

From World-Systems to Globalization: Theories of Transnational Change and the Place of the United States

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As the title of this issue of *American Studies* suggests, globalization has become one of the most debated topics at the end of what Henry Luce termed the "American Century."¹ To many observers, the pace of globalization has accelerated over the last twenty years, bringing the entire world into a unified market, creating similar cultural practices, and a common set of institutional relationships.² From Los Angeles to Cairo, consumers can purchase the same Japanese-made electronic devices, which were assembled in Malaysia or Mexico. Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) acts like a global bank regulator. The United Nations has peacekeepers or mediators in some 20 countries around the globe. Aviation, telecommunications, finance, and the Internet bring societies together using uniform protocols. Some scholars have suggested that globalization's transformational effects are already so strong as to undermine the power of national governments.³ Others have suggested that the pervasive impact of globalization on traditional cultures and national sovereignty will inevitably provoke a backlash, a "clash of civilizations," a "jihad" against "McWorld." This backlash may endanger a nation's heritage, its distinctive culture and values, from what is now seen as a rapidly receding past.⁴

Naturally, the globalization debate has enormous implications for the study of the United States. Globalization has sometimes been equated with "Americanization," that is, the spread of American or American-style products, customs, and institutional models. Does this mean that we should re-write United States history as the rise of a society to global influence? Or should we re-write American

studies into the study of the society that represents, for good or ill, the blueprint for change in other societies?

Questions concerning the role of the United States in the process of globalization themselves suggest broader, more general questions about the nature and scope of historical change. Globalization, as it is usually understood, assumes two things: first, that societies are much more intimately connected today than ever before, and, second, that change has been initiated from one dominant center and has radiated outward in a uni-directional fashion. These questions call for careful scrutiny. In order to understand adequately globalization in its historical context, we should ask, how have societies been connected to each other in the past, before the recent explosion of global changes that Deane Neubauer has described in his article in this issue? Has economic change been the crucial force in connecting societies over time, bringing political and cultural influences in its wake? Or have the actions of governments been crucial in shaping economic change? Do cultural forces operate independently of economic and political factors? And, has large-scale historical change been uni-directional, with one center from which dominant changes emanate outward, or has a variety of changes, some even contradictory, been typical in history?

Immanuel Wallerstein has been one of the most prominent and controversial scholars to engage these broad questions during the last quarter century. In this article, I examine the basic elements of the globalization model that he has proposed for comprehending the historical roots and dynamics of what he has termed the "world-system." In the mid-1970s, Wallerstein, a political scientist, proposed a macroscopic model of interpreting large-scale international changes as the consequence of the development of this global system.⁵ Wallerstein argued that societies, first in Europe and then throughout the globe, have for centuries been linked by a set of unequal economic and political relationships. This set of relationships forms the "world-system." Rather than studying individual countries or processes, he asserts, we should investigate the world-system as a whole and the dynamics of the relationships that comprise that system.

Given Wallerstein's macroscopic perspective and his emphasis on focusing on the *systemic* nature of modern world history, it is no coincidence that many scholars writing on globalization have been influenced by Wallerstein's emphasis on long-run historical change.⁶ On the other hand, many of the recent writers on globalization neglect Wallerstein's central insights on conflict and discontinuity as features of the modern world-system.⁷ At the same time, Wallerstein, even as he has influenced social scientific thinking on globalization, profoundly disagrees with the argument that contemporary globalization represents a major break with the past. Wallerstein's focus on the world-system, a system that has had different centers at different times, is a useful corrective to the tendency to equate globalization with Americanization. Similarly, Wallerstein's emphasis on the intricate connections among economic, political, and cultural forces within the world-system suggest a complex model that transcends simple explanations that reduce globalization primarily to economic or cultural factors.

This is especially pertinent, I contend, because the globalization debate has recently threatened to become a fractured dialogue, with those emphasizing economic change and those concerned with culture going off in different directions.⁸ For one group of writers, globalization means economic integration, the expansion of Western-style or capitalistic markets into more areas of the world and an increase in the flow of goods and investments. Most economists, business leaders, and politicians, at least in the industrialized world, welcome these changes:

All around the globe, socialists are embracing capitalism, governments are selling off companies they had previously nationalized, and countries are seeking to entice back multinational corporations that they had expelled.⁹

Others, concerned about social welfare and national sovereignty, fear that globalization may lower the level of social welfare and employment in industrial countries, while it simply exploits the working poor elsewhere. Globalization also threatens the ability of citizens or national governments to control their own destiny. The 1999 Seattle protests against the WTO and the attacks on McDonald's in France are dramatic manifestations of such sentiment.¹⁰

At the same time, observers interested in cultural change interpret globalization differently. Focusing on popular culture—especially music and television—they see a movement that ostensibly breaks down nationalism, erodes ethnic stereotypes, and unites diverse peoples around common ideals. “Forget modernity,” Martin Albrow recently wrote, “Escape the stifling hold of the modern on our imagination. We live in our own time and the Global Age opens worlds up to us in unprecedented ways.”¹¹ Some of the confusion between economic and cultural or political globalization, and between globalization's positive and negative effects, can be examined through the strengths and weaknesses of Wallerstein's systems approach. Understanding why his approach was such a break in thinking about world history is a crucial first step.

The History of World History

Trying to write a history of the bewildering variety of world societies is, of course, not new. The liberal tradition has long argued that writing world history to account for the diversity of cultures from China, the Islamic world, and Europe is one of the defining characteristics of western society.¹² Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Hegel in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries first grasped the extent of global diversity and developed a new kind of history, one that accounted for diversity within a common narrative. Voltaire and Hegel argued that societies could be classified according to the extent that they approximated a universal (usually European) standard of rationality; Montesquieu suggested that societies diverged because of climate, geography, or religion. The key tension within

European views of world history is whether the world is converging into a single history and, if so, whether it is essentially a western one. The Marxist tradition is part of this same tension. Marx assumed that the history of societies around the globe would all eventually be determined by similar forces of class struggle.¹³

After World War II, social theorists sought a new worldview and prefigured globalization theory. Modernization theory and its offshoots, political development and the stages of economic growth, promoted by American social scientists in the 1950s and 1960s, represented a classic example of the argument for uniformity of historical change. In general, these theories broke with earlier attempts by European philosophers to embrace diversity. Instead, American social scientists came down clearly on the side of westernization as a universal process. As C.E. Black wrote: "Modernity takes the form of a set of characteristics believed to be generally applicable to all societies."¹⁴ All societies, in all time periods, would pass from a pre-industrial, pre-democratic stage towards a future that looked remarkably like the post-World War II United States.¹⁵ Yet in recognizing the enormous changes wrought by modernization, theorists suggested societies changed independently, unaffected by each other. Societies varied only in the degree and rate of their adaptation to the external forces of modernization impinging upon them.¹⁶

William McNeill's diffusionist model and Barrington Moore's peasant-based Marxist theory represent two exceptions to the prevailing trends in the 1960s. In McNeill's *The Rise of the West*, societies differ but they exchange innovations and ideas in an intricate web of conquests, borrowings, and modifications.¹⁷ In general, in the 1950s and 1960s, Marxism was on the defensive as an influential social science theory, but Moore made a radical change that preserved some of its explanatory power. Moore argued that what determined whether societies would become democratic was their experience in moving from an agricultural to an industrialized stage. Germany, for example, failed to alter relations between aristocrats and peasants, and, hence, retained an aristocracy that paved the way for fascism. By contrast, revolutions and civil wars in the United States, England, and France destroyed the power of aristocratic landholders and opened the way for democracy. Moore thus provided a powerful critique of modernization theory: modernization, in a political sense, was not simply a product of economic and cultural change moving hand in hand; struggles for power determined what kind of "modern" society emerged.¹⁸ Nonetheless, both McNeill and Moore found it difficult to deal simultaneously with power relations among societies and how they influence each other. McNeill did not differentiate power among societies. For Moore, the key was the power relations within them, not the relations they have to each other.

Wallerstein's World-System of Power

By contrast, Wallerstein argued that, while similar processes of change were occurring across the globe and throughout modern history, the structure of

capitalism and the system of states meant that radical differences would always remain among societies. At the same time, he synthesized economic and political factors more effectively than almost any theorist of world history or globalization had done. While economists and sociologists often portray the contemporary growth of markets as autonomous, Wallerstein argued that the more powerful states determine market growth. In other words, *states*, not market forces alone, have always guided capitalism. Similarly, strong states dictate how cultural globalization occurs.

Wallerstein, who began as a scholar of post-independence Africa, contended that modernization, political development, and economic growth theories minimized the inequalities that existed between richer and poorer societies. By their economic dominance over poorer societies, capitalist societies determined whether or not less-developed societies would ever develop. Certain countries could be trapped in poverty and kept as dependencies of capitalist societies. Thus, one could not simply treat all countries or societies as comparable units. For Wallerstein, time and place were critical. Thus, economic development and power relations were parts of a changing world system.

For Wallerstein, since the 1500s, one economy—the world-system of capitalism—dominated. Individual national economies were simply part of that system. Thus, a society's place in the capitalist world-system, within the international division of labor encompassing more capitalist industrial countries and less-developed agricultural ones, was critical. A nation's location within the world-system, rather than its internal class or power structures, determined its level of economic development and political structure—i.e., authoritarian or democratic. As Wallerstein wrote recently about his first theoretical statements:

World-systems analysis insisted on seeing all parts of the world-system as parts of a “world,” the parts being impossible to understand or analyze separately. The characteristics of any given state at T2 were said to be not the result of some “primordial” characteristic at T1, but rather the outcome of processes of the system, the world-system.¹⁹

In this model, rich, powerful “core” societies tend to develop democratic political traditions and structures. They live in part off the extracted surplus of poorer societies on the “periphery” of the world-system. “Weak” states, whose central governments cannot control powerful social groups, comprise the periphery.²⁰ Without control over their own societies, weak states on the periphery are manipulated by strong states at the core of the world-system. The unique feature of the capitalist world-system in Europe was that it was never a world-empire, as had existed in ancient Rome, China, and the Islamic world, but was rather a collection of states united in a world economy: “The secret of capitalism was in the establishment of the division of labor within the framework of a world-

economy that was *not* an empire."²¹ This world-system, not individual states, should be the appropriate unit of analysis.

Even though the economy was the basis of the world-system, states remained crucial to Wallerstein's argument. The capitalist world-system flourished and spread, he contends, because states protected and promoted capitalism and suppressed anti-capitalist or "antisystemic" movements. Core states made capital accumulation possible, while periphery states facilitated the extraction of raw materials in alliance with the core and against the interests of their own populations.

This world-system began, for Wallerstein, in the sixteenth century. The western Europe core extracted surplus from southern and eastern Europe, then the European and North American core extracted profits from the rest of the world. According to Wallerstein, if globalization were to represent the spread of the world-system, then recent worldwide economic growth would not be new:

The years 1945-90 cannot be appropriately appreciated without understanding that they are merely the latest period in the long history of the modern world-system, a historical social system which originated in the sixteenth century.²²

Thus, industrialization and modernization were powerful—indeed, defining—forces of modern history for Wallerstein, but they were not uni-directional. Poorer, periphery states might never develop industrial capitalist economies so long as they remained dependent economies. International economic ties involved not simply the spread of industrialization or capitalism outward; instead, one region or group could be parasites. Class conflicts within nations, then, were less important than the power of one region over another. Yet Wallerstein recognized that societies or countries were not monolithic. Instead, capitalist classes in the core states established decisive alliances with ruling classes in the periphery. As two observers of Wallerstein put it, in his argument, "classes are viewed as transnational actors."²³

One of the ingenious, though also frustrating, aspects of Wallerstein's model was his use of the term "semiperiphery" to describe states such as Prussia and Russia that fall between the core and periphery, but partake of elements of both. As a number of critics have pointed out, the semi-periphery category allows Wallerstein to retain his model, but to explain a huge number of variant cases—undeveloped economies in strong states, for example—and to allow for change.²⁴ Competition and economic and political instability in the semi-periphery allow for constant tension and explain new emerging core states such as nineteenth-century Germany and twentieth-century Japan.

For scholars of American and Latin American studies, it is interesting that Wallerstein drew his ideas from the work of the social scientist Andre Gunder Frank, who argued that underdevelopment in Latin America persisted because of

unequal relations with capitalist countries such as the United States.²⁵ But one can trace the origin of Wallerstein's argument even farther back to the work of Eric Williams, who argued that slavery had been one of the foundations of the industrial revolution because it provided British textile factories with cheaply produced cotton fiber.²⁶ Behind both Frank and Williams, of course, lies Lenin, who argued in his *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* that western European countries staved off proletarian revolt before 1914 by exploiting Africa, Asia, and Latin America.²⁷

Nonetheless, Wallerstein also represented a genuine breakthrough by combining the central idea of economic exploitation with an historical analysis of politics. He did this by drawing on the historical work of the French historian Fernand Braudel and the Polish historian Marian Malowist.²⁸ More generally, his work was instrumental in introducing American audiences to the Annales school.²⁹ From Braudel and other Annales scholars, Wallerstein drew evidence that Europe had developed capitalist practices at least as far back as the fifteenth century. In Malowist's research, Wallerstein found the example of raw materials drawn from an underdeveloped economy with a weak state. Grain from early modern Poland was shipped to more developed economies—England and the Netherlands—that Malowist argued, exploited Poland. For Wallerstein, this was the original case of externally-driven underdevelopment. The Latin America described by Andre Gunder Frank or the Africa of the 1960s that Wallerstein had himself originally studied paralleled Poland and eastern Europe of the sixteenth-century. Thus, one of the critical features of the world-system for Wallerstein was the inherent conflicts it contained. The western Europe core possessed strong states able to extract resources from their own societies, while eastern Europe, with its weak states, could not control their own social groups nor resist exploitation by the core states.

Wallerstein has had an enormous influence among historians and social scientists alike. Along with the work of the British Marxist Perry Anderson and American sociologist Charles Tilly, Wallerstein helped spark a renaissance of "historical sociology" and "social science history."³⁰ His work influenced, for instance, Eric Wolf, Janet Abu-Loghud, Michael Hechter, Michael Mann, and Alfred Crosby.³¹ More generally, Wallerstein's influence helped revive world history, reflected in the appearance in 1990 of the *Journal of World History*, which has focused on a more dynamic examination of how societies in diverse parts of the world have interacted.³²

In sociology, world-systems theory has become a flourishing sub-discipline, with close ties to political science and history.³³ Wallerstein set up his own center, appropriately named the Braudel Center, at the State University of New York at Binghamton, and *Review*, both devoted to world-systems research.³⁴ In 1994, a *Journal of World-Systems Research* began publication, most recently supported by centers of global studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz and Johns Hopkins University.³⁵ Although having been deeply influenced by Braudel,

Wallerstein has had a reciprocal influence on Braudel. In the second edition of his third volume, *The Perspective of the World*, of his last major work, *Civilization and Capitalism*, published in 1979, Braudel reorganized his earlier work into the perspective of an emerging world economy.

Wallerstein's Critics

Since publication of *The Modern World-System I*, his first major world-system publication, in 1974, Wallerstein's work has elicited criticism as well.³⁶ Critics argue that he emphasizes too strongly the role of international trade in explaining the deep-seated injustices against less-developed societies. The flow of grain from the Baltic in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for example, was only a small fraction of the grain produced in eastern Europe; Malowist may have overestimated its importance in re-feudalizing the region. Similarly, the relationship between exporting raw materials, on the one hand, and non-democratic governments and economic underdevelopment, on the other, is weak. After eastern Europe declined as a grain-exporting region in the eighteenth century, England, soon to be the industrial leader of the world and home of parliamentary democracy, was an exporter of grain for almost half a century.³⁷ Nor is it clear that economic expansion of the core depended on exploitation of periphery economies. When the industrial revolution began, profits generated by all of Britain's seagoing trade accounted for only an estimated one-sixth of investment in the country. Britain itself, in other words, generated much of its own investment for industrialization.³⁸

Poorer countries often do not gain as much from exporting raw materials to richer countries as the value of the materials would dictate that they should. The terms of trade generally disadvantage poorer countries exporting raw materials. They do not control marketing and transportation systems, and more industrialized countries take the larger portion of profits. However, this does not mean that exporting raw materials has locked countries into underdevelopment nor is it a major reason why some countries are rich. Until Europe developed dependence on imported oil after 1945, it drew relatively few raw materials from overseas.³⁹ Wood, coal, iron ore, and most minerals came from Europe itself. Oils, natural dyes, and rubber from outside Europe made up only a small portion of its needs. The one exception was cotton imported from the United States.

Although Wallerstein's model has strengths that some recent globalization arguments lack, I agree with some of his critics that it has theoretical weaknesses. Wallerstein too often makes the pressure of the international market the primary shaping force on politics, rather than internal struggles of classes or other groups. Thus, Marxists and liberal theorists alike have criticized Wallerstein for neglecting power differentials *within* societies. Why Germany in the 1800s opened successfully to international markets and Argentina did not cannot be solely laid at the feet of international bankers or merchants. Power struggles within states or societies make a difference, often the decisive one.⁴⁰

Wallerstein also tends to collapse cultural forces into political ones and to reduce the role of states to fostering capitalism. Wallerstein usually treats cultural forces as manifested in political systems. Some of his critics argue, however, that the independent force of cultural habits that encourage entrepreneurialism or resist external influences cannot be reduced to different characteristics of political systems. In addition, as Theda Skocpol and David Held have argued, competition among states in war and diplomacy powerfully shapes the relations of states within the capitalist world-system.⁴¹ Similarly, such a significant international phenomenon as the movement of labor has never fit neatly within the capitalist world-system. Large-scale migration and expanding capitalism closely coincided in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, however, protectionism has kept states from ever allowing migration to be as free as it was before, despite its benefits to capitalism.⁴²

Economists—even those writing on world economic history—have generally not embraced Wallerstein's model.⁴³ Economists question Wallerstein's argument that economic integration—that is, increased trade and investment among countries—inevitably relegates poor, agricultural nations on the periphery of the world-system to poverty. They argue that increasing economic integration, like economic growth, generally helps poor and rich nations alike, even though it has a mixed record on closing the gap between them.⁴⁴

World-Systems and the Study of Globalization

Despite these flaws in the economics of Wallerstein's approach, I contend that his world-systems model still has much to offer in the current debate on globalization. Much of the recent writing on globalization by social scientists, especially sociologists such as Ulrich Beck, Roland Robertson, Tony Spybey, and John Tomlinson, has turned globalization into a cultural phenomenon that gives lower priority to economic and institutional change.⁴⁵ Enthusiasts of cultural globalization such as Malcolm Waters even explicitly reject the economic base of globalization. Instead, from this perspective, culture drives globalization, and economic connections follow from cultural ones.⁴⁶ For example, John Tomlinson argues that "Cultural practices lie at the heart of globalization. . . . [T]he huge transformative processes of our time that globalization describes cannot be properly understood until they are grasped through the conceptual vocabulary of culture."⁴⁷

In reaction, Wallerstein himself rejects use of the term "globalization" because he believes it distorts his central argument that the capitalist system is the crucial ingredient for transnational relations. He does accept the term "globalism" to refer to cultural trends that parallel economic dominance, but he rejects the argument that globalization somehow diminishes the importance of state power. The recent surge of international economic integration—growing free trade and international investment—is a continuation, he believes, of the historic capitalist world-system in which, he argues, states have always been the handmaiden of

capitalism:

Globalism was *not* “globalization.” As used by most persons in the last ten years, “globalization” refers to some assertedly new, chronologically recent, process in which states are said to be *no longer* primary units of decision-making, but are now, only now, finding themselves located in a structure in which something called the “world market,” a somewhat mystical and surely reified entity, dictates the rule.⁴⁸

Wallerstein has also been uncomfortable with the notion that globalization is inevitable. He believes that the political dominance of core states is the linchpin for the world-system, and hence the instability of the 1970s and 1980s might herald the unraveling of the world-system. Never an orthodox Marxist, Wallerstein in the 1980s sounded very much like many radicals in arguing that a worldwide depression might be healthy in the long-run because it would undermine the world-system and allow some new system to emerge.⁴⁹ In arguing that the recessions and protests of the 1970s and 1980s were signs of long-term decline, Wallerstein was part of the long tradition of western radicalism that has viewed decline as preparation for reform.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, his assertion that the political role of the core states is crucial to world-system is an insight upon which more scholars writing on globalization need to build.

United States History and Globalization

In the twenty-five years since Wallerstein’s *Modern World-System* first appeared, numerous scholars have published influential works that together suggest ways in which a new global history can be written. Many of them, like Wallerstein, use time and place as crucial factors that determine how societies have interacted.⁵¹ In many of these, the United States plays an enormous role both in determining the world of the present and in being shaped by the forces of the international market and European politics and culture. Migration to the United States from Europe, for example, was not a simple movement of people from one area of the world to another. Migrants had a variety of locations from which to choose; only a little more than half of the 55 million Europeans who emigrated between 1815 and 1924 settled permanently in the United States. By the twentieth century, many European migrants had no intention of settling, but were workers moving among labor markets. With the transfer of capital investment, moreover, migration contributed to raising wage levels in Europe and closing the gap between the standards of living in North America and in western Europe.⁵² Underlying the economic growth of the United States was the American government’s willingness to follow European core nations, particularly Britain and France, in keeping its security markets open to foreign investment and going on the gold standard in the Bland-Allison Act of 1878.⁵³

In the area of international relations, too, U.S. isolationism can obscure its intricate connections within the western world. Although the United States lacked a land army and avoided direct involvement in European affairs in the late-nineteenth century, it was still a major influence in international relations. It helped keep European powers out of China and Latin America, negotiated an end to the Russo-Japanese War, and, most important, created an informal alliance with Great Britain that freed it to face Imperial Germany.⁵⁴

Another way in which the United States can be seen as a part of a developing world-system in the modern era is in the rise of global institutions. During the nineteenth century, international agreements on cables, shipping, maritime transportation, passports, postal payments, health regulation, and financial transfers established networks that are the foundation for globalization today. Contemporary standards for aviation, telecommunications, and satellite connections all were built on the foundation of agreements laid at nineteenth-century international congresses in Paris, Brussels, and Bern.⁵⁵

The United States adhered to almost all international standards created in the nineteenth century, although it rarely led in formulating them. These agreements facilitated the tidal wave of immigration, investment, and trade that transformed the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century United States. Because the United States moved from being a follower to a leader within this web of institutions in the twentieth century, its role is crucial for understanding the institutions of the modern world-system. Wallerstein saw the world-system as dominated by exploitative core states; we still need a history of these global institutions that answers whether they have been essentially cooperative. Do they represent collective efforts of equal states, or hegemonic relationships, with the most powerful states calling the shots?

Those who argue that globalization inevitably weakens the role of states should examine Wallerstein's argument that states and capitalism have always been partners and that the world-system has developed in stages over time. As Ronald Axtmann has argued, while economic globalization is a new phase in the way that states have used economic growth, it is not a radical break with the past. Cooperation among governments to promote trade, free markets, and select investments in exports are all historic mechanisms.⁵⁶

Contemporary analysts of globalization, both economists and cultural studies scholars, neglect this story at their peril because the pre-1914 era suggests that globalization is not inevitable and that conflict is as likely as cooperation. At the beginning of the twentieth century, observers saw a wave of globalization perhaps more powerful than today because it radically broke with the immediate past. In 1910, the French socialist Gustave Herve examined the explosion of both global capitalism and international institutions and asked, "At the end of this evolution whose outline is already clear, who will see not a United States of Europe and of America, on its way to the United States of the World?"⁵⁷

Yet this wave of globalization was largely destroyed. Migration contracted sharply during the First World War and has never been as free since then. One-

third of the international organizations created in the nineteenth century disbanded or disappeared as a result of the Great War. The imprint of the protectionism and nationalism created by the First World War and the subsequent Great Depression has only recently begun to ebb.⁵⁸ Globalization, this history suggests, has so far not been a uniform, inevitable process. As Wallerstein argues, capitalism and the states promoting it are engaged in a power struggle against less-capitalist economies and states. Even if one does not accept the clear division that Wallerstein makes between core and periphery, his argument that capitalism has grown in an often destructive process through conflict is insightful.

Similarly, Wallerstein's model allows for shifting locations of states in the world-system. He has noted the movement of capitalist leadership from Italy to Spain to the Netherlands to Britain and to the United States. Similarly, a careful study of global influences indicates that the outward spread of industrial capitalism from northwest Europe has spawned diverse waves of globalization. Industrialization and finance spread British influence, while German influence was especially important in eastern Europe and Russia.⁵⁹ French influence was particularly pronounced in Latin America. Thus, in many parts of the globe, Americanization followed British influence, and, more generally, Europeanization.⁶⁰ Today, as Japan's investments, trade, and cultural exports expand across East and Southeast Asia, Japanese culture is often the medium through which people in these regions experience "globalization."⁶¹

It is problematic, furthermore, whether even economic institutions in the most powerful states—the United States, Germany, and Japan—are converging in form. Each preserves unique characteristics and has evolved in ways unanticipated by the uniform logic of capitalism. The U.S. anti-trust action against Microsoft would be unthinkable in Japan and Germany. Unlike the United States and Japan, Germany is deeply integrated into a transnational institution, the European Union. On the other hand, Japanese government ministries direct capital flows and economic planning in ways unlike anything in the United States or Germany. Cultural forces and unique political history remain strong.⁶²

One other virtue of Wallerstein's work is that he made resistance to the world-system an integral part of its history. Some of the most intriguing work that he and his collaborators have done is on "antisystemic" movements, simultaneous or at least comparable movements of protests, strikes, and reactions against what they term, using Gramsci, as capitalist states' "hegemony."⁶³ Even they, however, usually focus on left-wing protests against capitalism and fail to deal with the equally common conservative reaction against globalization. In a language drawn from traditional American populism, one Christian fundamentalist in the United States recently wrote:

Under the guise of free trade, the one-world parasitic apparatus has now apparently been contrived and has begun siphoning strength and resolve from this nation and others. The global

elitists now channel America's wealth, along with funds from other geopolitical and economic spheres, into Third-World countries at a rate greater than ever before. They constantly strive to solidify their one-world power base through material goods giveaways. They continue to create and consolidate an ever-increasing constituency dependent on the New World Order hierarchy for absolutely everything as those poorest of earth's people move through their miserable lives from cradle to grave.⁶⁴

Furthermore, a true global history of Americanization can only be complete with a history of anti-Americanism, a history still being written. Anti-Americanism is as much a product of American global influence as the vast array of consumer products and services that often prompts it. The opponents of transnational cultural influences paint a very different portrait of American influence than do the celebrants of the blurring of borders and the global shopping mall. In one extreme but not atypical example, Alfred Mechtersheimer, a former German military officer turned Green Party politician, combined both traditional conservative and left-wing critiques of the United States when he wrote soon after the Gulf War that

The continuity of U.S. American bloody expansion extends from the extermination of the Native American Indians to the perpetual intervention in Latin America, the war crimes in Dresden and Hiroshima, to Vietnam, all the way to the massacre of Mutla Ridge in February 1991, south of the Iraqi city of Basra.⁶⁵

As we write the history of globalization and its discontents, we are moving into an era where, thanks in large part to the pioneering work of scholars such as Wallerstein, we will not be able to carry out the study of American history or of contemporary United States society without investigating the world-system in which the United States has been both an actor and a subject. It is also true that increasingly we cannot study world history or comprehend contemporary globalization without examining the critical role of the United States.

Notes

1. The author would like to thank Gail Bossenga and the editors for their excellent comments on this article.

2. Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (Newbury Park, 1992); Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, 1996); Tony Spiby, *Globalization and World Society* (Cambridge, 1996); William Greider, *One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism* (New York, 1997); Malcolm Waters, *Globalization* (London, 1995); Ulrich Beck, *What is Globalization?* (Cambridge, 2000); John Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture* (Chicago, 1999); James Mittelman, ed. *Globalization: Critical Reflections* (London, 1996).

3. Saskia Sassen, *Losing Control? Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization* (New York, 1996); Susan Strange, *The Retreat of the State: The Diffusion of Power in the World Economy* (Cambridge, 1996).

4. Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld* (New York, 1995); Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, 1996); Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York, 1999).

5. Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York, 1974) [*The Modern World-System I*]; *The Modern World-System II: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600-1750* (New York, 1980); *The Politics of the World-Economy: The States, the Movements, and Civilizations* (Cambridge, 1984); "World-Systems Analysis," *Social Theory Today*, Anthony Giddens and J.H. Turner, eds. (1987); *The Modern World-System III: The Second Great Era of Great Expansion of the Capitalist World-Economy, 1730-1840s* (New York, 1989).

6. David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance* (Stanford, 1995), 26-7; Ronald Axtmann, *Liberal Democracy Into the Twenty-first Century: Globalization, Integration, and the Nation-State* (Manchester, 1996).

7. Waters, *Globalization*, 8-12; Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture*.

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