

Chapter 12

Uneven and Combined Development in the Sociocultural Evolution of World Systems

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The comparative world systems perspective advances the idea of semi-peripheral development as a set of processes that have been important in sociocultural evolution since the first emergence of interpolity interaction networks (world systems).¹ Whole world systems are conceived as systemic interaction networks based on intensive exchange, cooperation and conflict. Very small world systems are compared with larger continental and global ones. The notion of core/periphery relations is a fundamental concept in this theoretical approach. Uneven development and co-evolution are conspicuous features of the emergence of complexity and hierarchy within and between human polities. Polities that were in the middle of core/periphery structures were more likely to be the locus of the implementation of new technologies and new forms of organization that facilitated conquest and empire formation and that expanded and intensified exchange networks. Sociocultural evolution then can only be explained if polities are seen to have been in important interaction with each other since the Palaeolithic Age (Rosenberg 2010). This idea was inspired by Leon Trotsky's concept of 'uneven and combined development' (Trotsky 1932).

Semi-peripheral marcher states and semi-peripheral capitalist city-states have been important agents of sociocultural transformation in world history since the Bronze Age. Studies of the growth of cities and of the territorial sizes of polities confirm the importance of semi-peripheral development as a cause of scale changes in human sociocultural evolution. And the contemporary global system continues to show signs of this phenomenon. In this chapter we advance the idea that polities that have held intermediate positions in core/periphery structures (the semi-periphery) have often been the locus of the implementation of new technologies and forms of organization that have facilitated conquest, empire formation and the expansion and intensification of exchange networks.

Core, periphery and semi-periphery are relational concepts that depend on the nature of interpolity interactions and the nature of the polities that are interacting. The semi-periphery is in between the core and the periphery, but the specific meaning of that 'in between-ness' depends on the structure of the larger system and the nature of the polities that are its parts. Christopher Chase-Dunn and Thomas Hall (1997) made an important distinction between core/periphery differentiation and core/periphery hierarchy. Core/periphery differentiation exists when polities with different levels of population density are systemically interacting with one another (making war, alliances or trade). Core/periphery hierarchy exists when some polities dominate and/or exploit other polities. Chase-Dunn and Hall do not assume that all world systems (networks of systemic interpolity interaction) are organised as core/periphery structures. Rather they see core/periphery hierarchies as having emerged and evolved as capabilities for domination and exploitation of distant peoples have been developed. The inclusion of prehistorical small-scale polities in the scope of comparison allows for the study of the emergence and development of interpolity differentiation and hierarchy. The distinction between differentiation and hierarchy is important because it allows for the analysis of known cases in which less population dense polities (e.g. the Mongols) have exploited higher density ones (e.g. China), and for the study of possible cases of semi-peripheral development in situations in which core/periphery differentiation, but not core/periphery hierarchy were present (see below). The nature of the semi-periphery thus depends on the nature of the interpolity system. In practice we can use population density differences (settlement sizes) and differences in modes of production (foraging, farming, pastoralism, etc.) to identify polities that are likely to have been semi-peripheral to other polities.

Semi-peripheral development has taken different forms. A kind of semi-peripheral development occurred in prehistoric California in two small world systems composed of sedentary hunter-gatherer polities. And there were semi-peripheral marcher chiefdoms in the Pacific that conquered other polities and formed island-wide paramount chiefdoms (Kirsch 1994). Semi-peripheral and peripheral marcher states were the most frequent agents of the formation of large empires in world history (Inoue *et al.* 2016). Semi-peripheral capitalist city-states encouraged the production of surpluses for exchange and commercializing since the Bronze Age. Europe was a semi-peripheral promontory of Afroeurasia that rose to global hegemony because the weakness of its tributary empires allowed the emergence of capitalist states (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997, 90–3). All the modern hegemonies (Netherlands, United Kingdom and the United States) were formerly semi-peripheral states before their rise to hegemony (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997; Anievas and Nisancioglu 2013). And the contemporary global system continues to demonstrate signs of semi-peripheral development both in terms of upward mobility

and transformation. The concept of uneven and combined development in the writings of Leon Trotsky has played a significant role in the formation of the idea of semi-peripheral development.

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In his studies of the 1905 Russian revolution (*Results and Prospects* and *Our Revolution* which he wrote in 1906 and 1907, respectively), Leon Trotsky contended that Russia could not reproduce the kind of capitalism that had emerged in Western Europe. Rather Russian development would need to be constructed in the context of the already existing Europe-centred world economy. Trotsky explained this by proposing his twin laws of uneven and combined development: ‘Unevenness, the most general law of the historic process, reveals itself most sharply and complexly in the destiny of backward countries. ... From the universal law of unevenness thus derives ... the law of combined development—by which we mean a drawing together of the different stages of the journey, a combining of separate steps, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms’ (Trotsky 1932, 5–6). For Trotsky, development was uneven because history had already established that different countries grew economically at different rates and development was combined because backward countries, like Russia, would simply import and implement and execute the most advanced aspects of technology and organization from Western Europe. However, this was not done ‘slavishly’ as ‘a backward country does not take things in the same order’ (Trotsky 1932, 4). Countries could move decades ahead of the developmental process by simply taking advantage of the knowledge and experience of the more advanced and developed countries, the result being an interlacing of backward and advanced processes of development—combined development.

Trotsky’s twin laws have been a source of inspiration for the formulation of new ideas and concepts across disciplines such as the economic historian, Alexander Gerschenkron’s (1962) idea of the advantages of backwardness as a boon for rapid industrialization, cultural anthropologist, Elman Service’s (1971) concept of adaptivity as a spur to adaptive evolutionary change and historian Carroll Quigley’s (1979) notion of a semi-periphery that mixes cultures to gestate new combinations that lead to competitive success. More recently, world historian and ethnographer Philippe Beaujard (2005) has contended that core, peripheral and semi-peripheral polities co-evolve with one another despite interpolity exploitation and domination. Trotsky’s twin laws have also been developed into a transhistorical and non-Eurocentric theory of international relations (Matin 2013a, 2013b) and an explanation of the emergence of hegemons (Anievas and Nisancioglu 2013). For Justin Rosenberg (2010), archaeological evidence shows that transitions to agricultural societies were uneven in time and space depending upon environmental differences. And so uneven and combined development preceded the international one but also was important in the emergence of geopolitics. The case for uneven and

combined development informing a theory of international relations based on historical sociology is advanced by Rosenberg (2010) and by Kamran Matin (2007). For instance, Matin (2007, 432) contends that ‘the high mobility, predatory and war-attuned nature of nomadism were of the utmost importance in shaping the outcome and forms of the interrelation between the nomads and sedentary societies’. He applies this idea to pre-modern Iran. According to Matin, the use of a nomadic institution called the *uymaq* (a political-administrative unit consolidated in Iran under Tamerlane), produced the underdevelopment of private property. This was in part because of pre-modern Iran’s relations with nomadic peoples and the resulting form taken by the Persian sultanates. All these scholars inform the central idea of this chapter, which is that much of socio-historical systemic transformation occurred in, and was fuelled by, peoples and polities who were in semi-peripheral, and sometimes peripheral, locations within the world systems in which they lived.

The semi-periphery lies between the core and the periphery. Given its position in the core/periphery hierarchy, the semi-periphery includes regions that mix both core and peripheral forms of organization. Semi-peripheries may also be spatially located between two or more competing core regions. And they may be regions where mediating activities link core and peripheral polities. They may also include regions in which institutional features are intermediate in form between those found in the core and periphery (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997, chapter 5). So many semi-peripheral polities are likely to be engaging in some form of combined development. The intermediate position between ‘core’ and ‘periphery’ explains why semi-peripheral polities are most capable of reaping what Trotsky termed the ‘privileges of backwardness’. This implies that the roots of those processes of developmental ‘catch up and overtake’ that Trotsky associated with combined forms of development stem mainly from the structural specificities of each world system.

But it is important to note that engaging in transformational activities in the semi-periphery is not a guarantee of advancing into another phase or stage of development or of upward mobility into the core. Conceptualizing the semi-periphery as being a stage in development ignores the relational and hierarchical aspects of interpolity relations in a larger world system. The possibility of moving up into the core or down into the periphery is dependent, not just on the activities being engaged in, but also on the relations that are operating in the world system of which the semi-peripheral polity is a part (Babones 2005).

World systems have taken rather different forms depending on the predominant modes of accumulation (kin-based, state-based, capitalist). Furthermore, upward mobility into the core and transformational activity are not necessarily the same. It is possible for a semi-peripheral polity to change the logic of social action within a world system (as semi-peripheral capitalist city-states did for thousands of years) without moving into the core.

Before proceeding with our argument that the semi-periphery should be seen as a wellspring of sociocultural evolution, we should first define, and therefore reimagine, the spatial boundaries of world systems. Immanuel Wallerstein conceived of the semi-periphery as an essential and permanent element of the modern world system (Wallerstein 1974, 1976). He sees the world system as trimodal, with multicultural economies and a structurally unequal division of labour in the production of necessary goods for everyday life. An anthropological framework of comparison that considers both the prehistory and the history of world systems is possible by defining whole systems as interpolity interaction networks in which the interactions (trade, warfare, communications, etc.) are important for the reproduction of the internal structures of the composite units and cause changes that occur in these local structures (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997). Examinations of small-scale world systems show that Wallerstein's notion of 'reciprocal minisystems' in which polities interact within a single homogenous cultural context (Wallerstein 1984) are actually rather rare. Most small-scale systems are multicultural and so spatially bounding them must focus on interactions such as alliance formation, warfare and trade that often occur between polities that have different languages and cultures.

Human polities have evolved from bands to tribes to chiefdoms to states, to empires and then to the modern interstate system of republics and hegemonic leadership. In *Rise and Demise*, Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997) contended that there have been three predominant modes of accumulation since the Stone Age: kin-based, tributary and capitalist (Wolf 1982). The qualitative transformations involved in the emergence of state-based and then capitalist logics of integration have often involved initiatives taken by actors from semi-peripheral locations. Some types of semi-peripheral development lead to upward mobility of the polities that implement innovations, while others do not do that but they do contribute to transforming the institutional structure of the whole system.

Hub theory scholars contend the innovations are most likely to occur in the core where information crossroads promote the recombination of ideas (e.g. Hawley 1950; McNeill and McNeil 2013; Christian 2004). Others claim that the semi-periphery, or even the periphery (Lattimore 1980), are important loci of new organizational, ideological and technological developments. Our position is that the most important thing for uneven and combined development is not where innovations occur but in what places they are implemented. Semi-peripheral polities have a greater incentive and less disincentive to devote resources to new forms of organization and technology than do most core polities. This is what Trotsky referred to as the 'penalties of priority' whereby earlier developed and dominant states suffer from a certain conservatism in adopting new technological and organizational innovations).

COMBINED DEVELOPMENT IN PREHISTORIC CALIFORNIA

The sedentary foragers of indigenous late prehistoric California provide two interesting examples of semi-peripheral development in kin-based world systems. Indigenous California has been the focus of intensive ethnographic studies mapping cultural, linguistic and material characteristics of native Californians, (Kroeber 1976; Voegelin 1942) and of systematic studies by archaeologists (Jones and Klar 2007). In *The Wintu and Their Neighbors*, Chase-Dunn and Mann (1998) presented a study of late prehistoric Northern California as a system of interaction networks that linked small-scale polities (tribelets) across major linguistic divides. That study revealed that the Northern California systemic interaction networks were formed by warfare, trade and intermarriage ties that extended for many kilometres around the Sacramento River Valley and that linked Northern and Central California into a single prestige goods network based on the exchange of clam-shell disk beads. Chase-Dunn and Lerro (2014) note that the Northern California core/periphery hierarchy was very slight, but that there was an important degree of core/periphery differentiation constituted as interaction between valley-dwellers (Wintu) with larger villages and hill-dwellers (Yana) with smaller villages.

Northern California displayed an interestingly different version of what some anthropologists (Schneider 1977; Peregrine 1992) have called prestige goods systems. In most prestige goods systems, a local elite used its monopoly on the importation of prestige goods to reward and control local subalterns. You could not get married if Uncle Joe did not provide you with a special kind of pot or other ritually necessary exotic item. In Northern California local headmen were the ones who carried out inter-village exchange. This interpolity exchange was mainly organised as gift-giving among village heads who were competing with one another to establish and maintain reputations of generosity. This was not a commodified trading system, but this gift-giving was an important institutional substitute for raiding during periods of scarcity. These exchange networks were facilitated by the use of 'protomoney' in the form of clam disk shell beads, a storable symbol of value that allowed village headmen to accumulate wealth that could be exchanged for food or other goods. This kind of prestige goods system was not very hierarchical, but the facilitation of exchange networks across tribelet boundaries reduced the impetus to raiding, creating the conditions for greater population density and a relatively pacific structure of interpolity interaction. So, where is the semi-peripheral development in this? It turns out that the Pomo, who lived adjacent to Clear Lake in Central California, were the main manufacturers of clam disk shell beads. They obtained clam shells by trading with the Coast Miwok that lived at Bodega Bay and they devoted a large amount of family labour time to producing round beads with a hole in them

for stringing into the ‘protomoney’ that was used in the large down-the-line trade network linking Central and Northern California, including the Wintu and their neighbours (Vayda 1967). But were the Pomo ‘semiperipheral’ in any important sense?

First we shall describe a similar, but also somewhat different, instance of this kind of interpolity economic specialization that existed in late prehistoric Southern California. The Chumash were sedentary foragers who lived along the Southern California coast in what is now Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. They built and used a distinctive plank canoe (*tomol*) that allowed them to fish offshore and to develop a trade network that linked those living on the Northern Channel Islands with the villages on the mainland. The large coastal villages were also connected by trade in food items with smaller inland villages in the mountains and valleys adjacent to the coast. As population increased on the Northern Channel Islands the islanders increasingly specialised in the production of olivella shell beads that came to function as proto-money in a rather large down-the-trade network that linked the Chumash with the Yokuts in the San Joaquin Valley and the Gabrieleno (Tongva) peoples in what became Los Angeles and Orange Counties. The island Chumash came to devote a rather substantial portion of their labour time to the production of shell bead money, which gave them something to exchange for food from the mainland (Arnold 2004). The natural resources of the islands were somewhat depleted by population pressure, which encouraged the islanders to specialise in the production of shell beads in order to have something to exchange for food from the mainland. Was this semi-peripheral development?

As with Northern California, there is no evidence of interpolity exploitation or domination between island and coastal villages. Neither the Pomo nor the island Chumash lived in a core/periphery hierarchy in which some polities were exploiting and/or dominating other polities. But they did live in a situation of core/periphery differentiation—in which systemic interaction was occurring among polities with different degrees of population density. Studies of village sizes in late prehistoric California show that both the Pomo and the island Chumash had villages that were smaller than the village sizes that existed in adjacent polities. In Southern California the biggest villages, and the biggest concentration of villages, were on the mainland coast. In Northern California the biggest villages were those of the Patwin in the southern Sacramento River Valley (King 1978, 60). The island Chumash example also suggests another aspect of semi-peripherality. Some natural locations contain more resources that are useable to humans than do others. One cause of uneven social development is simply the uneven geography of natural capital. Core polities are those that occupy the best locations and non-core polities occupy less fecund sites. The island Chumash had less access to land-based resources such as deer and acorns, than did the mainland

Chumash and so their villages were smaller. And the Pomo had less access to riverine resources (anadromous fish runs) than did the Patwin who lived along the Sacramento River. If these were cases of semi-peripheral development, the specialised activities of the protomoney manufacturers facilitated the emergence and intensification of the interpolity gift exchange network. This activity allowed a larger population to live on the islands and facilitated a regional world system that had relatively more peaceful exchange and relatively less warfare.

SEMI-PERIPHERAL DEVELOPMENT: UPWARD MOBILITY AND/OR TRANSFORMATION

Arnold Toynbee (1946) contended that the ecologically marginal locations that semi-peripheral polities occupy are a motivating factor in their implementation of risky new technologies and strategies that often cause social change. Owen Lattimore (1980) also argued that non-core polities were often the source of important investments in new organizational and technological innovations. Innovations are often developed within core polities, at central nodes in transportation and communications networks, but semi-peripheral polities are more likely to implement these than core polities are because they are less risk averse. Again, this is reminiscent of Trotsky's concept of 'penalties of priority' that afflict older sclerotic core polities.

Geographical unevenness is also important in Patrick Kirch's (1984) model of island settlement and the rise of semi-peripheral marcher chiefdoms in the Pacific. The first arrivals to an island occupied the best locations with fresh water and good soil, usually on the windward side that received the most rainfall. Later arrivals populated the less desirable locations and so the conical clan system of closeness to the ancestors came to match the ecological unevenness of the island locations. The oldest, most senior, lineages occupied the best locations. But it was usually a junior chief from the leeward side of the island that conquered the rest to form an island-wide paramountcy, changing the scale of political organization and facilitating greater organizational complexity—both upward mobility and transformation.

Semi-peripheral capitalist city-states, on the other hand, long performed transformation without much upward mobility. These were states out on the edge of core regions that specialised in interpolity trade. Most often they were maritime enterprises (Dilmun, the Phoenician city-states, Melaka) but sometimes they organised trade over land (the Old Assyrian city-state). These trading states expanded exchange networks and incentivised the production of tradable surpluses since the Bronze Age, but they did not take power in the core until a concentration of them in one region, Europe, coincided with

the relative weakness of tributary empires. As was the case in late prehistoric California, the capitalist city-states did not move into the core for a very long time, but they did make it possible for larger, more complex and hierarchical world systems to emerge by expanding and intensifying exchange networks.

MARCHER LORDS

Semi-peripheral marcher states—semi-peripheral polities that conquer older core polities and form larger empire states—are both upwardly mobile and transformative. Examples include the Qin dynasty, the Neo-Assyrians, the Persians, the Macedonians, the Romans, the Inka and the Aztecs (Inoue *et al* 2016). The Akkadian empire is one of the oldest empires produced by a conquest of states. Prior to its unification by Sargon of Akkad, the Sumerian city-states had existed for well over seven centuries. These city-states interacted through a complex economic network with a definitive core-periphery hierarchy. The core had a written language, theocratic government and irrigated agriculture. The periphery consisted of pastoralists, horticulturalists and specialised quarrying and manufacturing villages. An exchange network is known to have existed among the core and peripheral polities with both ‘backwash and spread effects’ (Myrdal 1963, 152). If the network dynamic between the core cities and the rest of Sumer was mostly a prestige good network with the older core dominating most resources, as Friedman and Rowlands have claimed (1977), a spread effect would be understandable. However, metalworking throughout the Bronze and Iron Ages has been attributed to mountain societies. Additionally, some amount of manufacturing occurred in the remote villages near large soapstone deposits. Both co-evolution and ‘the development of underdevelopment’ (Frank 1967) were occurring in the Mesopotamian system before the rise of the Akkadian Empire.

Sargon the Great, the eventual conqueror and unifier of the Sumerian city-states, was a cupbearer to the king of Kish, one of the core Sumerian city-states. Sargon was a servant belonging to a class of Semitic-speaking non-Sumerian immigrants who had long been present in the Mesopotamian heartland of cities. Sargon was able to unify all of Sumer through a military campaign creating a very large empire-state. He was described as a ‘marcher lord’ and a pioneer of hegemonic empire (Mann 1986). In chapter 5 of *The Sources of Social Power*, Michael Mann argues that the Akkadians were successful in their war effort and at unification of the city-states because they combined the Sumerian core-type military strategy (the use of heavy infantry) with a pastoralist military technology (composite bows). While the idea that Sargon used a combination of core and peripheral organizational and military technologies to conquer Sumer has been supported (e.g. Diakonoff 1991;

Mann 1986) other scholars have proposed other factors such as class and ethnic rebellion as having been important to the Akkadian rise (Yoffee 1993).

Typically, polities and interpolity systems cycle through centralization (by conquest or incorporation) and decentralization resulting from the decline of centralised power. When a polity within a region sustains a significant increase in size from the largest previous polity size in the region, it is called an ‘upsweep’ (Inoue *et al.* 2010). The Institute for Research on World Systems Polities and Settlements (SetPol) Research Working Group at the University of California Riverside has quantitatively identified most of the major upsweeps in the territorial sizes of polities since the early Bronze Age in the world regions in which evidence is available about the changes in the territorial sizes of the largest polities. The SetPol Research Working Group identified twenty-one such upsweeps in five world regions since the early Bronze Age.

We examined these to determine whether or not they were the result of semi-peripheral marcher conquests (Inoue *et al.* 2016). We found that over half of the polity upsweeps were produced by marcher states from the semi-periphery (10) or from the periphery (3). This means that the hypothesis of semi-peripheral development does not explain everything about the events in which polity sizes significantly increased in geographical scale, but also that the phenomenon of semi-peripheral development cannot be ignored in any explanation of the long-term trend in the rise of polity sizes.

AQ: Please clarify whether city-states could be given as two words without the hyphen.

The semi-peripheral capitalist city-states promoted trade and commodification for millennia, increasingly linking Afroeurasia into a connected multi-core world economy. The relative weakness of tributary empires in the West in the context of a commodified institutional matrix allowed a strong regional trade matrix of autonomous city states to emerge, and then the emergence of larger states that were under the control of capitalists. The rise of the West was another instance of uneven and combined development that occurred on a promontory of Eurasia.

And the spiral of development within the modern Europe-centred system continued to display uneven and combined development. Alexander Anievas and Kerem Nisancioglu (2015) have argued that the developmental trajectory of European capitalism was significantly affected by the thirteenth- to fourteenth century *Pax Mongolica*. In particular, Europe benefited significantly from what Trotsky called ‘the privilege of historic backwardness’. Anievas and Nisancioglu (2015, 87) write, ‘Arising late on the periphery of this world system, European development had the most to gain from the new intersocietal links being forged, particularly through the diffusion of new technologies and “resource portfolios” spreading from East to West.’ And all of those capitalist nation states that were forerunners of the emerging capitalist world system (the United Provinces of the Netherlands in the seventeenth

century, the United Kingdom of Great Britain in the nineteenth century and the United States in the twentieth century) were all formerly semi-peripheral powers who led in the deepening and expansion of capitalist economic development. The twentieth century peasant wars and revolutions that challenged the core of the capitalist world system attained their greatest power in semi-peripheral Russia and China.

CONTEMPORARY SEMI-PERIPHERAL DEVELOPMENT

In the contemporary global system, the semi-periphery continues to push the boundaries in terms of both upward mobility and innovative systemic change. The economic and political development of the semi-peripheral BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) represent global challenges to the centrality of the United States, Europe and Japan. Contemporary semi-peripheral polities are contributing to social change by implementing organizational and ideological forms that facilitate their own upward mobility and that transform, to some extent, the logics of social reproduction and development. The form of state capitalism that has emerged in China contributes a new note to the complex music of the varieties of capitalism in the global system. Giovanni Arrighi (2007) contended that the form of Chinese diaspora capitalism emerging in East Asia represents a somewhat progressive improvement over the financialised, bellicose and work-destroying Western version. Whether or not the Chinese version of foreign investment and resource extraction turns out to be better or worse than that of the West is still being played out in Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America (Bergesen 2013; Grell-Brisk 2015).

Core-periphery interactions continue to evolve with the development of increasingly sophisticated digital and military technologies from the core, and organizations and institutions like ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America), the New Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank from the Asian and Latin American semi-periphery. The increasing economic and political power of the semi-peripheral challengers drives a certain amount of reorganization of the global political economy. Many see US hegemony as being in slow decline and the emergence of the multipolar world that the BRICS say that they want (e.g. Chase-Dunn *et al.* 2011).

It is indisputable that deindustrialization and financialisation have been major trends in core polities since the 1970s. This is most evident in the United States, where financialisation has been pushed to its limits and has been widely viewed as the main cause of the global economic recession of 2008. To a lesser extent there has also been a move towards financialisation among the semi-peripheral polities. Some of the BRICs are becoming wise

to the diminishing advantages of rapid export-oriented industrialization. One could go so far as to state that the BRICS are in fact engaging in combined development. With its continued focus on economic growth and development through manufacturing while concurrently engaging in high finance (as with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)), China is a good example of a semi-peripheral country that is confronting the new twists of globalization flexibly, combining elements in new ways. For instance, China could be seen as engaging in a form of combined development in the management of its economy. The Chinese approach has been termed anything from 'capitalism with Chinese characteristics' (Yasheng Huang 2008) to 'state-controlled capitalism', 'socialist market economy' and 'Chinese capitalism'. All these phrases suggest that China has combined and applied the different elements of the economies of advanced countries to its own socio-historical and political condition.

It has been noted by some scholars that the contemporary semi-peripheral polities are not hot-beds of progressive revolution or even evolution. The 'pink tide' reaction against neoliberalism in Latin America led by President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela spread to most Latin American countries, but not to other regions of the world (Chase-Dunn *et al.* 2015). Many semi-peripheral countries are under the control of reactionary elements and others are just trying to move up the food chain of global capitalism. Patrick Bond's (2013) article in the journal *Links* goes as far as to call the BRICS sub-imperialist powers that peddle and reaffirm neoliberal policies, and that help maintain the modern capitalist world system and its institutional power structures. Bond points to, among many things, the numerous corporations such as DeBeers, Gencor (later BHP Billiton) and Liberty Life Insurance that benefited from South Africa's financial deregulation and the transition from 'racial to class apartheid' in the 1990s. Bond also reminds us about Ruy Mauro Marini (1972) who developed the concept of sub-imperialism in the 1970s. Marini saw Brazil to be the most prominent example of sub-imperialism. He contended that Brazil's expansionist policy in Latin America and Africa was driven by a quest for new markets, an effort to gain control over sources of raw materials and was intended to prevent potential competitors from having access to such resources.

Bond claims that South Africa has pursued these same kinds of sub-imperial policies, as have most of the other BRICS. In fact, according to Bond, the 2013 BRICS summit held in South Africa declared support for corporate land grabs, worsened Africa's retail-driven de-industrialization, and revived the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) programme—the embodiment of neoliberal policies in Africa, and of course, the BRICS bank.

Bond is not alone in his view that these semi-peripheral polities are mainly engaged in propping up the existing power structure. William I. Robinson

(2015) decries the state-centric view of now globalised capitalism. He notes that the rise of China has been mainly due to foreign investment in manufacturing that uses cheap Chinese labour, and he stresses the extent to which China is an integrated part of global capitalist accumulation and an important player in what he calls an emergent transnational state. Ho-Fung Hung (2015a) and S.S. Karatasli and Sefika Kumral (2015) claim that China has pursued economic and political policies that primarily maintain the global status quo. In a recent *New York Times* article, Hung (2015b) contends that the China-backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has become a multilateral organization that can only serve to buttress the prevailing global economic structures. Although China provided the initial financial support for the AIIB, in order to garner the support of most of the allies of the United States China had to forgo veto power over the actions of the new bank (Wei and Davis 2015). Hung points out that US hegemony at its height exerted huge power over the bilateral and multilateral institutions it helped to found after the Second World War. Hung also notes that the AIIB's capacity for influence and power in the global economy is limited given its multilateral nature and that it is unlikely to provide China with the means to supplant the United States as a global leader.

Still, the extent to which China and/or the other BRICS countries are shoring up the current core-periphery hierarchy is a point of contention. Bond sees the BRICS as mainly reproducing the hierarchical structures of the system because he has another world in mind—an egalitarian, cooperative and sustainable world society. Upward mobility in the system does not necessarily challenge the basic logic of the system or reduce its injustices. Bond is right about that. But this approach ignores the changes compelled by the rise of the BRICS. A shift of economic power away from Europe and North America towards the semi-periphery changes the equation with regard to global racial stratification. It makes global culture even more multicultural than it has previously been. It probably does not lower the magnitude of global inequality, because inequality within the BRICS countries has been increasing.

The idea that China could replace the United States as a global hegemon has been suggested by some scholars (e.g. Frank 1998, 2014; Arrighi 2007b), but few now really believe this. The rise of BRICS portends a more multipolar, less US-centric, system. That is a big change from what has existed since the Second World War. Despite arguments that the AIIB will not help in China's rise to hegemonic power, the bank could serve as a serious alternative to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank for development funding and foreign aid in the Global South. China has been praised by many African governments as being more attuned to the needs of the Global South. Writing for the *Financial Times* in 2008, the President of Senegal, Abdoulaye Wade,

explained, ‘China’s approach to our needs is simply better adapted than the slow and sometimes patronizing post-colonial approach of European investors. ... Economic relations are based more on mutual need. ... [And] China, which has fought its own battles to modernise, has a much greater sense of the personal urgency of development in Africa than many western nations’ (Wade 2008). The AIIB is in direct competition with the World Bank. The semi-peripheral and peripheral polities are creating new anti-systemic and reformist institutions that facilitate a certain amount of disengagement with the old core. The BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) is intercontinental. The Development Bank of Latin America, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), the African Development Bank and a myriad of other new institutions have been organised in the Global South to counter the prevailing global structures of power. The most influential of these are those from the semi-periphery such as the NDB and the AIIB. The discourse about the need for an alternative to the US dollar in the global economy continues to persist. The dollar alternative issue may become more feasible if AIIB and NDB grow in size and influence despite the arguments made by Hung (2015a) and Bond (2013a; 2013b).

Many people in the Global South, especially the urban poor, have been under siege from the Washington Consensus and the neoliberal structural adjustment programmes of the International Monetary Fund. The imposed structural adjustment programmes have been very unpopular and have not resulted in improved lives for the vast majority of people. This has resulted in populist reactions in many semi-peripheral and peripheral states. The World Social Forum emerged in 2001 as a popular response to neoliberal policies. The semi-periphery, where so many of the impacts of neoliberal policies have been felt, has nurtured this kind of anti-systemic thinking. With its history of uneven and combined development and empowering transnational social movements, the semi-periphery has the potential to reshape the trajectory of global system.

NOTE

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Chapter 13

Navigating Non-Eurocentrism and Trotskyist Integrity in the New Trotskyist IR of World History

John M. Hobson

This chapter will hone in on the problems of Eurocentrism and *potential* ahistoricism that infect parts of the New Trotskyist International Relations (NTIR); an exciting approach (or more precisely a variety of approaches), which has emerged in the last decade within the discipline of IR.¹ These range from the orthodox approaches advanced by the likes of Neil Davidson (2009) and Sam Ashman (2010) to the more unorthodox approaches advanced by the likes of Justin Rosenberg (2006; 2007; 2008; 2010), Kamran Matin (2007; 2012; 2013a; 2013c), Alexander Anievas (2014a), Kerem Nişancioğlu (2014) as well as Anievas and Nişancioğlu (2014; 2015), Robbie Shilliam (2009a, 2009b) and Cemal Burak Tansel (2015). Probably the key pioneer of this unorthodox approach is Justin Rosenberg. The immediate difference between the orthodox and unorthodox approaches concerns the scope or depth of the historical terrain that is broached. The former tends to focus on the period of British industrialisation and its aftermath, whereas the latter works on a much deeper world-historical terrain that goes back *before* the period of Western European industrialisation and, at least in Rosenberg's work (2010), reaches all the way back to Ancient Sumer (3,500 BCE). Rosenberg is currently working on a book-length treatment of this project, the findings of which are likely to be really exciting as this could well open up a genuinely original take on both IR and world history.

However, my twin-primary concern in this chapter is not simply to interrogate the scope of the historical terrain analysed but to consider the issue of Eurocentrism/non-Eurocentrism on the one hand, and whether non-Eurocentric Trotskyism retains or breaks with Trotsky's original conception of uneven and combined development on the other; something that for the sake of convenience I will refer to as 'Trotskyist integrity'. I ask the latter question precisely because many orthodox Trotskyists might well assume