



A Festschrift in Honor of Christopher K. Chase-Dunn

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This is a festschrift in honor of Christopher K. Chase-Dunn, an homage richly deserved. We celebrate a career spanning more than four decades that includes (so far) some 19 books and 60 articles with over 10,000 citations,¹ five National Science Foundation Grants, election to the American Academy for the Advancement of Science, an Institute, and a legacy of social scientists he mentored along with scores of others influenced by his scholarship. Particularly noteworthy is the breadth of Chase-Dunn's scholarship, which spans a broad swath of disciplines including economics, international relations, anthropology, history, geography, and archaeology, with articles published in journals such as the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *Current Anthropology*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *Political Geography Quarterly*, *Journal of Archaeological Research*, *Social Evolution and History*, and *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*. And it is indeed fitting for this collection to be published in the *Journal of World-Systems Research*, a journal created by Chase-Dunn in 1995.

¹ *Global Formation* alone has been cited more than 1300 times.



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I won't go into detail about Chase-Dunn's career, which is well documented in a video interview at the University of California, Riverside, in June, 2017, shepherded by Andrew Jorgenson and myself.² This conversation touches on Chase-Dunn's passionate involvement in the radicalism of the 1960s, his graduate school years at Stanford, the evolution of his scholarship at Johns Hopkins and the University of California-Riverside, his colleagues, his current work, and his own homage to John W. Meyer, whom he credits with saving his life. There are also lots of personal anecdotes along the way. It's vintage Chase-Dunn and well worth watching (a podcast is also available). The link to watch is accessible under supplementary files.

The Contributions

This special issue is the outgrowth of an ASA panel I organized in 2015 as a critical assessment of Chase-Dunn's work, which included many of the authors in this issue. Most of the contributors have long standing relationships with him, many that span decades. John W. Meyer was Chris' mentor at Stanford, and Albert Bergesen was a fellow graduate student. Andrew Jorgenson, Peter Grimes, and I were all his graduate student advisees, and Mike Timberlake was his post-doc at Johns Hopkins. Ho-Fung Hung and Jon Turner were colleagues, at Johns Hopkins and University of California-Riverside, respectively. And Jennifer Bair and Valentine Moghadam have both worked with Chris on various projects and institutional settings. In reading these essays, the high regard and appreciation with which these contributors (including myself) hold their personal, as well as scholarly relationships with Chris' becomes evident.

There are nine contributions, organized broadly into three sections. The first section covers Chase-Dunn's early years as a graduate student at Stanford. It begins with a short letter from **John W. Meyer**, who recounts how Chris got started at Stanford, how he stepped out of the program for several years to pursue his activist interests, and his (successful) return. The second article is written by **Albert Bergesen**, who provides insights into the genesis of Chase-Dunn's most well-known work, the 1975 ASR article on the impact of foreign capital dependence on economic growth and inequality. Bergesen reminds us that the now-commonplace ways of thinking about and empirically analyzing theoretical relationships in macro-comparative sociology were unknown when he and Chris were in graduate school. He outlines what he refers to as "the perfect storm" at Stanford, a confluence of three new sociologists on the Stanford faculty (Joseph P. Berger, John Meyer, and Michael Hannan) and their novel perspectives on theory construction, data analysis, and theory testing, which provided Chase-Dunn with new tools for his ground breaking article. (As an aside, Chase-Dunn recounts in his interview a personal episode with Bergesen that involves a cup flying past Al's head and through a glass window. Don't miss it.)

²Our thanks to Siddiq Siddiqui-Ali and colleagues at the University of California-Riverside for filming this interview.

The second group of papers details the ways in which Chase-Dunn's scholarship has influenced their own research. **Andrew Jorgenson**, co-editor of this special issue, provides a mix of personal reflections on Chase-Dunn, along with a brief outline of how Chase-Dunn's work has influenced the development of Jorgenson's field of environmental sociology, a linkage not widely recognized. **Mike Timberlake** addresses Chase-Dunn's contributions to comparative urban sociology and urban studies, broadly considered, including his theorizations and empirical work on global city systems. Timberlake locates Chase-Dunn's work within the broad urbanization literature, which provides an excellent overview of this field. **Jennifer Bair and Marion Werner** offer a wide ranging discussion that connects and expands upon Chase-Dunn's work on uneven development as expressed in his most highly acclaimed book, *Global Formation*, and its relationship to their own work on global commodity chains. **Valentine Moghadam** addresses another central aspect of Chase-Dunn's work found in *Global Formation*, his conceptualization of the semi-periphery, and its relationship to her own scholarship on revolutions and rebellions, focusing on Tunisia. **Ho-fung Hung** highlights Chase-Dunn's work on premodern world-systems and how it expands our understanding of the modern world-system, by broadening the number of cases available for comparison.

In the final section, two contributors use Chase-Dunn's works as a starting point for the development of new theorizations on the underlying dynamics of social evolution. **Jon Turner** proffers the only critical assessment of the World-Systems paradigm to be found in this issue, suggesting that it no longer reflects today's realities, particularly as expressed in Wallerstein's core concept of a global division of labor (core, semi-periphery and periphery). Turner provides what he considers a broader conceptualization of social evolution based on "inter-societal systems." In the last contribution, **Peter Grimes** offers a sweeping theoretical treatise that attempts to merge World-Systems theory and Complexity Theory, with the goal of creating a general theory of human evolution.

The concluding essay is written by Chase-Dunn, who begins by tracing the evolution of his career, followed by detailed comments on the preceding contributions along with some personal comments about the authors.

Foreign Capital Dependence, Economic Growth, and Inequality

I'd like to follow-up briefly on Bergesen's piece about Chase-Dunn's 1975 ASR article on the impact of foreign capital dependence on economic growth and inequality. As Bergesen points out, this was ground-breaking research that moved this debate from discourse (and polemic) to empirical study, and in so doing laid the groundwork for literally hundreds of empirical studies examining the impact of foreign capital dependence on a variety of outcomes (including much of my work), or including this measure as a control variable in associated studies. This article, along

with a follow-up piece by Chris and his long-time colleague, Volker Bornschier (Bornschier and Chase-Dunn 1985), initiated the often recounted debate on the impact of foreign investment dependence on development (see Kentor and Boswell 2003) that's continued for more than 40 years. The impact of foreign capital dependence on economic growth continues to be assessed today (Mahutga and Bandelj 2008), and the scope of these studies has broadened to include outcomes such as the environment (i.e. Jorgenson et al 2007), international migration (i.e. Sanderson and Kentor 2009), and political corruption (Choi and Woo 2011) among many others.

And Finally, A Story

Let me close on a personal note with a story about Chris, one that I relate every year to our incoming graduate students – for reasons that will become apparent.

This event took place during my graduate student days at Johns Hopkins, with Chris as my advisor. I had just received an editorial decision from *Social Forces* of “revise and resubmit” on a manuscript I had recently submitted. One of the anonymous reviewers had written something like “this is pretty good for World-Systems research, but we all know that this is a failed paradigm.” Totally outraged, I showed Chris this review and asked him how I should handle it. Chris was equally incensed, and directed me to write back to the editor, insist that there was no place in the academy for this kind of pejorative commentary, and demand that this review not be included in the editor's evaluation of my manuscript. I wrote the editor as Chris instructed, and received a quick reply. The editor first apologized for the reviewer's comments, and indicated that, as I requested, he would drop this review from consideration. He went on to say, however, that this reviewer was the only one in favor of a “revise and resubmit” – the other two had both recommended an outright rejection. Therefore, since both remaining reviews were negative, he was rejecting my manuscript. The editor closed by suggesting that I needn't bother submitting any future manuscripts to *Social Forces* while he was editor. Aghast, I returned to Chris' office, stammering about how I had written to the editor as discussed, and how my manuscript had been rejected, along with any future possibility of publishing in this journal. Chris replied - without any hesitation, “oh yeah, you should never do that.”

I should also point out that Chris is the reason I'm a sociologist. He encouraged and facilitated my return to Johns Hopkins to finish my dissertation after I had stepped out of academia for a decade. And he's been a resource, colleague, and friend ever since. I know many others who share these sentiments.

Chase-Dunn's legacy? It's not yet written. Chris concludes his interview by telling us that the best is yet to come. He's now working on “the answer” to human social-cultural evolution, which he hopes to complete before his retirement in 2020. We hope so, too.

About the Author

Jeffrey Kentor is Professor and Chair of the Sociology Department at Wayne State University. Kentor's research focuses on long term macro-level social change, from an international political economy perspective. His work explores the economic and military dynamics that shape relationships between countries, and how these processes impact economic development, income inequality, migration, health, and the environment.

Disclosure Statement

Any conflicts of interest are reported in the acknowledge section of the article's text. Otherwise, author has indicated that he has no conflict of interests upon submission of the article to the journal.

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