



JOURNAL OF WORLD-SYSTEMS RESEARCH

ISSN: 1076-156X | Vol. 32 Issue 2 | DOI: 10.5195/jwsr.2026.1501 | jwsr.pitt.edu

Editor's Introduction

Co-Editors:

Devparna Roy
Nazareth University
droy9@naz.edu

Daniel S. Pasciuti
Georgia State University
dpasciuti@gsu.edu

Managing Editors:

Robin Losito
Nazareth University

Madelief L. Tilder
Georgia State University

Paige Masrouri
Nazareth University

Jun Yang
Georgia State University

We are pleased to present the Fall 2026 issue of the *Journal of World-Systems Research* at a moment of profound global uncertainty and transformation. Across the world, intensifying geopolitical rivalries, ecological crises, democratic backsliding, widening inequalities, and challenges to existing forms of global governance have renewed the urgency of world-systems perspectives. The contributions in this issue demonstrate the continuing relevance of *longue durée* and relational approaches for understanding the structural dynamics of the contemporary world-system. They demonstrate how processes of accumulation, power, and domination continue to shape unequal development across time and space, while highlighting the institutions, movements, and intellectual traditions that challenge those inequalities.



New articles in this journal are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 United States License.

This journal is published by Pitt Open Library Publishing.

First, we wish to highlight the exciting development of [Caravanserai](#), a new commentary series affiliated with the *Journal of World-Systems Research*. This commentary series is intended to foster timely dialogue on contemporary events through a world-systems lens. Like the fortified roadside inns that connected travelers across Afro-Eurasia, *Caravanserai* seeks to provide a space where scholars can collectively reflect upon unfolding global developments and situate them within broader historical trajectories. In an era of accelerating geopolitical conflicts and crises, the series offers a venue for timely, accessible reflections grounded in historical depth and global analysis. *Caravanserai* aims to foster dialogue across scholarly communities and contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and possibilities of our historical moment.

We are honored that the inaugural contributions were authored by Christopher Chase-Dunn “[Autocracy, Democracy and EcoSocialism in the Geosphere](#)”, Patrick Bond “[Pushing back against Capital’s Devaluation: Workers versus Eco-Destructive Multinational Corporations](#)”, Ravi Palat “[briCs+, and Changing Geopolitics in the Twenty-First Century](#)”, Marina Karides “[The Uses of Islands in the Capitalist World-System](#)”, and Paul Ciccantell “[The Materiality of the 21st Century](#)”. This month, Manuela Boatcă, asks us to consider the current state, not as a new phase or a crisis, but as a continuity of decline moving further towards force and extraction; “[The Hegemon in Decline – Or, the Plot is Thickening](#)”.

These scholars invite us to fully consider the global historical moment that we are in and consider possibilities for resistance, alternative futures, and systemic transformation. Across diverse topics ranging from BRICS+ and global geopolitics to labor struggles, ecological crisis, island coloniality, and democratic futures, *Caravanserai* contributors demonstrate the value of world-systems analysis for making sense of contemporary events by situating them within the deeper historical dynamics of capitalist development, hegemonic transformation, and global inequality. Taken together, *Caravanserai* has sought to engage us with how intertwined crises are reshaping the contemporary world-system, while highlighting emerging forms of resistance and alternative futures through a *longue durée* analytical lens.

We invite scholars to join this ongoing conversation through contributions that bring world-systems analysis to bear on current events and emerging global realities. Please join us in this endeavor by submitting commentaries of 2,000 to 5,000 words that analyze pressing current events from a *longue durée* perspective. Submissions may be directed to Devparna Roy or Dan Pasciuti.

Second, we would like to celebrate the continued expansion of the Journal of World-Systems Research Editorial Board which was approved by the ASA this summer. With 21 distinguished scholars, they reflect JWSR's longstanding commitment to international and interdisciplinary scholarship. Drawn from across the globe, they bring a remarkable breadth of expertise in world-systems analysis, political economy, development studies, social movements, agrarian studies, environmental change, and global inequality.

We warmly thank **Toivo Asheeke, David Baronov, Patrick Bond, Christopher Chase-Dunn, Paul Ciccantell, Cinzia D. Solari, Shelley Feldman, Paul Gellert, Andrej Grubačić, Ricardo Jacobs, Sahan Karataşli, Marina Karides, Patricio Korzeniewicz, Şefika Kumral, Jason Mueller, Corey Payne, Kristin Plys, Anthony Roberts, Jackie Smith, Shaohua Zhan, and Lu Zhang.**

We are deeply grateful for their enthusiasm, interest, and willingness to contribute their time and expertise to the journal. Their insights, thoughtful reviews, and instrumental support will continue to strengthen JWSR's mission of fostering innovative, globally engaged scholarship and advancing critical conversations across the social sciences.

Third, the Fall 2026 issue features eight research articles organized around interconnected political, ecological, and historical questions. Collectively, they illuminate how violence, exclusion, and inequality are reproduced through the structures of the modern world-system while also identifying important sites of resistance, alternative political imaginaries, and pathways toward more equitable futures. These articles demonstrate the breadth and vitality of contemporary world-systems scholarship, and, taken together, they show that understanding the present requires not only attention to immediate events but also an appreciation of the deeper historical processes that continue to shape our world.

The first article in this issue, by Victor Ramiro Fernandez, **“Understanding Divergent Convergence”**, argues that the twenty-first century global economy is being reshaped by two simultaneous trends: increasing convergence between the Global North and Global South, and growing divergence within the Global South itself. Central to this transformation is the rise of the Sino-Asian region as a major center of global accumulation. Fernandez integrates Arrighian World-Systems Analysis, Latin American Structuralism, and Historical Institutionalism to show that shifts in global accumulation enabled Sino-Asia's rise, while differences in industrialization, technological upgrading, regional integration, and especially state capacity, explain why some

Global South countries have advanced more rapidly than others. Taken together, these perspectives account for both Sino-Asia's emergence and persistent uneven development.

We are further delighted to announce that Fernandez's article will be highlighted in ASA journal podcasts in September, available on [Spotify](#) and [Libsyn](#).

The next article, by Ege Demirel, Muhammed Kürşad Özekin, and Ayça Özekin, **“The Capitalist World-System in Interregnum”**, examines the post-2008 evolution of the world-system through the combined perspectives of World-Systems Analysis and Gramsci's concept of interregnum. Demirel argues that the contemporary period is not a conventional hegemonic transition toward a new dominant power but rather a prolonged phase of instability in which the U.S.-led order is weakening without a coherent successor emerging. The article highlights the uneven rise of semi-core powers, particularly China and Russia, whose growing influence increasingly challenges the liberal international order. At the same time, semi-peripheral states are pursuing pragmatic alignments that expand their autonomy while leaving broader global inequalities intact. The result is a fragmented and multipolar world characterized by competing projects of order, strengthened South-South connections, and persistent political, economic, and geopolitical crises. Demirel concludes that the present moment is best understood as an interregnum: a transitional period in which the old order is in decline, yet no new historical bloc has consolidated the power necessary to establish a stable global equilibrium.

In **“Donald Trump and Radical Reconfiguration of the World-System in the Context of the World Order Transformation”**, Leonid Grinin, Anton Grinin, and Andrey Korotayev discuss the modern world-system's almost two decades-old structural crisis and deep transformation of the world order. The systemic crisis is expressed in the intensification of contradictions, the growth of conflicts, and the spread of other turbulent and destructive political processes that destabilize the global situation, with the backdrop of a deepening climate crisis. These processes are closely connected with the weakening and destruction of the existing world order and with preparations for the ushering of a new one. The authors show the causes and stages of development of this process, by analyzing the direction, mechanisms, and causes through which President Trump's actions contribute to the destruction of the foundations of U.S. influence in the world and to the transformation of the world order.

In **“Longue Durée Dynamics of the Far Right in the Capitalist World-System”**, Sefika Kumral and Şahan Savaş Karataşlı highlight the contemporary resurgence of the far right, not as an exceptional phenomenon, but a recurring response to periods of crisis in the world-system. Using a historical comparison of three eras, the decline of Dutch hegemony and Bonapartism, the

collapse of British hegemony and classical fascism, and the current crisis of U.S. hegemony, the authors show that far-right movements repeatedly emerge when economic stagnation, geopolitical competition, and widespread social unrest undermine established systems of authority. While these movements differ across historical contexts, they share a common political logic: restoring order through exclusion, repression, militarization, and hierarchical nationalism. Finally, they contend that today's far right is a distinct but related formation, shaped by neoliberal financialization, uneven Global North-South development, and the dynamics of contemporary imperialism.

We then shift to Getent Addisu Gelaneh and Mohammed Seid Ali's article on "**The Coloniality of Political Theory**", which critiques the universalist foundations of Western political thought. Drawing on decolonial theory, Foucauldian genealogy, and world-systems analysis, the authors argue that liberalism and neoliberalism are historically rooted in European experiences rather than universally applicable models of political order. They introduce the concept of the coloniality of political theory to explain how Eurocentric ideas sustain global dominance through moral hierarchies, juridical universalism, and market-centered notions of rationality that marginalize Indigenous and non-Western traditions.

Using Ethiopia and Somalia as case studies, Gelaneh and Ali show how imported Western institutions often conflict with locally grounded political ontologies and practices. They highlight the Ethiopian Gadaa system and the African philosophy of Ubuntu as alternative traditions that offer distinctive understandings of authority, justice, community, and political obligation. The authors ultimately advocate for a decolonial political theory grounded in epistemological pluralism and recognize African political thought as a legitimate source of normative political philosophy.

Turning to the relationship between capitalism, ecology, and global inequality, our next two contributions demonstrate how environmental insecurity and climate change are not external challenges to the world-system but expressions of its underlying structures of accumulation and power. These articles shift attention from climate change as a technical or environmental problem to the ways ecological crisis is embedded in the unequal structures of the capitalist world-system through the production of environmental insecurity, climate governance, and global inequality.

In "**The Capitalogenic Security Trilemma**", David Fields and Adem Elveren draw on Jason Moore's world-ecological framework to locate the source of ecological (in)security in capitalism's appropriation of unpaid natures. Arguing that ecological crises are not external to

capitalism but arise from capitalism's dependence on the appropriation of unpaid labor and natural resources, they introduce the concept of "capitalogenic security trilemma"; a reconceptualization of the tension among social, trade, and national security in which ecological (in)security figures as a constitutive structural condition of the modern world-system rather than as a contextual backdrop. Their contribution to the world-system literature is a unified theoretical model in which the monetary and biophysical asymmetries of the world-system, so far theorized in parallel, are shown to be two forms of a single circuit of appropriation, such that core security and peripheral insecurity are jointly produced rather than separately determined. This perspective raises questions about the effectiveness of reform efforts that do not address the underlying mechanisms of capitalist appropriation.

Gala Kumec's article "**The System Changes, Inequality Does Not**", argues that climate inequality is not an accidental consequence of climate policy but a structurally produced feature of the global order. Rooted in the uneven distribution of economic, technological, and political power within the world-system, the green transition relies on global value chains that enable countries in the Global North to maintain high consumption while shifting ecological and social costs to the Global South. Low-carbon development and digitalization create new forms of dependency through intellectual property regimes, data extraction, and control of critical minerals, while international climate governance remains dominated by Northern priorities and market-based solutions, limiting efforts to address historical responsibility and global redistribution. Climate vulnerability and adaptive capacity are therefore shaped by existing power asymmetries, where meaningful solutions require not only environmental reforms but also the redistribution of power and resources and the restructuring of global institutions to operate within planetary limits.

Finally, Nicholas Matheou returns us to some of the foundational challenges in World-Systems Analysis. In "**Commercial Revolution in the Central Eurasian Middle Ages**", he invites us to reexamine Abu-Lughod's landmark analysis on the middle ages and Pax Mongolica to understand the relationship between the Afro-Eurasian Commercial Revolution and the formation of the Mongol world-empire. In doing so, Matheou renews Abu-Lughod's theoretical arguments as the culmination of a long process of Afro-Eurasian economic integration. Matheou contends that the "long thirteenth century" witnessed the emergence of a unified Afro-Eurasian world market through the growing interconnection of commercial networks, constituting an Afro-Eurasian Commercial Revolution. However, unlike the modern capitalist world-economy, this world market operated within a world-system dominated by tributary regimes of accumulation, producing distinct developmental dynamics.

Focusing on the Mongol Empire, the article reinterprets Central Eurasian nomadism as a specific form of tributary rule that shaped patterns of trade, accumulation, and integration across Afro-Eurasia. In doing so, it both revises and strengthens Abu-Lughod's original thesis, highlighting the long history of capital accumulation under both sedentary and nomadic tributary regimes. The article concludes by proposing a renewed research agenda that situates medieval Afro-Eurasian commercial expansion within a broader world-systems framework and traces the historical roots of global economic integration long before European hegemony.

As this issue demonstrates, world-systems scholarship remains vital for understanding the interconnected crises and transformations of our historical moment. From shifts in global accumulation and geopolitical power to the resurgence of authoritarianism, the persistence of colonial forms of knowledge, and the deepening contradictions of climate governance, these contributions reaffirm the value of historical, relational, and multidisciplinary analysis. In an era of turbulence and systemic transition, World-Systems Analysis offers both critical tools for understanding global inequalities and intellectual resources for imagining alternatives. Together with the ongoing *Caravanserai* commentary series, this issue reflects our commitment to fostering dialogue that bridges historical inquiry and contemporary debate while contributing to more just, democratic, and sustainable futures.