mushroomed into the idea of the whole stratified system.

It is possible to have good temporal depth but still to ignore the periphery and the dynamics of global inequalities. The important theoretical and empirical work of political scientists George Modelski and William R. Thompson (1996) is an example. Modelski and Thompson theorize a “power cycle” in which “system leaders” rise and fall since the Portuguese led European expansion in the 15th century. They also study the important phenomenon of “new lead industries” and the way in which the Kondratieff wave, a 40- to 60-year business cycle, is regularly related to the rise and decline of “system leaders.” Modelski and Thompson largely ignore core–periphery relations to concentrate on the “great powers.” But so does Giovanni Arrigui’s (1994) masterful 600-year examination of “systemic cycles of accumulation.”³ Gunder Frank’s (1998) latest reinvention, an examination of Chinese centrality in the Afroeurasian world system and the abrupt rise of European power around 1800, also largely ignores core–periphery dynamics.

So too does the “world polity school” led by sociologist John W. Meyer. This institutionalist approach adds a valuable sensitivity to the civilizational assumptions of Western Christendom and their diffusion from the core to the periphery. But rather than a dynamic struggle with authentic resistance from the periphery and the semiperiphery, the world polity school stresses how the discourses of resistance, national self-determination, and individual liberties are constructed out of the assumptions of the European Enlightenment.

I contend that leaving out the core–periphery dimension or treating the periphery as inert are grave mistakes, not only for reasons of completeness, but because the dynamics of all hierarchical world-systems involve a process of semiperipheral development in which a few societies “in the middle” innovate and implement new technologies of power that drive the processes of expansion and transformation. But I would not exclude scholars from the circle because of this mistake. Much is to be learned from those who focus primarily on the core.

It often is assumed that world-systems must necessarily be of large geographical scale. But systemness means that groups are tightly wound, so that an event in one place has important consequences for people in another place. By that criterion, intersocietal systems have only become global (Earth-wide) with the emergence of intercontinental seafaring. Earlier world-systems were smaller regional affairs. An important determinant of system size is the kind of transportation and communications technologies that are available. At the very

³The more recent work by Arrigui and Silver (1999) reintroduces the consideration of core–periphery and class struggle dynamics.

small extreme we have intergroup networks of sedentary foragers who primarily used “back-packing” to transport goods. This kind of hauling produces rather local networks. Such small systems still existed until the 19th century in some regions of North America and Australia (e.g., Chase-Dunn & Mann, 1998). But they were similar in many respects with small world-systems all over the Earth before the emergence of states. An important theoretical task is to specify how to bound the spatial scale of human interaction networks. Working this out makes it possible to compare small, medium-sized, and large world-systems and to use world-systems concepts to rethink theories of human social evolution on a millennial time scale.

Anthropologists and archaeologists have been doing just that. Kasja Ekholm and Jonathan Friedman (1982) have pioneered what they have called “global anthropology,” by which they mean regional intersocietal systems that expanded to become the Earth-wide system of today. Archaeologists studying the US Southwest, provoked by the theorizing and excavations of Charles DiPeso, began using world-systems concepts to understand regional relations and interactions with Mesoamerica. It was archaeologist Phil Kohl (1987) who first applied and critiqued the idea of core-periphery relations in ancient Western Asia and Mesopotamia. Guillermo Algaze’s (1993) *The Uruk World System* is a major contribution as is Gil Stein’s (1999) careful examination of the relationship between his village on the upper Tigris and the powerful Uruk core state. Stein develops important new concepts for understanding core-periphery relations.⁴ Research and theoretical debates among Mesoamericanists also have mushroomed. Peter Peregrine’s (1992, 1995) innovative interpretation of the Mississippian world-system as a Friedmanesque prestige goods system has cajoled and provoked the defenders of local turf to reconsider the possibilities of larger-scale interaction networks in the territory that eventually became the United States of America (e.g., Neitzel, 1999).⁵

THE COMPARATIVE WORLD-SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

Tom Hall and I have entered the fray by formulating a theoretical research program based on a reconceptualization of the world-systems perspective for the purposes of comparing the contemporary global system with earlier regional intersocietal systems (Chase-Dunn & Hall, 1997). We contend that world-systems, not single societies, always have been the relevant units in which processes of structural reproduction and transformation have occurred, and we have formulated a single model for explaining the changing scale and nature of world-systems over the past 12,000 years.⁶

⁴Stein’s polemical use as a straw man of the alleged necessity of all world-systems to have very exploitative and spatially extensive core-periphery hierarchies is an unnecessary distraction from an otherwise intriguing analysis.

⁵This archaeological world-systems literature is reviewed in Hall and Chase-Dunn (1993).

⁶Though we are sociologists, we long have engaged in serious dialogue with social scientists from other disciplines, especially archaeologists, ethnographers, political scientists, historians and geographers. Our original intent may have been to raid these *auslanders* for their data, but in learning the required foreign languages we also have learned how the other tribes think, and our own thinking has been subsequently reconstituted. Our reconceptualization of world-systems concepts is obviously indebted to those who created the world-systems perspective: Fernand Braudel, Immanuel Wallerstein, Samir Amin, Andre Gunder Frank, and Giovanni Arrighi. We also draw heavily upon the evolutionary work of Marshall Sahlins, Morton Fried, Marvin Harris, Robert Carneiro, Robert Cohen, Patrick Kirch, and Stephen Sanderson. Our formulation was greatly influenced by world historians, especially William McNeill and Philip Curtin. The sociologists who have most influenced us have been Gerhard Lenski, Randall Collins, Janet Abu-Lughod, and Michael Mann. The geographers who inspired us were Owen Lattimore, David Harvey, and Peter

Institutional Materialism

Due in part to its multidisciplinary sources of inspiration, our formulation bridges many disciplinary chasms. The term we now use for our general approach is “institutional materialism.” We see human social evolution as produced by an interaction among demographic, ecological, and economic forces and constraints that is expanded and modified by the institutional inventions that people devise to solve problems and to overcome constraints. Solving problems at one level usually leads to the emergence of new problems, and so the basic constraints are never really overcome, at least so far. This is what allows us to construct a single basic model that represents the major forces that have shaped social evolution over the last 12 millennia.

This perspective is obviously indebted to the “cultural materialism” of Marvin Harris and its elaboration by Robert Cohen, Robert Carneiro, and Stephen Sanderson. Our approach to conceptualizing and mapping world-systems is greatly indebted to David Wilkinson, though we have changed both his terminology and his meaning to some extent (see Chapters 1–3 in Chase-Dunn & Hall, 1997).

It is the whole package that is new, not its parts. We contend that world-systems have evolved because of the basic demographic, ecological, and economic forces emphasized by cultural materialism, but we do not thereby adopt the formalist and rational choice individual psychology that is bundled with the cultural materialism of Harris and Sanderson. Our approach is more institutional because we contend that there have been qualitatively different logics of accumulation (kin-based, tributary, and capitalist) and that these have transformed the nature of the social self and personality, as well as forms of calculation and rationality. We remain partisans of Polanyi’s (1977) substantive approach to the embeddedness of economies in cultures. This does not mean that we subscribe to the idea that rationality was an invention of the modern world. We agree with Harris and Sanderson and many anthropologists that people in all societies are economic maximizers for themselves and their families, at least in a general sense. But it also is important to note the differences in the cultural constructions of personality, especially as between egalitarian and hierarchical societies. Here we follow the general line explicated by Jonathan Friedman (1994).

Semiperipheral Development

We also add the important hypothesis of semiperipheral development: that semiperipheral regions are fertile locations of the emergence of new innovations and transformational actors. This is the main basis of our claim that world-systems are the most important unit of analysis for explaining social evolution.

As we have said above, the units of analysis in which our model is alleged to operate are world-systems. These are defined as networks of interaction that have important, regularized consequences for reproducing and changing local social structures.⁷ By this definition many small-scale regional world-systems have merged or been incorporated over the last 12,000 years into a single global system.

Taylor. From political science we have been most greatly influenced by George Modelski, William R. Thompson, and David Wilkinson. From archaeology Richard Blanton, Gary Feinman, Philip Kohl, Kristian Kristiansen, Robert Mc C. Adams, Joseph Tainter, and Peter Peregrine have inspired us. The ethnographers who have most influenced our theory are Jane Schneider, Kasja Ekholm, and Jonathan Friedman. Economist Ester Boserup also contributed greatly to our understanding of population pressure and evolution.

⁷Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997) proposed a set of nested networks for spatially bounding world-systems.

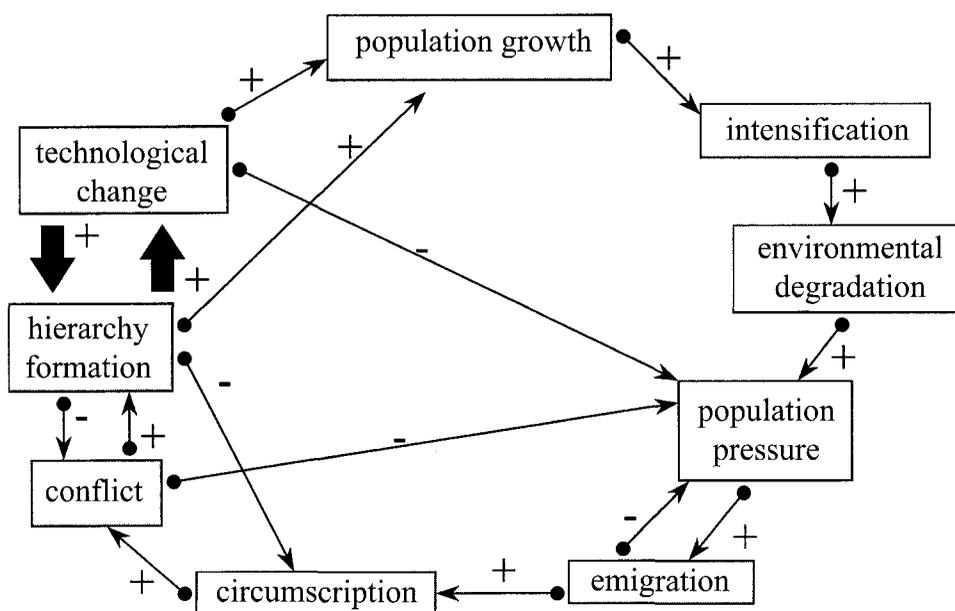


FIGURE 27.1. Basic iteration model.

The Iteration Model

Our basic explanatory model shows what we think are the main sources of causation in the development of more hierarchical and complex social structures, as well as technological changes in the processes of production. We call our schema an “iteration model” because the variables both cause and are caused by the main processes. It is a positive feedback model in which systemic expansion, hierarchy formation, and technological development are explained as consequences of population pressure, and in turn they cause population growth, and so the sequences of causes goes around again.⁸ We use the term “iteration” because the positive feedback feature repeats the same process over and over on an expanding spatial scale. Figure 27.1 illustrates the variables and our hypotheses about the causal relations among them. Positive arrows signify that a variable increases another variable. Negative arrows indicate that a variable decreases another variable. Thicker arrows indicate stronger effects.

The model is not alleged to characterize what has happened in all world-systems. Many have gotten stuck at one level of hierarchy formation or technological development. Our model accounts for instances in which hierarchy formation and technological development occurred. There were many systems in which these outcomes did not occur. Our claim is not that every system evolved in the same way. Rather, we hold that those systems in which greater complexity and hierarchy and new technologies did emerge went through the processes described in our model.

At the top of Fig. 27.1 is *population growth*. We realize that procreation is socially regulated in all societies, but we contend, following Marvin Harris, that restricting population growth, especially by premodern methods, was always costly, and so the moral order tended to

⁸We have modified our specification of the iteration model slightly from what was presented in Chapter 6 of *Rise and Demise* (Chase-Dunn & Hall, 1997) in order to clarify the distinction between intensification and technological change.

let up when conditions temporarily improved. This led to a long-run tendency for population to grow. Population growth leads to *intensification*, defined by Marvin Harris (1977, p. 5) as “the investment of more soil, water, minerals, or energy per unit of time or area.” Intensification of production leads to *environmental degradation* as the raw material inputs become scarcer and the unwanted byproducts of human activity modify the environment. Together intensification and environmental degradation lead to rising costs of producing the food and raw materials that people need, and this condition is called *population pressure*. In order to feed more people, hunters must travel farther because the game nearest to home becomes exhausted. Thus the cost in time and effort of bringing home a given amount of food increases. Some resources are less subject to depletion than others (e.g., fish compared to big game), but increased use usually causes eventual rising costs. Other types of environmental degradation are due to the side effects of production, such as the buildup of wastes and pollution of water sources. These also increase the costs of continued production or cause other problems.

As long as there were available lands to occupy, the consequences of population pressure led to *migration*. So humans populated the whole Earth. The costs of migration are a function of the availability of desirable alternative locations and the effective resistance to immigration that is mounted by those who already live in these locations.

Circumscription (Carneiro, 1970) occurs when the costs of leaving are higher than the costs of staying. This is a function of available lands, but lands are differentially desirable depending on the technologies that the migrants employ. Generally people have preferred to live in the way that they have lived in the past, but population pressure or other push factors can cause them to adopt new technologies in order to occupy new lands. The factor of resistance from extant occupants also is a complex matter of similarities and differences in technology, social organization, and military techniques between the occupants and the groups seeking to immigrate. When the incoming group knows a technique of production that can increase the productivity of the land (such as horticulture), they may be able to peacefully convince the existing occupants to coexist for a share of the expanded product (Renfrew, 1987).⁹ Circumscription increases the likelihood of higher levels of conflict in a situation of population pressure because, though the costs of staying are great, the exit option is closed off. This can lead to several different kinds of warfare, but also to increasing intrasocietal struggles and conflicts (civil war, class antagonisms, clan war, etc.) A period of intense conflict tends to reduce population pressure if significant numbers of people are killed off. Some systems get stuck in a vicious cycle in which warfare and other forms of conflict operate as the demographic regulator, e.g., the Marquesas Islands (Kirch, 1991). This cycle corresponds to the path that goes from population pressure to migration to circumscription to conflict, and then a negative arrow back to population pressure. When population again builds up, the circle goes around again.

Under the right conditions a circumscribed situation in which the level of conflict has been high will be the locus of the emergence of more hierarchical institutions. Carneiro (1970) and Mann (1986) contend that people will tend to run away from hierarchy if they can in order to maintain autonomy and equality. But circumscription raises the costs of exit, and exhaustion from prolonged or extreme conflict may make a new level of hierarchy the least bad alternative. It often is better to accept a king than to continue fighting. So kings (and big men, chiefs, and emperors) emerged out of situations in which conflict has reduced the resistance to

⁹But there also are cases in which the technological differential and other differences are too great, and so the incoming group exterminates the locals instead of incorporating them. Such was the outcome in Northern California (Chase-Dunn & Mann, 1998) and in many other regions in North America.

of the effects of population pressure to more directly cause changes in hierarchies and technologies of production, thus shortcutting the path that leads through migration, circumscription, and conflict. How can the emergence of states allow population pressure to more directly affect *hierarchy formation* and technological change? Once there are already states within a region, the phenomenon of secondary-state formation occurs. Population pressure in outlying semiperipheral areas combines with the threats and opportunities presented by interaction with the existing states to promote the formation of new states. This is the main way in which state formation short cuts the processes at the bottom of Fig. 27.2. We do not mean to say that conflict disappears, but rather that it does not need to reach the same levels of intensity in order to provoke the formation of new states once states are already present in a region.

State formation also articulates the rising costs due to intensification with changes in technology. The specialized organizations that states create (bureaucracies and armies) sometimes use their powers and organizational capabilities to invent new kinds of productive efficiency and to implement new kinds of production. Governing elites sometimes mobilize resources and labor for irrigation projects, clearing new land for agriculture, developing transportation facilities, and so forth. The portrayal of the early states and agrarian empires as technologically moribund is due mainly to comparing them with the much more powerful tendency of capitalist societies to revolutionize technology. But compared to earlier, less-hierarchical systems, the tributary empires increased the rate of technological innovations and implemented them across vast areas.

The emergence of market mechanisms and capitalism also articulated the forces produced by population pressure with new forms of hierarchy formation and technological change. Obviously markets provide incentives to economize and to develop cheaper substitutes for depleted resources that are becoming more expensive because of intensification. But markets and capitalism also alter the way in which hierarchy formation occurs. Once capitalist accumulation has become predominant in a system of regional core states, the sequence of the rise and fall of corewide empires is replaced by the rise and fall of hegemonic core powers in which hegemonic power is based as much on comparative advantage in the production of core commodities as on superior military capabilities. Capitalist hegemons more directly respond to the changing economic and political forces produced by ecological degradation and population pressure than tributary empires did. Again, conflict is not eliminated, but the intensity of conflict that is necessary to produce new levels of hierarchy formation is reduced. Competition comes to be based less on military factors and more on economic ones. Many now believe that this trend has gone so far that future hegemonic rivalry will not involve military conflict. Though we must all hope that this is true, there are good reasons to be somewhat skeptical (see Chase-Dunn & Podobnik, 1995). Another round of world war among core states might well prove to be fatal for the human species, but it also might lead to the formation of a global state that would outlaw warfare, as in the future scenario painted by Warren Wagar (1992). Our main point here is that capitalism transmits population pressure to the hierarchy formation process, creating incentives for the emergence of global governance.

The industrial capitalism of the late 19th and 20th centuries also has altered the operation of population pressure by producing the “demographic transition” in core countries. Harris (1977) contends that this has been the consequence of the concurrence and interaction of three forces: the fuel revolution, the job revolution, and the contraception revolution. The demographic transition means a decrease in mortality due to better public health measures and rising wages and then a decrease in fertility and family size. These changes lower population pressure in the core countries, and if they were replicable on a world scale, population pressure might cease to be such a driving force of social change. But Harris argues that the demographic

transition in the core states since the latter quarter of the 19th century was due to conditions that will be difficult or impossible to replicate on a world scale.

Harris contends that average wages in the core did not rise above subsistence until the last quarter of the 19th century, but other studies of wages show that returns to labor rise and fall cyclically with long economic cycles such as the Kondratieff wave and the long cycles of price inflation–equilibrium studied by David Hackett Fischer (1996). Fischer (1996, p. 160) reports evidence of rising wages and returns to labor throughout the 19th century. The demographic transition was produced by a combination of rising wages with the invention of inexpensive and effective methods of birth control and the shift from coal to oil (which multiplied geometrically the amount of energy utilized in production).

Harris also emphasizes that these concurrent and interactive “revolutions” were probably a unique and time-bound phenomenon rather than the early stages of a global transcendence of population pressure. The nonrenewable character of oil-based energy, and the ecological impossibility of extending the contemporary American level of resource utilization to the vast populations of Asia, add up to what Peter Taylor (1996) has called “global impasse.” The model of development to which the global majority has been encouraged to aspire is an ecological impossibility for all to attain. If the Chinese eat the same number of eggs and drive the same number of cars per capita as the United Statesians do, the biosphere will collapse. The best expert projection of proven oil reserves with current techniques and current consumption levels is around 50 years. That is not much time in the perspective of human social evolution.

All this is to say that the current system probably has not permanently transcended the nasty bottom part of the iteration model. As did states, capitalism has allowed the number of people on Earth to increase greatly. It also has produced the tantalizing possibility of a new system in which population pressure has been brought under control. But the failure to extend the demographic transition to the peripheral countries, or rather to reduce fertility after reducing mortality, has resulted in population pressure on a scale greater than ever before. Under such circumstances a return to some new version of the nasty route would seem to be likely.

Is our revised iteration model testable? In principle it is, but not with existing data sets. The Human Relations Area File might be a good place to start, but its unit of analysis is the society, not world-systems, and the characteristics of the societies are conceptualized as synchronic, whereas we would need to study processes of change over long periods of time. What is needed for formal comparative cross-world-systems research is a “representative sample” of each of the major types of world-systems.

In *Rise and Demise* (Chase-Dunn & Hall, 1997), we have begun to study bounded world-systems over long time periods, but the numbers of cases remain small. This problem can be overcome by doing time series analyses on individual world-systems, and this is the research design that holds the most immediate promise for being able to evaluate the causal propositions contained in our model. Time series analysis using structural equations models could disentangle the kind of reciprocal causation we hypothesize in our iteration models. It also would be desirable to study as many separate systems as possible in order to see if the causal structures hold across different systems.

MODELING THE MODERN SYSTEM

My *Global Formation* (Chase-Dunn, 1998) is an effort to make a single model of the constants, cycles, and trends of the modern world-system and to work out major conceptual

issues and arguments regarding the “necessity of imperialism.” This model of the structural constants, cycles, and secular trends specifies the basic and normal operations of the system. I argue that this basic scheme continues to accurately describe the system in the current period of global capitalism and the “information age” (Chase-Dunn, 1998).

Schema of World-System Constants, Cycles, and Trends

The structural constants are:

1. Capitalism: the accumulation of resources by means of the production and sale of commodities for profit.
2. The interstate system: a system of unequally powerful sovereign national states that compete for resources by supporting profitable commodity production and by engaging in geopolitical and military competition.
3. The core–periphery hierarchy: in which core regions have strong states and specialize in high-technology, high-wage production, while peripheral regions have weak states and specialize in labor-intensive and low-wage production.

These structural features of the modern world-system are continuous and reproduced. I argue that they are interlinked and interdependent with one another such that any real change in one would necessarily alter the others in fundamental ways (Chase-Dunn, 1998).

In addition to these structural constants, there are two other structural features that I see as continuities even though they involve patterned change. These are the systemic cycles and the systemic trends. The basic systemic cycles are:

1. The Kondratieff wave (*K*-wave): a worldwide economic cycle with a period of from forty to sixty years in which the relative rate of economic activity increases (during “A-phase” upswings) and then decreases (during “B-phase” periods of slower growth or stagnation).
2. The hegemonic sequence: the rise and fall of hegemonic core powers in which military power and economic comparative advantage are concentrated into a single hegemonic core state during some periods and these are followed by periods in which wealth and power are more evenly distributed among core states. Examples of hegemons are the Dutch in the 17th century, the British in the 19th century, and the United States in the 20th century.
3. The cycle of core war severity: the severity (battle deaths per year) of wars among core states (world wars) displays a cyclical pattern that has closely tracked the *K*-wave since the 16th century (Goldstein, 1988).
4. The oscillation between market trade versus more politically structured interaction between core states and peripheral areas. This is related to cycles of colonial expansion and decolonization and is manifesting itself in the current period in the form of emergent regional trading blocs that include both developed and less-developed countries.

The systemic trends that are normal operating procedure in the modern world-system are:

1. Expansion and deepening of commodity relations: land, labor, and wealth have been increasingly mediated by marketlike institutions in both the core and the periphery.
2. State-formation: the power of states over their populations has increased everywhere,

- though this trend is sometimes slowed down by efforts to deregulate. State regulation has grown secularly, while political battles rage over the nature and objects of regulation.
3. Increased size of economic enterprises: while a large competitive sector of small firms is reproduced, the largest firms (those occupying what is called the monopoly sector) have continuously grown in size. This remains true even in the most recent period despite its characterization by some analysts as a new “accumulation regime” of “flexible specialization” in which small firms compete for shares of the global market.
 4. International economic integration: the growth of trade interconnectedness and the transnationalization of capital. Capital has crossed state boundaries for millennia but the proportion of all production that is due to the operation of transnational firms has increased in every epoch. The contemporary focus on transnational sourcing and the single interdependent global economy is the heightened awareness produced by a trend long in operation.
 5. Increasing capital intensity of production and mechanization (in several industrial revolutions since the 16th century) has increased the productivity of labor in agriculture, industry, and services.
 6. Proletarianization: the world work force increasingly has depended on labor markets for meeting its basic needs. This long-term trend may be slowed temporarily or even reversed in some areas during periods of economic stagnation, but the secular shift away from subsistence production has a long history that continues in the most recent period. The expansion of the informal sector is part of this trend despite its functional similarities with earlier rural subsistence redoubts.
 7. The growing gap: despite exceptional cases of successful upward mobility in the core-periphery hierarchy (e.g., the United States, Japan, Korea, Taiwan), the relative gap in incomes between core and peripheral regions has continued to increase, and this trend has existed since at least the end of the 19th century and probably before.
 8. International political integration: the emergence of stronger international institutions for regulating economic and political interactions. This is a trend since the rise of the Concert of Europe after the defeat of Napoleon. The League of Nations, the United Nations, and such international financial institutions as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund show an upward trend toward increasing global governance.

The comparative world-systems perspective developed by Chase-Dunn and Hall does not require the reformulation of this schema of structural constants, cycles, and trends. The very long-term perspective does reveal that many of the dynamic processes that operate in the modern world-system are analogous to patterns that can be seen in earlier systems. Kondratieff waves (40- to 60-year business cycles composed of A-phases of expansion and B-phases of stagnation) probably existed in 10th century China. The hegemonic sequence (rise and fall of hegemonic core powers) is the particular manifestation in the modern system of a general sequence of centralization and decentralization of power that is characteristic of all hierarchical world-systems. In all world-systems small and large, culturally different groups trade, fight, and make alliances with one another in ways that importantly condition processes of social change.

The cyclical trend of economic globalization (international economic integration) needs to be understood in the context of the other cycles and trends specified in the schema above.

The trends and cycles reveal important continuities and imply that future struggles for economic justice and democracy need to base themselves on an analysis of how earlier struggles changed the scale and nature of development in the world-system. This raises the question of the relevance of these theoretical approaches for possible human futures.

WHERE IS IT GOING?

The term “globalization” has been used to refer to “the globalization project”: the abandoning of Keynesian models of national development and a new emphasis on deregulation and opening national commodity and financial markets to foreign trade and investment (McMichael, 1996). This is to point to the ideological aspects of the recent wave of international economic integration. The term I prefer for this turn in global discourse is “neoliberalism.” The worldwide decline of the political left may have predated the revolutions of 1989 and the demise of the Soviet Union, but it certainly also was accelerated by these events. The structural basis of the rise of the globalization project is the new level of integration reached by the global capitalist class. The internationalization of capital has long been an important part of the trend toward economic globalization. There have been many claims to represent the general interests of business before. Indeed, every modern hegemon has made this claim. But the real integration of interests of the capitalists in each of the core states probably has reached a level greater than ever before.

This is the part of the model of a global stage of capitalism that must be taken most seriously, though it certainly can be overdone. The world-system has now reached a point at which both the old interstate system based on separate national capitalist classes and new institutions representing the global interests of capitalists exist and are powerful simultaneously. In this light, each country can be seen to have an important ruling class fraction that is allied with the transnational capitalist class.

Neoliberalism began as the Reagan–Thatcher attack on the welfare state and labor unions. It evolved into the structural adjustment policies of the International Monetary Fund and the triumphalism of the ideologues of corporate globalization after the demise of the Soviet Union. In United States foreign policy it has found expression in a new emphasis on “democracy promotion” in the periphery and semiperiphery. Rather than propping up military dictatorships in Latin America, the emphasis has shifted toward coordinated action between the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the US National Endowment for Democracy to promote electoral institutions in Latin America and other semiperipheral and peripheral regions (Robinson, 1996). Robinson points out that the kind of “low intensity democracy” that is promoted is really best understood as “polyarchy,” a regime form in which elites orchestrate a process of electoral competition and governance that legitimates state power and undercuts more radical political alternatives that might threaten the ability of national elites to maintain their wealth and power by exploiting workers and peasants. Robinson (1996) convincingly argues that polyarchy and democracy promotion are the political forms that are most congruent with a globalized and neoliberal world economy in which capital is given free reign to generate accumulation wherever profits are greatest.

The Spiral of Capitalism and Socialism

The interaction between expansive commodification and resistance movements can be denoted as “the spiral of capitalism and socialism.” The world-systems perspective provides a

view of the long-term interaction between the expansion and deepening of capitalism and the efforts of people to protect themselves from exploitation and domination. The historical development of the communist states is explained as part of a long-run spiraling interaction between expanding capitalism and socialist counterresponses. The Russian and Chinese revolutions were socialist movements in the semiperiphery that attempted to transform the basic logic of capitalism, but which ended up using socialist ideology to mobilize industrialization for the purpose of catching up with core capitalism.

The spiraling interaction between capitalist development and socialist movements is revealed in the history of labor movements, socialist parties, and communist states over the last 200 years. This long-run comparative perspective enables one to see recent events in China, Russia, and Eastern Europe in a framework that has implications for future efforts to institutionalize democratic socialism. The metaphor of the spiral means this: Both capitalism and socialism affect one another's growth and organizational forms. Capitalism spurs socialist responses by exploiting and dominating peoples, and socialism spurs capitalism to expand its scale of production and market integration and to revolutionize technology.

Defined broadly, socialist movements are those political and organizational means by which people try to protect themselves from market forces, exploitation, and domination and to build more cooperative institutions.¹⁰ The several industrial revolutions, by which capitalism has restructured production and reorganized labor, have stimulated a series of political organizations and institutions created by workers and communities to protect their livelihoods and resources. This happened differently under different political and economic conditions in different parts of the world-system. Skilled workers created guilds and craft unions. Less skilled workers created industrial unions. Sometimes these coalesced into labor parties that played important roles in supporting the development of political democracies, mass education, and welfare states (Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens, 1992). In other regions workers and peasants were less politically successful, but managed at least to protect access to rural areas or subsistence plots for a fallback or hedge against the insecurities of employment in capitalist enterprises. To some extent the burgeoning contemporary "informal sector" in both core and peripheral societies provides such a fallback.

The mixed success of workers' organizations also had an impact on the further development of capitalism. In some areas workers and/or communities were successful at raising the wage bill or protecting the environment in ways that raised the costs of production for capital. When this happened capitalists either displaced workers by automating them out of jobs or capital migrated to where fewer constraints allowed cheaper production. The process of capital flight is not a new feature of the world-system. It has been an important force behind the uneven development of capitalism and the spreading scale of market integration for centuries. Labor unions and socialist parties were able to obtain some power in certain states, but capitalism became yet more international. Firm size increased. International markets became more and more important to successful capitalist competition. Fordism, the employment of large numbers of easily organizable workers in centralized production locations, has been partially supplanted by "flexible accumulation" (small firms producing small customized products) and global sourcing (the use of substitutable components from broadly dispersed competing producers). These new production strategies make traditional labor-organizing approaches much less viable.

Socialists were able to gain state power in certain semiperipheral states and to create

¹⁰The term "antisystemic movements" also has been used to designate this family of popular forms of resistance (Amin et al., 1982; Arrighi et al., 1989). The main movements I have in mind are anticolonial and anti-imperial national liberation movements, the global indigenous movement, labor movements, socialist parties, communist states, feminism, and environmentalism. The problem of counterhegemony is how to bring these interests together.

political mechanisms of protection against competition with core capital. This was not a wholly new phenomenon. As discussed below, capitalist semiperipheral states had done and were doing similar things. But the communist states claimed a fundamentally oppositional ideology in which socialism was allegedly a superior system that eventually would replace capitalism. Ideological opposition is a phenomenon that the capitalist world economy had seen before. The geopolitical and economic battles of the Thirty Years War were fought in the name of Protestantism against Catholicism. The content of the ideology may make some difference for the internal organization of states and parties, but every contender must be able to legitimate itself in the eyes and hearts of its cadre. The claim to represent a qualitatively different and superior socioeconomic system is not evidence that the communist states were ever able to become structurally autonomous from world capitalism.

The communist states severely restricted the access of core capitalist firms to their internal markets and raw materials, and this constraint on the mobility of capital was an important force behind the post-World War II upsurge in the spatial scale of market integration and a new revolution of technology. In certain areas capitalism was driven to further revolutionize technology or to improve living conditions for workers and peasants because of the demonstration effect of propinquity to a communist state. United States support for state-led industrialization in Japan and Korea (in contrast to US policy in Latin America) is only understandable as a geopolitical response to the Chinese revolution. The existence of “two superpowers”—one capitalist and one communist—in the period since World War II provided a fertile context for the success of international liberalism within the “capitalist” bloc. This was the political–military basis of the rapid growth of transnational corporations and the latest round of “time–space compression” made possible by radically lowered transportation and communications costs (Harvey, 1989). This technological revolution once again has restructured the international division of labor and created a new regime of labor regulation called “flexible accumulation.” The process by which the communist states have become reintegrated into the capitalist world-system has been long, as described below. But the final phase of reintegration was provoked by the inability to be competitive with the new form of capitalist regulation. Thus, capitalism spurs socialism, which spurs capitalism, which spurs socialism again in a wheel that turns and turns, while getting larger.

The economic reincorporation of the communist states into the capitalist world-economy did not occur recently and suddenly. It began with the mobilization toward autarchic industrialization using socialist ideology, an effort that was quite successful in terms of standard measures of economic development. Most of the communist states were increasing their percentage of world product and energy consumption up until the 1980s (Boswell & Chase-Dunn, 2000).

The economic reincorporation of the communist states moved to a new stage of integration with the world market and foreign firms in the 1970s. Andre Gunder Frank (1980, Chapter 4) documented a trend toward reintegration in which the communist states increased their exports for sale on the world market, increased imports from the avowedly capitalist countries, and made deals with transnational firms for investments within their borders. The economic crisis in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union was not much worse than the economic crisis in the rest of the world during the global economic downturn that began in the late 1960s (see Boswell & Peters, 1990, Table 1). Data presented by World Bank analysts indicates that gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates were positive in most of the “historically planned economies” in Europe until 1989 or 1990 (Marer et al., 1991, Table 7a).

Put simply, the big transformations that occurred in the Soviet Union and China after 1989 were part of a process that has been underway since the 1970s. The regime changes were

a matter of the political superstructure catching up with the economic base. The democratization of these societies is, of course, a welcome trend, but democratic political forms do not automatically lead to a society without exploitation or domination. The outcomes of current political struggles are rather uncertain in most of the ex-communist countries. New types of authoritarian regimes seem at least as likely as real democratization.

As trends in the last two decades have shown, austerity regimes, deregulation, and marketization within nearly all the communist states occurred during the same period as similar phenomena in noncommunist states. The synchronicity and broad similarities between Reagan–Thatcher deregulation and attacks on the welfare state, austerity socialism in most of the rest of the world, and increasing pressures for marketization in the Soviet Union and China are all related to the B-phase downturn of the Kondratieff wave, as were the moves toward austerity and privatization in most semiperipheral and peripheral states. The trend toward privatization, deregulation, and market-based solutions among parties of the Left in almost every country is thoroughly documented by Lipset (1991). Nearly all socialists with access to political power have abandoned the idea of doing anything more than buffing off the rough edges of capitalism.

The way in which the pressures of a stagnating world economy impact on national policies certainly varies from country to country, but the ability of any single national society to construct collective rationality is limited by its interaction within the larger system. The most recent expansion of capitalist integration, termed “globalization of the economy,” has made autarchic national economic planning seem anachronistic. Yet, political reactions against economic globalization are now under way in the form of revived ex-communist parties and economic nationalism in both the core and the periphery (e.g., Pat Buchanan, the Brazilian military, the Indonesian prime minister) and a growing coalition of popular forces who are critiquing the ideological hegemony of neoliberalism (e.g., Ralph Nader, environmentalists, and a resurgent labor movement that defeated the “Fast Track” legislation in the United States, etc.) (see Mander & Goldsmith, 1996). Antiglobalization demonstrations from Seattle to Prague have made the headlines and the glory days of neoliberal economics have passed even within the international financial institutions.

Political Implications of the World-Systems Perspective

The age of US hegemonic decline and the rise of postmodernist philosophy have cast the liberal ideology of the European Enlightenment (science, progress, rationality, liberty, democracy, and equality) into the dustbin of repressive totalizing universalisms. It is alleged that these values have been the basis of imperialism, domination, and exploitation, and thus they should be cast out in favor of each group asserting its own set of values. It is important to note that self-determination and a considerable dose of multiculturalism (especially regarding religion) were already central elements in Enlightenment liberalism.

A structuralist and historical materialist version of the world-systems approach poses this problem of values in a different way. The problem with the capitalist world-system has not been with its values. The philosophy of liberalism is fine. It quite often has been an embarrassment to the pragmatics of imperial power and frequently has provided justifications for resistance to domination and exploitation. The philosophy of the Enlightenment has never been, by itself, a major cause of exploitation and domination. Rather, it was the military and economic power generated by capitalism that made European hegemony possible. Power was legitimated in the eyes of the agents and some of the victims by recitation of the great liberal

values, but it was not the values that mainly enabled conquest and exploitation, but rather the gunships and the cheap prices of commodities.

To humanize the world-system we may need to construct a new philosophy of democratic and egalitarian liberation. Of course, many of the principle ideals that have been the core of the Left's critique of capitalism are shared by non-European philosophies. Democracy, in the sense of popular control over collective decision making, was not invented in ancient Greece. It was a characteristic of all nonhierarchical human societies on every continent before the emergence of complex chiefdoms and states. My point is that a new egalitarian universalism can usefully incorporate quite a lot from the old universalisms. It is not liberal ideology that caused so much exploitation and domination. It was the failure of real capitalism to live up to its own ideals (liberty and equality) in most of the world.

A central question for any strategy of transformation is the question of agency. Who are the actors who will most vigorously and effectively resist capitalism and construct democratic socialism? Where is the most favorable terrain, the weak link, where concerted action could bear the most fruit? Samir Amin (1990, 1992) contends that the agents of socialism have been most heavily concentrated in the periphery. It is there that the capitalist world-system is most oppressive, and thus peripheral workers and peasants, the vast majority of the world proletariat, have the most to win and the least to lose.

On the other hand, Marx and many contemporary Marxists have argued that socialism will be most effectively built by the action of core proletarians. Since core areas already have attained a high level of technological development, the establishment of socialized production and distribution should be easiest in the core. Organized core workers have had the longest experience with industrial capitalism and the most opportunity to create socialist social relations.

I submit that both "workerist" and "Third-Worldist" positions have important elements of truth, but there is another alternative that is suggested by a structural and comparative theory of the world-system: the semiperiphery as the weak link. Core workers may have experience and opportunity, but a sizable segment of the core working classes lack motivation because they have benefited from a less confrontational relationship with core capital. The existence of a labor aristocracy has divided the working class in the core and, in combination with a large middle stratum, has undermined political challenges to capitalism. Also, the "long experience" in which business unionism and social democracy have been the outcome of a series of struggles between radical workers and the labor aristocracy has created a residue of trade union practices, party structures, legal and governmental institutions, and ideological heritages that act as barriers to new socialist challenges. These conditions have changed to some extent during the last two decades as hypermobile capital has attacked organized labor, dismantled welfare states, and downsized middle-class work forces. These developments have created new possibilities for popular movements within the core, and we can expect more confrontational stances to emerge as workers devise new forms of organization (or revitalize old forms). Economic globalization makes labor internationalism a necessity, and so we can expect to see the old idea take new forms and become more organizationally real. Even small victories in the core have important effects on peripheral and semiperipheral areas because of demonstration effects and the power of core states.

The main problem with "Third Worldism" is not motivation but opportunity. Powerful external forces that either overthrow them or force them to abandon most of their socialist program soon beset democratic socialist movements that take state power in the periphery. Liberation movements in the periphery most usually have been anti-imperialist class alliances that succeed in establishing at least the trappings of national sovereignty, but not socialism.

The low level of the development of the productive forces also makes it more difficult to establish socialist forms of accumulation, although this is not impossible in principle. It is simply harder to share power and wealth when there are very little of either. But, the emergence of democratic regimes in the periphery will facilitate new forms of mutual aid, cooperative development and popular movements to challenge the current ideological hegemony of neoliberalism.

Semiperipheral Democratic Socialism

In the semiperiphery both motivation and opportunity exist. Semiperipheral areas, especially those in which the territorial state is large, have sufficient resources to be able to stave off core attempts at overthrow and to provide some protection to socialist institutions if the political conditions for their emergence should arise. Tom Hall and I (Chase-Dunn & Hall, 1997, Chapter 5) found that semiperipheral societies have played transformational roles in many earlier world-systems, an observation that we dub “semiperipheral development.” Some semiperipheral societies have continued to be both upwardly mobile and transformative of social relations in the modern world-system. All the hegemonic core powers (the Dutch, the British, and the United States) were former semiperipheral countries. John Markoff (1996) shows that innovations in democratic institutions tended to occur in semiperipheral countries in the 19th century. Semiperipheral regions (e.g., Russia and China) have experienced more militant class-based socialist revolutions because of their intermediate position in the core–periphery hierarchy. While core exploitation of the periphery creates and sustains alliances among classes in both the core and the periphery, in the semiperiphery an intermediate world-system position undermines class alliances and provides a fruitful terrain for strong challenges to capitalism. Semiperipheral revolutions and movements are not always socialist in character, as we have seen in Iran. But when socialist intentions are strong, there are greater possibilities for real transformation than in the core or the periphery. Thus, the semiperiphery is the weak link in the capitalist world-system. It is the terrain on which the strongest efforts to establish socialism have been made, and this is likely to be true of the future as well.

On the other hand, the results of the efforts so far, while they undoubtedly have been important experiments with the logic of socialism, have left much to be desired. The tendency for authoritarian regimes to emerge in the communist states betrayed Marx’s idea of a freely constituted association of direct producers. The imperial control of Eastern Europe by the Russians was an insult to the idea of proletarian internationalism. Democracy within and between nations must be a constituent element of true socialism.

It does not follow that efforts to build socialism in the semiperiphery will always be so constrained and thwarted. The revolutions in the Soviet Union and the Peoples’ Republic of China have increased our collective knowledge about how to build socialism despite their only partial successes and their obvious failures. It is important for all of us who want to build a more humane and peaceful world-system to understand the lessons of socialist movements in the semiperiphery, and the potential for future, more successful forms of socialism there.

Once again the core has developed new lead industries—computers and biotechnology—and much of large-scale heavy industry, the classic terrain of strong labor movements and socialist parties, has been moved to the semiperiphery (Silver, 1995). This means that new socialist bids for state power in the semiperiphery (e.g., South Africa, Brazil, Mexico, perhaps Korea) will be much more based on an urbanized and organized proletariat in large-scale industry than the earlier semiperipheral socialist revolutions were. This should have happy

consequences for the nature of new socialist states in the semiperiphery because the relationship between the city and the countryside within these countries should be less antagonistic. Less internal conflict will make more democratic socialist regimes possible and will lessen the likelihood of core interference. The global expansion of communications has increased the salience of events in the semiperiphery for audiences in the core and this may serve to dampen core state intervention into the affairs of democratic socialist semiperipheral states.

Some critics of the world-systems perspective have argued that emphasis on the structural importance of global relations leads to political do-nothingism while we wait for socialism to emerge at the world level. The world-systems perspective does indeed encourage us to examine global constraints (and opportunities) and to allocate our political energies in ways that will be most productive when these structural constraints are taken into account. It does not follow that building socialism at the local or national level is futile, but we must expend resources on transorganizational, transnational, and international socialist relations. The environmental, feminist, and indigenous movements are now in the lead with regard to internationalism and labor needs to follow their example.

A simple domino theory of transformation to democratic socialism is misleading and inadequate. Suppose that all firms or all nation-states adopted socialist relations internally but continued to relate to one another through competitive commodity production and political-military conflict. Such a hypothetical world-system still would be dominated by the logic of capitalism, and that logic would be likely to repenetrate the "socialist" firms and states. This cautionary tale advises us to invest political resources in the construction of multilevel (transorganizational, transnational, and international) socialist relations lest we simply repeat the process of driving capitalism to once again perform an end run by operating on a yet larger scale.

A Market Socialist Global Democracy

These considerations lead us to a discussion of socialist relations at the level of the entire world-system. The emergence of democratic collective rationality (socialism) at the world-system level is likely to be a slow process. What might such a world-system look like and how might it emerge? It is obvious that such a system would require a democratically controlled world federation that can effectively adjudicate disputes among nation-states and eliminate warfare (Wagar, 1996). This is a bare minimum. There are many other problems that badly need to be coordinated at the global level: ecologically sustainable development, a more balanced and egalitarian approach to economic growth, and the lowering of population growth rates.

The idea of global democracy is important for this struggle. The movement needs to push toward a kind of popular democracy that goes beyond the election of representatives to include popular participation in decision making at every level. Global democracy can be real only if it is composed of civil societies and national states that are themselves truly democratic (Robinson, 1996). Global democracy is probably the best way to lower the probability of another war among core states. For that reason it is in everyone's interest.

How might such a global democracy come into existence? The process of the growth of international organizations, which has been going on for at least 200 years, will eventually result in a world state if we are not blown up first. Even international capitalists have some uses for global regulation, as attested to by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Capitalists do not want the massive economic and political upheavals that would follow the collapse of the world monetary system, and so they support efforts to regulate "ruinous"

competition and beggar-thy-neighborism. Some of these same capitalists also fear nuclear holocaust, and so they may support a strengthened global government that can effectively adjudicate conflicts among nation-states.

Of course, capitalists know as well as others that effective adjudication means the establishment of a global monopoly of legitimate violence. The process of state formation has a long history, and the king's army needs to be bigger than any combination of private armies that might be brought against him. While the idea of a world state may be a frightening specter to some, I am optimistic about it for several reasons. First, a world state is probably the most direct and stable way to prevent nuclear holocaust, a desideratum that must be at the top of everyone's list. Second, the creation of a global state that can peacefully adjudicate disputes among nations will transform the existing interstate system. The interstate system (multiple sovereignties in the core) is the political structure that stands behind the maneuverability of capital and its ability to escape organized workers and other social constraints on profitable accumulation (Chase-Dunn, 1998, Chapter 7). While a world state may at first be dominated by capitalists, the very existence of such a state will provide a single focus for struggles to socially regulate investment decisions and to create a more balanced, egalitarian, and ecologically sound form of production and distribution.

The progressive response to neoliberalism needs to be organized at national, international, and global levels if it is to succeed. Democratic socialists should be wary of strategies that focus only on economic nationalism and national autarchy as a response to economic globalization. Socialism in one country has never worked in the past and it certainly will not work in a world that is more interlinked than ever before. The old forms of progressive internationalism were somewhat premature, but internationalism finally has become not only desirable but necessary. This does not mean that local-, regional- and national-level struggles are irrelevant. They are just as relevant as they always have been. But, they also need to have a global strategy and global-level cooperation lest they be isolated and defeated. Communications technology certainly can be an important tool for the kinds of long-distance interactions that will be required for truly international cooperation and coordination among popular movements.

Boswell and Chase-Dunn (2000) imagine a feasible vision of a fairer and more sustainable world-system based on a modified version of the idea of market socialism proposed by John Roemer (1994). Roemer rethinks the institutional structure of socialism in the light of the problems of "soft budget constraints" produced by state ownership of the means of production. In Roemer's model all citizens at the age of majority would inherit 1000 shares of stock in large firms. These can be traded and so firms need to try to make profit in order to compete for additional capital. At the global level this model needs to be modified to take into account the inequalities of the core-periphery hierarchy. Boswell and Chase-Dunn (2000) introduce an element of worker control over large firms and socialist international financial institutions (a Peoples World Bank) that will help to reduce uneven development and degradation of the environment.

How could such a world come about? Wagar (1996) has proposed the formation of a "World Party" as an instrument of "mundialization": the creation of a global socialist commonwealth. His proposal has been critiqued from many angles: as a throwback to the Third International, and so forth.¹¹ Boswell and Chase-Dunn (2000) support a somewhat

¹¹See the critiques of Wagar's proposals in the special issue on "Global Praxis" of the *Journal of World-Systems Research*, Volume 2, 1996 (<http://csf.colorado.edu/wsystems/jwsr.html>). The World Party web page is at <http://csf.colorado.edu/wsystems/archive/praxis/wp/index.htm>, and further discussion of the idea of a World Party during the months of October and November, 1999, is available at <http://csf.colorado.edu/mail/wsn/>.

modified version of Wagar's proposed World Party idea. Self-doubt and postmodern reticence, as well as the dominant rhetoric of neoliberalism, tar this approach as Napoleonic or worse (e.g., Stalinist, megalomaniac). It certainly is necessary to learn from past mistakes, but this should not prevent us from debating the pros and cons of concerted and organized action. There are many world parties already, but perhaps there needs to be one that understands the lessons of historical capitalist development and human social evolution. Members of such an organization would debate what we know from social science and what needs to be done to survive, prevail, and make good on Earth. They also might undertake special organizing projects in key areas that are being neglected by other progressives.

The international segment of the world capitalist class is moving haltingly toward global state formation. The Asian crisis has led to calls for institutions that can dampen or ameliorate the destabilizing effects of wild fluctuations in international capital flows from some capitalists who are in this very business, e.g., George Soros. The World Trade Organization, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund have come under increased attack from antiglobalizationists on the both the right and the left. Rather than simply oppose international political integration with a return to nationalism, progressives should make every effort to democratize the emerging global state. We need to prevent the normal operation of the interstate system and future hegemonic rivalry from causing another war among core powers (e.g., Wagar, 1992; see also Bornschier & Chase-Dunn, 1999). We need to shape the emerging world society into a global democratic commonwealth based on collective rationality, liberty, and equality. This possibility is present in existing and evolving structures. The agents are all those who are tired of wars and hatred and who desire a humane, sustainable, and fair world-system. This certainly is a majority of the people of the Earth.

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