TOWARD COMPARATIVE GLOBALIZATIONS: GLOBALIZATION IN HISTORICAL RETROSPECTIVE AND WORLD-SYSTEM ANALYSIS

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This introduction explains the background and underlying theoretical and substantive debates about globalization, world-systems analysis, and the ways to make comparisons among them. It provides information to introduce the topics to readers not closely familiar with these debates. It also situates the contexts for each of the papers in those theoretical and empirical discussions. This introduction, and the entire issue, is not intended as a final word, or even current word. Rather, it is an invitation to scholars in many disciplines to contribute to these discussions.

Keywords: *Afroeurasia, collapse, comparative strategies, comparative world-systems analysis, emergent change, frontiers, globalization (contemporary, ancient), globalization processes, globalization-like processes, indigenous peoples, inflection point, negotiated peripherality, social evolution, Southeast Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, world-systems analysis, world-systems perspective, world-system theory, world-system time.*

A little more than two years ago Andrey Korotayev and Leonid Grinin, general editors of *Journal of Global Studies* (*JoGS*), asked me to edit a special issue to bring deeper historical perspectives on the uses of world-systems analysis in the studies of globalization. The result is this issue, a collection of eight papers addressing this topic in broad terms from a variety of perspectives.

As will be obvious most of the papers hold to views that see globalization as a set of ancient processes, which only took on the more recent manifestations and became truly global in the last century or so. None of these authors claim that there is nothing new in recent processes of globalization. Most assuredly there are many new aspects to contemporary globalization. However, these aspects did not appear *de novo*. As many have asked, how can one tell what is new if one does not already know what is old? Rather, these authors argue that similar processes have been occurring for millennia. In particular if there are cyclical processes of any sort, without a long term sense of those cycles it is all but impossible to tell what is new, and what is the same process either more – or less – intensified (see figure in Hall 2009: 31).

For those not familiar with World-Systems Analysis (WSA) (formerly called world-system theory or world-system perspective) probably the best place to start is Wallerstein's *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (2004). Among many things, he states: 'A world-system is not the system of *the* world, but a system *that is a* world and that can be, most often has been, located in an area less than the entire globe' (*Ibid.*: 98; italics in original). In this brief volume he brings readers up to date as of its publication, reviews some new directions in WSA, and provides a useful glossary and annotated bibliography. The University of California Press has recently re-issued the four vol-

umes of *The Modern World-System* (Wallerstein 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2011d) the first of which was originally published in 1974. The new publications have prologues commenting on critiques and extensions that have been made since 1974. The prologue to Volume I (*Idem* 2011e) is especially helpful in augmenting what Wallerstein said in his introduction (*Idem* 2004).

Over the years many writers have extended world-systems analysis further and further into the past. One of the earlier efforts was that of Janet Abu-Lughod (1989) who set out to examine the roots of the 'modern world-system' by exploring the interconnections that reached from Europe to China in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Probably the largest divide in these extensions is between Andre Gunder Frank (Frank and Gills 1993; Gills and Thompson 2006), who argued that there has been one expanding system for five thousand years and Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997) who argued for many world-systems of various kinds since at least the Neolithic, some twelve millennia ago. This debate, which may appear to be nit picking about whether or not world-system has a hyphen, continues – and has caused no end of headaches for copy editors who often do not realize that the presence or absence of the hyphen is a marker of an important theoretical distinction. Wallerstein's and now others' claims that 'a system *that is a* world' is critical since a major claim of WSA is that it is world-systems that are the largest unit of social evolution. All other social units, from empires to states to non-state societies to families all occur within the context of a world-system. Furthermore, there is an intense recursive relationship among all these social units: the parts shape the whole and simultaneously the whole constrains changes in the parts.

Picking apart the interactions between the overall system and its various components is where a great deal of WSA is concentrated. In 1999, Nick Kardulias edited a volume based on two anthropology conferences in 1995 (Central States Anthropological Society and American Anthropological Association) exploring these interactions. His 2007 paper on negotiated peripherality was a significant extension of that work. I, too, have contributed to these efforts with respect to frontiers (Hall 2009, 2012, 2013) and Indigenous Peoples (Hall and Fenelon 2008, 2009). In all these, and many other works by other authors, a strong emphasis is on examining world-systems from the bottom up, or from the periphery to the center. All this is aimed at foregrounding the proactive efforts of groups and individuals in dealing with expanding world-systems. Hall and Fenelon reverse the usual social movement's approach which tended to see indigenous movements as the latest of additions to identity-based movements. They argue instead, that a more appropriate approach sees Indigenous efforts as the original social movements, with others coming much later. Obviously, all are influencing each other today in many ways.

WSA has continued to evolve. Two conferences were held at Lund University in Sweden where scholars from many disciplines participated. The first conference in 1995 eventually gave rise to a volume on *World System History* (Denemark *et al.* 2000) which had chapters by most of the people doing this work. The second conference in 2003 gave rise to two volumes edited by Alf Hornborg and Carole E. Crumley (2007) and by Alf Hornborg, John Robert McNeill, and Joan Martinez-Alier (2007). A conference celebrating Andre Gunder Frank's work was held at the University of Pittsburgh in 2008. Revised papers were collected and edited by Patrick Manning and Barry K. Gills (2011). Also in 2011, Hall, Kardulias, and Chase-Dunn published a review of world-systems literature intended primarily for archaeologists, but useful to researchers in oth-

er disciplines. In 2012, Salvatore Babones and Christopher Chase-Dunn edited *Handbook of World-Systems Analysis* in which many authors summarized the ways in which they have used WSA. Several of the contributors to this special issue are represented there. In Douglas Nothrup's *Companion to World History* (2012), Immanuel Wallerstein's work is cited in many of the articles. Chase-Dunn and Hall (2012) also contributed a summary of how WSA may be used in global scale analyses. They also discussed the east-west contributions to world-systems evolution in their contribution to the volume on Andre Gunder Frank (Chase-Dunn and Hall 2011). While these volumes and papers cover much of the history of world-system analysis and approaches to it, they also have extensive bibliographies that point to earlier, salient work.

Here, too, it is useful to recall Immanuel Wallerstein's comments on the word, 'world', in world-systems analysis: a world system does not necessarily mean the entire planet – albeit it does now in the second decade of the twenty-first century CE – but rather, a more or less self-contained social unit, a world if you will. Hence there were many world-systems and many globalizations in the distant past (see Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997), contra the arguments of Andre Gunder Frank and Barry K. Gills (1993; see also Manning and Gills 2011).

Debates and arguments about such topics – age of globalization processes, number and kinds of world-systems – can easily devolve into scholastic discussions of meanings, a process not worth the energy it takes to hold them. Here I argue, what is important is to be clear what one is discussing and comparing. It is fine to compare apples and oranges if one is discussing kinds of fruit. One could add baseballs or basketballs if one is discussing spherical objects. The key point is that what constitutes appropriate objects for comparison is not found in the objects themselves, but in the purpose of the comparisons. Only if one is restricting discussion to the merits of different kinds of apples, is the exclusion of oranges obvious and necessary.

Both world-systems and globalization processes are huge topics, multi-faceted, and encompass insights from all social and historical disciplines. It is only by scouting the overall range of each that one can make intelligibly restricted comparisons. Narrow comparisons should not be eschewed. They are one of the best ways to get into details, nuances, and subtleties of social processes. But those details, nuances, and subtleties need larger contexts within which they may be understood. As becomes clear in these papers there are many levels of comparisons and contexts. Again, it is the purpose of a comparison that points to how many and which contexts are important. A prosaic illustration that appeared in many cartoons in the 1990s underscores this. A young boy who was a computer whiz interested in stocks was strenuously arguing with his father about how the father should make his investments. At one point the father asked, 'what happens when stock prices go down?' To which our tyro asked, 'you mean they can go down?' The narrow historical experience and consequent assumption that stock prices could only rise, severely restricted our tyro's analysis. Much progress or broadened understanding in the social sciences – and probably all sciences – develops from discovering the larger contexts within which narrower studies have been made. Attention to contexts also can reveal qualities formerly thought to be constant that are in fact variables – even if changing at a 'glacial' pace.

Conversely, many localized processes cannot be understood or studied from exceedingly broad contexts. Rather, what is needed is movement between levels and understanding when some things can be considered 'constant' and when they need to be

considered variables (see, *e.g.,* Skocpol and Somers 1980; Manning 2006). Among the most notorious and controversial debates are the myriad discussions of climate change. In these debates yet another 'lesson' about comparisons can be discerned. When changes are very slow relative to the span of study, their effects often become invisible, and changes are hard to measure, especially when the data are extremely noisy, as virtually all social processes and data are.

Somewhat related to this are the concepts of emergent changes and/or inflection points. These are situations when some sort of boundary is crossed and entire sets of phenomena change. One of the most complex in social history is the 'emergence of the state'. Note well the term 'emergence'. Not quite emergent, but close. A classic example of an emergent property is the purpose of a machine. Even complete understanding of physics and chemistry will not explain what the machine does. To be sure, they can often explain how and why it might fail. In that sense the state is an emergent social form, especially when considering situations of so-called 'pristine' states, that is, states that were invented or produced in contexts where no other states existed. Because this has happened several times in human history it is at least plausible that there may be systematic forces and processes involved in the emergence of states even while the details of each instance vary considerably. If one traces globalization processes, or at least globalization-like processes to before the Neolithic, one is then in a position to ask how did the processes change or evolve with the development of states. If, on the other hand, one restricts oneself to relative recent decades (*e.g.,* Sklair's [2002, 2006] otherwise excellent discussions make this assumption) one cannot even frame the question, nor even see the consequences of the development of the so-called modern nation-state.

A more subtle example is Julian Go's (2011) comparison of the British and American empires. By carefully delineating cycles of (modern) empires, he compares nineteenth century Britain with twentieth century United States. While the historical times are nearly a century apart, cyclical phases are the same. He demonstrates rather forcefully that the 'American Empire' is hardly exceptional. If U.S. political pundits, especially those of conservative bent were to hear or read this they would be howling about the undermining of 'American Exceptionalism'. This is not to say that there might indeed be some American Exceptionalism, but if so it is not in what most pundits claim. This gloss does not do justice to Go's nuanced argument. To expand a bit more, Go determines his comparison by using world-system time, the cyclical phases of core powers within world-systemic process to compare the two empires at equivalents phases of their cycles.

His paper in this issue draws some insightful conclusions about how one might compare world-systemic and globalization processes. It appears after three broader discussions of globalization and world-systems in part because that background is useful to appreciate his rich argument.

The eight papers could be arranged and/or read in many orders. As editor I opted for chronological and theoretical scope to organize them, moving from general to more focused, though a few straddle these in several dimensions. The authors draw on and come from many disciplines: anthropology, archaeology, geography, philosophy, political science, sociology, and world history. Such multi- and inter-disciplinary work is a hallmark of world-systems analysis (and world-systems analysis), and is increasingly typi-

cal in studies of globalization. This diversity is reflected in this special issue, albeit, only partially.

Nick Kardulias' paper uses archaeological information to discuss the meanings of globalization, especially in ancient settings (see also Hall, Kardulias, and Chase-Dunn 2011). He uses Justin Jennings *Globalizations and the Ancient World* (2011) to dig more deeply into what globalization and/or globalization processes mean in an archaeological setting. Christopher Chase-Dunn provides a cogent and detailed examination of how world-systems evolve and what that implies about possible futures of the current world-system (Chase-Dunn and Lerro 2014). As with Kardulias, he argues for the existence of globalization processes and world-systems since before the Neolithic revolution. Andrey Korotayev and Leonid Grinin build on world-systems analysis to discuss global integration, which, they argue, has been proceeding for *five or more* millennia. Their paper adds several nuances to globalization and world-systems theorizing.

Running through, or under, these papers are the various debates and discussions about the age of world-systems and their origins. A few points that are barely explicit, and more often implicit, bear brief mention. First, is the issue of the unification of Afroeurasia. This was discussed quite early by Janet Abu-Lughod (1989) and in contrast to Wallerstein's original concept that the European world-system was not much connected to Asia or Africa. This calls to mind Jared Diamond's discussions in *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (1997) about Eurasia's initial endowments in animals and resources and the ease of spread along an east-west axis. Much of his argument is useful in understanding the development of the Afroeurasian world-system. Peter Turchin, Jonathan M. Adams, and Thomas D. Hall (2006) conducted a basic analysis of Diamond's claim and find that it holds up empirically quite well. Further, the one notable exception is the north-south axis in pre-contact South America, actually illustrates the same principles at work. That network follows similar climatic schemes by use of elevations along the Andean mountains, rather than by latitude.

Second, Stephen K. Sanderson (Sanderson 1999; Sanderson and Alderson 2005) notes the very interesting parallels between the sequences of social evolution in the Old World and the New World. He further notes that the time spans involved are closely parallel in length, albeit at different historical times. Many differences are readily explained by the natural endowments in plants and animals suitable for human domestication. Others have also noted the development of world-systems in the Americas (reviewed in Hall, Kardulias, and Chase-Dunn 2011).

Third, Peter Turchin and Thomas D. Hall (2003) built on analyses of synchronization of cyclical processes across long distances in animal populations in theoretical ecology to begin to develop an explanation for the seeming parallels between Rome and China. These were first noted by Frederick J. Teggart in 1939, and have since been explored by others. Their analysis underscores why seemingly low levels of trade in luxury goods – silk and gems – can have large impacts at either end of the network. This is an account of why trade in luxury goods can often be as important as the trade in bulk goods that Wallerstein discusses extensively. These connections have also brought attention to the complex roles of pastoral nomads across central Asia.

At a less macro scale, Julian Go discusses how to use information about cyclical processes in world-systems to compare trajectories of empire change, as already noted. Glen D. Kuecker builds on deep historical understandings to examine how the contemporary world-system might collapse as globalization processes encounter the hard limits

to the resources consumed by humans. Surprisingly, at least to some, he argues that it is the peripheral areas and peoples who are best positioned to survive a global collapse brought on by over use of resources (Kuecker and Hall 2011). Kuecker expands on this discussion in his contribution to this special issue. I should note that these discussions of collapse differ significantly from those by Diamond (2005) or McAnany and Yoffee (2009) or Yoffee and Cowgill (1991) and more akin to the work of Tainter (1988) or Meadows *et al.* (2004).

Daniel Little uses historical approaches to analyze just what 'place' means in world history and how that relates to concepts of nation and region. He examines many concepts that are too often taken as givens, and shows how analyses and understandings might change with differing concepts. Not incidentally, he explicates how and why some such discussions talk past each other. Sing Chew provides a cogent study of the development and influence of the first Southeast Asian world-system, and its importance to the development and processes of the growing Afroeurasion world-system described by Chase-Dunn and by Grinin and Korotayev. Patrick Manning wraps up the volume with a discussion of what might have been lost by lack of attention to the 'Afro' part of Afroeurasia, emphasizing sub-Saharan Africa. In doing so, he offers a broad overview of the important roles of Africa in world history, and underscores how much more there is to be learned. He also brings the discussion full circle as he notes that we all ultimately came out of Africa.

I urge readers *not* to consider any of these essays as the last word. Rather, they are perspectives on globalization and globalization-like processes that continue to shape our contemporary world. Whether one ends up agreeing or disagreeing with these various approaches to globalization and world-systems analysis, one will find her or his view enriched. I hope readers will also find useful suggestions about how to compare and contrast different instances of globalization. These papers also raise a myriad of topics for further empirical study and theoretical development.

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