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World-System Analysis:

Contemporary Research and Directions

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CONTENTS

Introduction: Contemporary Directions and Research in World-Systems Analysis	6
<i>Richard E. Lee and Gerhard Preyer</i>	

NEW DIRECTIONS IN WORLD-SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

Global Democracy: A World-Systems Perspective	15
<i>Christopher Chase-Dunn and Terry Boswell</i>	
Material Spatialities of Cities and States	30
<i>Peter J. Taylor</i>	
Culture as a World System	46
<i>Göran Therborn</i>	

CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH IN WORLD-SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

A Note on Method with an Example – The “War on Terror”	71
<i>Richard E. Lee</i>	
Path-Dependency, Stocks, Switching-Points, Flows: Reflections on Long-term Global Change and Local Opportunities	85
<i>Denis O’Hearn</i>	

Atlantic History and World Economy: Concepts and Constructions	102
<i>Dale Tomich</i>	

CULTURE IN THE WORLD-SYSTEM

Multi-Dimensionality, Mutual Constitution and the Nature of Systemness: The Importance of the Cultural Turn in the Study of Global Systems	125
<i>Barrie Axford</i>	
Ethnicity and Religion: Structural and Cultural Aspects of Global Phenomena	143
<i>Mathias Bös</i>	
Multiple Modernities and Globalization	165
<i>Gerard Delanty</i>	
Diaspora History Construction and Slave Culture Formation on Small U.S. Plantations	186
<i>Wilma A. Dunaway</i>	
The Dialogue between Cultures or between Cultural Interpretations of Modernity – Multiple Modernities on the Contemporary Scene	201
<i>Shmuel N. Eisenstadt</i>	
Culture and its Politics in the Global System	217
<i>Jonathan Friedman</i>	
National Identity and Globalization: Policy Paths and the Process of Reimagining Community	239
<i>Frank J. Lechner</i>	

ON CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

Simulation Theory on Conceptual Grounds	261
<i>Brie Gertler</i>	
Unconventional Utterances? Davidson's Rejection of Conventions in Language Use	285
<i>Mason Cash</i>	

Moral Realism, Supervenience, Externalism and the Limits of Conceptual Metaphor	320
<i>Ron Wilburn</i>	
Eine neue Theorie der Kooperation	374
<i>Gerhard Preyer</i>	
Development – Paradox, Paralysis and Praxis	390
<i>Robert Kowalski</i>	
Contributors	412
Imprint	414
On ProtoSociology	415
Published Volumes	416
Bookpublications of the project	425
ProtoSociology: Digital volumes available	444
Cooperations / Announcements	445

GLOBAL DEMOCRACY: A WORLD-SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

Christopher Chase-Dunn and Terry Boswell

Abstract

This essay is on the concept of global democracy. We discuss the historical development of the concept of democracy and the material bases for the possible emergence of a democratic and collectively rational global commonwealth in the future. We confront the problem of contested meanings of democracy, the roots of the modern concept in the European Enlightenment, the problem of Eurocentrism in the formulation of a global philosophy of democracy, the relationship between capitalist globalization and antisystemic movements and the need for globalization from below.

MATERIAL SPATIALITIES OF CITIES AND STATES

Peter J. Taylor

Abstract

The concept of spatiality is introduced as an analytical tool for studying the modern world-system. The spatialities of cities and states are contrasted as spaces of flows and spaces of places respectively. It is argued that the latter is embedded in the social sciences as an unexamined spatiality. Dis-embedding is achieved through constructing a revisionist world-systems analysis that focuses on cities. This world-systems analysis is then used to describe two world-spatialities, for the current situation and for a generation hence. The conclusion identifies a systemic bifurcation as an anarchist moment.

CULTURE AS A WORLD SYSTEM

Göran Therborn

Abstract

This article attempts to come to grips with the lack of a systematically argued "systemness" in world-systems analysis and with a reductionism regarding the multidimensionality of world-system relations. In addressing these issues, systemness is taken as a

contingent variable and a case made for distinguishing at least five major interconnected and interacting human world systems, that, however, are not reducible to one another. From this perspective, the world system of culture is singled out and illustrative examples of the relationships between religious identities, family structures, cognitive and symbolic forms, and high and popular culture on a global scale are examined to highlight the contradictions of hegemony and resistance in the contemporary world.

A NOTE ON METHOD WITH AN EXAMPLE – THE “WAR ON TERROR”

Richard E. Lee

Abstract

Much has been made of the centrality of comparison to sociological research. The world-systems perspective, however, posits a single unit of analysis that challenges the possibility of designating the independent cases demanded by the formal logic of comparative analysis. The present work suggests an alternative to comparisons of multiple cases in the form of analogies among instances of processes. The consequences of such a methodological shift are explored through the example of the contemporary “War on Terror”.

PATH-DEPENDENCY, STOCKS, SWITCHING-POINTS, FLOWS: REFLECTIONS ON LONG-TERM GLOBAL CHANGE AND LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES

Denis O’Hearn

Abstract

This paper examines the possibilities for peripheral localities to achieve upward mobility in the world-system by “hooking on” to larger processes of world-system accumulation. In particular, is it possible for economies that are dependent on foreign investment to receive a flow of investments that is high enough to overcome the negative impacts of a high stock of foreign investment, thus enabling them to cross a threshold and achieve upward mobility in the world-system? An analysis of the

recent experience of the southern Irish “Celtic Tiger” economy during 1990-2000 indicates that such an upward movement is possible on the basis of massive foreign investment inflows. On closer examination, however, the Irish-type model appears to be highly deficient, because a high proportion of growth is illusionary and also on grounds of social desirability and lack of generalizability.

ATLANTIC HISTORY AND WORLD ECONOMY: CONCEPTS AND CONSTRUCTIONS.

Dale Tomich

Abstract

This article presents a unified, multidimensional, and relational approach to Atlantic history by treating the Atlantic as a historical region of the capitalist world economy. In contrast to more conventional comparative approaches, the approach presented here grounds Atlantic history in the longue durée geographical historical structure of the maritime Atlantic and construes particular political, economic, social, or cultural units as parts of the more encompassing Atlantic and world economies. Within this framework, particular units or relations are viewed as complex historical outcomes of relations and processes operating across diverse spatial and temporal scales. Thus each unit is related to the others, and each occupies a distinctive location in the maritime Atlantic division of labor. Through an example of plantation slavery, the article examines the ways in which specific units are formed within the larger historical field and examines the variation among them. By calling attention to the relations among units over time and in space within a unified historical field, it identifies specific conjunctures and contingencies shaping Atlantic history.

MULTI-DIMENSIONALITY, MUTUAL CONSTITUTION AND THE NATURE OF SYSTEMNESS: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CULTURAL TURN IN THE STUDY OF GLOBAL SYSTEMS

Barrie Axford

Abstract

In this article I will address the critical question of the constitution of global systems and the part played in such processes by what is often summarized as culture. I

examine the important distinction between culture and globalization and culture as constitutive of global social relations. The need to cleave to a systemic treatment of globality is put, while noting the dangers that lie in one-dimensional accounts of global system constitution. To offset any such tendency I explore the constitution of global systemness from a structurationist perspective. I outline the nature and significance of culture in the study of global systems, drawing attention to different literatures. Finally I underscore the importance of the cultural turn in the study of global systems and what has to be done to take full advantage of it.

In what follows I will address the critical question of the constitution of global systems and the part played in such processes by what is conveniently – if sometimes unhelpfully – summarized as “culture”. By global systems I mean networks of interaction and meaning that transcend both societal and national frames of reference. I want to shift the emphasis away from an under-theorized focus on cultural globalization to a consideration of global systems as enacted in part through cultural processes. In other words, I do not want to conflate the conjunctural features of contemporary (cultural) globalization with culture as the realm of lived experience integral to the enactment of all social-systemic relations. In some respects this approach may be seen as part of a shift – perhaps a paradigm shift – in how we understand the space of the social, and in how, or whether, we construe the global as the constitutive of all social relations (Beck 2003; Shaw 2003). I will begin with a mild polemic against a well-known systemic account of world-making forces that highlights some of these issues.

ETHNICITY AND RELIGION: STRUCTURAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF GLOBAL PHENOMENA

Mathias Bös

Abstract

Ethnicity and religion are European concepts used to describe social patterns in the world system. Historically, the Jewish and Greek traditions exemplify two models of the relation between religion and ethnicity. In sociological theory ethnicity and religion are two aspects in the multilayered systems of cultures in human society. Structurally most religions include many ethnic groups, but most ethnic groups have one majority religion. This relation often leads to the local misperception that identifies one ethnic group with one religion. Cultural and structural features of religion and ethnicity show four mechanisms, which account for the particularizing effects of the interaction between religion and ethnicity: religion and ethnicity as meaning struc-

tures mutually enhance each other; religion and ethnicity fit together structurally on many levels; religion and ethnicity are highly efficient "mobilizing mechanisms"; and religion and ethnicity can serve as symbolic expressions of inequality.

MULTIPLE MODERNITIES AND GLOBALIZATION

Gerard Delanty

Abstract

What is often called "multiple" modernities is best seen as referring to the different expressions of an increasingly emergent global modernity rather than simply to multiple societal forms. Modernity is not converging into a unitary, homogenous form; rather it denotes an isomorphic condition of common aspirations, learning mechanisms, visions of the world, modes of communication. As such modernity can arise anywhere in the world; it is not a specific tradition or societal form but a mode of processing, or translating, culture. Modernity is a particular way of transmitting culture that transforms that which it takes over; it is not a culture of its own and therefore can take root anywhere at any time. This is because every translation is a transformation of both the object and the subject. The essence of modernity is a capacity to transform culture in a continuous process of translation.

DIASPORA HISTORY CONSTRUCTION AND SLAVE CULTURE FORMATION ON SMALL U.S. PLANTATIONS

Wilma A. Dunaway

Abstract

This analysis of enslavement in an American South subregion provides an historical microcosm for understanding the complexities of provincial culture formation in the modern world-system. Simultaneously rooted in multiple points of local and world-systemic origin, peoplehood is an historical product of the capitalist world-system. Despite widespread notions to the contrary, low black population density and geographical isolation did not forestall slave community building on small plantations. Despite extreme repression, slaves dialectically preserved and altered hidden transcripts in order to recapture pasts that had been silenced by the capitalist system. Embracing the collective diasporic memory of many disparate communities, small slave populations shared the collective grievance and the counter-hegemonic culture of all who had been forced to participate in international and domestic labor migrations.

CULTURE AND ITS POLITICS IN THE GLOBAL SYSTEM

Jonathan Friedman

Abstract

This article deals with the relation between cultural process, the politics of culture and global systemic dynamics. The central argument is that cultural forms are generated out of socially constituted experience, what I refer to as the experiential substrate of culture, and that the latter is itself elaborated in specific conditions of social existence that can be linked to global processes. The history of the culture concept is discussed in such terms and the emergent salience of identity politics from the mid 1970s is understood to be part of a larger process of Western hegemonic decline. From the point of view of the larger system, the new cultural politics is an expression of real political and cultural fragmentation. This systemic decline is also the basis of real political economic globalization and the emergence of cosmopolitan elites that are the major bearers of the discourse of globalization. The latter is part of a process of class polarization that pits emergent cosmopolitan "hybrid" elites against downwardly mobile indigenizing locals.

NATIONAL IDENTITY AND GLOBALIZATION: POLICY PATHS AND THE PROCESS OF REIMAGINING COMMUNITY

Frank J. Lechner

Abstract

World culture legitimates the particularity of national identities yet globalization calls their viability into question. What are nations to do? This paper argues that identities undergo embattled redefinition by means of path-dependent renegotiation. The reproduction of national difference and the viability of national culture thus depend on "glocal" forms of identity work, fine-grained understanding of which is important to any analysis of culture in the world system. Proposing that processes of policy formation serve as useful markers of identity transformations, the paper illustrates how in policy arenas in the Netherlands national identity was enacted in meeting recently intensified global challenges with local paradigms while at the same time the content and viability of the national "project" were continually in question, leading to variation over time and by sector in the reimagining of national community.

SIMULATION THEORY ON CONCEPTUAL GROUNDS

Brie Gertler

Abstract

This paper outlines a conceptual argument for Simulation Theory. My principal goal is not to win converts to Simulation Theory, but rather to suggest that the current deadlock in the dispute between Simulation Theory and Theory Theory calls for a shift in focus, from empirical to conceptual considerations. I argue that mental concepts such as BELIEF and DESIRE are indexical, in that possessing them requires the capacity to make direct indexical reference to states which satisfy them (e.g., beliefs and desires). And only Simulation Theory can accommodate this indexicality.

UNCONVENTIONAL UTTERANCES? DAVIDSON'S REJECTION OF CONVENTIONS IN LANGUAGE USE

Mason Cash

Abstract

Since people can often successfully interpret utterances that flout or ignore conventions, Davidson concludes that shared conventions are neither necessary nor sufficient for linguistic interpretation. This conclusion is based on an overly narrow conception of what it is to know, and to share, a language. Rather than, as Davidson argues, simply interpreting the meaning the speaker intends their words to be interpreted as having (and their words' truth conditions), successful interpretation requires interpreting the illocutionary act the speaker intends to be interpreted as performing (and the act's felicity conditions). This change in focus highlights the need for many types of shared conventions, beyond the conventional meanings of words that Davidson considers and dismisses as unnecessary. When any one convention is ignored or flouted, interpretation is possible because the apparently unconventional utterance nonetheless conforms to a host of other shared conventions. Conventions are necessary for linguistic interpretation.

MORAL REALISM, SUPERVENIENCE, EXTERNALISM AND THE LIMITS OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR

Ron Wilburn

Abstract

In this paper, I articulate a form of moral realism that I take to be of special promise. I hope to show, not only that this realist position satisfies cognitivist, objectivist and success constraints, but also that this position is particularly commended by a number of recent apologetic strategies that have been more commonly deployed in the defense of other non-moral varieties of realism. To this extent, I aim to show that moral realism, far from being a desperate or quixotic position, is a perfectly natural extension of analytic philosophy's efforts to reform itself in spirit of post-positivistic recovery.

EINE *neue* THEORIE DER KOOPERATION

Gerhard Preyer

Abstract

In the contemporary research on cooperation we find mathematical, game-, moral-theoretical, experimental and ethological investigations. These approaches are individualistic in principle. Raimo Tuomela introduces a correction of the conceptualization of the standard game theory because this proposal lacks an account of collective commitments and acting for a reason, we need for explaining many cases. The essay sketches Tuomela's proposal with regard to his new turn of analyzing cooperation. A substantial problem in social theory emerges from this framework understanding the social. The question is whether there is something like a basic consensus in social systems or a normative notion of collective commitments. This leads us to a re-interpretation of the function of social norms, I will sketch.

DEVELOPMENT – PARADOX, PARALYSIS AND PRAXIS

Robert Kowalski

Abstract

Development is permeated by paradoxes. These are primarily the result of a confusion of logical types that characterises human communication. When these paradoxes are

turned into double binds they have a distinctly disabling impact upon the partners and the processes of development. The two main causes of double binds are an inability to withdraw from the no win choices of paradox, and an interdiction against discussing the existence of the paradox. A number of examples of double binds in development and their causes are discussed and a series of suggestions to improve the practices of development are made.