

## World-Economic Theories and Problems: Quigley vs. Wallerstein vs Central Civilization

David Wilkinson  
Political Science Department  
University of California-Los Angeles  
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**Reprise.** This is one in a series of papers on civilizational issues. Its predecessors have argued for the existence of a world system/civilization, "Central Civilization," born regionally in the Middle East about 1500 B.C. in the collision of two smaller, expanding local civilizations, expanded throughout the globe, engulfing all competing civilizations to become the unique global social system in the last 100-150 years. If continuing social struggles both are and imply continuing social entities, there is social continuity--stabilities, trends and cycles--in the struggles forming and maintaining Central Civilization.[\[2\]](#) A consequence of accepting Central Civilization as a genuine entity, or a reason for treating it as a fruitful heuristic, is, in particular, the finding that it possesses a political cycle (states system--universal empire) characteristic of other entities commonly treated as civilizations (Wilkinson, 1986; 1987, 53-56; 1988) as well as a political evolution (from multistate anarchy to balance-of-power) incipient but never successfully established in other world systems (Wilkinson, 1985).

[Page 1]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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**World-economy: Quigley and Wallerstein**. Central Civilization also displays economic trends (Wilkinson, 1987, 48-53) which invite theoretical assessment. There have been two notable contemporary efforts to develop socio-economic theories for large-scale long-lived social macrosystems: Carroll Quigley's civilizational theory; and the world-system analysis of Immanuel Wallerstein and his colleagues. It would be of interest to see how these approaches interact with the phenomena observed in Central Civilization, an entity absent from Quigley's list of civilizations and Wallerstein's lists of world-systems alike.

Quigley and Wallerstein share an emphasis on the importance of economics to holosocial evolution, and on the desirability of an approach both historical and theoretical, comparative and evolutionary. Both emphasize the importance of alternating cycles of expansion and stagnation, and regional divisions among geographic cores, semiperipheries and peripheries, though in markedly different ways. Each is in a particular theoretical tradition--Quigley the Toynbeeian, Wallerstein the socialist--to which he makes changes sufficiently fundamental as to constitute for many purposes a new beginning. Scaling up both theories to cover an entity (Central Civilization) that is

larger, longer-lived, and more heterogeneous than any on either of their rosters produces both problems and serendipities.

How to treat these two theorists presents a dilemma. On the one hand, Quigley is earlier, his model simpler, perhaps more classical (and Wallerstein's correspondingly more baroque); Wallerstein's continues to develop rapidly, both in his own work and that of many other members of the world-systems school. On the other hand, some problematic aspects of Wallerstein's approach seem already to have been surmounted in Quigley's work. The procedure here adopted to inspect the interaction of their theories with a new unit of analysis is, first, a straightforward abridgement of Quigley's approach (which is sufficiently contained, self-consistent and lucid to be presented

[Page 2]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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as summaries and long excerpts), accompanied by a few marginal comments, and followed by critical notice of the fundamental contradiction (as I see it) between this approach and the "fact" of Central Civilization; next a review of the Wallersteinian literature, with a running commentary on its divarications, and having occasional recourse to Quigley's ideas as reparatives; finally a review of some patterns in the economy of Central Civilization, with a view to seeking comprehension of them. The eventual objective of this third section will be to find those properties, attributed to world-systems by Wallerstein and to civilizations by Quigley, that fit Central Civilization, in whole or in part; and to find the lacunae for research to fill, the exploratory hypotheses that guide research even as disconfirmed, the concepts that belong in the repertoire of any future world-economic theory of Central Civilization, whether or not they are Quigleyan, Wallersteinian, or both.

### **I. Carroll Quigley's Civilizational Theory: Abridgement and Critique**

Quigley's civilizational ideas, like Wallerstein's world-systems concepts, grow from a consideration of what ought to be the basic units of social analysis and a derivative social taxonomy. Of particular note are: Quigley's unique general theory of the "instrument of expansion"; his account of the rhythm of expansion and crisis in the evolution of civilizations, and of the persistently powerful distinction of core, periphery, and semiperiphery; and his views on the role of universal empire and of socialism in civilizational theory.

**Units of social analysis: societies and civilizations.** A society is a group whose members have more relationships with one another than they do with outsiders. As a result, a society forms an integrative unity and is comprehensible (Quigley, 1961, 28): what goes on within it can be grasped without reference to things outside it (30). There are two different kinds of societies: (a) parasitic, wealth-decreasing (hunting, fishing or

gleaning) societies and (b) producing societies (agricultural, pastoral, etc.), which seek to increase the amount of wealth in the world.

[Page 3]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

---

Among producing societies, there have been simple producing societies like the Zuni (with agriculture), or the Masai (with pastoral herds), and "civilizations," superficially distinguishable by having writing and city life (31). As for the relative numbers of each, we might say that there have been hundreds of thousands of parasitic societies, at least thousands of simple producing societies, but not more than two dozen civilizations. Of the two dozen civilizations, all of which existed during the last ten thousand years, seven have been alive in recent years, while the rest, amounting to approximately seventeen in number, lived and died long ago (32). Sixteen civilizations are clearly enough demarked to be uncontroversial. They appear, reach a peak of achievement culminating in a great empire, and are destroyed in due course by external invaders (32-36).

**An inventory of civilizations.** Quigley supplies a (37) table which gives the name, approximate dates, the name of the culminating empire and the outside intruders who terminated its existence for the sixteen civilizations mentioned:

| NAME         | DATES                   | EMPIRE   | INVADERS  |
|--------------|-------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Mesopotamian | 6000-300 B.C.           | Persian  | Greeks    |
| Egyptian     | 5500-300 B.C.           | Egyptian | Greeks    |
| Indic        | 3500-1500 B.C.          | Harappa  | Aryans    |
| Cretan       | 3000-1100 B.C.          | Minoan   | Dorians   |
| Sinic        | 2000 B.C. -A.D. 400     | Han      | Huns      |
| Hittite      | 1900-1000 B.C.          | Hittite  | Phrygians |
| Canaanite    | 2200-100 B.C.           | Punic    | Romans    |
| Classical    | 1100 B.C. -A.D. 500     | Roman    | Germans   |
| Mesoamerican | 1000 B.C. -A.D. 1550    | Aztec    | Europeans |
| Andean       | 1500 B.C. -A.D. 1600    | Inca     | Europeans |
| Hindu        | 1500 B.C. -A.D. 1900    | Mogul    | Europeans |
| Islamic      | 600-1940                | Ottoman  | Europeans |
| Chinese      | 400-1930                | Manchu   | Europeans |
| Japanese     | 100 B.C. -A.D. 1950 (?) | Tokugawa | Europeans |
| Orthodox     | 600 -                   | Soviet   | ?         |
| Western      | 500 -                   | ?        | ?         |

[Page 4]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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**Civilizational stages.** Civilizations come into existence, flourish and grow for a while, reach a peak of power and prosperity, weaken and decay and go out of existence, all by slow processes covering decades or centuries. This process can be studied effectively by

periodizing it, as scholars like Vico, Danilevsky, Flinders Petrie, Spengler and Toynbee have. Toynbee has done best so far (according to Quigley), but even Toynbee fails to provide a process and explanation for the stages of change (66-69). Quigley accordingly attempts to supply process and explanation. His theory of civilizational change depends intrinsically on the notion of an "instrument."

**Instruments and institutions.** All culture (*avers* Quigley) arises from humans' efforts to satisfy their needs, and is therefore purposive. Humans need security, power, wealth, companionship, certainty and understanding. Social organizations (consisting mostly of personal relationships) come into existence to satisfy such needs. So long as they fulfil their purposes, they may be called "instruments." But every such social instrument tends to become an "institution." This means that it takes on a life and purpose of its own, distinct from its cultural purpose, which is therefore achieved with decreasing effectiveness. Every social instrument becomes an institution because: every instrument divides its labor into particular duties, and most persons in the organization become committed to those narrow roles, while few or none serve the total purpose of the instrument; persons are more than their roles, prefer themselves to their duties, and seek to turn the resources of the instrument to their private advantage; persons trained to certain duties find it difficult to change themselves to allow the instrument to meet changing social conditions, and become "vested interests" who prevent adaptation (49 - 50).

[Page 5]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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"When instruments become institutions, as they all do, the organization achieves its function or purpose in society with decreasing effectiveness, and discontent with its performance begins to rise, especially among outsiders. These discontented suggest changes, which they call reforms.... When these suggestions are not accepted or are rejected by the established groups who control the criticized organization, conflicts and controversies begin, the discontented seeking to change the organization, while the vested interests seek to maintain their accustomed methods of operation." (58-59)

The strain between the two groups Quigley labels the "tension of development." From this tension "there may emerge any one (or combination) among three possible outcomes: reform, circumvention or reaction. In the first case, reform, the institution is reorganized and its methods of action changed so that it becomes, relatively speaking, more of an instrument and achieves its purpose with sufficient facility to reduce tension to a socially acceptable level. In the second case, circumvention, the institution is left with most of its privileges and vested interests intact, but its duties are taken away and assigned to a new instrument within the same society... In the third possible outcome, reaction, the vested interests triumph in the struggle, and the people of that society are doomed to ineffective achievement of their needs on that level for an indefinite period.

"When an institution has been reformed or circumvented, there is once again an instrument on the level in question, and the purpose of that level is achieved with relative effectiveness. But, once again, as always happens, the new instrument becomes an institution, effectiveness decreases, tension of development rises and conflict appears. If the outcome of this conflict is either reform or circumvention, effectiveness increases and tension decreases. If the outcome is reaction, ineffectiveness becomes chronic and tension remains high.

"As a result of this process of historical development, the development of each level appears in history as a pulsating movement. Periods of economic prosperity alternate with periods of economic stagnation; periods of religious or intellectual satisfaction alternate with periods of religious or intellectual frustration. Periods of political order or military success alternate with periods of political disorder or military disaster." (59-60)

[Page 6]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

---

**The instrument of expansion.** "The pattern of change in civilizations presented here consists of seven stages resulting from the fact that each civilization has an instrument of expansion that becomes an institution. The civilization rises while this organization is an instrument and declines as this organization becomes an institution."

"By the term 'instrument of expansion' we mean that the society must be organized in such fashion that three things are true: (1) the society must be organized in such a way that it has an incentive to invent new ways of doing things; (2) it must be organized in such a way that somewhere in the society there is accumulation of surplus--that is, some persons in the society control more wealth than they wish to consume immediately; and (3) it must be organized in such a way that the surplus which is being accumulated is being used to pay for or to utilize the new inventions. All three of these things are essential to any civilization. Taken together, we call them an instrument of expansion. If a producing society has such an organization (an instrument of expansion), we call it a civilization, and it passes through the process we are about to describe." (69-70)

When a society is organized in such a way that innovation is encouraged and rewarded, that society has powerful incentives to invent, and it will have what economists label "invention" (70). When some persons or organizations in the society have more wealth passing through their control than they wish to use immediately or in the "short run," there is accumulation of surplus, or "saving" (71). When surplus is to provide incentive to invent, or to utilize new inventions, there is "investment" or "reinvestment." (71-72)

Every civilization will be found to have an organization that accumulates capital--creates, controls and disposes of surplus. "In Mesopotamian Civilization it was a religious organization, the Sumerian priesthood to which all members of the society paid tribute. In

Egyptian, Andean and, probably, Minoan civilizations it was a political organization, a state that created surpluses by a process of taxation or tribute collection.

[Page 7]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

---

In Classical Civilization, it was a kind of social organization, slavery, that allowed one class of society, the slave owners, to claim most of the production of another class in society, the slaves. In the early part of Western Civilization it was a military organization, feudalism, that allowed a small portion of the society, the fighting men or lords, to collect economic goods from the majority of society, the serfs, as a kind of payment for providing political protection for these serfs. In the later period of Western Civilization the surplus-creating instrument was an economic organization (the price-profit system, or capitalism, if you wish) that permitted entrepreneurs who organized the factors of production to obtain from society in return for the goods produced by this organization a surplus (called profit) beyond what these factors of production had cost these entrepreneurs." (73-74)

There can be more than one surplus-creating organization (e.g. private accumulation no doubt existed during and despite the Sumerian priesthood or the Inca or Russian socialist state) in any society; there always is; yet the variant types turn out to be incidental, small in scope, aimed usually at luxury consumption not reinvestment, hence not instruments of expansion. (77)

**The crisis of expansion.** "Like all instruments, an instrument of expansion in the course of time becomes an institution and the rate of expansion slows down. This process is the same as the institutionalization of any instrument, but appears specifically as a breakdown of the three necessary elements of expansion. The one that usually breaks down is the third--application of surplus to new ways of doing things. In modern terms we say that the rate of investment decreases. If this decrease is not made up by reform or circumvention, the other two elements (invention and accumulation of surplus) also begin to break down. This decrease in the rate of investment occurs for many reason, of which the chief one is that the social group controlling the surplus ceases to apply it to new ways of doing things because they have a vested interest in the old ways of doing things. They have no desire to change a society in which they are the supreme group. Moreover, by a natural and unconscious self-indulgence, they begin to apply

[Page 8]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

---

the surplus they control to nonproductive but ego-satisfying purposes such as ostentatious display, competition for social honors or prestige, construction of elaborate residences,

monuments, or other structures, and other expenditures which may distribute the surpluses to consumption but do not provide more effective methods of production.

"When the instrument of expansion in a civilization becomes an institution, tension increases. In this case we call this 'tension of evolution.' The society as a whole has become adapted to expansion; the mass of the population expect and desire it. A society that has an instrument of expansion expands for generations, even for centuries. People's minds become adjusted to expansion. If they are not 'better off' each year than they were the previous year, or if they cannot give their children more than they themselves started with, they become disappointed, restless, and perhaps bitter. At the same time the society itself, after generations of expansion, is organized for expansion and undergoes acute stresses if expansion slows up." (74-75) A crisis will occur in any civilization when the rate of expansion decreases. "And such decrease is the chief result of the institutionalization of the instrument of expansion, something that occurs in every civilization." (76)

The "tension of evolution" or crisis of expansion may end in (1) reform, (2) circumvention, or (3) reaction. In Western Civilization, both circumvention and reform have occurred. "As a result Western Civilization has had three periods of expansion, the first about 970-1270, the second about 1420-1650, and the third about 1725-1929. The instrument of expansion in the first was feudalism, which became institutionalized into chivalry. This was circumvented by a new instrument of expansion that we might call commercial capitalism. When this organization became institutionalized into mercantilism, it was reformed into industrial capitalism, which became the instrument of expansion of the third age of expansion in the history of Western Civilization. By 1930 this organization had become institutionalized into monopoly capitalism, and the society was, for the third time, in a major era of crisis." (78)

[Page 9]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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**Expansion and civilizational evolution.** "The process that we have described, which we shall call the institutionalization of an instrument of expansion, will help us to understand why civilizations rise and fall. By a close example of this process, it becomes possible to divide the history of any civilization into successive stages.... We shall divide the process into seven stages, since this permits us to relate our divisions conveniently to the process of rise and fall. The seven stages we shall name as follows":

1. Mixture
2. Gestation
3. Expansion
4. Age of Conflict
5. Universal Empire
6. Decay

## 7. Invasion

**Origins: mixture at peripheries.** "Every civilization, indeed every society, begins with a mixture of two or more cultures. Such mixture of cultures is very common; in fact, it occurs at the boundaries of all cultures to some extent." (78-79) Very rarely, out of such mixture, a new producing society with an instrument of expansion emerges (79). "Since cultural mixture occurs on the borders of societies, civilizations rarely succeed one another in the same geographic area, but undergo a displacement in space...civilizations have generally arisen on the periphery of earlier civilizations. Canaanite, Hittite, and Minoan civilizations arose on the edges of Mesopotamian Civilization. Classical

[Page 10]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

---

Civilization was born on the shores of the Aegean Sea, especially the eastern shore, on what was the periphery of Minoan Civilization. Western Civilization arose in Western Europe, especially in France, which was a periphery of Classical Civilization. And on other peripheries of Classical Civilization were born Russian Civilization and Islamic Civilization." (79-80)

**Gestation.** "If the new society born from such a mixture is a civilization, it has an instrument of expansion. This means that inventions begin to be made, surplus begins to be accumulated, and this surplus begins to be used to utilize new inventions. Eventually, as a result of these actions, expansion will begin. The interval before such expansion becomes evident, but after the most obvious mixture has ceased, may cover generations of time. This period will be called the Stage of Gestation." (80)

**Expansion: characteristics.** "The Stage of Expansion is marked by four kinds of expansion: (a) increased production of goods, eventually reflected in rising standards of living; (b) increase in population of the society, generally because of a declining death rate; (c) an increase in the geographic extent of the civilization, for this is a period of exploration and colonization; and (d) and increase in knowledge.... This period of expansion is frequently a period of democracy, of scientific advance, and of revolutionary political change (as the various levels of society become adapted to an expanding mode of life from the more static mode of life prevalent in Stage 2)." (81)

**Expansion: core and periphery.** "As a result of the geographic expansion of the society, it comes to be divided into two areas: the core area, which the civilization occupied at the end of Stage 2, and the peripheral area into which it expanded during Stage 3. The core area of Mesopotamian Civilization was the lower valley of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers; the peripheral area was the highlands surrounding this valley and more remote areas like Iran, Syria, and Anatolia. The core area of Minoan



Civilization was the island of Crete; its peripheral area included the Aegean Islands and the Balkan coast. The core area of Classical Civilization was the shores of the Aegean Sea; its peripheral areas were the whole Mediterranean seacoast and ultimately Spain, North Africa, and Gaul. The core area of Western Civilization covered northern Italy, most of France, the Low Countries, England, and extreme western Germany; its peripheral areas included the rest of Europe to eastern Poland, North and South America, and Australia.

"When expansion begins to slow up in the core areas, as a result of the instrument of expansion becoming institutionalized, and the core area becomes increasingly static and legalistic, the peripheral areas continue to expand (by what is essentially a process of geographic circumvention) and frequently short-cut many of the developments experienced by the core area. As a result, by the latter half of Stage 3, the peripheral areas are tending to become wealthier and more powerful than the core areas. Another way of saying this is that the core area tends to pass from Stage 3 to Stage 4 earlier than do the peripheral areas. In time the instrument of expansion becomes an institution throughout the society, investment begins to decrease, and the rate of expansion begins to decline." (81-82)

**Age of Conflict: characteristics.** "As soon as the rate of expansion in a civilization begins to decline noticeably, it enters Stage 4, the Age of Conflict. This is probably the most complex, most interesting, and most critical of all the seven stages. It is marked by four chief characteristics: **(a)** it is a period of declining rate of expansion; **(b)** it is a period of growing tension of evolution and increasing class conflicts, especially in the core area; **(c)** it is a period of increasingly frequent and increasingly violent imperialist wars; and **(d)** it is a period of growing irrationality, pessimism, superstitions, and otherworldliness. The declining rate of expansion is caused by the institutionalization of the instrument of expansion. The growing class conflicts arise from the increasing tension of evolution, from the obvious conflict of interests between a society adapted to expansion and the vested interests controlling the uninvested surpluses of the institution of expansion who fear social change more than anything else." (82)

"The Stage of Conflict (Stage 4) is a period of imperialist wars and of irrationality supported for reasons that are usually different in the different social classes. The masses of the people (who have no vested interest in the existing institution of expansion) engage in imperialist wars because it seems the only way to overcome the slowing down of

expansion. Unable to get ahead by other means (such as economic means), they seek to get ahead by political action, above all by taking wealth from their political neighbors. At the same time they turn to irrationality to compensate for the growing insecurity of life, for the chronic economic depression, for the growing bitterness and dangers of class struggles, for the growing social disruption and insecurity from imperialist wars. This is generally a period of gambling, use of narcotics or intoxicants, obsession with sex (frequently as perversion), increasing crime, growing numbers of neurotics and psychotics, growing obsession with death and with the Hereafter."

**Age of Conflict: the Ministries of Love, Peace and Truth.** "The vested interests encourage the growth of imperialist wars and irrationality because both serve to divert the discontent of the masses away from their vested interests (the uninvested surplus). Accordingly, some of the defenders of vested interests divert a certain part of their surplus to create instruments of class oppression, instruments of imperialist wars and instruments of irrationality. Once these instruments are created and begin to become institutions of class oppression, of imperialist wars, and of irrationality, the chance of the institution of expansion being reformed into an instrument of expansion become almost nil. These three new vested interests in combination with the older vested institution of expansion are in a position to prevent all reform. The last of these three, the old institution of expansion, now begins to lose its privileges and advantages to the three institutions it has financed. Of these three, the institution of class oppression controls much of the political power of the society; the institution of imperialist wars controls much of the military

[Page 13]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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power of the society; and the institution of irrationality controls much of the intellectual life of the society. These three (which may be combined into only two or one) become dominant, and the group that formerly controlled the institution of expansion falls back into a secondary role, its surpluses largely absorbed by its own creations. In this way, in Mesopotamian Civilization, the Sumerian priesthood, which had been the original instrument of expansion, fell into a secondary role behind the secular kings it had set up to command its armies in the imperialist wars of its Age of Conflict. In the same way in Classical Civilization the slave owning landlords who had been the original instrument of expansion were largely eclipsed by the mercenary army that had been created to carry on the imperialist wars of the Age of Conflict but took on life and purposes of its own and came to dominate Classical Civilization completely. So too the Nazi Party, which had been financed by some of the German monopoly capitalists as an instrument of class oppression, of imperialist war, and of irrationality, took on purposes of its own and began to dominate the monopoly capitalists for its own ends." (83-84)

(I have added the Orwellian nomenclature to label the instruments of class oppression--Ministry of Love--of imperialist war--Ministry of Peace--and irrationality--Ministry of

Truth. Of course the instruments need not be state bureaucracies: parties, corporations, churches, movements, cults or businesses could be the social organizations that perform the functions in question.)

**Universal Empire: preliminary core empires.** "As a result of the imperialist wars of the Age of Conflict, the number of political units in the civilization are reduced. Eventually one emerges triumphant. When this occurs we are in Stage 5, the Stage of Universal Empire. Just as the core area passes from Stage 3 to Stage 4 earlier than the peripheral area does, so the core area comes to be conquered by a single state before the whole civilization is conquered by the universal empire. In Mesopotamia the core area was conquered by Babylonia as early as 1700 B.C., but the whole civilization was not conquered by a universal empire until Assyria about 725 B.C. (replaced by Persia about 525 B.C.). In Classical Civilization

[Page 14]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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the core area was conquered by Macedonia about 330 B.C.; the whole civilization was conquered by Rome about 146 B.C. Western Civilization has gone from Stage 3 to Stage 4 three different times. The three Ages of Conflict are: **(a)** the period of the Hundred Years' War, say 1300-1430; **(b)** the period of the Second Hundred Years' War, say 1650-1815; and **(c)** the period of war crisis that began about 1900 and still continues. In each case the core was conquered by an imperialist state: by England under Henry V about 1420, by France under Napoleon about 1810, and by Germany under Hitler about 1942. In the first two cases the old institution of expansion (chivalry and mercantilism) was circumvented by a new instrument of expansion (commercial capitalism and industrial capitalism), and a new period of expansion commenced. In the third case it is too early to see what has happened. We may be getting a new instrument of expansion that will circumvent monopoly capitalism and bring our civilization once again into a period of expansion. Or we may continue in the Age of Conflict until the whole of our civilization comes to be dominated by a single state (probably the United States)." (84-85)

**Universal empire: semiperipheral and peripheral phases.** "In the imperialist wars of Stage 4 of a civilization the more peripheral states are consistently victorious over less peripheral states. In Mesopotamian Civilization the core states like Uruk, Kish, Ur, Nippur, and Lagash were conquered by more peripheral states like Agade and Babylon. These in turn were conquered by peripheral Assyria, and the whole of western Asia was ultimately conquered by fully peripheral Persia. In Minoan Civilization the core area of Crete itself seems to have been conquered by peripheral Mycenae. In Classical Civilization the core area Ionian states led by Athens were conquered by the semiperipheral Dorian states Sparta and Thebes, and the whole Greek-speaking world was then conquered by more peripheral Macedonia. Ultimately the whole of Classical Civilization was conquered by fully peripheral Rome. In the New World the two isolated maize civilizations seem to provide a similar pattern. In Mesoamerica the core Mayan

cities of Yucatan and Guatemala seem to have been overcome by the semiperipheral Toltecs and these, in turn, by the fully peripheral Aztecs of highland Mexico. In the Andes region the core area seems to have been along the coast and in the

[Page 15]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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northern highlands of Peru. These cultures were submerged by a number of more peripheral cultures of which the most successful was the Tiahuanaco from the southern highlands of Peru. And finally, at a late date, not a century before Pizarro, the whole Andean Civilization was conquered by the fully peripheral Incas from the forbidding central highlands."

"In the Far East and Middle East the same sequence can be discerned. The core area of Sinic Civilization was in the Huang Ho Valley. This area was conquered by Chou about 1000 B.C. and by the semiperipheral Ch'in from the mountains of Shensi eight centuries later (221 B.C.). The whole of Sinic society was then brought into a single universal empire near the Han dynasty from its southern periphery (202 B.C.-A.D. 220). The Sinic Civilization was destroyed by Hunnish nomad invaders before A.D. 400, and a new civilization, which we call Chinese, began to rise from the wreckage along its southern frontier. The core of this society seems to have been south of the Yangtze River. This core came under a single political rule as early as 700 under the T'ang dynasty. Wider areas were added by successive dynasties of which the Yuan or Mongols were so remote that they can be regarded neither as peripheral nor even as Chinese (1260-1368); the Ming (1368-1644) were of southern Chinese (and thus peripheral) origin; and the final Universal Empire of the Manchu (1644-1912) was from the peripheral north, Manchuria, with their original seat of power at Mukden."

"The history of the Middle East provides similar evidence. We cannot speak with any assurance about the Indic Civilization, but it seems likely that its earliest origins were in the lower valley (Sind) and are to be seen in the excavations at Chandu-Daro, while later it moved northward into the Punjab (upper valley) and found its universal empire in the originally peripheral Harappa area. After the destruction of this culture by the Aryan invaders from the northwest, the successor Hindu Civilization began to arise (late second millennium B.C.) in the Ganges Valley. The core area of this new civilization fell under the political control of the local Maurya (ca. 540-184 B.C.) and Gupta (ca. 320-535) dynasties. Then, as Hindu culture spread over the whole Indian subcontinent, political dominance

[Page 16]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

---

shifted to peripheral powers such as the Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty (ca. 740-1036), originating from Central Asiatic pastoral invaders, and a series of Moslem dynasties, mostly Turkish, at Delhi (after 1266), culminating in the Universal Empire of the Moguls (1526-1857)."

"In the Islamic Civilization a similar pattern seems to have occurred. The core area of the civilization is to be found in western Arabia. As its culture spread over most of western Asian and northern Africa, political domination fell to increasingly peripheral dynasties: the Omniad Caliphate, of Arabic origin, ruled from Damascus during much of its period (661-750), while its successor, the Abbaside Caliphate, ruled from Bagdad (750-ca. 930). The Seljuk Turks ruled briefly (1050-1110) from Persia and were ultimately succeeded by the Universal Empire of the Ottoman Turks with its center in Anatolia (1300-1922)."

**Universal Empire: triumph of the periphery.** "The victory of more peripheral states over less peripheral states during Stage 4 of any civilization seems so well established that it is worth while to seek the reasons for it. A number of these can be mentioned. In the first place, as a general rule, material culture diffuses more easily than nonmaterial culture, so that peripheral areas tend to become more materialistic than less peripheral areas; while the latter spend much of their time, wealth, energy, and attention on religion, philosophy, art, or literature, the former spend a much greater proportion of these resources on military, political, and economic matters. Therefore, peripheral areas are more likely to win victories. This contrast is quite clear between, let us say, Sumerians and Assyrians, between Ionians and Dorians, between Greeks and Latins, between Mayas and Aztecs, or even between Europeans and Americans."

"A second reason for the victories of more peripheral states arises from the fact that the process of evolution is slightly earlier in more central areas than in peripheral ones. Thus the central areas have already passed on to Stage 4 and may even have achieved a premature dress rehearsal of Stage 5 (with the achievement of a single core empire) while peripheral

[Page 17]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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areas are still in a relatively vigorous Stage 3. Generally speaking, military victory is more likely to go to an area or a state in Stage 3 than to one in any later stage, because the later stages (and the more central areas) are more harassed by class conflicts and are more paralyzed by the inertia and obstruction of institutions. Core areas generally have been ravaged for a longer period of imperialist wars. The combination of these obstacles gives the inhabitants of a core area a kind of world-weariness (sometimes called a 'failure of nerve') that is in sharp contrast to their own earlier attitudes or to those of their more peripheral rivals. Accordingly, the task of creating a universal empire is likely to be left to such rivals." (86-87)

**Universal Empire and socialism.** "It should be noted that in some cases, such as Egypt, Crete, or Russia, a single political unit has ruled over the civilization from its early history. This generally arises in civilizations whose instrument of expansion is a socialist state. In such a case imperialist wars are not so prevalent a characteristic of Stage 4, and the achievement of a single political unit (universal empire) is not one of the chief characteristics of that stage. As a result the stage may last a shorter time and cannot be so easily demarcated from earlier and later stages as can be done in civilizations where imperialist war and achievement of a universal empire is one of the most prominent marks of the stage. Absence of these items does not indicate absence of [stage 4], which is marked by its other, less easily observed, characteristics, such as decreasing rate of expansion, growing class conflicts, declining democracy, dying science, decreasing inventiveness, and growing irrationality."

"These characteristics and the commonly observed achievement of political domination by a single (peripheral) state bring the civilization to Stage 5, the Stage of Universal Empire." (87)

[Page 18]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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**Universal Empire: the Golden Age.** "When a universal empire is established in a civilization, the society enters upon a "Golden Age." At least this is what it seems to the periods that follow it. Such a Golden Age is a period of peace and of relative prosperity. Peace arises from the absence of any competing political units within the area of the civilization itself, and from the remoteness or even absence of struggles with other societies outside. Prosperity arises from the ending of internal belligerent destruction, the reduction of internal trade barriers, the establishment of a common system of weights, measures, and coinage, and from the extensive government spending associated with the establishment of a universal empire. But this appearance of prosperity is deceptive. Little real economic expansion is possible because no real instrument of expansion exists. New inventions are rare, and real economic investment is lacking. The vested interests have triumphed and are living off their capital, building unproductive and blatant monuments like the Pyramids, the 'Hanging Gardens of Babylon,' the Colosseum or (as premature examples) Hitler's Chancellery and the Victor Emmanuel Memorial. The masses of the people in such an empire live from the waste of these nonproductive expenditure. The Golden Age is really the glow of overripeness, and soon decline begins. When it becomes evident, we pass from Stage 5 (Universal Empire) to Stage 6 (Decay)." (87-88)

**Decay.** "The Stage of Decay is a period of acute economic depression, declining standards of living, civil wars between the various vested interests and growing illiteracy. The society grows weaker and weaker. Vain efforts are made to stop the wastage by legislation. But the decline continues. The religious, intellectual, social, and political levels of the society begin to lose the allegiance of the masses of the people on a large scale. New religious movements begin to sweep over the society. There is a growing reluctance to fight for the society or even to support it by paying taxes. This period of

decay may last for a long time, but eventually the civilization can no longer defend itself, as Mesopotamia could not after 400 B.C., as Egypt could not about the same time, as Crete could not after 1400 B.C., as Rome could not after A.D. 350, as the Incas and Aztecs could not after 1500, as India could not after 1700, as China could not after 1830, and as Islam could not after 1850." (88)

[Page 19]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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I would surmise that one should add to the list of causes of decay that the institutions of class oppression, imperialist war and irrationality, having become through institutionalization less able to supply these "goods" in defense of the vested interests parasitizing the institution of expansion, may during their "tensions of development" prove able to defeat reform or circumvention. At that point, the society should be incapable either of expanding or of being held stagnant.

**Invasion.** "Stage 7 is the Stage of Invasion, when the civilization, no longer able to defend itself because it is no longer willing to defend itself, lies wide open to 'barbarian invaders.' These invaders are 'barbarians' only in the sense that they are 'outsiders.' Frequently these outsiders are another, younger, and more powerful civilization. The following list of universal empires shows the barbarian invader that destroyed the civilization in question:

| CIVILIZATION | UNIVERSAL EMPIRE | INVADER         | DATE            |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Mesopotamian | Persian          | Greeks          | 334 -300 B.C.   |
| Egyptian     | Egyptian         | Greeks          | 334 -300 B.C.   |
| Cretan       | Minoan           | Greek Tribes    | 1400 -1100 B.C. |
| Classical    | Roman            | Germanic Tribes | 350 -550 B.C.   |
| Canaanite    | Punic            | Romans          | 264 -146 B.C.   |
| Andean       | Inca             | Spaniards       | 1534 -1550      |
| Mesoamerican | Aztec            | Spaniards       | 1519 -1550      |
| Chinese      | Manchu           | Europeans       | 1800 -1930      |
| Hindu        | Mogul            | Europeans       | 1500 -1945      |
| Islamic      | Ottoman          | Europeans       | 1770 -1920      |

As a result of these invasions by an outside society, the civilization is destroyed and ceases to exist." (88-89)

[Page 20]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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**Determinism and freedom in the evolutionary process.** "This process is not relentlessly deterministic at all points but merely at some points, in the sense that men

have power and free will but their actions have consequences nevertheless. In general, if cultural mixture produces a new producing society with an instrument of expansion we have Stage 1 of a civilization. Stages 2, 3, and 4 will follow inevitably. This means that, if a producing society has an instrument of expansion, saving and investment will lead to expansion, and this expansion will eventually slow up as the instrument becomes an institution. At this point, in the early part of Stage 4 there is considerable freedom since the institutionalized instrument of expansion may be reformed or circumvented. If it is, expansion will be resumed, and the civilization will again be in Stage 3. If it is not reformed or circumvented, reaction will triumph, and the crisis will become worse. The choice between reform and reaction is not, however, a rigid one. The last part of Stage 3 may be a continual series of minor reforms and circumventions to the point where the creation of new instruments just about balances the institutionalization of old instruments and expansion continues at a fair rate for a considerable time. Circumvention, especially geographic circumvention, may force institutions that would not otherwise have reformed to do so in order to compete. Thus, for example, as the textile industry of New England became institutionalized, new, more modern plants grew up in the South; the existence of these southern plants (a case of geographic circumvention) forced the textile mills of New England to either modernize or perish. On a more dramatic scale the whole industrial system of England, in recent times, has been in an institutional condition and has been faced with the choice of reforming, this creating new economic activities and new economic organizations, or perishing from the competition of peripheral areas, like the United States, or semiperipheral areas, like Germany (or even other civilizations, like Japan or India)."

"Because of such conditions as these, the whole first part of the Age of Conflict (Stage 4) is a period of crisis and of hope. Only when the vested interests create new instruments of class oppression, of imperialist wars, and of irrationality, and when these new instruments, in turn, begin to become new institutions, does hope fade. Crisis becomes endemic in the civilization, and continues until the universal empire with its Golden Age is established. In those civilizations that had a single political unit from an earlier stage, like Egyptian, Minoan or Orthodox Civilization,

[Page 21]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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the Age of Conflict is frequently of a briefer duration because imperialist wars are of limited extent. The fact that these one-state civilizations frequently have a socialist state as their instrument of expansion also serves to obscure the duration of the Age of Conflict because such a civilization has weak incentives to invent in its Age of Expansion and less dramatic class conflicts in its Age of Conflict, thus serving to obscure the transition from one of these stages to the other."

"In theory there is nothing rigid about Stage 5. So far as observations of past civilizations indicate, every civilization passes from the Age of Conflict to the Age of Universal



Empire. That means that one state, probably a peripheral one, emerges triumphant over the whole area of the civilization. But in theory it is at least conceivable that the competing states of Stage 4 might just fight each other down and down to lower and lower levels of prosperity and public order without one emerging triumphant over all the others. In such a case, Stage 5 might be omitted, and the civilization would pass directly from Stage 4 to Stage 6 (Conflict to Decay) without achieving any universal empire. Something like this may have been true of Mesoamerican Civilization. In a similar way, it is conceivable, in theory, that a civilization could continue for a very long time on the Stage of Decay without passing on to Stage 7. For there can be no invasion to end the civilization unless there are invaders to come in. Egypt, for example, was so well protected by seas and deserts against invaders that its Stage of Decay lasted for more than a thousand years. It is also, in theory, conceivable that some universal empire some day might cover the whole globe, leaving no external 'barbarians' to serve as invaders." (89-91)

(In that case, perhaps one should recall that Toynbee's concept of the "internal proletariat" implies that a decaying civilization can produce its own internal "barbarians.")

**Outside societies; encounters between civilizations.** "This point leads to one final consideration, namely, the relationship of outside societies to any civilization. In theory again, it would seem that an outside

[Page 22]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

---

society that was stronger than a given civilization might at any time come in and smash it. In practice, however, it seems that civilizations are in little danger of such an experience except early or late in their careers. In general, a civilization is in no danger from any society except another civilization from Stage 2 to Stage 6. In Stage 6, however, it is in danger from any society, even a parasitic one, as is clear from the destruction of Crete, Classical, Hittite, and Sinic civilizations by noncivilized invaders. When two civilizations collide we may use the tentative rule that the victory will go to the one that is closer to Stage 3 (Expansion) but that neither one will be destroyed unless it is in Stage 6. In 492-479 B.C. Classical Civilization, in Stage 3, and Mesopotamian Civilization, in the last part of Stage 5, collided, and the former won; in 336-323 they collided again, with Classical in Stage 4 and Mesopotamian in Stage 6, and the latter was destroyed. In 264-146-B.C. Classical Civilization in Stage 4 met Canaanite Civilization in Stage 6, and destroyed it. In 711-814 Western Civilization in Stage 2 was able to preserve itself against Islamic Civilization in Stage 3; three hundred years later, in what we call the Crusades, Western Civilization in Stage 3 returned the visit to Islamic Civilization, then in stage 4, but could not destroy it. However, in 1850-1920, Western Civilization, just reaching the end of Stage 3, again collided with Islamic Civilization, now in Stage 6, and destroyed its universal empire, the Ottoman Empire, and probably liquidated the whole

civilization, a process that is still going on. This was the only one of several civilizations that were in a similar stage and that have not met, or appear to be now meeting, a similar fate. The other universal empires in Stage 6 that have been destroyed by Western Civilization while in Stage 3 are the Inca, the Aztec, the Manchu, the Mogul (in India), and perhaps the Tokugawa (in Japan)." (91)

**The present moment.** "At the present time [1961] India seems to be in Stage 2 of a new civilization; China may be in Stage 1 of a new civilization; while the situation in Japan and in the Near East is still too chaotic to make any judgement about what is happening. Russian Civilization, which began about A.D. 500 and had its period of expansion about 1500-1900, had the state as its instrument of expansion and was just

[Page 23]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

---

entering upon Stage 4 in 1917 when the reform of this institution gave it a new instrument of expansion. As a result, Russian Civilization has been in Stage 3 for the second time in recent years, but it remains a relatively weak civilization because of its weak incentives to invention. A collision between this civilization, which is early in Stage 3, and Western Civilization, which has just begun Stage 4, would probably be indecisive in its outcome. If Western Civilization reforms and again passes into Stage 3, it will be far too powerful to be defeated by Russian Civilization; if Western Civilization does not reform, but continues through the Stage of Conflict into the Stage of Universal Empire, the threat from Russian Civilization will be much greater. However, by that time the new Indian Civilization or the new Chinese Civilization may be in Stage 3 and will present greater threats to both Western and Russian civilization than either of these will present to the other. The possible, but by no means inevitable, relationships of these four civilizations in terms of the relevant stages can be seen from the following chart.

| CIVILIZATION | PRESENT TIME | FUTURE  | REMOTE FUTURE |
|--------------|--------------|---------|---------------|
| Western      | Stage 4      | Stage 5 | Stage 6       |
| Russian      | Stage 3      | Stage 4 | Stage 5       |
| Indian II    | Stage 2      | Stage 3 |               |
| Chinese II   | Stage 1 or 2 | Stage 3 |               |

This chart is purely guesswork, because if Western Civilization reforms in the Present Time (as appears highly unlikely), or if any revolutionary new technology discovery (such as the conquest of photosynthesis) is made in the near future, this whole relationship will be modified." (91-92)

[Page 24]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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**Chronological conspectus.** The following chart gives Quigley's (93) rough chronology of the seven stages for five civilizations.

**QUIGLEY'S CIVILIZATIONAL STAGES DATED**

| CIVILIZATION                  | MESOPOTAMIAN      | MINOAN            | CLASSICAL  | WESTERN                                |       |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--|--|-------|
| RUSSIAN                       |                   |                   |  |  |       |
| 1. Mixture<br>A.D. 500-       | 6000-5000<br>B.C. | 3500-3000<br>B.C. | 1200-900<br>B.C.                                 | A.D. 300-<br>750                       | 1300  |
| 2. Gestation<br>1500          | 5000-4500         | 3000-2500         | 900-800  | 750-970                                | 1300- |
| 3. Expansion<br>1900          | 4500-2500         | 2500-1700         | 800-450<br><br>in East<br><br>600-250<br>in West | 970-1300<br><br>1420-1650<br>1770-1929 | 1500- |
| 4. Conflict<br>1917           | 2500-800          | 1700-1600         | 450-330<br><br>in East<br><br>250-146<br>in West | 1300-1430<br><br>1650-1815<br>1900-    | 1900- |
| 5. Universal<br>Empire        |                   |                   |  |  |       |
| a. Core                       | 1700-1650         |                   | 330-<br>A.D. 150                                 | 1420; 1810;<br>1942                    |       |
| b. Whole<br>Civili-<br>zation | 725-450           | 1600-1450         | 146-<br>A.D. 150                                 |  |       |
| 6. Decay                      | 450-350           | 1450-1250         | A.D. 150-<br>300                                 |  |       |
| 7. Invasion                   | 350-200           | 1250-1100         | A.D. 300-<br>600                                 |  |       |

[Page 25]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

**Critique.** The parsimonious elegance of Quigley's model is impressive. I have found the attempt to apply it overwhelmingly problematic, increasingly so as one moves from earlier-toward later societies. The fundamental problem lies in the fact that the later

civilizations named by Quigley do not fit the criteria he lays down for delimiting the units of social analysis. The later "civilizations" are clearly parts of larger transactional networks, not simply via occasional collisions with other such entities, but via long-term entrainment in a single macropolitical structure (states system) and process (struggle of and against Dominant Powers: Wilkinson, 1988, 52-56).

In particular, the "civilizations" Quigley lists include three--Islamic, Orthodox and Western--which seem to me never to have constituted comprehensible, integrative unities. Rather their relations with one another have been so strong, persistent and powerful that they cannot be understood apart from one another, and clearly formed a single, heterogenous civilization for many centuries. Others on Quigley's list--Hittite, Canaanite and Classical--seem similarly to have formed parts of a larger whole for all their lives, others--Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Hindu, Chinese, Japanese--for part of the life spans he accords them. I have styled this single, large, long-lived entity "Central Civilization." (Wilkinson, 1988, 31-48.)

If we treat Central Civilization as a reality, it is clearly a heterogeneous reality. It will not display a single homogeneous social organization serving as an instrument of expansion; there will be several - e.g. monopoly capitalism and state socialism and market capitalism, coexisting since 1917. So far as political-military, religious and scientific "cycles" depend on the life-cycles of instruments of expansion, unless all instruments of expansion that coexist in one civilization have the same life-cycle, civilizational processes cannot be expected to occur synchronically throughout a civilization; they will instead be complex and regionalized, even beyond the core- semiperiphery-periphery regionality persuasively alleged by Quigley.

[Page 26]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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Nevertheless, the idea of "instrument of expansion" is a powerful one, and offers an excellent entree to the general problem of the theory of political economy at the macrosocial level.

## **II. Immanuel Wallerstein's World-Systems Theory**

Wallerstein's project presupposes a dialectical approach with a socialist inclination. Rejecting most of the propositions about large-scale long-term staged social evolution associated with Engels, Morgan and Lenin, and even the Enlightenment assumptions of inevitable and actual social progress associated with Marxism in general, Wallerstein has sought to construct a comparative and evolutionary theory of social units and processes that will not simply ptolemaicize Marxism, adding further epicycles to the 19th-20th century accretions to engendered by ad hoc attempts to explain the malfunctioning of history from the point of view of socialist theory.[3]

Wallerstein seeks to retain a dialectical, historical approach, to remain economic in focusing on production and distribution of economic goods as central to social change, yet also to accept a role for politics that is not simply reducible to economics, and a role for the nation and state not simply reducible to class. He tries to avert overly optimistic forecasts of the future by systematically expunging overly pro progressivist interpretations of the past.

[Page 27]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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Wallerstein's theory is filled with complexities and subtleties. Let us try to reconstruct it from its main sources, complexities and all, keeping a running commentary.

### **1. Social entities: units of analysis.**

Social systems should be defined and delimited by self-containment and endogenous dynamics (Wallerstein, **The Modern World-System** vol. I--hereafter TMWSI--347). They should be further defined by selecting a most-powerful explanatory criterion. That criterion is economic. "Integrated production processes" account for the largest percentage of social action (Wallerstein, **The Politics of the World-Economy**--hereafter PWE 28).

To analyze social phenomena, one must bound them in space and time (TMWS2 245). Using an economic criterion, we should find the concrete historical systems, object of social study, by finding the spatio-temporal boundaries of integrated sets of empirical production processes (PWE 28).

[Page 28]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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A social system therefore has by definition one division of labor. As a whole, it has economic needs, as do its parts; they are not self-sufficient, though it must be; its sectors and regions must exchange internally if its economic needs are to be met (Wallerstein, **The Capitalist World-Economy**--hereafter CWE--5). We shall find that effective divisions of labor, "economies," do historically exist, and do represent suitable units of social analysis (PWE2). An economy may have one inclusive state, but it need not. It may have one pervasive culture, but it need not (CWE 5).

The effective, ongoing divisions of productive labor define economies that have real bounds (PWE 162-163). The fact of exchange between areas is not sufficient evidence that they are part of a single division of labor, economy and social system. "Preciosities,"

for instance, may be exchanged in a "rich trade" that remains external to a system--even while much affecting its evolution (CWE 14).

Every economy is characterized by a "mode of production" (PWE 162). A mode of production is a way of making decisions about how labor is divided, how much is produced, how much is invested, how much is accumulated, how much is consumed (CWE 155). Modes of production allow us to create a social taxonomy, because there are only a few actual or possible such modes (CWE 155).

**Comment.** Self-containment is indeed a suitable criterion for defining and delimiting social systems, and a limited amount of exchange among systems should not cause us to deny their separate existence. Otherwise, most of these propositions seem better treated as hypotheses than as assumptions, or better still as heuristics: social-system researchers ought to look for integrated production processes, divisions of labor, systemic "needs," and modes of production; they may find one, many, or none in empirical systems.

Wallerstein is prudent not to be deterred from analyzing societies as

[Page 29]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

---

fundamentally endogenous even though they have some transactions across their boundaries. Whatever human society we take as the largest meaningful unit of social analysis, short of the whole species on the whole earth, will prove to have some exchanges across its boundary with other societies. Such exchange does suggest the existence of a larger-scale entity. But this need not be a "society" it could be what Toynbee calls an "ecumene"; in another sense, it could be a social field, where relatively solid-like or liquid-like societies are linked by transactions through their mutual gaseous envelope.

Most civilizations, Central Civilization notably, seem to have had several layers of economic processes, fluctuatingly integrated, paralleled by highly significant "predation" processes, with several coexisting "modes of production." In fact, most large-area economies will combine several "modes," and none need consistently dominate. Trade, predation and tribute/taxation can coexist and alternate nicely.

Whatever processes compel the writing of a common history to organize systems and control their boundaries; often these have been politico-military processes of expansion, invasion, war, conquest, rule: imperialism sensu stricto, empire as process.

Wallerstein often uses "political system," "unified political system," "political unity," "political structure" or "polity" where it might be more usual to say "state." "State" is a term Wallerstein sometimes employs as transhistorically and transculturally generic (e.g. PWE 150-151) and sometimes prefers to treat as historically specific to the modern

capitalist world-economy (Hopkins and Wallerstein 1982b, 130). Most political terminology turns out, on examination, to have been abstracted from an original historical context. "State" seems no more Renaissance-Italian-specific than "polity" Greek-city-state-specific. Following Walker (1953), Wight (1977) and Wesson (1978), and one tendency in Wallerstein, I shall use the term "state" generically.

[Page 30]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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## 2. Social System-types.

In fact, only four modes of production are possible (PWE 163); only three have existed (PWE 147); they are of two varieties (TMWS1 348).

Variety I.        Minisystems.  
Variety II.      World-systems.  
    a.    With a single state: world-empires.  
    b.    Without: world-economies.  
Future mode (II-a-2?): a world-government.

Minisystems may be styled reciprocal, world-empires redistributive, world-economies capitalist, and the future world-government socialist (PWE 163).

Minisystems are small in area, contain a few families or lineages, constitute highly autonomous, subsistence economies with weak technological bases that maintain their populations with little surplus, have a limited division of labor and elementary task specialization whose processes of exchange among producers are governed by reciprocal gift-giving, a single culture, no regular payment (or receipt?) of tribute, simple agricultural or hunter-gatherer society, family or lineage based: historically they have been earliest, numerous, short-lived (to a maximum of say 6 generations, 150-200 years), recurrently absorbed by and emerging from areas abandoned by world-empires and world-economies, but are now extinct (TMWS1 348, PWE 148-149, 164, CWE 5, 155-156).

A future socialist mode of production would be rational, free, stateless (but administered), non-repressive, not laborious, maximally classless and egalitarian, equitable, democratic, non-aggressive, ecologically sound, fully planned and properly productive. Such a system is concretely historical and realizable (**Historical Capitalism**-hereafter HC--106-110; PWE 25, 147, 157-158), and not represented by contemporary "socialist" national economies (TMWS1 351).

[Page 31]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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World-systems are large, have an extensive division of labor and many cultures. World-empires have a single state embracing all or most of their area. World-economy, for want of a better term, describes those world-systems lacking an encompassing state (TMWS1 348, CWE 5, 156). World-systems by and large constitute the empirical record available for us to study.

**Comment.** It might be possible to verify, or at least to test, the hypothesis that only three "modes of production" have existed, but it seems more sensible to treat this classification as a taxonomy that will fit the collection of empirical social systems well or badly, and be retained, changed or discarded accordingly.

The proposition that only four modes of production are possible seems hard to verify. The "socialist" character of the future fourth seems even harder to verify, because wishful. That this system is in some useful sense "historical," logico-meaningfully and causally coherent, and concretely feasible, remains to be demonstrated. Whether the future relationship between what socialists may want and what they may get will be fundamentally different from such relationships in the past requires to be explored.

If we cannot usefully posit or assume that a world-system has only one mode of production, we cannot avoid considering contemporary socialisms as reflecting the possibilities of one genuinely "historical" mode of production, even, perhaps especially, if we regard them as bad models for the world's future--or their own.

There is no want of a better term than world-economy. Some such term as "states-system" (or "state system," Wesson 1978; "system of states," Wight 1977; "multi-state system," Walker, 1953) would parallel "world-empire" better than "world-economy," all the more since by the Wallersteinian usage of "economy" a world-empire must necessarily be a world-economy.

[Page 32]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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It seems unnecessary to make the assumption (by definition) that world-systems have many cultures. If the proposition is treated as a hypothesis it will probably fit most present and past cases, but one might well contend that Old Kingdom Egypt and Tokugawa Japan had an overall unifying culture as well as differentiated regional and class subcultures; and a cosmopolitan, sensate, bourgeois culture, similarly differentiated, seems to be emerging in the current states system, and could conceivably become global.

### **3. World empires.**

A world-empire is a political unit (TWS1 15), uniting one economy (single division of labor) and many cultures (PWE 150). The world-empire could be long or brief, large or small, highly centralized and bureaucratized or extremely decentralized with a "very



atrophied center (as in feudal Europe in the early Middle Ages)" (PWE 151, CWE 158). The imperial state is redistributive in that it is a mechanism for collecting tribute (TMWS1 16) from direct producers (thereby forced to produce a limited surplus) on behalf of the non-productive administrative classes and their public works (PWE 150-151).

The many "cultures" of the world-empires included "parallel groups of agricultural producers, 'world'-wide trading groups, endogamous translocal 'administrative' groups." (CWE 158) There are no more world-empires; there have existed many, but not enormously many, from the Neolithic till quite recently. (CWE 158)

Aside from the military force and ideological consciousness of the rulers (awareness that their well-being entails the survival of the system), world empires, like all world-systems, were sustained by possessing a middle stratum, exploited exploiters, bought-off potential leaders of revolt. The middle strata of world-empires are commercial-urban long-distance luxury traders. (CWE 22-23) The basic form of world-empires remained redistributive. "No doubt they had clusters of merchants who engaged in economic exchange (primarily long-distance trade), but such clusters, however large, were a minor part of the total economy and not fundamentally determinative of its fate. Such long-distance trade tended to be, as Polanyi argues, 'administered trade' and not market trade, using 'ports of trade.'" (CWE 6) The world-imperial frameworks eventually "established political constraints which prevented the effective growth of capitalism, set limits on economic growth and sowed the seeds of stagnation and/or disintegration." (CWE 37)

[Page 33]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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Such "redistributive empires were constantly expanding and contracting over historical time," at varying speeds and to varying sizes, with several or many coexisting on the globe at the same time because the level of technology never permitted them to expand to cover its entire surface (PWE 152).

The "pattern" of such systems was a cyclical one--expansion of size and hence total surplus to the point where the bureaucratic costs of appropriating the surplus outweighed the surplus that could, in socio-political terms, be effectively appropriated, at which point decline and retraction set in.

"The cycle of expansion and contraction involved the perpetual incorporation and releasing of 'units' which, when outside the 'world-empire,' formed reciprocal-lineage minisystems, but which when incorporated within it, formed merely one more situs out of which tribute was drawn and whose socio-economic autonomy was thereby eliminated." (CWE 158)

Since "there was a certain 'revival' of the forms of a particular culture each time a new world-empire was created in the same geographic zone, we can also use the concept 'civilization' to connote those cultural forms that are common to successive world-empires in the same zone. (China is the model case of a long series of such successive world-empires.)" (CWE 158)

"The political centralization of an empire was at one and the same time its strength and its weakness. Its strength lay in the fact that it guaranteed economic flows from the periphery to the center by force (tribute and taxation) and by monopolistic advantages in trade. Its weakness lay in the fact that the bureaucracy made necessary by the political structure tended to absorb too much of the profit, especially as repression and exploitation bred revolt which increased military expenditures. Political empires are a primitive means of economic domination." (TMWSI 15)

[Page 34]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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**Comment.** There is a tension between the political importance and economic unimportance of the merchant class in Wallerstein's world-empires. St. Cyprian (200-258), bishop of Carthage, denounced profiteering and price-raising in the grain trade in terms that suggest that Wallersteinian capitalist contradictions were salient, and politically dangerous, in a non-luxury trade under a Wallersteinian world-empire. I would venture the guess that traders, and the markets associated with them, were economically vital to most Wallersteinian world-empires--which were therefore not merely "redistributive," but had a complex mode of production/instrument of expansion. Probably merchants represent an element both politically menacing and economically indispensable from the point of view of the imperial state. In this, they would resemble the "pushers" and black-marketeers in today's socialist states. The histories of Phoenicians in the Persian empire, Greeks and Jews in the Roman, Aztec traders in the Aztec, would be informative on this score. Likewise the systems of merchant regulation in Southwest and East Asian empires might be inspected with a view to understanding whether world-empires hold down merchant classes and control markets with vigor and with reason.

Wallerstein will later construct a different cycle of expansion and contraction for world-economies. Quigley's alternative is to argue a general pattern of expansion and "conflict" for all civilizations, with different subfeatures for the politically unified and the politically dispersed. For occamist reasons, a general cycle should probably be explored before separate particular cycles are accepted.

World-empires may well possess, in addition to and underlying their cycles and redistributions, a particular inclination to accumulate certain things: namely, public works, monuments to the ruling elite (living and dead), bureaucrats and the population of the imperial metropolis.

#### **4. World-economies.**

A world-economy is an economy with many cultures, but without an encompassing state. Therefore the economy's production processes are economically linked, through a "market," rather than through a redistributive state (PWE 13, 15; TMWSI 15).

##### **a. Capitalism and world-economy.**

Wallerstein's work displays some ambiguity about the relationship between "capitalism" and "world-economy," and about what "capitalism" denotes. "Capitalism" alternatively means a mode of production in which a "market" redistributes surplus 2 (CWE 159), or one based on the principle of maximizing capital accumulation (PWE 3). We shall examine the definitions of "capitalism," and their theoretical consequences, more closely later.

Whichever the definition, the relationship between capitalism and world-economy remains ambiguous. On the one hand, capitalism and world-economy are "obverse sides of the same coin," "different characteristics" of "the same indivisible phenomenon" (CWE 6), so that "capitalist world-economy" means the same as, and has the same definition as, "world-economy" (PWE 153). A world-economy, having a market, may be capitalist by deduction (CWE 159); or, because production for it "is based on the capitalist principle of maximizing capital accumulation," it may, again, be capitalist by deduction (PWE 3).

On the other hand, the linkage is functional. For a world-economy to survive over a long period of time (more than 100 years may be "long"--CWE 160; four centuries is certainly "long"--PWE 13-15) it must have a capitalist mode of production (PWE 15). On the third hand, capitalism "is only feasible within the framework of a world-economy and not within that of a world-empire" (TMWSI 52). For a capitalist mode of production to "come to fruition," a world-economy must survive over a long period of time (PWE 153).

On the fourth hand, capitalism and the world-economy are separate but causally linked and mutually reinforcing entities: "It is the peculiarity of the modern world-system that a world-economy has survived for 500 years and has not yet come to be transformed into a world-empire--a peculiarity that is the secret of its strength. This peculiarity is the political side of the form of economic organization called capitalism. Capitalism has been

able to flourish precisely because the world-economy has had within its bounds not one but a multiplicity of political systems" (TMWSI 348).

**b. Characteristics of capitalism.**

A world-economy requires physical transportation of commodities between productive processes, and "commerce" (transfers, between autonomous organizations, of "rights" to commodities) as well as commodity transports (PWE 2). Its trade network is local and long-distance both (CWE 37).

Actors in market commerce seek to maximize profit by reducing costs paid to suppliers for commodity rights, and by increasing prices charged to customers. Those who fail to conform are bankrupted (PWE 3). Since actors are committed to their profits rather than to any market ideal, they attempt to avoid the operations of the market whenever these do not maximize their profit, by seeking through the power of states to remove market constraints that disadvantage them and create new constraints that benefit them (CWE 17-18). "The functioning then of a capitalist world-economy requires that groups pursue their economic interests within a single world market while seeking to distort this market for their benefit by organizing to exert influence on states, some of which are far more powerful than others but none of which controls the world market in its entirety." (CWE 25)

[Page 37]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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**c. The terminations of world-economies.**

There have been world-economies prior to the modern capitalist global world-economy. They were however highly unstable structures, very fragile, with life spans probably less than a century (TMWSI 348, CWE 160). Either they were transformed into empires when a single member state expanded to fill the boundaries of the division of labor (China, Persia, Rome, Byzantium, Egypt, at appropriate periods in their respective histories: TMWSI 16, CWE 5-6, 37). Or, lacking the political structure to prevent them doing so, regions withdrew from the system, which disintegrated (Wallerstein gives no examples CWE 160).

**d. The modern world-economy.**

The contemporary world-economy is exceptional. It has existed in at least part of the globe since the sixteenth century (PWE 13), thereby being the only world-economy to survive over a long period of time (PWE 14-15) and allow the coming to fruition of a capitalist mode of production (PWE 153).

**Comment.** I would suggest that it makes most sense to treat states systems and market-based economic structures as (on the fourth hand) mutually reinforcing, not as synonymous nor as prerequisite (in either direction).

The anti-competitive and anti-market tendencies of actors in markets, noticed by Adam Smith, are well formulated by Wallerstein. With exemplary clarity he points up the mixed political motives of market actors: their simultaneous inclination to expand and to reduce state interference with the market. This mixture of motives is helpful in explaining the resiliency, coexistence, inseparability, and persistence in parallel of the statist and market organizational principles which is demonstrated throughout the long history of Central Civilization.

[Page 38]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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Quigley provides an equally intriguing and alternative hypothesis regarding the actors' mixed behavior in a market system: he sees it as cyclical rather than continuous, and relates it to instrument/institution cycles. "As long as a capitalistic organization is an instrument, it seeks to increase profits by reducing costs rather than by increasing prices; but when a capitalistic system becomes an institution, it shifts its efforts to trying to increase profits by increasing prices." He finds three successive forms of "institutionalized capitalist systems" in "Western" Civilization: municipal mercantilism 1270-1440, state mercantilism 1690-1810 and monopoly capitalism after 1900 (1961, 234).

Contrary to Wallerstein's position, the lifespans of states-systems seem on the whole to be longer than-a century, not shorter, and longer, not shorter, than those of universal empires, which accordingly should be treated as the less stable form.

##### **5. The roster of world-systems.**

There have been large but countable numbers of world-empires and world-economies (PWE 164). Absent a systematic count, a partial inventory of world-systems can be constructed from notices given incidentally in Wallerstein's works.

World-empires include (at unspecified times) Persia, Egypt, Byzantium, Rome (CWE 5-6, 37; TMWSI 16); noted in the 15th century, China and the Turco-Moslem world (TMWSI 57); noted in the sixteenth century, the Ottoman and Russian world-empires (CWE 26), the latter lasting no later than the eighteenth century (CWE 27, TMWSI 306). Western Europe feudalism grew out of the partial disintegration of an empire (TMWSI 17).

World-economies other than the modern include a "proto-world-economy" noted in the Indian Ocean in the sixteenth century (CWE 26) and small city-state-based world-

economies in northern Italy, and in Flanders and northern Germany, noted in the late Middle Ages (TMWSI 36-37); and, at appropriate historical periods, the predecessors of the world-empires of Egypt, China, Persia, Rome, Byzantium (CWE 5-6, 37; TMWSI 16).

[Page 39]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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In attempting an inventory of Wallerstein's world-systems, two noteworthy taxonomic problems emerge: one has to do with "feudalism," the other with "foci of trade" and "external arenas." The taxonomic status of "feudalism" is ambiguous or unresolved: "feudal Europe in the early Middle Ages" is a world-empire "with a very atrophied center" (PWE 151; cf. CWE 161); or, "Feudal Europe was a 'civilization,' but not a world-system" (TMWSI 18); or, there exists a separate "feudal mode of production" (TMWSI 37)--"relatively self-sufficient economic nodules which involved the relatively direct appropriation of the small agricultural surplus produced within a manorial economy by a small class of nobility" (TMWSI 36).

There also exist "foci of trade," whose conceptual status is uncertain. "In the twelfth century, the Eastern Hemisphere contained a series of empires and small worlds, many of which were interlinked at their edges with each other. At that time, the Mediterranean was one focus of trade where Byzantium, Italian city-states, and to some extent, parts of northern Africa met. The Indian Ocean--Red Sea complex formed another such focus. The Chinese region was a third. The Central Asian land mass from Mongolia to Russia was a fourth. The Baltic area was on the verge of becoming a fifth." (TMWSI 17) Conceivably these foci of trade are to be classified as world-economies or "proto-world-economies"; alternatively they may exist as collections of world-economies and/or world-empires, which are loosely linked at a larger scale.

This latter interpretation is consistent with Wallerstein's idea of "external arenas": "The external arena of a world-economy consists of those other world-systems with which a given world-economy has some kind of trade relationships, based primarily on the exchange of preciosities...." (TMWSI 302--The "rich trade," the trade of luxuries, is "a trade between A-B in which the producers of A think they are giving B something utterly worthless; the producers of B think they are giving A something worthless; however, each thinks they are receiving something marvelous," WSA 100.) For instance, as of 1600, Persia, the Ottoman Empire and Russia were outside the European world-economy, in its "external arena," while Poland and Hungary were inside (TMWSI 301).

[Page 40]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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**Comment.** It is clear that a research priority for exponents of world-systems theory must be to do a complete inventory of world-systems. The classification of feudalism will be a problem, as it is for all civilizational theorists (cf. Coulborn, 1965). It may prove easiest to see feudal Europe as a states-system with rather unstable membership and boundaries: within the system of Central Civilization, feudalism never describes more than a regional or local, and temporary, anomaly, reflecting an adaptation to temporary politico-economic collapse.

It seems "rich trades" should be treated, on the one hand, as evidence of the separateness of the economies thus linked, and, on the other hand, as a very strong motive for making the two economies into one--by trade, predation, conquest, or all three--and as a foreshadowing of such unification. Other than "rich trade" foci, foci of trade are usually also best treated as world-economies, or, I would say, states systems.

## **6. Capitalism.**

Whether prior world-economies were capitalist or not, for Wallerstein the modern world-economy surely is. This is so consequential that one must further explore the meanings and theories associated with "capitalism." Wallerstein finds one potential definition of "capitalism" uninteresting: All historical systems back to Neanderthal accumulate "capital" stocks of wealth (goods, machinery, money etc.) that incarnate past labor (HC 13); if then "we define capitalism as merely the use of stored dead labor," it has existed for tens of thousands of years and is likely to continue. (CWE 271-272) Another common definition is unhelpful: capitalism is not properly defined in terms of private entrepreneurs employing wage-laborers, nor consequently escaped by socialist states nationalizing industries (HC 19). Two definitions, one based on the idea of accumulation, the other on the idea of a market, persist.

[Page 41]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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### **a. Capitalism defined by accumulation.**

"Capital" may be seen not merely as accumulated wealth storing dead labor, but accumulated wealth used primarily to accumulate "more of the same"; where this priority regularly exists, a capitalist system is operating (HC 14). This occurs when the structures of the system reward successful accumulators and penalize all others (CWE 272), "driving from the arena those who seek to operate on other premises" (PWE 15).

One consequence of the accumulative definition is either to reduce the number of world-economies to one, or to disjoin analytically "capitalism" from the idea of a world-economy. For if we mean by capitalism "a system oriented to capital accumulation per se," then "capitalism has existed in only one time and place, the modern world since the sixteenth century. Earlier there had been capitalists. There had even been embryonic or

proto-capitalist systems." But these "previous social structures were such as to circumscribe the individual capitalists found within them, squash those forces that sought to change the social economy in a capitalist direction, and in general destroy the fruit of 'enterprise'" (CWE 272).

### **b. Capitalism defined by markets.**

A consequence of a market definition of capitalism is that accumulation becomes a tendency, i.e. a theory or hypothesis, rather than a defining feature. Thus: "A capitalist mode of production is one in which production is for exchange; that is, it is determined by its profitability on a market, a market in which each buyer wishes to buy cheap (and therefore that which is, in the long run, most efficiently produced and marketed) but in which each seller wishes to sell dear (and therefore is concerned that the efficiencies of others are not permitted to reduce his sales). Thus the individual as buyer rewards efficiency and as seller uses his political power to thwart it." (CWE 159) And what "distinguishes capitalism as a mode of production is that its multiple structures relate one to the other in such a way that, in consequence, the push to endless accumulation of capital becomes and remains dominant. Production tends always to be for profit rather than for use." (CWE 272)

[Page 42]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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### **c. Political economy of capitalism.**

Whether it characterizes capitalism by definition or by hypothesis, accumulation requires minimizing costs and maximizing sales prices. "The primary tool in the reduction of costs is force applied to the direct producer" to appropriate all but a minimum of the "value" he has produced, via state coercion of unequal contract in forced labor, wage labor and petty proprietorship (where debt or other indirect mechanisms force the direct producer "to sell his product at below the market value").

"The primary tool in the expansion of sales price is the creation of a monopoly, or at least a quasi monopoly" - since without a world-state no absolute monopoly can exist, because only state power can preclude competition (PWE 3-4).

### **Comment.**

Accumulation as a principle seems much less useful as a defining criterion for capitalism than markets (or private property), from which accumulation is clearly historically separable. Cities represent enormous and persistent physical accumulations of capital, and all civilizations tend secularly to accumulate cities. (This is demonstrated for Central Civilization: Wilkinson, 1988, 39-48.) Other civilizations have at least been shown, even if sometimes with marked cyclicality, to tend to accumulate population (McEvedy and



Jones, 1978, 149, 167, 181, 184, 199, 226, 293, 310). But this surely evinces a surplus-generating mechanism, even if all surplus happens to be reinvested in the next generation (the reproduction of labor) or in extending settlements ("reproduction" of land?) rather than in technology/invention

[Page 43]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

---

or in capital. No doubt accumulations will vary: mercantile cities may tend to accumulate merchants (or spawn nearby or far-off city-colonies), bureaucratic cities to accumulate offices, monumental cities to accumulate tombs, capital cities to accumulate population. Nonetheless accumulation seems to characterize all human society but hunter-gatherers, who disperse their populations as fast as they accumulate them, until the boundaries of their ecumene are reached (Iberall and Wilkinson, 1984, 1985).

Quigley, who posits a system of accumulation as necessary for any and every civilization, seems to have the right of it here. Capitalism may however be an unusually accumulative instrument of expansion: we may find that the larger the market fraction of an economy, the greater the chance that the accumulation will be reinvested to accumulate via increasing production rather than by increased redistribution or predation (more factories vs. more tax collectors or more warriors). Such an accumulative strategy probably approaches an asymptote (its "limits to growth") which lies much farther out than the limits to tribute or predation. The secular rate of accumulation may well have been much greater, then, for the "modern" phase of Central Civilization, because and to the degree that markets have prevailed economically therein. Certainly the rate of accumulation of people has markedly accelerated in Central Civilization's modern/Western and contemporary/global phases.

## **7. The modern capitalist world-economy.**

"The capitalist world-economy is an historical social system," with a genesis, patterned rhythms and trends, and a probable future transformation into another type of historical social system; all these aspects require explication (PWE 14).

### **a. Genesis of the modern world-economy.**

Historical capitalism was born in late-fifteenth-century (HC 19) or sixteenth century (PWE 2) or "long sixteenth century" (PWE 37) from 1450 to 1640 (CWE 37) Europe; the "capitalist world-economy came into existence in Europe somewhere between 1450 and 1550" (PWE 97).

[Page 44]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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The origin of historical capitalism was as "a mode of resolving the 'crisis of feudalism' that had shaken...Europe in the period 1300-1450" (PWE 97). Capitalism served the interests of the European feudal upper strata by reversing--between 1450 and 1650, or indeed 1450 and 1900--trends toward equalization, small-scale peasant production, aristocratic control and political decentralization (HC 40-42). Contrary to the idea that a progressive bourgeoisie overthrew a backward aristocracy, "historical capitalism was brought into existence by a landed aristocracy which transformed itself into a bourgeoisie" by radical structural surgery that significantly expanded its "ability to exploit the direct producers" (HC 105-106).

**b. Its worldwide extension.**

The capitalist world-economy expanded in space over time (HC 19). "Its spatial boundaries originally included Europe (or most of it) plus Iberian America" (PWE 37) but covered the entire globe by the late nineteenth century, and still covers the entire globe (HC 19). Ottoman Turkey, Persia, Russia, the Indian Ocean economy were outside it in the sixteenth century (CWE 26, TMWSI 301); Russia and India were brought in during the eighteenth century (TMWSI 306, WSA 99). "Westernization" or "modernization" are labels for the cultural processes involved in the global expansion of the capitalist world-economy (HC 82).

**c. "Bases" and "consequences".**

There are several additional predications which appear to apply to the modern capitalist world-economy rather than to world-economies per se or to capitalism per se (so far as these can be distinguished from it or each other): on some it is "based," others are its "consequences."

[Page 45]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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"The capitalist world-economy is a system based on the drive to accumulate capital, the political conditioning of price levels (of capital, commodities and labor) and the steady polarization of classes and regions (core/periphery) over time" (PWE 29).

Human equality is "by definition incompatible with the functioning of the capitalist world-economy, a hierarchical system based on uneven development, unequal exchange and the appropriation of surplus value" (PWE 21).

Classes, ethnic/national groups, households, and "states": "All of these structures postdate, not antedate capitalism; all are consequence, not cause" (PWE 29).

Important features of the modern capitalist world-economy in Wallerstein's theory, requiring and receiving closer scrutiny, are that it is: regionally polarized, cyclical, occasionally hegemonic, regressive, doomed and surpassable. To these features we shall turn next.

### **Comment.**

Wallerstein believes neither in the revolutionary nor in the progressive image of capitalism; but he misses the strongest argument against both. Whether we use an accumulative or (as I prefer) a market-based/propertarian definition of capitalism, it long predates the modern era, seems to have time-boundaries close or identical to those of the phenomenon of civilization itself, and therefore cannot be either as (recently) revolutionary or as progressive as is sometimes believed.

The idea of "capitalism" as a reformist strategy for the survival of a landed aristocracy is remarkably stimulating. Quigley's idea of the reform of an institution of expansion seems to provide the general theoretical category of which this is a possible instance. (Quigley himself contends that capitalism, by which he means "an economic system motivated by the pursuit of profits within a price structure," could be seen

[Page 46]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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either as a circumvention of feudalism or as a reform of the medieval commercial system: 1961, 233). Pre-modern and post-modern capitalist innovations may also need reinterpreting as reformist strategies, or as circumventions, e.g. of a socialist state, as in the USSR and China today.

The economic continuity which Wallerstein finds between "feudal" and "modern" Europe is the easier to accept since it is paralleled by a political continuity: they are periods in the history of a region of the same states system (vide Wilkinson, 1988, 55-57).

Wallerstein seems correct in asserting, and Quigley wrong in denying, that there today exists a single world-system/ civilization, product of the global spread of what was in the fifteenth century only one of many such.

It is not, however possible to accept that feudal Europe, or modern Europe (with or without Iberian America) ever constituted a world system with a largely self-contained life and endogenous dynamics. Indeed, it seems strange even in sheerly economic terms to find Spanish America (an object of predation and redistribution rather than commerce) has nonetheless gotten into the world-system, while Russia, Turkey and Persia are external to it. I prefer the judgement that, like Quigley's Orthodox and Islamic civilizations, Wallerstein's Russian, Turkish and Persian world-empires, were not "external arenas" but part and parcel of a single system, a single process and struggle, that

of Central Civilization, which as a whole resembled a Wallersteinian "world economy" more than did any of its parts, which were not "worlds" to themselves politically, nor, in consequence, economically.

It is not clear by what definition equality is incompatible with a capitalist world-economy; definitional incompatibilities are in any case innocuous, since it is empirical incompatibilities that have practical significance. In this case the underlying question is, if every human society whatsoever displays inequality (e.g. by age, gender, lineage) and new forms of inequality appear with every enlargement or complication of human society, whether capitalism has any relationship to equality except that of being one of the forms in which it fails to occur.

[Page 47]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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I believe that researchers who look for pre-modern classes, nations, households and states will find them without much difficulty.

## **8. Core and periphery.**

A world economy has a geographical as well as a functional division of labor. "World-economies...are divided into core states and peripheral areas." Core states are advantaged, have strong state machineries and national cultures; peripheral areas have weak or nonexistent indigenous states (TMWSI 349). Core and periphery are features of capitalism: "world-empires had joined their 'edges' to the center by the collection of tribute, otherwise leaving relatively intact the production systems over which they had 'suzerainty,' whereas the capitalist world-economy 'peripheralized' areas economically by incorporating them into the division of labor." (Hopkins, Wallerstein et al., 1982b, 55)

### **a. Causation.**

Why is there regional polarization? Wallerstein's various answers include definitional or functional requisiteness, geoeconomic regionalism (core-likeness) and force (unequal exchange).

1. **Requisiteness.** "[W]ithin a capitalist world-economy, all states cannot 'develop' simultaneously by definition, since the system functions by virtue of having unequal core and peripheral regions." (W 1975, 23)

2. **Geography.** Production processes are linked in complex commodity chains (HC 16). These chains have a directionality, raw-to-finished. Commodity chains have been geographically convergent: "they have tended to move from the peripheries of the capitalist world-economy to-the centres or cores" (HC 30). The more easily monopolized processes are concentrated in core areas, the less skilled, more extensive manpower

processes in "peripheral" areas (PWE 4-5). What "makes a production process core-like or periphery-like is the degree to which it incorporates labor-value, is mechanized, and is highly profitable" (PWE 16). There are core states and periphery states because there "tend to be geographical localizations of productive activities such that core-like production activities and periphery-like production activities tend each to be spatially grouped together" (PWE 15).

[Page 48]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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**3. Unequal exchange.** "The exchange of products containing unequal amounts of social labor we may call the core/periphery relationship" (PWE 15). There is a parallel political polarization between strong core states and weaker peripheral states, "the 'political' process of 'imperialism' being what makes possible the 'economic' process of 'unequal exchange'." (PWE 5) Unequal exchange "means, ultimately, the transfer of some of the surplus of one area to a receiver of surplus in another" as "consequence of the fact that more labor power has gone into producing the value exchanged in one area than in the other." (WSA 94) Unequal exchange exists when commodities moving one way incarnate more "real input (cost)" than equally-priced commodities moving the other way (HC 31). Unequal exchange existed in pre-capitalism when one party to a market transaction used force to improve his price (HC 30-31). Core zones are those which gain profit or surplus by unequal exchange transactions (HC 31-32). In capitalism, unequal exchange has been concealed by the fact that commodity chains cross state frontiers (HC 31). Strong core state-machines keep peripheral state-structures weaker, their economies lower on the commodity chain, their wage-rates lower (HC 32). This is done by force--wars and colonization--when there are significant political challenges to existing inequalities, otherwise by market supply-and-demand with an enormous apparatus of force latent (HC 32-33).

**b. Change.**

Cores move over time (PWE 103, TMWS1 350, CWE 33). New technologies render different commodities "high-profit, high-wage" at different moments: "At first, wheat was exchanged against textiles; later textiles against steel; today steel against computers and wheat" (PWE 103).

[Page 49]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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**c. Intermediate zones.**

"There always exist semiperipheral zones" (PWE 15). Semiperipheral states "function as loci of mixed kinds of production activities" (PWE 15), have enterprises engaged in both "corelike" and "peripheral" processes. In moments of expansion of the world-economy, these states "serve to some extent as economic transmission belts and political agents" of some imperial core power. In periods of stagnation and crisis, core powers' hold on these states may be weakened; one or two, which are strong enough, may play among the rivals, erect new quasi-monopolies, displace some falling core powers and impose themselves as new core powers (PWE 7).

Semiperipheral areas "are in between the core and the periphery on a series of dimensions, such as the complexity of economic activities, strength of the state machinery, cultural integrity, etc. Some of these areas had been core areas of earlier versions of a given world-economy. Some had been peripheral areas that were later promoted, so to speak, as a result of the changing geopolitics of an expanding world-economy." (TMWSI 349)

"The semiperiphery is a necessary structural element in a world-economy. These areas play a role parallel to that played, *mutatis mutandis*, by middle trading groups in an empire.... These middle areas (like middle groups in an empire) partially deflect the political pressures which groups primarily located in peripheral areas might otherwise direct against core states and the groups which operate within and through their state machineries." (TMWSI 349-350)

The middle strata in world-economies consist of the semiperipheral states. (CWE 23)  
"The three structural positions in a world economy--core, periphery, and semiperiphery--had become stabilized by about 1640." (CWE 18)

[Page 50]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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**Comment.** Quigley seems right to treat cores and peripheries as features of all civilizations, not simply of states-system periods or capitalist instruments of expansion, and right again to treat them in the first instance as rooted in the fact that expansion necessarily means that some regions will enter a civilization later than others. Wallerstein seems right to assert that cores move in space over time; this can be seen as a different way of perceiving, what Quigley is sharper in asserting, that at least some semiperipheral and peripheral states have usually in the long run been advantaged in imperialist war and universal-empire- building. An interesting question, not fully explored, is that of the balance of advantage in economic expansion. Quigley sees it as lying with the latecomers (because of geographic circumvention, developmental short-cuts, and preferential diffusion of material culture); Wallerstein as clearly sees it lying with the core states (greater force, stronger state-machines, unequal exchange). The differences might be reconciled: since cores do move, but slowly, Quigley's cited forces may operate at longer timescales than Wallerstein's, and in the opposite direction.

Quigley's causal mechanism (geographic expansion over time) seems sufficient to account for the origin of core-periphery distinctions. The enormously uneven distribution of particular natural resources (ores, soils, climates, water, etc.) across the globe and each of its regions may combine with the inequality of the distribution of human populations and the self-interested power of the core states to account for the perpetuation of such regionalization (in all world-systems), technological change (Wallerstein), at least if surprising or uncontrolled, and, more effectively and inescapably, core wars (Quigley), may help to account for core declines and/or movements and their direction.

[Page 51]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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It is not clear that the concept of "unequal" exchange is viable as a description--it seems to entail some variant of the problematic labor theory of value--or as an explanation--it seems to conflate force, which would plausibly explain involuntary transfers of surplus, with technological inequality, which would plausibly explain voluntary exchanges of high-labor-input for low-input commodities. The degree to which goods transports are characterized by either vs. both of those mechanisms would seem to be an intriguing but empirical question.

If cores move, there is no reason to create a triple core-semiperiphery-periphery distinction within civilizations, and we can reserve "periphery" to designate those areas outside a civilization (Wallerstein's "external arenas") into which it may, or may not, expand at some future time. The structural necessity of an intermediate zone within a world-economy at best remains to be demonstrated.

### **9. Cyclicality.**

The growth of the capitalist world-economy "has not been constant, but has occurred in wavelike spurts of expansion and contraction" caused by production exceeding effective demand (PWE 6).

In periods of expansion, "Production is expanding overall and in most places. Employment is extensive. Population is growing. Prosperity is the sign of the time." Real wages "for large numbers of people may be declining" but nominal prices steadily inflate. "There is considerable social ferment," optimism, daring, apparent individual mobility, apparently providential progress. (TMWS2 129)

Periods of downturn "are much more visibly uneven." The "regression, stagnation, withdrawal, bad times" are "not bad for everyone." Reduced production and employment are more likely in the peripheral areas. "The strong not only survive; they frequently thrive." (TMWS2 178)

Market forces in the capitalist world-economy have produced an alternating cycle of regular and significant expansions and stagnations in the system as a whole (HC 34). What forces account for cyclicality in capitalism? Perhaps an underlying cycle of enterprise aging: every fifty years or so commodity chains have been restructured, resources more efficiently reallocated, some production processes demoted and relocated toward the periphery, some entrepreneurs and workers eliminated (HC 34-35). Eliminated producers tend to be the less efficient; these tend to be the "older" enterprises (and the states in which they are located) because of costs of amortizing "older" capital investment and "rising labor costs resulting from the growing strength of workers' organization" (PWE 6-7).

Perhaps a demand cycle: it is suggested that "expansion occurs when the totality of world production is less than world effective demand, as permitted by the existing distribution of world purchasing power, and that 'contraction' occurs when total world production exceeds world effective demand. These are cycles of 75-100 years length in my view and the downward cycle is only resolved by a political reallocation of world income that effectively expands world demand." (Wallerstein 1975, 24)

Perhaps a political cycle: periods of stagnation reduce overall production, lead to class struggles in core countries which force redistribution of income to their lower strata and raise workers' standards of living. Upper strata compensate for this by incorporating new zones, new lower strata, new ultralow-income-receiving direct producers (PWE 6).

In any case, there is a longer-term, asymptotic and limited trend as well: "The mechanism by which the capitalist system ultimately resolves its recurrent cyclical downturns is expansion: outward spatially, and internally in terms of the 'freeing' of the market...via the steady proletarianization of semiproletarian labor and the steady commercialization of semi-market oriented land." The geographic limits are largely reached; the freeing of the factors of production is perhaps halfway completed. (CWE 162) This implies that at some point a stagnation will become irresolvable.

**Comment.** Cycles in civilizations/world systems have been observed since Vico, or even Ibn Khaldun. The best recent kinematic account seems to have been Toynbee's revised Helleno-Sinic model (Toynbee, 1961, 197-209, 304; Wilkinson, 1986). The Toynbeean cycles seem to be as political as economic, not necessarily economically determined. Among economically driven cyclical theories, however, Quigley's institutionalization theory seems more satisfactory than Wallerstein's because it is more general (cross-



civilizational and cross-polity) in its application. The mechanisms Wallerstein cites probably do work locally, within markets, and within the scope of the larger Quigleyan process, whose fluctuations have a much greater wavelength than Wallerstein's. In a system with several modes of production/instruments of expansion, of course, there can be more than one underlying (or regional) Quigleyan cycle at work. Quigley's supply-side emphasis on waves of (open-ended) technological innovation is as notable as Wallerstein's demand-side concentration on purchasing power and his emphasis on (asymptotically limited) geographically and structurally-based expansion. Supply-side and demand-side factors may very well work on different timescales; the possibilities of technological innovation still seem so large as to be able to outweigh, for the next centuries at least, the effects of reaching the other limits to growth; here again I would choose to follow Quigley.

## 10. **Hegemony.**

The idea of "hegemony" assumes a remarkable significance in Wallerstein's theory. It is distinguished from world-empire (PWE 38). It has political, economic and politico-economic features, by definition or by hypothesis. Whatever its character otherwise, it is brief, rare, and peculiarly related to war, sea-power and free trade, and to the Netherlands, Britain and America.

[Page 54]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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### a. **Hegemony defined.**

At times, Wallerstein defines hegemony politically, in "power" terms. Given that there exists an interstate system with several great powers, hegemony exists when one of them has unquestioned supremacy (PWE 58), is truly first among equals, with a really great power margin or differential (PWE 3-39), can largely impose its rules and its wishes in the economic, political, military, diplomatic, and even cultural arenas (PWE 38) and has an edge so significant that allied major powers are de facto client states and opposed major powers feel highly defensive (PWE 39). (The idea that the hegemonic power has effective veto power in all arenas PWE 38 - is surely necessary but not at all sufficient to hegemony in the political sense; likewise that opposed major powers feel "relatively frustrated" -PWE 39.)

At times, hegemony is defined by Wallerstein in a completely different way, economically, as great and general competitive advantage. When "no second power or combination of second powers seems capable of challenging the economic supremacy of the strongest core power" the situation is called hegemony" (Hopkins, Wallerstein *et al.*, 1982b, 52). What has occurred in each historic instance of hegemony was that "enterprises domiciled in the given power in question achieved their edge first in agro-industrial production, then in commerce, and then in finance. I believe they lost their edge in this sequence as well.... Hegemony thus refers to that short interval in which there

is simultaneous advantage in all three economic domains" (PWE 40-41). "The pattern of hegemony seems marvelously simple. Marked superiority in agro-industrial productive efficiency leads to dominance of the spheres of commercial distribution of world trade....Commercial primacy leads in turn to control of the financial sectors of banking (exchange, deposit, and credit) and of investment (direct and portfolio). These superiorities are successive, but they overlap in time. Similarly, the loss of advantage seems to be in the same order from productive to commercial to financial), and also largely successive. It follows that there is probably only a short moment when a given core power can manifest simultaneously productive, commercial and financial superiority over all other core powers. This momentary summit is what we call hegemony" (TMWS2 38-39).

[Page 55]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

---

Finally, at times hegemony is defined in a combined, politico-economic sense. "If we assume a number of core states, we can assume 'rivalry' as a normal state of affairs, with exceptional periods in which one core power exceeds all others in the efficiency of its productive, commercial, and financial activities, and in military strength. We can call this latter 'hegemony.'" (Hopkins, Wallerstein et al., 1982a, 116)

When the political and economic forms of hegemony are not treated as if related by definition, they seem in Wallerstein to be causally connected. Having economic advantage depends on political power: "Hegemony involves more than core status. It may be defined as a situation wherein the products of a given core state are produced so efficiently that they are by and large competitive even in other core states, and therefore the given core state will be the beneficiary of a maximally free market. Obviously, to take advantage of this productive superiority, such a state must be strong enough to prevent or minimize the erection of internal and external political barriers to the free flow of the factors of production...." (TMWS2 38) Having economic advantage leads to political power: "When producers located within a given state can undersell producers located in other core states in the latter's 'home market,' they can transform this production advantage over time into one in the commercial arena and then into one in the financial arena. The combined advantages may be said to constitute hegemony and are reflected as well in a political-military advantage in the interstate system" (PWE 17). Or having economic advantage may be independent of having political power: economic supremacy is to be distinguished from "imperium," the characteristic of world-empire, "in that it operates primarily through the market...." (Hopkins, Wallerstein et al., 1982b, 52)

**b. Free-market policy of the hegemon.**

Wallerstein argues that it would be rational for a hegemon (presumably in the economic or politico-economic senses only) to promote free trade. The material base of hegemonic power "lies in the ability of enterprises domiciled in that power to operate more

efficiently in all three major economic arenas--agro- industrial production, commerce, and finance. The edge in efficiency of which we are speaking is one so great that these

[Page 56]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

---

enterprises can not only outbid enterprises domiciled in other great powers in the world market in general, but quite specifically in very many instances within the home markets of the rival powers themselves" (PWE 38-39). "If hegemony is defined as a situation in which a single core power has demonstrable advantages of efficiency simultaneously in production, commerce, and finance, it follows that a maximally free market would be likely to ensure maximal profit to the enterprises located in such a hegemonic power" (PWE 5).

**c. War-origin and seapower-basis of hegemony.**

According to Wallerstein, the United Provinces (the Netherlands), Great Britain and the United States have each held hegemony in the modern capitalist world-system. Each hegemony followed a world war (Thirty Years War 1618-1648; Napoleonic Wars 1792-1815; the single long 'world war' 1914-1945) in which a previously maritime power transformed itself into a land power to defeat a historically strong land power (the Hapsburgs, France, Germany) which seemed to be trying to transform the world-economy into a world-empire (HC 58-59). The basis for the victory was the-- momentarily greater--economic efficiency of the capital accumulators in these states in "agro-industrial production, commerce and finance" (HC 59). "In each case, the hegemony was secured by a thirty-year long world war. By a world war, I shall mean...a land-based war that involves (not necessarily continuously) almost all the major military powers of the epoch in warfare that is very destructive of land and population" (PWE 41). "Hegemonic powers were primarily sea (now sea/air) powers. In the long ascent to hegemony, they seemed very reluctant to develop their armies, discussing openly the potentially weakening drain on state revenues and manpower of becoming tied down in long land wars. Yet each found finally that it had to develop a strong land army as well as face up to a major land-based rival which seemed to be trying to transform the world-economy into a world-empire" (PWE 41).

[Page 57]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

---

**d. Rarity and brevity of hegemony.**

Hegemony is a rare and unstable situation; the statistically normal situation of rivalry within the interstate system is one in which "many powers exist, grouped more or less

into two camps, but with several neutral or swing elements, and with neither side (nor *a fortiori* any single state) being able to impose its will on others" (PWE 39).

The hegemonies were brief because: the production advantages could not be sustained indefinitely (PWE 17) (indeed, other states could copy the productive efficiencies without paying the same amortization costs of obsolete equipment) the hegemonic powers bought labor peace with internal redistribution; and the high military costs of hegemonic responsibilities were economically burdensome (HC 59-60); and "the mechanisms of the balance of power intrude to reduce the political advantage of the single most powerful state" (PWE 17).

**e. Hegemonic succession.**

"In the long period following the era of hegemony, two powers seemed eventually to emerge as the 'contenders for the succession': England and France after Dutch hegemony; the US and Germany after British; and now Japan and western Europe after US. Furthermore, the eventual winner of the contending pair seemed to use as a conscious part of its strategy the gentle turning of the old hegemonic power into its 'junior partner' the English vis-a-vis the Dutch, the US vis-a-vis Great Britain...and now?" (PWE 42-43)

**Comment.** Hegemony theory, as we shall see, is a mare's nest. Its problems begin with the confusing multiplication of definitions of "hegemony." We can best escape that confusion by remembering that "hegemony" is a term that predates the confusion, and had (and has, if we wish) a reasonably unambiguous usage. E.g. Herz (1951): "When Wilson led the United States into the war at the side of the Entente, he did it in order to save Europe--and the world--from the danger of German hegemony [emphasis added]" (213); "The balance of power system of the last centuries has not prevented wars and injustice, nor has it been a safeguard against exploitation and imperialism. But it has preserved a world of nations against the threat of hegemony [emphasis added] and domination by one super-power...." (220-221) The established use of hegemony is clearly in the political sense, and that is a strong sense.

[Page 58]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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Going farther back only makes the case clearer and stronger. The OED tells us that hegemony is, "Leadership, predominance, preponderance, esp. the leadership or predominant authority of one state of a confederacy or union over the others." Historians from the 19th century used the term with respect to Athens in the Delian League, Macedon in the Hellenic League, and Prussia in the North Germanic confederation. Hegemony was in all these cases the step just before empire, i.e. the abolition of the independent existence of the states. Thus, in the Delian League, founded (478 B.C.) at the instance of the smaller states, those who sought to pull out (Naxos 467, Samos 440) found their walls razed, their fleets seized, their once-voluntary tribute made compulsory,

their islands colonized or garrisoned; those who sought to stay out (Aegina 457, Melos 416) found themselves forced in or massacred; those who stayed in found their forces under Athenian command and the League treasury moved to Athens. The Hellenic League, founded 338 at the instance of Macedon after it had defeated Athens and Thebes, was a perpetual alliance (of those states, and the rest of the Greeks save Sparta), under Philip's headship and military command; when the Greeks tried to escape (335), Thebes was destroyed and its population enslaved, which persuaded the rest to be quiet; when Athens again tried to withdraw (323), and was defeated (322), it was garrisoned and its constitution remade by Macedon. What Prussia had wanted in the Germanic Confederation (1815-1866) it got from the North German Confederation ((1867-1871): the presidency and commandship-in-chief; this hegemony was shortly replaced (1871) by an empire organized around Prussia. In sum, hegemony is a distinct, meaningful and useful politico-military concept: a condition of overwhelming strength such that all other states in a certain group follow the hegemon, voluntarily, or through fear, or through applied force. This distinct concept is historically and politically important. No useful purpose is served by watering it down, or by turning it into an economic concept, or by weighting it down with economic provisos, stipulations or preconditions.

[Page 59]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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Henceforward I shall therefore define hegemony exclusively in a politico-military sense, and in the strong sense: unquestioned supremacy, a really great margin of power over other states and the ability (unequivocally demonstrable only by the act) of imposing its rules and its wishes throughout the system.

It then becomes necessary to find a replacement term to fit Wallerstein's economic sense of "hegemon": a state characterized by great productive, commercial, and financial competitive edge, profitability, wealth, and prosperity relative to the other states in a system. "Fountainhead" might convey the sense of the principal source of innovation in the system, "apex" the sense of being at the top of a structure without controlling it, "leading wheel" the sense of being the first part of a system to get where the whole system is going. Absent a perfect term, I choose the nautical "forereacher," one who gains an advantage on and goes ahead of others in a competition. The economic definition could then be replaced by an economic hypothesis: i.e. "all forereachers (and only they) become hegemons." This hypothesis can then be scrutinized by inspecting the careers of the three alleged hegemons, on the assumption that the three states are correctly described as "forereachers," greatly advantaged economically, but that evidence of their (politico-military) "hegemony" remains to be sought.

## **11. Hegemons.**

Wallerstein names three hegemons: the United Provinces (the Netherlands), in the mid-seventeenth century, Great Britain in the mid-nineteenth, the United States in the mid-

twentieth (HC 58). In two cases there are perplexities in the dating of the alleged hegemonies.

[Page 60]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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**a. The Dutch hegemony.**

In trying to comprehend the Dutch hegemony, it seems necessary to set aside two anomalies in its treatment by Wallerstein. On one occasion the Dutch hegemony is alleged to have begun as early as 1608, presumably because otherwise the hegemon's free-trade ideology would have appeared prematurely (when "at the moment of Dutch accession to hegemony in the seventeenth century" Hugo Grotius published his argument for open seas and universal freedom to trade - PWE 5). On another occasion, 1651-1678 is seen as "the height of Dutch hegemony" (TMWS2 65); this dating fits the theory only in that it follows the Thirty Years' War. Most often, however, the Dutch hegemony is seen as beginning in 1620 (PWE 17, 40; Hopkins, Wallerstein *et al.*, 1982a, 116,118--at latest 1625, TMWS2 39 and Hopkins, Wallerstein *et al.*, 1982b, 62) and ending 1650, followed by hegemonic decline and acute conflict with successors 1650 -1672 (*Ibid.*; PWE 58). Let us therefore examine the proposition that the United Provinces had hegemony in the world-system from 1620 to 1650.

**Comment.** Poles, whom Wallerstein includes within the modern world-system at this time, fought Russians (outside); Poles and Venetians (inside) fought, and Hungarians (inside) worked loose of Turks (outside); Turks fought Persians, Persians fought Moguls, Moguls threatened to fight English. Wallerstein excludes, and I cannot countenance excluding, Russia, the Ottoman Empire, Persia, and perhaps India from the world-system in the mid-seventeenth century. If one counts them in, as I believe we must, there can be no question of a Dutch hegemony, which these actors surely never felt.

Even if we include only Western and Central Europe and Iberian America in the world-system at this time, Dutch hegemony is by no means evident. One must grant that by this period the Dutch had become a naval power of the first rank: though humiliated by a Spanish fleet at Bahia as late as 1625, the Dutch were able to defeat the Spanish invasion fleet at the Slaak in 1631, and even to gain an apparent naval primacy (by defeating Spain at the battle of the Downs Oct. 1639) during the last third of their "hegemony." It is however also true that this primacy could be viewed, in the light of later events, as quite nominal, since it lasted only until the first time it was challenged (by the English--first Anglo-Dutch War, 1652-54).

[Page 61]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

---

One must also concede to the case in favor of Dutch hegemony that, while Portugal was a dependency chafing under Spanish rule, the Dutch were able to take away many of her (sub)colonies; still, once having re-established *de facto* independence 1640-1644, the Portuguese were strong enough to take back Brazil, 1645-1654.

Having granted this case, which is far from overwhelming, one must then note what lies in the other pan of the scales.

(1) During most of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), far from behaving or being treated as a hegemon intervening to impose their rules throughout the world-system, the United Provinces were glad to hold their own, since they were fighting to preserve their *de facto* independence from Spain, and to persuade it to recognize them as *de jure* independent, and therefore to stop trying to reconquer them. (2) In this battle, Spain was quite able to invade the Netherlands (and held Breda 1624-1637), while the Netherlands was never able to invade Spain (though others did). (3) The Dutch did aspire to liberate the Spanish-occupied southern Netherlands, and did manage to counterinvade them, but failed to liberate them (except Maastricht), so that the "Spanish Netherlands" they remained. When Spain at long last conceded Dutch independence by the Treaty of Munster (Jan. 1648--28 years after the Dutch attained "hegemony"!), the Dutch held less of the Netherlands than in 1577, never having been able to regain Brussels, Tournai, Bruges, Ghent or Antwerp (lost to Don John of Austria and Alexander Farnese in the late 16th century) nor Ostend (lost to Spinola in the early 17th). (4) When Spain made peace with the Dutch, it did so not because defeated in the field, but in order to fight on unhindered against what it apparently viewed as a more powerful, more threatening, more dangerous enemy, a state which had invaded metropolitan Spain (aid to Catalan insurgents 1641, occupation of Roussillon 1642) and had annihilated the Spanish field army (Rocroi, May 1643); France. Apparently Spain was correct in its judgement, since, fighting on without Dutch assistance, France nonetheless proceeded to defeat Spain again (Battle of the Dunes, June 1658) and even forced it to cede much of Flanders (Peace of the Pyrenees, Nov. 1659), in the same Spanish Netherlands which the Dutch had been too weak to pry from the hands of Spain.

[Page 62]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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Leaving aside the obvious inference that France surely was, and Spain probably was, on balance more powerful than the Dutch, it would be well to remember that during the Thirty Years' War, other participants also raised larger armies, fought longer, and/or collected more winnings, than the Dutch. It was Sweden, not Holland, which was able to demand and receive concessions in territory, money and intra-German influence to purchase peace. The Austrian Habsburgs kept larger armies in the field longer and operated at longer distances from home than the Dutch, and when they were defeated, it was the French, Swedes and German states that did the crucial fighting. As for other states, Bavaria, Brandenburg, Denmark, England, Poland, Saxony, Scotland, Switzerland

and Transylvania all seem to have fought (or abstained) or gained (or lost) with very little reference to or notice taken of their Dutch "hegemon."

A more traditional reading of history contends that the Thirty Years' War marks a shift from the Habsburgs to France as the first-ranking, but not hegemonic, power in the states system. On the whole the traditional interpretation remains more persuasive than the Wallersteinian. It is hard to maintain the idea that the Dutch were a hegemonic power 1620-1650--or at any other time. In that period, there was no hegemon. The Dutch were forerachers, marvelously competitive and prosperous. Never did they have hegemony, never did they approach hegemony.

#### **b. The British hegemony.**

Again the time-boundaries of this hegemony flex more than is desirable. It may run from 1815-1850 with a decline 1850-1873 (Hopkins, Wallerstein *et al.*, 1982b, 62, by analogy with Netherlands dates), or 1815-1873 maxmally (PWE 17, 40), or from 1850-1873 (Hopkins, Wallerstein *et al.*, 1982a, 116, 118), with 1815-1850 then a period in which the new hegemon bypasses an old one in decline (*Ibid.*) and 1873-1897 (*Ibid.*; or 1896, PWE 58) a period of declining hegemony with acute conflicts with successors. The most frequently cited dates are 1850-1873.

[Page 63]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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**Comment.** In the British case (as in the American) there is no longer a difficulty caused by world-systems analysts excluding some notable members of the states system of Central Civilization from the hegemonic accounting. Britain, too, was during the period of its putative hegemony accepted by all powers as an independent state, and avoided the indignity of having any part of its metropolitan territory occupied by a foreign power. Thus far the case is easier to make than that for the Dutch.

Choosing 1850-1873 as the hegemonic period, and again assuming that Britain was indeed the world-system's economic foreracher (and the Crystal Palace exhibition of 1851 surely asserted a flagrant prosperity), the case for Britain's political hegemony can at least be made more credibly than for the Dutch.

Even skeptics must concede that Britain in this period did blockade Greece (1850 Jan - Mar) to compel interest and compensation payments; did block Siamese attempts (1850-1863) to expand southward into Malaya; did (or the East India Company did) end friction with Burmese interests by a war (1852-1853) in which south Burma was annexed; did drive Persian occupiers out of Afghanistan (1856-1857); did put down the Great Mutiny in the armies of the East India Company, and take the government of India from it (1857-1858); did fight the second Maori War in New Zealand (1860-1870) to a settlement satisfactory to Britain; did bombard Kagoshima (1863) to punish Japan's Satsuma clan



for a murder; did conduct a successful punitive expedition against Bhutan (1865) over frontier disorders, and another, even more successful, against Abyssinia (Ethiopia; 1867-1868) over the imprisonment and murder of consular officials; did put down Louis Riel's first rebellion in Canada (1869-1870). These were indubitably hegemonic acts with respect to these countries.

[Page 64]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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To prove the systemwide hegemony of the hegemon such a listing is of some value, but certainly not sufficient, for those who felt the British yoke were not the crucial actors in the system, the great powers. On the other hand, to deny that Britain had hegemony, it is of some value, but again not sufficient, to point out that most events in the Americas, north and west Africa, southwest Asia, Indochina, Indonesia, interior China, Japan, and Korea went on without reference to the rules, desires, or permission of Britain: conceivably the small powers were controlled by the great, and the great by the Greatest.

What is critical to the case for and against British hegemony is to examine the other "great powers"--in this period, France, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Prussia/Germany. One might also look closely at the conduct of the United States, given that hegemony theorists have named it as Britain's successor. In the period 1850-1873, it is not easy to make a case that Britain's hegemony was regularly felt by all these powers; nor regularly felt by any; nor, indeed, that it was ever felt.

Was Britain hegemonic over France? Britain tamely observed the coup of Napoleon III in 1851, and the revolution of 1871, and did nothing to assure that either new regime would subserve its desires. The Franco-British expedition in the Crimean War (1853-1856) was largely an egalitarian collaboration, but if either led the way it was France; to balance this (and preserve us from believing in French hegemony) the British may then be seen as senior partners with the French in the Second Opium War against China (1856-1860). When France and Piedmont combined (1859) to despoil Austria of northern Italy (1859-1870), Britain's objections to a war were ignored, and ignored with impunity. When the British, French and Spanish jointly occupied Vera Cruz (1861) to compel payment of the Mexican debt, it was France which attempted to create a puppet empire under Maximilian, Britain (and Spain) which responded by withdrawing (1862), the Mexicans who balked France, and ultimately the USA which, mobilizing 50,000 men on the Rio Grande and threatening military intervention (1865-1866) persuaded France to withdraw its troops. When France was ultimately defeated, and Napoleon III's career ended, it was not accomplished by Britain (but by Germany, 1870-1871). Where was British hegemony over France? Invisible, and nonexistent.

[Page 65]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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Was Britain hegemonic to America? While Britain did intervene, indirectly and delicately, in the American Civil War--by building raiders (Florida, Alabama, Shenandoah) for the Confederacy, the side toward which Britain's economic interests predisposed it--not only was that side not saved by the "hegemon," but the British even accepted an arbitration (1871) which awarded the US damages (1872) for the cruisers' depredations. American pressure, not British, opened Japan (1853-1854); the USA participated (with Britain, France and the Dutch) in bombarding Shimonoseki (1864) to end the antiforeign activity of the Choshu clan. Where was hegemony over America? Not in evidence.

Was Britain hegemonic over Russia? One might as plausibly ask, was Russia hegemonic over Britain? If Britain behaved hegemonically in its sphere, so did Russia in its. Russia put down the rebellious Poles (1863-1864) despite British protests. Russia advanced its frontiers in Central Asia toward India (1860-1868, Tashkent Samarkand and the Oxus) despite Britain's fears and objections. Russia outpaced Britain into China--it was the Russians who truly won the Second Opium War (without fighting it) acquiring (1858, treaty of Aigun) the left bank of the Amur, and (1860, treaty of Peking) the Ussuri region. Russia unilaterally abrogated its obligation (treaty of Paris, 1856) to leave the Black Sea neutral, unfortified, and without a navy--and despite British protests Russia compelled the London conference (1871) to accept the abrogation as a *fait accompli*. Indeed, it would be easier to make the case for Russian than for British hegemony in this period. After all, when Napoleon III prepared to advance against Austria in Italy, it was Russia's acquiescence France sought, not Britain's. And in the Crimean War (1853-1856) it took the combined forces of Britain, France, Turkey, and Piedmont, repeated Austrian threats of war, and a defensive alliance of Prussia with Austria, to bring weight enough against Russia to frustrate her attempt to extend her influence in the Balkans, the Black Sea and Turkey. The implication is that Russia would have been more than a match for any one of the allies (say Britain) alone; such strength is a characteristic usually attributed to hegemons, and a combination of great powers to bring low one of their number is frequently treated as implying that the victim is seen as near-hegemonic in attainments and hegemonic in ambition.

[Page 66]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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If Britain was the hegemon, and Russia too, surely Austria was also the hegemon. While Britain and France fought the battles and took the casualties, Austria's first Crimean War ultimatum to Russia (June 1854) ended the Russian occupation (from July 1853) of the Danubian Principalities (Wallachia and Moldavia); Austria's second ultimatum (December 1855) ended the war on terms very unfavorable to Russia (Vienna Four Points, rejected by Russia 1854, medicine made even more unpleasant, swallowed at the Congress of Paris, 1856). Surely this is how hegemons behave.

Was Britain at least hegemonic to Prussia? Here at last one sees a single genuine instance of quasi-hegemonic behavior. Swedish troops, backed by British naval threats, caused Prussia to settle its 1848-1850 war with Denmark over Schleswig-Holstein on unfavorable terms. Thereafter, however, the story is different. In the better-known Schleswig-Holstein war of 1864, Prussia, carrying Austria in its train, effaced the humiliation and reversed the verdict of the prior war, and despoiled Denmark of these provinces in the teeth of British attempts to bring about peace and save the Danes. In the Austro-Prussian war (1866), Prussia (and Italy) defeated Austria and most German states; France, cowed by Prussia, mediated a settlement on Prussian terms which reduced Austria and aggrandized Prussia; Prussia did not move until its relations with Russia were excellent; Britain's feelings were not consulted. In the Franco-Prussian war (1870-1871), Prussia's purpose was to bring the South German states into a Prussian-ruled Germany; France was defeated, Germany united as an empire on Prussian terms; Britain's concern was to preserve Belgian neutrality; that guaranteed, Britain counted for nothing. Was this British hegemony? Surely not.

In 1850-1873, Britain was rich, powerful and controlled a great empire. Nonetheless, it was not hegemonic to the world-system, which had no hegemon.

[Page 67]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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### **c. The American hegemony.**

In the American case, time-boundaries are more consistently asserted: *et al.*, 1982a, 116,118 and 1982b, 62). At the end of the Second World War, "the US emerged as the uncontested hegemonic power" (PWE 71); "the United States was unquestionably the strongest power in the world" (PWE 69). "The only significant constraint on US power was the USSR" (PWE 135); "Although the USSR was not as strong, either economically or militarily, as anyone pretended, it was just strong enough to create world-systemic space for various anti-hegemonic and antisystemic forces" (PWE 135). "Until 1967 the United States dominated the world military arena and political economy including the markets of other industrialized countries--and western Europe and Japan followed US leadership willingly and completely. By 1990 the former allies will have parted company with the United States" (PWE 58 [1980]). "The heyday of US world hegemony is over. This means that at no level-- economic production and productivity, political cohesiveness and influence, cultural self-assurance and productivity, military strength-- will the US ever again match its unquestioned primacy of the period 1945-67. However,...the US is still today the most powerful state in the world and will remain so for some time" (CWE 95 [1975]). "I expect the emergence of two new *de facto* blocs, that of Washington--Tokyo--Beijing on the one hand...and that of Bonn--Paris--Moscow on the other...." (PWE 141 [1981]). "I have argued elsewhere that the *de facto* Washington--Beijing--Tokyo axis which developed in the 1970s will be matched in the 1980s by a *de facto* Paris--Bonn--Moscow axis" (PWE 183 [1984]).

**Comment.** The case for an American hegemony having existed is easier to make than for a British (and far easier than for a Dutch): the USA was a superpower after World War II, one of only two; unlike the British it both sought and got a voice in the resolution of virtually every major world issue in the years in question. Since the US surely did emerge from World War II as the "forereacher" of the world-economy, it conceivably represents a (lone) confirming case of the path from forereacher to hegemon.

[Page 68]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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Furthermore, there are numerous events of the period 1945-1967 which could indeed be interpreted within a framework of global hegemony: the reconstruction of Japan and Western Germany, and the politico-economic structures and world roles of those states; the Marshall Plan economic reconstruction, and NATO politico-military reconstruction, of Western Europe; the maintenance of the status quo in the Greek-Turkish events of 1946-48 and the Berlin blockade of July 1948; the mobilization of a winning military coalition in the early Korean War, June-October 1950; the settlement of the Suez crisis of 1956 and the Congo crisis of the 1960's. If we define the "globe" to omit the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China, India, the Third World after 1954, Cuba under Castro, and France under Gaullist influence, the case for hegemony would become more plausible. Unfortunately for the proposition we are examining, it would remain plausible long after 1967. Indeed, since in the Gorbachev and Deng era the USA seems far more pleased with events in the Second World as a whole than it has been since 1945, one may expect that someone who senses that it is the powerful who are inclined to be smug will shortly publish a book called "**The Rise of American Hegemony.**"

In dealing, however, with the 1945-1967 period, and hewing to the meaningful sense of hegemony (ability to impose one's rules and wishes throughout the system), we are likely to find a shortage of hegemony. The procedure here adopted will be to explore history from 1967 backward to look for events which might be seen as terminators to a hegemony which, we are to assume, began in 1945. We are seeking, for instance, a stalemated outcome which might evince global bipolarity or multipolarity rather than hegemony; seeking also cases where the "hegemon's" "hegemony" is flouted or ignored, and it responds with passive acceptance or impotent frustration (rather than enforced obedience or condign and deterrent punishment). Hegemony, if real, should be flaunted, not flouted.

[Page 69]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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Perhaps then the American hegemony ends in October 1964 rather than 1967, when China explodes a nuclear weapon and blasts its way into the nuclear club, and is not expelled? Or in April 1963, when France begins to pull out of the naval side of NATO,

and is not prevented? Or in October 1962, when the USSR by making and reversing a nuclear-missile initiative extracts a US promise not to invade Cuba, which is kept? Or in August 1961, when East Germany reinterprets Berlin border-control rights in its own favor by the falt accompli of the Berlin Wall, which remains standing? Or in April 1961, when the US-sponsored exile invasion of Cuba gives new meaning to the word "fiasco," and defeat is accepted? Or in February 1960, when France explodes the Degaullebomb, while the US stolidly looks on?

Perhaps the first hegemonic failure could be dated in March-April 1959, when China puts down the Tibetans despite US unhappiness (while in 1987-1988 it appears that Chinese sensitivity to US desires, and hence US influence over China's Tibetan policy, is greater than it was during the alleged "hegemony")? Perhaps the first failure of hegemony comes in October-November 1956, when Russia puts down the Hungarians with similar unconcern (again, US influence over Soviet policy in East Europe seems greater in the 1980's, after "hegemony," than before)? Or does hegemony end in April 1955, when the Bandung Conference launches a "nonaligned" movement of states at a time when the USA is vigorously promoting alignment, and succeeds while American diplomacy fails? Or in 1954-1955, when India refuses US military assistance and arranges Soviet economic assistance as a substitute? Or in August 1954, when France rejects the European Defense Community? Or in June 1953, when the USSR puts down the East Berlin rising? Or in 1950-1953, when China fights US-led forces to a stalemate in Korea, preventing the annihilation of the North Korean state? Or in February 1952, when Britain explodes a nuclear device? Or in November 1950, when China invades Tibet?

Perhaps the end of American hegemony should be dated to June-December 1950, when India refuses to cooperate with US policy in Korea and goes its own way? Or to February 1950, when China allies with the USSR in open defiance of vigorous US efforts at dissuasion? Or to the undisturbed slicing of the Hungarian salami 1947-1950? Or to September 1949, when the USSR explodes a nuclear device? Or to 1947-1949, when the Republic of China collapses and a Communist revolution is victorious despite US objections?

[Page 70]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

---

Or to 1946-1948, when the British Labor government embarks on massive socialist experiments at nationalization, not to be reversed until the days of Thatcher, and then not at America's behest? Or to July-August 1948, when the USSR excludes the US, Britain and France from the new Danubian Basin regime? Or to February 1948, the intensely resented but unimpeded Communist coup in Czechoslovakia? Or to July 1947, when the USSR rejects the Marshall Plan? Or to March 1947, when the USSR rejects the US-UN atomic energy control plan? Or to Jan. 1947, when the US charges that the USSR has violated the Yalta agreement for free elections in Poland?

The hegemon's collapse may be earlier still: December 1945 - January 1947, when Marshall's mission to stop the Chinese civil war fails because neither of the Chinese parties will comply with US wishes. Indeed, one could see American hegemony as having vanished as early as April-June 1945, when the US accedes to a United Nations Charter which gave it a Security Council role no greater than that of Russia, Britain, France or China, in no way comparable to that of Athens, Macedon or Prussia in their respective leagues. If so, American hegemony was born dead.

Are these episodes of self-restraint, or impotence, or prudence, or unredeemed frustration, proper tests of American hegemony? We can best judge by asking another question: what if each of these events had occurred differently? What if in each case US pretensions, demands and achievements had been greater, and US desires willingly complied with (as in the West European Marshall Plan), or complied with under fear or threat (as in the Suez crisis), or recalcitrants occupied militarily and reconstructed (as were the powers just defeated in World War II) or attacked by force and harshly punished (as was North Korea). Suppose the US had demanded, and secured, the permanent presidency and only right of veto on the Security Council, and the perpetual high command of all UN military forces; had imposed a free-market free-election settlement of the Chinese civil war against the will of both parties; had cancelled the tainted elections in Poland, and conducted new ones; had imposed unilateral nuclear (and perhaps conventional) disarmament on the USSR; had ordained and obtained a reversal of Britain's socialist experiment; etc. Would not such impositions be treated

[Page 71]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

---

by any hegemonist historian as first-class evidence that the US possessed hegemony over the states thereby victimized, and, if these were all the other great powers, over the world-system as well? Surely then the consistent absence of such impositions must be consistently treated as evidence that there was no US hegemony over the USSR; nor China; nor India; nor many Third World states; nor, at some times, France nor Britain. These states, however, account for most of the world-system.

The conclusion is inescapable. America was remarkably prosperous and a politico-military superpower 1945-1967, one of two, in a bipolar system in which it had regional hegemony and no more. In the world-system as a whole, there was no hegemon; and there was no American hegemony.

There have been economic forerunners. The forerunners have been more inclined than most states to free trade, have been seapowers, have been great powers, have prospered in great wars that have punished their rivals. But they were never hegemons. Hegemonic research ought to be redirected to finding out why not. Did they even seek hegemony? Could they have had it if they had sought it? Perhaps the fact that they were not hegemons, probably never sought hegemony, and possibly were never seriously

suspected of seeking hegemony, is evidence of common sense, and helps explain why they prospered while others were brought low by the costs and counteralliances that afflict hegemonist imperialism.

In any case, the hypothesis that forerunners become hegemonies is nonviable. The evidence contradicts it, and actually suggests the contrary proposition. The comparative study of civilizations may enlarge the contrary proposition, for there exist world systems that, having become universal empires, almost certainly passed through some prior stage of hegemony. If we can show, as perhaps we probably can show, that genuine hegemonies like Ch'in, Assyria, Persia, Rome, were not only geographic fringe states but economically backward states when their ascent began, and even during much of it, the contrary proposition can become part of the theory of world systems.

## **12. Progress and retrogression.**

[Page 72]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

---

Returning now to the main line of argument of Wallersteinian world-systems theory: it is unusual among socialist-oriented theories in affirming the objective meaningfulness of the idea of human "progress" or "development" while simultaneously denying both the inevitability of future and the actuality of past "progress."

Progress is not inevitable (HC 107); indeed, faith in inevitable progress vitiates our understanding of the real historical alternatives before us (HC 8). "Development" must imply a reduction in the global "polarization" of a system; but historically, polarization of the modern capitalist world-economy has increased (HC 36). The vast majority of the populations of the world are less well-off materially than in previous historical systems (HC 40). The monumental creation of material goods, the endless accumulation of capital, coupled with the monumental polarization of reward, has meant the incessant widening of the real gap between the many who have benefited enormously, and the many more who have seen a reduction in their real total incomes and the real quality of their lives (HC 72). The thesis of the absolute immiseration of the proletariat--not industrial workers, but the overwhelmingly larger rural and urban-slum work-forces--is correct: they work harder, eat less well, and get less total reward than their ancestors five hundred years ago (HC 100-101). The process of polarization, and therefore of absolute immiseration of direct producers by falling real income "has never ceased to expand" since 1450, as can be empirically demonstrated "provided one measures the polarization in terms of the world-economy as a whole and not in terms of particular states" (PWE 97-98).

**Comment.** The hypothesis of absolute immiseration in the modern world-economy is important, unconventional, and, even if mistaken, a major heuristic contribution of Wallerstein's insistence on looking at the economy of an entire world-system as a whole.

It deserves measurement. In such measurement one must however separate the "polarization" or "relative immiseration" from median real income and "absolute immiseration." They might covary inversely. Precisely on the grounds which led Wallerstein to carry the theoretical enterprise beyond a single state or even the core states, however, the boundaries of the unit of measurement must, to avoid part-whole fallacies, be extended to the entire states system, to Central Civilization, and not confined to a regional focus (such as e.g. 16th century Western Europe).

[Page 73]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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**13. The future of capitalism and socialism as world-systems.** Wallerstein views capitalism's future as bleak, a view orthodox enough, in socialist terms; but as Wallerstein denies the inevitability of progress, and views socialism as progressive, his expectations for socialism's future are less so.

**a. The capitalist future.**

"Historical systems...eventually go out of existence [in] consequence of internal processes in which the exacerbation of the internal contradictions lead to a structural crisis" of a massive, long-term character (HC 90). "Historical capitalism entered its structural crisis in the early twentieth century and will probably see its demise as a historical system sometime in the next century." (HC 90) The Russian Revolution was the "symbolic detonator" of the current systemic crisis "and has always been seen as such" (PWE 24).

**b. A bourgeois pseudo-socialist future.**

Wallerstein warns that if the world bourgeoisie assumes "socialist" clothing and seizes control of the transition process out of the disintegrating historical-capitalist order, as the landed aristocracy did of its own transition process, the future could see the creation of yet another minority-serving exploitative historical system . Only if the world bourgeoisie tries to maintain the doomed historical-capitalist system is the next transition likely to be to a relatively classless, more egalitarian world order (HC 106-107).

[Page 74]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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**c. A socialist world government.**

In Wallerstein's view, a world order that maximizes equality and equity, increases humanity's control over its own life (democracy), and liberates the imagination, is conceivable, possible, desirable, and properly labeled socialism--"a fully planned single



productive organizational network in the world-economy" (PWE 25); "a concretely historical socialism," "a realizable historical system which may one day be instituted in the world" (HC 109-110).

The world "is in the beginning of the transition to a fourth prospective type" of social system, "a socialist world- government" (PWE 147). In a socialist world-system, "on the basis of an advanced technology, capable of providing a rate of global production adequate to meet the total needs of all the world's population, the rate and forms of production will be the result of collective decisions made in virtue of these needs" without inordinate labor-time needs. The "social motivations for collective aggressive behavior will have disappeared"; worldwide ecological balance will be an inherent objective. "In short, the socialist mode of production seeks to fulfill the objectives of the rational and free society which was the ideological mask of the capitalist world-economy. In such a situation, repressive state machinery will have no function and will over time transform itself into routine administration" (PWE 157). Contradictions will persist until families no longer socialize individuals in values appropriate to a capitalist mode of production, and "might still persist" even thereafter, "but there is no plausible way of predicting what they will be or whether they will be" (PWE 157-158). "The only alternative world-system that could maintain a high level of productivity and change the system of distribution would involve the reintegration of the levels of political and economic decision-making. This would constitute a third possible form of world-system, a socialist world government." (TMWS1 348)

[Page 75]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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**Comment.** Wallerstein's discussion of the future of capitalism seems wishful. There is insufficient reason given to consider the demise either of powerful markets or of accumulation "probable" within the next century. While ecological, epidemiological or autogenocidal catastrophe of unprecedented magnitude might have such effects, Wallerstein foresees an end to capitalism through structural crisis, and it is hard to find any better reason to believe this forecast than its predecessors. Quigley seems more correct in seeing periods of "crisis" as precisely also periods in which reform or circumvention can occur.

Given the idea that only four modes of production are possible (PWE 163), it is not clear whether bourgeois pseudo-socialism is a world-economy, world-government, or world-empire--presumably the last. Since the issue of real and fake socialism has been a hot one since Marx's time, the question of the theoretical status, historical analogues if any, prospects, problems and symptoms of this entity need addressing by any who consider it a serious and unpleasant possibility; all the more so if one considers the association of past universal empires with "a socialist state" by Quigley (1961, 87), and the general character of such empires from the viewpoint of the inmates of a states system. The road to such an empire (Wilkinson, 1985), and its sequel (Wilkinson, 1987) seems easier to

visualize than for a Wallersteinian world-government: world-systems researchers need to address this issue with prudence and care.

Despite Wallerstein's avowal that the socialism he anticipates is "concretely historical," it seems demonstrably "utopian" in never having existed and not existing now, and in being ardently desired but not shown nor seriously argued to be self-consistent, concrete, or feasible. Capitalism is judged by what it has been, not by what one might wish it to be; socialism is judged by what one might wish it to be, not what it has been. Is this not what is meant by "utopianism"?

It is worth noting that classical liberals and libertarians who believe that planned individual decision-making in a market produces collective rationality might well libel the current world-economic order "historical socialism" and label the Wallersteinian ideal "a concretely historical capitalism." Perhaps both applications are equally innocuous.

[Page 76]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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#### **14. Conclusion.**

Wallerstein's world-systems theory needs intensive reconstructive work. The theory of hegemony fails, and needs replacement by a theory of forereaching. Historical capitalism (markets) and socialism (statist economy) need recognition as persistent features of world-economies in general; utopian capitalism and/or socialism, which possibly do merge, need analysis in the language of science and engineering, not simply that of desire. Russia, Turkey, Persia and India must be recognized as inside, not outside the modern world-system, and the definitions that compelled their exclusion replaced. Cycles in the modern world-economy need to be placed in the context of the cycles prevalent in all civilizations/world systems; core and semiperiphery in the modern world-system need to be placed in the context of core-semiperiphery phenomena in all civilizations/ world systems; in both instances Quigley's ideas will help. The issue of accumulation must be addressed separately from that of markets, and of capitalism. The roster of world-systems must be completed, and the taxonomic problems of "feudalism" and "foci of trade" handled. And the question of the relationship between world-systems and modes of production/instruments of expansion must be settled empirically, not by definition, and hence must be considered open, not closed.

#### **III. Central Civilization vs. World-Economic Theory**

I have elsewhere (Wilkinson, 1988, 48-53) provided some impressions of the economic "facts" about Central Civilization which comparative theory needs to accommodate and explain. To what extent can Quigley's and Wallerstein's ideas be deployed for such a purpose?

### **Economic levels**

1. Extracivilizational as well as intracivilizational trade characterized Central Civilization's Egyptian and Mesopotamian predecessors, and Central Civilization itself from its inception until its incorporation of the globe.

Wallerstein's propositions about the "rich trades" help to account for the existence, distance, and relatively low impact of such external trade. Still, if it is highly rational to trade what is "worthless" for what is "precious," one must expect traders (and tribute-seekers, and predators) to flock towards preciousness. Such a tendency may help explain the marked inclination of civilizations to couple with or engulf one another, on the assumption that uneven distribution of resources and uneven development of technology tend, while civilizations are separated, to create what will be viewed as "preciosities" as soon as they begin to communicate.

This proposition, and all those hereafter asserted for Central Civilization, may well be true of other civilizations, and certainly should be treated as comparative hypotheses or heuristics.

2. There existed an Old World ecumenical macroeconomy, a multicivilizational structure which apparently provided the highest-level largest-scale economic order until the global reach of Central Civilization, as the evolving context of the world economies of the various Eurasian civilizations linked by the silk, spice, slave, gold and ivory trade.

This economy was larger than any polity (universal empire or states system) it contained, encompassing Central Civilization, Indic, Far Eastern, and others. It may require theoretical treatment as a whole; its theory is likely to be quite special, precisely because of the absence of a polity.

3. Local economies and short-range trade probably account for most economic activity most of the time, with the extraction of food from each city's hinterland and its distribution to the city population of primary importance.

### **Commodities**

4. World-economic commodities in Central Civilization have tended strongly to be elite goods--luxury food, clothing, shelter, and display items--along with the trade tools of elite-supporting soldiers and bureaucrats (weapon-metal; paper for recordkeeping).

Elites, classes, and the associated inequalities must not be treated as recent phenomena.

5. Early Central trade in precious metals may, and coinage does, imply the development of mobile free persons, merchant classes and economic vs. politico-military elites, characterized by private property in portable wealth.

These elements of capitalism similarly must not be treated as of recent vintage.

6. The entry into the Central world-economy of fish, wheat, oil and wine, suggests mass consumption driven either by political redistribution (to hire the loyalty of armed men, clients, voters etc.) or by markets, probably varyingly by both. Luxury goods may also have spread more widely through the social structure.

7. The general trend over time is clearly toward a continuing increase in the number and variety of commodities traded in the world economy of Central Civilization. Within this trend there are temporary and permanent commodity dropouts, shifts in regional contributions, epochs of faster and slower commodity increase. But the trend remains.

Commodities and commodification too precede modernity, and must be attributed to some early cause, perhaps simply to civilization's division of labor, increased scale, and increased population. Commodities and markets are not intrinsically related: granite appears to be a state commodity for Egyptian monument-builders; granite-hewers worked not for their own tombs, but for the monumental egos of the state elite.

The increase in the number and variety of commodities over time is one piece of evidence for a secular trend to expansion in Central Civilization over the past 5000 years.

[Page 79]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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### **Expansion**

8. There is as yet discernible no clear increase in the per capita wealth or living standards of the median individual during the pre-modern periods of Central Civilization. It appears that increased production is mostly utilized to increase total population and total urban population. The aggregate wealth of the wealthiest strata (typically politically rather than economically defined) must have increased, but it is not clear that the per capita wealth of those strata also increased. Modernization seems another story.

But if Wallerstein is right regarding "absolute immiseration," it is an even less cheerful story. One wonders, for instance, if the forward-days of contemporary world food reserves are more or fewer than in the first food-storing cities. At best, there is room for doubt, and for inquiry.

**9.** There is no clear evidence of an endogenously economic general crisis or collapse ever having occurred in the Central world economy, although there have been city-level and state-level disasters, and systemwide periods of setback and stagnation, usually deriving from politico-military events.

This has been argued at length (Wilkinson, 1988, 39-48). A very long-term expansive trend appears to underlie various cycles of expansion and stagnation. If Quigley is right, this implies very frequent reforms and circumventions. If an economy is very mixed, with strong regional differentiation, regional failure by institutionalization may lead to the semiperipheralization of the failing region and the destruction of the failed institutions by intruders from another region of the same civilization--a combination of Wallerstein's core-shifting and Quigley's semiperipheral-success ideas.

[Page 80]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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**10.** The basic expansive process in Central Civilization appears to be circularly causal, dependent upon the presence of an unpopulated or underpopulated geoeconomic periphery and a Malthusian pressure: population expands; more and larger and more dispersed cities with more populous hinterlands extend and intensify settlement; there is greater division of labor and specialization; sufficient demand arises to mobilize new products or longer routes to more distant sources; total production rises; increased production mainly serves to support an enlarged population; etc.

While seas, seabeds, poles, deserts, mountains, forests, tundra, atmosphere, and space remain in many ways peripheries and frontiers of expansion, they are also barriers. Whether the ultimate bounds of human expansion are those of landmasses or of the universe is not clear. Can a civilization avoid taking out all its economic expansion extensively, by a corresponding population growth? Perhaps not.

**11.** The borders and cities of Central Civilization expanded preferentially toward commodity sources, but not always quickly, effectively, or uniformly.

Quigley and Wallerstein employ circumferential rather than radial images of expansion; otherwise their theories meld well with this observation. We may add that a preferred direction of expansion could well be precisely toward "rich trades." Otherwise, areas likely to be brought into the semiperiphery sooner would include likely population outlets and tribute sources.

## **Instruments of expansion/modes of production**

12. Whatever may be true for state and local economies, it is incorrect to describe the world economy of Central Civilization as at any time fundamentally feudal, nor slave, nor hydraulic, nor free-peasant, nor communal, nor corporate, nor hierocratic; nor is it fundamentally, in the Wallersteinian sense, either a "world-economy" (capitalist) or a "world-empire" (tributary).

[Page 81]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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In the 5th century B.C., to take an apparently extreme example of variety, but a binding one, what was the Athenian economy? A slave economy (there was a very large slave population)? A peasant economy (most citizens were country-born and bred, and landowners, producing sheep, cattle, grapes, olives, grain)? A merchant capitalist economy (exporting wine and oil, providing coinage and a carrying trade)? An industrial economy (based on the silver, lead, zinc and iron mines, importing grain)? With an industrial proletariat (slaves included skilled workers; free workers' wages hovered at subsistence)? A world-empire (Athens imposed tribute on other states)? A welfare state (much of the population was on the public payroll via the mass-jury system)? A socialist state (massive expenditures on public works--harbors, fortifications, temples, naval expeditions)? Clearly something of all: a very mixed economy. And all this in a tiny fraction of the total area of Central Civilization!

13. It is an interesting fact, and one worth reflecting on, (not just a given) that Central Civilization has never yet been completely penetrated by any particular "instrument of expansion" (in the Quigleyan sense) or "mode of production" (in the Marxian sense), institutions.

A possible hypothesis is that there are a limited number of possible modes of production (Wallerstein); that all have inbuilt self-destructive propensities (Quigley); and that the only available choices at times of reform or circumvention are the items from the same old menu.

14. A possible reason why the world economy of Central Civilization has never been fully statist is that the universal states of Central Civilization have been either short-lived, with their extraction capabilities confined to the civilizational core, or tolerant of private property and merchant classes.

Since the same could be said of universal empires in Indic, Far Eastern, Japanese and Mexican civilizations, we might want to look at the Inca empire, also brief but apparently ultra-statist, to question its extremism, explain its divergence, and thereby explain the norm. Similar questions might be usefully put to statist national economies, e.g. the Soviet and Chinese, within states systems.

15. A possible reason why the world economy of Central Civilization has never been fully capitalist (private- propertarian, individualist, market-based) is the unbroken prominence of the political state, based on force, and of political-military-religious elites based on ground rents, taxes, and extraction by force.

Why can these elements apparently not be expunged? How far can they be suppressed, and kept suppressed? These are questions of interest at least to libertarians, and to those socialists who are in touch with the anarchist rather than statist tendencies of that movement. Wallerstein's idea of the marketer's mixed motives and the consequent need of capitalists for states is very much in point here.

16. For whatever reason, the Central economy is at all times a mixed political economy, embodying trade and war, coercion and bargaining, the one-few-and-many. The balance shifts with time, scale, region, commodity.

And possibly other variables. The determinants of the mix need study. The coexistence, with regional and temporal variations, is so marked as to suggest a theory of the mixed economy as historic norm, and capitalism and socialism as ideal-typical extremes, needs developing.

17. The balance shifts more toward "capitalism" (without ever coming close) as states are small, weak and numerous, more toward "statism" as they are few, strong and large.

18. One useful indicator of the statist/capitalist balance in the civilization might be the balance between cities of the same size that are state capitals (i.e. power-maintained) and those that are commercial centers (i.e. trade-maintained).

### **Core and semiperiphery**

19. The core/semiperiphery distinction is not that of a straightforward division of labor between political coercion and economic supply, nor between primary and higher-tech products; but both divisions are notably present.

The elements of time-delayed expansion over space, of institutional aging, of destructive core wars, of unequal "materialism" and exogenous technical development will also all doubtless prove factors in determining and shifting cores.

20. It is the politico-military predominance of the core, not any purely economic differentiation or "unequal exchange" tradition, that mainly accounts for the tendency for the core to drain the semiperiphery: loot, tribute, taxes, price controls, confiscations, trade route closures, and enforced monopolies are primarily political ventures.

21. A significant fraction of primary products come from within the core, from the hinterlands of core cities.

This becomes less true in the 19th century with the development of railroads; the British policy of agricultural free trade may mark the shift. However, it remains true that...

22. Citification, and eventually core status, tends to move toward major semiperipheral supply sources.

### **Inequality**

23. Wherever it is possible to map the distribution of wealth in Central Civilization, inequality prominently appears: by city, by region, by political power, by inheritance, in law, by age and family status, by gender. The several inequalities do not appear to be reducible to any one fundamental root inequality.

There is abundant scope here for theory and observation, dialectic and eristic, in the contemplation of the world-economies of Central and other civilizations.

[Page 84]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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## **CONCLUSION**

Carroll Quigley's economically driven model of the evolution of a civilization is elegant, lucid, consistent, and tight. There are serious problems in its delimitation of the units of macrosocial analysis, and in its dependence upon a relatively homogeneous structure and process to explain fluctuations in relatively heterogeneous social systems. It is not at all clear that such systems have "stages" rather than "phases." Nevertheless Quigley's concept of an instrument of expansion is more generally useful than the alternative "mode of production," which suffers from the same defects while not directly addressing the crucial issue of the general phenomenon of macrosocial expansion. Similarly, Quigley's ideas about core and periphery relationships, and about expansion/stagnation cycles, are of great value in broadening later views of the same topics.

The world-systems school of Immanuel Wallerstein and his colleagues has produced a large body of provocative work with great internal complexity. It too delimits the units of macrosocial analysis in ways that seem to call for revision, though in different ways from



Quigley's work. It would be useful for world-systems analysts to consider Quigley's work as a potential contributor to their own.

For the study of Central Civilization, Quigley and Wallerstein are resources despite the fact that Quigley would deny that such an entity ever existed, while Wallerstein would accept it only for the past two centuries or so. Nonetheless this entity displays core-periphery phenomena, and probably buffers "globally" the effects of "local" expansion/stagnation cycles which its world wars probably also "locally" entrain.

[Page 85]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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Even if one does not accept the tight polity-economy linkages implied in the Quigleyan civilizational and Wallersteinian world-systems schema, one cannot come away from reading Quigley and Wallerstein without accepting that there must be some such linkages: if not quite those linkages posited by either, then perhaps mixtures of their pure types, and perhaps softer, more delayed, sometimes even (as in the forerunner-hegemon case) inverted versions of their harder couplings. No two writers seem better sources for hypotheses concerning the political economy of Central Civilization.

## Notes

1. This paper was originally presented at the annual meeting of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations, Hampton, VA, May 26-29, 1988.

2. Editor's note: Here Wilkinson defines his primary unit of analysis -- a set of interacting polities (states and empires) that ally and make war with one another. He uses the term "civilization" to refer to interaction networks of this sort.

3. The observations that have engendered socialist epicyclism are well enough known, though most are only implicitly present in Wallerstein's revisions, as motives for a largely fresh start. The discrepant observations include, most prominently: the failure of socialist transformations to occur at the right time in the right place (i.e. 19th century industrialized West) and their apparent occurrence at the wrong times in the wrong place (e.g. Russia, China, Cuba, Vietnam, Mozambique); the de-proletarianization of the industrial "proletariat," and its ascent to a "working class"; the growth of non-revolutionary and/or non-socialist working-class trade-unionism; the socialist nationalism of 1914 and the national socialisms of the 1920's; the reappearance of capitalist imperialism in the late 19th century and its failure to lead to a final inter-capitalist war and world revolution in the late 20th; the failure of the Soviet revolution to spread; the enduring splits among social democrats, democratic socialists, and communists; Soviet "social imperialism" or "hegemonism"; the longevity, variety, and progressive development of the crisis, last stage, and death throes of capitalism; the persistent political repressiveness, mutual antagonisms, and economic backwardness of socialist states; the failure of their states to

wither away, and the growth of bureaucracy; the reappearance of classes, elitism, and even monarcho-charismatic ("personality cult") and hereditary-dynastic political tendencies; and lately even signs of a transition from socialism to capitalism.

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[Page 86]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

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[Page 87]

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[Page 88]

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[Page 89]

*Journal of World-Systems Research*

