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INVIGORATING WORLD SYSTEM THEORY as CRITICAL THEORY:  
Exploring Philosophical Foundations and Postpositivist  
Contributions <\*>

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ABSTRACT

World system theory comprises two distinct lines of inquiry:

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macro-social studies of historical world-systems and ideological critique. World system theorists often shun ideological critique, but for two reasons I argue it must be foremost. First, without explicit attention to its philosophical foundations, world system theory rests upon several unexamined, uncomplementary, liberal premises. These premises pose conceptual puzzles. World system theorists frequently cast such puzzles as methodological, empirical, or theoretical problems, rather than as symptoms of ideological confusions requiring critique. Second, through explicit critique, theorists may transform implicit philosophical foundations into explicit ontological and epistemological groundings. Such groundings will enable world system theorists to better realize their critical, emancipatory goals and to resolve theoretical puzzles. One such puzzle -- the conceptual distinction between politics and economics -- recurs often, arising in the debates on the relation(s) between the state system and capitalism and thwarting efforts to demonstrate the unity of the world system.

I suggest that world system theorists engage in explicit ideological critique to lay equally explicit ideological foundations for their histories. I suggest a critical, conceptually historicist, "constructivist" approach that builds upon postpositivist critiques and introduces constitutive

principles. I illustrate the virtue of this approach by demonstrating the unity of the modern world system.

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Contributions

The basic premises of their [world-systems] work remain relatively unexamined.

--Janet Abu-Lughod (1990:273)

## I. INTRODUCTION

For over 20 years world-system theorists have crafted compelling analytic frameworks, descriptive and comparative historical investigations, and theories. Studies contesting "the modern world-system", "the world system", and historical "world-systems" testify to the fertility of their work. These studies also raise methodological, empirical, conceptual, and theoretical challenges (Chase-Dunn, 1992:313-314). To confront these challenges world system theorists conduct additional historical studies in order to

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draw comparisons among world systems and demonstrate their characteristics (Chase-Dunn and Hall, 1992). However, world system theorists might also regard the several challenges as emblematic of deeper controversies. Theorists might move from theory-construction to the meta-theoretical groundings that secure theories and frameworks. Thus, world system theorists confront complementary research programs: history and critique.

I recommend a philosophical critique of world system theory (WST) in order to make its ideological groundings explicit. The critical premise and social promise of WST remains unfulfilled because a telling ideological critique is lacking. Without it, WS theories and historical studies rest upon unexamined liberal, positivist foundations which do not well support WST's critical, emancipatory aspirations. WS theorists criticize and reject these foundations, but do not critique them: "[i]n the rejection of nineteenth century social science, world-systems analysis necessarily rejects its reigning faith" (Wallerstein, 1990:291). The consequent tension among goals, theories, and foundations produces conceptual puzzles. Current controversies include the character, logics, and boundaries of world-systems, their relationships to modes of production and modes of accumulation, and the nature of systemic transformation (e.g., Chase-Dunn and Hall, 1992). Leading world system theorists recognize that conceptual controversies currently focus research (Wallerstein, 1990:291-293), yet they also often

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reduce such conceptual controversies to matters of empirical research and methodology. However, conceptual puzzles signal philosophical incongruities that demand ideological critique.

I comment not as a WS theorist, but as a meta-theorist trained in International Relations, working in International Political Economy, consequently drawn to WST, and partial to postpositivist critiques. I seek to participate in WST's energizing scholarly conversations by illustrating that the goals WS theorists establish for themselves can be met in general via postpositivist contributions and, more specifically, through the specific merits of critique, conceptual histories, and constructivism. This approach assaults neither WST nor social science. I argue not for "marauding irrational warriors" (Wallerstein, 1992:4). Postpositivism shares a prefix with postmodernism and poststructuralism, but is distinct from these schools; postpositivism possesses no destructive bent (cf. Peterson, 1990, 1992; Rosenau, 1992a:66-68 and 84, 1992b:10). Rather, postpositivism provides an initial critique of positivism, liberalism and science, questions categories and concepts, and complements much existing WS work. By focusing upon concepts and foundations as much as on systems and structures, one might regard several problems confronting WST as actually borne of inadequate critique and incongruent foundations.

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In this paper I try too much. The first half is an extended ideological and theoretical critique of WST. The second half then offers a reconstruction. My simple claim is that WST sits atop liberal ideological foundations mixed with marxian normative condemnations of capitalism. The result leaves WS theorists with uncertain and inconsistent groundings that cause incompatibilities among the ideology, theory, and practice of WST. To make the point, I necessarily explain the philosophical character of liberalism itself. Thus, the first half of the paper makes a philosophical argument about the ideological character of WST and about the need to explore that character -- in the terms set by WS theorists -- as a necessary feature of the development of WST. The second half of the essay reconstructs WST along the lines sketched, focusing primarily upon the conceptual-ideological division between politics (states) and economics (capitalism). I illustrate a means for considering them a unity.

More specifically, the essay proceeds in several sections. Section II specifies WST's twin research agendas to argue that critique defines and motivates WST, but theorists' privilege historical studies instead. Incongruities between theory and practice create conceptual puzzles, which arise when critical theory is forsaken. I fix the necessity of critique by triangulation. In three passes through world system theory I demonstrate the presumed and deduced need for ideological critique in statements of purpose (Section

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IIA), statements of theory (IIB), and the practice of theorists (III). Section III argues that a definitive puzzle -- Chase-Dunn's "one logic or two?" question about the character of the modern world-system -- illustrates a broader concern: do politics and economics represent a unity or interdependent realms? These questions pose philosophically rather than conceptually the definitive concern of world system theory (e.g., Wallerstein, 1990:292). In short, are politics and economics distinct but interdependent social systems (as world system theorists suggest in their practice) or do they comprise a unified social or world system (as world system theorists assert in their theory)?

The second half of this essay seeks to resolve critically such conceptual puzzles. Section IV defends and specifies the recommendation to engage in postpositivist critical theory. The approach maintains the key features of world system theory without privileging or disparaging any contestants in current theoretical controversies. Section V confronts the "unity or interdependence?" question to demonstrate the unity of the modern world-system. The demonstration fulfills world system purposes, illustrates critique, addresses a definitive historical-theoretical case, joins WST's twin logics, resolves a plaguing categorical distinction, and opens new research options. Section VI briefly concludes with lessons learned, WST's reciprocal contributions to critical theory, and issues for future attention.

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## II. THE LOGICS of WORLD-SYSTEM THEORY

### A. Ideological Critique and Macro-Historical Social Theory

WST entails simultaneous research agendas in ideological critique and macro social-historical studies. We recognize these twin logics as critiques of liberalism, capitalism, and/or modernity, and as investigations into their historical origins. Their entwined character reveals WST's goal of ideological critique; the preponderant attention to histories illustrates needed ideological underpinnings. In a Figure below I outline these twin logics as a feedback loop or, in a different vocabulary, as mutually constituted inquiries. My point is to demonstrate that in the terms set by WS theorists, ideological critique is essential. Indeed, it must ground and frame the macro histories. The sustained attention to historical studies precipitates conceptual puzzles arising from inadequate critique and consequently incongruent groundings.

Let me begin with an example. WS theorists assert as doctrine that the flux of global relations are reducible to a unified world system comprising persistent systemic dynamics, enduring

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structures, and the mechanics of long term social change (Wallerstein, 1990:288-289; Frank and Gills, 1992:5-14; Gills and Frank, 1992:623; and Chase-Dunn, 1992). The hallmark of WST is that the state system and global capitalism are not aptly conceived as distinct social systems. Rather, politics and economics jointly comprise a unity, a single indivisible global social system called "the world system". Wallerstein (1983a: 305) is adamant:

[I]t makes no epistemological sense whatsoever to distinguish a "logic" of the world-economy from a "logic" of the interstate system. Indeed, it is barely possible to talk about one even provisionally without talking about the other. To try to do so is simply to return to the premises against which world-systems analysis was a protest.

Yet WS theorists in their analyses routinely refer to the "interdependence" of politics and economics (e.g., Chase-Dunn, 1989:4), not to unity. From the perspective of social critique, conceptual histories, and postpositivism, this conceptual conundrum creates an intriguing puzzle. WS theorists invoke the vocabulary of political and economic systems (and other innovative concepts) to challenge the liberal, positivist reckonings of modern global conditions and to offer the alternative of the MWS and historical world systems. Yet the conceptual masonry of "politics" and "economics" reinforces and reconstructs the modern, liberal,

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positivist edifice which divides global social relations into "national" and "international" levels and "political" and "economic" categories. Hence, WS theorists reproduce a 2 cell x 2 cell conceptual architecture anchored by "the state":

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"Ideological Architecture"

	POL	ECON
INTL	1.state conflict	1.conflicts over global distrib of wealth
	2.balance of power	2.global expansion of capitalist relations
	3.hegemony	3.commodification and proletarianization
NATL	the state	national wealth and class relations

Figure 2: The 2 x 2 Liberal Ideological Architecture

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WS theorists then struggle mightily to demonstrate the unity of the

assemblage and to confront accusations that WST actually privileges politics over economics, or vice-versa. In short, to challenge the liberal worldview, WS theorists employ marxian and critical concepts, but do so within the distinctly liberal architecture which is at issue. Conceptual puzzles result. Such puzzles and incongruities promote competing schools (e.g., Chase-Dunn, 1992), hamper mutual understanding, and thwart cumulated knowledge. I focus on Wallerstein and Chase-Dunn throughout because they are exemplars of WST and because they are unusually self-conscious about the historical and ideological character of their work.

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"The Twin Logics"

WORLD SYSTEM THEORY as IDEOLOGICAL CRITIQUE

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      :
      v
Critique of Liberal ideology
      and foundations
      :
      :
      :
      :
      :
      v
What are economic-
political relations?
^
      :
      v
What are capitalist-
competitive state system relations?
      ^
      :
      :
      v
What are the origins of capitalism
and the competitive state system?
      ^
      :
      :
      :
Investigation of constitution
and organizing principles
of the modern global system
      :
      :
      :
      v
WORLD SYSTEM THEORY as MACRO HISTORICAL
SOCIAL THEORY
  
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Figure 2. The Twin Logics of WST

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#### The Twin Logics of WST

The twin logics represent simultaneous ideological critique and historical studies. Among WS theorists, ideological critiques more closely resemble "criticisms", but they include attacks on norms, theory-building, ontology, epistemology, and method. Normative criticisms include condemnations of material conditions and global inequities. Criticisms of theory-building include comments on liberal social science, categories, and concepts. Ontological challenges include attacks against the presumed, modern distinctiveness of (capitalist) economics and (state-centered) power politics. Epistemological challenges, blending with methodological ones, appear in the recurring dissatisfaction with disciplinary disputes.

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Along the other front, macro socio-historical studies include unique and comparative studies of world-systems and the world system, systemic transformation and continuity, and systemic structures. In recent years, as WST and its concepts enter wider circulation, WS research has become more overtly comparative. While emphasis has shifted from "origins" to (comparative) "transformation", social change remains the focus. Indeed, theorists regard social change as both a systemic dynamic and a normative goal.

These two logics -- socio-historical studies and ideological critique -- comprise inextricable, mutually reinforcing lines of inquiry. Socio-historical studies explore the origin, evolution, and transformation of systems and structures. Ideological critique challenges our values, conceptions, and explanations of systems, structures, and transformations. Historical concern for the origins of capitalism and the competitive state system presupposes some basis for conceptually establishing their distinctiveness. Yet to identify conceptually distinct or unified political and economic realms begs the question of their identities and historical origins. Hence the two fronts: one socio-historical and empirical, the other conceptual and ideological. Hopkins and Wallerstein (1982:7) write that:

[o]ur efforts have taken two very different but related tacks. The

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first has been the rewriting of modern history...The second has been the elaboration, first of ways of heuristic theorizing..., and second of methods of inquiry...This latter...may be the more difficult of the two.

The issues depicted in Figure 2 are related, the lines entwined, the logics mutually reinforcing. History is wed to theory, but the critical impetus often remains implicit, decelerating into methodological challenges. Wallerstein (1990:292) writes that "[t]here is hard work to do at three levels: theoretical, methodological, and organizational". Ideological critique beckons as well.

While theory and method are important, critique is central to WST. The difficulties of building theories, compiling histories, specifying concepts, erecting frameworks, refining methods, and collecting empirical data are palpable, but they are compounded by inadequate critique. Historical "rewrites" provide less in the way of new information than they inform WS concepts and taxonomies. The latter comprise "heuristic theorizing". They erect new frameworks for understanding history. Attention focused upon models and methods misses the need for prior foundations upon which to build theories. Said simply, critique drives WST.

First, WS theorists initiate research in the name of critique and

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condemnation. Criticisms of capitalist excrescence, highly inequitable modern material conditions, and liberal categories, concepts, and practices including social science, motivate macro social studies of historical ruptures and continuities. In turn, historical studies reinforce the criticisms and inform theories of social change necessary to alleviate social ills (Hopkins and Wallerstein, 1982:8; Chase-Dunn, 1992:331; Chase-Dunn and Hall, 1992:108; and Wallerstein, 1992c:616). Friedman (1992:369) resounds:

The importance of understanding the continuity and invariability of the global system is of more than academic import. It points to an issue more serious and perilous than any particular mode of production or civilization or social system. The capacity to even conceive of consciously changing the world for the better lies, perhaps, in changing the system as a whole, a system whose most general properties have eluded the storms both of innumerable revolutions and cataclysms.

Second, ideological critique is a necessary features of WST since alternative histories require alternative frameworks. Theory building demands critique or refinement of such frameworks. As WST is no reformist enterprise, its historical studies must be framed as alternatives to existing understandings (Hopkins, 1982:190). The effort stakes the contested terrain. As WST's alternative

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reckonings require alternative concepts and/or conceptual clarification (Wallerstein, 1974b:268, 1974c:2), Chase-Dunn and Hall's (1992:88, 89) specific comment is more generally applicable:

"the conceptualizations being used are often confused and

confusing" (also Chase-Dunn, 1992:326). So, again, critique is necessary. Without explicit critique the theoretical and conceptual innovations of WST rest atop the very liberal, modern, capitalist, Eurocentric philosophical assumptions it criticizes because these are the assumptions that currently prevail and shape (our impressions of) the world.

#### B. Liberalism, Positivism, and Social Theory: The Subjects of Ideological Critique

##### Liberalism

Allow me to clarify this contentious point about WST's implicitly liberal foundations. Emerging in the 17th century, coming to fruition in the 18th century, and achieving global proportions in the 20th century, liberalism is a distinctive intellectual tradition (or worldview or ideology) of diverse strands concerned foremost with individual freedoms, the reduction of state power, the right to consent to and participate in political institutions, and a commitment to pluralist politics and society (e.g., Berlin,

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1969; Seidman, 1983; Arblaster, 1984, Gray, 1986, Rapaczynski, 1987, Hoffmann, 1995). As an intellectual tradition, liberalism is the political theory of modernity. The modern world is the liberal world. "[L]iberalism has been, in the last four centuries, the outstanding doctrine of Western civilization" (Laski, 1962:5). Liberalism is "a general style of thinking" (Rapaczynski, 1987:6); it is "a way of seeing the social world and a set of assumptions about it" that are "so deeply ingrained that they are hardly ever made explicit" (Arblaster, 1984:6). Consequently, liberalism is "an ensemble of [social] practices" (Onuf, 1989:164). Gray (1986:x) notes four basic principles and defining concepts that frame this body of thought and practice. The liberal tradition asserts the moral, political, and ontological primacy of INDIVIDUALS, their basic EQUALITY, the UNIVERSAL moral unity of humans as beings, and an AFFIRMATIVE attitude toward improving

social institutions and conditions. C.B. Macpherson (1963:3) elegantly describes liberalism and its components:

The individual is free inasmuch as he is proprietor of his person and capacities. The human essence is freedom from dependence on the wills of others, and freedom is a function of possession. Society becomes a lot of free equal individuals related to each other as proprietors of their own capacities and of what they have acquired by their exercise. Society consists of relations of exchange between proprietors. Political society becomes a

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calculated device for the protection of this property and for the maintenance of an orderly relation of exchange.

Beginning with Locke, private property was declared an

indispensable condition of individual freedom. Private property also serves to conceptually divide social relations and highlight the embedded (2 x 2) liberal architecture or ontology. Individuals bearing property rights comprise "society". The exchange of property rights comprises the realm of "economics". Over time, society came to be regarded as nearly synonymous with the realm of economic exchange. The protection of rights, notably property rights, from state usurpation or other infringement is the domain of "politics". Indeed, possession of (property) rights is the means by which individuals may better resist the state. These elements comprise the "national" sphere of social relations. Liberal "culture" embodies these principles and their configuration into this worldview. The principles may be shared with others in different countries, but the conflicts among these countries and among their citizens comprise "international" life. In this light, private property rights are not merely tools for the crafting of individual FREEDOM. Instead, private property rights constitute INDIVIDUALS as actors, recognizable to each other by the material properties and intangible rights they possess.

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Thus:

In order to explain the relation between the individual and society, one had to begin with the concept of human individuality. Consequently, one had to be able to specify the latter's constitutive elements without reference to the social interaction that was going to be derived from them. Man's humanity, far from being derivative with respect to social and political relationships, became their foundation (Rapaczynski, 1987:8).

Individuality is then reducible to the rights and obligations of a citizen. In Macpherson's (1963) memorable phrase, liberalism is rooted in "possessive individualism". Notably, individuals possess property rights. They possess a property in themselves as humans and in the material goods they acquire by applying their labors and exchanging the fruits. The realization of individual freedom requires property rights and socio-political pluralism, which in turn generate conflict and competition (Seidman, 1983:15). Thus, liberalism hails the primacy of individuals over state and society and asserts the primacy of competition over cooperation. As defining factors of social life, differences eclipse commonalities and interests overshadow passions (Hirschman, 1977). Conflict, insecurity, and the need to produce and trade follow as corollaries. As Rapaczynski (1987:9) notes, the premises of radical individualism and social competition "prepared the ground

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for the marriage of liberal politics with classical economics". As liberalism has become less a national political doctrine and more a global ideology, its inextricable connections with global capitalism and market exchange have become undeniable (Hoffmann, 1995).

## Positivism

Yet, as is true for all worldviews, these normative claims, theoretical premises, and subsequent practices rest atop deeply embedded ideological assumptions. Liberalism is built upon the same philosophical foundations that ground "the mechanistic science of nature" (Rapaczynski, 1987:7). That is, liberalism is conceived literally as a social SCIENCE. "[T]he growth of modern science and the emergence of liberalism are overlapping developments" (Arblaster, 1984:26). Both science and liberalism are based upon scientific procedures and methods, the distinction between facts and values, confidence in individual experience and empiricism, rationality, comparative testing and experiment, concerns for control, knowledge as a tool, and the analytic reduction of wholes into component elements, whether atoms or individuals. These premises "serve to align liberal individualism with the outlook and principles of modern science...Indeed, liberalism embodies the scientific approach and extends it to the realm of politics" (Arblaster, 1984:26). Individuals are the atoms of social science,

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as Hobbes so clearly conveys in his mechanistic depiction of social relations.

This orientation is positivist. Most clearly, positivism is an ontology, identifying for us what is real. Positivism looks at "things" -- that is, it looks at discrete, identifiable units or positivities, whether actors, events, attributes, acts, or whatever. Every concept is a "thing". The world is understandable because it is unproblematically composed of identifiable things. We know this to be "true", to be a "fact", because we can touch, experience, count, and test features of the world. For liberals, individuals are the central "things", the central "fact" of social life. Social wholes, collectivities, or structures such as the state, community, or society are merely aggregates of individuals. While liberals may not regard them as "real", they are treated as positivities. Such claims make the external world a certainty. We know the world positively. It has positive substance. We are positive what is out there. From these positivist claims derives an equally positivist epistemology called "rational empiricism". We know it better simply as "science" and as the defining element of the Enlightenment. As Rapaczynski (1987:65) concludes:

by grounding political philosophy in arguably the greatest intellectual achievement of modernity -- mechanistic natural science -- [early liberal thinkers] provided a strong foundation

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and an extremely powerful argumentative strategy for...much of liberal thought.

Indeed:

the emergence of moral and political individualism has been tied

logically and historically to the development of an analytical individualism which was used to interpret the natural physical world as well as the world of man. All the characteristics of the abstract individual...are carried over into liberal social, economic, and political thought (Arblaster, 1984:53).

#### Social Theory

WST's structural ontology appears to challenge liberalism's individualism. It harkens in many ways to the universalist worldviews of Aristotle and medieval Christianity, especially in its teleological and final-causation strands: individuals and societies are driven by larger external forces, and no individual alone can achieve salvation or satisfaction. Such must be attained socially, whether within the polis, the Church, or a socialist movement (Rapaczynski, 1987:62). WST claims not that individuals constitute social structures, but that structures constitute individuals and pattern their behavior. Wallerstein's structural and historicist premises stand farthest from liberalism and echo

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the revolutionary and critical voices in European social-political theory and its classical, counter-Enlightenment strands. Yet Chase-Dunn's decided structural positivism places him much nearer the liberal camp. As framed, this is an unresolvable social theory dilemma: individuals versus structures as the explanatory variables in social relations? However, for WS theorists, the identification of the key structures as political (state-centered power politics) and economic (production and trade) actually reinforce a liberal-positivist framework. After all, for WS theorists, these specific structures exist positively and they set the context of social relations. Thus, WST's structural challenge to individualism requires a complementary critique of positivist epistemology. Rather than a critique of liberalism, WS theorists acquiesce to a liberal framework.

Even the argument that the "political" component of WST mirrors liberalism while the "economic" elements draw from marxism rings hollow. Gramsci and Habermas, among others, have decried the "excessively bourgeois character of Marxian social theory" with its "latent positivism", utilitarianism, and economism (Seidman, 1983:11; Rapaczynski, 1987:7). More pointedly, the marxian elements of WST offer insufficient critique (more below). While marxism attempts to unify science and critique, the unity is suspect. The same is true of WST. Indeed, the synthesis of science and critique represents an attempted synthesis of

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liberalism and revolution. The foundations of marxism are set in liberalism. The revolutionary strand of marxism sought "to preserve the ideological core of liberalism, namely the doctrine of autonomy and democracy" (Seidman, 1983:12). Marx posed less an antithetical challenge to liberalism than he tried to transcend the limitations of liberalism (Kiss, 1982).

In the US and Britain, the fields of sociology, social and political theory, and political philosophy developed in tandem with the successes of liberal civilization. However, continental European social theory emerged from liberalism's failures and was advanced as its critique. Thus, Marx, Durkheim, Weber, and WS theorists evince a deep-seated ambivalence toward liberalism. Liberalism expresses the notion of individual freedom and provides for its realization, yet it is also strikingly deficient since its realization is only partial: distributive issues are largely silenced and communitarian concerns are devalued. The concepts of alienation, anomie, and reification convey the critical posture toward liberalism conveyed by these theoretical giants. Wallerstein's attention to "proletarianization" shares an identical concern. However, as Seidman (1983:14) argues:

the critique of liberalism and bourgeois society by Marxism and sociology...was founded upon liberal values and modernist presuppositions...to preserve the progressive heritage of

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liberalism while reconstructing it.

As I demonstrate below, the same is true of WS theorists. Their potential critical contributions require explicit attention. This attention must be directed to ideological foundations and will be assisted by postpositivist insights. WST's embedded liberal ontology and its epistemological groundings require critique. I recommend a "constructivist" approach because it seeks to connect individual agents and social structures into a coherent, comprehensive social theory grounded in an ontology that balances actors, structures, and concepts. Constructivism is a form of ideological critique.

#### Critique and Foundations

Critique penetrates to philosophical foundations. By "critique" I refer to the self-conscious effort to make problematic what is typically presumed. Problem-solving theory accepts the world as is and seeks to resolve problems on the basis of those presumptions. Critical theory "stands apart from the prevailing order of the world and asks how that order came about [as it focuses on] the social and political complex as a whole rather than on the separate parts" (Cox, 1981). Cox (1981) adds that critical theory is directed:

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toward an appraisal of the very framework for action, or problematic [problematique], which problem-solving theory accepts as its parameters... [T]he critical approach leads toward the construction of a larger picture of the whole of which the initially contemplated part is just one component, and seeks to understand the processes of change in which both parts and whole are involved.

Such critique is linked to "liberation" in the effort to assist humans to consciously and actively determine their "own way of life" (Horkheimer, 1972, in Bernstein, 1978:181). To this end, critical theorists attempt "to construct a systematic, comprehensive social theory" (Kellner, 1989:1) by which to provide criticisms and pose alternatives to traditional worldviews, ideologies, philosophies, theories, and sciences. Such modes arose with the developments that define the modern era: the rise of industrial capitalism and the concomitant prominence of rationalization, secularization, and political inequalities (Rosenau, 1992a:49-51). Critical theorists critique "modernity" in an effort to promote new social behaviors -- praxis -- that will promote liberation while revitalizing reason. In this regard, many critical theorists are postpositivist in their challenge to modern, positivist science, language, and categories. They are postmodern in terms of their cultural critique of modernity. They are not (necessarily) postmodern in the poststructural sense of critiquing

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and deconstructing all structural relations and practices, including reason and the Enlightenment (cf. Habermas, 1981; McCarthy, 1981:xvi-xix; Rosenau, 1992) <1>. Thus, critical theorists critique (elements of) the modern worldview.

A "worldview" is an "ideology". In this philosophic rather than theoretical or political sense an ideology comprises three features: coherent philosophical foundations (ontology and epistemology), theory construction and therefore (social) science and method, and normative judgments. Ideology provides and/or informs the categories, frameworks, and concepts by which we apprehend and understand the world. Through ideologies we conceive, hence "see" the world. As such, ideology becomes a central subject of critique.

An "ideological critique", then, challenges the normative, philosophic, and theoretical presumptions of our "worldviews". Normative critiques are many, including those from feminists, "greens", religious sources, and animal rights advocates. Ontological challenges to liberal modernity's (individual, atomistic) positivism include structuralism (shared by most WS theorists) and historicism (shared by many, especially Wallerstein). Structuralism entails no complementary challenges to epistemological positivism. Indeed, Chase-Dunn offers his 1989 volume as an express effort at positivist "theory construction" and

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a "defense of theory" (Chase-Dunn, 1989:1, 298). He specifically defends "structural theory against the attacks made by historicists" (Chase-Dunn, 1989:5). By contrast, Wallerstein's historicism is encompassing, unifying, and tends toward more idiographic than nomothetic analyses. Wallerstein (1992a) also addresses epistemological issues, distinguishing positivist "scientism" and unruly "postmodernism" from the "historical social science" he encourages.

Avowedly epistemological challenges include the many interpretive-subjective approaches uncomfortably enveloped by the phrase "postpositivism", which, in its specific uses, means the rejection of positivism's word-object correspondence, categorical distinctions, and rigid, "colonizing" conceptual dichotomies. More generally, postpositivism levels a critique at the narrow conception of "science" that currently prevails, arguing that its preoccupation with the analytic realm of postulates, hypotheses, models, theories, categories, taxonomies, explanations, empirical statements, and logical rules overemphasizes ontology and method. This view of science demeans the ideological realm of "reality-defining assumptions and epistemological presuppositions" that drive and frame scientific inquiry (Seidman, 1983:296). Postpositivism seeks a rapprochement between positivism and classical theory.

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#### Ideological Critique and Postpositivism:

Postpositivism regards identifying "things" as very problematic. Thus, analyzing such things is also problematic. In short, postpositivism critiques science and asks epistemological questions. We are thwarted from knowing by an image of language as merely the labeling of the external world. A contrary view holds that we make the world through language. One must critique prevailing social practices, including science, and prevailing frameworks of understanding, such as theories, ideologies, and even the Enlightenment Project itself. Thus, a critique offers a comprehensive evaluation of the theories and practices that characterize a society. Emancipation may follow since critique may free individuals from "certitudes" which are no longer certain. Such failed certainties include specific theories, of course, but also ideological foundations such as positivism, objectivism, individualism, structuralism, and the like. In this sense, critique represents a unity of theory and practice to create understanding. Critique need not entail a repudiation of the Enlightenment or involve a massive overhaul or reorganization of society. Poststructuralists more often draw nihilistic conclusions; postpositivists and postmodernists do not. Postpositivists engage in an ontological revolution. Postmodernists pursue a deeper epistemological revolution.

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To challenge positivism and empiricism is to challenge the premise that individuals are the basic elements of social reality. It also challenges the historical-conceptual character of "individuals". It is well-known, for example, that not all individuals (women, children, elderly, refugees, immigrants, etc) have always been regarded as politically- or conceptually-significant "individuals".

Simultaneously, structures themselves are inapt as basic social elements. Indeed, it is now commonplace to claim that individuals and structures mutually constitute each other: individual choices

and behaviors create and reproduce social structures, yet such structures create the conditions in which certain kinds of individuals and roles exist. Thus, as social theorists, we require a social theory with ideological foundations which will allow us to explore such co-constitution or mutual construction. This is especially so for WS theorists since they want to be ontologically holistic and structural, yet normatively emancipatory. Clearly the relationship between individuals and structures is at issue, otherwise who or what is being liberated, and from what?

Thus, WST potentially represents an odd irony. It claims to be structural -- even to the extent its theorists regard individuals as epiphenomenal -- yet it reproduces in whole a positivist philosophical architecture with liberal details and marxian ornaments. WS theorists try to replace individuals with

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structures, but the structures implicitly introduce liberalism's defining premises. As noted, Wallerstein's historicism taps a stream of continental European critiques of liberalism, while Chase-Dunn's positivism draws from Anglo-American affirmations. WST will advance when it confronts not only liberalism -- which it inadvertently reinforces -- but also when it confronts the positivist groundings of liberalism and modernity. WS theorists must confront ideology and ideological critique. Postpositivism has charted the course for many such critiques.

Postpositivism entails at least three distinct strands: the history and philosophy of science, interpretive theories, and critical theory (Bernstein, 1976; Seidman, 1983) <2>. In general, postpositivism often entails the "linguistic turn" toward concepts and language, understood as the conveyors of historically-situated, socially-constructed meanings. Postpositivism's ontology recognizes the primacy of words and language rather than "objects" or "individuals". The corollary subjective epistemology avers that the "objects" and "relations" we "see" in the world are socially-constructed through language and concepts. By this view, what we regard as external "reality" is created by our shared understandings about the world. In this regard "the world" is more akin to a text we interpret than to a known commodity we identify and manipulate. Thus, we should be wary of stipulating definitions or operationalizing terms divorced from socio-historical context.

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In contrast, postmodernism and poststructuralism entail different motives and analyses. Postmodernism acknowledges the linguistic turn, but may also proceed to a cultural critique of liberal, capitalist modernity, including critiques of social practices and structures such as capitalism or industrialization, and cultural forms such as literature, architecture, and scholarship. Poststructuralism, the most extreme of the three "post-" moves, decries "structures" (or structured social practices) as forms of oppression because they impose meanings and understandings, hence also social behaviors, from which some will disproportionately benefit and others will disproportionately suffer.

Critique or Condemnation?

WS theorists do not level critiques as outlined above. Of the three fundamental features of an ideology or worldview -- philosophical foundations (epistemology and ontology), theoretical constructions, and normative judgments -- WS theorists are, in my opinion, initially sparked by normative concerns. Their specific criticisms, the core of the implied critiques, are normative condemnations initiating their twin inquiries.

Both Wallerstein and Chase-Dunn passionately believe that the MWS, particularly the capitalist world-economy, produces reprehensible social inequalities. In this sense Wallerstein (1987:309) refers

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to WST as "moral, and in its broadest sense, political, protest". The condemnations of poverty, inequality, and exploitation, appearing often in early writings, indict the modern world (system) as a whole <3>. These inequalities affront justice and gravely challenge political order (e.g., Wallerstein, 1974b:4, 1974c:4, 1982:14, 1991:chaps 8 and 11). Wallerstein (1979:vii) declares that "I am politically committed and active, and regard open polemics as a necessary part of my scholarly activity" (cf. Wallerstein, 1974b:4, 10). The purpose of WST becomes clear: social change and human liberation. "[W]ith a view to shaping future outcomes...the intellectual task of interpreting modern social change [is] to affect its course" (Hopkins and Wallerstein, 1982:7). Chase-Dunn (1989:12), echoing Marx and others, writes that the "ultimate goal is to help us understand the world in order to change it" <4>.

Wallerstein is comfortable in this vein. He sees WST as a scholarly, polemical, practical, and political means of fostering social change. In this regard his attention is cast more ardently toward future changes -- that is, the "future demise of the world capitalist system" -- than to its "rise" (Wallerstein, 1974a, 1990:291, 1991). Conversely, Chase-Dunn has preferred of late to look back through history to ancient world-systems. Historical analyses, especially of the unity of global capitalism and the competitive interstate system, indirectly substantiate the current

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system's exploitative, unjust, unequal, and discriminatory character by illustrating that these characteristics inhere in the system. Such analyses provide a "call to action" (e.g., Chase-Dunn, 1989:307). Ideological critique would represent an irrelevant dalliance, "semantic juggling", or arid abstraction (e.g., Wallerstein, 1983a:307). The MWS must be changed and the majority must demand it:

For that majority, the real question is not which nation is hegemonic in the present world-system, but whether and how that world-system will be transformed (Wallerstein, 1980b:131).

From this perspective, Wallerstein and Chase-Dunn fervently wish to direct us. We anticipate an emphatic ideological critique, but WS theorists posit rather than conduct it. We hear condemnation, exhortation, and claims for problem-solving in the grandest sense: and what is the transition to socialism if not a monumental problem to resolve? It matters less whether the theorists' concepts are embedded in complementary ideological foundations than that the justice of the cause prevails.

We reasonably expect that WS theorists will directly address values and norms. They express clearly ideological criticisms, so why not pursue the normative implications of their own condemnations to a critique that frames and focuses the criticisms against the express

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target? By pointedly formalizing a critique, WS theorists better meet their own (scholarly, personal, and social) goals. Wallerstein understands the difficulty:

[A] theoretical formulation is only understandable and usable in relation to the alternative formulation it is explicitly or implicitly attacking; and that it is entirely irrelevant vis-a-vis formulations about other problems based on other premisses (Wallerstein, 1983b:9)

The "alternative formulation" is always at issue, and it is liberalism: "Liberal ideology prevailed in the world of social science" (Wallerstein, 1974c:2). Explicit critique makes comparison, contrast, and controversy productively manageable. Made explicit, "other premisses" become subjects in their own right. Since philosophical premises set theoretical foundations, all theories are shaped by the underlying ideological structure, whether acknowledged or not. Without drafting alternative ideological blueprints, we simply renovate the prevailing architecture. Thus Frank (1994:260), employing a different metaphor, writes that "[i]deology still blinds too many historians". Hopkins (1982:190), in a book dedicated to methodological and theoretical issues in WST, strikingly makes the point:

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[T]here is no way, short of kidding ourselves -- or, much more seriously, schizophrenia -- that we can convert this subjective tension [introduced by normative concerns and social transformation goals] into observer-object distance. We have no place to stand except on such ground as we make. And the very making of that ground is a part-process of our subject matter.

The macro histories also require groundings. Hence the two logics and their mutual constitution.

C. Macro Social-Histories

WS theorists turned to macro historical studies to account for troubling systemic conditions identified in the normative protests.

Historical studies now dominate WST. In the last fifteen years, and especially in the last five years, a welter of system-histories have appeared <5>. These studies extend the WS framework; address the logics, structures, and processes of world systems; refine basic concepts; promote comparative studies; and address the means, motives, and manifestations of social change. WS theorists have built a rich historico-empirical base, but little knowledge cumulation or theoretical coherence has followed, and the critical-ideological foundations of the histories are

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underspecified. Conceptual problems follow, yet WS theorists consistently address these problems as empirical, methodological, and descriptive concerns (e.g., Chase-Dunn, 1982:182; 1992:319), rather than as ideological and critical issues. Nonetheless, the histories can not avoid them. Early studies of the MWS make the point.

The Modern World System as a (Critical-Ideological-Conceptual) Problem

WST requires critique; WS theorists claim to offer it, but do not. To address the problems WS theorists identify, they must conduct critique. As Wallerstein (1990:292) proclaims: "It is time we seriously tackled the question".

In an early volume Wallerstein (1979:160) writes that "the explanation of [the] genesis" of the modern world-system is the foremost issue challenging WS theorists (on "genetic" concerns, see also Wallerstein 1974b:134, footnote 8; 1979:161; 1984:14, 30; and 1992c:590). Chase-Dunn (1989:14) likens his 1989 book to a "search for a social 'genetic code'". The MWS remains a benchmark critical (theory), ideological, and conceptual problem. Thus, WS theorists encourage(d) us to examine "the determining elements of the modern world system", particularly "the issue of the relationship between economic and political processes in the capitalist mode of

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production" (e.g., Wallerstein, 1974b:10; Chase-Dunn, 1981:20). The relationship between political and economic processes raises obvious ontological (what are the "determining elements"?) and epistemological (how do we know?) queries. The conceptual matter -- what is the defining relationship of the MWS? -- is inextricable from the critique and the philosophical implications.

The remainder of this Section and the next illustrate the inextricable character of these problems and the necessity of an ideological critique. I cover familiar ground, but, like a mobius strip, the argument is (con)dense and looped. With each iteration the sequence of connections differs. I begin and end with the twin logics.

### Deducing the Two Fronts

Sympathizers and critics alike recognize that the core of WST is to inform us of the way(s) that global capitalism and the state system are related. With a concern for "determining elements" and the logic of development, we encounter one of the inextricable lines of inquiry. The other follows logically, but not in practice. To question separate or unified logics is to question ontology and raise issues with philosophical implications that beg critique. We confront the MWS, an ontological depiction that implicitly criticizes prevailing premises that distinct political and economic

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realms exist. Yet if a single unified WS exists, what are its characteristics? Wallerstein and Chase-Dunn stipulate an ontological unity. However, rather than demonstrate that global capitalism and the interstate system comprise a unity (e.g., Wallerstein, 1974b:162, 391, 1983a:305; Chase-Dunn, 1981:19-21ff, 1983; 1989) WS theorists presume it. Chase-Dunn (1981:19) declares quite specifically that "the interstate system is the political side of capitalism, not an analytically autonomous system", and that "political and economic processes can be understood to have a single, integrated logic". Wallerstein (e.g., 1974b:357; 1982:12, 15) concurs. To say "can be understood" is to make a crucial theoretical promise upon an ontological claim. Yet efforts to maintain or dismantle ontological claims are distinctly epistemological problems.

How might we attempt to conceive capitalism and states as a unity? Hence the epistemological question: are the categories of "economics" and "politics" apt, especially for claiming systemic unity (Wallerstein, 1990:292)? In the wake of this question bob queries about theory and method, leading us to philosophy and critique (Giddens, 1984:xx; Cohen, 1987:276). Herein sits WST's challenge to paradigmatic liberal categories and understandings. By stipulating but not demonstrating an alternative ontological claim about what the world is, what remains are epistemological groundings by which we know the world. Such groundings are related to theory and method, but not reducible to them.

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Yet for WS theorists epistemological issues dissolve into methodological ones (Hopkins and Wallerstein, eds., 1982). Wallerstein (1974b:11; 1983b, 1990:292. 1992) promotes a "undisciplinary" social science by which to understand the world system and macro social changes; Chase-Dunn (1989:viii) writes of a "cumulative" social science. Both write of "historical social science". The purpose in each instance is to apprehend systemic logic(s) broadly and comprehensively. These calls translate normative criticisms of liberalism into ontological claims implying epistemological critique (e.g., Wallerstein, 1983a:300; 1987), which in turn become a methodological matter (e.g., Hopkins, 1982:190). Commenting on the theoretical implications of these claims, Wallerstein (1983a:306) writes that: "[a]n alternative mode of theorizing" -- based upon the ontological claim of a single

global logic -- "thus has inexorably led us to an alternative methodology". This method involves a "more scientific history of a more historical social science" (Hopkins and Wallerstein, 1982:7). Such issues ask about WST's research orientation: history or critique? We return to the twin logics. We can not escape them.

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#### Description, Explanation, and Critical Resistance

The twin logics additionally confine us since WS theorists intend their macro histories to explain how the modern world arose (Wallerstein, 1974b:3) and how "the logics of social development" transform (Chase-Dunn and Hall, 1992:82). However, their claims describe rather than explain (e.g., Mouzelis, 1992:250) since WS concepts have roots in descriptive modern categories. Such categories provide theorists with standing from which to describe social reality. Wallerstein, in straddling liberalism and marxism, is set in neither. Thus, he can only stipulate categories and concepts rather than use them to justify his descriptions <6>. Yet even as outspoken a critic as Chirot (!) can proclaim that WST provides "a good guide to social reality", an "admirable" map that "clarifies" macro social terrain (Chirot, 1980:539, 540, 541). Little explanation of the contours appears, however. As a "descriptive model" WST:

specifies the relationships in time, between the various cycles and trends which are features of the larger world-economy itself. This can be done without saying much about the causal [explanatory] relations (Chase-Dunn, 1982:182).

WS theorists might also critique prevailing categories and frameworks in order to illustrate the superiority of WS alternatives, to distinguish "wholes" from "parts" in "specifying causal relations" (e.g., Goldfrank, 1990:252), and to

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conceptualize "the main motors and tendencies of capitalist development" (Chase-Dunn, 1982:182; 1989). In this light Chirot (1980:542) hails WST as "a successful ideological assault against capitalism". To illustrate that WST offers better explanations than other schools of thought, theorists might tell us why existing understandings are inadequate. Read as a philosophical matter, WS theorists become critical theorists. Read otherwise, WS theorists become historians engaged in conceptual duels marked by "distortions" (Cameron, 1976:143), "confusions" (Chirot, 1980:539; Chase-Dunn and Hall, 1992:88), and "false models" (Wallerstein, 1990:292). WS theorists echo themes which resonate throughout critical theory. Why aren't they critical theorists? Why do Wallerstein and Chase-Dunn resist and denigrate critical theory (e.g., Hopkins and Wallerstein, eds., 1982; Chase-Dunn, 1989:306-307; Wallerstein, 1992:4; Frank, 1993:423)?

Such resistance is discouraging and perplexing. WS theorists'

statements of purpose demand critique. Success requires a pointed critique. Even if one concedes the prominence but not the priority of the historical studies, one cannot escape the entanglements of critique. We discern, indeed feel, unabashed ideological revulsion motivating the historical studies. However, the emphasis upon normative claims provides little analytical leverage or philosophical foundation. WS theorists contest norms and values, but concede at the outset the philosophical ground. Yet this

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ground is the contested terrain. And the contests are ugly. Since unique WS foundations remain unspecified, WS theorists suffer simultaneous accusations of "vulgar marxism" (Zolberg, 1981:275), "neo-Smithian[ism]" (Brenner, 1977; Skocpol, 1977:1079; cf., Denmark and Thomas, 1988; Denmark, 1992), and Third World totalitarian worship (Chirot, 1980:539). Conceptual confusion follows the uncertainty over ideological groundings <7>. Both critics and advocates are confused since liberal and marxian categories endure, securely nesting WS concepts and informing WST in unexpected ways. At best, the macro histories represent alternative "organizing myths" or comparative "inventorying". At worst, they represent the abandonment of WST for other objectives <8>. To quote Hopkins (1982:190) again: "We have no place to stand except on such ground as we make." A look at the animating question "one logic or two?" further illustrates the difficulties by placing the MWS case study in a starkly philosophical light.

### III. THE GIVEN WORLD(VIEW) and CONCEPTUAL PUZZLES

#### A. Politics and Economics: Unity or Interdependence?

While WS theorists wrestle with several conceptual uncertainties, no conceptual issue has been more central than the relationship of

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politics to economics. Overcoming this dichotomy remains a goal of WST (e.g., Wallerstein, 1990:292), but its enduring presence confounds claims to systemic unity and theoretical coherence. In

an article addressing state-centered International Relations (IR) scholars, Chase-Dunn (1981) poses the problem of unity or interdependence with rhetorical flair and majestic brevity: "one logic or two?" I explore the conceptual and logical dichotomy to place the debates on the MWS in a clearly philosophical context, to convey the philosophical character of conceptual problems generally, and to illustrate that critical inattention to this dichotomy causes a recurring theoretical problem. WS theorists typically suggest empirical studies or conceptual refinement as solutions. Neither will suffice without critique.

Chase-Dunn 's 1981 article spurred work in IR seeking to protect a privileged state-centered realm from the predations of

"economistic" and/or structural thinking (Ashley, 1983). Yet in WST, little work followed. Two reasons explain the lack of progress. First, claims about a single unified system (logic) represent an unexamined analytical premise -- not the subject of inquiry, but the starting point for it. Second, the dichotomy profoundly colors our conceptions of the world. We recognize the effects in vocabulary, hence conceptual puzzles. A practical vocabulary of separate spheres and logics irreconcilably clashes with theoretical claims to unity. Consequently, distinct realms

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and logics are bridged by conceptual fiat: two logics become one. The theoretical claim "resolves" or dissolves the conceptual division. I begin with the sources of the problem in liberal thought to illustrate their persistent recurrence in WST, appearing as inconsistencies between theory and practice. I end with a pointed critique of "the unity move", the common methodological resolution to the chronic problem. I make this third pass through WST to reassert the necessity of philosophically-attentive critique and to widen the earlier argument beyond the MWS. I argue here that conceptual puzzles recur throughout the whole of WST. The rift dividing politics from economics is the most prominent, vexing, and emblematic, recurring in debates on modes of production, accumulation, and systemic boundaries.

#### Philosophical Givens

The liberal worldview asserts distinct political and economic realms as givens (e.g., Walzer, 1984) <9>. This distinction echoes throughout social science, including WST, to Wallerstein's (1990) dismay. Among most social theorists, especially those in IR and International Political Economy (IPE), the concepts of "capitalism" and "states" specify the economic and political realms, respectively, and to a significant degree organize one's understanding of "the modern world". This distinction is a hallmark of both liberalism and marxism; liberals posit the

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distinction, marxians perpetuate it, WS theorists imply it <10>. These distinctions raise the striking conceptual problems that define both IPE and WST: the cleavage separating politics and economics that thwarts efforts to apprehend the seemingly separate realms as a comprehensive whole. WS theorists make the constitutive theoretical claim that the MWS comprises a unified logic. Yet Wallerstein and Chase-Dunn inconsistently argue whether the economic and political realms represent a unity (e.g., Wallerstein, 1974b:162, 391, 1983a:305; Chase-Dunn, 1981:19-21ff, 1983, 1989), distinct "interdependent" social spheres (e.g., Chase-Dunn, 1989:4), or a causal connection <11>.

To conceive conceptually discrete realms as a whole raises a profound problem. What is the whole? Wallerstein (1990:288) regards "the so-called macro-micro problem...[as] a totally false problem". Still, since wholes always comprise parts, perhaps a better question asks how the parts are related? Are they combined,

joined, or united? If combined, then two or more parts are added to form an aggregated whole, as with ham-and-eggs. The "and" and hyphens become important because they maintain the distinct identities of the parts of the whole. Similarly, joined parts retain their distinctiveness, but their particular arrangement or relation becomes central, creating a novel composite of constitutive parts. For example, we analytically and physiologically regard the human skeletal, circulatory, and

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respiratory systems as separate, but one can not exist absent the others. They are joined in a particular manner and configuration. Similarly, the brick and lumber in a home represent distinct parts, but they are joined via architecture and construction in unique arrangements to form a discrete whole. Last, parts may form a unity. Copper and tin form bronze, but no distinct identities endure. Bronze is composed of copper, but it has no copper parts. Marriages evince all three characteristics. The partners combine personalities and resources and join in matrimony to form a marriage union.

Asked differently, does our conception of a "whole" involve external relationships (aggregated combinations), a composite arrangement of parts into a (conjoined) whole, or internal relationships (a holistic unity)? Such issues also ask whether our conception of the whole looks at units or relationships among units? Combined and united wholes draw our attention to units. Combined wholes comprise units; unities are units. Yet joined wholes are discernible by the relationships among the parts.

Such issues become significant as we ask "what is political-economy?" Is it politics plus economics, politics joined to economics, or politics united with economics? Similarly, is the MWS simply states plus capitalism, their interdependent integration, or their unity? If not a unity, then we are left with

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combinations and conjoint arrangements. WS theorists highlight both. Structural analyses examine social arrangements and relationships (conjointness). However, claims that the capitalist world-economy "created" (e.g., Wallerstein, 1984:14) states identify a causal combination.

#### Consequent Inconsistencies and Displaced Critique

Such inconsistencies illustrate the divide that separates statements of WS theory and practice. WS theorists see in their theory an indivisible social whole; in practice WS theorists, and neorealists in IR, see distinct, independent parts interacting in complicated, mutually dependent ways. The former is the single logic of the MWS; the latter is "complex interdependence". Nevertheless, Wallerstein and Chase-Dunn generally stress unity, not interdependence. Wallerstein and Chase-Dunn intend to lay new foundations and erect new conceptual and theoretical frameworks. Yet by acknowledging a distinct, divisible, integrated social

reality, the theoretical framework of WST falls away revealing a liberal philosophical architecture. Acceptance of these premises represents acceptance of the problems that brought WST to the fore in the first place (e.g., Wallerstein, 1983a:304-305). Wallerstein and Chase-Dunn deny the liberal identification of distinct political and economic realms, yet then employ a liberal vocabulary that requires theorists to work to integrate or conjoin the realms.

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Wallerstein (1990:292) appreciates the linguistic problem: "we are pursuing false models and undermining our own argumentation by continuing to use such language".

Normative, ontological, and epistemological critiques of liberalism and of language have circulated throughout the century, yet WS theorists appear disinterested in recent attacks by linguistic analysts, poststructuralists, and other postpositivists upon the philosophical assumptions of liberalism. Despite Wallerstein's acumen (e.g., 1992b), he admits to philosophical inadequacies (1983a:306). Chase-Dunn (e.g., 1989:1, 21) disdains philosophical issues as mere "literary trends", preferring instead his "Victorian", "old fashioned predilections". What should remain, in his judgment, is positivism. Such philosophical reluctance is surprising given, for example, Wallerstein's avowed purposes and self-conscious awareness of the problems he confronts:

The centrality of state boundaries in the conceptual frameworks of the disciplines, the sharp distinction between matters that were "political" and matters that were "economic", the use of "social" and/or "cultural" to categorize all concerns that did not deal directly with the decisions of governmental structures or of firms...all derived from the premises of the liberal ideology (Wallerstein, 1983a:304).

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These premises provide the "logical basis for a cultural imperialism that has dressed itself in scientism and categorical imperatives" (Wallerstein, 1982:29) <12>. Yet they endure. Frank and Gills (1992:62), for example, compare their theoretical formulations to a "three legged stool" <13>. "The theoretical question is whether this trinity of arenas...is at all useful, or whether it is in fact pernicious" (Wallerstein, 1990:292).

The dimensions of "capitalism" (economic realm) and "the state" (political realm) so thoroughly pervade our thinking and our understanding of global social relations -- whether liberal or marxian, realist or world system -- that it becomes difficult to move beyond them to see other (aspects of) social phenomena. As we press the limits and definitions of these concepts, subjects emerge about which it is difficult to speak and areas of conflict or contradiction arise in the use of these terms. We confront conceptual puzzles. Our vocabulary troubles us. Concepts themselves become problems, signalling deeper philosophical

uncertainties.

### Three Conceptual Puzzles

WST's twin logics raise at least three conceptual puzzles centered upon the ontological question "one logic or two?" The first issue

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involves conceiving the "modern global system". This is an ideological and conceptual problem. The expression is evocative but imprecise since one can apprehend it only through "contested" concepts (MacIntyre, 1973; Gray, 1977) such as feudalism, capitalism, transition, markets, exchange, wage labor, property relations, the state, and so on. Both "capitalism" and "the state" are highly contested concepts embracing a wide range of meanings (cf. Bottomore, ed., 1983:64-67; Bottomore, 1985; Benjamin and Duvall, 1986). Intriguingly, one term often comprises the context by which the other is understood. Thus, to use "capitalism" and "the state" to conceive the "MWS" is to replace two contested concepts for one. To introduce a "single logic" or "unifying relationship" does little better to reconcile the conceptual uncertainties. Consequently, we understand the phrase "MWS" and its component terms by the way they are embedded by theorists into models. We understand the models as a constellation of concepts rendered sensible by their relative positions and orientations. We become textual analysts attending to specific uses and contexts so as to appreciate various meanings of the terms. Thus Chase-Dunn and Hall (1992:82) seek to "defend [their] approach [and their "typology", "constructs", "theory", and conceptual specifications] against competing formulations".

Second, the problem of conceptually embracing both the political and economic realms restates the "one logic or two?" question as a

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substantive or theoretical claim. To characterize systemic logics is to address ontological issues tantamount to articulating one's conception of broad social relations. Hence the first conceptual puzzle. It also immediately raises inextricable questions about epistemology. Hence the third conceptual problem.

Speaking to this third issue, Chase-Dunn (1989:295) writes that:

[t]he shift to a world-system frame of reference necessarily raises questions of epistemology and the philosophy of science. Is there a stance vis-a-vis these problems which is most appropriate for understanding world-systems? Are certain methodologies ruled out? What difficulties do we encounter as we attempt to build theories about world-systems and to subject those theories to evidence, and how can these be overcome?

Thus, we encounter a chain of conceptual issues. To ask "what is the MWS?" leads us to ask both "what are states and capitalism?" and "how are they related?" These lead us to inquire "what is apt theory and method for answering such questions?" Thus, we return

to the two logics and we return to ideology and worldview -- that is, to the coherent packaging of ontological and epistemological judgments. From these we generate constellations of related concepts, as well as conceptual frameworks, taxonomies, methods, and explanations. We return to preferred and privileged concepts.

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We return to the issue of how we "see" the world.

This is a pointedly ideological matter, yet Wallerstein treats it as a methodological concern when arguing that we should "see" it through a "unidisciplinary" social science. With this suggestion he resolves conceptual distinctions by ignoring them, by observing self-evidently the merit of bridging the divides. Conceptual distinctions dissolve into a single perspective, but in conceptual terms the original disciplinary distinctions endure, now merely combined or joined rather than unified. Difference dissolves into unity. I call this the "unity move", a case of trying to resolve conceptual problems conceptually. It reappears in claims to the existence of a single MWS, its "unified" logic, and to Frank and Gills' claims to a single global system logic embracing 5000 years.

#### B. The Unity Move

Order and sense arise when a unity is formed. Order arises when we see differences as arbitrary and essentially burdensome, and when we embrace such differences collectively and comprehensively. Although Wallerstein envisions a unidisciplinary approach as a plan of action, it represents a normative claim. He offers no foundation or procedure for fostering a unified perspective. In this vein Wallerstein (1990:292) remarks:

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We have said from the outset that our perspective is unidisciplinary. But we have merely paid lip service to this view...No one believes us when we say there is but a single arena with a single logic. Do we believe it ourselves?

The many become the one. Wallerstein intends for this single logic to supercede the many, but it succeeds in merely subsuming them. Wallerstein employs precisely the same rhetorical move in the macro histories. Chase-Dunn and Hall (1992:101) refer to Wallerstein's "totality assumption". The MWS is the stipulated unity of apparently distinct economic (global capitalism) and political (competitive state system) realms. Again, the many become the one. Wallerstein (1974b:5-7) arrives at the concept of the "modern world system" by exactly the same strategy. He embeds or subsumes his conception of "social conflict" in ever-broader contexts. Conceptual distinctions dissolve into larger packages or patterns while preserving their original character. The many become the one. The largest singularity is the world system,

stretching back into the Bronze Age (Frank, 1993).

"Conceptual Morass"

A similar difficulty explains the "one logic or two?" question, thereby minimizing (double meaning) its subjects. The query is

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ultimately nebulous and therefore distracting. Without explaining what the single logic entails or how we might come to comprehend a single logic, we are left without leads to pursue the "relationship". We have no doubts that capitalism and the state system are related, but we remain curious, even frustrated, about the way(s) in which they are related to one another. Critical theory remains implicit and unfulfilled. WS theorists identify several important conceptual problems, but often transform them into methodological matters whereby differences dissolve. Rather than address the "genesis" or "deep structural logic" of conceptual issues, they forsake critique to dismiss the basic conceptual distinctions as arbitrary and insignificant. They again forsake critique to then undertake historical studies based on the contested concepts and unifying methods.

Remarks Wallerstein made insightfully twenty years ago I repeat critically now: "This was far more a conceptual than an empirical problem...This seemed to be a vast conceptual morass" (Wallerstein, 1974b:4,6). The problem is wonderfully described by James Baldwin (1955:14):

Our passion for categorization, life neatly fitted onto pegs, has led to an unforeseen, paradoxical distress; confusion, a breakdown of meaning. Those categories which were meant to define and control the world for us have boomeranged us into chaos; in which limbo we

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whirl, clutching the straws of our definitions.

"Such language" thwarts us, revealing a lack of groundings (Wallerstein, 1990:292). "Conceptual clarification is the most constant need", writes Wallerstein (1974c:268), but the issue remains "how?" We seek firm ground. We need to look critically into history and into our use of language.

No wonder historical case studies have proliferated. No wonder comparison is now the watchword. Prevailing categories and concepts raise more questions than provide answers. By inducing categories from cases WS theorists seek to enliven the concepts with which they craft their theories. Theoretical (dis)confirmation becomes congruent with conceptual clarification and data collection <14>. Thus, Chase-Dunn and Hall (1992:91) offer "thinking about empirical studies" as a research strategy for investigating central concepts. They acknowledge the need for critical theory when they declare the concepts should be problematic, not axiomatic claims (Chase-Dunn and Hall, 1992:106). The liberal categories, concepts, and institutions of

"capitalism/market/economics" and "state/politics" illuminate many aspects of social reality, but occlude and confound others. The view of the world that these concepts afford us is too fragmented (cf. Walzer, 1984). We can neither conjoin them nor accept them separately. We are puzzled, perhaps plagued. We need a critique.

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#### Summary

At the risk of taxing patient readers, I have now offered three arguments for ideological critique in terms set by WS theorists. I have critiqued (i) statements of purpose (the war along two fronts), (ii) statements of theory concerning a benchmark example (the MWS), and (iii) the practice of WS theorists (unity versus interdependence) to derive the role of critique in WST. Having sought to demonstrate the place of critique, I have also addressed its character, virtue, and necessity. Chronic conceptual puzzles -- arising in macro theory, historical studies, and philosophical musings -- signal the need. With the need clear, I address a pair of anticipated reservations and offer three research suggestions in the next section.

#### IV. CRITICAL APPREHENSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

##### A. Anticipating Trouble

The suggestion to advance an explicit ideological critique against liberalism meets with two standard objections. One holds that such

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an effort diverts WS theorists from important concerns. A second reaction suspiciously regards critical theorists as sinister assailants rather than allies. I think such concerns are misplaced.

##### Political Usefulness

Several theorists argue that extensive critique misplaces effort since a "politically useful" WS alternative, not some desirable critique, is the social and scholarly goal. Yet if political usefulness is the standard, then current WST also falls short because it weakly accounts for social change. Critical conceptual histories account for social change quite well and, when investigating constitutive principles, well account for structural change.

The view that critique misplaces effort rests on the false presumption that condemnations represent sufficient critique, or that the merit of a goal is sufficient to motivate and justify it. First, normative and theoretical criticisms strike at the consequences of liberal-capitalism, not the edifice, which I regard as the actual target of WST. More importantly, normative outrage

misses the point of theorists' ontological and epistemological concerns. An explicit critique offers advantages. Levelling a critique is akin to drafting a blueprint for (re)construction. The effort organizes future work and provides the necessary foundation

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upon which to build. Moreover, the detritus from the critique may provide material for the actual (re)construction effort (e.g., Wallerstein, 1974a, 1974b:4-7; Frank, 1993:383-384). As every "alternative" implicitly critiques prevailing ideas, its rationale is lost if not made explicit.

Wallerstein might remind us, however, that the purpose of WST is to "arrive at utilizable concrete complex descriptions of historical structures" (Wallerstein, 1983a:307). He encourages us to begin with what is clear and troublesome: we should begin our ruminations and revolutions with the social structures that confront us. Conceptual fine-tuning, much less a pointed ideological critique, is an unaffordable luxury, if not a deceptive trap:

I say, therefore, away with semantic juggling and let's get on with the very hard work of describing complex reality in politically useful ways (Wallerstein, 1983a:307; see also Chase-Dunn, 1992:315, 326).

The comment strikes decisively. How do concrete macro historical studies foster social change in ways that apparently "useless" ideological critique does not?

Oddly, the answer matters little since WST's descriptive analyses

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do not well account for social change. Prior efforts "foundered"; current attempts are "tentative" (Chase-Dunn and Hall, 1992:106). So long as WS analyses investigate structures descriptively rather than generatively, theories of structural and systemic transformation will remain elusive since no individuals inhabit the structural analyses to conduct social changes. Said bluntly, no expressly logical, conceptual, or analytical connection exists between descriptions of structures and motivations to social change. The connection is presumed, although Wallerstein's historicism better accounts for change than positivist reckonings. Chase-Dunn tires of the criticism that WS theorists ignore individuals. He holds that WS theorists consider the structural contexts in which individuals behave. Others argue that individuals create structured social contexts by their behaviors; the WS response holds that socially structured contexts mold individuals. This is an old debate with no resolution in these terms.

While the descriptive macro histories do not promote social change, the structural character of these studies offers great advantage if theorists can render structures in generative and explanatory terms. That is, can WS theorists generate and explain durable

social structures? In explaining the generation of structures and the social behaviors they generate, the structures become subjects of study rather than stipulated premises. Individuals' behavior

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provides the necessary explanations, and thereby also explains social change. This turn requires a critical eye, but encounters a second criticism

Construction, Deconstruction, or Destruction?

Critical theory and postpositivism -- specifically theoretical interpretation, conceptual histories, generative theory, and attention to agent-structure concerns -- offer leverage against the intractability of addressing social change via descriptive structural analyses. Unfortunately, several scholars regard critical theory as a challenge to WST because they mistakenly believe that extreme poststructuralist critiques represent all critical theorists and postpositivists (e.g., Rosenau, 1992a, 1992b). As structural theorists, WS theorists are appropriately concerned about poststructural critiques. Many social scientists, not just WS theorists, decry poststructuralism's perceived radical (individualist) relativism and decentered subjectivity as anathema to social science, or, via methodological individualism, as stimulating an indirect renaissance in neoclassical economic studies. However, I suggest postpositivist critiques, not the kind of caricatured devastations attributed to poststructuralists.

I argue for "critical modernism" or "late-modern postpositivism" (Burch, 1994:41). Modernism, the cultural label for liberal,

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positivist modernity, privileges the theorist, whose unique ability is to perceive (conceive?) the world as it is, rather than as it appears. A modern worldview avers that a structured, orderly, lawlike "reality" exists independent of the knower. In the course of their investigations, scientists come to know in greater degree the structured order of reality. Alternatively, postmodernism declares that individuals (re)create and (re)produce the world in unique, socially-conditioned ways. Thus, reality is not independent of the observer. One can accept this postpositivist (i.e., no positive reality) view of socially-constructed meanings without adopting postmodernism's rejection of philosophical and structural foundations. I argue that we must "see" and "know" the world from some vantage point. This is a foundation. With foundations, postmodernism is not postmodern. Instead, it is postpositive; it is critical modernism.

Still, fears merit attention. To be clear, critical theorists aspire to precisely the goal of human liberation that motivates WS theorists. They pursue their goal by means consonant with WST -- that is, by making questions of the deep premises that other analyses regard as "givens" (e.g., Horkheimer, 1972:270 in Bernstein, 1976:180). Critical theorists decry claims to universalism and underscore the "historicity" of concepts and

meanings, just as WS theorists do (e.g., Wallerstein, 1979:ix-xii, 1992b:6). Appreciation of the historicity of concepts and meanings

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is central to the "linguistic turn", an epistemological turn toward postpositivism and away from the objective finitude of positivism. Wallerstein encourages us in this direction, but does not take the final explicit step (e.g., Wallerstein, 1979:ix-xii).

In suggesting postpositivist ideological critique and conceptual histories, I seek to address questions raised by WS theorists and to pursue them with advice they outline, especially the advice to avoid making key concepts "a matter of assumption rather [than] of investigation" (Chase-Dunn and Hall, 1992:89) The central thrust of my argument crystallizes in Chase-Dunn and Hall's (1992:89) conclusion, typical of WS theorists, that the "point is to conceptualize [key concepts] as an empirical issue, not an axiomatic one". Yes, the key is to investigate axiomatic premises.

Yes, the point is to address central concepts because they are the components of theoretical models and reflect underlying philosophical foundations. Yet to render the investigations as solely empirical, historical studies is to avoid the fundamental ideological character of the difficulties.

I suggest critique and postpositivism because they will help WS theorists address the questions that they raise. They do so by confronting axiomatic presumptions at an expressly conceptual level without invoking methodological individualism at the expense of

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structural analyses. It will also attract new scholars -- fresh graduates trained in postpositivism -- to WS issues. In short, the criticisms anticipated from WS theorists are distorted or misplaced. I do not claim to know better WST or the minds of its foremost contributors, but in approaching contentious issues from outside the circle, I strive to bring a fresh and useful perspective. I hope to avoid the "stratospheric" or "trendy" irrelevance or the "irrational marauding" often attributed to postpositivism (e.g., Frank, 1993:423; Chase-Dunn, 1989:1; Wallerstein, 1992:4).

#### Offerings Illustrated

In brief ontological and epistemological examples I illustrate what postpositivism and ideological critique offer. First, an explicit critique of liberalism's ontological foundation challenges the larger categorical distinction between politics and economics upon which Chase-Dunn's "one logic or two?" question rests and by which the states/capitalism distinction cleaves. A successful critique illustrates that such divisions are social creations, not natural facts of life. Logical alternatives exist if we care to consider them. Such a critique places prevailing understandings in a socio-historical context, the very context that WS theorists labor to reconstruct. This critical claim alone provides a rationale for

conducting historical studies. It also grounds alternative

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ontological claims, whether presumed or concluded by the historical studies, as equally plausible. Thus, the critique invites, grounds, and informs the studies. Wallerstein (1984:1) acknowledges that a "set of categories" can itself pose a theoretical problem; Friedman agrees (1993:409). "Social science would... make a great leap forward if it dispensed entirely with [contested categories]", writes Wallerstein (1984:1). Such banishment, if possible, is best achieved through critique.

Second, the same critical insight into socially-constructed understandings justifies and substantiates the epistemological goal of "historical social science". When we understand socio-historical context, we understand social "understandings". We need not presume the effort since theorists can conclude the necessity. Both Wallerstein and Chase-Dunn agree. Explicit critique helps theorists answer the questions they pose for themselves by illuminating conceptual difficulties. Postpositivism addresses such difficulties by attending to socio-historical meanings and the changes they experience and foster.

#### B. Suggestions

The purpose and conduct of critical theory remain issues. I comment on only three characteristics: critique, conceptual historicism, and constructivism.

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#### Critique and Critical Theory

As social scientists we investigate a world produced by human ideas and initiative. However, liberal problem-solving theory characterizes the world in ahistorical and categorical terms, rather than as the consequence of history and human effort. Critical theory refuses to accept prevailing ideas, behaviors, understandings, and circumstances as beyond human influence. In order to foster forms of reasoning that privilege the quality of human life rather than economic rationality, political privilege, or the scientific method, critical theory also refuses to accept as "natural" the rules, boundaries, and divisions that denote social life. Thus, critical theorists strive not to reproduce descriptively society's concrete realities, but to understand and change them. In this sense, engaging in critical theory is a socio-political act. Explicit critique identifies a non-issue or unexplored premise, seeks its philosophical implications or causes, connects the issues to ideological worldviews and derived concepts, and links the issues to social change: how did prevailing understandings and concrete realities emerge, and what alternatives exist?

The postpositivist attention to socially-constructed knowledge directs our attention to categories, while the "linguistic turn" in

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philosophy draws us to consider concepts' linguistic use and the meanings they communicate. As meanings change, context and behavior changes too. We must conceive the world differently in order to behave differently.

#### Conceptual Histories and Constitutive Principles

Once attentive to language and concepts, we encounter conceptual histories. Although not the type of historical studies encouraged by WS theorists, conceptual histories meet every criteria and address the established purposes of WS investigations -- that is, to understand prior social contexts and social change. The simplest conceptual histories chronicle the changing meanings of concepts key to scholars' theories or to actors' understandings and motives. Since structures are identifiable by the principles by which they are organized or ordered, conceptual histories of "organizing principles" communicate changing meanings, contexts, and structural forms. An alternative is to explore the principles which constitute actors' understandings of their world and the structures they confront. In contrast to organizing principles, I call the latter "constitutive principles" (Burch, 1994:42-45).

Constitutive principles differ from organizing principles as atomic particles differ from entries in the Table of Elements, as genetic code differs from the taxonomy of the animal kingdom, as the

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architectural precept "form follows function" differs from brick and mortar. Constitutive principles -- the axiomatic, originating, and actuating qualities of "principles" and of "constitution" in the essential sense -- generate and govern a social structure; organizing principles describe it.

Thus linked to the structural foundations already firmly set by WS theorists, conceptual histories of constitutive principles chronicle how agents' behaviors, as driven by their motivating conceptual frameworks, produce structures and, reciprocally, transform structures into the social frameworks in which individuals make choices. Social structures are thereby animated and concepts historicized. We might call this a conceptually historicist version of critique. By such critique structures become generative features of social theory and material life.

#### Constructivism

Constructivism resolves the agent-structure problem, which analytically separates structures from individuals, and draws our attention to social rules conveyed through typologies of linguistic expressions (Giddens, 1984; Onuf, 1989; Wendt, 1987, 1992). Recall the fear of poststructuralism's radical individualism in contrast to WST's structuralism. The agent-structure problem captures the tension or "undecidable opposition" between individuals and

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structures as explanations of social phenomena. The "problem" is to develop an effective social theory without privileging in advance agents over structures, or vice-versa, as theoretical explanators. Similarly, one must avoid privileging economic structures over political ones, and vice-versa. Constructivism attempts to resolve the agent-structure problem by ontologically wedding both, without privileging either, into comprehensive social theories that appreciate as well the tension between objective and subjective epistemologies. WST's structural orientation opposes actor-oriented explanations. Yet explanations of social change must introduce agents to explain the patterned reproduction of the social structures themselves and the changing social behaviors that alter the patterns. As noted, without agents of change, the structures can only describe. The critical and conceptually historicist suggestions I make strengthen WST by moving it toward constructivist social theory. By making agents' understandings and behaviors central to WS analyses, theorists reclaim their normative and theoretical focus, balance their structural inclinations, and build upon the implicit ideological critique that anchors their work.

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#### V. DEMONSTRATING THE UNITY OF THE MODERN WORLD SYSTEM

It is not that consensus has been reached about the post-sixteenth century system. Controversies still abound.

--Janet Abu-Lughod (1990:273)

Were WS theorists to attend explicitly to ideological matters, they would set foundations for their extensive research projects and balance their two-pronged attack. By attending to ideological matters via critique, conceptual historicism, and constructivism, I believe they would position themselves securely to address and answer the questions they pose for themselves, but can not ably answer given current groundings. I use these suggestions to demonstrate the unity of the MWS -- that is, to answer Chase-Dunn's "one logic or two?" query. This question exemplifies two concerns:

conceptual puzzles in general and the specific, recurring puzzles introduced by the conceptual divide between economics (E) and politics (P), and their separation from culture (C). This puzzle is not the issue currently sparking WS debate, but, first, I regard this question as the early battlecry of WST research, the rhetorical query which defines the scholarly effort. Second, current debates mirror this type of conceptual problem and demand similar resolutions (e.g., Frank, 1990; Wallerstein, 1990; Chase-Dunn, 1992; Gills and Frank, 1992). The E + P + C model undergirds WST, as illustrated by the analogy of a three legged stool. Thus the concept "MWS" as Capitalism + State System

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specifies historically and conceptually the basic model. In the

following I draw from Burch (1994) and employ the outline used above.

### Critique

Critique involves three steps, beginning with a non-issue. WST tackles such an issue -- the ideologically-definitive relationship between P (states) and E (capitalism) -- to ask "what is capitalism?" and "what is a state?" Current research asks what is a "world-system"? WS theorists now critique "the MWS", unsure whether it is a unique historical circumstance or an example of a larger historical category. Gosden (1993:410), commenting on Frank (1993), could as easily be commenting on the MWS: "[a]lthough the existence of interconnections is clear, their nature is not".

Questions about historical world-systems and the MWS lead us to philosophical issues, the second feature of critique. Unfortunately, theorists often do not appreciate the inextricable ontological and epistemological challenges raised by theoretical questions. As seen, when WS theorists regard such matters, they read them as ontological-methodological rather than ontological-epistemological. When concerns about theory-construction arise, ontological issues are typically easier to grapple with than the concomitant epistemological ones. One

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ontological variant simply inverts the liberal privileging of  $P > E$  such that  $E > P$ . Another version sees them as balanced,  $E = P$ ; and a last one sees them as a unity,  $E :: P$ . How can we demonstrate and explain one of the claims? The question raises the epistemological corollary to the ontological claim. To reduce the questions to conceptual refinement and/or empirical "inventorying" misses the underlying philosophical point. In questioning the liberal categorical distinction between economics and politics, I accept the WS claim to systemic unity. I now require a vocabulary and conceptual framework for reckoning unities or social wholes. I find it in the agent-structure debates and constructivist theory.

Thus, we come via critique and ideology to critical theory, the third element of critique. In outlining my critique of WST and identifying the philosophical implications of non-issues, my goal is to conceive structures as generative. This move requires that we see structures as both social consequence and catalyst. Were social theorists to embrace generative structures, descriptive structures would fade, "constitutive principles" become apprehensible, conceptual histories come to the fore, and social change becomes a realizable focus. Yet ontological claims about mutual-constitution must be wed to a critical theory epistemological view. Thus, critical theory becomes both necessary and central. Conceptual histories of constitutive principles become analytical foci and the philosophical foundations of actors' worldviews become central concerns.

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## Conceptual Histories

Upon these specific premises I can now demonstrate systemic unity. I propose to mediate the dualistic and structural oppositions through constitutive principles. The principles capture patterned activities to reveal actors' understandings of the world. Conceptual histories of constitutive principles become histories of social structures. Burch (1994) offers a conceptual history of "property", a constitutive principle for both the state system and global capitalism. The concept of property as "ownership" can not be divorced from "rights to property". Property rights represent social rules which coordinate social activity; property is the resource at issue and, in turn, a resource to be wielded in distributing material advantage. Property rights both contribute to the politics/economics dichotomy and, when understood as social rules, help dissolve the categorical barrier.

I do not argue that states and capitalism are related, linked, joined, or described by any similar synonym. Instead, I refer to a single, coherent, unified social reality. Prior to 1700 in northwestern Europe, no social or conceptual distinction between the state system and capitalism existed. Understandings of "property" and "property rights" unified them. Historically

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contingent understandings of property mark the degree of separation between allegedly distinct political and economic realms. Historically, property possessed a single, socially definitive understanding as a tangible and material object of ownership (Pocock, 1985; Reeve, 1986; Ryan, 1984, 1987; Burch, 1994:44-55). The best example is land. In this light one can understand the state system as a system of territorially based, real, landed property. Consider, for example, the relationship between "a state" and "estate". In early modern European history "the state" represented the territorial property rights of sovereign monarchs. Ultimately these property rights to territory extended to the institutional-legal structures for ruling and controlling the individuals that lived on this landed property. The royal propertied estate came to be a state endowed with sovereignty.

By approximately 1700 in northwestern Europe, prevailing understandings of property and property rights -- as judged from the texts of jurists, theorists, statesmen, and financiers -- had bifurcated. Distinctly real and mobile forms of property had emerged on a large, broad scale. Conceptions of mobile or intangible property arose in dramatic political debate concerning corruption, the transferability or political offices, and credit (Pocock, 1985). Credit was immediately compared to other intangible values and mobile instruments such as insurance, notes, and bills of exchange. As landed property literally and

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figuratively grounded the political realm of states, mobile property opened a realm of fluid exchange. We now regard this as "the economy" and as distinct from the Greek "oikos", meaning household. Shifts in property rights linked the state system to

capitalism. Mobile property rights fueled and lubricated the motor of a burgeoning capitalist system. Thus global capitalism became a system of production, exchange, investment, and accumulation based on the fluid transfer of factor inputs, final products, and capital (as opposed to tangible markers of wealth).

Thus, property denotes status and authority as it connotes power and political privilege. Control over property and property rights contributes to the constitution of the (allegedly distinct) "political" world by establishing forms of privilege and by reinforcing both material and social asymmetries. Property also denotes the use and disposal of property, and thereby delimits access to production and exchange. Property and property rights, then, help generate the (allegedly distinct) "economic world" as well. Such privileges and denotations contribute to control, domination, exploitation, production, accumulation, and exchange, all of which structure social relations.

Social understandings of property and property rights constitute our world as relatively whole or divided. The modern, liberal worldview sees a highly differentiated world. This is a social

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adaptation. Property was a wedge that split the spheres of society, yet it was also a tie that bound them. Separated political and economic spheres -- with politics understood as the relationship between authority and deference, and economics as production and exchange -- outlines to a considerable extent the modern, liberal view of the world. Thus, "politics" came to comprise the relationship between authority and subjects. "Economics" represents the relationship between individuals and objects.

#### Constructivism

As an ontological matter I argue that economics and politics are unified as structures sharing organizing and constitutive

principles. As a matter of epistemology I address these issues using critical theory. As a matter of theory I use constitutive principles and constructivism to explain the coherence of the whole. I move from structuralism to constructivism when I invoke actors' understandings, in the form of constitutive principles, and depict their behaviors in terms of patterned activities. This view combines actor-oriented and structure-oriented representations of human conduct without privileging one over the other. It does so by turning to history to explore the "historicity" of concepts and meanings. Each of these steps is in keeping with the spirit, if not the letter, of WST.

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## VI. CONCLUSIONS

Among prominent social theories, WST comes closest to fulfilling the promise of critical, constructivist theory. By pursuing their statements of theory into the realm of postpositivism, WS theorists may achieve their critical aspirations. An expressly ideological critique secures philosophical foundations and apprehends conceptual puzzles as symptoms of ideological troubles. In the effort, WS theorists set a substantial ideological foundation. Reinforced foundations improve conceptual frameworks, which in turn improve all theories. Not only will a secure foundation better describe and perhaps explain social conditions and transformations, but it will also better inform normative condemnations, philosophical alternatives, and differing explanations since it is rooted in an explicit critique across all three dimensions of ideology.

By considering the twin logics simultaneously, WS theorists specify the philosophical and categorical referents around which frameworks, models, and theories can cohere. Concepts become embedded not only in theories and in the foundations that secure the theories themselves, but also in the specific historical

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contexts and the specific practices of individuals. From this vantage, WS theorists can better conduct their macro socio-historical studies because "what" they are studying will be conceptually clearer, more consistent, and coherent. So too will "it" be tinged with the sweat of human effort, the tides of human emotion, and the stir of human choice. As a result, the histories will become conceptually, theoretically, and practically richer, and they may cumulate knowledge into and around better specified models, rather than splinter existing frameworks. Chase-Dunn and Hall's (1992) campaign to cohere comparative studies around widening typologies advances indirectly against the problem of establishing standards for comparison. The effort succeeds when groundings are as secure as classifications.

Similarly, critical theorists and postpositivists can learn from WS theorists. In the finest spirit of the critical theory tradition, WS theorists propose to offer pronounced critiques of modernity, liberalism, capitalism, and social science. WS theorists' critiques and investigations of the social structures of accumulation, the production of hegemony and ideology, and the emergence of modern practices contributes to critical investigations of the emergence of the modern world. Indeed, much can be gained by building bridges between critical theory as an ideological challenge to modernity and WST as a critical study of modern civilization. Postpositivists and postmodernists provide

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comprehensive ontological and epistemological challenges; critical theorists typically level critiques of frameworks of understanding.

WST uniquely provides more detailed ontological, material, and normative challenges. These projects are more complementary than

antithetical. They might easily comprise an ensemble of critiques of modernity, together challenging the modern, liberal, capitalist, positivist world from its philosophical foundations and distinctive practices to its historical emergence, material excrecence, and ideological transformation.

I have sought to illustrate not arid philosophical matters or suffocatingly "stratospheric" metatheory, but conceptual problems identified by WS theorists and arising from WS theories. I have sought to approach these problems in world systemic terms. By demonstrating the unity of the MWS I hope to demonstrate a critical resolution to a pernicious conceptual problem. At the same time I hope to illustrate how similar conceptual problems may be addressed. Postpositivism provides a salutary and sanguine option.

By turning also to critical theory, constitutive principles, and constructivism, I intend to illustrate an alternative approach to social theory that draws our attention to rules and rule.

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By looking at sovereignty, for example, as a form of property rights (rules), I tell a history of unity in the development of states, capitalism, and the modern world. By this view sovereignty is not the defining element of the modern world or of the international system. Sovereignty is a claim to rule. Sovereignty is a set of property rights upon which the claim to rule rests. Claims to rule generate rules. Some are formalized into laws; others remain informal. "Culture" is the realm, if we choose to call it such, which identifies the values enriched and ensconced in rules. Thus, through rules, the prospect looms of uniting culture with economics and politics -- that is, uniting all three legs of the social science "stool". WS theorists appreciate both the prominence of property rights and social rules -- the "rule-ridden" character of the MWS (e.g., Wallerstein, 1979:162, 1984:2, 33, 1989:75; Chase-Dunn, 1989:21, 25, 37).

I seek to participate in WS debates. I also extend invitations to those debaters to engage critical theory, postpositivism, conceptual histories, constructivism, and rules-and-rule. The invitations open research opportunities that hold bright promise in pursuing the goals WS theorists identify for themselves. I extend the invitations "constructively" and collegially.

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#### ENDNOTES

1 Rosenau's (1992a, 1992b) depiction of "skeptical postmodernists"  
corresponds with (extreme) poststructuralism. Her characterization  
of "affirmative postmodernists" corresponds closely with  
postpositivist critical theory.

2. Pioneer contributors to the first strand include Thomas Kuhn  
(1970), Imre Lakatos (1970), and Paul Feyerabend (1975). These  
scholars illustrate that the practice of science includes much  
non-rational, non-empirical, and non-scientific activity. Second,  
postpositivist critiques also appear in interpretive theories,  
drawing from phenomenology, ethnomethodology, hermeneutics,

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ordinary language philosophy, analytic philosophy (i.e., the  
"linguistic turn"), and postmodernism and poststructuralism. J.L.  
Austin and Ludwig Wittgenstein are monumental figures in the  
tradition of linguistic analysis, which has profoundly influenced  
the other examples. As Onuf (1989:43) notes: "Wittgenstein has  
had an enormous influence on Philosophy and Social Theory,  
precisely because he is seen at the juncture of the two. It would  
be difficult to find any recent writer whose prestige is so high".  
Wittgenstein's and Austin's explorations of language -- especially  
"performative utterances", that is, language that conveys meaning  
and action rather than merely serving as a descriptive label --  
undermines the naive nominalist view of language and of the nature,  
description, and explanation of social action. Others in this  
tradition seek to interpret phenomena from the specific historical,  
cultural, and contextual conditions. This view seeks no universal  
or general or lawlike explanations. Last, among critical  
theorists, Jurgen Habermas (1971, 1981) is probably best known.  
Critical theorists, many influenced by Marx, offer critiques of  
modern society and mainstream science, which reinforces modern  
social relations. Habermas is also influenced by other late 20th  
century critiques.

Other books of value to me, and perhaps to those interested in

introducing themselves to postpositivist thought, include: Ball, ed. (1987), Ball, Farr, and Hanson, eds. (1989), Bernstein, (1983),

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Fay (1987), Harvey (1989), Kellner (1989), Norris (1983), Peterson (1992b), Pitkin (1972), Poster (1989). In economics, see Sherman (1987) and von Mises (1976), although the latter is not postpositivist. In IPE, see Rosow et al., eds. (1994). In IR, see the symposium on the "Third Debate" in *International Studies Quarterly* 33(3) September, 1989. For many, this symposium may be the perfect introduction since the contributions are brief, written to appeal to a wide audience, presume no background, and include criticisms from the un-persuaded.

The initial masters of postpositivist scholarship include L. Wittgenstein, John Searle, Charles Taylor, Michel Foucault, Richard Rorty, Jacques Derrida, and Roland Barthes among many others.

3 Over a decade ago Wallerstein (1983b:100-101) argued with fiery passion:

It is...by no means self-evident that there is more liberty, equality, and fraternity in the world today than there was one thousand years ago. One might arguably suggest the opposite is true...The argument is simple[:] the absolute immiseration of the proletariat...

Similar claims appear in Wallerstein's (1982:14) comments on the

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"illogic" of the capitalist world-economy, in his (1992c:616) discussion of the "irrational" and "untenable capitalist world-system", and Chase-Dunn's (1989:339-340) conclusion about the systemic "absurdity" of the capitalist world-economy.

4 Wallerstein (e.g., 1974b:10) seeks "a more egalitarian world and a more libertarian one...[for] the larger and more oppressed parts of the world's population". He seeks a social system "that maximizes equality and equity, one that increases humanity's control over its own life (democracy), and liberates the imagination" (1983b: 109-110). Chase-Dunn (e.g., 1989:5) aspires to a "more humane and peaceful world society". Note that these are consummately liberal goals, but that they bleed into social democracy and socialism.

Commenting on such motivations, Frank and Gills (1992:64) ask:

What was the ideological reason for Wallerstein's and Frank's "scientific" construction of a sixteenth century transition to a modern world capitalist economy and system? It was the belief in a subsequent transition from capitalism to socialism.

5 Chase-Dunn (1992:314, note #1) lists twenty-three articles and

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three edited collections. We can also add Chase-Dunn's own edited volume (Chase-Dunn and Hall, eds., 1991) and at least twenty studies appearing in the journal *Review* since 1989. Such studies are necessary because "[e]arlier efforts to understand evolutionary change have foundered largely because the units of analysis were wrong" (Chase-Dunn and Hall, 1992:106).

6 Critical "Comments" appended to Frank (1993) make the same point about a purported Bronze Age world system. Edens (1993:408) asks "whether Frank is describing a historical reality" or stipulating an alternative? Similarly, Gosden (1993:410) writes that "[n]ow there is a danger of the model helping to shape history in its own image". Eden (1993: 408) concludes that Frank "insist[s] on" his model, although it suffers a "logical circularity". Friedman (1993:409), remarking on his affinity for Frank's work, comments on "the foundation we stipulated". On the same page he notes that conceptual innovation is key: "the emergence of...the crucial concept of transcendence".

7 For example, Chase-Dunn and Hall (1992:93) define "a true state" as "existing when a regionally organized society has specialized regional institutions -- military and bureaucratic -- which perform the tasks of control and management". By this definition several

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unusual cases will likely qualify as states: urban gangs such as Los Angeles' Crips and Bloods, organized crime, protective organizations such as New York's Guardian Angels or Nation of Islam "security teams", and civil war combatants such as the Confederate States of America and Rwandan Hutus.

8 The phrase "organizing myths" is Wallerstein's (1983a:301), although he uses it to describe the pervasive categories and concepts provided by liberal ideology. "Inventorying" arises as Chase-Dunn and Hall (1992:106-107) encourage us in "the assembly of a data set containing large numbers of world-systems" as one of three recommended research strategies.

9 This is uncontroversial. The liberal, modern worldview-- from Hobbes and Locke to the present -- presumes distinct, separate political and economic realms of social life. Scholars of various stripes make this point (e.g., Ashley, 1983; Walzer, 1984; Gilpin, 1987). In IR, Morgenthau (1948) and Waltz (1979) premise the centrality and uniqueness of politics. Lenin (1917), for example, argues conversely. Liberal theorists, hence realists in IR and IPE, see little point in affirming the notion of distinct realms. They do so indirectly, however, when they level criticisms such as "economism" at other theorists. In this regard several critics of

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Wallerstein confirm the conceptual presumption of separate realms (e.g., Skocpol, 1977; Modelski, 1978; Waltz, 1979; Zolberg, 1981, and W.R. Thompson, 1983). Among most social theorists, either the political or economic realm dominates, thus the crudest caricatures of liberalism and marxism.

10 To repeat briefly, as Seidman (1983) argues, marxism is a variety of liberalism distinguished by its normative premises, but not its philosophical ones. Wallerstein and Chase-Dunn blend with the liberal positivist-objectivist philosophical foundations a marxian normative critique of the modern world system. Thus WS theorists, like marxians, set liberal philosophical foundations.

11 Other connectives include "linked" (Wallerstein, 1982:15), "interlinked" (Wallerstein, 1984:2), and "integrated". Nouns include "imbrication" and "concatenation" (Wallerstein, 1992:561, 563) and "unicity" (Wallerstein, 1974c:3). More often Chase-Dunn employs a structuralist vocabulary to describe a world-system's essence, including: "deep structural logic" (Chase-Dunn, 1989:1, 48), "single systemic logic" (p. 8), "deep social structure" (p. 14), "basic underlying logic" (p. 15), and "deep structural essence" (p. 48). WS theorists also invert liberal categorical imperatives to argue that economics dominates politics, not vice-versa: the capitalist world-economy "created" states (e.g.,

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Wallerstein, 1984:14, 29, 33). On these matters ideological name-calling ensues (e.g., Cameron, 1974; Brenner, 1977; Skocpol, 1977; and Zolberg, 1981; cf. Denemark and Thomas, 1988; Denemark, 1992). However, recent WS theoretical work suggests that "true states" can be identified in Lower Mesopotamia, Old Kingdom Egypt, and Mesoamerica (e.g., Chase-Dunn and Hall, 1992:91-95).

12 Wallerstein's passion carries him further:

One of the profoundest holds an existing historical [ideological] system has on the persons located within it consists of the set of "self-evident" and virtually unexamined overall statements...which give us our categories and our priorities for analysis. These statements also dictate to us what we should and usually do ignore as historically unimportant. It is essential, furthermore, to underline the fact that even [critics] normally accept, even build upon, these historical verities. Such statements are what we mean by "organizing myths" (Wallerstein, 1983a:301)

13 Frank and Gills (1992:62) write that:

[l]ike our "world-systems" colleagues, we also subscribe to and practice what we call the "three legged stool" approach: like that

stool, our study of the social world system is supported equally by three ecological/economic, political, and cultural/ideological/ethical legs.

14 Edens's comments (1993:408) following Frank (1993) are equally apt for WST generally and the MWS in particular:

Another difficulty is logical circularity: the test for identifying a world system is the same as the analysis of its contents...But until [WS theorists] expose the mechanisms that endorse the world-system identification, [they are] assuming the analysis before [they] undertake it.