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## STILL PARTNERS AND STILL DISSIDENT AFTER ALL THESE YEARS? WALLERSTEIN, WORLD REVOLUTIONS AND THE WORLD-SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

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### I. THE DEMISE OF WORLD-SYSTEMS ANALYSIS?

This essay owes its origins to the provocative title of a recent article by Immanuel Wallerstein: “The Rise and Future Demise of World-systems Analysis” (1998a).

“Demise”? What might this mean?

The title evokes, of course, Wallerstein’s pathbreaking 1974 essay that spoke of “The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System.” Twenty-five years later, Wallerstein is bold enough to speak of the demise of the perspective, a perspective that now encompasses a global group of scholars. For world-systems scholarship has, since 1974, thrived in book series, journals, universities and professional organizations—creating in the process a world-systems diaspora scattered around the planet.

To speak of the future, much less the demise, of world-historical scholarship thus raises a critical issue for a large group of scholars and programs not just in Binghamton, or even the United States, but around the world. And we do indeed face, as several of our elder scholars have noted, an uncertain future—especially as we seek to secure the conditions to sustain the next, third generation of world-systems scholars. It is in relation to this larger group that I pose the question: What were the origins of the

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world-systems community, and why should it flourish or even survive in the coming decades?

My response is straightforward: world-systems scholarship was born of the world revolution of 1968, and its promise, and indeed survival, depends on sustaining its relationship with antisystemic movements—movements that today are the inheritors of, but very different from, the world revolution of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Other analyses of world-systems work reach quite different conclusions. For many, particularly sociologists, the world-systems perspective is the victim of its own success. For as “globalization” has been accepted within and across the social sciences and the humanities, world-systems work has, from this point of view, lost its distinctiveness through the acceptance of its globalizing premise. As Giddens posed it in his first introductory text (1995), as a global society emerges the world-systems perspective finds its fulfillment. A variant of this is posed by Tilly, who recently argued (1995) that large-scale comparative work, of which world-systems stands at the most macro level (Tilly 1984), is no longer possible due to the effects of globalization.

For many working in the field itself, the evolution of our work follows another path, that of paradigm development. Hence, for example, Chase-Dunn’s and Hall’s argument that our work has proceeded from perspective to scientific theory, reaching a stage where “the study of world-systems promises to wrest our expectations about the future away from theology and into the realm of science” (1995:415). For yet others still, such claims reveal only how world-systems analysis has been bypassed by a more radical, post-modern turn that rejects the field’s historical, structural and so-called Third World or Marxist foundations. If we speak of global relationships at all from this standpoint, they should be cast as constantly shifting landscapes, as in Appadurai’s enticing formulation.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile the master of the field, Immanuel Wallerstein, talks of the demise of the perspective as it dissolves into a central position among, and potentially unifies, all the social sciences.

<sup>1</sup> Specifically “ethnoscapes,” “mediascapes,” “technoscapes,” “fianncescapes,” and “ideoscapes,” which designate cultural flows that are “the landscapes that are the building blocks of...imagined worlds” (1997:33).

I do not believe that we can discriminate among these assessments by employing the common strategy of tracing the linear evolution of our research projects and publications over the last twenty-years.<sup>2</sup> What I propose to lay out instead is an interpretation-sketch, as Terry Hopkins would have called it, of the origins of world-systems analysis and our present and future choices. This leads, as we shall see, to the assertion that we face an extraordinarily favorable, world conjuncture that calls for more distinctive, critical world-systems work than before.

Put more sharply, my thesis is this: Child of 1968, world-systems analysis depends upon reclaiming and reinventing our dissident stance—methodologically, intellectually, and in relation to our global allies. From this flows quite concrete priorities, research agendas, and institutional initiatives.

I shall proceed in three parts:

- (1) unearthing the origins of world-systems analysis in the world revolution of “1968”
- (2) evaluating the character and imperatives of three current antisystemic movements, and their relation to world-historical analysis, and
- (3) tracing out concrete institutional conditions for reinventing world-systems work and supporting the next, third generation of world-historical scholars.

## II. BACK TO 1968

I start with a simple question: what is the genealogy of world-systems analysis?

Academics naturally tend to trace backward to the history of authors, ideas and texts. In this regard the first (1974b) volume of Wallerstein’s *The Modern World-System* (TMWS) stands out, of course, as the accepted breakthrough. Indeed, to have gotten us all fascinated about sixteenth century Europe and a second serfdom was no mean feat!

<sup>2</sup> These can vary widely. See for example Chase-Dunn and Hall (1995), Martin and Beittel (1998), Wallerstein (1997), or on the Fernand Braudel Center “Report on an Intellectual Project: The Fernand Braudel Center, 1976-1991” <http://fbc.binghamton.edu/fbcintel.htm> (November 14, 1998).

But wherein lie the roots of this achievement and its attraction for such a wide scholarly audience? Harriet Friedman, in claiming the *TMWS* as one of the most important sociology books of the century, argues:

Wallerstein in 1974 forged a deeply influential perspective by merging American [sic] sociology with French social history. His importation of the *Annales* school into US sociology compares with Parson's early importation of Max Weber. He reconnected American sociology with a boldly original elaboration of themes from European scholarship (1998:319).

Others, more numerous and closer to the core of sociology as a discipline, have located—perhaps “contained” is the more accurate word—world-systems analysis as a radical variant of development studies. Thus for example Chase-Dunn and Peter Grimes trace world-systems analysis back to the emergence in the early 1970s, “primarily in sociology,” of a:

rapidly growing group of social scientists [who] recognized that ‘national’ development could only be understood contextually, as the complex outcome of local interactions with an aggressively expanding European-centered “world” economy (1995:387-8).

Daniel Chirot's and Thomas Hall's assessment is similar, with its own peculiar twist:

World-system theory is a highly political approach to the problem of economic development in the Third World. It was created by policy-oriented intellectuals in countries at a medium level of development to account for their societies' demonstrable inability to catch up to the rich countries (1982:81).

Clearly the reference is dependency theory and its variants, and presumably indicates major scholars such as Samir Amin, Cardoso and Faletto, Andre Gunder Frank, and Walter Rodney<sup>3</sup> as world-systems “theorists”;<sup>4</sup> in the case of Wallerstein the influence of early work on and in Africa is equally important (see Wallerstein 1986 and the introduction, pp. 3-11, to *TMWS*).

<sup>3</sup> The dates and subjects of their works bear some attention; see Samir Amin (1974; French original in 1970), Cardoso and Faletto (1969), Andre Gunder Frank (1969), and Walter Rodney (1972).

<sup>4</sup> Surely at least several of these would bristle at the appellation of “world-systems theorist,” and would reject at being cast as “policy-oriented” intellectuals (even if one did defect to become President of Brazil in order implement anti-dependency policies).

If all these statements agree on the timing of the emergence of world-systems studies—the early to mid-1970s—they surely differ on the major concepts and claims of world-systems analysis and the locations of the scholars involved. One could nevertheless reconstruct the origins of the perspective by noting its reliance upon, and synthesis of, three traditions: (1) studies of imperialism and colonialism—usually Marxist or Panafricanist in inspiration—that stressed the interdependent nature of European and Third-World development, and thus an international if not “world” division of labor; (2) the *Annales* tradition, with its emphasis upon multiple, contingent temporalities and localities; and (3) radical studies of European capitalism which, although more nationalist in unit, provided insights into phases of economic stagnation and expansion, creative destruction, and hegemony. Each of these lineages brought with it critical insights, as well as limiting assumptions.

We do have in hand a number of studies that trace out these contributions and concepts,<sup>5</sup> and this task surely deserves further work, especially concerning the methodological origins and implications of a world-embracing, social division of labor. Continuing down the road of constructing a narrative of such advances would, however, contribute little to the task at hand here. For as Wallerstein suggested in his recent *Demise* essay, “If world-systems analysis took shape in the 1970s, it was because conditions for its emergence were ripe within the world-system...” (1998:103) Thus even as we acknowledge the roots of the perspective in three previous traditions, we must still ask: what were the world-economic conditions in the early 1970s that opened up the space for such a synthesis and perspective *and* drew in so many scholars from around the world? And we might ask what Wallerstein did not in his essay: what do conditions thirty years later, today, hold for the future of the paradigm, its scholarship, its scholars?

The late 1960s and early 1970s were of course a peak period, as Friedman notes in her analysis of *TMWS*, “of intellectual, political, and academic interest in international power and exploitation.” And it would be easy to run down a list of radical events and ruptures, from Third World resistance to European and US rule, to the decline of U.S. commercial, financial, and

<sup>5</sup> See our own contributions: Martin 1994, Martin and Beittel 1998.

productive hegemony, through the oil “crises” of the mid- and late-1970s, to the calls for a new international economic division of labor, etc.

Academic work on international issues also flourished, with one group of scholars seeking to advance “political order in changing societies” from Vietnam to South Africa, while others attacked such programs through critiques of Euro-American modernization theory and inconclusive attempts to theorize post-World II imperialism.<sup>6</sup> As already noted, world-systems scholarship clearly developed from the latter camp, constructing novel analyses of global hegemonies, world-economic relationships and inequality, trends and cycles of world-economy expansion and contraction, and so forth.

For many these remain the hallmark features of the perspective. Yet tracing out anti-modernization and even world-economic analyses would still mislead us. For this procedure not only obscures substantive shifts in the perspective over time, but focuses far too narrowly on concepts and discourse. Here Wallerstein points our attention in a different direction by noting that “The prime factor (behind the rise of world-systems analysis) can be summarized as the world revolution of 1968 (1998:103).”

Yet we must still ask: what was this epochal shift, and, more concretely, how did it lead to world-systems analysis? Wallerstein, in an essay targeted upon world-systems’ challenge to the social sciences, did not elaborate—somehow the development of the perspective got severed from the fate of the conditions and the movements that apparently gave it birth. Certainly the events and movements of the 1968 conjuncture are well known, ranging as they did from anti-Vietnam war movements around the globe, to Black power and consciousness movements on all sides of the Atlantic, through student movements in France, Mexico, Japan, to the Cultural Revolution in China, the Naxalite movement in India, and the emergence of armed national liberation movements in Africa, etc. It would be easy to extrapolate from this “context” to the relevance and pursuit of global studies of exploitation and the birth of the world-systems school.

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<sup>6</sup> The most elegant of these, which demonstrated the inapplicability of late nineteenth and early twentieth century theories of imperialism to the post-World War II epoch, was Arrighi (1983).

This might make for a compelling narrative—and even a good book—of events, biographies and ideas. Yet far more was involved than attacks upon US hegemony at home and abroad, and the emergence of scholars addressing these phenomena, and, later yet, the stilling of the movements’ energies. For capital, core states and the academy were each in quite separate ways radically challenged by the eruption of global protest, protest pitted directly against prevailing modes of incorporating and taming past movements. And it was here that a world-systems perspective provided a central locus for understanding and coalescing much of this ferment by students and scholars.

It did this through two critical advances, which it is useful to recall. First, world-systems scholars have insisted that capitalist accumulation has always been a global process, while political rule has been exercised through multiple, relationally-constructed institutions. This has been stated and developed in many different ways over the last two decades. But it clearly separated our work from dependency theory and modernization theory, not to mention contemporary proponents of “globalization” who proclaim to see, only today, a world-scale economy and the demise of the nation state.<sup>7</sup>

Second, we have consistently pursued methodological and conceptual formulations premised upon ever-expanding, deepening and polarized relational networks. Capital accumulation may thus be world-scale in its operations, but it rests upon uniting differentiated locales of production and accumulation. Whether one uses terms such as core-periphery, state formation and deformation, or even North-South, we have been insistent on bridging and linking locations across continental, national, and local boundaries.<sup>8</sup>

What we have failed to notice, perhaps, is that these two starting points of our work derived directly from the fundamental challenges posed by the

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<sup>7</sup> Or for many of their opponents, who argue the case for the retention of national states and economies, e.g. Hirst and Thompson (1997).

<sup>8</sup> Here too there were precursors we all studied, many rooted in the transcontinental Black scholarly tradition, such as Black scholars’ assertion of the concomitant birth of industrialization and plantation production, European freedom and American slavery (e.g. Eric Williams, Oliver Cox, etc.).

movements of the “world revolution of 1968.” As was suggested in the slim and remarkable volume *Antisystemic Movements* (Arrighi, Hopkins, Wallerstein 1989), the historical singularity of the 1960s movements was not simply that they accused the older left—from industrial working class leaders and social democrats in power in core states, to the leaders of new, postcolonial states in the south—of the great sins of weakness, corruption, co-optation, neglect and arrogance. More critically, this charge was a rejection everywhere of the dominant, antisystemic strategy of seeking liberation through capturing and then exercising state power. For those coming to power, as in the late victories of national liberation movements, the central problem was openly posed as the new state and neo-colonial bourgeoisie—as projected by Fanon and Cabral; where left parties were long in power, as in Eastern Europe, South Asia or China, new movements were launched against the party and state. What the brighter stars of the movement—such as Malcolm X, Fanon or Cabral—thus challenged us to understand might be simply stated as: how do we make sense of a world where state power and party political organization—the essential inheritance of 1848 and 1917—have become the route not to freedom and equality, but rather a reinforcement of inequality, underdevelopment and autocracy?

And it is here that world-systems analysis entered, setting out in sharp and elegant terms the conceptual and methodological tasks necessary to understand a world with a single, relentlessly unequal and imperial economy, and yet multiple, relationally-sovereign states. It is hardly surprising that the perspective, and the graduate programs key senior scholars worked at, drew in so many dissident young scholars with experience in the movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>9</sup>

The late 1970s and 1980s were, moreover, hardly conducive to such efforts as structural adjustment was applied to higher education. Nevertheless world-systems scholars and allied graduate programs did survive, and

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<sup>9</sup> Binghamton’s graduate program was not alone in this process, but it clearly constituted the core location primarily due to the efforts of Terence Hopkins (see the chapters in Wallerstein 1998b, including my own on the graduate program (Martin 1998)). It is worth noting that few new graduate or research programs were created and sustained by other leading senior scholars of the day. We should not fail to note this as we face the problem of fostering a third generation of world-systems scholars.

even flourished. As can be seen from scholarly biographies, Binghamton—the case I know best—drew students and faculty from all over the world,<sup>10</sup> a highly unusual feature by contrast to the prevalent parochialism of US sociology (or political science) departments, including even the rare few that had, like Binghamton’s, a significant group of Marxist scholars. To be sure, there were fewer Black, Latino/a, and female scholars than there might have been; still both the faculty and student body made for an unusual program—one deemed in an external review conducted in the early 1980s (if I remember correctly) as a “high risk” one, given its deviation from the sociological norm.

In summary: while it is common to trace the history of world-systems work through the development of key concepts and publications, the role of antisystemic movements was critical: they posed the key conceptual challenges, provided the talented and passionate young scholars, and sustained the development of new programs in Binghamton and elsewhere.

In short: no antisystemic movement, no world systems analysis.

### III. FROM 1968 TO 1998 AND BEYOND: LIVING IN THE INTERREGNUM, OR REVIVAL?

If this conclusion is plausible, we must then ask: How do these factors explain our situation today? And beyond?

For many of course the 1980s and 1990s represent a period of the containment, suppression, roll-back, or dissolution of the Black, Latino/a, national liberation, women’s, youth and students movements of late 1960s and early 1970s—matched by a parallel flight of scholars into discourse and ivory towers. And while scholars retreated from these engagements and the public arena, it is often argued, capital proceeded from strength to strength

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<sup>10</sup> There are several print sources that reveal this, and might be examined more closely. The most public sources are the lists of faculty of, and Ph.d.s granted by, Binghamton’s sociology department and other programs, as contained in the American Sociological Association’s annual *Guide to Sociology Departments*. For the Fernand Braudel Center, one might examine the annual newsletter, as well as the membership and affiliate lists published by the Center. In addition of course are other centers of world-systems work, ranging in the U.S. from a quantitative stream emanating from John Meyer’s group at Stanford, the Santa Cruz group, Chase-Dunn and others at Johns Hopkins, etc. The location and content of the PEWS annual conference provides another, related source of information.

on a world scale. World conditions might thus easily be said to have moved decisively against the kinds of work we do, and the institutions and relationships we rely upon.

These assertions are, I would argue, not simply a caricature of the conjuncture we find ourselves in, but politically and intellectually misleading—and dangerous as a guidepost for our future work. Let me try to reach a quite different conclusion.

We cannot of course claim false victories: we are a long way from 1968 in any space/time calculation. Recall that in the late 1960s capital and the US state faced widespread insurgency and then the outbreak in the early 1970s of a global economic panic—and in response moved faster than the movements. Here world-systems research provided much insight by path-breaking analyses of US hegemony and capital's response to unruly labor in the North, and calls for a new international division of labor (and information) from the South.<sup>11</sup> While claims of a radically new international division of labor<sup>12</sup> were surely overstated, few would contest such innovative responses as the relocation of industrial production processes, the abandonment of postwar US-style liberalism and developmentalism (see Wallerstein 1995a), and the application of neo-liberal policies to tame the South by granting new regulatory and repressive roles to the IMF and the World Bank.

As the 1990s proceeded, it became evident that these initiatives heralded both a formative response to the challenges of the 1960s and were reconstituting the relational processes that underwrote class, racial, and gender formation on a world scale. Yet it also became evident, as the 1990s flowed on, that these projects rebounded upon their formulators in quite unforeseen ways—weakening both capital and core states on the one

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<sup>11</sup> These are far too numerous to list here. In addition to individual works on the evolution of the world economy by Amin, Arrighi, Frank, Wallerstein, etc., there were also co-authored works that pitted one analysis—and set of expectation and predictions—against another. On the latter see for example the very different expectations of Amin, Arrighi, Frank and Wallerstein in their 1982 volume *The Dynamics of Global Crisis*.

<sup>12</sup> For one of the early and most-cited statements see Fröbel, Heinrichs and Kreye (1977).

hand,<sup>13</sup> and propelling forward movements on the other.

There would be no return to 1968. But by the late 1990s it is possible to perceive the even greater utility of a world-systems analysis—especially as it relates to an incipient blossoming of antisystemic movements, which will challenge us, as in the 1968 phase, to break new ground yet again.<sup>14</sup> Let me illustrate this charge and the challenges it poses for us with three quick sketches of three antisystemic movements.

### Labor and the Global Division of Labor

We stand on firmest ground in relation to class-based movements and those most classically presented as machine/industrial-based, working class movements. The reason is straightforward: we have considerably more conceptual and historical work to draw on, given the centrality of Europe and the United States to studies of working class formation.

What world-systems scholars have achieved in the last decade is to demonstrate how capital's response to labor protest in core areas has only served to form new labor movements in semiperipheral areas, and, prima facie, a century-long process of linked labor protest on a world scale. The central insights draw directly upon methodological principles laid out in the mid-1970s: no single state process of class formation, but rather a global, trans-territorial one.

What we have not achieved, I think we must frankly admit, is a conceptual rendering of this world-wide, historical process of class formation—we remain still prisoners of an outward movement from Europe and the United States. Thus we have strong studies of the rise of labor in semiperipheral states, allied to notions of Fordism and/or industrial relocation, but these are heavily centralized upon factory, waged labor—and thus constitute but

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<sup>13</sup> One result was the turn to financial speculation; the key work here is of course Arrighi 1994.

<sup>14</sup> A small but growing literature exists on contemporary transnational organizations and movements, with particular attention to new non-governmental organizations in the field of environmental, human rights, indigenous and feminist movements; see for example Smith, Chatfield, and Pagnucco, 1997, and Keck and

partial accounts of the global process of labor formation. We most certainly have not achieved a resolution of the challenge posed by the 1960s movements: how do we understand processes of class formation that are necessarily world-scale, and yet labor movements' historic containment within narrow, national political aims? Discussions in the 1970s—of proletarian and bourgeois nation-states, unequal exchange, internal colonialism in core areas, and settler classes and labor aristocracies in the “Third World,” among others—pointed out the issue of class formation on a global scale, but clearly left it unresolved.

In this area labor may well be moving ahead of us, calling upon scholars, as in 1968, to offer new understandings of labor protest—whether we speak of the US, Europe or, especially, workers' movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America. For in all these areas capital's post-1968 strategy has laid bare the central contradiction posed by world-systems analysis in the wake of 1968: how can capital, which operates on a world-economic scale, be successfully engaged by territorially-organized and racially- and gender-bounded labor organizations?

To see this advance we need but recall that in 1968 the new left accused old labor of the sin of abandoning Third World labor, Black labor, and women workers—and that today few if any labor movements are unaware of the global character of capital, the growing polarization of rich and poor, and the necessity of linking across national, racial, and gender boundaries.

There is much analytical work and empirical evidence charting these developments, as the articles by Armbuster, Bonacich, and Silver, among others, document in the 1998 symposium in the *Journal of World-Systems Research* (JWSR). Illustrations of these processes at work are quite vivid, ranging from such well-known efforts as the global GAP and NIKE campaigns to UAW and UNITE anti-Nafta initiatives. Indeed U.S. academics need go no further than their own campuses, where management has privatized food and housing and vending services, triggering student protests against the corporate monopolies on campus, cuts in local workers' wages in the newly privatized food and housing operations, and the sweatshop production abroad of campus-licensed athletic apparel.

To watch these developments and protests is to realize that capital and core states' responses to the challenges of 1968 have not only failed to provide stable zones of labor exploitation and labor peace abroad, but also

instigated a new, world-wide awareness of the systemic character of capital accumulation. For capital this is surely a portent of dangerous, antisystemic challenges, pushing well beyond the labor movement conditions that prevailed in 1968.

These kinds of developments challenge world-systems researchers to develop new conceptions and investigations of capital-labor relationships and, especially, new forms of class formation and labor organizing across national and continental, core and peripheral, boundaries. Of one thing we may be certain: others, mired in the poverty of nationally-bounded and linear models of Euro-North American working class formation on the one hand, or localized postmodern contexts on the other, have little to contribute to this task.

In short we stand in a very different, and potentially much more fruitful, conjuncture. This challenges us, as in the immediate wake of 1968, to advance further, quicker and on a broader world scale.

### Moving beyond Labor and Capital

Could one make a similar case in other areas, beyond the classic and deeply studied arena of industrial working class movements? Indeed, what of the movements that in 1968 denounced the labor aristocracy of the old, white male, working-class movement and unions, and turned to cultural forms of political awareness, if not action? As before, I would argue: we stand, thirty years later, on the precipice of a new wave of antisystemic protest and intellectual work. Let me give two examples of this among many: research and movements in the area of “gender” and “race.” (This sets aside the even more obvious, world-wide cases such as the environmental, anti-structural adjustment, and indigenous movements.)

### Feminism, Difference, and the Wage-Unwaged Relationship

The explosion of feminist scholarship has undoubtedly been one of the most enduring contributions of the 1960s movements. One of the primary targets was, of course, older left analyses that excluded women, as absent actors, in working class or nationalist struggles; in the language of the old left, women's liberation would await the revolution, the seizure of state power, or the creation of a socialist state.

The sweeping feminist attack on such positions quickly expanded into a broader intellectual realm. Central was the analysis of women's activity and work—and here strong lines of convergence emerged with the fundamental methodological and conceptual work being advanced by world-systems scholars. Feminists' insistence on revaluing women's non-waged work, and opening up voices from these domains, matched, for example, world-systems scholars' insistence that the rise of waged labor, modern cities, and democracy in Northwestern Europe was only possible through the parallel creation of new forms of non-waged, coerced and slave labor—not to mention the conquest of whole new peoples and continents.

This central conceptual and methodological premise set our work distinctly apart from developmentalists (including many Marxists), comparativists, and modernizationists alike. While many of the latter sought to chart how informal sectors might exist alongside of formal economic life, world-systems scholars turned to examining how the interdependent gendering of waged and non-waged labor operated historically. This entailed not simply linking, for example, the creation of peasantries to feed raw materials to Europe's factories, but unearthing how export cash crops became male crops, and food crops female crops. Or how in other locales, in the words of Maria Mies and others, "housewifization of women is... a necessary complement to the proletarianization of men" (1998:10), colonialism dictated different but linked forms of patriarchy in Europe and its colonies (see for example Mies 1986, Mies and Shiva 1993), and how female labor has been central to the reorganization of the international division of labor and the rise of mobile factory systems in East Asia. As these comments suggest, consideration of gender and non-waged labor pressed world-systems scholars to work at a far more micro-scale than a grand world-economic narrative suggested; emblematic of such work were the volumes by the Binghamton group on conceptualizing household structures and waged and non-waged labor.

The poststructuralist and postmodern turn has lent emphasis to this research trajectory, as has the rejection of any universal, essential "woman" and the recognition of difference among women's local situations and struggles. Indeed one of the necessities and dangers of work on gender and feminist movements is that it calls for intensive local studies, by contrast for example to studies of working class movements which tackled the global

division of labor, multinational corporations, hegemony, and state power. Thus one finds many collections such as Amrita Basu's *The Challenge of Local Feminisms: Women's Movements in Global Perspective* which emphasize local conditions and cultures, and provides only the most tentative links across micro case studies. "Global" in such cases often indicates only the compilation of a variety of individual case studies.

The great difficulty here, of course, is that as one abandons any generalization about "women," one reverts intellectually to the ideographic position of conventional historiography—and politically to the inability to perceive any unity across local struggles. Some have thus called for, in Spivak's terms, the tactical acceptance, for political purposes, of a "strategic essentialism"—surely an admission of pitfalls of particularism in many intellectual and movement positions.

As Nancy Forsythe's careful and rich methodological discussion (1998) of this conundrum reveals, the world-systems perspective offers a way out of this problem, a way to reject both a universal, essentialized woman on the one hand, and the construction of gender difference site by separate site on the other. Rather, as Forsythe suggests, we need to focus upon basic world-systems principles of the relational nature of information and differentiation within a single social and historical world. This means we need to

articulate the relationship between gender differentiation and other kinds of social differentiation as processes of a world-historical system. As parts of a single historical system, the relationship between gender and other social differences is "built in." The primary intellectual, or theoretical, question concerns the unit of analysis of which each analytically discrete process of differentiation is a part—but only a part—and in which the relationships among processes of social differentiation adhere. (1998:117)

Thus: "we should... stop referring to gender at all, or refer to it as a shorthand for what it is we mean when we use the term: the processes through which gender is differentiated."<sup>15</sup> (1998:117)

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<sup>15</sup> See also, for example, Mies' and Shiva's discussion of the pitfalls of the global-local discourse and cultural relativism, and the manner by which women's movements superceded this, in their "Introduction" (pp. 1-21) to *Ecofeminism* (1993), esp. pp. 8-12.

Just how processes of gender differentiation proceed remains, even among world-historical feminists, very much a matter of debate. Some, such as Sassen, see a radical rupture in the present period (1998), due in part to demise of the nation-state and state sovereignty. From this position difference may be constructed increasingly without reference to core/peripheral boundaries that most often rest on state boundaries. Thus Torry Dickinson not only argues that processes of accelerating income inequality on a world scale are intertwined with increasing gender polarization (1998:99), but that (like Sassen 1998) state boundaries operate with far less force than in past centuries. "Accordingly, it is hard not to be struck by the uneven checkerboard, patchwork, or quilted appearance of today's world, which increasingly differentiates areas within nation-states, making parts of the North seem more like parts of the south, and areas in the South seem like parts of the North" (1998: 99). It follows in this view that state boundaries are increasingly less effective in segregating women and feminist movements in different locales and cultures from each other: "One consequence of the differentiation within zones may be that women in the North and South can now find more common ground giving them greater ease as they talk about and address their globally-related differences" (1998:99).

For still others, the long-standing process of gender differentiation and oppression based upon waged/non-waged labor formation is a continuing, indeed accelerating one. Hence the tendency in this period of global stagnation to see the commodification of female labor in some locales and the enhanced reliance upon non-wage and even de-commodified female labor in yet others. For still others heightened levels of female non-waged labor indicate a successful resistance strategy by women as they seek to withdraw from capitalist relations altogether (see Dickinson 1998).

What is evident despite these varying interpretations is that processes of gender and social differentiation are not leading to a global homogenization and proletarianization of female labor, as is predicted by modernizationists, comparativists, and globalization theorists. And yet neither are women's local contexts and struggles unrelated. This is evident on the ground, as an increasingly global feminist movement has developed in ways unimaginable in the 1960s and 1970s. As is well known, feminists have had to confront the often volatile divisions among women's organizations and experiences by location in the global hierarchies of wealth and race. Early assumptions,

for example, that development would lead to similar wealth and positions of core, white women's households—and thus their demands would eventually be the demands of women everywhere—have been challenged and debated, leading to quite new understandings of how patriarchy and gender are differentiated on a world-scale.

If one response to these developments was a turn to locality and context by scholars, another more fruitful one is greater dialogue among women activists worldwide, and thus a far stronger movement. One can see this process increasingly at work as local women's organizations and campaigns have found common ground at national and international levels—particularly by debating and relating local reproductive and non-wage issues and struggles. Such dialogue across the global fault lines that divide women has become a regular feature at such meetings as the Women's Linking for Change Conference in 1994, the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995, the Women's Day on Food Conference in Rome in 1996, etc.

There is of course no assurance these discussions, campaigns and intellectual analyses will march from success to success. But we should recognize that the present world conjuncture is not 1968 in a very positive sense. As Dickinson puts it,

With the exception of a small number of feminist and world-economy scholars, twenty years ago few scholars in the North accepted the idea that the global profit-making system had been one of the primary forces determining the destiny of the world's people. (1998:98)

Today both scholars and grassroots activists understand this very well. No longer can patriarchy and capital accumulation—which have depended so long on hidden non-wage work and the praise of so-called local cultural and family norms—avoid being revealed as world-historical processes which accelerate and link gender difference. The advance of a shared understanding of this situation among both activists and scholars is a significant advance. It is thus not simply increasing awareness of patriarchy and inequality that marks a qualitative leap forward from 1968,<sup>16</sup> but the recognition of, and increasingly interlinked movement organization against, the global processes that sustain such inequalities.

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<sup>16</sup> See Mies' conclusions, 1998:22.

In short: there can be no question that we stand on the threshold of a very different understanding of how patriarchy is created and recreated through hierarchies and inequalities on a world-scale. As with class-based movements so too with feminist movements: today's movements have built upon the legacy of the 1960s, moved beyond celebration and study of local differences, and now grasp the fundamentally world-historical system they confront. As Forsythe concludes,

What is clearly discontinuous at present is the development of women's empowerment on a global scale... While patriarchy reigned in the past, simply seeing more of it in the modern world-system prevents us from seeing what is historically unique, and, more importantly, what is politically most relevant of the unfolding of the historical system. The most urgent questions for feminists today center, not so much on capitalism and women's oppression, but on capitalism and women's empowerment, the fact that the modern world-system has been witness to the emergence of women's empowerment. (1998:121-22)

A very bold question thus follows:

If the current period does mark the end of male domination (male hegemony)... does the shift in gender relations in the current period suggest a new periodization in which the modern world-system is an end point? (1998:123).

An answer to this question can best be pursued, for all the reasons argued above, by a new wave of feminist, world-systems research.

### Racing World-systems: subjecthood and nationhood on a world scale

If the relation of feminist movements and world-systems work suggests that the spirit of 1968 is alive and well, a similar case for new, antisystemic advances can be made if we look at contemporary Black movements. This is admittedly a thinner case, intellectually and theoretically, given the smaller number of scholars and resources committed to Black studies in the last generation.

It is also, as is the case of women's movements, where the standard academic narrative fails us. We are often told this is the age of the declining significance of race and the end of modernity's essentialized racial categories, and the rising recognition of hybrid cultural-racial identities. Even phenomena associated with the African-centered movement—from the growing

celebration of Kwanzaa to a Black Cleopatra and Nile—become in this context little but signs of diffuse racial and cultural imaginings.

Drawing on colleagues' work and basic world-systems premises, I would argue a very different thesis: we stand on the verge of a fourth grand wave of Black nationalism—to use Michael West's formulation<sup>17</sup>—a movement heir to the antisystemic breakthroughs of the last wave in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and desperately seeking to advance its antisystemic inheritance. And to develop this historical thesis we need to reinvent and reinvest the fruits of a generation of world-historical research.

This is a long and optimistic charge, one that I can only sketch here. But let me extend a point made above: as in the case of other “new” movements, Black nationalists (like all uses of the term nationalism, a Janus-faced notion to be sure) in the 1960s and early 1970s rejected their predecessors' belief in the promise of state power and liberalism as a route to freedom.

This was true, we should recall, both at home and abroad. Indeed one of the major misfortunes of the last three decades of national histories of the period was to deny the global Black character of this movement. In the US one needs only to point to the rejection by Black nationalists of the civil rights movement's early pursuit of integration into a common US culture and citizenship, or for Malcolm X's call for world-wide human, as opposed to *national*, civil rights abroad one needs only to glance at Fanon's and Cabral's warnings of the pitfalls of nationalist consciousness and misplaced expectations for the postcolonial state.

World-systems scholars drew directly from this movement and its intellectual predecessors, as can be seen from the biographies of many of our leading scholars. In proposing the fundamental notion of multiple states

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<sup>17</sup> See his “Like a River: The Million Man March and the Black Nationalist Tradition in the United States,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* (1999). West's dating for the four waves of Black nationalism (in the US one should note) are roughly 1850 to 1861, 1919 to 1925, 1964-1972, and 1980 onward; for a contrasting historical overview similarly inspired by recent Black movements, see Cha-Jua 1998. How US Black nationalism links to contemporary Africa and US foreign policy remains unexplored. Historians, unlike their colleagues in the social sciences, have at charted these links through the 1950s; see Plummer 1996 and Von Eschen 1997.

and yet a singular world-economy, early world-systems scholarship openly sought to build upon the work of such predecessors as Eric Williams and Oliver Cox, while addressing more directly the 1960s puzzle of the relation between global racial oppression, national liberation, and institutional political power.

What was not anticipated was how the displacement of the equivalency between liberation, state power and economic power would call for far more radical formulations than proposed by both scholars and social movements of the day. For what the failure and often rejection of social-democratic and socialist solutions to global racism left unresolved was the conceptualization of racial inequality and identity as national or even local process. The end of formal colonialism or segregation might reveal the false hopes of advancing national economies and civil rights, and the rising significance of race and racial polarization—a fundamental position advanced by Black nationalists and world-systems scholars alike. But it did not develop any resolution of how we might construct new understandings and new conceptions of how “race” and racial inequalities have been constructed and reconstructed on a *world* scale, within and across the boundaries of sovereign states.

There were of course many explorations, almost all resting on the worldwide character of resistance to racial oppression. It was not by chance for example, that the opening pages of *Black Power* by Ture and Hamilton started with the notion of internal colonialism, a concept derived via dialogue with African national liberation movements—or that this term would be extended to analyze South Africa, the Caribbean, Canada, Ireland, Native Americans, etc. Yet here too the essential contradiction between race and residence, nationhood and citizenship, remained unresolved. More recent analyses—which stress how the colonial status of “subject” remains embedded in postcolonial states while citizenship is denied (e.g. Mamdani 1996)—reveal the continuing search for new formulations, and the lingering hold and hope of national solutions.

Some, such as proponents of a present rupture into globalization, would tell us this is simply the debris left behind by the ongoing demise of states. What this misses, of course, is the antisystemic movements’ continuing rejection of the state solution—and the current political renewal of transnational movements as they confront global processes of racial inequality and stratification. In key ways the movements may be advancing ahead of

us, as in the early phases of 1968 period. Need we recall that this breaking of political identities and rights away from the state was central to all the movements that blossomed in the 1960s?

In this respect the current wave of Black nationalism, which expresses a common Black condition worldwide, should not be understood as simply a return to the panafricanism of the epoch of anti-colonial and national liberation movements. For today’s transcontinental Black movements threaten African and American states and rulers alike. Thus on the one side of the Atlantic, for example, we witness the overthrow of old dictators in Africa and the search for a “Second Independence;” on the other side we see a new generation’s rejection of integrationist and statist solutions, and the search for a broader, African-centered identity and ideology. The forging of an interrelated Black identity through global cultural linkages is even more striking. These movements are, moreover, linked across state and continental boundaries. Walking into the student union of a Black South African university in the 1990s, for example, one should not be surprised to see posters of Tupac Shakur on sale and KRS-One on the radio. Or if one is in Chicago, watch South African reggae performers speaking of a common home world where “They won’t build no hospitals no more... All they build will be prison, prison.” (Dube 1989).

Many relegate such transatlantic cultural expressions to the thin realm of popular consumption and commercial exchange—hardly the strongest case for a revived, global wave of Black nationalism. Yet what does one make of the refashioning of “Africa and Black” as so evident in the millions of feet that marched in the Million Man and Million Women Marches? Or the emergence of the more sharply radical and focused Black Radical Congress, where attention to global conditions and movements, Black feminism, and youth was and is so heavily stressed (see among others Boyd 1998, Cha-Jua 1998, West 1999)?

Sociologists of course want harder, empirical evidence. Let me suggest some: the ICPSR recently released the raw data of their latest Black politics survey (1995). Take one question posed to young Black males, which asked them to choose between these two beliefs:

Africa is a special homeland for all black people including blacks in the US”

—OR—

“America is the real home for black people here”.

What would we expect as answers? What would be an antisystemic or systemic response, a response that indicates a transnational and anti-statist position?

Does it surprise us that a majority of these citizens of the world’s most central state, proclaim themselves not citizens of the U.S. but of a broader Africa?<sup>18</sup> Or that over seventy percent of Black adults believe their children should be taught an African language? What might we ask, has happened to the promises of national development and a national citizenship? It should be noted as well that these phenomena contradict the postmodern claims of the emergence of ever-more fragmented, localized, and multi-racial identities. For here we have instead a transnational construction of a shared racial position, a very different matter. Indeed, might one not ask if this putative fourth wave of Black nationalism in the US prefigures another global wave of antisystemic Black movements—and this time around, movements that openly acknowledge their common situation and the failure of statist strategies?

To ask these kinds of questions is to reveal how little research and theoretical development has taken place in this area. Long ago Wallerstein argued, in the critical essay on “Peoplehood,” that “race, and therefore racism, is the expression, the promoter and the consequence of geographical concentrations associated with the axial division of labor” (1991:80). As such

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<sup>18</sup> See Michael Dawson, Ronald Brown, and James S. Jackson, *National Black Politics Study*, 1993 [Computer file]. ICPSR version. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, 1998. The actual choice was answered by over 1200 respondents. Of the 18-30 year old males questioned, 50% answered Africa, 41% America, and the remainder refused the choice and answered both or neither. The figure for young women was 45% Africa and 49% America. I must thank colleague Todd Shaw of the University of Illinois Department of Political Science for bringing this data to my attention. He is engaged in a collaborative project on Black nationalist attitudes; see the forthcoming revision of Todd Shaw, Robert Brown, Cathy Cohen, and Marwin Spiller, “Lessons Learned? Black Intergenerational and Gender Differences on Black Nationalism and Feminism,” paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 3-6, 1998.

racism is always and everywhere a global process and never a national or local one, unifying zones through racial domination and resistance—and has accordingly become increasingly virulent as polarization between zones has accelerated over the last four centuries (on this last point see Wallerstein 1983).

Such formulations point the way forward, but only that. World-systems scholars might first ask for parallel explorations along the lines associated with studies of feminist or class movements:

- Can we chart, as for labor movements, global waves of racism and resistance?
- Can we explain, as for women’s movements, difference and unity on a world-scale?
- Does global racial inequality parallel global income and gender inequality and polarization?
- Are there distinct epochs or phases, of stability, rupture, and reformation in global racial stratification and ideologies over the last four centuries?
- Is there a post-1968 rupture or advance in antisystemic, antiracist movements? Is the fourth wave a global wave, and how is it distinct from the 1960s Black power/consciousness or other panafrican movements?
- Do current stirrings of post-1968 movements presage a frontal attack on notions of nation-state allegiance and identities that have served to contain past anti-systemic movements?

To ask such questions indicates the immediate relevance, indeed necessity, of a world-historical perspective. For we can only approach such issues by presuming race is fundamental to over four hundred years of global capitalist accumulation—and indeed is accelerating in relevance to systemic transformation and antisystemic resistance. Indeed, as we have argued above, current movements threaten not only the central ideologies and inequalities that underpin the capitalist world, but the very political foundations of the world-economy by destabilizing the nation-state bounding of claims for civil rights, subjecthood, and citizenship. To understand this advance beyond national states, and toward a global movement composed of locally distinct movements, requires far more world-systems work on both racial oppression and antisystemic movements as a group.

## IV. TOWARD A THIRD GENERATION OF WORLD-SYSTEMS SCHOLARSHIP

If we stand—intellectually as I have argued, and most certainly in terms of movements' awareness of the structure of the world-system—far in advance of the situation in the 1960s and 1970s, how do we proceed? If one is willing to admit the possibility of the resurgence of antisystemic movements, how do we ensure that world-historical research and researchers may flourish in response? How, in very concrete terms, can we work to ensure that world-systems programs continue to attract dissident young scholars' interest and, yes, even the foundation and university support necessary to sustain and launch the next, third, generation of world-systems scholarship?

I have assumed here agreement on the inability of "globalization" research to respond to these challenges, and an acceptance that world-systems work is not a fully evolved, scientific, paradigm—two among many possibilities suggested by other, more distinguished scholars. And I am posing a more problematic path, it might also be noted, than Wallerstein's projection of the "demise" of the perspective as world-systems research moves into a central—could we say hegemonic?—position in the social sciences. This is a far bolder, longer-term vision. My aim is more modest: what might the immediate conjuncture, the next five to fifteen years, bring?

Let us first ask: if world-systems work arose out of the "world revolution of 1968," what of such factors today? Conditions today, are argued above, are significantly different. Rather than being propelled by a strong if ebbing tide of protest, we confront instead an anticipatory moment of movement advance—and one that is increasingly differentiated and yet consciously world-wide in operation. We similarly live in not a rich, world-wide boom period as in 1968, but in a moment at the end (hopefully) of a long phase of global stagnation [indeed where is the A-phase of global expansion that was to begin in 1990, according to the early 1980s predictions of Wallerstein and others!].

Despite these unfavorable factors, in key respects our ability to foster research and the next generation of scholars may be better than has existed for several decades. We do not face the task of forging a body of world-historical scholars and programs; the work of the last generation has given us this foundation. And we certainly are in a far more favorable situation than our elders were in the 1970s and 1980s (as well I remember), who confronted

far harsher conditions of academic downsizing, the institutionalization of Reaganite opposition to radical work, and the unshakable domination of the disciplinary and international/area studies establishment. As I, and others, have argued,<sup>19</sup> higher education in the US has proven unable to respond to the "global" challenge so well recognized by not just university administrations but capital and state politicians. Thus the core disciplines remain resolutely mired in parochial studies of the United States and, at best, their comparative application to other areas of the world. This is especially true of sociology, the home discipline of many world-systems scholars, which has fewer "international" scholars than many other disciplines. Indeed what is one to make of the American Sociological Association's recent Commission on Graduate Education recommendations, backed by the ASA President, that called for a more scientific core for the discipline, fewer international students, the expulsion of radical students, and less interdisciplinary cooperation?<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile those who might respond better, those located in comparative and especially area studies, remain blocked by adherence to national units of analysis, their comparison, and Eurocentric models and theory. Charles Tilly's recent admission (1995), that the comparative method and Big Case Comparisons are gone, is but one indicator of how comparativists stand far behind world-systems methodological studies inspired by the early work of Terry Hopkins (see Bach 1980, Hopkins and Wallerstein 1982, McMichael 1990, and Tomich 1994 among others). As I have argued recently with Mark Beittel (1998), there is little chance that comparative or international development research will adequately address the world of the late twentieth much less twenty-first century.

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<sup>19</sup> This is a long story, of which my collaborative contributions are focused on the history of African and area studies; the Gulbenkian commission report stands out of course at another end of such an analysis; see among others West and Martin 1997 and 1999, Palat 1996, and Wallerstein et al. 1996.

<sup>20</sup> See Joan Huber (1995), as well as responses by Bill Gamson (1992), Norm Denzin (1997), and the reply by Mirowsky and Huber (1997).

Nor are area and international studies programs likely to fare much better, despite considerable and volatile discussions in these areas. Here startlingly new initiatives by capital and especially the major research foundations, the SSRC, etc.—all of whom have called for a new form of “global” education suited to the next century—have told area specialists they must, to put it bluntly, change or suffer a steady decline. Area studies programs, in particular, have been the recipients of much attention and funding, and yet have failed to date to provide innovative responses to the “revitalizing” sought by the Ford and Rockefeller foundations, among others.

Indeed the dominant disciplinary and area structures on the major research campuses have constituted the primary obstacle to the innovation sought by foundations, astute provosts and chancellors, and senior scholars concerned with global initiatives. As in the 1970s, it has often been on the stronger, smaller campuses where new, innovative programs have been able to take root. In short: there is an increasing awareness of the necessity of world-historical and world-relational research and education—and world-systems scholars are, I would argue, best suited to seize these opportunities. And in doing so we should consider, obviously, ways to enhance current programs and utilize resources we did not have in the 1970s and 1980s—including the world-systems diaspora.

To do so, however, will require us to keep our critical edge, to continue, as one (Maoist) title of Wallerstein’s says, “to keep the tiller firm.” (1995b). In this we have allies—both in the new world-wide movements and in higher education, upon whom we must, as in the 1960s, depend and draw inspiration. Workers in the field of world-systems work, in looking to the future, could do no better than to continue to form a family of dissidents.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, we could no better than to follow the dictum inspired by the life of CLR James: *to grow more dangerous as we grow older.*

<sup>21</sup> See Wallerstein (1995:241), who describes the broad scholarly group of post-World War II, world-historical scholars by saying: “Let me call this the family of dissidents, in the sense that they all were dissenting from the views that had dominated, still largely dominate, the universities.”

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