



Immanuel Wallerstein's Legacy in Southern Europe¹² Notes for Thinking Andalusia from World-Systems Theory

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Abstract

This paper is a farewell and an intellectual tribute to one of the greatest masters of contemporary Marxist thought and one of the major references in contemporary social science. Immanuel Wallerstein died August 31, 2019, leaving a theoretical, historical, and intellectual legacy that is to be read, rethought, and actualized by social scientists in the coming decades. His world-systems theory gave rise to a whole new understanding of the genesis of the capitalist world-system. This contribution reviews the sources that inspired the world-system theory, as well as showing its main contributions and its dialogues with other proposals of critical social theory, such as the epistemologies of the South and decolonial thought. This article is also a new formulation of the perspectives that the world-systems theory opens for the historical and sociological research on Andalusia and southern Europe in the context of the historical genesis of world capitalism.

Keywords: Immanuel Wallerstein, world-systems theory, southern Europe, Andalusia

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On August 31st, 2019, the sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein passed away. He was one of the most important intellectual references of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. He was also one of the most brilliant minds of Marxist analysis in the last third of the twentieth century. A New Yorker of Jewish origin, he was a professor at Binghamton University, director of the Fernand Braudel Center and president of the International Sociological Association. World-systems theory was his great contribution to historical sociology and contemporary social science. It was developed in his four-volume work *The Modern World-System, vol. I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* published in 1974; *The Modern World-System, vol. II: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600–1750*, published in 1980; *The Modern World-System, vol. III: The Second Great Expansion of the Capitalist World-Economy, 1730–1840s* from 1989; and *The Modern World-System, vol. IV: Centrist Liberalism Triumphant, 1789–1914*, published in 2011.

The theory of the world-system brought together the contributions of the best tradition of Marxist sociology and long-term historical analysis. Like all rigorous Marxists, Wallerstein started from Marx's work, specifically from the postulates of “Chapter IV Transformation of Money into Capital,” and the “General Formula of Capital,” in Volume I of *Capital, Concerning the Formation of the World System* (Marx [1867] 1994a). His analysis also starts from “Chapter XX Historical Considerations on Commercial Capital,” in Volume II of *Capital* (Marx [1885] 1994a).

With Karl Marx's work as his main intellectual reference, Immanuel Wallerstein was able to develop his work and his theory of the world-system thanks to other intellectual currents that he was able to combine in his new world-historical outlook. I am referring, in the first place, to the dependency theory developed by authors such as André Gunder Frank, Ruy Mauro Marini, Henrique Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and Theotonio dos Santos. Born out of the experiences of Latin American states in the search for new development paradigms and closely linked to ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), an organization linked to the UN. It sought to explain how the economic development of certain countries in the world-system had occurred in direct relation to the production of underdevelopment and structural subordination in the countries of the South. This subordination did not allow for economic development in those countries.

Another great reference for Immanuel Wallerstein was the French historian Fernand Braudel and his work *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (Braudel [1949] 1993). The method of historical analysis that Braudel called *longue durée* profoundly conditioned Wallerstein. It made him think of broader cycles of historical and economic development than those traditionally used in conventional historiography, always adjusted to medieval, modern, or contemporary periodization. Braudel's study of the Mediterranean regional system and continental economic systems brought Wallerstein very close to his future contribution known as the world-system. In addition to Fernand Braudel, another author of the Annales School who was to have a powerful influence on Immanuel Wallerstein was Pierre Chaunu. Key to Wallerstein's work would be the work entitled *Seville et l'Atlantique (1504–1650)* (Chaunu [1958]

1983) on the relationship between Seville as a port city of the Spanish Empire, the conquest of America and the mercantile-colonial administration.

The third major contribution to Wallerstein's work, which the author always acknowledged, was the current of Black Caribbean Marxism and Afro-American thought (Wallerstein 2000). I am referring to the theories of racial capitalism of Oliver Cox (1976) and Cedric J. Robinson (1983). Black Marxists from the Caribbean and the United States made Wallerstein understand that capitalism not only had a center and multiple peripheries, but that the processes of dispossession carried out by the logics of capitalist expansion and accumulation generated a new world-system of multiple centers and interdependencies. This would be analyzed by Wallerstein as a world-system, thus overcoming the unidirectional center-periphery view of the dependency school. Moreover, thanks to Afro-Caribbean thinkers, Wallerstein transferred the Braudelian model from the analysis of the Mediterranean regional system to the Atlantic system, thus forging a new analysis of the modern capitalist world-system.

A fourth contribution that is important to point out is the one that took place in the 1990s, during the long stays that Immanuel Wallerstein spent at the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra together with Boaventura de Sousa Santos. During these stays, Wallerstein had access to all the literature and historiography of the Portuguese Marxist tradition, whose main representative was Vitorio Godinho Magalhaes, and his masterpiece *Os Descobrimentos e a Economia Mundial* (Godinho 1963, 1970). In the Portuguese historian's works, Wallerstein was able to see the importance of the Iberian and Southern European empires in the genesis of the capitalist world-system. He was also able to understand the genesis of the Portuguese expansion and the role of the emerging Atlantic slave trade, whose precedent was the slave trade in the eastern Mediterranean as a result of the Crusades and the military tension between the Eastern Roman Empire, with its capital in Constantinople, and the Ottoman Empire, who took Constantinople in 1453 (renaming it Istanbul).

Arguably world-systems theory was the last major contribution to the historical, economic, and social analysis of the formation of the capitalist world system from the sixteenth century to the present. First, Wallerstein bequeathed the concept of historical capitalism, which makes it possible to critically relate the genesis of so-called Western modernity to the historical development of the capitalist mode. Immanuel Wallerstein's proposal also calls for thinking of the whole series of processes, collapses, wars of expansion and economic transformations of the sixteenth century as a great transformation constituting a new world system: the terminal crisis of feudalism, the military conquests of Mediterranean Europe, colonial expansion in the Atlantic, land concentration, new forms of export agriculture, the emerging slave trade, extractivist mining, the mercantile circulation of gold and silver in the new global financial system, the implosion of the Spanish Empire, and the emergence of new hegemonic states such as the Dutch, French and English. All this gave rise to a new world economic system that would shape the new era in history that we have called Western modernity.

The Legacy of Immanuel Wallerstein and his Theory of the World-System in Dialogue with the Knowledge of the Global South

On December 4th and 5th, 1998, the Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems, and Civilizations hosted the event “Transmodernity, Historical Capitalism, And Coloniality: A Post- Disciplinary Dialogue.” The event, organized by Ramón Grosfoguel and Agustín Lao-Montes, would bring together Enrique Dussel, Immanuel Wallerstein, and Aníbal Quijano as keynote speakers. Walter Mignolo, Nelson Maldonado Torres, Fernando Coronil, Bolívar Echeverría, and Silvya Winter also took part as speakers. This event has been considered the founding moment of the Grupo Modernidad/Colonialidad (Grosfoguel and Castro-Gómez 2007). After the event, the Coloniality Working Group was set up as a working group affiliated to the Fernand Braudel Center, of which Immanuel Wallerstein was director.

This was undoubtedly the first major current based on the work of Immanuel Wallerstein's work. This is what Dussel (2002) himself acknowledged in his work *World-System and Trans-Modernity*. The decolonial turn was part of the debate that the sociologist conducted in the late 1990s with the theorists of the Latin American modernity/coloniality current. The concept of “coloniality” first appeared in 1992, when Immanuel Wallerstein and Aníbal Quijano published *Americanity as a Concept, or the Americas in the Modern World* (Wallerstein and Quijano 1992). Wallerstein's affirmation of capitalism as a strictly economic transformation and his understanding of modernity as a cultural transformation, which came only in the nineteenth century following the French Revolution, was confronted in 1998 by the Latin American thinkers Enrique Dussel and Ramón Grosfoguel. They warned Wallerstein of the civilizational character of modernity, of which capitalism was only its economic dimension (Dussel 2008; Grosfoguel 2018). This turn could only be understood, as Professor Ramón Grosfoguel has pointed out, from the perspective of those who saw Europe coming, and not only from the position of those who saw an expanding Europe. The series of cultural, religious, and social implications that northern Europe expanded to southern Europe, the Mediterranean, the eastern Atlantic, the Caribbean, and Latin America shaped and constituted a new paradigmatic time that theorists and Latin Americans have called modernity/coloniality. Hence, the Latin American group began to theorize the new analytical tool known as the modern colonial world-system. Professor Ramón Grosfoguel (2018) has developed in his works the diversity of global hierarchies of domination that lead to the theorization of the modern/colonial/capitalist/racist/patriarchal world-system.

It has been the intellectuals of this Latin American current, and especially Enrique Dussel, who have pointed to the year 1492 not as the birth of modernity in the sense of a civilizing overcoming of the world. For Dussel, the Castilian conquest of 1492 in the Caribbean and Latin America implied the origin of the logics of colonialism, latifundia, political subordination and economic dependence (Dussel 1994). On the other hand, Ramón Grosfoguel (2013) has made a key reading of the year 1492 for the Andalusian social sciences, pointing out the importance of the year 1492 in the history of Andalusia in relation to the conquest of America, and recalling that the prelude to the American conquest must be placed in the War of Granada (1482–1492) which put an end to the last Muslim political authority in Western Europe.

Another transcendental contribution was made during Wallerstein's years in Portugal. In addition to delving into African Studies produced in the Portuguese and Lusophone sphere, Wallerstein was able to engage in an in-depth dialogue with the Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos. This dialogue produced several works that consolidated the analysis of Portugal as a semi-periphery. This categorization was very important for a new understanding of southern Europe in the 1990s and early decades of the twenty-first century. In this sense, we can consult Boaventura de Sousa Santos's (1992) work *O Estado, as Relações Salariais e o Bem-Estar Social na Semiperiferia: o Caso Português*, and an update of that work together with other essays in *La Difícil Democracia: una Mirada desde la Periferia Europea* (Sousa Santos 2017). Boaventura de Sousa Santos's postulates (2016), based on his dialogues with Wallerstein, began to define southern Europe as a historical subject. This makes it possible to generate an analysis that situates Andalusia as the center of world history. Andalusia is not only southern Europe, it is also the center of the relationship between southern Europe and Africa. It is also one of the centers of the world-empire constituted by the Castilian conquests in the south of the Iberian Peninsula, the Canary Islands, the Caribbean and Latin America.

World-Systems Theory and Historical Capitalism: Theoretical Tools for Thinking from Andalusia

In the field of Andalusian Studies and in the Departments and Faculties of History, Humanities, and Social Sciences of Andalusian universities, Immanuel Wallerstein has not been studied in the depth required. It was probably the economist and professor at the University of Seville, Carlos Arenas Posadas, who was the first to incorporate the legacy of Immanuel Wallerstein in his works on the Economic History of Andalusia. In his work *Poder, Economía y Sociedad en el Sur: Historia e Instituciones del Capitalismo Andaluz* (2015), Arenas Posadas points out:

The trajectory followed until today by the Andalusian economy is partly indebted to the institutional system created during the Castilian conquest, which gave way throughout the Modern Age to a capitalism built on a hierarchical political and value system, tinged with privileges inside and outside the market....It can be said that a growing part of the Andalusian territory was early involved in mercantile activity, even in the world-economy in Wallerstein's terms, as were the slave enclaves in sub-Saharan Africa, the plains east of the Elbe in the hands of the Junkers, the plantations of the Caribbean or the southern states of North America which participated in the global trade in arms, slaves, cotton and manufactured goods. (Arenas Posadas 2015: 119–120)

It is curious that Immanuel Wallerstein never referred to the relationship between the conquest of Al-Andalus and the conquest of the American territories, nor to the role of the new Andalusian extractive economies, nor to the role of the forms of coloniality applied by Castile to

the conquered Andalusian territories³. In this respect, two things could be argued. First, as a attentive reader of Braudel, Wallerstein inherited a vision of the Mediterranean that was very much centered on the French experience, hence a Mediterranean confined to the Balearic Sea, the Gulf of Lion, the Ligurian Sea, and the Tyrrhenian Sea: that is, the seas of the French world and those that historically connected France with Italy. This Braudelian line of interpretation was shared by the bulk of Fernand Braudel's disciples, including Pierre Chaunu. He assumed the territories conquered by the Crown of Aragon to be essentially Mediterranean, while the territories conquered by Castile were, from his point of view, essentially Atlantic. This reasoning always tended to include Andalusia solely in the Atlantic sphere, stripping Almería, Granada, and Málaga of their status as Mediterranean mercantile cities and the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada of its eminently Mediterranean character as a mercantile, tributary, and urban social formation. In the twelve volumes of Pierre Chaunu's (1983) *Séville et l'Atlantique (1504–1650)*, Andalusia is interpreted at all times from the historical experience of its Castilian capital, Seville. Above all from its character as a colonial capital and port of the Spanish Empire (Chaunu 1983). The Andalusian historical experience has been impoverished and denied by taking Seville as the only reference point, because it was the Empire's mercantile port.

Secondly, Wallerstein spent long time in Portugal, he studied certain African contexts in depth and he had a deep personal relationship with dependency theorists from the Arab-Muslim world such as Samir Amin⁴. Despite the fact that Wallerstein never incorporated the Eastern/tributary/mercantile social formations of southern Europe into his analysis (such as Al-Andalus, the Exarchate of Ravenna, or Byzantium) it is at the intersection of Arab-Muslim dependency theory and analyses of southern Europe as semi-periphery that we will find the theoretical tools to think of southern Europe as internal periphery. I refer to urban, tributary, and mercantile social formations in southern Europe and the implications of the internal conquests of the fourteenth century for the subsequent formation of the world-system.

These are therefore some of the lines along which to advance in sociological and historical research in order to incorporate Andalusia into critical discussions on the development of historical

³ The only author to incorporate a relatively solid analysis of Andalusia into the world system was Hans-Heinrich Nolte (1995) with his work "Internal Peripheries: From Andalusia to Tatarstan." The paper was published in 1995, in *Review*, a journal of the Fernand Braudel Center directed by Wallerstein. In it, he analyses the role of Andalusia and the Tarstan region as peripheral areas in the interior of Europe producing agricultural products. Both regions had been Muslim, one under the Umayyad Caliphate and the other under the Ottoman Sultanate. Both had been defined as prosperous agricultural regions in the centuries before the Castilian and Russian conquest. Later, after the Castilian conquest of the Emirate of Granada (1492) and after the Russian Christianisation of Khanate of Kazan (1713), they became peripheral, agriculturally productive, economically dependent, and politically subordinate regions. Nolte focuses on analysing the consequences of this pattern of dependency during the processes of industrialisation in Europe in the nineteenth century. The work is a first approximation. Is very interesting, but too intuitive. It is much better documented for the Tatar case than for the Andalusian case. The author only uses one work on the history of Andalusia, *A Handbook of History*, written by Antonio Dominguez Ortiz, in 1983.

⁴ Evidence of the intense personal and academic relationship that brought Immanuel Wallerstein and Samir Amin together is *Dynamics of Global Crisis*, edited by Samir Amin, Giovanni Arrighi, Frank Gunder and Immanuel Wallerstein in 1982.

capitalism. In this sense, there are two essential readings for rethinking Immanuel Wallerstein's (2004) work from Andalusia. Firstly, his article *A Descoberta da Economia-Mundial*, published in 2004 in the *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, published by the Centro de Estudos Sociais of the University of Coimbra. In this work, Wallerstein makes a strong intellectual critique of the paradigm of discovery developed by the hegemonic traditions of social science in Portugal. The idea of discovery was nothing more than a nationalist narrative that, throughout the nineteenth century, tried to place Portugal in the logic of the new imperial narratives. This was part of the colonial race that the colonial powers were developing in the heat of French hegemony and its new enlightened historiography. This critique of the paradigm of discovery allows Andalusian social science researchers to develop a new and profound critique of the Eurocentric and Hispano-centric legacies of the so-called reconquest, as Antonio Machado Núñez (Moreno 2008) had already developed in the old tradition of Andalusian social sciences, and as Blas Infante ([1915] 2010) and the whole tradition of contemporary Andalusian intellectuals have done.

But, without doubt, the key work for deepening historical and sociological knowledge of Andalusia is Volume I of *The Modern World System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the XVI Century* (Wallerstein 1974). Specifically, I refer to two chapters. The first is entitled “Medieval Prelude,” and the fourth “From Seville to Amsterdam: The Failure of Empire.” In them, Wallerstein tried to draw attention to the medieval background to the shaping of the world-system in its earliest genesis. Wallerstein went through the whole discussion on the genesis of capitalism carried out by the so-called British Marxist school with authors such as Earl J. Hamilton, Robert Brenner, Eric Hobsbawm and Perry Anderson, a discussion known as the Brenner debate (Aston and Philpin 1987). In his new theorisation, Wallerstein took up the importance of war in the processes of land accumulation that the author himself begins to describe as capitalist. The logics of accumulation produced by the Crusades allowed for a disruption of feudal property that gave rise not only to large processes of new accumulated land ownership, but also to an emerging genuine land market, which could well be the origin of the land market in Europe. This reflection was well developed by historiography and economic history in the Spanish State, in relation to the phenomena of the formation of the first historical *latifundismo* in Lower Andalusia, as a result of the military conquest of the Guadalquivir Valley and the consequences in terms of land distribution, repopulation, and the emergence of new markets for the purchase and sale of agricultural land. Immanuel Wallerstein's thesis for western and central Europe in the feudal Crusades connects in another way with Spanish historiography on the reconquest and its consequences for Andalusia, but these traditions had not been brought into dialogue. For Wallerstein, what happened in northern Europe had worldwide consequences, while for Spanish historiography, what happened in Andalusia only had consequences for the Crown of Castile. Another vitally important issue analyzed by Wallerstein in this work has to do with the political and administrative consequences of the series of wars of conquest that took place in Europe for the development of the subsequent modern state. In this sense, he noted that:

This state was a creation that came not from the sixteenth century but from the thirteenth century in Western Europe.... The boundaries that determine the borders

of France, England and Spain to this day had been more or less definitively established in a series of battles that took place between 1212 and 1214. (Wallerstein 1979: 45)⁵

Let us remember that between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries the feudal states conquered the territories of the Near East where they founded the so-called Crusader states. The Normans conquered from the Arabs and Byzantines the entire southern part of the Italic Peninsula. The Holy Roman Empire expanded into its eastern territories. The Crown of England conquered Wales and Scotland. The Crowns of Castile and Aragon conquered from Toledo (1085) to Seville (1248). For Wallerstein, these processes of internal expansion in Europe gave rise to the historical genesis of modern states. In the case of the peninsular kingdoms, the administrative and institutional shaping of the Christian crowns was closely linked to the conquests of Andalusian territories. The Crowns of Castile and León were definitively united under the reign of Ferdinand III the Saint, conqueror of Jaen, Cordoba, and Seville. Later, the definitive union of Castile and Aragon took place in the context of the War of Granada in 1492. Wallerstein also recognizes the importance of internal conquests in Europe as a phase anticipating European Atlantic expansion towards Africa and America. In Wallerstein's words: "the great explorations, the Atlantic expansion, were thus not the first but the second thrust of Europe" (Wallerstein 1979: 55).

In the fourth chapter of the same book, "From Seville to Amsterdam: The Failure of Empire" (Wallerstein 1979), Wallerstein developed his theory that the dissolution of the world-empire (the world system under Spanish imperial hegemony) gave way to the world-system. For the author, this could only happen when states took over the power of world hegemony; that is, when the new modern states dissolved the Spanish Empire. According to Wallerstein, a capitalist world-system could not mature and develop within it. Moreover, he finds one of the causes of the Spanish imperial disaster in the forms of oppression, domination, and expulsions that the empire carried out throughout the sixteenth century and the first decade of the seventeenth century. He notes in this regard:

Having expelled the Jews in 1492...having persecuted the Marranos and Erasmists throughout the 16th century, Spain expelled the last pseudo-religious minority, the Moriscos in 1609. The Moriscos numbered some three hundred thousand, and were mostly agricultural labourers, preferably located in Valencia and Andalusia. The expulsion of the Moors disrupted the internal social structure in Spain (Wallerstein 1979: 275).

Including the historical experience of Andalusia in international discussions on world-systems theory depends on the capacity for analysis and reflection of all researchers and social scientists in Andalusian universities. Of course Andalusia, from many points of view, played a transcendental role in shaping the modern colonial capitalist world system. It was a laboratory for the politics of conquest and colonial administration from the beginning of the thirteenth century

⁵ The literal quotations from this work are taken from its Spanish edition *La Agricultura Capitalista y los Orígenes de la Economía-Mundo Europea en el siglo XVI*, published in 1979 by Siglo XXI Editores.

(with the battle of Navas de Tolosa and the colonization of the Guadalquivir Valley). The conquering of Granada in 1492 was a prelude of the American expansion. The forced conversions of Moors to Christianity in 1499 had a great repercussions on the religious repression of the American Indigenous peoples. It also constitutes a important background to the formation of the first large estates by right of conquest. The political subordination of the four kingdoms of Jaen, Cordoba, Seville, and Granada to the Crown of Castile was a model for the formation of viceroyalty formation in the Americas. Now it is our turn to understand that part of the updating and renewal of Andalusian social sciences depends on integrating our research, from our own problems and with our own analytical frameworks, into the great critical discussions that take place in the dialogues of international critical thought.

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