



## New Geographies of Uneven Development in *Global Formation*: Thinking with Chase-Dunn

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The scientific task, as well as the political, is not to give a finished definition to an unfinished process, but to follow all its stages, separate its progressive from its reactionary tendencies, expose their mutual relations, foresee possible variants of development, and find in this foresight a basis for action.

-Leon Trotsky (cited in Burawoy 1989: 786)

### **From Uneven and Combined Development to “*Global Formation*”**

In his well-known essay comparing Skocpol and Trotsky, Michael Burawoy considers how Leon Trotsky’s theory of uneven and combined development extends the Marxist research program. As Burawoy explains, Trotsky’s efforts to defend the core tenets of historical materialism led him to reject Marx’s oft-cited claim from the opening pages of *Capital* that “the country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future.” This is not

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is a collaborative endeavor. Authors are listed alphabetically.



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correct, Trotsky argued, because the very fact that industrial development has occurred elsewhere alters the historical path, creating both new constraints and new opportunities for those that follow.<sup>2</sup> Uneven and combined development is the theory that explains this non-linear unfolding of capitalism in world historical time.

The theory of uneven and combined development, as elaborated in Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*, centers on "how the development of capitalism on a world scale creates a different balance of class forces in different nations" (Burawoy 1989: 782). Capitalism "continually expands and transplants itself onto foreign soils and combines with different social structures to produce different constellations of class forces..." with the consequence "that revolutionary changes take on distinctive national characters" (ibid: 783).

We chose Trotsky's words as an epigraph for our contribution to this festschrift because the theory of uneven and combined development tackles some of the same concerns that occupy Christopher Chase-Dunn in his book *Global Formation: the spatial dynamics of capitalism*, the articulation of different modes of production, and the centrality of class forces for understanding social transformation. Like Trotsky, Chase-Dunn is concerned with tasks both "scientific and political" (and he pointedly notes in the introduction that these "are certainly not the same activities"), including the careful analysis of social currents and forms of resistance in order to distinguish "the progressive from the reactionary."

While Chase-Dunn's direct references to Trotsky in *Global Formation* are few, his 1988 article "Comparing World-Systems: Toward a Theory of Semiperipheral Development" offers a more extended discussion of Trotsky's work. There, he cites perhaps the most famous passage from *History of the Russian Revolution*, in which Trotsky explains that the unevenness of capitalism's expansion across space and time means that its development in "the backward countries" will feature "a drawing together of the different stages of the journey, a combining of separate steps, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms" (Trotsky 1977: 27). Chase-Dunn goes on to draw a connection between Trotsky's argument about the "privilege of historic backwardness" and his own hypothesis about the transformative potential of the semiperiphery.

Yet in this same article, Chase-Dunn also notes the weakness of Trotsky's theory of uneven development from a world-systems perspective—namely, that it ignores the "the hierarchical and structural aspects of relations among more and less developed societies" (1988: 35). It is not enough to acknowledge the possibility of different trajectories; what must be rejected is the assumption that these lead to a common destination. Put differently, while Trotsky's notion of uneven and combined development disrupts a linear imaginary of capitalist development in which

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<sup>2</sup> Marx later revised this sentence in the French edition to make clear that he was comparing England to the European continent, and not making the case for worldwide uni-linear capitalist development (see Anderson 2010: 176-178).

less advanced countries are simply at an earlier point on the path blazed by those ahead of them, world-systems theory shifts the frame of reference by rejecting any notion of generalized development tout court. The reason that the developed country does not present the developing country with the “image of its future” is because the relationship between them is one of ongoing exploitation rather than temporal succession.

Global Formation offers, among many other things, a particularly keen and exhaustive analysis of the reproduction of global hierarchy into core, semi-periphery, and periphery positions. What we find particularly valuable in this book, and in Chase-Dunn’s discussion of uneven development from a world-systems perspective especially, is the opening it provides for thinking about the relationship between spatial and social difference across the landscape of capitalism. This is an agenda we have been pursuing in our work on “disarticulations,” which we define, in the broadest sense, as an approach to commodity production through the lens of the reproduction of geographies of uneven development (Werner and Bair 2011; Bair and Werner 2011; Bair, Berndt, Boeckler and Werner 2013). The disarticulations agenda emerged from our critique of the “inclusionary bias” of network approaches to global development, including some that trace their origins to Hopkins and Wallerstein’s concept of commodity chains. Based on our own empirical research on export production in Mexico and the circum-Caribbean, we were struck by the tendency of much research on global value chains and global production networks to focus on the effects of incorporation into transnational circuits of production, particularly the degree to which participation in such networks enables “industrial upgrading.”

This narrow focus on incorporation and the upgrading implications therein, while not unimportant, tended to leave unexamined other questions which we have come to believe are critical for understanding what commodity chains can tell us about the nature of the world-system. For example, how and with what consequences do regions and actors become disconnected or expelled from commodity chains in times of restructuring and/or crisis? Perhaps even more fundamentally, how do the everyday dynamics of such chains express, mobilize, and reproduce the sociospatial difference that is the condition of their possibility? Disarticulations is the term we coined to describe these analytical concerns.

One of the challenges for us was finding a way to develop the claim that forms of social difference underwrite capital accumulation—for example, by shaping the contours of commodity chains—without implying that the logic of capital is sufficient for understanding such difference. We found Stuart Hall’s (1980) essay, “Race, articulation and societies structured in dominance,” particularly helpful in this regard. Hall reinterprets debates on colonial capitalism, and specifically the relationship between race, class, and capital accumulation, through the concept of articulation, which he understands as the material and ideological work that connects relations of production and complexly structured social formations. For example, rather than reduce race to class or

theorize race outside of material relations, Hall urges us to “start... from the concrete historical “work” which racism accomplishes under specific historical conditions—as a set of economic, political and ideological practices...concretely articulated with other practices in a social formation” (338). In developing this notion of articulation as a linking together of social and structural difference via material and ideological practices, Hall draws on Althusser’s concept of the social formation to intervene in what was, at the time, one of the most contested issues within Marxist thought: the “mode of production” debate (Foster-Carter 1978).

Global Formation similarly draws inspiration from Althusserian thought. In reviewing the mode of production controversy, Chase-Dunn differentiates his position from Wallerstein’s “totality assumption,” which maintains that a single mode of production—capitalism—has characterized the entirety of the world-system since its emergence. Instead, Chase-Dunn acknowledges the possibility that a world-system might accommodate multiple modes of production, and that recognizing this possibility, and the conflict and competition occurring between modes of production, might be helpful for understanding the possibilities for social transformation that are present in a given place and time. In elaborating this position, Chase-Dunn notes the distinction that Althusser and Balibar introduce in *Reading Capital* between “the mode of production (the basic essence of capitalism as a system) and the social formation (the concretely existing set of social institutions which contain historical survivals of earlier modes of production and nascent elements of modes of production of the future” (1998: 27). Chase-Dunn extends the concept of social formation from that of a national society to that of the world-system, and takes this reformulation—the global formation—as the title of his book.

Chase-Dunn’s analysis of core-periphery hierarchy as a global formation remains generative for our understanding of contemporary dynamics of uneven and combined development. The central question Chase-Dunn is pursuing in this work is not what effect uneven development has on particular nation-states and their fortunes, but rather by what mechanisms global hierarchy is reproduced. We see an affinity between this formulation and the kind of intervention we aim to make with the disarticulations approach—that is, we are asking not how incorporation into a commodity chain might enable a particular region to develop, but rather how commodity chains articulate—in the Althusserian sense—socio-spatial difference.

In the remainder of this brief essay, we discuss how Global Formation informs and resonates with our own efforts to understand the problematic of uneven development. We are especially interested in thinking about how Chase-Dunn’s analysis of core/periphery reproduction at the height of what was commonly called the “New International Division of Labor” (NIDL) might help us make sense of more recent patterns of socio-spatial fragmentation. To be sure, the specific cartography of the world system has been redrawn since the initial round of offshoring that sparked the NIDL formulation (Fröbel, Heinrichs and Kreye 1978), as East Asian countries moved into the

semi-periphery. Yet, these shifts have not closed the gap between the North and South. Instead, the dynamics of uneven development at the regional and national level have accelerated, as have corresponding “efforts to draw ‘boundaries’ delineating who will be ‘cut in’ and who will be ‘left out’” from the benefits of ongoing accumulation (Silver 2003: 21). Developing a rigorous analytical framework to parse these boundaries and their political and economic implications could not be more timely, as we navigate the hangover precipitated by the 2007-8 financial crisis centered in the global North, the darkening clouds over the much celebrated BRICS, and the wave of populist politics breaking across the countries of the core. Below, we proceed by discussing three ways that *Global Formation* sheds light on the reproduction of global hierarchy in the contemporary period: new geographies of South-South uneven development; the uneven commodification of labor and the dynamics of the world class structure; and the new politics of uneven development in the global North.

### **Boundary-Drawing and the New Geographies of South-South Uneven Development**

Several insights from Chase-Dunn can aid us in the analytical task of assessing the relationship between particular geographies of uneven development and the general structure of global hierarchy. First, in *Global Formation*, Chase-Dunn uses the work of Marxist geographer Neil Smith (1984) to foreground the multiple scales at which uneven development operates. He draws out the connection between the dynamics of uneven development at the global level—those which produce “core” and “peripheral” countries and zones—and processes of class formation and class politics as these occur within countries.

Chase-Dunn’s insistence on “the region” as the territorial unit of “coreness and peripherality” (208) through which uneven development can be grasped is particularly fruitful for understanding capitalism’s shifting geographies. The region here signals an intentionally ambiguous spatial unit of analysis, potentially indicating sub- and supra-national, and network, formations. This ambiguity is analytically useful since it obviates the sort of unit presuppositions that plague much analysis of development, especially the assumption of “national development.” The analyst must instead ask what territorial form uneven development is taking, and how core and periphery are produced in a given instance. In Chase-Dunn’s formulation, regions form “nested” hierarchies, including national and global city network hierarchies, continental/supra-national hierarchies and subnational regional hierarchies. While “nesting” is a misleading descriptor,<sup>3</sup> the main point is that core and periphery operate at multiple, intersecting levels constituting a “complex unity,” that is, the global formation.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, “nesting” can imply aggregation as opposed to inter-relation (see e.g., Collinge 2006).

Chase-Dunn's insights on the reproduction of global hierarchy, the connection between global hierarchy and class relations, and his engagement with the NIDL debates offer key tools for interpreting the shifting terrain of uneven development in the global South. The celebrated rise of the so-called BRICS—Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa—reflects the contemporary dynamics of peripheral to semi-peripheral shifts in the world-system, as well as their limits. For Chase-Dunn, the semi-periphery is a key axis of global hierarchy. In economic terms, these locations—states, cities, regions—concentrate either a mix of capital- and labor-intensive activities or intermediate activities (see especially pages 204-214). This composition, and the position of nation-states that encompass such a mix, have important political implications for class conflict, the political form of semi-peripheral states, and the reproduction of global hierarchy on the whole. As Chase-Dunn notes, semi-peripheral states have posed the most significant challenges to core power and have been the primary sites of socialist experimentation. Echoing insights from Giovanni Arrighi, Chase-Dunn's focus on the semi-periphery is highly suggestive of a reworking of Marx's observation: perhaps the semi-periphery shows the core the image of its own future.

In the current conjuncture, we are struck by a generalized turn in analysis of the BRICS and other so-called emerging economies from sites of challenge to global capitalism (e.g., the New International Economic Order), to exhibits of global neoliberal governance (e.g., the debt regime), to motors of neoliberal deepening and refashioning. Harvey argues that the BRICS in particular served as absorbers of surplus from the core, a spatial fix for its crisis of overproduction. These 'emerging markets' soon became centers of capital accumulation that "sought out systematic spatio-temporal fixes for [their] own surplus capital by defining territorial spheres of influence" (Harvey 2003). South-South flows of investment and finance have created cascading patterns of uneven development, opening hinterlands to capitalist exploitation and facilitating surplus flows from (re)new(ed) peripheries to regional (i.e., Southern semi-periphery) and eventually Northern (i.e., core) destinations. Bond (2015) argues that the BRICS primarily lubricate and legitimize global capital, extending and deepening neoliberalization. This reading (perhaps intentionally) downplays the complexity of this process, for as Bond acknowledges, the processes of outward investment and financing are diverse amongst these countries (e.g., state-owned enterprises in China and state-financed private multinationals in Brazil). Moreover, few would suggest that China is simply a channel for neoliberal political economy. Nonetheless, the dynamic of South-South uneven development is highly significant. Its concrete character is explored in several areas, for example, in the "neoextractivist" tendencies of Chinese investment in South America (Svampa 2015; Ciccantell and Patten 2016) and Chinese and Brazilian investment in resource rich zones of continental Africa (Carmody 2011; Power et al. 2016).

Global value chain and global production network analyses are meso-level heuristic devices that make the study of uneven development tractable. Recent studies note that the terms for

inclusion in global production networks have become increasingly complex, and often more restrictive—indications of heightened competition at different nodes in the chain. While the empirical literature has turned to analyzing the possibilities for firm inclusion in global networks under these conditions, we instead have argued that the contemporary restructuring of commodity circuits reflects both long-standing and emerging forms of territorial and social unevenness in the global economy, especially amongst and within global South countries.

We can consider this restructuring through the lens of two processes: firm-level efforts to defer capital devaluation and regional disinvestment. The first process has been explored through studies of “downgrading”—that is, proactive or defensive strategies to defer devaluation by shifting to new products or activities. Downgrading strategies in some cases reflect the heightened power of core-based multinational corporations that block the possibilities for functional upgrading by producers in the periphery and semi-periphery (e.g., Gibbon and Ponte 2005; Neilson 2014). This dynamic reflects a reproduction of core-periphery hierarchy along well-worn pathways. In other cases, however, emerging South-South differences are creating new contours of uneven development through firm-level downgrading. Kaplinsky et al. (2011), for example, document the functional downgrading of Thai cassava and Gabonese timber firms that abandon value-added processing to meet the demands of Chinese buyers who seek less transformed goods. The limits to demand in the global North, and the dynamics of global production networks oriented towards the semi-periphery, were particularly evident in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. As Smith et al. note, “global value chains and global production networks highlight the heightened interdependencies in the world economy and have become transmission belts for the economic crisis” (2014: 126; see also Pickles and Smith 2016). Indeed, the material limits to core markets, together with emerging market constraints in the current context of low commodity prices, and capital outflows and increasing debt in China, suggest the complexity of interactions between periphery, semi-periphery and core zones.

Analysts have noted the intensification of the second process, regional disinvestment, reflecting heightened intra-network competition, the shortening of the FDI lifecycle, and the increasing number of mergers and acquisitions (MacKinnon 2012). The possibility to resolve capitalism’s overaccumulation problem through “switching crises” depends upon intra-national uneven development combined with relatively weak territorial alliances.<sup>4</sup> Chase-Dunn offers a lucid and important review of these debates, in dialogue with Cardoso’s thesis of “dependent development.” His insights are as salient now as they were when first offered. In China since the 1990s, for example, regional competition for Taiwanese investment in computer production has

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<sup>4</sup> See Harvey (1999 [1982]) for a key discussion on the limits of such switching crises. The more “locked-in” capital becomes to its regional spatial formation, the more violent the switching crisis, including dramatic re-making of local alliances (of which fascism can be an outcome), technical mixes, and social and physical infrastructures (pp. 428-9).

driven the redistribution of these activities from the Pearl River Delta to the Yangtze River Delta (Yang 2009). While the Pearl River Delta remains the preferred site of export production, efforts by the Chinese government to reorient the economy towards the domestic market, coupled with growing labor unrest spurring wage increases and labor law improvements in the Pearl River region, is leading first-tier suppliers such as Foxconn to move their major production facilities inland (or abroad) in search of lower wages, laxer enforcement, and cheaper land (Chan 2014; Yang 2013).

The restructuring of production networks intra-nationally gained pace in Mexico in the late 1990s as well, where garment and auto parts plants extended their networks from the border and northern region of the country to central and southern states as a strategy to allay global competition (Collins 2003; Plankey-Videla 2012; Alvarez-Medina and Carrillo 2014). In the auto industry, this trend appears to have intensified in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis (Alvarez-Medina and Carrillo 2014). Such intra-national shifts often entail changes in the exploitable workforce. In the Turkish garment industry, for example, as production shifted from Istanbul to the southeast, the composition of the workforce also changed, from male and female urban immigrants in Istanbul to “factory daughters” in the southeast (Dedeoglu 2013). In sum, these micro- and meso-scale studies of production network restructuring remind us of the usefulness of Chase-Dunn’s unit of analysis for uneven development. It is precisely the interaction of accumulation and disinvestment at multiple scales that both propels and remakes the global formation.

### **The Uneven Commodification of Labor and the World Class Structure**

In the first chapter of *Global Formation*, in which Chase-Dunn lays out the main elements in his theory of the “deep structure” of “real capitalism,” he distances himself from a view of capitalism that insists on the exploitation of wage labor as its defining characteristic. Specifically, Chase-Dunn cautions against an overly simplistic view of labor commodification as something that is either present or absent. Rather, if commodification is “the process by which formerly non-market-mediated activities come to take the commodity form” (18), then labor commodification can be thought of as a continuum on which different societies (or different sectors or spheres of activity within those societies) might be arrayed. To make a rough analogy to the language of statistical analysis, commodification is not a dichotomous, but rather a continuous variable. This view of labor commodification as a spectrum, in turn, is bound up with how we understand capitalism’s scope, since from a world-systems perspective, locations that occupy intermediate positions on this spectrum are still within the structure of the capitalist world-economy: “Both Marx and Wallerstein see commodity production as necessary to capitalism, but Marx argued that “fully



formed” capitalism can only be based on wage labor, while Wallerstein argues that peripheral capitalism can be based on less commodified forms of labor control” (18-19).

This understanding of labor commodification as a spectrum is critical for how the world class structure and its spatial expression in the hierarchical world-system is conceptualized in *Global Formation*. As Chase-Dunn explains, the “world class system may be understood as *a continuum from protected labor through wage labor to coerced labor* which roughly corresponds to the core/periphery hierarchy” (39-40, emphasis in the original). Core and periphery each encompass a particular mix of labor forms along the continuum, with the former concentrating more commodified and protected labor than the latter. Certainly, Chase-Dunn would not dispute that all forms of labor along the continuum may be found in the different zones of the global hierarchy, but it is the particular combinations—and the prevalence of a given form—that illuminate the “rough correspondence” between class relations and core/periphery position (or the global formation). This revised theory of capitalism’s deep structure allows us to appreciate the variable but patterned worldwide geography of commodification: “The world-systems perspective encourages us...to notice how control institutions (relations of production) are structured beyond the point of production, in states, and, indeed, are institutionalized in the core/periphery hierarchy” (23).

Chase-Dunn’s formulation of commodified labor as a continuum offers a relational understanding of the global division of labor, an understanding that is particularly salient as we consider contemporary economic restructuring. Central to this understanding must be an analysis of how capital reproduces the hierarchical value of labor through forms of social difference not entirely of its own making. Feminist scholars have long observed how strategies to shift the mix of relative and absolute surplus value, for example, depend upon forms of “masculinizing” and feminizing” workforces.

In circuits of global production, for example, the sorts of competitive dynamics we discussed above that are rearticulating north-south and south-south networks are also shifting the mix of labor commodification, forms of power (e.g., exploitation or domination), and social difference at the heart of surplus extraction. As suppliers in the global South respond to pressures to incorporate more complex functions, processes or higher value products for markets in the global North, they have created more fine-grained stratification amongst workers. Full package garment firms in the global South (i.e., firms that coordinate the main functions of production), for example, navigate the quality, cost, and lead time demands of “fast fashion” by employing a mixed workforce of permanent, better remunerated workers, on the one hand, and temporary, poorly paid workers, on the other. The temporary workforce concentrates structurally devalued labor, such as immigrants, and, in some sectors, also relies upon a gendered hierarchy of labor (Plank, Rossi and Staritz 2012; Rossi 2013).

These patterns can also be found in the nodes of global production networks generally concentrated in the global North. In the case of integrated warehousing and distribution centers in the U.S., for example, firms secure their position through subcontracting chains that facilitate an accordion-like proliferation of categories of temporary work, tiered by length of employment contract (from months to weeks to single shifts). In this industry, workers are made precarious by their gendered and racialized social location, reinforced by the criminal justice system (Gutelius 2015). Following Chase-Dunn, scholars must consider the implications for class politics of this kind of fragmentation of paid labor that mobilizes broader mixes of commodified labor along the spectrum in the different zones of the global hierarchy, and what this signals for the sorts of interactions that are taking place between core and periphery regions.

In *Global Formation*, Chase-Dunn points out that, “it is not the operation of a perfect labor market which determines proletarian status, but the subjection of labor to the logic of profit making, and this is accomplished by a wide variety of institutional means” (41). We could not agree more. The challenge for contemporary analysis is to reconcile this observation with the mounting evidence that much labor simply cannot be exploited directly by capital; the colloquial notion of unemployment is of course an approximation of the condition of labor’s non-value or waste vis-à-vis capital. As Marx wrote “the relative surplus population is... the background against which the law of demand and supply of labor does its work” (1976: 792). Our contention is not that today’s “reserve army” is an absolute outside to capital; rather, at the margins, capital appears to operate through the iterative inclusion and exclusion of vast populations, reworking colonial legacies, “remnants” in Chase-Dunn’s global formation, in contemporary times. As Gidwani and Wainwright observe, “the modal condition of work within postcolonial capitalism is not absolute expulsion of vulnerable populations from capital’s “reserve army” but rather, the spatio-temporal flux in and, hence, tenuousness of, capital’s embrace” (2014: 45). Chase-Dunn is keenly aware of these tensions, and the political possibilities and perils they create (Boswell and Chase-Dunn 2000), including, as we discuss briefly in our concluding section, in the core of the world-system.

### **Boundary-Drawing and the New Politics of Uneven Development in the North**

*Global Formation* not only provides an exhaustive review of the ways in which the hierarchy between the (relatively) more commodified/more protected core and the (relatively) less commodified/less protected periphery is structurally maintained; Chase-Dunn also explains why the maintenance of this hierarchy is necessary—namely, because “of the political effects which exploitation of the periphery has in the core” (244). Here, Chase-Dunn draws out the connection between the dynamics of uneven development at the global level—those which produce “core” and “peripheral” countries—with those occurring *within* countries. From the perspective of the world-system, the surplus that is extracted from the periphery fuels capital accumulation in a

number of ways, but one important way that it does so is by “promoting a relative harmony between capital and important sectors of labor in the core” (42). Uneven development is, in this sense, an ongoing form of global redistribution from periphery to core, which attenuates class conflict in the latter by sharing a portion of the system’s rewards with privileged workers (predominantly white and male under Fordism) in core countries.

In revisiting *Global Formation* during the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign, and in the immediate post-election period, we were struck by the way in which Chase-Dunn’s analysis of the world class system speaks to the recent surge in populist politics in core countries (though not only). We make this observation with some trepidation, since these political developments are varied, complex and emergent. Nevertheless, we were particularly intrigued by Chase-Dunn’s observation that because “class harmony” in the core is based, in part, on the benefits that core workers derive from the exploitation of the periphery (42), changes in the core-periphery dynamic are likely to impact, potentially dramatically, class relations within the core.

Here, Beverly Silver’s generative framing of boundary-drawing can be put into fruitful conversation with Chase-Dunn’s formulation of interacting class relations, the spectrum of labor, and core and periphery arrangements. The notion of boundary-drawing as a modality of class relations crystallizes the relationship between spatial and social difference that we take to be the beating heart of uneven development. While world-systems theory has tended to focus on the core-periphery hierarchy as the central boundary delineating those who are “cut in” from those who are “left out,” we must also focus on the boundary-drawing that is occurring within the core, where race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and other forms of social difference become discursively mobilized lines of demarcation, intended to separate those entitled to lay claim to a piece of the shrinking pie from those who are not.

In an article written some twenty years ago, Immanuel Wallerstein gestured towards this kind of boundary-drawing when he reflected on the “counterattack” then being waged under the sign of neoliberalism. This counterattack was, first and foremost, about resisting the costs associated with redistributive demands coming from two quarters: the Western working classes, which sought to preserve and extend the elevated standard of living they had experienced in the post-War period, and the citizens of the global South, who were increasingly seeking the rights and privileges that had already been extended to the working classes of the core. In the 1970s, in the content of decolonization, newly independent countries in Asia and Africa clamored to be cut in on the “global New Deal” undergirding U.S. hegemony (Arrighi 1994; 2000). But rather than the realization of the New International Economic Order sought by the G-77, the 1980s brought the ascendancy of Reagan and Thatcher, whose policies “signaled a major reversal of strategy by the privileged classes... a return to the pre-1848 strategy of handling workers' discontent by

indifference plus repression” (Wallerstein 1995: 26). Writing in 1995, Wallerstein imagines the state of politics a few decades hence and predicts the following:

We will have social structures in Europe and North America...in which the ‘working class’ will be disproportionately composed of non-White workers, probably outside the trade-union structures, and even more probably without basic political and social rights. At the same time, the children and grandchildren of today’s union members will be ‘middle class’—maybe unionized, some doing well, and others less well (and there-upon more likely to be engaged in right-wing politics). Looked at from outside, we will have returned to the pre-1848 situation, in which, within the traditional loci of the liberal state (Western Europe and North America), the ‘workers’ will be poorly paid and outside the realm of political and social rights. Western workers will once again have changed, and the class struggle will be a race struggle. The problem of the twenty-first century will be the problem of the color line” (26-27; emphasis original).<sup>5</sup>

Wallerstein is imagining a political moment in which racialized resentment and similar forms of boundary-drawing articulate a desire to get “cut back in” at others’ expense, to recover the privileges long associated with being on the right side of the world-system boundary separating the haves from the have nots. In short, we read Wallerstein’s formulation of the twenty-first century color line as an effort to understand how social and structural difference are linked via material and ideological practice within the global formation that Chase-Dunn’s work has done so much to illuminate.

By way of closing, we would acknowledge how deeply our reading (and re-reading) of *Global Formation* has been influenced not just by the particular set of theoretical and empirical concerns that we are pursuing in our work, but also by our own interdisciplinary collaboration, which aims to put critical, and especially feminist, economic geography in conversation with structural political economy in order to understand the nature of uneven development. Undoubtedly, other readers will draw very different insights and inspiration from Chase-Dunn’s rich and wide-ranging inquiry into the nature of the world-system. For us, Chase-Dunn’s work has been, and continues to be, an important resource to draw on in working towards a deeper understanding of what Jamie Peck (2016: 318) has described as the promise of uneven development: “The true potential of

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<sup>5</sup> Arrighi and Silver cite this same passage from Wallerstein in their own highly prescient discussion of the political perils posed by an increasingly financialized world economy: “Even the most enthusiastic supporters of interstate competition in globally integrated financial markets have begun to fear that financial globalization is turning into a brakeless train wreaking havoc. They worry about a mounting backlash against the effects of such a destructive force, first and foremost the rise of a new brand of populist politicians fostered by the mood of helplessness and anxiety that is taking hold even of wealthy countries” (2001: 273).

theories of uneven development, in this respect, is not to fold difference into some singular and enveloping logic of systemic reproduction, but to gather difference in a manner that is constitutive but never closed, understood as an engine of transformative change with the ever-present potential to disrupt, remake, and reformat “from below,” and therefore displaying parametric patterns while retaining the capacity to break (out of) them.”

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