



## Outlines of a Global Power-Field (GPF) Theory (Part 1)<sup>1</sup>

### Mapping the Dynamics of the Modern World-System and its Penetration in the Middle East c. 1850-1950

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#### Abstract

*This essay takes modern world-system theory and maps it into a political-economic field of power. This re-modeling of the theory better illustrates the diffuseness and the spatiality of the operations of global forces; thus, helping us have a greater appreciation of the durability and scope of Western economic and political hegemony across the world. Our exposition also tracks the structural transformation undergone by the Global Power-Field (GPF) throughout its history showing the evolving character of its dominance. Moreover, this field paradigm does not restrict its considerations to matters of political economy but also centralizes factors of politics and international relations that play a fundamental role in driving historical dynamics. The workings of this emerging model are then illustrated by a historical case study from the Middle East: The nineteenth and early twentieth century Ottoman Empire.*

**Keywords:** Modern World-System; Global Power-Field; Mode of Governmentality, Division of Sovereignty; Peripheralization; Ottoman Empire

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<sup>1</sup> “The New Shape of the Global Power-Field (GPF) After the Transformation of the Modern World-System Post-WWII (Part 2): Further Outlines in the Evolution of the Field and its Impact on the Global South” can be found in *Journal of World-Systems Research* Winter/Spring 2022, DOI 10.5195/JWSR.2021.1071



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The modern world-system was a historical theory proposed by the late Immanuel Wallerstein nearly 40 years ago as a model of explaining the systemic forces of political economy that have been driving global history for the past five hundred years. In this essay, I propose to take modern world-system theory and re-cast it as a political-economic field of power. The advantage of characterizing this theory as a global field rather than merely a system is that the field-model enhances our understanding of the diffuseness of power of the world-system and the spatial dimensions of its operations, while the notion of a system implies that such forces are more often directed. Understanding the diffuseness of the power of the modern world-system and its spatiality better illustrates how its operations work independently from the direct intervention of agents within its field and how such power reproduces itself despite its transformations over space and time. Moreover, the field model is better able to represent the unity underlying the seemingly dispersed economic, political, and social practices in a way that a system cannot.

My construction of this field of political economy derives its understanding from Pierre Bourdieu's theorization about the character of a social field. For Bourdieu, the social world consists of various fields (social structures) that define its operations.<sup>2</sup> Fields represent various arenas (social spaces) in the social world where various groups or individuals interact/compete with one another to meet their needs (e.g. religious, economic, political, etc.) (Rey 2007). The use of the field metaphor as the context that describes social interactions implies that there are social forces at work in social spaces, and that social fields are not neutral places of social interaction but are structured by relations of power. Therefore, a field is something that exerts a force on the agents that participate in it and structures them in certain positions within the social world (Rey 2007).

In framing the world-systems model following this conception of dynamic and structured space (i.e., a field), I am re-adjusting this notion that was originally designed for analysis of micro-level social systems to a macro-level political-economic system, whose scope is global. Drawing such an analog is feasible so long as one recognizes that the relationships of power are "scalable" and that their operations are not fixed to a limited type of spatial systems. Moreover, recasting the world-system model into a field will put greater emphasis on the character of relations and practices that generate power within this field than on the particular agents who occupy it.

Once I re-model the modern world-systems theory into a field paradigm, I will then show how this model works in historical cases. The particular case that I will draw from to illustrate this paradigm will come from the modern Middle East. This is particularly important as most applications and representations of the modern world-system draw less attention to this region; thus, making our efforts illustrate the relevance of world-systems theory to all parts of the globe. The historical case that is chosen for this study is the nineteenth and the early twentieth century Ottoman Empire.

Moreover, I will not simply expand the regional relevance of world-systems theory but will increase the scope of its analysis by centralizing political factors in addition to its economic

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<sup>2</sup> For an in-depth representation of the workings of a social field, see Bourdieu's article "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," especially p. 5; and his work *Outlines of a Theory of Practice* (1977: 72-73). Also, Rey (2007: 41).

emphasis. Although world-systems theory integrates political factors into its analysis it does not put great emphasis on political and international relations, as such relations are seen as secondary to the aims of the world-system which are fundamentally economic. This field model of the world-system will give greater centrality to political dynamics even though world-system theorists argue that there is no central institution like a world government or a world empire that would give centrality to political ends in the same way that the theory posits a world economy based on a unitary global market. Moreover, it is argued that such a centralized political institution would run contrary to the fundamental economic (capitalist) goals of the world-system (Wallerstein 2004).

Yet the lack of a centralized state institution governing the world-system like a world empire does not negate the existence of unitary political practices and ends within the system. Such a power-field is able to produce a global governance regime without needing the machinations of a global government leading to a situation where there is “governance without government.”<sup>3</sup> For this political dimension, this GPF model will employ Foucault’s notion of governmentality<sup>4</sup> to construct a modality of global governance that exercises a dispersed form of administrative power over populations, states, and regions without the necessity for the direct intervention of a centralized governing institution like a (super) state to enable the operations of this power. In essence, this field model of the world-system centralizes issues of international relations in addition to issues of political economy.

Before I start delineating the fundamental dynamics of this field, there will be a few aspects of the world-system that this model will not address directly. First, the focus of this outline will be on macro inter-regional relations, concentrating on the relations between the core and the peripheral regions of the power-field and the political and economic forces at play within it, rather than the internal dynamics of each its zones. For example, in my presentation, I ignore the micro-dynamics of class relations within any given state and the impact of those relations on its policies or the state’s interactions with its citizens. As this model is a mere outline, it is not intended to address every dynamic and development within the world-system. Moreover, this field model only represents the dynamics of the world-system from the point (c. 1850) when the entire globe was allegedly incorporated (Wallerstein 2011). Second, since we are talking about a field that denotes actions in space, the focus of the exposition will be on how power is engendered through practice rather than the ideological undercurrents that motivate historical action and economic/political behavior.

Thirdly, it may seem that when discussing marginalized zones within the GPF that these regions were passive agents who were unable to resist the forces within the field and were totally subject to the direction of its power flows; hence, giving the impression that the field is structurally deterministic. Historically speaking, this representation may be an oversimplification, yet what I

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<sup>3</sup> See Cox 1994: 48-49 and Helleiner 1994: 173.

<sup>4</sup> A neologism by which Foucault meant the rationality and practice of governance as a form of activity whose aim is to shape and affect the conduct of some subject and where its workings are not contingent upon their identification with the specific functions of any governing institution. See Foucault article (1991) titled “Governmentality,” as well as Gordon (1991: 2) for more on this notion.

am trying to capture in this model are the preponderant forces and actions that define the field, and hence, some generalization is necessary for this representation. Yet what should be understood from this model is not that actions are determined by the power dynamics of the field, but rather that the basis of this field's power is that it sets the conditions for actions within it; thus, putting constraints on its agent's power to act. With these stated limitations of the model, I can now start the exposition.

### **A Brief Synopsis of the Modern World-System**

Before re-configuring world-systems theory into a field model, it behooves us to present a cursory outline of its basic components to contextualize for the reader how the components of this system also function as the geopolitical poles in a global field of power. According to the original author of world-system theory, Immanuel Wallerstein, the modern world-system is a global order that started to come into existence in sixteenth century Europe and eventually encompassed the entire globe. Its basic characteristic was its institutionalization of a globally scaled division of labor regime that structured economic relationships between various regions of the world (Wallerstein 2004). Wallerstein has defined the geo-economic formations that structured this system over time and the relationships that developed between these formations as follows:

(1) **Core Zones:** These are the regions that benefited the most from the world-system and initially consisted of Northwestern European states like England, France, and Holland. These states developed strong state machinery and ideology of national culture which served as an ideological mask for the justification and maintenance of the growing economic disparities that resulted from a pronounced increase in wealth. (Wallerstein 2011). Furthermore, the core regions were able to acquire cheap raw materials from peripheral regions for their industries and accumulate large amounts of capital by exporting the finished products (Duchrow 1992).

(2) **Peripheral Zones:** These were regions in the world that represented the counter opposite of the core zones since they had weak state machinery and they were either non-autonomous, like colonies, or had low levels of autonomy since they were in semi-colonial situations (Wallerstein 2011). Initially, these regions were represented by Eastern Europe and Latin America, but by the nineteenth century included Asia and Africa. These peripheral zones exported their raw materials to the core regions. Goods produced in these zones were designed to be traded abroad in the capitalist world economy and not for internal consumption. So even if the economies of these regions were self-sustaining before being incorporated in the capitalist world-system they were now rendered dependent as each region now specialized in producing one crop or good that was determined to be the most productive and profitable for trade in the world economy (Wallerstein 2004).

(3) **Semi-Peripheral Zones:** These regions/states were neither peripheral nor core, although they may have been one of those two at one time in the early history of the capitalist world-system, but eventually declined or rose in status to become semi-peripheral states in the system. They lie somewhere in between the political-economic spectrum that defines core and peripheral regions.

Examples of this type of state that were core states yet declined over time in the history of the world system are Spain and Portugal. These states were often exploited by the core states but were themselves exploiters of peripheral regions. For example, Spain imported gold and silver from the Americas that had been extracted through forced labor but did not use this capital to establish their manufacturing sector, and instead used it to buy manufactured products from the core regions (Wallerstein 2011).

To reiterate, the key ordering principle that defines the relationship between these geographic zones is economic: a global division of labor (Wallerstein 2004). Wallerstein elaborates on the economic character of this relationship that delineates these geographic configurations as follows:

The axial division of labor of a capitalist world-economy divides production into core-like products and peripheral products. Core-periphery is a relational concept. What we mean by core-periphery is the degree of profitability of the production processes. Since profitability is directly related to the degree of monopolization, what we essentially mean by core-like production processes are those that are controlled by quasi-monopolies. Peripheral processes are then those that are truly competitive. When exchange occurs, competitive products are in a weak position and quasi-monopolized products are in a strong position. As a result, there is a constant flow of surplus-value from the producers of peripheral products to the producer of core-like products. This has been called unequal exchange. (Wallerstein 2004: 28)

What we take away from this statement is that the current geographic configurations of the world-system are not fixed, and vary over time by how well state actors can redefine their economic relations that demarcate the space they occupy in the system. In this regard, Wallerstein states:

What is a core-like process today will become a peripheral process tomorrow. The economic history of the modern world-system is replete with the shift, or downgrading, of products, first to semiperipheral countries, and then to peripheral ones. If circa 1800 the production of textiles was possibly the preeminent core-like production process, by 2000 it was manifestly one of the least profitable peripheral production processes. (Wallerstein 2004: 28)

Hence, states can shift their economically determined positions within the system if they change the character of their economic practices. So, the system remains historically dynamic as it identifies the positions of a state within the system based on economic processes and not necessarily on their geographic locations even though the current configuration of the world-system concentrates power and wealth in Western countries (a core zone). But even though states may theoretically have the capacity to change their positions within the system, the power dynamics within the system are tilted in favor of those states which currently occupy the stronger positions in its hierarchy to maintain their hegemony, making it very difficult for weaker states to ameliorate their standing.

### **Re-Modeling the Modern World-System**

The structuring mechanism for the operations of power generating the field of the modern world-system was the establishment of asymmetrical relations between the various geo-economic and geo-political zones within it. What asymmetry implies in this field is the existence of structural inequalities and imbalances within the system of relations, which produce the forces that structure the political-economic actions and practices which take place within that dynamic space. Hence, it is these asymmetrical relations that represent the lines of force within this distinctive field that make it effectual. This field's operative principle is the institutionalized structural imbalances that have been globalized and that define the stratified positions occupied by the international actors within it. These underlying organizational asymmetries tilt the balance of power in favor of some actors over others and enable certain actions while disabling others; thus, fostering hegemonic relationships within the field.

The core zone within the field represents the center of power because it is from this zone and for this zone that these asymmetrical relations are generated. An example of such unbalanced relations between the zones within this power-field; between c.1850 (when it is alleged that this political-economic system was put in place globally [Wallerstein 2011]) and c.1950 (when such a system was undergoing an internal re-alignment [Wallerstein 1996]) the dominant political reality operating globally was colonialism. Core (European) states (e.g., the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Netherlands, Russia, Spain, and Portugal), brought more than 80 percent of the global landmass under their direct or indirect colonial domination (Agnew 2003). Colonial control not only meant political hegemony over such a large region where colonized states lost sovereignty over governance of their nations and lands, but also meant the setting up of imbalanced economic relations between colonizing core countries and colonized or semi-colonized peripheral and semi-peripheral countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

At the heart of this uneven economic relationship between zones in the world-system was a global division of labor that placed the control of the means of production in the core zone. It is precisely this economic arrangement that generated the asymmetrical relations of power in the field that induced a peripheralization process that economically marginalized other regions of the world, placing the core regions at the center of the global economy. By peripheralization, we mean the generation of political and economic forces that alienate certain regions of the world from their historically established modes of production which turned them from self-subsisting economies into commodity economies that were dependent on and in the service of the world market.

Hence, peripheralization was a process that represented both attractive and repulsive forces within the GPF. On the one hand, it was a process that induced certain regions in the globe to produce cash crops and mineral resources that gravitated towards the core region where the means of production were concentrated to make those resources into finished manufactured products for the world market. On the other hand, it was a process that disincentivized, and in some cases actively destroyed, the modes of production in other regions alienating those regions from their capacities for independent production, thereby impoverishing their economies. So, peripheralization induces the centripetal forces of this emerging power-field whereby wealth

continuously and automatically flows from the periphery to the center and at the same time generates centrifugal forces that marginalize the periphery from its indigenous productive capacity. This is the precise character of the asymmetrical arrangement establishing a relation of domination of the core over the peripheral zones.

The actual methods and practices by which peripheralization processes were employed to establish relations of domination will be explored later in this essay when historical illustrations of this process will be discussed. For now, I am simply drawing the theoretical framework for it. But what is distinctive about this mode of domination that takes place through this field of power is that it generates relations of domination without the necessary or direct intervention of agents. Bourdieu expounds on the character of this type of domination as opposed to traditional forms of domination saying:

In societies which have no “self-regulating market”.... Relations of domination can be set-up and maintained only at the cost of strategies which must be endlessly renewed, because the conditions required for a mediated, lasting appropriation of other agents’ labor, services, and homage have been brought together. By contrast, domination no longer needs to be exerted in a direct, personal way when it is entailed in possession of the means (economic and cultural capital) of appropriating the mechanisms of the field of production, which tend to assure their field of cultural production by their very functioning, independently of any deliberate intervention by the agents. (Bourdieu 1977: 183-184)

Bourdieu calls the freeing of these processes of domination from the intervention of agents “objectification” (Bourdieu 1977), presumably because subjects (or agents) are no longer required to constantly maintain the structures of hegemony once its order has been established. Objectification produces “permanence and cumulativeness of material and symbolic acquisitions which can subsist without the agents having to recreate them continuously and in their entirety by deliberate actions” (Bourdieu 1977: 184). It is the objectification of peripheralization that makes its processes autonomous in carrying out its function of alienating particular regions and states from their established modes of production that made them self-subsistent. Furthermore, it is this objectification that marginalized them within the modern order of the global economy without the persistent involvement of those subjects for which this established order benefits most.

At the same time that there is automaticity in the GPF, there is a diffuseness in the operations of its power given the elusiveness in attributing political and economic actions to real actors. The lack of direct and persistent intrusion in the processes of this field disperses the operations of power within it, which masks the imbalances that those operations produce, thereby creating an unequal playing field amongst the various actors. In this sense, peripheralization, as a particular form of the operation of power that is a defining characteristic of this field, is a diffuse force that is at play aligning the actions of the agents towards the specific ends of the world-system even though some of the agents within the field are pursuing other ends. This is not to say that peripheralization is a determinative force and that those subjects who are most adversely affected by it are unable to resist its machinations. But resisting its influence is difficult when one is unable to locate the locus

of this force in the direct actions of agents, since the established structural asymmetry within the field creates a dispersion of power which functions to incentivize certain actions and penalize others. In this regard, Wallerstein asserts:

If we say that a system “gives priority” to such endless accumulation, it means that there exist structural mechanisms by which those who act with other motivations are penalized in some way, and are eventually eliminated from the social scene, whereas those who act with the appropriate motivations are rewarded and, if successful, enriched. (Wallerstein 2004: 24)

### **The Political Configuration Operating within the Global Power-Field**

It is important to recognize the historical context for the establishment of the GPF required, in addition to the institution of economic practices, the undertaking of certain geopolitical actions that would institute and maintain its global reach. This undertaking meant that core states had to assert direct territorial control and/or determinative political influence over the majority of the world under what may be called a concomitant geopolitical order of colonialism. Analogous to the capitalist economic hierarchy of the world-system, the colonial order also followed a tripartite global division of regions or states into colonizers (primarily Northwestern European states) which coincided with the core states, the colonized (mostly African, Asian, and Latin American states) that coincided with peripheral states, and semi-colonized (like the Ottoman Empire and China) that perhaps coincided with the semi-peripheral states. There were strong military states that were colonizers like Spain and Russia but because their economic mode of production was not capitalist, they did not constitute core states in the system and were also assigned a semi-peripheral status. Without such geopolitical maneuvering by core-colonizing states, it's hard to conceive how this power-field would have become so rooted in the political-economic structure of the planet. This sort of political domination was required to establish the global economic reach of this emerging power-field because taking over the direct sovereign control of most of the world's territories facilitated capitalist transformations within those territories for the GPF to become operational. Yet at the same time, what distinguishes modern colonial domination from pre-modern territorial conquests was the capitalist economic arrangement (a division of labor) that was put into place between core (or colonial) and peripheral regions (colonized) through the re-ordering of the economies of colonized states to serve the ends of the colonial metropole.<sup>5</sup> So, the global territorial control under colonialism and the spread of the economic practices of capitalism were symbiotic occurrences in the establishment of the modern world-system.

It is this symbiosis between political and economic practices that generated a geopolitical field of this world-system because the economic peripheralization of colonized regions was concomitant to their political peripheralization under colonialism. The character of the political exercise of power under colonialism was of a different order from the economic exercise of power.

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<sup>5</sup> See Luxemburg (2003: 349-350), who is one of the earliest theorizers of how this re-ordering of colonized economics took place in the nineteenth century.

Yet it still represented a form of peripheralization in the political sphere that is analogous to its economic counterpart. Political peripheralization essentially consisted of stripping and/or minimizing the political sovereignty of colonized or semi-colonized states. This was accomplished through direct military control of the governing apparatuses of those states/regions as was the case in colonization or through the signing of extraterritoriality treaties that minimized the economic and political autonomy of what can be called semi-colonized states. Historically speaking, capitulatory agreements between core and peripheral states preceded and became the pretext for direct colonization. In either case, the processes of peripheralization were in operation even in the political sphere in the form of marginalizing the political sovereignty of weaker states by the militarily and economically stronger core states.

Thus, modern colonialism signified a new modality of political power which differed from traditional forms of hegemony like the pre-modern dynastic imperial rule.<sup>6</sup> It was distinct because it wedded conventional modes of political dominance and military territorial acquisition with the added dimension of the seizing of a territory's modes of production, transforming their economic output in such a way that would integrate them into the global capitalist order.<sup>7</sup> Hence, it was as a new mode of governmentality in political terms similar to the way that capitalism represented a distinct mode of production in economic terms. That is because, within the political colonial project, capitalism was deeply embedded in its structures of dominance. At the same time, the world's colonial order was deeply implicated in capitalism, in that the capitalist project was sustained and achieved its global reach through colonial expansion.

What was this "mode of governmentality" that created a core-centered political order that was co-terminus with the economic order in the world-system? Essentially, it meant the application of political techniques of peripheralization which progressively displaced native political-legal structures and norms with European-based laws and legal systems, which maintained the political preponderance of core-colonial states over those that were economically peripheral and politically dominated. Such political peripheralization of native normative systems first took place through direct impositions of colonizing states in their seizure of political power of colonized states or through the securing of capitulations and extraterritorial privileges that ceded some of the political sovereignty of those states that were not (yet) directly colonized.

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<sup>6</sup> Contrasting dynastic imperial rule to modern colonialism with reference to its relationship to the economy, Luxemburg says about Muslim imperial rule in India: "For none of the successive Mahometan conquerors had ultimately violated the internal social life of the peasant masses and its traditional structure. They only set up their own governors in the provinces to supervise military organisation and to collect taxes from the population. All conquerors pursued the aim of dominating and exploiting the country, but none was interested in robbing the people of their productive forces and in destroying their social organisation. In the Moghul Empire, the peasant had to pay his annual tribute in kind to the foreign ruler, but he could live undisturbed in his village and could cultivate his rice on his *sholgura* as his father had done before him." (2003: 352).

<sup>7</sup> Identifying this mutually implicated relationship between capitalism and colonialism over a century ago, Luxemburg states: "Hence, derives the vital necessity for capitalism in its relations with colonial countries to appropriate the most important means of production. Since the primitive associations of the natives are the strongest protection for their social organisations and for their material bases of existence, capital must begin by planning for the systematic destruction and annihilation of all the non-capitalist social units which obstruct its development" (2003: 350).

This displacement of native political and normative institutions facilitated and legitimized the intervention of core/colonial states in the affairs of peripheral/colonized states creating an axial division of sovereignty of policing and policed states; an arrangement that was analogous to the axial division of labor in terms of political economy. This practice of division of sovereignty was represented by the nineteenth century policy of “standard of civilization” which was upheld by core European states, that advocated the non-interference between these states in their internal affairs yet legitimated the interference of these core states in the affairs of non-European states on the basis that they were not sufficiently “civilized” to handle their activities (Buzan and Lawson 2015: 198). But more importantly, the progressive institutionalization of core-based (European) legal codes and systems in peripheral/colonized regions generated the conditions for the objectification (in the Bourdieuan sense expounded upon earlier) of the means of political and cultural domination. This objectification would eventually obviate the need for the direct interventions of the hegemon to maintain their preeminence in the GPF after the period of colonial rule ended, as it would create a politico-legal architecture that fostered structural imbalances in the GPF that tilted political power towards the core regions.

This objectification happened when the institutionalization of such foreign laws began to change the material conditions (e.g., modes of production, social and political practices, etc.) on the ground. This change established the social environment for the durability of those political norms even when the political/military force that initially grounded them was no longer imminently present. Once this matrix was in place, it generated the diffuse vectors of power that allowed core states to maintain their capacity to act on the actions<sup>8</sup> of the colonized states without direct intervention. It is the indiscrete and dispersed character of the power relations that create the capacity for core states to “act at a distance,” and generate the asymmetrical and stealth dynamic of the GPF that tilts the political and economic preponderance towards core states.

This is a key difference between the colonial (and neocolonial) modes of domination and those of pre-modern imperial conquests in its greater ability to objectify or institutionalize its power differential (hegemony) in the very fabric of the societies it dominated.<sup>9</sup> It was the diffuse and lasting character of the power relations of that mode of governmentality that generated the political (and economic) force vectors that comprised the GPF.<sup>10</sup> Another important difference is that colonialism differs from pre-modern imperialism not only in wedding political domination to economic transformation but also in terms of political practice wherefor traditional imperialism,

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<sup>8</sup> Foucault’s conception of power proposes that it does not necessarily work directly on the subject but works on their actions. It is “a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of acting. *A set of actions upon other actions*” (Foucault 1982: 789, emphasis added).

<sup>9</sup> As an illustration of the differences in these modes of governmentality, I have already pointed out in a previous footnote that Luxemburg noted how traditional forms of empire never disrupted the modes and means of production of the societies they ruled in the same way that modern colonialism has done.

<sup>10</sup> Mann argues that although modern colonial empires were realized through military force as the case for ancient empires, the difference between the two lies in the processes of consolidation after these conquests where in modern imperialism economic means became the dominant form of consolidation in ways that ancient empires could not do (Mann 1988).

the bifurcation of political practices between colony and metropole did not exist. Political practices were fairly homogenous throughout the empire as both colony and metropole were both subjected to the same imperial law. On the other hand, political practices were bifurcated between colony and metropole in colonialism (e.g., constitutional and democratic practices in the metropole, but alien and undemocratic impositions in the colony). This resulted in the colony's alienation from its indigenous modes of governance and their exclusion from participating in the modes of governance of the privileged metropole. All of these factors over time changed the political conditions in the colonies and perpetuated their compromised sovereignty that made direct military intervention no longer necessary for the continuous domination of core states.

It was through such political methods that colonialism was able to produce a perpetual situation of compromised political sovereignty that allowed for direct intervention or influence by core states in affairs of peripheral states without the reverse scenario being true. It is this division of sovereignty regime in global affairs that generated the political imbalances necessary for the operation of the GPF along with the concomitant re-ordering of economic relations in the world. There was a mutual embeddedness between the colonial mode of governmentality and the capitalist modes of production because it was through political actions that core states harnessed the productive power of the colonial population and its territory to serve capitalist ends; while at the same time the instituting of an axial division of labor regime perpetuated the political power of core states. It is the ensemble of such political and economic powers and practices that are fundamental to defining the GPF.

### **Incorporation of the Periphery into the Emerging Global Power-Field (GPF): Integration by Peripheralization of the Ottoman Empire.**

The incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into the GPF and its transformation from agrarian-based social formations with tributary/redistributive model of political economy (Bromely 2005; Sunar 1987) to one that served capitalist ends was a lengthy and varied process that differed from one region of the empire to another. But underlying all of those varied experiences was the capacity of the core region, consisting of Western European states, to peripheralize other geo-economic regions from their self-sustaining modes of production to ones that created dependencies on core states. Perhaps it is this attribute of having the capacity to peripheralize that defines core regions or states in the GPF. The key elements to this capacity to peripheralize were its wealth-generating capitalistic modes of production, efficient bureaucratic political administration, and technological advancements that gave European states greater power to impose a new political and economic order on the rest of the world for their advantage.

Perhaps the earliest most definitive historical events that created the political conditions facilitating the incorporation<sup>11</sup> of the Ottoman Empire in the emerging GPF were its series of

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<sup>11</sup> Here I am distinguishing between actual processes of incorporation and peripheralization, and the political and economic conditions that facilitate those processes and make them historically possible.

military defeats to the Russian Empire spanning from the mid-eighteenth to the early nineteenth century in the Ottoman-Russian wars of 1768-1772, 1787-1792, and 1806-1812, and the Russian annexation of the Crimea in 1783 (Hinnebusch 2011; McCarthy 1997; McGowen 1994). Moreover, in the peace treaty Küçük Kaynarca (1774) that ended the Ottoman-Russian wars of 1768-1772, “the Russians also declared their right to intervene in support of Greek Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire” (McCarthy 1997: 196), which was an example of the sort of extra-territorial concessions to foreign powers that various European states would repeatedly impose on the Ottoman Empire for the remaining century and half of its existence. These concessions were the sort of political practices that were indicative of the operations of the division of sovereignty regime that would characterize the emerging GPF.<sup>12</sup>

The Ottoman state’s political and military weakness, along with its economic fragility symbolized by the revenue losses it had experienced before the nineteenth century,<sup>13</sup> were some of the conditions that set the stage for its peripheralization within the GPF. These factors impelled it to undertake a reform of its military, government bureaucracy, and economic institutions during the nineteenth century to catch up with Europe’s technical superiority. These reforms were known as the Tanzimat (c. 1839-1876), but the irony is that these efforts unwittingly facilitated the economic and political peripheralization processes of the Empire (Hinnebusch 2011) and hastened its integration in the stratified GPF.

It is around this period, and due to this new political orientation towards the “modernization” of the Ottomans, a series of asymmetrical relationships were established between them and several Western European states like Britain, France, and Germany who were the quintessential representatives of the core zone within the increasingly expanding GPF. The main method of establishing these asymmetrical relations between the Ottoman Empire and these core zone states was their obtaining from the Ottomans what was known as capitulations that gave various economic and political advantages to these European states and their members. These capitulations consisted of various extra-territoriality agreements and economic concessions that granted European state and non-state actors special rights and privileges that no one else enjoyed (Hinnebusch 2011). How these core states were able to extract these capitulations from the Ottomans was in large part due to their economic and military superiority which induced or cajoled the Empire into such unfavorable agreements. The Ottoman Empire was very much in need of revitalization that depended on the economic, military, and political support of these European nations if it were to avoid total collapse.

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<sup>12</sup> Extra-territoriality and other politically capitulatory concessions will be discussed in more detail in the later portion of this section.

<sup>13</sup> There is disagreement between scholars as to the causes of decline of the Ottoman state’s revenue but Sunar (1987), Kasaba and Wallerstein (1987), and others [see the details of this debate in Frank (1998) and Pamuk (1994)] argue that the influx of silver to Europe from its colonies in the Americas during the sixteenth century and its subsequent global inflationary effects played a role in the decline of the Ottoman treasury. If this assertion is true, then this represents an early economic power-vector of peripheralization that core regions used to gain advantage in the world economy in general and the Ottoman Empire in particular.

An example of economic concessions was the Anglo-Turkish Convention of 1838, which was agreed to by the Ottomans under duress to gain support of the British against the Ottoman governor of Egypt Mohammad Ali who sought secession from the Ottoman Empire<sup>14</sup> and attempted to seize the Ottoman province of Syria (Quateart 1994). This treaty removed all protectionist measures on Ottoman goods and manufacturing and allowed for foreign merchants to freely engage in trade throughout the empire (Quateart 1994). This protectionism meant that raw materials were sold to the guilds at controlled prices by local or foreign suppliers. Yet the Convention removed these measures that protected Ottoman manufacturers from European competition. This elimination of protectionism and the rise of the price of raw materials left most Ottoman manufacturing guilds bankrupt. The eventual extinction of Ottoman manufacturing guilds made the Ottoman economy into a supplier of raw materials whose market value was determined by European manufactures (Hinnebusch 2011).<sup>15</sup> This illustrates the economic peripheralizing process of turning the Ottoman Empire from a manufacturing economy to one that would simply supply raw materials and cash crops to the manufacturing activities of core states.

To add to the Ottoman's economic woes, the new tax collecting scheme implemented during the Tanzimat reforms proved, in the long run, to be inefficient and did not bring in the necessary revenues for the empire to adequately finance its modernization projects. The money that was collected had to be spent on defense against the ever-growing European (particularly Russian) aggression on Ottoman territories during the nineteenth century (McCarthy 1997). Even when a good deal of the budget was spent on defense, this was still insufficient to finance the wars that the Ottomans were drawn into in the nineteenth century, such as the Crimean War of 1853-1856. This meant that they had to borrow from European bankers on unfavorable terms, where they would only receive half of the contracted debt and would have to pay the full amount back with interest, which was justified by European financial circles for the supposed risk of lending to the Ottoman state (McCarthy 1997; Pamuk 1994). These actions plunged them into debts that they were unable to pay back, which resulted in actions by the European powers that made them lose more of their economic sovereignty.<sup>16</sup>

These onerous debts resulted in the Ottoman fiscal crisis in the 1870s where they were unable to pay off foreign loans, so they had them rescheduled under the supervision of a new foreign

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<sup>14</sup> Although Egypt was de facto independent of the Ottoman Empire in all but name and the Ottoman suzerainty over it was primarily symbolic.

<sup>15</sup> Wallerstein cites the observations of historians on the economic effects of the adoption of these policies on the Ottoman economy in the nineteenth century: "Despite a whole series of political and economic countermeasures attempted by the Sublime Porte beginning with the measures of Selim III in 1793-1794, by 1856 one English author talks of the fact that manufacturing industry has 'greatly declined' in Turkey and that Turkey now exported raw materials which later returned there in a manufactured form. By 1862, another British author's comment has an even more decisive tone: 'Turkey is no longer a manufacturing country'" (Wallerstein 2011: 151)

<sup>16</sup> Speaking about the functions of foreign loans to peripheral states in the capitalist world order, Luxemburg says: "Though foreign loans are indispensable for the emancipation of the rising capitalist states, they are yet the surest ties by which the old capitalist states maintain their influence, exercise financial control and exert pressure on the customs, foreign and commercial policy of the young capitalist states." (Luxemburg 2003: 401)

administration. In 1881, the Ottoman Empire was forced to turn over its finances to the European-run Public Debt Administration, which was staffed by Europeans and empowered to collect taxes and pay off the empire's creditors from the proceeds. This administration proved to be efficient tax collectors, but a lot of that income that should have gone to finance the state was siphoned off by the Public Debt Administration (Hinnebusch 2011; McCarthy 1997; Quataert 1994). The Ottoman state wanted to invest to develop their industry, but the Europeans wanted them to develop their agriculture (read: cash crops) from which Europeans received their main profits. European powers only sought to keep the Ottoman state strong enough so that it could pay its debts, and not become independent (McCarthy 1997).<sup>17</sup> Of the approximately LT 400 million that was borrowed between 1854-1914, 34 percent went to paying off the difference between the actual and the issued debt, 45 percent went to liquidate previous debt; six percent went to military expenditures, five percent to cover budget deficits, and only five percent was productively invested, while the remaining five percent was put to other uses. The Ottoman state benefited very little from these debts (McCarthy 1997).

So what projects were the portion of loans productively invested used for in the first place? The loans which were often procured from private European investors were put into projects that would facilitate the export of Ottoman cash crops to core countries (Western Europe) in the growing capitalist world-system<sup>18</sup> and thus facilitating the incorporation of peripheral states like the Ottoman regions into the system. So, loan money often went into projects like building railroads and ports to expedite the transport of goods in the capitalist commodity chain<sup>19</sup> and not towards factories that would strengthen the productive capacities of these countries by investing in manufacturing, for example. Moreover, these loans to the Ottoman Empire represented

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<sup>17</sup> In regards to keeping weak states functional enough so as to exploit them, Wallerstein claims that this process is important for incorporating new states in the capitalist system: "From the point of view of the existing interstate system, the ideal situation in an area undergoing incorporation is the existence of state structures which are neither too strong nor too weak. If they are too strong, they may be able to prevent necessary transfrontier flows on the basis of considerations other than that of maximizing the accumulation of capital in the world-economy. And if they are too weak, they may not be able to prevent others within their territory from interfering with these flows. At the end of the process of incorporation, one should expect to find states, which internally, had bureaucracies strong enough to affect directly in some ways the production processes, and which were linked externally into the normal diplomatic and currency networks of the interstate system." (Wallerstein 2011: 171)

<sup>18</sup> See Owen (1981: 110) about the growth of Ottoman agricultural exports to Europe in this period. Speaking about the same process of exploitation in India, Frank says: "Two of the principal instruments the British used to drain India of its capital were the railroads and the debt. The railroads were not only the physical instruments used to restructure the economy in order to be able to suck raw materials out and pump manufactured commodities in along the right of way. The Indians were also obliged to pay themselves for the installation of this exploitative mechanism on their soil. (Frank 1978: 147).

<sup>19</sup> Luxemburg addresses the issue of the building of transportation infrastructure in Ottoman lands in from the mid-nineteenth century by European powers: "In the fifties and sixties, British capital built the railway lines Symrna-Aydin-Diner and Smyrna-Kassaba-Alasehir, obtained the concession to extend the line to Afyon Karahisar and also leased the first tract for the Anatolian railway Ada-Bazar-Izmid. French capital gradually came to acquire influence over part of the railway building during this time. In 1888, German capital appeared on the scene. It took up 60 percent of the shares in the new merger of international interests, negotiated principally with the French capitalist group represented by the *Banque Ottomane*. International capital took up the remaining 40 percent" (Luxemburg 2003: 419).

investments of stagnant European (money) capital because of the saturated investment market in Europe, which was looking for new opportunities of investment (productive capital) to accumulate more wealth.<sup>20</sup> Eventually, the ultimate bearer of the burden of these loans was the Ottoman population who had to pay higher taxes on their yields so that the Ottoman state can pay back these exploitative loans to its European creditors (Luxemburg 2003).<sup>21</sup>

So, it was in this fashion, that European states and particularly those core states within the capitalist world-system were able to economically under develop and semi-colonize the Ottoman state and society to keep it in a dependent position within the new international political and economic order that European states were forging for their benefit. So, the Tanzimat reforms achieved little in terms of strengthening the Ottoman state and keeping it independent from foreign control, which had been their main purpose. But what the Tanzimat did do was strengthen the state's control over civil society in form of greater government centralization (McCarthy 1997; Voll 1982). It was more to the advantage of European states to keep a single, centralized Ottoman state because it was "easier and more profitable to dominate the empire's market through privileges and concessions" than it would have been the case of a fragmented polity (Quataert 1994: 761).<sup>22</sup> Thus, European states encouraged the increasing centralization and bureaucratization of the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century.

Before I discuss the forms of political peripheralization induced by this emerging field of power, let me subject this historical presentation of events to a GPF analysis. What can be deduced from this historical discussion is that there were several economic practices by core states that represented vectors of power within the field that induced peripheralizing effects. One such practice was the creation of a system of debt peonage that acted as a power vector that gave operability to this emerging global field to encourage peripheral regions to surrender their factors of productions to core regions. It was demonstrated in the case of the Ottoman Empire how unfavorable loans procured from the European powers led first to the surrendering of the Ottoman

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<sup>20</sup> For details about the processes and purposes European capitalist investments in the form of foreign loans, see Luxemburg 2003: 407-408.

<sup>21</sup> Explaining the structural burden caused by foreign loans on the Ottoman peasant, Luxemburg says: "German capital builds railways, ports and irrigation works in Asiatic Turkey; in all these enterprises it extorts new surplus value from the Asiatic whom it employs as labour power. But this surplus value must be realised together with the means of production from Germany (railway materials, machinery, etc.) How is it done? In part by commodity exchange, which is brought about by the railways, the dockyards, etc., and nurtured in Asia Minor under conditions of natural economy. In part, i.e. in so far as commodity exchange does not grow quickly enough for the needs of capital, by using force, the machinery of the state, to convert the national real income into commodities; these are turned into cash in order to realise capital plus surplus value. That is the true object of the revenue grants for independent enterprises run by foreign capital, and of the collateral in the case of loans. In both instances so-called tithes (*ueshur*), pledged in different ways, are paid in kind by the Turkish peasant and these were gradually increased from about 12 to 12.5 percent. The peasant in the Asiatic *vilayet* must pay up or else his tithe would simply be confiscated by the police and the central and local authorities." (Luxemburg 2003: 422)

<sup>22</sup> This practice of encouraging just enough bureaucratic centralization within peripheral states, as Wallerstein points out (see footnote 17 above), was a part of deliberate and more generally applied strategy of core states to keep peripheral states functional enough to efficiently extract their resources without the interference of intra-state groups who can resist the state and interrupt those flows.

financial administration to these states who in turn used this capacity to further integrate its economy into the commodity chain of the GPF by building railroads and ports instead of strengthening Ottoman industrial production. Moreover, the cajoling of the Ottoman Empire to liberalize its economy and remove protectionist measures on Ottoman manufacturing led to this sector's demise and turning the Ottoman economy into merely a producer of cash crops and raw materials for the world market.

In this way, core states successfully transformed the Ottoman mode of production from one that was oriented towards self-subsistence and reliance on its manufacturing and agriculture to a mode of production that became dependent on the production of commodities for the world market. It is the enfranchisement and normalization of such economic practices on a global scale that came to comprise the GPF and that maintained the division of labor regime between core and peripheral regions. These measures were largely induced by the structural imbalances in the GPF because of the privileged position core states occupied within it that allowed them to leverage such power imbalances, as the field's operative principle, to their favor.

Yet such economic peripheralization of the Ottoman Empire was concomitant to its political peripheralization that took place through changes in its modes of governmentality, precipitating divisibility within its political sovereignty. The economic and military weakness of the Ottoman Empire forced it into unfavorable political arrangements with the growing power of European states in the global arena. The general tenor of these arrangements can be characterized as the practice of "policing"<sup>23</sup> as a particular technique of political peripheralization that slowly reshaped its mode of governmentality and divided its political sovereignty. Capitulations were an example of such policing techniques<sup>24</sup> that not only gave economic advantages to core states but political ones as well. Both of these advantages worked in tandem to reinforce one another and produce peripheralizing effects on those states which granted such concessions.

One of the historical manifestations of such political capitulations of the Ottoman Empire to European (core) states were concessions of extraterritoriality in the mid-nineteenth century where European subjects and agents would be exempt from Ottoman legal jurisdiction. European pressure further made them extend these exemptions to non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire (Hodgson 1974). The Ottomans set up separate courts for European subjects outside the purview of Ottoman courts. Separate commercial and criminal courts were established that would settle disputes between the Ottoman subjects and European nationals. In these new courts, European consular representatives had the power to veto decisions of these courts against their nationals (Hallaq 2009).

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<sup>23</sup> This Foucauldian neologism is used in this context to indicate the employment of strategies of power whose aim was to re-engineer the body politics of the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>24</sup> The Ottoman Empire had been granting what were called capitulations, as special status agreements, to European merchants and states since the sixteenth century. But the form that capitulations took in the nineteenth century transitioned from being grants of special status to certain parties that maintained Ottoman economic and political sovereignty to granting concessionary rights to foreign parties that weakened such sovereignty.

These extraterritoriality privileges to designated subjects and agents of core nations, and in some cases, semi-peripheral nations like Russia which earlier in the nineteenth century had already extracted the right to intervene on behalf of Greek Orthodox Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire (McCarthy 1997), represent the sort of core state policing practices facilitated by their privileged position in the GPF. These practices gave core states the power to exert such peripheralizing forces on the operations of Ottoman institutions and in the process divide their sovereignty. I will later show how such policing (peripheralizing) practices led to profound changes in the Ottoman state and society.

Moreover, during this same period and under European political pressure, Ottoman law was restricted to adjudicate matters of family law and pious endowments, and it was stripped of jurisdiction over criminal and commercial law. Instead, the Ottomans adopted European penal and commercial codes in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1853, the Egyptian regime, which was under the symbolic suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire, also adopted the French-modeled Ottoman Commercial Code of 1850; which was implemented through merchant councils. These councils, ruled by European and Egyptian judges, effectively moved commercial transactions outside the jurisdiction of Islamic law (Awass 2019)<sup>25</sup> which previously governed these transactions in Egypt and the Ottoman Empire. Hence, representing yet another politically peripheralizing practice that led to the loss of Ottoman sovereignty.

As for the implications of the adoption of these European criminal codes, Ruth Miller (2005) documents the transformations of Ottoman criminal law starting with the period of Ottoman reforms in the 1840s until the later period of the formation of the early Turkish Republic by the 1940s. She shows how the orientation of Ottoman criminal law had shifted from “crimes against victims,” which was embedded in its social context and defined by Islamic moral principles, to the “victimless crime category” that accompanied the increasing bureaucratization of the Ottoman state and society for which such an abstraction of the law concomitantly redefined the relations between religion, society, and state (Miller 2005: 6-7).

With this change of orientation, there was a growing focus of the reformed criminal codes that criminalized insubordination against the state and its new bureaucratic order in comparison to the previously established Ottoman law which was more concerned with protecting individuals and society from transgressions. For instance, legislative reforms after 1908, when the Young Turks deposed the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II and effectively took over the Ottoman state, made marriages that did not get the state’s approval an imprisonable crime, including those who performed the marriage ceremony (Miller 2005). Political sanctioning of marriage was never a requirement within Islamic law nor previous Ottoman law, but the criminalization of undocumented marriages was an indication of the increased social policing that was the hallmark of a modern bureaucratic state, as the regulation of sexual relationships was strictly within the jurisdiction of Islamic law, its courts, and the social customs of the particular society.

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<sup>25</sup> Also see Hallaq 2009.

What these European induced changes in Ottoman laws represent is a transformation in the Ottoman mode of governmentality which had its effects on the political conditions that changed the character of Ottoman state and society relations through the demonstrated changes in economic, social, and political practice. For example, the shift to the “victimless crime” category signified the growing interiorization of government rationality that no longer needed to reference external factors such as Islamic law for the legitimation of its social operations. This interiority to state practice is what Foucault identified as an emerging theme in the formation of the early modern European states which he called “reason of state,” where:

The state is governed according to principles which are intrinsic to it and which cannot be derived solely from natural or divine laws...the state, like nature, has its own proper form of rationality....[and] the art of government instead of seeking to found itself on transcendental rules, a cosmological model, or a philosophical-moral ideal, must find the principle of its rationality in that which constitutes the specific reality of the state. (Foucault 1991: 97)

Increasingly, this type of political posture of state interiority came to represent the new mode of governmentality of the modernizing Ottoman state, which transformed the empire and eventually gave birth to several secular nation-states like Turkey. Such changes in modes of governmentality tended to favor European actors in the GPF, because it institutionalized in peripheral regions their normative and institutional constructs. These constructs created the economic, political, and social conditions in the periphery conducive to the operations of European power in the world reinforcing their dominance in the GPF. This is how such structural imbalances in this emerging field of power became ever more objectified and became the conditions for action within it. Increasingly, core states no longer needed to intervene directly to affect outcomes, but instead these normative and institutional establishments functioned independently by diffusely influencing the actions of weaker states like the Ottoman Empire and its successor nation-states to the advantage of the core region. As a result, further peripheralizing the Ottoman’s position from the center of power within the field.

### **Conclusion**

This essay attempted to lay the groundwork for reconceptualizing the modern world-system as a global field of power to better capture the more diffuse elements of its operation. The main contention is that the mechanisms of this reconfigured system-field function on the principle and practice of asymmetrical relations between the various geographic domains of the field. Moreover, this examination traced the emergence and processes of this Global Power-Field (GPF) in the high era of European colonialism but did not capture the transformation of the field in the neo/postcolonial era. In a subsequent article, entitled “The New Shape of the Global Power-Field (GPF) After the Transformation of the Modern World-System Post-WWII (Part 2): Further Outlines in the Evolution of the Field and Its Impact on the Global South,” I will discuss in depth

the historical evolution of the Global Power-Field in the postcolonial era. These two articles are meant to function in tandem with one another.

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