

WORLD-SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

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Summary

World-systems analysis is a knowledge movement elaborated since the 1970's and is a critique of dominant modes of analysis in the nineteenth-century social sciences. It insists on three things primarily: (1) World-systems (and not nation-states) are the basic unit of social analysis; (2) Neither nomothetic nor idiographic epistemologies permit useful analyses of social reality; (3) The existing disciplinary boundaries within the social sciences no longer make any intellectual sense.

World-systems analysis is not a subdivision of the social sciences. It is another approach to, or perspective on, the ways in which one should undertake social analysis of historical reality. As a mode of analysis, it must itself be placed in its historical context, which is where we begin. This will be followed by a discussion of the distinctive features of world-systems analysis. Then we shall turn to reviewing arguments with its critics.

1. Historical Origins of World-systems Analysis

Concepts in the social sciences are seldom without precedent. But it is only when they receive considerable attention and a reasonable amount of empirical elaboration that we can consider that they have entered the purview of the social sciences as a structure of knowledge. In this restricted sense, world-systems analysis came into existence in the 1970s.

The dominant current in world social science from the late nineteenth century to circa 1970 was that social science consisted of a series of specified disciplines with more or less accepted boundary lines. Whereas, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there were a very large number of different appellations of university chairs that seemed to cover matters we today call social science, this list began to be reduced to a select few. As of 1945, the standard list included anthropology, economics, political science, and

sociology. The author would include history, even though many historians insisted that history was not a social science. The author would also include Oriental studies, although this was not widely accepted as a social science discipline. And, on the other hand, the author would not include psychology, because the object of psychology treats a different level of reality than social science. This, however, is controversial. This short list of names had become standard in most universities across the world as of 1945, but since then there has been a blossoming of other names, so that by 2000 it had become less clear that there was a standard list.

The logic of the list that had evolved between 1850 and 1945 was that it reflected three intellectual cleavages thought to be most important by nineteenth-century scholars: past/present; the Western world/the others; and the three presumed separate domains of modernity. Historians studied the past and economists, political scientists, and sociologists studied the present. All four of these disciplines studied the Western world and anthropologists and Orientalists studied the "others." The anthropologists studied "primitive" societies, and the Orientalists studied non-Western "high civilizations." Finally, the study of the Western present was divided among the three domains into which, it was argued, all of the modern world had become differentiated: the market (economics), the state (political science), and civil society (sociology). As of 1945, the boundaries between the "disciplines" were considered quite firm intellectually, and they were reinforced organizationally.

This categorization was intellectually defensible in terms of the dominant social realities of the world from 1850 to 1945. But it began to fall apart after 1945 for two separate reasons which combined to undermine the schema. On the one hand, the geopolitical self-assertion (or reassertion) of the non-Western world (decolonization, national revolutionary movements, the Bandung conference of 1955) made it not very useful to Westerners to study these countries via the lens of either anthropology (with its traditional emphasis on "tribes" that had no "history") or Orientalism (with its traditional emphasis on philology and the analysis of esoteric non-Western, but essentialist and therefore unchanging, cultural patterns).

In the post-1945 period, historians, economists, political scientists, and sociologists were all encouraged to include the non-Western world in their domain of research. When that happened, anthropologists decided to abandon their exclusive concern with the non-Western world and study the cultural patterns of the Western world as well. And the Orientalists, under considerable political pressure, committed organizational suicide, for the most part renaming themselves (cultural) historians. The epistemological gap between studying the West and studying the "others" more or less ceased to exist.

The second new element was the enormous expansion of the world university system after 1945 in terms of numbers of universities, numbers of faculty, and numbers of students. For faculty and for doctoral candidates, this led to the search for more niches into which social scientists could claim a specialty, and for doctoral students an original topic of research. One way to do this was to add a second discipline's name as a modifying adjective to one's specialty (economic anthropology, social history, etc.) which expanded the domains of acceptable research for persons in the separate disciplines. However, at the same time, it led to a breakdown of the disciplinary separations that had been predicated on presumably

the radical distinctions between different spheres of social life.

The response to these two breakdowns of the logic of the distinctive disciplines was multiple. All sorts of concepts and methodological assumptions that had seemed so useful and so obvious now were open to reevaluation. One major way of handling some of these problems that obtained wide purchase from 1945 to about 1970 was the newly-fashionable concept of "modernization" built around a social process called "development." In one sense, modernization was not at all a new concept. It is easy to demonstrate that most of the great binary distinctions developed by nineteenth-century social scientists - status/contract, mechanical/organic solidarity, *Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft*, traditional versus rational-legal legitimation, etc. - were after 1945 being simply collapsed into one overall category of traditional/modern.

Development, which was of course an avatar of the eighteenth-century concept of progress, had two virtues which made it into a useful operational tool for post-1945 social scientists. On the one hand, it allowed the social scientist to distinguish between various kinds of development - economic, political, social - and thereby maintain intact the classical distinction that undergirded the three great nomothetic disciplines of the social sciences. But on the other hand, it allowed the social scientist to overcome the Western world/"others" distinction now out of favor by adding the codicil that different countries were at different "stages" of development. This had the advantage of being universalist. The operations of all states worldwide were explained by the same concept of development and therefore were said to be pursuing the same trajectory or model of development. On the other hand, the states were also different (or particular) at the present time, because they were at different "stages" of the same developmental process. In addition, "development" had a third virtue. One could derive from its study useful parables for political advice: if "underdeveloped" countries copied the wisdom of "developed" ones, they would advance more rapidly along the universal path of societal development. As a result, the gap between the "developed" and the "underdeveloped" would inevitably close. In this way, modernization theory put forth a very optimistic view of the future of those states that were still poor and struggling.

This intellectual patchwork seemed for a while to be a promising solution to the intellectual and political issues of the post-1945 world. Within 20-25 years, however, it fell apart under multiple assaults. By 1970, it had become reasonably clear that the real-world gap between "developed" and "underdeveloped" countries, far from closing, was growing wider. The reinvigorated militancy of both women's movements and movements of ethnic/racial/national understrata found no explanatory or political berth within the framework of modernization theories, or at least none that these movements found useful. And the world revolution of 1968 threw the cozy dominance of modernization theories and theorists out of kilter altogether by challenging both their substantive and their methodological premises.

It is at this point that world-systems analysis presented itself as a knowledge movement that made a series of arguments which called into question first modernization theory and then, more fundamentally, the whole structure of the social sciences as they had been constructed in the nineteenth century. There were three basic elements to world-systems analysis. One had to do with space, one with time, and one with epistemology.

2. Basic Concepts of World-systems Analysis

2.1 The Space of Social Reality

In the nineteenth century, the political primacy of the state as an institution came to be the accepted norm in terms of both social science analysis and political preference. It followed that almost everyone believed that the most significant arena of social action was that which occurred within the boundaries of the state. Using this premise, many things seemed obvious: States were sovereign. States had historical roots. They had economies, political systems, social norms and structures, and cultural heritages, each of which could be specified by social scientists. What distinguished one state from another was its specific combination of these parallel spheres. Above all, states were the geographical container of "societies" - that is, coherent, holistic entities in which all individuals were located.

States all sought to become or to be thought of as nation-states. To be a nation-state meant that a state had very largely overcome any and all divisive particularisms, which were regarded as anomalous leftovers from prior history, leftovers whose destiny it was to disappear. Hence, whatever happened of any importance happened within the state, or between states as entities vying with each other in the international (geopolitical) arena.

Obviously, the eyes of the researcher had to be focused therefore on the state as the unit of analysis. Insofar as scholars used quantitative data, they spoke of statistics. The very word, statistics, derived from the word, state. Statistics were normally and primarily compiled by state machineries. If scholars compiled their own material, they sought to express them in terms of state boundaries (as, for example, percentages or trends within states).

It was of course possible to compare states to each other - either synchronically in terms of their level of achievement at a given moment of time or diachronically in terms of the historical moment at which they began to do specific things or have specific institutions. The vision was very linear. All states were or should be moving forward along similar paths. The nineteenth century called this progress. One could of course analyze why particular states were reluctant to discard "antiquated" institutions, in this way holding themselves back or falling further behind.

With the aid of their specialists, states looked forward to where they might arrive in the future, and how soon they might get to a point at which their situation had manifestly improved. Simultaneously, they also looked backward to discover their "origins" - a concept that had implications for appreciating to what kinds of physical boundaries they could legitimately lay claim, and what language or form of language they could or should utilize and teach.

The comparative mode and analytic model became especially strong in the period following the Second World War with its emphasis on what came to be called "development" and the process of "catching-up" to leading states. In the post-1945 period, it was seen to be important not merely to "catch up" but to do so as fast as possible. Populations and their elites were very impatient. Scholars were required to figure out exactly what allowed a country to "develop" and thereby be able to suggest the optimal techniques for accelerating the pace.

The self-evident quality of the view that the states were the primary locus of social action and the cadre within which societies existed and were nourished was slow to unravel. Political "internationalism" was precisely inter-national and presumed the existence, indeed encouraged the strengthening, of the states as the loci of sovereignty. The great anticolonial movements of the twentieth century did not challenge the concept of the nation-state - far from it! Rather, they insisted that the (colonial) state in which they lived was oppressed by its inclusion within the boundaries of the "metropolitan" state, and should therefore make its way as an independent entity, one that had all the attributes of every other sovereign state.

Nonetheless, there were dissenting voices. One of the most significant and ultimately most influential was that of Fernand Braudel, whose first classic book, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, explicitly rejected the state as its unit of analysis. Braudel argued that in the sixteenth century the Mediterranean arena constituted an *économie-monde*. This was not the economy of the entire world (globe) but a historical structure that cut across many political boundaries and was knitted together by its skein of economic interdependencies. Braudel described the Mediterranean *économie-monde* as it evolved over what he called its *longue durée*, and sought to trace the complex imbricated patterns of its natural environment, its economic rhythms (*conjunctures*) and secular trends, its multiple variety of political structures (empires, city-states, and nascent "nation-states"), and its different "civilizations."

With this approach, Braudel had changed the unit of analysis in a very fundamental way. His book was hailed as original and path-breaking, but in practice social scientists - most social scientists - continued to make the state their basic unit of analysis. When Braudel's book was published in 1949, it was no doubt still too early to reverse a long tradition, especially since that was the moment of the apogee of developmentalism as a doctrine and a political practice.

It was the world revolution of 1968 that made it more possible to break the orientation of the social sciences to the state as the basic unit of analysis. It was at this time that developmentalism/modernization theory first came under serious attack - first political, then intellectual attack.

The political attack was straightforward. There came to be widespread sentiment that the political path that most states had been followed worldwide from 1945 to 1968 was not bearing the promised fruit. Despite the fact that states everywhere seemed to have come under the control of political forces that promoted developmentalist policies, the situations had not improved significantly either at the level of the world-system as a whole or at the level of each state taken separately.

At the level of the world-system, as we noted above, the gap between the wealthiest and the poorest countries had not decreased at all. On the contrary, it had actually increased rather significantly. In that sense, the policies ensconced in modernization theories had not paid off for the "developing" countries of the world. The fact that these governments were in many, even most, cases led by political movements that proclaimed themselves antisystemic or of the left - national liberation movements, communist or socialist parties - did nothing to alleviate this sense of disappointment and disillusion. It merely tarred these

movements themselves with the brush of error, folly, or betrayal.

What perhaps was even worse in the eyes of the populations of the "underdeveloped countries" or "peripheral zones" was that the internal structures of these countries, while often ostensibly transformed in many ways, seemed to have continued old negative features under new names. They were not clearly more democratic politically or egalitarian socially or economically. Indeed, class distinctions seemed to have persisted in the creation of various kinds of *Nomenklaturas*.

Politically, therefore, the revolutionaries of 1968 called for a reassessment of historic strategies of social transformation. Since the dominant strategy for over a century had been acquiring state power as the mechanism wherewith one could achieve social transformation, the revolutionaries wondered whether the social movements had been right to be so state-oriented. They began to orient their political strategy to be at once both more global and more local.

This political shift, of considerable cultural importance, opened for social scientists the epistemological question of the usefulness of the state as the basic unit of analysis. World-systems analysis was one of the outgrowths of this questioning.

World-systems analysis insisted that, apart from minisystems that no longer existed, all historical systems were world-systems (using the word "world" to indicate a large region, not necessarily the entire globe), and that it was historical social systems that were the basic unit of analysis. The states that social scientists had been assuming as the basic units did indeed exist, but as structures *within* the modern world-system. Therefore, the modern world-system was not to be thought of a collection of autonomous state-structures that occasionally and in limited ways interacted with each other. Rather it was an integrated system of multiple states and cultures with an axial division of labor, a system that had a historical life. It had been created (and one was called upon to analyze the moment and conditions under which it had been created). It had structures that were simultaneously enduring and evolving. And it would at some point move far from equilibrium and come into structural crisis, one that would lead to its demise and replacement by some other historical system or systems.

In terms of space, a historical social system had boundaries, but the boundaries were not fixed. The structures of the modern world-system, which was a capitalist world-economy, led to its continual geographic expansion, such that over time the capitalist world-economy came to encompass the entire globe. At that point, the issue for the modern world-system was no longer how it related to zones outside its geographical limits but how it coped with the fact that there were no longer zones outside its geographical limits.

2.2. The Time of Social Reality

Once one takes historical systems as the basic units of analysis, time becomes as important as space. Indeed, one has to move towards using a concept of TimeSpace. We have already noted that there are three basic moments in time for any historical system: the time of its coming into being; the time (much longer) of its "normal" functioning and development/evolution; the time of its structural crisis, bifurcation, and demise. The first

and third times are quite different from the second (much the longest) time.

The period of a historical system's coming in being and the period of its structural crisis leading to demise are both unique. They can only be analyzed idiographically in terms of the very specific parameters that define them. The social action of a time of creation can malfunction and a stable, equilibrated historical system may fail to come into existence. This happens all the time, although social scientists rarely investigate such abortive attempts at structural creation. The time of structural crisis likewise has no predictable outcome. Its trajectory is intrinsically uncertain. In this way too, world-systems analysis rejects the assumption of inevitable progress. Progress from this perspective is merely possible, but so is regression.

However, time is most neglected as a defining variable when we deal with the "normal," more or less equilibrated life of a historical social system. Most analysts use time as an exogenous and negligible element. Either they use a nomothetic epistemology, in which time is said to be irrelevant, since all the "laws" they claim exist are in their view eternal laws of social existence. Or they assert an idiographic epistemology, in which time is a sequence of "events" that are completely particular, and all that an analyst can do is to recount empathetically what has occurred, to the degree possible. This sequence is said to determine everything in the particular case but not to have probative value beyond the case being described. No generalizations of any kind are possible in this view.

It was against this dominant model of nineteenth-century social science that Braudel rebelled. He called the first the "very long duration." He doubted its very existence, saying that it could only be the "time of the sages." He called the second episodic or event-linked time (*l'histoire événementielle*). Events indeed existed, but he said they were "dust" and therefore of very minor importance. He thus insisted that these two uses of time were both of limited use to the analyst.

As against these two concepts of the role of time, Braudel put forward two other forms. One he called "structural" time - the slow-moving, long-lasting (but never eternal) environmental and social structures of a historical system that constrain the options of social action. The second was "cyclical" time (*l'histoire conjoncturelle*) composed of the A- and B-phases of the many processes that occurred within the parameters of the underlying structures, and precisely as a result of their constraints,

World-systems analysis attempted to operationalize these Braudelian temporalities, especially the two that he considered most important. For world-systems analysis, there are measurable cycles whose effect is clear and repeated. The Kondratieff "long waves" of economic activity (of 50-60 years) are one of the most obvious. They describe the expansion and contraction/stagnation of the world-economy as a whole. There are also geopolitical cycles of hegemony, whose pace is slower (100-150 years) - what Rondo Cameron has called "logistics." Some analysts, such as Joseph Schumpeter, argue that these kinds of cycles can be divided not merely into two phases, but into four. And if one does this, one acquires a powerful tool to explain continuing ostensible shifts in social reality, without falling into the deceptive trap of seeing every shift as something "new."

If we denominate these shifts as "cyclical rhythms" of the historical system, we need to

recognize that it requires political action to emerge from a B-phase, and that it is virtually impossible to return to the precise point of cyclical upturn. The cycles have their impact on the system, and force it to develop or to evolve. If one puts together all the changes, this tends to look like a ratchet - two steps up and one step down. The whole then forms part of a "secular trend," which involves the slow and limited modification of the basic structures.

The combination of cyclical rhythms and secular trends constitute the basic framework within which one can recount and understand the historical operation and development of any historical social system. Of course, accepting such a framework for analysis does not commit the analyst to any particular empirical judgment. One can still debate the empirical location of space and time. Was the Russian empire in the seventeenth century part of the capitalist world-economy (as Nolte argues) or still outside it? Is the first hegemonic power of the modern world-system the United Provinces or were there one or two predecessors (as Modelski and also Arrighi argue)? These empirical controversies force the analysts to sharpen their theoretical perception and eventually to eliminate ambiguities. What the theoretical framework of world-systems analysis does from the outset is to delimit which are the fruitful empirical debates to pursue and which ones are not.

The fact that there are secular trends necessarily implies that, at some point, they much reach asymptotic limits. And thus it is that any historical social system sooner or later reaches its moment of structural crisis - which is the moment at which there is no longer sufficient "upward" space for the secular trends to move, and therefore there is no longer a way to emerge from the B-phases of the cyclical rhythms. Equilibrium can no longer be restored even partially because the system is now too far from equilibrium.

It is in this discussion of what happens when systems move far from equilibrium that the sciences of complexity provide a model, one that is quite different from the long-dominant Newtonian model. The sciences of complexity, as elaborated notably by Ilya Prigogine, have a different model from the long dominant Newtonian model, a model which they assert applies to all kinds of systems (physical, biological, and social): The future is inherently indeterminate, not determinate. Probabilities are not reflections of our scientific ignorance but describe states of the world, indeed the vast majority of states of the world. Time-reversibility does not exist. Everything is governed by the arrow of time, which plays an essentially constructive role. The object of science is not to reduce everything to simplicity but to explain and elaborate complexity. Systems move far from equilibrium and at a certain point bifurcate, which then requires a "choice" between two alternative outcomes, a choice whose outcome cannot be predicted in advance, but one that establishes a new order out of the chaos and wild fluctuations of the period of bifurcation.

The period of bifurcation, chaos, and wild fluctuations out of which will emerge a new order (but one impossible to predict in advance) is in fact the description of the third time of historical social systems, that of structural crisis. It is the view of many world-systems analysts that the modern world-system has entered this third moment of time. It is important to note that, in this third moment, the processes adumbrated as constituting the mechanisms of the "normal" operation of the historical system do not cease to operate. It is merely that they no longer serve the function of restoring some kind of equilibrium; they may indeed exacerbate the fluctuations.

Hence, world-systems analysis has elaborated a fifth kind of TimeSpace that is applicable to this period. Borrowing Paul Tillich's concept of *kairos*, it may be labeled transformational TimeSpace. This third moment of time is of course the first moment of time of the subsequent historical social system or systems that will emerge at the end of the process. Hence the first moment of time of the existing modern world-system must be analyzed as the third moment of time of some previous historical system, a further task for the world-systems analyst.

2.3. Epistemological Consequences

It is thus clear that world-systems analysis, in the course of its analytic development, has been forced to cope with fundamental epistemological issues, and as a result to challenge some of the reigning views. As the work of world-systems analysts proceeded, explaining the history of the epistemology of the social sciences and the present challenges became one of the accepted tasks of world-systems analysis.

Basically, world-systems analysis sees the structures of knowledge as themselves one of the basic institutions of any historical system. It follows that the modern world-system developed its own epistemological assumptions. The unified epistemological concepts of pre-modern social systems were replaced by ones more suited to the structural needs of the capitalist world-economy. The basic form that this took was the invention of the concept of the "two cultures" - one scientific and the other humanistic. This division marked in fact a division of the primary concerns of the scholar between the two groups. The scientific group argued that they alone were able to pursue effectively the search for truth, and in turn renounced any other task. The humanistic group was thus left with exclusive control over and concern with the search for the good and the beautiful, and effectively withdrew from the search for truth.

This division of focus and task began to seem important in the middle of the eighteenth century. It was institutionalized in the revived university system of the nineteenth century wherein knowledge was divided among separate faculties of the natural sciences and the humanities, each utilizing different and mutually hostile epistemologies. The domain of social action became a contested terrain for the two cultures, each asserting dominion over the social/human sciences. In practice, the various disciplines within the social sciences divided the terrain as well, choosing sides. Some leaned in the scientific direction and others in the humanistic direction.

However, as the modern world-system moved into its structural crisis, this crisis was reflected in the realm of epistemology as well. The very concept of the two cultures came to be challenged. The sciences of complexity, by their attack on Newtonian premises and their emphasis on the centrality of the arrow of time, moved decisively away from the concept of the two cultures. Similarly, cultural studies within the humanities, by their emphasis on the social context not only of the production of knowledge but on the reception and interpretation of knowledge, similarly moved away from the concept of the two cultures.

While there does not yet exist an accepted new unified epistemology for all of knowledge, it is quite clear that resolving this issue is part and parcel of the "choices" imposed upon us

by the bifurcation within which we find ourselves presently. Since we do not know what will be the outcome of this systemic struggle, we are left unsure what kind of epistemology will emerge in the new order that will eventually prevail. However, the debate about epistemology has begun to be central to the larger debate about what kind of the world-system will be constructed in the course of the transition.

3. Critiques of World-systems Analysis

World-systems analysis, like any vibrant knowledge perspective, is replete with internal debates about the definition of the basic perspective, the empirical findings of those who pursue this perspective, and the moral and political implications to draw from this perspective. What is perhaps more important is to outline briefly the four main intellectual objections to the entire thrust of world-systems analysis. They come from the positivists, the orthodox Marxists, the state autonomists, and the culturalists.

In the past 150 years, the positivists have held the dominant position within the social sciences, not only in the nomothetic disciplines (economics, political science, and sociology) but in history as well. The positivist historians object to the efforts of world-system analysts to elaborate a structured vision of historical phenomena, asserting their aversion to generalizations. And the nomothetic positivists object in the other direction. For the latter, world-systems analysts fail to put forward falsifiable propositions and are insufficiently oriented to quantitative data. Both are of course reacting to the precise criticisms that world-systems analysis has been making of their modes of analysis.

The orthodox Marxists generally assert that world-systems analysis has abandoned or insufficiently stressed class analysis, and has thereby eliminated the presumption of an inevitable progression of historical stages of development. In addition, they protest against all sorts of particular propositions: the importance of non-wage labor in capital accumulation, the recognition of modes of social grouping other than class (race, gender, ethnicity, etc.) as crucial explanatory variables, the failure (in their view) to distinguish adequately between the sphere of production and the sphere of circulation, and the interpretation given to "real existing socialism." In short, the orthodox Marxists are objecting to anything that deviates from the model put forth by the two intellectually prescriptive Marxist parties - the German Social-Democratic Party and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

The state autonomists (in the tradition of Otto Hintze) object to the eradication of the strong intellectual boundary between the activities of states and the activities of capitalist entrepreneurs. They insist that the basic motivations of actors in the two spheres respond to different rules and pressures, and the two stories cannot be collapsed into a single analytic sphere.

All three of these forms of objectors - the positivists, the orthodox Marxists, and the state autonomists - insist on the centrality of the state as the unit of analysis. They are therefore objecting to the basic premise of world-systems analysis.

Finally, the culturalists are rebelling against the priority given to either the market or the state in all the other main modes of social analysis. They insist that not merely has the cul-

tural sphere been neglected but that it in turn is the primary locus of explanation of social reality. For this group, world-systems analysis seem to involve merely another variety of generalizing propositions that neglect or give a secondary role to the cultural sphere. They particularly are upset by the proposition that the so-called political, economic, and socio-cultural spheres are merely a construct of centrist liberalism and have no lasting intellectual utility.

In short, most of the criticisms of world-systems analysis criticize it for what it explicitly proclaims as its perspective. World-systems analysis views these other modes of analysis as defective and/or limiting in scope and calls for unthinking them. The response of those thus criticized has been primarily to reassert their own, long-standing epistemological and substantive views.

World-systems analysis is a perspective in creation. It is a holistic, uni-disciplinary view of social reality. Its future development and its future intellectual utility will be a function of how plausible its empirical conclusions prove to be and how useful its analytic insights will be to those engaged in the real struggle over the transition to a new world order.

Glossary

- Epistemology:** The branch of philosophical thought that discusses how we know what we know and how we can arrive at validating the truth of our knowledge.
- Hegemony:** This term is often used loosely merely to mean leadership or dominance in a political situation. Antonio Gramsci, the Italian Communist theorist, following Machiavelli, insisted on an ideological/cultural component, in which leadership was legitimated in some way by the population, which he saw as crucial to enable elites to maintain power. The term has a narrower use in world-systems analysis. It refers to those situations in which one state combines economic, political, and financial superiority over other strong states, and therefore has both military and cultural leadership as well. Hegemonic powers define the rules of the game. Defined in this way, hegemony does not last very long, and is self-destructive.
- Historical (social) system:** This combination of "historical" and "system" into one phrase is used by world-systems analysts to insist on the fact that all social systems are simultaneously systemic (that is, they have continuing characteristics that can be described) and historical (that is, they have a continuing evolving life and are never the same from one moment to the next). This paradoxical reality makes social analysis difficult but, if the contradiction is kept in the center of the analysis, makes it more fruitful and more realistic.
- Idiographic-nomothetic:** This pair of terms was invented in Germany in the late nineteenth century to describe what was called the *Methodenstreit* (battle of methods) among social scientists, one that reflected the division of scholarship into the two cultures. Nomothetic scholars insisted on replicable, "objective" (preferably quantitative) methods and saw

their task as arriving at general laws explaining social realities. Idiographic scholars used largely qualitative, narrative data, considered themselves humanists, and preferred hermeneutic methods. Their principal concern was interpretation, not laws, about which they were at the very least skeptical. (Note that *idiographic* is different from *ideographic*. "Idio-" is a prefix derived from Greek and means specific, individual, one's own; hence *idiographic* means particular descriptions. "Ideo-" is a prefix derived from Latin and means picture, form, idea; hence *ideographic* means a non-alphabetic writing system, such as Chinese characters.)

Kondratieff cycles: These are the basic cycles of expansion and stagnation in the capitalist world-economy. The so-called A- and B-phases generally last 50-60 years in length taken together. Their very existence is contested by many economists. Among those who utilize the concept, there is much debate about what explains them and particularly what explains the upturn from a B-phase to an A-phase. They are named after Nikolai Kondratieff, a Russian economist who wrote about them in the 1920s (although he was far from the first to describe them). Kondratieff himself called them long waves.

Nation-state: The nation-state is the de facto ideal towards which all, or almost all, modern states aspire. It refers to a state in which all persons can be said to be of one nation and therefore share certain basic values and allegiances. Being a nation is defined differently in different countries. It almost always means speaking the same language. It often means sharing the same religion. Nations are said to have historical ties which, it is usually claimed, predate the existence of a state structure. Much of this, not all, is mythology. And almost no state comes really close to being a genuine nation-state, but few admit this.

Social time: This concept, particularly favored by Fernand Braudel, suggests that there the analyst should look at different temporalities that reflect different social realities. Braudel distinguished between two widely-used social times: the short time of "events" used by *idiographic* scholars and the "eternal" time of *nomothetic* social scientists. He much preferred two other social times which he considered more fundamental: the structural time that was long-lasting and reflected continuing (but not eternal) structural realities, which he called the *longue durée*; and the cyclical time of ups-and-downs that occurred within the framework of a given structural time.

System: A system literally means some kind of connected whole, with internal rules of operation and some kind of continuity. In social science, its use as a descriptive term is contested, particularly by two groups of scholars: *idiographic* historians who tend to doubt the existence of social systems, or at least feel they are not the primary explanations of historical reality; and persons who believe

that social action is the result of individual actions (often called methodological individualists) and that the "system" is nothing but the compound of these individual activities. The use of the term "system" in social science implies the belief in the existence of so-called emergent characteristics.

TimeSpace:

This is a recently invented concept. The capitalization and the lack of space between "time" and "space" is used to represent the view that, for every kind of social time, there exists a particular kind of social space. Thus, time and space in social science should not be thought of as two separate phenomena, measured separately, but irrevocably linked into a limited number of combinations.

World-system:

A world-system is not the system *of the* world, but a system *that is* a world and which can be, most often has been, located in an area less than the entire globe. World-systems analysis argues that the units of social reality within which we operate, whose rules constrain us, are for the most part such world-systems (other than the now extinct, small minisystems that once existed on the earth). World-system analysis argues that there have been thus far only two varieties of world-systems: world-economies and world-empires. A world-empire (examples, the Roman Empire, Han China) are large bureaucratic structures with a single political center and an axial division of labor, but multiple cultures. A world-economy is a large axial division of labor with multiple political centers and multiple cultures. In English, the hyphen is essential to indicate these concepts. "World system" without a hyphen suggests that there has been only one world-system in the history of the world.

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