



## Thirty Years of the *Journal of World-Systems Research* Editors' Introduction

**Rallie Murray**

*California Institute of Integral Studies*

[rmurray@mymail.ciis.edu](mailto:rmurray@mymail.ciis.edu)

Ten months into the genocide in Gaza, it seems appropriate to return to William Robinson's (2024: 487) article from our previous issue, "Palestine and Global Crisis: Why Genocide? Why Now?" in which he questions what greater insight the genocide in Palestine might give about "the crisis of global capitalism and what the future may hold." The extreme violence that has only escalated through the last year betrays a global descent into necropolitics, the material destruction of human bodies is turned towards productive ends. Genocide, Robinson (2024: 494) explains, has "[become a] profitable and politically expedient tool" in the constant expansion of global capitalism, forcing the creation of new markets. (How can one sell the tools of mass murder if nobody is using them? How better to access cheap natural resources than to swiftly—thus brutally—destroy everything in the way?). The gasps of a dying hegemon desperately clinging to power turn to the easiest deployment of power—violence and destruction rather than coercion and control—reflected back within the core as conjunctural socio-political rhythms swing wildly towards hyper-conservatism. Arrighi, Hopkins, and Wallerstein (1989) wrote that the more extensive/intensive the development of the world-system—that is to say the continuation and fictive or forced growth of world economy within a finite space—leads the world-system to destroy itself in pursuit of



Articles in vol. 21(2) and later of this journal are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 United States License.



This journal is published by the [University Library System, University of Pittsburgh](#) as part of its [D-Scribe Digital Publishing Program](#) and is cosponsored by the [University of Pittsburgh Press](#).

power over production and social control. This is, as Aaron Bushnell said, what “our ruling class has decided will be normal.”

The first issue of the *Journal of World-Systems Research* was published on August 25th, 1995 as a batch of articles published as a batch of articles organized as the thematic section *Hegemonic Rivalry: Past and Future*. As seems fitting, three decades later almost to the day, the author of the first “[Editor’s Introduction](#),” **Christopher Chase-Dunn**, offers a historical reflection on “The Rise and Trajectory of *JWSR*.” The transformations that the journal and its situated field have undergone over the past 30 years points towards a future in which world-systems research continues to grow and develop new trajectories.

In celebration of the impact that *JWSR* has had on the field, we have curated what might be called the journal’s “Greatest Hits” (based upon an analysis of the top downloaded articles of each decade—not to demean the importance of any articles not listed; it also provides an excellent opportunity for us all to return to and bring back into conversation other well appreciated articles).

- 1990s: “[Competing Concepts of Globalization](#)” (Leslie Sklair), “[Gender and Globalization: Female Labor and Women’s Mobilization](#)” (Val Moghadam)
- 2000s: “[East-West Orientation of Historical Empires and Modern States](#)” (Peter Turchin, Jonathan M. Adams, and Thomas D. Hall), “[The New Global Economy: Time-Space Compression, Geopolitics, and Global Uneven Development](#)” (John Agnew)
- 2010s: “[Impacts of Colonialism: A Research Survey](#)” (Patrick Ziltener and Daniel Kunzler), “[What is Racism?](#)” (Ramon Grosfoguel)
- 2020s: “[Deglobalization, Globalization, and the Pandemic: Current Impasses of the Capitalist World-Economy](#)” (Alexandre Abdal and Douglas M. Ferreira), “[Refiguring the Plantationocene: Racial Capitalism, World-Systems Analysis, and Global Socioecological Transformation](#)” (Michael Warren Murphy and Caitlin Schroering)

In this issue, we are pleased to present several Research Articles followed by a Commentary by **Boaventura de Sousa Santos**. Our first research article, “Overflowing the Channels of the Left” by **Daniel Patrick Burridge**, takes as its topic the interactions between leaders of anti-systemic movements with allied officials in leftist governments in Latin America, with specific interest in the role of these “transmission belts” in managing territories and ecological networks and the relationship between society and the environment. His article explores these relationships on a meso-scale to demonstrate the power that communities in the Bajo Lempa in El Salvador have taken towards the management of resource governance and agro-ecological practice. Next, in “World-Systems Analysis and the Postnatal Care Utilization among Periphery Women,” **Neema Langa** examines how education, socioeconomic status, rural/urban residence, and region impact the utilization of postnatal care in Tanzania between 2010–2016. Her findings offer an important intervention into an understanding of how access to and utilization of crucial reproductive care are impacted by economic dependence, and how this might help future strategies

for pregnant women and mothers in Tanzania. **Ishmael Hlovor** and **Lord Mawuko-Yevugah** employ world-systems analysis, systemic cycles accumulation theory, and the new international division of labor thesis in their article, “The Current World-System and Conflicts,” to deconstruct the U.S.-China Trade War and provide evidence that this conflict is systemic and will continue (as it already has been) through Biden’s and future U.S. presidential administrations. Finally in their article “Appraising Sociological Approaches to Ecologically Unequal Exchange,” **Nicholas Theis**, **Mauricio Betancourt**, and **Amanda Sikirica** undertake a critical analysis of quantitative sociological research on ecologically unequal exchange (EUE) to explore how methods currently most frequently employed in research into EUE might be better woven into sociological theory, creating complementary research that better incorporates this research into the world-systems approach rather than the focus on the nation and inter-national relations. Finally, **Boaventura de Sousa Santos** offers a decisive critique of AI as a tool of capitalist, colonial, and patriarchal exploitation and domination enacted by “white supremacist social order” and the ideology of whiteness. Alongside this critique, however, he introduces the analytical use of epistemologies of the South as radical critique of the Eurocentric “enlightenment” encoded in AI, rendering visible the possibility of exit/liberation from the global technological domination it promises.

As always, many thanks to the authors and reviewers whose contributions make up this issue.

**Disclosure Statement:** Any conflicts of interest are reported in the acknowledgments section of the article’s text. Otherwise, authors have indicated that they have no conflict of interests upon submission of the article to the journal.

### References

- Arrighi, Giovanni, Terence K. Hopkins, and Immanuel Wallerstein. 1989. *Antisystemic Movements*. New York: Verso Press.
- Chase-Dunn, Christopher. 1995. “Introduction to the Journal of World Systems Research.” *Journal of World-Systems Research* 1(1): 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.5195/jwsr.1995.58>
- Robinson, William I. 2024. “Palestine and Global Crisis: Why Genocide? Why Now?” *Journal of World-Systems Research* 30(1): 485–498. <https://doi.org/10.5195/jwsr.2024.1264>