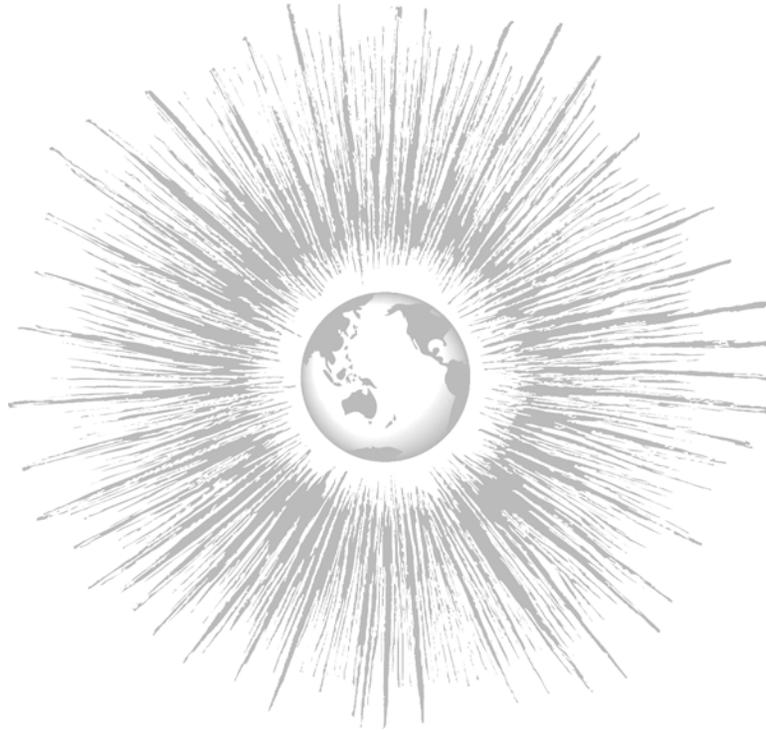


BOOK REVIEWS



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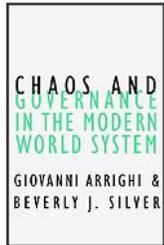
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Arrighi, Giovanni and Beverly J. Silver *et.al.* 1999. *Chaos and Governance in the Modern World System*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 320 Pages, ISBN 0-8166-3151-4 Cloth, ISBN 0-8166-3152-2 Paper.

http://www.upress.umn.edu/books/a/arrighi_chaos.html



The current period of uncertain change and transformation in the world capitalist system has befuddled scholars attempting to identify patterns and predict where things are headed. Far from movement towards consensus, debate continues to rage over globalization and what type of world order will emerge in the wake of the apparent break up of the U.S.-centered hegemonic system.

This important volume is a product of the Hegemonic Transitions Study Group of the Fernand Braudel Center. In it, Arrighi, Silver, and several collaborators attempt to make greater sense of the current period and to shine some predictive light on the future by analysis of systemic change in two earlier periods of transformation in the world system. The theory of hegemonic transition as systemic change laid out by Arrighi in his earlier work, *The Long Twentieth Century*, looms large throughout the volume and provides much theoretical guidance. The earlier transitions from Dutch to British and then from British to U.S. world hegemony are seen to resemble the present period of transformation and uncertainty in several key respects. The authors set out to compare the similarities and differences between those earlier transitions and the present period. This endeavor is undertaken through an exploration of four current, inter-related controversies, each of which is accorded a chapter.

First is the changing balance of power among states. What configuration may replace U.S. hegemony is not yet clear, but the authors suggest that there is renewed Great Power rivalry, systemwide financial expansion centered on the declining U.S. hegemon, and the emergence of new loci of power, in particular, East Asia. But the current period is peculiar insofar as it is characterized by an unstable “bifurcation of military [U.S.] and financial [East Asian] global power” (pp. 95).

Second is the balance of power between states and business organizations. The transitions from the old joint-stock trading companies to the British system of family business enterprise, and then to the U.S.-based system of multinational corporations is explored as backdrop to the current reorganization of state-business relations. Transnational decentralization, the spread of informal networking, and the subordinate revival of small business around the world has weakened the regulatory capacity of even the most powerful states.

Third is the power of subordinate groups in the world system. This is in my view the best chapter in the volume. The systemwide expansions in trade and

production that characterized each period of hegemony were based on social compacts between dominant and subordinate groups. These compacts became undone through intra-elite conflict and unrest from below as competition among states and capitalist enterprises during hegemonic transitions undermined the conditions necessary for the reproduction of social compacts. Growing social conflict, spurred on by rising polarization during the “financialization” period of hegemonic decline gives way to new compacts as emerging hegemonies reorganize world production on novel foundations. The authors see the current process creating new social forces—through increased proletarianization, feminization, and changing spatial and ethnic configuration of the world’s labor force—that the decaying hegemonic order will have greater difficulty accommodating.

Fourth is the changing balance of power between Western and non-Western centers. The focus here is on the gradual incorporation by the West of the East into the capitalist world system in the 18th and 19th centuries, which marked the ambiguous triumph of Western civilization in a now single global system, ambiguous because Western colonialism and suzerainty could not fully disarticulate the China-centered Asian trade and tributary network nor undermine the civilizational basis of this network. East Asia, according to the authors, has emerged as the most dynamic center of world-scale accumulation processes. Should the region become the center of a new world order (the new hegemon) it will face the challenge of transforming the modern world into a “commonwealth of civilizations.”

This book is a timely, well-done, and important piece of work. Too often scholars observing rapid social change engage in conjunctural analysis which forgets that the present *is* history, or step backward only to the immediately preceding period, thereby failing to properly contextualize the present or to gain a more solid predictive perspective. The long historic view, one that identifies enduring cycles, tendencies, structures and the patterns of structural change—one of the hallmarks of world system scholarship—is refreshing and essential if we are to understand the current period of globalization. Nonetheless, the study has several limitations and disappointments. The remainder of this review critiques some underlying thematic issues that run through and inform the volume, especially the study’s nation-state-centrism and its notion of the rise of an East Asian hegemon.

It is not clear to me that the theoretical framework of hegemonic transitions is adequate to capture the current period of change, insofar as the new period may involve major *discontinuities* associated with novel qualitative change in the political economy of world capitalism. The authors seek to uncover underlying patterns in past instances of systemic change as clues to underlying patterns in the current turbulence. They *assume* that these past transitions are comparable. I have argued elsewhere that the state structuralism and the nation-state centrism which characterizes much world system analysis and which tenaciously informs this volume as

well are incapable of accounting for the changes we are witness to under globalization insofar as the nation-state is no longer the organizing principle of the capitalist system and insofar as new transnational social forces have emerged that are no longer grounded in particular states and the old dynamics of state and geo-political competition. I may well be wrong, but these issues are never even problematized in this volume.

The problem of state-centric and nation-state centric analysis is that it does not allow us to conceive of an emergent global hegemony in terms of transnational classes and groups no longer bound to any state or to specific geographies. As a consequence, the most Arrighi, Silver, and their colleagues can predict is the rise of an East Asia hegemony. This is a popular and by now a well-worn thesis but it is backed by very little concrete evidence and not really supported by global political and economic dynamics in recent years. We know that East Asia dynamism is inseparable from the massive entrance of transnational capital, and more recently (especially in the wake of the late 1990s crisis), has been organized by elites seeking not a regional circuit of accumulation in rivalry with circuits elsewhere but a more complete *integration* into globalized circuits.

What we see instead of a “recentering of the global economy in the East” (pp. 219) is precisely a *decentering* of the global economy; its fragmentation and the rise of several zones of intense global accumulation. One such zone in Europe runs from the northwest to the southeast, cutting across borders and reaching out into areas of Eastern Europe. Another in North America is the U.S.-Mexico border zones. Several such axes criss-cross East Asia. These may not be territorially-bounded rivals for hegemony as much as sites of intensive accumulation within a global economy that bring together transnational capitalists and elites in diverse locations around the world, precisely what we would expect from a supranational and decentered transnational configuration. This is more a case of historic discontinuity than continuity in the sequence of hegemonic transitions. Nor is it clear that the civilizational perspective advanced in chapter four is appropriate for the current era. The chapter is really about the Western conquest of Asia in the 18th and 19th century, and seems to borrow the civilizational paradigm in order to give weight to the dubious conclusion that East Asian dynamism reflects “the decline of the West.”

The world system is assumed to still be characterized in the current epoch by competitive nation-states as the appropriate sub-units of analysis, even though this type of analysis is less and less able to capture current dynamics. The claim that Great Power rivalry is again on the increase (pp. 88), for instance, was also a popular argument in the early 1990s but is not supported by any evidence and does not go far in explaining current global political dynamics. Arrighi and Silver assume that “new complex of governmental and business agencies endowed with greater system level organizational capabilities than those of the preceding hegemonic complex”

(pp. 34) need be nested in particular nation states (or geographies). Whether this is so would best be problematized. In this same vein, the chapter on subordinate groups in the world system links the notion of any new social compact to the rise of a new hegemonic state. But certainly analysis of the current global state of affairs suggests that just as likely is some sort of global Keynesian regulatory and redistributive program organized by nascent transnational state apparatuses.

The limitations of such state structuralism and nation-state centrism is reflected in the Weberian conception of the state that informs a good deal of world system, IR, and IPE analysis. In this conception states are territorially bound geo-political units *by definition*; the state thus becomes reified and—quite ironically—ahistoricized. But the pervasive Weberian influence engenders a deeper problem that arises in the attempt to grasp the current period: recurrent dualisms of “states and markets” or of the economic and the political. This has led to a dual logic approach: at the economic level the global logic of a world economy prevails, whereas at the level of the political a state-centered logic of the world system prevails. For Arrighi, Silver, and their colleagues, the dualism is expressed as U.S. military power and East Asian financial power, an interpretation which I believe confuses more than clarifies our understanding of the current period.

The volume is premised on the unproblematized assumption that the current transition will follow the same pattern of the rise of a new state-based or geographic hegemon that will reorganize the system and stabilize it under new arrangements. So long as the authors cling to this state structuralism and nation-state centrism they are unable to conceive of, and bring into the analysis, the prospects of a transnational hegemony representing a discontinuity from past transitions. The problem here is not our meta-theory (world system theory, historical materialism, etc.) but our inability (unwillingness?) to modify or even discard paradigmatic applications of meta-theory we have developed when they no longer help explain unfolding realities.

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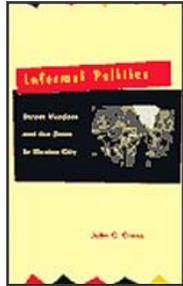
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Cross, John C. 1998. *Informal Politics: Street Vendors and the State in Mexico City*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 272, ISBN 0-8047-3062-8 paper, ISBN: 0-8047-3060-1 cloth. <http://www.sup.org/>



Spanning the last thirty years, investigations of the informal sector have focused mostly on the economic role of unregulated and undocumented work in national and global economies. Considerations of the political efforts of informal sector workers are scant in the literature including political sociology and the sociology of development. John C. Cross's book, *Informal Politics: Street Vendors and the State in Mexico City*, brings to the forefront the political influence of Mexico City's street vendors in the implementation of state policies which effect them. Using ethnographic and comparative historical methods, Cross details four case studies of recent interactions between street vendor organizations and the state and compares three distinct periods of Mexico City's government's relationship to its street vendors. Cross' research demonstrates that, although marginalized, informal sector workers do have a place in Mexico's political landscape.

Cross does a nice job naming the various features of Mexico's political structure and explaining the relationships that have led to the substantial power of street vendors' organizations in Mexico City. While most analyses of Mexico's political system characterize it as an oligarchy in which the needs of most members of society are not politically relevant, Cross demonstrates otherwise. By focusing on the political opportunity structure or the ways interest groups or social movements might infiltrate the state, Cross shows how street vendor organizations gain 'tolerances,' the informal permission or official blind eye from state actors to vend in city streets (officially an illegal act).

For instance, two characteristics of Mexico's political structure that prove to advantage street vendors' organizations are clientelism and low state integration. Clientelism is described as an exchange of political patronage for sought after privileges between a politician and the leader of an organization. Low state integration consists of high disparity between policies made and the implementation of those policies and opens the possibility of government corruption. In case after case, Cross demonstrates how leaders of street vendors' organizations negotiate with low level political officials who in most cases agree to tolerate street vending in exchange for their political patronage. Because the Mexican state is not well integrated, city officials have leeway in choosing when and where to implement state policies, especially the murky policies regarding the informal sector. In addition, street vendors

are an attractive constituency to politicians because the autonomy and flexibility in vendors' labor allows for impromptu participation at political protests and events. Cross suggests that vendors have advantages over other marginalized groups, such as formal workers and peasants, in gaining political access because of their visibility, flexibility, and the necessity of their perpetual efforts towards securing a place to sell and earn a living.

Cross embeds his examination of street vendors and the state within theoretical perspectives from social movements and political sociology. He challenges arguments that claim that social movements are instigated by the elite to gain advantage and maintain power. By focusing on the organizational efforts of street vendors and their successes, Cross's findings generally support the resource mobilization perspective, focusing on how members of a population instigate a movement for expanded their rights or freedoms. More specifically, Cross addresses Oberschall's free rider thesis that those who make no contribution towards a movement still enjoy the benefits earned by movement activists. Cross argues "the problem" of free riders is solved in the case of the street vendors movement in Mexico City, since to operate without harassment or police arrest vendors must belong to an organization. The strict participation of vendors in organizations, Cross explains in a well organized and detailed chapter, was a precedent set by Uruchurtu, a former Mexico City mayor. As part of his resistance to urbanization, Uruchurtu strictly enforced the prohibition of street vending and required street vendors to form organizations to secure a place at the official market venues he had built for vendors to legally retail their goods. Cross argues that this precedent, set in the fifties and sixties, contributes to the current political strength of street vendor organizations. Vendor organizations are also strengthened, Cross claims, by being organized as competitive groups, rather than as a monolithic association. He claims that the competition between vendor organizations to secure 'tolerances' from state officials keeps the leaders of these organizations accountable to their constituents who will switch from one organization to another if the leader does not follow through with opportunities sell goods profitably.

According to Cross, the competition among street vendor organizations, unlike worker unions and peasant movements, is an advantage for operating in Mexico's political system. Vendor organizations make pacts with various cliques in the government (until recently, Mexican politics has been dominated by one party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party or PRI). Within the party, *camarillas*, groups of individual politicians who help each other advance through the ranks of the bureaucracy, are formed. Thus competition among street vending organizations reflects the competition among government *camarillas* and allows for groups on either side to collude with each other to get needs met. While Cross realizes that this is a situ-

ation in which marginalized workers must constantly secure or defend the right to make a living, he seems to advocate for competitive factions within a social movement as a strategy for success.

Informal Politics contributes to theorizing in the areas of political sociology and social movements and to a political understanding of the informal sector. Critical of theories that assume state actors make autonomous decisions, Cross demonstrates the impact that marginalized groups can have on state officials' decisions. However, Cross still awards the state, its political structure and precedents, a great deal of power in determining the rights of street vendors. Little attention is drawn to the influence of changes in the national and global economies on decisions made by state actors. Also, from a world-systems perspective, much more could be made of Mexico's position in the global economy and how this shapes the employment structure of the nation. Cross makes little comment on the role that foreign capital and the US play in Mexico's political economy. Additionally, besides telling us that men make up the majority of the vendors and that some of the most powerful leaders of vending organizations are women, Cross dismisses the gendering of the informal sector. Also unanswered are questions regarding the ethnic background of street vendors, which may be a factor in how the state responds to the various vendors' organizations.

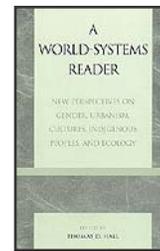
Yet Cross does do an excellent job accounting for numerous other factors that account for the impact of street vendors on the implementation of state policy. He gathers sufficient data to challenge arguments that claim that marginal groups in Third World state have no political power. His insight into Mexico's political structure fortifies his analysis and offers the reader an understanding of how marginalized Third World workers can gain access to the state without direct confrontation. *Informal Politics* is clearly written with theoretical arguments tightly linked to empirical evidence. This book is clearly a must read for those interested in the informal sector; it provides an excellent introduction to the politics of informality.

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Hall, Thomas D., ed. 2000. *A World-Systems Reader: New Perspectives on Urbanism, Cultures, Indigenous Peoples, and Ecology*. Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield. 352 pp. ISBN 0-8476-9184-5 Paper, ISBN 0-8476-9183-7 Cloth.

<http://www.rowmanlittlefield.com/>

Until now there has been no good "supplementary reader" for courses that introduce world-systems analysis to undergraduates. This book attempts to fill that void. It is a compilation of "state of the art" articles that are intended to serve one or



more of four editorial goals: (1) show how world-systems analysis is done; (2) demonstrate how the world-systems view is used outside of sociology; (3) illustrate how wide the range of world-systems inquiry has become; and (4) provide examples of new work in world-systems analysis. Unlike so many readers, the articles were either specifically written for or adapted to the collection, so that each clearly attempts to serve these editorial goals. The result is a collection that has more coherence than that found in most books of this sort. Among other

things, each article provides a door into a rich literature for anyone wanting to pursue a particular topic.

The first section of the book provides a useful, if necessarily selective, overview of world-systems analysis and recent research. The second section provides clear statements of how world-systems analysis pertains to work in archaeology, geography, international relations, and feminist research on development. The third section demonstrates the application of world-systems analysis to specific substantive areas: ethnic groups in Canada; urbanization; systems theory; and postmodernism. The fourth section focuses on the process of incorporation and frontiers, including both narrowly focused case studies on the incorporation of and resistance by indigenous women and a more general discussion on the nature of frontiers in world-systems analysis and the recent "rise" of East Asia in the modern world-system. The book concludes with more speculative articles on the future potential for a global movement for social democracy and the connection of world-system analysis to the ecology movement. The selections vary widely in their level of theoretical abstraction and/or their empirical scope. Some are discussions of general issues in world-systems analysis and others are case studies or narrowly focused on one particular issue.

Substantively and theoretically the selections are generally very high quality. For anyone interested in being brought up to speed on any of the topics covered, these articles are a good place to start. The articles on recent research, archaeology, gender and the world-system, urbanization, the analysis of frontiers, the rise of East

Asia, and global social democracy are likely to interest non-specialists with some curiosity about recent trends in world-systems analysis. I also found my interest piqued by the application of world-system analysis to systems theory (using the concept of dissipative structures), postmodernism, and the ecology movement.

What about students? The primary purpose of this book is pedagogical and it is primarily for that purpose it must be evaluated. With some caveats, I think this book is well worth considering for courses in world-system theory.

Students are going to require some prior exposure to world-system analysis before they start reading most of these selections. The introductory chapter by Hall is helpful, but more as a review than as an introduction. My experience teaching students of fairly average ability in a regional state university has been that they find both the level of abstraction and the historical sweep of world-systems analysis quite challenging. Some basic familiarity with the theoretical framework is likely to make the selections in the book much more meaningful to student readers.

I also think that this book is not the sort of supplemental reader than you can "assign and forget." Students are going to need the feedback and assistance of some sort of in-class discussion. I have found that even very challenging reading material can be incorporated into a course if it is made an integral part of what goes on in class. The issues addressed in this book are important enough and interesting enough that they merit systematic discussion. Given the time constraints of a semester course, I might find it necessary to be somewhat selective in what articles I assigned.

The good news is that this book is both challenging and accessible. One of the dilemmas of teaching world-system analysis that much of the literature is intimidating for undergraduates to read. Students may find this book difficult, but the selections are generally clearly written, with arguments that are well-organized and systematic. With the wide variety of topics, there are likely to be at least a few articles that different students are going to find interesting. Since my course enrolls about half non-sociology majors, but most are in one of the social sciences, the cross-disciplinary emphasis in this book is particularly useful.

This book also does what no general text can do. It invites students into the conversation about world-system analysis by practitioners in the field. It makes clear that world-system analysis is an evolving and expanding field. It illustrates the wide range of issues to which world-system analysis can be applied. It identifies unanswered questions, and sources of continued debate. It provides examples of how specific empirical questions have been addressed by using a world-systems analytical framework, including basic questions on the future of human society. In short, it helps students see world-systems analysis as an ongoing intellectual enterprise, rather just another "theory" to be learned.

A World-Systems Reader is a welcome addition to the still very short list of books

specifically designed for courses in world-systems analysis and well worth considering for course use.

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<http://www.perseusbooksgroup.com/perseus-cgi-bin/display/0-8133-6803-0>

In the modern world it has become generally accepted that certain basic human goals can be better achieved by embracing a standard set of institutions such as factories, schools, universities and centres for science. This means that nations have a tendency to converge towards a set of institutions and with these, to some extent, a set of values.

The purpose of *One World Emerging? Convergence and Divergence in Industrial Societies* by A. Inkeles is to examine the extent to which this convergence has taken place. The book is divided into 5 parts. Part 1 introduces the different aspects that are central to the book, such as convergence itself. Inkeles also gives examples to illustrate the scope of convergence as well as its limits. In part 2 he examines a number of nation states, specifically USSR, USA, India and China, in order to establish whether or not, and to what extent they have converged to some common standard. Institutions are the focus of part 3 where he examines changes in educational systems and the family. In part 4 he puts focus on process. He examines convergence of occupational prestige in industrialised societies, the effects of increasing communications between societies and individuals across the globe and finally the non-convergence of national constitutions in terms of due process guarantees. Finally, in part 5, Inkeles turns his attention to responses to global processes at the level of the individual.

As this brief synopsis might indicate, *One World Emerging?* contains many interesting elements. However, it also has many weaknesses and is therefore somewhat disappointing. The first weakness arises from the book's nature as a collection of articles and papers; as such does it not present the reader with a coherent and fully-fledged argument. Arguably, the issues surrounding convergence and divergence in the modern world are important enough to 'deserve' a single, book length, examination. However, here we are presented with a collection of relatively short and self-

contained pieces each examining a separate aspect of convergence and divergence. This lack of a single coherent argument means that an opportunity to examine an important aspect of the 'modern' globalising world had been missed.

Furthermore, since the collection is, in reality, a compilation of articles already published elsewhere (and over a period of 40 years) some of the pieces suffer from being severely out of date. One example is chapter 4 (first printed in 1963) which deals with the question of "Were the Soviet Union and the United States Converging?" (pp. 53- 70). The chapter is a critical evaluation of a book first published in 1944, by P. A. Sorokin, which presents the argument that the USA and the USSR did not represent irreconcilable ways of life. At the end of the chapter Inkeles concludes that Sorokin understated the differences between the USA and the USSR. An article comparing developments in the USA and the USSR might have been of some interest if it had taken developments after 1963 into account. However, reprinting what is in essence a 40 year-old extended book review seems somewhat pointless.

Another example of an article that could have done with some updating is chapter 11. In this chapter Inkeles examines responses to industrial life in a range of countries. The article itself is quite interesting, but is presented as only the start of a research project: "...the purpose of this study is to open a discussion, not to settle an issue." (p. 306). Considering that the article was published in 1960, it seems odd that there is no update provided of how the discussion has developed over the last 40 years.

Finally, there are several claims and conclusions in Part 1 which have been rendered irrelevant by subsequent events. For instance, at one point Inkeles writes that "...as the Soviet system matures ..." (p. 28) it can be expected to come into line with the general European pattern. A little later we are told that the feasibility of effectively reuniting the two parts of Germany must be seriously questioned (p. 45). Thirdly we are told that when considering convergence we must "...be prepared to face a very difficult task in specifying whether the common system that will presumably emerge will be more like that of the United States or that of the Soviet Union." (p. 23) It hardly seems necessary to point out how out of place these comments are in the light of the events of the last 15 years. Certainly the cumulative effect of these weaknesses creates an impression of a book seriously out of touch.

In Inkeles' defense it could be said that *One World Emerging?*, as Inkeles himself writes, "... is a record of [his] long-term and continuing engagement with the issue of convergence and divergence in industrial societies." (p. xvi). Therefore, each piece should be read with an understanding of the time in which it was originally published. This would definitely have been possible had the text been left unchanged. However, some attempts have been made at updating the pieces, one example being the opening sentence of chapter 3: "The Soviet Union no longer exists" (p. 53).

Clearly that sentence has been added after 1963. There are other instances of 'tampering', such as references to other chapters in the book. Consequently, the individual pieces have neither been left in their original form to speak to us from a time that knew as much as it did (to borrow from Wallerstein), nor have they been comprehensively updated.

Yet, despite these quite serious limitations, the book is instructive in methodological issues. A large number of the chapters are based on empirical evidence and Inkeles devotes much attention to methodology. This sometimes makes the book a bit of a slow read as the reader has to get past the methodology to get to the results. However, for anybody concerned with methodology *One World Emerging?* will make an excellent training text.

Furthermore, certain chapters of *One World Emerging?* are both interesting and useful. This was either because of their theoretical contribution to the field or because the contexts being described were still relatively current. In the case of the most up-to-date analyses, Inkeles also demonstrates a keen eye for unexpected yet eminently plausible conclusions. The two chapters in Part One, for instance, outline basic concepts useful for debates on globalisation such as interdependence, dependence and convergence. Inkeles also outlines evidence of convergence between societies as well as instances and trends of divergence. In so doing, he succinctly introduces the main concepts and assumptions that inform the remaining articles.

Other chapters present up-to-date analyses, such as Chapter 5, which examines China. This chapter is particularly interesting because it deals with a country which for a substantial period of time tried to isolate itself from the outside world, attempting to build up unique institutions designed to meet the unique needs of that country. China is also a country with a civilisation stretching back thousands of years and might therefore be more likely than any other country to be able to resist the pull towards convergence. However, Inkeles comes to the surprising yet reasonable conclusion that China is displaying notable signs of taking on institutions found in other industrialised and industrialising countries. So despite China's attempt to remain unique it is indeed 'converging' and Inkeles analysis of the situation is apposite.

Another example is chapter 10 which deals with the granting of due process rights in national constitutions. Examining the constitutional history of 139 nations Inkeles found that despite modern constitutions being "...very much alike in structure and form..." (p. 237) there is no "...general standard that all newcomers had to adopt." (p. 260). Using empirical evidence Inkeles skilfully illustrates that we are very far from being a uniform global society. He thus shows that even in a world where a great deal of convergence is evident, local culture and historically determined factors still have a great deal of influence on the lives of national populations. The chapter is therefore a sobering antidote to the more exuberant literature on globalisation

which often talks in terms of “the global village” (p. 3) or “a world polity”. (p. 239).

Despite these glimmers of acuity, the book is rather disappointing. This is because it does not present the reader with a coherent argument, nor is it a record of research to be read as pieces of their time since some, albeit half-hearted, updating has been attempted. Finally, since the updating is less than assiduous, many of the articles come across as being very outdated, which gives the impression of a lax or unfocussed approach to the project. In other words, *One World Emerging?* could have done either with a lot more or a little less work, depending on whether it is meant to be a single coherent argument or a record of past research to be seen in the light of its time.

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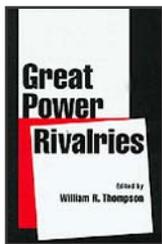
<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/politics/index.htm>

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Thompson, William R. ed. 1999. *Great Power Rivalries*. South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 352 pages, cloth, ISBN 1-57003-279-3.

<http://www.sc.edu/uscpres/Fw98/3279.html>

Inter-polity rivalry is very much a part of the world system. The swing between hegemony and rivalry is one of three key cycles delineated in Wallerstein's modern world-system analysis. Hence the suggestion that rivalries have a logic of their own, the core and well defended proposition of this collection, should appeal to those who wish to understand world system dynamics. A quick review of the text reveals that the traditional state-centric, power politics orientation of many political scientists and diplomatic historians is abandoned in favor of a healthy fusion of geopolitical, commercial and ideational analyses. Rivalry is conceived as a process that goes beyond simplistic dyadic interactions and challenges us to understand webs of complex coordinate behaviors. Finally, this volume is a transdisciplinary effort mixing political scientists and historians in a well-integrated interaction.



Thompson's introduction establishes a number of questions to be pursued throughout. Rivalry is yet to be satisfactorily defined, and the contributors consider quantitative definitions based on the extent of hostile interactions, and qualitative

definitions based on the psychology of hostile interaction and on mutual threat perceptions. Each contributor is also asked to consider the manner in which rivalries are initiated and terminated, how they escalate and deescalate, how they grow into webs of interaction and what their 'internal' vs. 'external' dynamics are. Coverage varies, though a few issues do find some focus. A definition based on mutual threat perceptions is highly favored. The question of which types of rivalries generate the most violence, how rivalries evolve, and how complex sets of associated rivalries develop, garner significant attention.

The book's 13 case chapters were born of a small conference on rivalries and are divided into 3 groups. The first concerns rivalries between regional powers and includes France and Spain from 1462 to 1700 (John Rule), Franco-Habsburg interaction between 1715 and 1918 (Paul Schroeder), and Franco-German interaction from the mid-19th century (Paul Hensel). Franco-Spanish interaction is most instructive, including a fairly regular cycle of war and peace, along with an excellent description of the nature of the world system during the shift from hegemony to rivalry. The discussion of the Franco-German rivalry adopts an 'evolutionary' framework and suggests that conflict escalates over the life of a rivalry as issues cumulate. The existence of a specific territorial issue makes this rivalry more volatile.

The second section of the book is particularly strong and concerns rivalries between maritime powers. This includes Genoa and Venice from the 11th to the 14th century (David Kelly), Venice and Portugal from the 14th to the 16th century (George Modelski), the Anglo-Dutch rivalry of the 17th century (Jack Levy) and the Anglo-American rivalry of the 18th and 19th centuries (Bill Thompson). Support is offered for greater violence due to the accumulation of grievances over time by Kelly, who argues that rivalries over territory generate more frequent conflict, while those over position/prestige are rarer but more ferocious. Modelski considers the moderating effects of rivalry between democratic powers, and transitions within the 'democratic lineage'. Jack Levy begins to question the spatial vs. positional rivalry dichotomy by noting the difficulty of separating issues of prestige, power and profit. Finally, Thompson notes the moderation of the rivalry between the UK and US, and suggests it is the explicit outcome of an evolutionary model where sides learn to interact and accomplish their goals short of force. The alternative, a rational choice model of fixed preferences and alternatives, would have yielded a different outcome.

Less agreement is generated over the question of the 'internal' vs. 'external' genesis of these rivalries. Genoa and Venice fought for structural reasons argues Kelly, though the winner was determined by differentially resilient internal social systems. Levy stresses domestic issues, but his narrative is so rich that it is difficult to discriminate between what might be primarily internal and primarily external.

Thompson, usually an inveterate structuralist, points to the critical role of learning by political leaders.

The third section considers rivalries between maritime powers and their challengers and includes the Ottomans and Venice from the 15th to the 17th century (Palmira Brummett), Britain and France from 1066 (Jeremy Black), Britain and Russia from the 18th to the mid 20th century (Edward Ingram), Britain and Germany between 1890 and 1914 (Suzanne Frederick), US-Japanese relations from the end of the 19th century into the 20th (David Rapkin), and the US-Soviet rivalry during the Cold War (Deborah Larson). These disparate cases produce a mixed bag of hypotheses and conclusions. Once again the dispute-count definition of rivalry fares poorly, though many authors offer novel definitional elements. Ingram argues that rivalries are less disputes over specific issues than conflicts over the shape of the future. Rapkin takes a more functional view, accepting the mutual threat perception framework but adding commercial interaction to the mix. Brummett describes the Ottoman-Venice rivalry as a highly uneven 'rivalry of convenience' (or perhaps 'rivalry when convenient') with each side's extensive and varied interactions leading to violence only when specific stakes and clear superiority warrant. Frederick adds the issue of growth and technology, while Larson argues that the territorial dimension of the US-USSR rivalry, often pursued by proxy, helped keep the two sides from direct conflict.

The most difficult issue in this section is the 'internal vs. external' genesis of rivalries. For the Ottomans-Venice, UK-Germany and US-Japan, structural explanations dominate. Discussions of UK-France, and UK-Russia discount structural explanations totally, in favor of internal, individual level dynamics. The Cold War is described as a rivalry that did not have to evolve as it did, but for a confounding ideological dimension that altered the perceptions and hence the actions of individuals.

One of this volume's great strengths is its mixing of historians and political scientists. The ratio is fairly even, and attempts at fruitful interaction as evidenced by mention of each other's chapters suggest a well-integrated endeavor. That said, the gulf between the disciplines remains wide. There is a tendency for the political scientists to structure their concerns around theoretically relevant issues and the generation of hypotheses. The hypotheses are fascinating, but some seem quite contextually specific. Some of the analyses seem so highly focused that future insights based on other variables or hypotheses might find them of little use. Social science may be captive to its tendency to focus analysis along a theoretical line. Some historians, on the other hand, ignore or even savage theoretical schools, and seek to let the available facts speak uniquely for themselves. They nonetheless betray their own theoretical predispositions, sometimes based on the selective nature of the available evidence, and fail to acknowledge this bias or the directions in which it might inad-

vertently lead. Though these tendencies are pronounced in a few places, they are the minority here. There is a good deal of healthy cross-fertilization, and those chapters that find the magic middle ground are real treats.

The collection lacks a conclusion. Thompson's introduction does a good job of setting the stage and providing a map of the volume. As such, however, it cannot engage in too much evaluation. The volume would have benefited from a summary consideration of the key questions raised. A concluding chapter could tell us where we stand, and suggest where we might go from here. There are some conceptual issues to be dealt with (e.g. the concept of "hegemony" is particularly abused). More importantly, who better than the editor or another conference participant to suggest what else we might wish to know, where students of one rivalry might look for additional insights or extend their analyses to help address important general questions, or to guide students to interesting and efficient research questions? The reader is left with the pleasant task of putting the various elements of this excellent work into perspective.

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Wellman, Barry. Editor. 1999. *Networks in the Global Village: Life in Contemporary Communities*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. ISBN: 0-8133-6821-9
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Dating as far back as Machiavelli (1532), Western social and political thought has been concerned with the ways in which structural changes constrain individuals' ability to establish collaborative social relationships that facilitate the non-contractual circulation of tangible and intangible resources. In *Networks in the Global Village* (1999), Wellman and his collaborators revive and reframe the age-old debate about the relationship between large-scale social change and sociability.

Wellman terms this bundle of concerns *the community question* and argues that such meso-level non-contractual exchange of resources is important to social integration (p.34-35). *Networks in the Global Village* is a book of vast depth and scope. Two key conceptual threads weave together



the project: (1) a reconceptualization of how and where to look for community; and, (2) the proposition that the characteristics of communities and the larger social system in which they are embedded interact, and thus constrain and shape each other.

Wellman challenges the centuries old rhetoric about the weakening and/or loss of community by reframing *the community question*. His point of departure is refreshingly simple: community is not lost, the trick is to know *how* and *where* to look for it (p. xx).

How, then, does one look for community? The search for community begins with a redefinition of community as a social network, or more precisely, as a *personal community* or “a person’s set of ties with friends, relatives, neighbors and work-mates” (p.xv). Where should one look for community? Anywhere is Wellman’s answer. Indeed, the contributors to this volume search for community in an astonishingly wide variety of settings including: (1) Canada, the United States, France and Japan—four advanced capitalist nations on three different continents; (2) Hungary and the People’s Republic of China (PRC)—two countries undergoing a transition from communism and state-centralized economies to post-communism; (3) Chile—a third-world country returning to civilian rule after seventeen years of military dictatorship and neoliberal restructuring; (4) pre-1997 Hong Kong—a hyper-capitalist city-state; and finally, (5) cyberspace.

In Chapters 1 and 2, Wellman and his co-authors, Gulia (Chapter 1) and Potter (Chapter 2), develop a framework for the comparative study of *the community question*. Using ego-centric social network data to explore the neighboring patterns of Torontonians, the authors develop three novel propositions. First, Wellman and Gulia deduce the basic building blocks of community, which they identify as:

(1) range, combination of network size and heterogeneity that jointly increases the ability of personal communities to provide a variety of resources; (2) intimacy, voluntary interest in contact over time; (3) contact, the level of interaction or accessibility of network members; and, (4) immediate kin as opposed to friendship ties (p.62-69).

Are these elements an idiosyncrasy of Torontonians’ personal communities or are they elemental to community at large? The authors suggest that these four “elements of community may arise in society’s where the purpose of the network or the resources garnered through them varies” (p.73-74).

Second, Wellman and Gulia build a typology of communities by combining the four elemental building blocks (4²) into sixteen possible variations. They identify the three community types that occur most often among Torontonians, which include:

community liberated—high intimacy, range, contact, and friendship (low immediate kin); (2) community lost—high intimacy and immediate kinship, low range and contact; and, (3) community saved—high friendship (low immediate kin), low intimacy, range and contact (p.71).

Finally, in chapter three, Wellman and Potter challenge the assumption that there is a stable correlation between types of social relationship (e.g. parent-child, friends) and the forms of support that flow through them. Furthermore, following in the tradition of Simmel, they suggest that the overall structure of community networks also affects the depth and kinds of support which they offer.

The propositions laid out so painstakingly by Wellman, Gulia, and Potter recast the search for community into social network analytic terms and create a unifying methodological and conceptual framework for cross-national comparative research into the community question. Indeed, a strength of *Networks in the Global Village* is that chapter authors can and do draw on this framework to explore the ways in which variations in the four elements of community, the overall structure of social networks, and the social relationships they sustain are linked to the quantity and quality of the resources that circulate in personal communities. Indeed, each contributor makes Wellman’s framework their own. Authors reformulate the competing theories of the specific debate in which their research question is embedded as testable hypotheses about the structure and composition of ego-centred social networks.

The second way in which *Networks in the Global Village* reframes *the community question* is by posing it as two interlinked components including: (1) a concern with how large-scale social systems affect the composition, structure, and content of interpersonal ties; and, (2) an interest in how the structure of personal networks affects the large-scale social systems in which they are embedded (p.2-3). Reformulated in this way, *the community question* emerges as a dynamic and multi-level research agenda.

Each chapter in *Networks in the Global Village* documents the existence of community networks and explores their implications for the societies in which they are embedded. In particular, the chapters on Hungary and China present a poignant and fascinating discussion of the interaction between personal community and social system. Sik and Wellman argue that in Hungary, all sectors of society and economy managed informal social networks that granted access to crucial and scarce resources. Personal community was used both as an addition to and as a substitute for state-controlled modes of resource distribution. Ironically, growing household poverty and fierce market competition in the postcommunist order has led to a greater reliance on personal networks as a complement to the market.

The chapter on getting a job in China tests Granovetter's 'strength of weak ties' argument. Prior to the market reforms of the 1990s, Bian argues, individuals wishing to bypass the state-controlled job placement process used their *guanxi* (good network connections) both to gather information about available jobs and to be placed in a job. Since these informal *guanxi*-based resource exchanges (information and the job) were unauthorized, the risk had to be minimized by mutual trust. In other words, in China the key to getting a job was strong, not weak ties. Following market reforms, the job search is, in theory, an open process, with "each individual scrambling for employment" (p.256). In this new context, *guanxi*-based assistance is no longer necessary to get information about available position, but remains important for the actual job placement process.

By way of conclusion and critique, it is worthwhile to signal the missing theoretical link in this cross-country comparative search for community, namely a dialogue with the insights of economic sociology. The contributors to this volume, Wellman in particular, make reference to concepts, such as embeddedness and social capital, that are central to Economic Sociology. Yet, except for engagement with Granovetter's strength of weak ties argument, what might have been a fruitful theoretical dialogue remains largely unexplored or merely implied. While unfortunate, the failure to engage directly with the theoretical contributions of economic sociology cannot detract from the strengths of the volume—a recasting of the community question in social network analytic terms, a theoretical and methodological framework for the cross-national comparative search for community that is flexible, multi-leveled and interactive, and a fascinating set of empirical studies on the nature of contemporary community life.

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