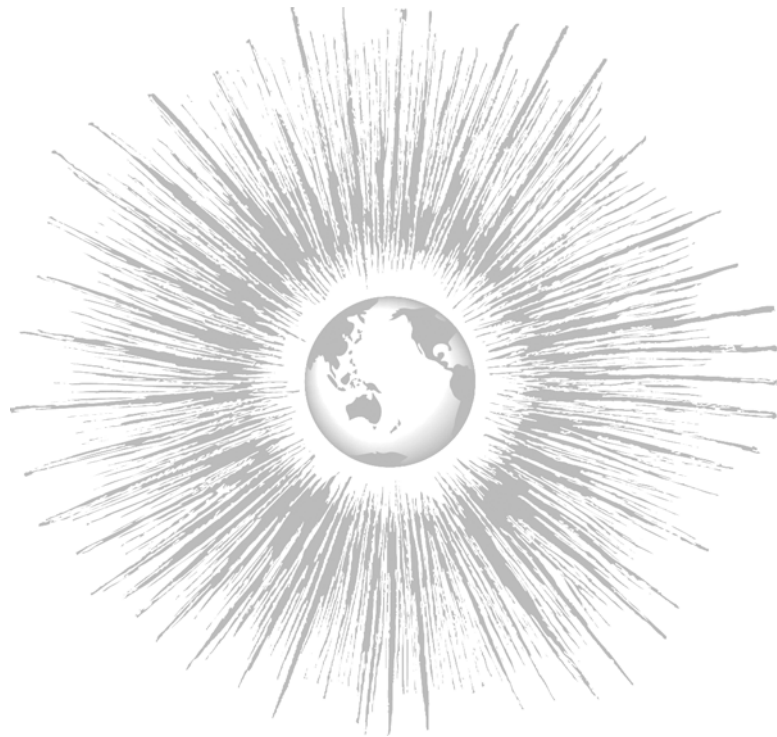


BOOK REVIEWS



Immanuel Wallerstein

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World Ecological Degradation: Accumulation, Urbanization, and Deforestation

3000 B.C. – A.D. 2000

Reviewed By Jason W. Moore and

Douglas Bevington

Immanuel Wallerstein. *The End of the World as we Know It: Social Sciences for the Twenty-First Century*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999. ix + 278, ISBN 0-8166-3397-5 (cloth), ISBN 0-8166-3398-3 (paper).

http://www.upress.umn.edu/Books/w/wallerstein_end.html

In 1994–98 Immanuel Wallerstein was president of the International Sociological Association. In this capacity he was invited to many parts of the world to deliver keynote addresses to local associations, and speeches at universities. This book prints the texts of fifteen such addresses, culminating in Wallerstein's long presidential address to the ISA itself at the 1998 World Congress of Sociology, under the title "The Heritage of Sociology, the Promise of Social Science." The topics covered range from communism, anticolonialism, the environmental crisis, liberalism, the future of the world system, rationality, Eurocentrism, epistemology, the internal organization of social science, the sociological "classics," and the value of social science.

The book is divided into two parts, called "The World of Capitalization" and "The World of Knowledge." These titles understate the scope of Wallerstein's thought.

I would start by registering admiration for Wallerstein's energy and dedication. This book records a huge commitment to colleagues in many parts of the world, including Poland, Japan, South Africa, the Netherlands, the USA and Korea. The wear and tear alone would be formidable. In the course of this traveling, Wallerstein has persistently tried to link the experience of politics and social science in different parts of the world to his understanding of the world system, and thus to move beyond the conventional perspectives and intellectual boundaries of North Atlantic sociology.

Because of the way it was put together, this is a difficult book to read or review. There is a good deal of overlap between chapters as Wallerstein pursues favorite themes (e.g. the history of Western political thought) with different audiences. Most of the argument is presented at a high level of generality and moves quickly from topic to topic. This is understandable in the context of agenda-setting keynote addresses, but it can be frustrating for a reader who wants to come to grips with Wallerstein's arguments as distinct from his attitudes and world-view. It's not too helpful to be referred, in the notes, to five or six other Wallerstein books for the detail.

This book impresses for its boldness. Wallerstein tackles large themes, makes

large claims, ventures predictions, puts ideologies and disciplines in their place. Here is someone who is not afraid of grand narratives.

Within the large scope of Wallerstein's interests, certain issues show his talents to greatest advantage. He has a fine sense of the dynamics of the world system, especially the interplay of classes and political ideologies. This is well shown in the address Wallerstein gave to the South African Sociological Association (Chapter 2 in this book) where he surveys the history of "anti-systemic movements," linking the story of colonial struggles with the story of class struggle in the metropole, in a way only the broad world-system perspective allows. Wallerstein goes on to offer a fourfold characterization of the present crisis of the system, which he sees as destabilized simultaneously by the approaching end of the rural labor pool, ecological crisis, democratization, and the decline of state power.

At its best, Wallerstein's approach produces intoxicatingly wide perspectives combined with moments of sharp insight. I loved his brilliant short essay (pp. 63–6), embedded within an address on states and sovereignty, on why a genuinely free market is bad for capitalism—only a strong state, and various forms of monopoly, make quick accumulation possible. (Though Wallerstein doesn't use the example, Bill Gates and Microsoft make his case perfectly.) When he turns to the world of knowledge, he is equally insightful and acerbic on the mad proliferation of specialties and sub-fields within the old framework of "disciplines."

But at other points, and the other issues, Wallerstein's touch is unsure. His idea of politics, for instance, remains largely within the framework of class struggle and he has difficulty grasping other forces. Gender relations, for instance, are pretty much outside Wallerstein's understanding of the world system. While he mentions feminism (especially as a challenge to sociology), his treatment of it is sketchy and the coverage arbitrary. Cultural politics are marginal in his world-view (except as political ideologies), and his account of "cultural studies" (pp. 215–6) is thin. It's not surprising, therefore, to find his treatment of postmodernism and deconstruction also thin and disdainful. This is a significant weakness, I think, in Wallerstein's survey of intellectual challenges to sociology. For an author concerned to assess the state of knowledge across all the disciplines, it is a little disturbing to find that Wallerstein takes not the slightest notice of Lyotard's famous and immensely influential essay of twenty years ago on the same topic, "The Postmodern Condition."

When the different essays are put together, as they are in this book, there do seem to be some inconsistencies. In Chapter 1, a speech delivered in 1996, Wallerstein usefully reviews the different forms of Eurocentrism in social science and argues for transcending it. But in Chapter 15, the presidential address of 1998, Wallerstein not only recalls but emphasizes and elaborates the utterly Eurocentric

tale of Marx-Durkheim-Weber as the founding fathers of sociology. It's hard to understand why Wallerstein of all people, who has done so much to show the importance of real history—global history at that—for sociology, should give a new airing to this jaded and parochial fiction.

More broadly, there seems to be an inconsistency or divergence between the second half of the book and the first. In the later chapters, Wallerstein emphasizes the challenges to conventional models of knowledge, giving particular prominence to Ilya Prigogine's idea of an end to Newtonian science. Complexity, unpredictability and qualitative change are emphasized. In the essays in the first part of the book, however, Wallerstein seems to emphasize the positivistic side of world-systems analysis, schematizing history, emphasizing economic cycles and the seemingly inevitable capture of anti-systemic movements by the system, and finally developing an impressive analysis of crisis tendencies in the capitalist world-system and predicting its breakdown and transformation in the foreseeable future. If we believe the critique of rationality and predictive science in the second half of the book, why should we believe the model of crisis in the first?

One is left wondering, too, how the substantively rational—read normative—social science Wallerstein argues for in the second half of the book can escape the fate of the other anti-systemic movements outlined in the first. Wallerstein proposes that social science is now becoming a meeting-ground for other types of knowledge, that there is a certain convergence of humanities (via cultural studies) and natural sciences (via complexity studies) on the territory of social science. I suppose it is all in the point of view, but I am more impressed by the revival of biological reductionism under the aegis of the new genetics, by the revival of a kind of imperialist stance in philosophy, and by the influence of deconstructionism, than by any movement of natural sciences and humanities towards social science.

I agree with Wallerstein that it matters a great deal what kind of social science becomes dominant. But I think he seriously underestimates neo-liberalism and free-market economics. Apart from some scathing remarks about the “snake-oil salesmen” of the Chicago school, Wallerstein does not give very much attention to contemporary “economic rationalism” (as it is called in Australia). But here is a substantively-rational social science of the kind Wallerstein calls for (though not the version he wants). And these particular snake-oil salesman are backed by the largest and most influential social science discipline (the only one, notably, to have its own Nobel Prize), by the political leadership of all major states (plus a lot of minor ones), and they have favor and funding from corporate capital to be going on with.

Wallerstein's model of a unified (or at least de-disciplined) social science is attractive, but do current historical conditions really allow it? I'm inclined to think

the future of sociology must be thought out first and foremost as a response to the current global dominance of market ideology, and that might suggest a significantly different trajectory from the one proposed in Wallerstein's stimulating argument.

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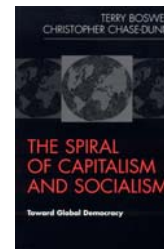
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Terry Boswell and Christopher Chase-Dunn. *The Spiral of Capitalism and Socialism: The Spiral of Capitalism and Socialism: Toward Global Democracy*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000. 281 pages, ISBN 1-55587-824-5 (cloth) ISBN 1-55587-849-0 (paper).
<http://www.rienner.com/viewbook.cfm?bookid=460>

There Is Still A Better Tomorrow

In an era of the TINA Syndrome (“there is no alternative” to industrial agriculture) and the end of the Grand Narrative, it is very encouraging to find the publication of a book that refuses to join the current fashionable bandwagon of celebrating postmodernism, capitalism, and free trade/markets. Boswell and Chase-Dunn's book rubs current history against its grain by suggesting the future remains open, and that we have not reached the ‘end of history’ as Fukuyama (1992) has gleefully celebrated. Through agency, they argue, the possibility of socialism (not Soviet nor Chinese style) in the form of global democracy remains a historical possibility. In a nutshell, this is their theoretical and practical project.



Boswell and Chase-Dunn's theoretical lineage is derived from the world-systems perspective *à la* Wallerstein albeit with some additions and revisions. The argument they pose is that progressive social change can occur only if we theoretically conceive the world as being organized within the dynamics and trends of a world-system, and that such a transformation is possible only if its implementation occurs at the global level and not at the societal/national level. The progressive march of socialism from nation to nation has inherent flaws if the modern world is organized around a world-system with its rhythms and trends. The ‘Sinatra Doctrine’ (“you do it your way”) articulated in the past, will also not work for the future. In view of this, the macro-level analysis of world-systems theory has much to contribute to our global future.

With the above intentions, Boswell and Chase-Dunn proceed to lay the structural and material grounds for reaching global democracy. The initial chapter outlines very succinctly the world-systems perspective that has evolved since Wallerstein's *Modern World-System I*, noting the important structural trends and cycles of the system, which would structure the emergence of a possible future. For them, this is also the strength of the world-systems perspective—its potential to identify a possible future as the theory has identified historical cycles and trends such as hegemonic rises and declines, phases of expansion and contraction, core-periphery relations, and ceaseless accumulation.

Boswell and Chase-Dunn also identify rightly that the world-systems perspective has been weaker in the area of agency because it is more structurally oriented in terms of approach. The chapter that follows then proceeds to address this weakness. Here we find an explication of various theories of revolutions. Revolutions are examined as world-historical events rather than as occurrences at the societal level, and their relatedness over time is demarcated. In this context, the events of 1989 for Boswell and Chase-Dunn have world-historical proportions because the revolutions and unrests that occurred were the final institutionalization of democracy that was initiated by the world revolution of 1789. Such events have wide sweeping transnational transformations because of the specific conjunctures in which they occur. These historical conjunctures are periods of transition for the world-economy when its cycles and secular trends exhibit tendencies that are the opposite to that of the prior conjunctures. Boswell and Chase-Dunn define such moments as world divides when the world-economy presents moments of transition. Thus, what occurred in 1989 should be placed and understood within such a context.

Given these conditions, during the current historical conjuncture, Boswell and Chase-Dunn argue for a tendency for a transition to global democracy, of course contingent on events and political practice. Using the trends and tendencies of the world-system, several likely scenarios of the future of the world system are sketched for our consideration. It is up to history to confirm or refute their projections. The scenarios are based on the trends and cycles of the world-economy placing weight on processes such as commodification (leading to proletarianization and individualism), hegemonic competition, decolonization, and democratization. Environmental collapse as a consequence of ceaseless accumulation is mentioned briefly as a likely historical possibility. In the sketching of these possible outcomes, Boswell and Chase-Dunn tend to emphasize anthropocentric factors that structure the future of the world-system, instead of giving equal weight to how other factors such as climate changes, tectonic shifts, Culture-Nature relations may affect a possible future. The question is whether 'economy in command' should basically underscore our analysis or whether we should also consider that it might very well be 'ecology in command' that ultimately determines systems transition. Since these elements are

included in some of Chase-Dunn's previous works (e.g., Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997), it is surprising that Boswell and Chase-Dunn have not incorporated these elements into their model.

Albeit interesting, what is important about Boswell and Chase-Dunn's contribution is not their articulation of a possible future, but their attempts to operationalize how global democracy can work and the institutions that are required to make such a social-political setup endure. They have taken up what Marx did not do. Marx wrote about socialism and communism but never explained fully the specific organizational and operational features for such social systems to function effectively. It was up to those that came after him, and who have won political power within a nation-state context, to design the blueprint for a functioning social system. Realizing all the mistakes and failures of such past economic and political exercises, Boswell and Chase-Dunn specify for us in fine detail what functioning institutions and organizations should be in place in order for the system to be enduring and non-exploitative. They do this by culling socialist economic writing (such as those of John Roemer), and suggest ways in which a world organized around global democracy could economically function. They also sketch for us the social and political global institutions that need to be in place to ensure global democracy. They have drawn a blueprint for us to consider should a transition to global democracy become possible. The book thus provides hope in a hope-less era of homogenization and continuing globalization. It should generate debate about the practical aspects of organizing a global system of political and economic democracy—a project that has been absent in academically social progressive literature to date.

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Stephen K. Sanderson. *Social Transformations: A General Theory of Historical Development*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999. Augmented edition, XIII + 479, ISBN 0-8476-9187 (cloth), 0-8476-9188-8 (paper).
<http://www.rowmanlittlefield.com/>

In this ambitious work, Stephen Sanderson singles out key transitions in human history and discusses theories of why they happened. His own orientation is “evolutionary materialism,” a general economic view grounded in world-systems theory. He is careful to point out that, unlike 19th century evolutionistic theories, his does not imply teleology or value-laden ideas of “progress.”

Drawing heavily on Marx, Immanuel Wallerstein, and cultural ecologist Marvin Harris, Sanderson seeks to develop general principles that explain the development of the major milestones. For him, as for most scholars in this tradition, the milestones include agriculture, civilization and the state, the consolidation of agrarian empires, capitalism, industry, and eventually the modern world-system with its global economy. He speculates on the future, but wisely refrains from excessive confidence in anyone’s prognostications. Finally, he provides a chapter on sociobiology and its possible relevance. This represents a departure from his earlier version of this book, and from most of the people he cites; scholars like Wallerstein make little use of sociobiology, and Harris has frequently and sharply critiqued it.

A very valuable feature of the book is the clear statement of his theoretical principles (pp. 3–16). These are excellent guidelines, well laid out. They will provoke considerable debate. Those who do not agree with them will have to make a serious case, rather than dismissing them as mere old-fashioned evolutionism.

After that, this book is best in the center, worst at the two ends. The beginning chapter, on the development of agriculture, relies heavily on Mark Cohen’s theory that agriculture arose from population pressure at the end of the Ice Age. Cohen held that the huge animals, previously hunted, died off; population growth forced people to work harder to feed themselves, and agriculture was born. Sanderson seems unaware of the fate of this theory. It led to predictions that agriculture would arise where megafauna had been most important, and would follow after a period of increasing stress visible in malnutrition and stunting. These predictions could be archaeologically tested on a worldwide scale, and turned out to be problematic, as Cohen has admitted (Cohen and Armelagos 1984). The earliest agriculture supplied an inconsequential amount of food, and made no detectable difference in nutrition. Nutrition, as shown by analysis of skeletons, remained basically good until agriculture began to provide much or most of the food supply—at which point nutrition levels generally declined. There remains a possibility that the invention of

agriculture had something to do with population growth, but few would see such growth as an adequate explanation by itself. In fact, agriculture arose in areas that saw a rapid increase in plant growth after the Ice Age; that were ecologically complex; and that were nodal in large trade networks. Opportunity and trade seem to have been the drivers (MacNeish 1977).

With the origin of the state, we are on firmer ground. Sanderson provides an excellent account of evolutionist theories on this subject, and comes to the reasonable conclusion that rising population and conflict over resources led to the triumph of certain groups. This process, iterated over time in areas where population could concentrate and build up, led to the development of a true ruling class and thus of a state. Comparisons of the world’s early civilizations, and their immediate antecedents, show something like this to be a general process.

The great agrarian states that emerged at the end of this process rose and declined, for reasons ably discussed in the following chapter. They also expanded the known world. Substantial world-systems grew in the Near East, East Asia, and the New World. Eventually a single oikumene dominated the Old World, as population, trade, technology, and communication increased in feedback with each other. Missing from this chapter is Ibn Khaldun’s great work of the 14th century, which still provides as good an account as any of the dynamics of agrarian empires.

The discussions of capitalism and the emerging modern world order take up most of the book, and defy summary. They are well done, thorough, and balanced. They present a good survey of the relevant literature (though not a complete one—that would take hundreds of volumes). However, Sanderson does not take enough account of the puzzle presented by China, which seemed on the very threshold of capitalism as early as 1400, if not indeed 1100—yet stagnated or actually retrogressed until the 19th century. The most challenging literature on this subject has emerged since Sanderson’s book was completed (Pomerantz 2000) or at least well along (Wong 1997), so this is not his fault.

Some of Sanderson’s statements about the decline of the United States and the rise of Japan (pp. 199–200) now seem dated. American hegemony is on the rise again—with Japan in economic agony, and with Europe giving away the store by putting themselves back under nonaccountable and centralized rule of a sort that capitalism, for all its sins, managed (briefly) to reduce.

Finally, he questions “progress,” noting that many would see the modal Third World citizen as not much better off now than centuries ago. Life spans have lengthened, but subsistence levels and options have often declined. Third World subsistence does not “count” in economic reckoning. The World Bank does not provide figures on the loss of land, forests, clean water, game, and other goods once enjoyed free.



The long Afterword on sociobiology is, unfortunately, rather a loss. Sanderson has the theory under control; he fails to make a case for its value, even as a limit on the possible. Sociobiology and its offshoot evolutionary psychology are rooted in a narrowly individualist mode of thinking that tends to reduce all human action to the short-term, narrow calculus of the selfish individual or the “selfish gene” (Dawkins 1976). This body of theory currently cannot explain the sociability, institutions, ideologies, and cultural variations whose evolution is the subject of Sanderson’s book. This situation is changing rapidly, as evolutionists work with kin selection models. Hopeful beginnings are being made, and Sanderson cites some of them. However, at present, sociobiology provides excellent explanations for why people often act like rats, but no adequate explanation for why they sometimes act like humans.

In summary, Sanderson provides valuable summaries of a major body of literature, and—usually—reasonable conclusions. His basic ideas are familiar from the literature of Marxian, world-systems, and cultural ecology. Other writers making creative use of economic history have come to somewhat similar conclusions without invoking “evolutionary materialism” per se. However, Sanderson provides a hopeful start at building a new and predictive theory from these ideas.

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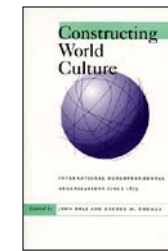
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John Boli and George M. Thomas. *Constructing World Culture: International Nongovernmental Organizations Since 1875*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999. 363 pages, ISBN 0-8047-3421-6 (cloth), 0-8047-3422-4 (paper).
<http://www.sup.org/>



Constructing World Culture: International Nongovernmental Organization Since 1875 is an important book, one which substantially reshapes our sense of global processes of the last 100 years and should inspire considerable research. At the same time, one suspects that as that research is carried out, the arguments of the volume will need considerable revision. The text takes issue with world systems analysis (although it should be noted that Wallerstein’s highly relevant writings on the ‘geoculture,’ science, and rationality are nowhere directly engaged by this text) and other ‘neorealist’ accounts of the international system, such as state competition theory and neoliberal institutionalism, on grounds defined by its title and subtitle. Neorealists do not problematize the goals and interests of states (their ‘culture’), assuming that they inevitably seek to maximize their wealth and security. And to the extent that they bother at all, neorealist theories account for international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) as a byproduct of the interests of states, which neorealists regard as the primary, almost exclusive, actors in international society (with the addition of multinational corporations). Not only do the authors demonstrate the untenability of these assumptions; they go on to argue that the dynamics of international non-governmental organizing in fact explain much about the goals of states. Lacking arms or other means of coercion, INGOs are able to exert considerable ‘rational voluntaristic’ authority by basing themselves on the principals of the world culture, i.e. universalistic rationality in the service of human progress. While sovereignty ultimately resides with states, states find themselves virtually forced to conform to the world culture the INGOs have made. It is a bold and provocative argument.

Although it is an edited volume, the authors share data sources (primarily the yearbook of international organizations), research methods (sophisticated quantitative tests), and theoretical perspective. The work is thus extremely cohesive. Furthermore, all of the topics are well chosen, examining consequential matters for the perspective being advanced. The first two chapters outline the growth of INGO from 1875 to 1988 (the last year for which they had data). Then there are examinations of four ‘social movements’ (environmentalism, the women’s movement, Esperanto, and the Red Cross), and four studies of scientific and technical fields (standardization, population control, development, and science associations). Finally, the conclusion pulls everything together to state the argument in particularly bold form.

Readers familiar with INGOs primarily from debates within the development or human rights literature will likely find the authors' description of the INGO world surprising. Encompassing more than 35,000 organizations, the ones around which controversy has swirled (for example, Greenpeace) actually make up a very small portion of the total. The largest number of organizations relates to Industry/trade/industrial groups—frequently 'peculiarly invisible' groups of technical specialists such as radiologists or bridge designers. The authors emphasize a shared culture among INGOs of universalism, individualism, rational voluntaristic authority, and a commitment to 'progress'. Although membership in INGOs (and location of their secretariats) is concentrated in wealthier countries, membership in poor countries has been expanding more rapidly than in wealthy countries in recent years. Curiously, size of country does not matter much in determining the number of INGOs citizens belong to: "Norway's 3 million people belonged to more INGOs than the United States' 240 million or Japan's 120 million."

In all the case studies, the relationship between the deepening of rationalized discourse and the increase in foundings of related INGOs is emphasized, while functionalist formulations that see INGOs as inevitable responses to 'global problems' like pollution or 'overpopulation' are decisively refuted. For example, the development of a rationalized discourse about the environment, in which nature is seen as constituted by a set of interdependent parts, the web of life, rather than appreciated as a thing of beauty, facilitated the emergence of environmental INGOs. Discourse which emphasized the embeddedness of nations in global processes (for conservatives, 'the need for foreign capital', for radicals, dependency theory) facilitated the growth of development INGOs.

The success of INGOs in getting states and international organizations to do what they wished is also emphasized. For example, the Geneva Conventions have more signatories than the United Nations has members, although the conventions originated in an INGO, the International Committee of the Red Cross, rather than in the efforts of states. The idea that states become strong as a result of population growth was replaced with the idea that population growth hinders development largely as a result of the arguments of INGOs. Industrial standards are adopted by multinationals, although the US standards body has tried, unsuccessfully, to intrude on this process and has discouraged its own companies from falling in line. INGOs exert power by either acting autonomously (professional association INGOs typically function entirely outside of state pressure), collaterally (working with states or international organizations) or penetratively (pushing their way into states to foster things like environmental or women's movements).

By clarifying the importance of international non-governmental organizations and insisting that scholars attend to the culturally constructed reasons states behave the way they do, the authors have done an immense service to understanding global dynamics. But one suspects they overstate their case. International non-governmental organizations, in which individuals voluntarily come together to rationally define agendas to advance progress, simply aren't the only force shaping world culture. The authors would do well to consider the role of the mass media, which often shapes an agenda for social action based on media imperatives for novelty and attention getting, rather than substantive rationality. Also relevant is the transnational organizing of the capitalist class, which is able to bring considerable pressure on states through network connections and financial power, although it does not follow the principles of the INGO world. Additionally, 'on the ground' social movements, engaging in unruly behavior such as protests, strikes, pickets and consciousness raising are a crucial generator of world cultural ideas (it is a little disconcerting to read an account of the expansion of women's NGOs in the seventies that gives no role to the explosion of feminist activism in the wake of '68—only to the effect of rationalistic development discourse which could include women). While INGOs may do much to shape the behavior of states, the opposite relationship may also develop. States may attempt to promote their views through the strategic distribution of foreign aid, for example (the US role in promoting 'overpopulation' as a social problem to be addressed comes to mind). Although religious organizations constitute a small portion of the INGO sector, their broad appeal may make them more influential than the numbers suggest. The list of additional sources of world culture could be expanded.

Additionally, universalistic, scientific rationality devoted to progress does not monopolize world culture. The authors mention Asian familialism and Islamic Fundamentalism, but only in passing. Postmodernism is mentioned rather derisively as a romantic revolt—but the notion that the social world must be interpreted culturally has found adherents in the development field, among others. Perhaps most significantly, consumerist rationality devoted to maximizing the purchase of goods by coating everything with a few reliable stimulants and making it all available as pervasively and continuously as possible, also shapes the global social field, although we suspect few INGOs actively approve of its values. Without bringing in these additional actors in constructing world culture, and these additional world cultural principles, one wonders how the authors would explain the near universal shift toward neoliberal policies engaged in by states worldwide over the last twenty years—surely this was not the work of a handful of altruistically inclined individu-

als seeking to rationally advance progress? Nevertheless, the authors have done an immense service by highlighting the role of NGOs in constructing world culture; now the tasks of embedding them in a more complex cultural field can move forward.

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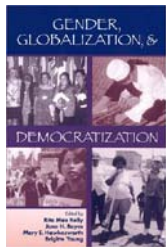
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Rita Mae Kelly, Jane H. Baynes, Mary E. Hawkesworth, and Brigitte Young, eds. *Gender, Globalization, and Democratization*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999. 288 pages, ISBN 0-7425-0977-X (cloth), ISBN 0-7425-0978-8 (paper).
<http://www.rowmanlittlefield.com/>

The critical thrust of this book lies in the introduction of women or gender into the discussion of globalization and democratization. Individual articles analyze: the impact of globalization on women; obstacles to the full inclusion of women in formal democratic processes; and obstacles to recognition of the undemocratic, gendered power relations embedded in less obvious social space. Globalization is the driving force in this text, with both gender regimes and democratization following on the contours of globalization. Nine of the 13 essays examine the impact of globalization on women or gender, sometimes with concluding comments on democratization, and three deal directly with democratization; the remaining essay is an introduction. The 13 essays are, in most cases, written by women originating from, or residing in, the countries about which they write. Most are descriptive analyses of cases based on secondary sources or theoretical/conceptual argument.

Explicitly or not, most of the articles intervene in the debate over the extent to which globalization represents a new phenomenon. In an early essay in the book, Brigitte Young states that her work contrasts with that of Marian Simms in arguing that “the current phase of the world economy is characterized by significant discontinuities with the preceding periods” (27). Young’s analysis matches regimes of accumulation and gender regimes, drawing on Connell (1987), Aglietta (1979) and Sassen (1996). Simms examines the book’s topics historically, arguing that “[f]rom the perspective of Oceania, globalization is not new but is a process that began almost two hundred years ago” (15). From the historical experience of the “settler col-



onies,” Simms derives lessons regarding past and present differences between these colonies and Europe in both globalization and gender regimes.

Yassine Fall’s contribution provides a primer in the world-economic history of Africa, but is scant in its attention to gender. Three case studies of neoliberal economic policies (HIPC Debt Relief Initiative, the Chad Oil Project, and privatization in Senegal) offer a barebones treatment of women.

The three articles that report on original data collection or fieldwork examine within and/or between country migration. In these studies, migration becomes a proxy for globalization. Laura Gonzalez’s 20 years of fieldwork is used to analyze the Guanajuatense community in Mexico and the US “to see how globalization in the form of imported mechanized agricultural methods and...labor demand in the North has affected traditional gender relations both in Mexico and the United States” (75). In their essay on Asian Indian immigrant women in the US, Arpana Sircar and Kelly adapt Smith (1968) to draw a flowchart of types of variables (biographical and social structural) relevant to adult political behavior—in this case the sex-role behavior of twenty immigrant women. The world-economic conditions that lead to immigration is background material in this essay and are not included among the correlates of sex-role orientation that are used to analyze the sex-role behavior of the subjects. Finally, Urvashi Soni-Sinha’s study of gender relations among families in the Noida Export Processing Zone in India refers to the literature on the household as a bargaining unit to ground her typology of changes in income control and household work-sharing in the households of 16 women, all but two of whom are migrants, which result from their waged work in the EPZ.

Jane Baynes’ and Kelly’s essay sums up the analysis of the impact of globalization with a conceptual piece that identifies three forces and circumstances that correlate with gender regime change or contestation: when women act to preserve a traditional gender regime; when women from traditional backgrounds find themselves in new circumstances (i.e., waged labor); and when clashes occur between gender regimes (for example, between a national/local regime and that of the UN). They then analyze gender regime changes in three “strategic sites:” Chiapas, the US/Mexico border and the international Human Rights Code.

Two articles in the book deal with sexual trafficking of women in Japan. The first by Seiko Hanochi matches changes over time in the nature of the sex industry in Japan (including the ‘comfort women’) to changes in “structures of global interdependence” (143). The second article by Kinhide Mushakoji seeks to “clarify the epistemological structure of the double standards discourse” supporting sexual slavery and its impediments to full democratization. The argument refers to Pateman (1988) in making its case for linking the gendered double standard to the public/private duality and its “hidden clandestine sectors” wherein reside undemocratic practices, sexual slavery among them.

Bang-Soon L. Yoon's essay is one of three which addresses directly women's movements. She analyzes the "poor linkage mechanism between women's elective, grassroots movements and the formal political arena" (171) in South Korea. Suranjana Gupta's analysis of the implementation of the mandate for the election of women to local offices in India focuses on the role of grassroots women's movements. Finally, Mary Hawkesworth discusses why democratization, celebrated by social scientists and policymakers over the last decade, has failed to produce gender equality. Hawkesworth scans the literature from the classics to modernization theory to the expansion of civil society and the growth of NGO's to assess how democracy is conceived and practiced. She traces how gendered assumptions and the recent "reconstitution of political space as male space" (235) have hampered women's political equality. Her discussion of the ways in which women's movements and feminist theorists pose challenges to the dominant conceptualizations is worthwhile.

Each essay offers a page or more of substantive background identifying the relevant characteristics of globalization; the background material reaches back usually to the mid-to-early twentieth century; in the cases of Fall and Simms, a more world-historical perspective is provided. The authors use Connell's concept of 'gender regimes' throughout the text, with more or less success. Connell's term contributes to, and draws on, the move in gender studies away from analysis in which a single, coherent model of gender relations is applied in cases, in favor of the heuristic conceptualization of gender as a multiple and unstable array of performances or practices. While most authors cite Connell and use the term gender regime, they fall back on conventional examination of how a case illustrates or contests a model of gender relations.

The tendency in the text to study how globalization affects gender, and not the other way around, in several essays posits a meeting of 'traditional' or personal relations—gender relations—and the new, dynamic processes of globalization. In this meeting, of course, the new, dynamic sector shapes the laggard gender sector. However, the resulting changes in gender regimes analyzed in these essays are not simply decried as more of the same gender domination, but are presented more complexly as giving way to both opportunities for and constraints on women's equality.

This a major theme of the book: the impact of globalization and democratization on women and gender is complicated, at times offering women the chance to make gains and at other times throwing up barriers. Its most important contribution comes as the refusal to reduce recent changes to simplistic readings of gender hierarchy, addressing the need for nuanced approaches to the current state of gender relations.

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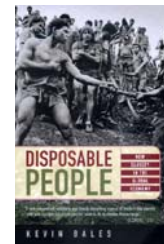
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Bales, Kevin, *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. 298 pages, ISBN 0-520-22463-9 (paper).

<http://www.ucpress.edu/books/pages/8428.html>

When I began reading Kevin Bales *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy* (1999), the international community was still reeling over *Etireno*. And rightfully so. *Etireno* was the ship off the coast of West Africa found to have 31 slave children on board in April of 2001. After pouring through countless *New York Times* stories on the extent of slavery around the world, I was relieved to pick up this timely piece of social science research. Everyone should read this book. Period.



Disposable People is not a book about slavery. It is a book about the "new slavery," what Bales defines as "the total control of one person by another for the purpose of economic exploitation" (p. 6). Bales cites three main factors that have led to slavery's reemergence in the post-World War II era: (1) unchecked population growth, (2) economic globalization, and (3) corrupt government and business leaders. Violence and economic exploitation intersect with these trends to produce an estimated 27 million slaves in the world today (Bales' estimate, p. 8). Most of these slaves—roughly 15–20 million—represent bonded laborers in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Otherwise, slavery is concentrated in South America, Southeast Asia, and North and West Africa.

After an introductory chapter, Bales organizes the book into five qualitative case studies, each featuring a particular country and a specific economic activity. These cases include: female sex workers in Thailand, water carriers in Mauritania,

charcoal workers in Brazil, brickmakers in Pakistan, and bonded agricultural laborers in India. Bales gives moving portraits of individual slaves, as well as concise histories and political economic contexts of each case. Two appendices follow the case studies, featuring Bales' methodology and excerpts from international conventions on slavery. Startling photographs of slaves throughout the world are included in the middle of chapter 5. Maps do not appear, but would have been useful.

Bales takes on two hats in this book—one academic, the other activist. I found the combination refreshing, if not urgent in light of the issue. For an in-depth discussion of solutions, Bales devotes a full concluding chapter. To eradicate the new slavery, he suggests ending extreme poverty, putting pressure on businesses via consumer boycotts, supporting anti-slavery activists, and developing new international laws to protect human rights and punish those culpable for slavery. He cites five things the reader can do to end slavery, including joining Anti-Slavery International and sharing this book with others.

Taken as separate wholes, each case study is a fascinating, if painful glimpse of contemporary slavery. Nevertheless, the comparative and analytic threads that tie this book together are weak. Bales distinguishes contemporary slavery from the old slavery by its lack of legal ownership, high profits, and indifference to questions of race. Like other workers in the contemporary era, slaves are temporary, faceless, in a word, *disposable*. The new slavery *mimics* contemporary global economic processes, shielding business owners and investors from culpability by subcontracting networks and short-term contracts (p. 25, 51). In addition to situating current slave labor processes in contemporary economic trends, Bales brings questions of culture into his analytic mix. He describes the relationships that underpin the new slavery in the developing world as primitive, traditional, something leftover from more archaic times (p. 88 for an example). Unfortunately, Bales lacks a coherent comparative-analytic framework to pull this complex analysis off.

To begin, Bales oversimplifies both the old and new versions of slavery. Research on slavery in the New World—to which I could find only one bibliographic reference—suggests that slaves were, in some cases, *very* disposable. Moreover, Bales' argument that race means very little in the new slavery is troubling, considering the extent to which race continues to structure labor markets throughout the world. Recent literature on slavery in the New World attempts to fuse cultural, political, and economic variables to understand how slavery evolved in various ways across geographic areas and historical periods. It does so in ways that honor the slaves themselves—their ability and will to survive, their attempts to build community, even their success in piecing together independent economic livelihoods. This approach would have been a better analytic blueprint for this book.

Bales' cultural variables lack depth at best. At worst, they suggest something deeply wrong with social values and networks in the developing world. That said, I

was equally dismayed to find no case study of slavery in the developed world. Many of Bales' arguments are reminiscent of the modernization hypothesis, which argued that labor processes based on feudal, ethnic, and familial relationships would die out with capitalism. Any economies that featured such traditional relationships were, therefore, backward. Not only was the modernization hypothesis wrong, it had the politically distasteful characteristic of blaming the victim. A number of sociologists have shown recently that traditional labor processes may not only survive, but actually thrive under certain conditions of advanced capitalism (Lee 1998; Portes 1995; Wells 1996). To this end, they have analyzed the intrusion of capitalism into specific local labor markets. Were Bales to analyze the new slavery from this perspective, he might begin to answer how local histories, cultures, and social structures intersect with contemporary global economic processes to pattern the new slavery in each case.

One of Bales more provocative points is that we should distance slavery politically and analytically from other forms of economic exploitation. I disagree with this point politically, feeling that we need to make connections so as to build a larger social movement around ending economic exploitation. I disagree analytically with this statement because the lines between economic exploitation and slavery are too fuzzy to separate neatly. Moreover, the new slavery is tied to the same global economic forces that produce other forms of economic exploitation.

These are perhaps analytic points that distract from the overall value of this book, which is Bales' reminder that this problem is not something we can ignore. On the contrary, it is something we can do something about right now. As for myself, I will be paying a visit to Anti-Slavery International's website tonight (www.antislavery.org). As Astill (2001) reminds us, *Etireno* may mean "end of story", but the end of the story it is not.

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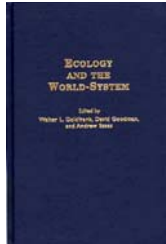
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Walter L. Goldfrank, David Goodman, and Andrew Szasz (editors). *Ecology and the World-System*. Studies in the Political Economy of the World-System, Immanuel Wallerstein, Series Adviser. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999. 288 pages, ISBN 0-313-30725-3 (cloth). <http://www.greenwood.com/>

Ecology and the world-system would seem to be a natural pair. Analyses of both tend to be holistic, systemic, and long-term. World-systems analysis is well suited to the study of unequal flows of productive (and waste) material among various parts of a world divided by power inequalities. Meanwhile, studies in ecology are increasingly cognizant of the social nature of ecology, i.e. the idea that humans are an intimate part of the ecosystem. In addition, the timing of the emergence of world-systems analysis in the early 1970s coincided with the burgeoning of the environmental movement, and both came from core, US intellectual roots. Yet, as with much academic work that is critical or leftist in outlook, world-systems scholars have been surprisingly silent on the real, material bases of production, except in its commodified form. It took another couple decades for the Political Economy of the World-System series finally to publish this volume on *Ecology and the World System*, based on papers presented at the PEWS annual conference in Santa Cruz in 1997.

Let me state up front that there are a number of excellent papers in this collection. But as with many edited collections, *Ecology and the World-System* is uneven and sparsely edited. It seems the editors either did not see much commonality among the papers to glean theoretical lessons or they simply could not garner the enthusiasm to write a conclusion. Their two page "Introduction" divides the papers into global analyses, cases "more delimited in time and space," and environmental movements – and merely remarks on "the multiple and various ways contemporary scholars are grappling with questions of environmental and social change."

The most useful chapter in the first part is Timmons Roberts' and Peter Grimes' "Extending the World-System to the Whole System," which might have served as an introduction to the book. They argue for the continued relevance of world-system analysis to understanding social change and the environment. Specifically, they claim that four key tenets of world-systems analysis (holism, materialism, a Braudelian historical approach, and structuralism that emphasizes position within a global stratification system) are crucial and can be used to study core issues such as the relation between environment and secular trends in the world economy, the causes and effects of cycles of crisis, mechanisms of peripheral exploitation, structural causes of conflict, and post-socialist transitions. These are laudatory themes, but, in fact, most of them are *not* taken up in the volume under review.



Part I actually starts with a brief (and predictable) excursus by Wallerstein on the impending crisis of capitalism due to both proletarianization and environmental degradation. Because capital is loath to fix the latter through internalization of ecological costs and governments reluctant to impose taxation to pay for fixing it, we are left doing nothing or shifting the costs to the South, i.e. merely a delaying pattern to the demise of capitalism. Peter Grimes' gloomy "The Horsemen and the Killing Fields" expands on the ecological dimensions of the current crisis leading from capitalist agriculture to atmospheric warming to the four apocalyptic horsemen of starvation, disease, pestilence and war. This reviewer at least finds this kind of world-system analysis too over-generalized and covering too long a *durée* resulting in ridiculous statements ("in the tropics, the majority of the soil is sterile," p. 16) and inaccuracies (Chinese "colonization" [sic] of Malaysia and Indonesia, p. 36). Al Bergesen and Laura Parisi's contribution is an odd hybrid. At first they propose non-"humanocentric" "ecosociology" because all prior social theory, even radical ones, have allowed for "species self-transformation without regard to the larger set of ecosociological relations within which that species is embedded" (p. 46). But the second part of the chapter is an analysis of toxic emissions based on traditional cross-national statistical analysis that does not address the social (let alone "ecosocial") relations of production and pollution. They are left to speculate, rather than theorize, the possible interrelationship between power and toxicity.

The challenge of theoretically incorporating the material and ecological processes of capitalist development with the development of the world-system is taken up provocatively in Stephen Bunker's and Paul Ciccantell's "Economic Ascent and the Global Environment: World-Systems Theory and the New Historical Materialism." This chapter contributes most directly to the volume's theme of ecology and the world-system. Contra other theories of hegemony, they argue that "the distinctive feature of the capitalist world-economy is the systematic expansion of the exploitation of nature via a division of labor on an increasing global scale" (p. 107). Through an examination of the ascent of Holland, Great Britain, the US, and Japan (all in 15 pages!), they analyze the "generative sectors" in raw materials and especially the linked transport industries that were crucial for political-economic ascent in each case—timber and shipbuilding for Holland, for example. They argue that each ascendant hegemon reorganizes the global environment and exploits a large number of specific local environments in order to expand capital accumulation (rather than capital accumulation leading to expanded resource exploitation).

There remain a few challenges for their argument and world-systems more generally. First, their concept of a "new historical materialism" remains underspecified. How does it differ from the old historical materialism? How does their argument relate to recent literature such as Foster's *Marx and Nature* that resuscitates Marx's

understanding of the material from pure labor theory of value accounts? Second, by focusing on ascent, Bunker and Ciccantell beg the question of descent. As Roberts and Grimes point out, world-systems analysis focuses on cycles. Sing Chew's chapter on the Bronze Age complements Bunker and Ciccantell by considering the ecological factors, including overcultivation, overgrazing and deforestation that contributed to the contemporaneous demise of Harappa and southern Mesopotamia centers of accumulation. Would Bunker and Ciccantell accept comparable arguments for the decline of the four hegemonies? How do phases of decline relate to the ever-expanding material throughput of capitalism? Third, by focusing on the hegemonies, they seem to underestimate the ease with which "local social relationships were restructured to permit the extraction of raw materials to support capital accumulation" (p. 114), as opposed to more recent understandings of the hybrid character of imperial relations. In that vein, the broader place of culture and institutions in world systems analysis is highlighted by Zsuzsa Gille's fascinating chapter on "Wastelands in Transition: Forms and Concepts of Waste in Hungary Since 1948." Gille notes the shift in ideas and practices of waste management from a socialist 'cult of waste' and its productive if inefficient re-use to waste as a cost of production and a distributional problem. Finally, with respect to Japan's (possible) ascent, Gavan McCormack's chapter "Modernism, Water, and Affluence: The Japanese Way in East Asia," raises provocative questions about the impossibility of replicating Japan's affluent ways. He argues that in the US the anti-dam movements have made strides in limiting future projects and dismantling some old ones.

This leads us into the social movements that are the focus of the last section of the book. Robert K. Schaeffer provides an overview of the US environmental movement's success in the 1970s and subsequent impasse, particularly as core deflationary policies undermined broad perceptions of environmental scarcity. The last two chapters address environmental movements and their relation to democratization in South Africa and rapid industrialization in South Korea. The cases are interesting in their own right, but the relationship between their semi-peripheral position and the relative (lack of) success of domestic environmental movements is not fully explored.

To conclude, this volume should be of interest to scholars of the world system and of the political economy of the environment, but it will be difficult for classroom use because the chapters are not well integrated with each other (and because of the book's high cost). Two questions might be asked of this volume. First, what is the unique relevance and usefulness of a world-systems approach to ecological and environmental questions (the two not being distinguished clearly by the authors)? Second, what do the contributions add to our understanding of the interrelations between political economy and environment? The collection does little to answer

the first, with the important exception of Bunker and Ciccantell discussed above, but adds much to the second. In fact, a number of the contributions in this volume are interesting precisely because they reject the rigid application of world-systems theory.

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John Lie, *Han Unbound: The Political Economy of South Korea*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998. 255 pages, ISBN 0-8047-3055-5. <http://www.sup.org/>

The first part of the title of John Lie's book, *Han Unbound*, alludes both to the country's name, South Korea, and a Korean word, *han*, which means "resentment, dissatisfaction," revealing the author's point of view on the tidal change his country of origin witnessed following its independence from Japan in 1945: something tantamount to a Prometheus is deemed to be unbound but proving to be a mixed blessing.



Indeed, Lie considers that real development occurred in South Korea, both in economic terms (higher GNP per capita, industrialization) and political terms (from authoritarian regimes to elected government), albeit at the costs of the overexploitation of labor and political repression. However, Lie strongly disagrees with neo-liberal opinion erecting South Korea as a replicable model of development for the Third World. In his view, the case is unique and its occurrence is made possible thanks to a unique combination of internal factors and particular circumstances in the "international political economy," the term he prefers for naming the broader context.

In the preface, Lie briefly describes his explanatory strategy as "structural sequence analysis," meaning "both the structured contexts and the contingencies that unfold in irreversible time," a "path-dependent process," a "sequence of structural opportunities and constraints," "causal relations that occur in concrete contexts and sequence." He nonetheless foregoes reviewing both "development literature" and existing debates over South Korea's course of change. Instead, a few concepts are carefully handpicked in the literature (such as the "developmental state," "triple alli-

ance”, and “authoritarian-bureaucratic state,” to name but a few) and aptly put to analytical use.

Each of the first five chapters of the book is dedicated to a given period of history of post- Second World War South Korea, up to the end of the eighties. The sixth and final chapter takes the story up to the mid-nineties and provides a brief conclusion. The two leading threads to be followed throughout the book are economic development and political change.

The building blocks of the author’s argument are the following: “Land reform, the developmental state, and low-paid labor—three inextricably intertwined factors—were crucial in propelling South Korean development. These internal factors, however, are necessary but insufficient to explain economic growth. It is impossible to ignore the international environment” (p.166).

The epochal change of the 1945–1952 period is the land reform, deemed to be a crucial condition for ulterior development. Although an “internal” phenomenon, it owes a lot to the geopolitical context, namely the United States’ policy of containment of communism and military presence in South Korea. The rest of the fifties are presented as a sterile decade, plagued with a patrimonial and authoritarian government (the Rhee regime) feeding upon U.S Aid and moneys and channeling it into “parasitic” incipient *chaebol* given to rentier types of activities.

The 1960s are presented as the first authentic development decade. A “developmental state,” which Lie carefully characterizes, emerges in the aftermath of a middle class, reformist military coup (the Park regime) triggered by an event seen as of uttermost importance, the 1960 April Student Revolution. If the “developmental state” is considered the result of an “internal” political dynamic, its success in industrializing the country is explained by “contingent, external factors-not planned, internal ones.” So, South Korea’s oft-praised “export-oriented” industrialization is presented not as an intentional strategy from the start but as the result of favorable external circumstances: the Vietnam War during which South Korea was called upon as a supplier of light industrial products and eventually, its being felicitously chosen by Japan as a junior partner, in a position to inherit production and export niches Japan was leaving vacant in foreign markets. The availability of cheap labor was what enabled South Korea to seize upon such opportunities. But labor had to be kept cheap. Hence, the systematic political repression during the Park regime. Once more, an element of the geopolitical context is evoked, namely the United States’ government tacit support for Park’s authoritarian regime.

Like the 1960’s, the 1980’s begins with a important rebellion, the May 1980 Kwangju Uprising and ends up in the military reasserting its power. But the export-led industrialization of the previous decades had transformed the social make-up of South Korea: a numerically important and more class conscious working class

had developed and the middle class had become more secure. By then, South Korea was sanguinely seen as being on the verge of joining the ranks of developed countries. In their long fight against authoritarian rule, the rather politically isolated students found new allies among the middle classes (until then, lukewarm towards their cause) and a populist ideology (the *minjung*) emerged as a bridge towards the exploited working class. Changing international politics further doomed authoritarian rule, mainly the waning Cold War and weakened U.S. support for hard-line anticommunist rule. The bid for the 1988 Olympics is presented as the last straw for the authoritarian regime. South Korea’s political act had to be cleaned up and authoritarian governments came to be seen as a thing of the past. A considerable anti-government movement took place in 1987 and South Korea then veered towards duly elected and representative governments, thus reaching a new stage of “political development.” With the lifting of systematic repression, wages rose steadily and labor unrest diminished.

Lie does not address the Asian financial market crisis and the debate over the nefarious effects of “globalization,” but does inform us of new realities: South Korea being pressurized to liberalize its import and financial markets; escalating wage costs hurting the competitiveness of exports; the restructuring of many *chaebol*. But, unfortunately for the reader’s natural curiosity, he does not venture into the question of whether South Korea’s development process has halted or goes on, given the new circumstances.

As a whole, the book provides an insightful view into South Korea’s outstanding economic and political changes over the last decades. A convincing rectification to viewing South Korea as a paragon of development, it should be read by anyone interested in the still oddly called field of “sociology of development” and by any reader interested in South Korea, whatever the reason may be. The book is also remarkable for the sober elegance of its style.

While John Lie’s study could be taken as emblematic of the heuristic value of world-system analysis, not even the shadow of an allusion to it is to be found in the whole book. Lie prefers to talk of the “international political economy,” not the world-system. This is his prerogative, of course! However, in this particular case, there is a serious drawback in ignoring the world-system perspective all together. The fact is that Immanuel Wallerstein’s tripartite stratification scheme of the world economy is particularly useful as an analytical framework for such cases of “development” as South Korea, for it draws attention to the fact that countries’ mobility, while possible, is not the rule; it carries the question as to whether a country’s “development” will peak or go on; it invites the researcher to study the unique set of circumstances under which a country’s mobility takes places and the particular ways in which it occurs (whether the mobility is sponsored or is the result of seizing opportunities).

Lie's methodological stance is most congenial with that of world-system perspective and, despite its astonishing silence about it, his book can certainly be taken as a valuable contribution to the realm of world system studies.

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Toggia Pietro, Pat Lauderdale, and Abebe Zegeye. *Crisis and Terror in the Horn of Africa: Autopsy of Democracy, Human Rights and Freedom*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company 2000. 276 pages, ISBN 0-7546-2135-9.
<http://www.ashgate.com/html/bookdetail.cfm?isbn=0754621359>

The book is composed of 11 articles, one introduction and a lucid postscript. *Crisis and Terror in the Horn of Africa* (CTHA) is primarily focused on a vast area which includes (a) Ethiopia, (b) Eritrea, (c) Somalia and Somaliland, (d) Sudan, and (e) Djibouti. Although each author has his or her own specific intellectual orientation, nevertheless they all agree on one point: the so-called internal problems of the Horn could not be understood, let alone solved, if the pressures created by the forces of globalization are not profoundly explicated. That is to say, famine, repression of dissent, military dictatorships, state terrorism, and ostensible 'clan' wars are directly related to the combined forces of past colonialism and ongoing globalization. In my view, this is the backbone of all contributors' overall argument.

In order to substantiate this argument Pat Lauderdale and Randall Amster investigate the Horn of Africa in dual terms: Local versus Global. In their view, the Global is, in terms of mechanism and structural impacts, the continuation of Colonialism in a more refined and complex guise. Seen in this light, Annamarie Oliverio views 'terrorism' as a by-product of or an inherent result of statecraft in the Horn of Africa. The reason is not to be found in an essentialist approach to African culture. On the contrary, she thinks a critical approach to the recent history of the Horn would demonstrate the deep relation between modernist aggression and terrorism in the Horn of Africa. John Sorenson is a theoretical-cum-empirical approach to the ideas and ideals of Human Rights in the Ethiopian context. After a long discussion on the African case, he argues that the ideals of equality and egalitarianism should not be abandoned if they have not been realized yet in their institutional sense. He is not clear about his own position as an analyst. It seems he thinks that ideas qua ideals are in the Platonic sphere. Sorenson neglects the fact that these ideas qua ideals should have some institutional back-up in the indigenous cultural matrix.

However, his position reposes the question of 'ideas' and context of ideas as an urgent *problematique* in Development Studies. The relation between terrorism and Western foreign policy is the theme investigated by Asafa Jalata. The substantial merit of his argument is that 'oppression' or other forms of injustice did not originate in the Horn of Africa by the emergence of the West in the Black continent. On the contrary, Jalata's case study demonstrates very vividly that native African imperialism had had a major role, as did the Western one. However, Jalata neglects that issues such as 'civil liberty' and 'democracy' did not come about even in the West but through a bloody process. This is an important fact for those who seek an institutionalization of universal human rights. T. M. Vestal's utopian yearning is aimed at the process and progress of 'democratization' and the ways in which this could be realized and operationalized in the Horn of Africa. It is not, nevertheless, clear if democracy in terms of Western tradition is not applicable to the Horn, then what is applicable? Or to put it differently, what do we have there in substantive terms? Is there anything called an African point of view? If there is, then what it is? As Ernest Gellner once rightly argued, nationalism is not born out of a nation's cry for being 'realized'; but the reverse is the case. By the same token, one should argue that the same applies to the creation of the state. Nevertheless, Mesfin Araya does not take this logic into consideration. However, one thing is striking in his analysis (which could be seen as the prevalent romantic mode of conceptualizing *Kultur*) and that is a romantic faith in 'people' as the guiding-force of politics in the Horn. Maybe!

Crisis in Somalia, by Pietro Toggia and Pat Lauderdale, is discussed in intercivilizational terms. Their main argument is that Somalis do not find a meaningful existence by being treated as modern individuals where modernity is termed an Occidental way of being. Julia Maxted rectifies what Araya did not heed in relation to nationalism and its birth. Besides, Maxted remarks that in order to rectify the proliferation of militarism in Somaliland, the role of the international community and above all Western foreign policy should be taken into consideration. However, the role of Islamism is treated in a very simplistic terms. Maxted takes its emergence in Somalia as a result of an external element and does not see the historical importance of this movement in Africa in general and the Horn in particular. (p.176). Pietro Toggia's positive assessment of the idea of civil society in a stateless Somalia is one of the unorthodox approaches within modern social and political theory. His approach is not aimed at the state of affairs but the 'fruits' of current affairs in Somalia in terms of universal human rights: free speech and free media.

Islamization in Sudan and its relation to the question of non-Muslims is what Korwa G. Adar investigates. The main issue which Adar thinks is of a global significance and has deep implications for Africa is the status of non-Muslims in a state that is pursuing Islamization policies. In other words, what would happen, globally and locally speaking, to universal human rights in the light of 'global islamizing

forces?' Although he has consistently 'autopsized' the politics of the 'North' in relation to 'Sudanese national' identity, nevertheless Adar does not offer the same approach to the discourse provided by the 'South'. Abebe Zegeye and Julia Maxted have tried to reply to the central question raised by Adar in their attempt to contextualize the plight of minorities in the Horn of Africa by resorting to the dual approach of internally assessing the external pressures and externally delineating the internal issues. That is to say, some constitutional changes are inevitable but Western support should find the 'right' avenues for allocating funding and economic resources.

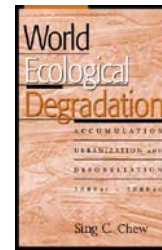
It seems that the authors in this work have some kind of 'Nativist-Claim'; i.e. they know that people in the Horn do not desire a modern 'civilization' as the Western one (xviii). Although it is very hard to assess the desire of a people for a civilizational level, nevertheless they ignore the same civilizational fact. In other words, the civilizational processes are not always voluntarily chosen and freely selected. On the contrary, most often they are imposed. The very nature of imposition (or how the culture in question receives the force) is related to the internal strength of the cultural unit that receives the force.

Last but not least, it should be noted that all contributors in this highly vibrant scholarly work suffer from a naïve interpretation of Western history. They think, at least in implicit terms, that the external coercion imposed on the 'Horn of Africa' is confined to the external realm of Western civilization. They don't extend their historical gaze beyond the pre-World War II western context in order to see the prevalence of coercion even inside the West. In one way or the other, they all lament that Western policies have been unjust to the Horn but they are unaware that the logic of modernity or the forces that brought about the modern world-system, if you like, were neither internally nor externally free of 'coercion'.

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Human beings are bad for the environment. This is the story that unfolds in Sing C. Chew's survey of "Culture-Nature relations" (p. 173) over the millennia.



World Ecological Degradation aims at an "ecocentric" reading of world history that challenges the "anthropocentrism" of mainstream as well as radical scholars. To this end, Chew makes three decisive choices. In the first place, he adopts Andre Gunder Frank's (1990) conception of a single world system whose history stretches back some five or six millennia. In this scheme of things, the accumulation of capital is the accumulation of things. Rather than a dialectic social relation, as for Marx, for Chew "capital" is "surplus." It should not be confused with Marx's value theory, which among other things identified the contradiction between capitalism's presumption of unlimited monetary capital accumulation and the sustainability of the "original sources of all wealth—the soil and the worker" (1977: 638). In reducing the theory of capital accumulation to the accumulation of things, Chew reduces to mere quantitative variation the fundamental differences between historical systems. Second, while (so-called) "accumulation" emerges as the prime mover of environmental degradation, Chew posits two additional sources: population growth and urbanization. And third, "world ecological degradation" is conceptualized primarily in terms of deforestation. Although other problems are discussed, such as air pollution and soil erosion, Chew argues for the centrality of deforestation, which "is a good proxy for our understanding of the intensity of the relationship between Culture and Nature" (p. 4). Regrettably, Chew does not really argue as much as assert the importance of forests—one would think that an "ecocentric" world history of deforestation might include discussions related to the role of forests in the hydrological cycle, the significance of forest variation across climactic zones, and so forth.

I do not think that Chew makes a strong argument in *World Ecological Degradation*, which suffers from inadequate theorization and an uneven empirical basis.

At the most basic level, Chew is trying to synthesize world-systems analysis with deep ecology. Yet, the reader will search in vain for an assessment of these two perspectives. Frank's globalist "one world system" perspective is favored over Wallerstein's conception, which stresses regionally-bounded social systems with distinct modes of political economy (such as feudalism versus capitalism). But Chew offers no argument for why Frank rather than Wallerstein is most useful for understanding world environmental history. Both Frank and Wallerstein are lumped together in the camp of anthropocentric historians who ignore "Nature." Only Braudel escapes this indignity. Unfortunately, Braudel's potential utility for world environmental

history does not merit attention. And unfortunately for Chew, his casual dismissal of Wallerstein betrays a casual reading of *The Modern World-System*, the first volume of which is replete with references to environmental transformation, including the idea that a reorganization of “world ecology” was necessary for the emergence of a capitalist world-economy (1974: 44; see also Moore, 2000: 129-136). Moreover, while the comparability of different “cultural relations with Nature between epochs” (p. 12) is one of Chew’s key questions, the Frankian “one world system” perspective undermines comparative inquiry. In this regard, the lack of engagement with Chase-Dunn and Hall’s (1997) work on comparing world-systems is particularly conspicuous.

Probably most importantly, Chew does not elaborate his central concepts—capital accumulation, population dynamics, and urbanization. Of course the great classical theorist of all three social processes is Marx. But Marx is barely mentioned and never cited, despite his extensive discussions of capital accumulation, population dynamics, and the town-country division of labor—not to mention the explosion of Marxist scholarship on the environment during the 1990s (e.g. O’Connor, 1998; Burkett, 1999; Foster, 1999). Even if ultimately rejected, Marx and Engels’ frequent and sustained discussions of the division of labor in the history of human society—an issue that Chew is presumably committed to discussing insofar as urbanization and population growth are central to his argument—can hardly be ignored.

Bereft of theory, *World Ecological Degradation* is not much better empirically. This becomes especially evident in Chew’s treatment of modern world environmental history. The discussions of Asia’s environmental history since 1500 are extensive, but read more like a collection of notes uneasily integrated into a cogent world-historical narrative. Most conspicuous is the almost total neglect of Europe’s environmental history. Chew recapitulates Perlin’s (1989) account of Venice’s problems with deforestation and wood scarcity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but here the story ends. The remainder of the chapter on the rise of Europe has practically nothing to say about Europe at all! Rather, Chew turns his focus to European intervention in the Indian Ocean world. Given that European states and capitalists were much more effective at transforming the landscapes of, in the first place, *Europe*, and in the (very close) second place, Latin America, the focus on Asia seems misplaced. Even this more focused discussion is plagued by curious omissions. Chew does not mention, for instance, the United Provinces’ destruction of clove trees in Southeast Asia in the 17th century as a crucial ecological precondition for Dutch hegemony in the Indian Ocean.

World Ecological Degradation invites comparison to Clive Ponting’s *A Green History of the World* (1999) and John Bellamy Foster’s concise and theoretically lucid *The Vulnerable Planet* (1994). Unfortunately, Chew’s book does not stand up well against

these and other recent ventures in the emerging field of world environmental history. It is neither as empirically dense as *A Green History*, nor as theoretically sophisticated and accessible to a broad popular audience as *The Vulnerable Planet*. Part of the problem is that *World Ecological Degradation* is really mis-titled. This is really a book about deforestation and not the broader patterns of world ecological degradation. The latter task would have required an examination of a broader range of decisive environmental transformations—soil erosion, the production of water infrastructures such as dams and canals, successive “green revolutions” (and before that successive “agricultural revolutions”), the exploitation of the oceans, the impact of ranching, and so forth. Most of these are mentioned, to be sure, but they appear to be tacked on to the manuscript in an essentially *ad hoc* fashion.

Finally, while Chew argues for a materialist perspective on social history, his fondness for deep ecology undercuts the materialist argument. In the final paragraph, Chew makes a decisively idealist turn. Humans are “natural aliens” on the earth, whose numbers have “exploded... without any predatory checks” (p. 172). Humans are “maladapted,” seemingly incapable of developing a rational relationship with the surrounding environment (p. 173). All hope, it seems, is lost. Ecological consciousness and environmentalism may have a very long history but their relation to the distinctive contradictions of successive historical systems is never explored—indeed, such exploration is ruled out by the very framework that Chew employs.

World Ecological Degradation embodies three trends in recent world and environmental historiography. The first is the retreat from a critique of capitalism. All societies have degraded the environment and so, it is reasoned, capitalism is no different. Or different only in degree. Having jettisoned capitalism as a meaningful analytical category, Chew cannot explain what identifies it—the rapid acceleration of deforestation and ecological degradation more generally in the 20th century. Even less is he able to account for the ways that the contradictions of capitalism not only destroy nature but produce new social forces that struggle for fundamentally new social relations predicated on the rational governance of the metabolism of nature and society. Among others, this is what the environmental justice movement in the core and various peasant movements in the periphery are all about. The second trend that *World Ecological Degradation* embodies is neo-Malthusianism, where population grows independently of social relations. (Here Chew joins Chase-Dunn and Hall in the neo-Malthusian wing of world-systems analysis.) And third, Chew propounds a naive version of ecological determinism—humanity’s goal should be to place “ecology in command” (p. 171). This is essentially a hard-line version of Barry Commoner’s famous dictum that “nature knows best” (1971). Chew takes this line of reasoning too far. While it is of course sound to follow nature’s laws, our knowledge

of such laws is socially constructed, reflecting and instantiating contradictory social relations. Thus “ecology” can be “in command” no more than “economy” or “society.”

World Ecological Degradation indicates just how far world environmental history has yet to travel. A more fruitful line of inquiry might at once theorize and investigate the distinct forms of environmental crisis—especially the distinct spatialities and temporalities of such crises—in varying historical systems. It might also consider the role of environmental crisis, itself an underdeveloped concept in the literature, in the transition from one historical system or “mode of production” to another. Such investigations would highlight the ways in which historically specific class relations not only shape the landscape, but also the ways in which these reshaped ecosystems become dependent upon such class relations for their very reproduction. At the most fundamental level, this would require a rejection of the sterile dualism of anthropocentrism versus ecocentricism in favor a dialectical view in which nature and society coevolve.

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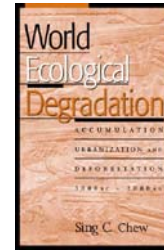
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The growth in awareness and concern over environmental issues has manifested itself in a ‘greening’ of the social sciences. This ecological revolution is beginning to influence world systems theory as well. *Ecology and the World-System*, edited by Walter Goldfrank, David Goodman and Andrew Szasz, served to initiate that dialogue. Now one of the contributors, Sing C. Chew, has produced a longer work to explore the larger dimensions of the ecological crisis in light of world systems theory. *World Ecological Degradation* builds on his earlier paper, “Ecological Relations and the Decline of Civilizations in the Bronze Age World System: Mesopotamia and Harappa 2500 B.C.–1700 B.C.” from that collection to explore an array of societies in the period from 3000 B.C.– to the present. The resulting work offers distinct contributions to both world systems theory and environmental theory.



A sympathetic critic of world systems theory, Chew challenges its theorists to give greater consideration to the role of what to Chew calls “Culture-Nature relations” in understanding historical change within world systems. By bringing in this ecological dimension, Chew is able to shed new light on key concepts in world systems theory, such as the ecological effects of core-periphery relations, as well the ecological bases for both the rise of core powers and also their decline. Central to his analysis is the contention that “ecological limits become also the limits of socio-economic processes of empires, civilizations, and nation-states, and the interplay between ecological limits and the dynamics of societal systems defines the historical tendencies and expansionary trajectories of the human enterprise.” (p. 57)

The incorporation of a world system approach is a welcome alternative to the isolated island examples and metaphors that have been used frequently in ecological analysis.

As Chew insightfully notes, “though isolated island communities offer a controlled method for our understanding of the relationship between Culture and Nature, it is limiting, as throughout world history there have always been numerous interactions between social systems, and in most circumstances, social systems handle their environmental resource constraints via conquests, promotion of migration (voluntarily and involuntarily), and trade exchanges.” (p. 3) When, for example, more than 240,000 trees were cut in New England between 1771 and 1773 for consumption in the West Indies (pp. 128–9), it becomes clear that the fate of a given ecosystem cannot be understood in isolation. As long as there are material exchanges between societies, that trade will produce ecological effects for both ends of the exchange.

These effects become all the more troubling when they take place in the context of core-periphery relations; “Core-periphery relations are very degradative of the environment, especially when the periphery is providing a vast amount of resources to meet the high consumptive needs of the core, with its highly urbanized population and exuberant lifestyles. This is exacerbated further with the adoption by peripheral elites of lifestyles and ideologies that mirror those of the core.” (p.26)

The resultant environmental degradation is experienced disproportionately by ecosystems in the periphery. Chew describes these effects on the periphery as the “ecological-degradative shadow” of the core. Chew adds, “These shadows are thus a consequent of core-periphery relations beyond those ecologically degradative effects that might be generated by the periphery itself.” (p. 11) This point serves as an important corrective to some Northern environmentalists who might otherwise consider the environmental degradation of the South only in terms of the policies and actions of the Southern nations.

One of Chew’s best contributions is to make explicit the natural origins of the objects crucial to the rise and dominance of core societies—such as naval fleets—and the intense environmental destruction that accompanied their production. After reading this book, one won’t be able to discuss 16th century British naval power without simultaneously picturing the two thousand old-growth oak trees that were felled to make each warship. (p. 122)

If the rise and reign of core powers comes through the appropriation of nature, it is reasonable to postulate that the resultant environmental degradation will play *some* part in the decline of a core power. And indeed, Chew argues that nature has a role in delimiting the life course of nations and empires. But disappointingly, he doesn’t take the next logical step of systematically evaluating the significance of ecological factors to societal collapse. There is only one compelling example offered where environmental degradation played a central role in the decline: the loss of Venetian dominance in shipping in the sixteenth century due to the scarcity and increased costs of wood for shipbuilding. (p. 121) But elsewhere, the link between environmental degradation and national decline is unexpectedly vague and even overstretched, such as in the accounts of Mesopotamia and the Roman Empire.

Regardless of its causes, Chew provides a useful insight into the ecological dimensions of this decline by considering its impacts not only for society, but also for nature. “Ecocentrally speaking, dark ages should be appreciated as periods for the restoration of the ecological balance that have been disrupted by centuries of intensive human exploitation of Nature.” (pp.9–10) Thus, the regeneration of nature provided by these periods of societal collapse is actually an important precondition for the subsequent renewal of the society.

As these examples illustrate, *World Ecological Degradation* makes clear contributions to understanding the ecological dimensions of historical change. However, it

is somewhat less satisfying for understanding the roots of ecologically degradative behavior. This is surprising. The temporal scope and geographic scale of the work seems ideally suited for a historical-comparative analysis of the different manifestations of ecological degradation across societies and modes of production. Comparison of these differences could then serve as a basis for understanding the social roots of environmental degradation.

Chew takes a different path, however. Rather than compare the differences, he highlights the commonalities of environmentally degradative behavior. In reviewing the “historical trajectory of human ‘macro parasitic’ activity,” Chew contends that “viewed from this long-term perspective, our present relationship with Nature has not changed significantly over time.” (p. 1) This conclusion is not untenable, but it must be established through careful evaluation of the differences in human relations with nature between societies.

Instead, Chew takes it as a premise, and in his efforts to identify a common pattern of degradation, he neglects the counterexamples. For example, large parts of the world are absent from his account, most notably the pre-European Americas and Australia. And he only examines the past 5000 years of human history, when there are examples of notably different culture-nature relations prior to that time. I suspect that some of these cases would have provided some important counterpoints to his contention that environmental degradation is “as old as the hills.” (p. 12)

Part of the limitation of this analysis is that Chew focuses on three factors that serve as good proximate markers of environmental degradation, but not as root causes: the accumulation of capital (broadly defined), urbanization, and population growth. There is no clear effort to account for the motivating causes for these factors. Instead, the factors become reified and power relations are strangely absent from the discussion. While the book gives central concern to the culture-nature relation, it does not give close consideration to how the relations *within* societies shape that dynamic.

A greater consideration of the forces behind accumulation, urbanization, and population growth might account for the differential presence of these three factors in various societies. It could then help to explain how and why some societies cause less environmental degradation than others, and thus point to more sustainable forms of social organization. However, Chew seems content simply to note the presence of the three factors in various societies as evidence of the consistency of societal degradation of the environment.

One consequence of this approach is the rather jarring conclusion to the book where Chew compares human communities to a cancer: “In medical diagnoses... confirmation of any two characteristics in the above cellular-differentiation process would establish the conditions for malignancy. It would be safe to say that from our examination of ecological relations throughout the last five thousand years of world

history, these criteria have often been met by the human communities across time and space.” (p. 173) While it provides a stark expression of the magnitude of humans’ impact on nature, it is hard to see how that sort of analysis can offer much guidance out of the environmental crisis.

Nonetheless, Chew’s work is an important contribution to the growing clarion call alerting us to the scope and severity of the ecological crisis. In doing so, it points to the need for further research in the social sciences to explore and address the social roots of that crisis. And in particular, *World Ecological Degradation* offers helpful insights into the potential role for world systems theory in that work.

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