# Racism and The Evolution of Distant Othering

Chris Chase-Dunn, Marilyn Grell-Brisk and E.N. Anderson

**Abstract:** This paper presents an overview of the ways in which human individual and collective identities and ideas about outsiders have changed as human polities have gotten larger, more complex and more hierarchical since the Stone Age. We are especially interested in forms of distant othering that are similar in some ways to modern racism and seek to understand how racism has evolved and where it may be going. We contend that all human polities have defined the boundaries of solidarity and support in ways that excluded and demonized other humans and non-humans, but that the boundaries have expanded over time to include larger and larger numbers of people. Boundary expansion has not been a smooth upward curve. Population growth can lead to resource scarcity followed by increasing intra and inter-group violence. Thus, there have been cycles of expansion and contraction with occasional upswings in the scale of cooperation. And both solidarity and othering are entwined with the building and maintenance of power structures. Status threats incite reactive movements when status characteristics are changing, especially on the part of those who think their privileges and resources are threatened. Comprehension of the long-term cyclical trends of inclusive solidarity and othering has implications for meeting the challenges of the 21ˢᵗ century.

We are social scientists studying the long-term, large scale evolution[1] of organizational structures, institutions and the ideational changes that relate to the scale changes that have emerged since the Stone Age. We employ concepts mainly from sociology and anthropology, disciplines that have examined sociocultural evolution and the behavior of human individuals and groups. Our discussion presumes the classical and contemporary literature on the self as an institution (Mead 1934), identity theory, the connection between the self and others, role theory and Simmel's important concept of social distance (Simmel 1955, 1971).

　　　　Othering is based on the construction of socially legitimate boundaries between the individual self and others and between "us" and "them" -- in-groups and out-groups. Othering and "selfing" are like wrestlers in a clinch. All human societies have organized identities around othering which includes different forms of stereotyping. And othering,

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[1] In using the term 'evolution', we mean long-term patterned change in social structures, especially the development of complex divisions of labor and hierarchy. We do not mean biological evolution, which is a very different topic, and neither do we mean "progress." Whether or not simplicity, complexity, equality or hierarchy are good or bad are value questions that are not necessary to the scientific prehension of social change (Sanderson 1990).

has always been important for reproducing differences and inequalities. Still, "the other" has evolved along with the uneven expansion of social complexity and the emergence of hierarchies since the Stone Age. This paper describes the evolution of the self, the other, and the forms taken in distinguishing between in-groups and out-groups with a focus on how racism as a form of othering has changed over the course of human sociocultural evolution from Stone Age nomadic foraging groups, to the contemporary global system. We mainly focus on the issue of socially distant others because we want to discern the ways in which things like modern racism have existed and evolved in the past.

Our theoretical perspective is institutional materialism and we study sociocultural evolution using the comparative world-systems perspective (Chase-Dunn and Lerro 2015). Immanuel Wallerstein (1987, 2017) contended that racism is structurally connected with the core/periphery hierarchy of the modern world-system. Thus, we are very interested in the issue of modern global racism as it is related to the core/periphery hierarchy in the contemporary global system. We also want to inquire about the connections between distant othering and premodern core/periphery hierarchies.

Sociocultural evolution has involved the invention of institutions that allow larger, more complex and more hierarchical human polities to function. Accompanying these long-term changes have been the emergence of more complex selves as well as larger and more abstract collective identities and solidarities. And these have been related to the restructuring of conceptualizations of internal and external others. Human nature is understood biologically to include the capability for institutionalized and socially constructed categories to be taken as natural and real (Chase-Dunn and Lerro 2015:3). Racism is socially constructed. It works differently in different modern polities, and it has taken different forms as human polities got larger and more complex. Georg Simmel (Coser 1956; 1955) noted that conflict is an important form of association because in-group solidarity is related to, and mainly produced by, competition and conflict between groups. What "they" are depends on, and is related to, what "we" are and what "I" am.

Status characteristics are beliefs about social categories that are consensually held by members of a society (Berger, Cohen, and Zelditch Jr. 1972). They are stereotypes that structure expectations about the behavior and evaluations of others, especially strangers. Many status characteristics are ranked. Examples are wealth, income, education, gender, ethnicity and race. In this approach, racial categories are socially constructed, and the content and evaluation of these categories differ across societies and change over time

within a society. Profiling is an example of how status characteristics affect expectations. Furthermore, expectations about behavior often stimulate feelings such as comfort, fear and anger. Status characteristics vary in the degree of consensus about them. They are often contested, and they change over time. Status threats incite reactive movements when status characteristics are changing, especially on the part of those who think their privileges and resources are threatened. Obvious contemporary examples are race and gender (Alvarez 2019).

The idea of social distance is made most clear in Simmel's (1971) essay on the stranger. The stranger, lives within the local society but is seen as socially distant from most of the community members. This distance is primarily due to the stranger's origins. Of course, Simmel is talking about Jews in Europe and ethnic minorities. Social distance does not equate physical distance as the stranger is simply "perceived" as outside the group despite being in constant contact with the group. The stranger, is in the group but not of the group. Still, there can be both internal and external distant others. For example, the phenomenon of scapegoating may involve identifying and blaming enemies within the society and external enemies. Our discussion of the evolution of distant othering will take this into account.

The analysis of modern racism often distinguishes between the attitudes, beliefs and emotions of individuals and institutional or structural racism in which outcomes of power processes produce material inequalities. Here we are interested in the subjective (individual and collective) aspects of othering, and in the connections between the institutional and structural forms of power that produce differential outcomes.

The evolution of human sociability, language, and culture remains highly controversial. There is no question that intolerance, prejudice, and othering are deeply inscribed in human society (Kteily et al. 2015; Kteily, Hodson, and Bruneau 2016). Castano (2012) has argued that the hated or despised group is typically thought of as human, just unworthy of consideration or of good treatment. This is primarily due to a lack of empathy. He introduces the term "infrahumanization" for this. Genocide and prejudice scholars have remarked on this phenomenon.

For Thomas Hobbes (1651) and John Locke (1689), humans in their natural state were true "savages" (Latin *homo sylvaticus,* "person of the forest"). They were warlike, isolated in small groups, nomadic, and without laws, private property, or true moral orders. The authors located their "savages", not amongst themselves but rather, in

"America," despite having plenty of material at hand to show them that American Native people were not even remotely like their stereotypes.

Still, Hobbes and Locke's notion of the savage was most likely based on the old idea of the "wild man," going back to Enkidu and persisting in the medieval European "savages" and "wodewoses." This idea of the "savage" in America created a foundation for the despicable treatment of Indigenous people by the settlers of the New World and Australia. The most striking exception in the early exploration period is the very strong and enlightened advocacy of the Spanish humanists, notably Bartolome de Las Casas (1552), but also Diego Duran, Bernardino de Sahagun, among others. They fearlessly and successfully argued that Native Americans were fully human, had souls, could not be killed at will, and had rights (including property) that had to be respected. They argued less successfully that Native people should not be enslaved.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau later argued for a less negative view of "savages." Contrary to persistent myth, he never used the phrase "noble savage," nor did he think savages were particularly noble. His savage was in fact the chimpanzee (1755), which was, indeed, hairy, nonlinguistic, forest-dwelling, somewhat social, and powerful, like the wodewose. He was the first, but far from the last, to see the chimp as our ancestor.

And yet, even earlier than Hobbes, Locke or Rousseau, Elizabethan Englishmen constructed the idea of Africans as an "other," unlike anything they had seen before. Winthrop D. Jordan (1968) argues that the concept of black-ness (initially based on the obsession of the Africans' skin color) were "loaded with intense meaning"; meanings (malignant, baneful, disastrous, having dark or deadly purposes etc.) that placed African's decidedly opposite that of Englishmen. Even Shakespeare did not escape using denigrating language to describe Africans, writing that his Black mistress' eyes were nothing like the sun or that her breath reeked (Sonnet 130).

This preoccupation with, assigned meanings and presumptions about the skin color of Black people was compounded by the supposed lack of religion (unlike their attempts at converting Indigenous People in America, they did not proselytize in Africa until the late eighteenth century (Jordan 1968)) of Africans. This led to the general view that African were "a people of beastly living, without a God…" (Jordan 1968:24). African heathenism was often linked explicitly with barbarity and black-ness and one aspect of their many "defects".

Religious wars spun out of control in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries, leading to exhaustion that led in turn to religious tolerance in a few countries (Te Brake 2017). The slave trade, already huge, vastly increased in the 18th century. Rapid colonial expansion led to genocides from Australia and the Americas to west China (the Dzungarian genocide of the mid-18th century) and Siberia. It is with settler colonialism and the slave trade that we see a significant rise in racism and distant othering, and in the idea that distant people are savages or otherwise inferior. More precisely, George Stocking (1968) and Lee D. Baker (1998) have demonstrated that the rise of racism can be traced to its connection with exploitative economics.

Like Stocking (1968) and Baker (1998), in the case of racism in the Americas, Eric Williams (1944) argued that the root of slavery was economics and not racism against Black Africans. Indigenous people of the Americas were first used in slave labor (however this was not widespread), followed by poor whites (many of which were indentured servants). Williams insists that the slavery of Black Africans was a solution, in certain historical contexts, of a labor problem and that slavery did not imply, the inferiority of Black people. But, Jordan (1968) argues that the othering of Black people by whites was dynamically joined with slavery. That Englishmen already had a prejudice that informed their particular othering (the color black and all its connotations in Elizabethan England, the supposed lack of religion of Africans and all its implications, eating habits and other supposed "deviant" behavior etc.) and vehemence toward Black people as they encountered them. Chattel slavery reinforced those prejudices taking on a particularly vile and violent form of othering permeating the institutions of American life.

Samuel Bowles (2006, 2008) argued that humans evolved in competing groups; the bigger and more combative groups eliminated the smaller ones, leading to the rapid evolution of larger groups and more warlike and murderous behavior. Despite factual evidence to support it, this notion has been challenged. The most recent contribution is based on a sophisticated simulation involving comparison of a wide range of mammals. González-Forero and Gardner (2018) argued that bigger brains in humans was ecologically driven rather than social challenges and was strongly promoted by culture; and bigger brains allowed for bigger social groups and more communication, which allow better foraging, and thus a positive feedback mechanism is created. Sociability alone could not account for the increasing size of the human brain over time because

mammals that are highly social, actually have smaller brains than their more independent relatives (gnus and naked mole-rats are examples). Competition does not either, since it has high costs that interfere with maintaining large brains and complex behavior. They conclude that only a widening diet and ecological niche can explain it, pointing to social omnivores of high intelligence, such as raccoons and wolves.

While this is a good model (Anderson 2014), it does not explain the extreme levels of intergroup violence and hatred that exist in almost all known societies. The most likely scenario is one in which, large foraging groups expanded into new areas, displacing existing smaller groups—initially, at least, more primitive hominins. According to Thomas Homer-Dixon (1994), Thomas Homer-Dixon et. al. (1993) and the Project on Environmental Change and Acute Conflict, environmental scarcities contribute significantly to violent conflicts in much of the developing world. The scholars take the view that upsurges in violence (sub-national, persistent and diffuse) will be induced by scarcity. The environmental changes that were identified as underlying violent intergroup conflict, include carbon emission, stratospheric ozone depletion, depletion of good agricultural land, forests, fisheries and degradation of water supplies. And while the poorest countries in the world (primarily peripheral countries) are the most to suffer the negative effects of these environmental changes, it is the core countries that produce the most carbon emission and contribute the most to stratospheric ozone depletion.

Nevertheless, not all human groups are combative. A few extremely peaceful ones are known. These are typically small and threatened by larger, stronger and more aggressive neighbors; coming to peace through fear. In the best comparative study to date, Robarchek and Robarchek (1998) compared the extremely peaceful Semai, with the more violent Waorani. Both societies were fairly similar in their everyday existence, hunting, food cultivation, system of lineage. They practiced permissive childrearing and were gentle and tolerant most of the time. The only difference relevant to their behavior was their relations with outsiders. The Semai were constantly harassed, robbed, and enslaved by the far more powerful Malays, and had no recourse except to flee. There was little doubt that their peacefulness was basically fear: they could not successfully resist and therefore would chose to leave. They generalized their fear response into nonviolence in all situations. The Waorani were able to fight back against heavy odds, succeeding in part by creating the image of themselves as utter mad-dog fighters. Again, they generalized this response. The Robarcheks (1998) noted that people can choose where to

situate themselves on the fight-flight-freeze response continuum, and then culture constructs responses.

Falk and Hildebolt (2017) showed that societies worldwide have an average violence rate that is moderate, but that tribal societies vary enormously. The Semai and their neighbors pin the peaceful end, the Waorani and the New Guinea Highland groups anchor the warlike one. Small hunting-gathering bands are generally relatively peaceful, and so are modern states. Chiefdoms and early states are particularly violent. Steven Pinker (2011) argues that peacefulness has been increasing throughout history; figures loosely support him, but many anthropologists consider his work on tribal violence highly exaggerated and note that he underplays modern violence, relying e.g. on war and murder rates without looking into genocide, slavery, and deliberately-caused famine (Fry 2013).

In almost all cases, neighbors are enemies. Neighboring tribes and states develop enmities that grow over time. The famous rivalry of the French and English is typical. Other cases include the Thai vs. the Burmese and Khmer, the Chinese vs. the central Asian steppe peoples, the Japanese vs. the Koreans, the Amhara vs. the Tigre and Oromo, the Aztecs vs. the Tlaxcalans, and so on around the world. Typically, a polity—be it a hunting-gathering band or a modern state—will ally itself with the neighbor's neighbors on the other side. The hated group is thus crushed between two polities. This is a dangerous strategy, however. Once the hated group is crushed, the two allies are suddenly each other's neighbors. They then often fight. As an example, in the Mongol conquest of China, the Song Dynasty allied itself with the Mongols to crush the Jin Dynasty, but once Jin was destroyed the Mongols simply went on to conquer Song— using the Jin armies, now Mongol subjects!

Highly negative stereotypes of neighbors are universal. Neighbors are subhuman, immoral, disgusting, and, in short, barbarians, to the extent they are culturally different from "us." In non-state societies, there is usually little contact with groups more remote than the immediate neighbors, but some societies specialized in long-range raiding and slave-taking on a large scale. Examples range from the Haida and Lekwiltok of the Northwest Coast of North America to the Vikings, some Turkic groups, and the East African Arabs. Such groups always *develop highly negative stereotypes of the people they raid, partly to justify to themselves the cruelty they use in their activities.*

Otherwise, truly distant peoples are little considered.  Often, they are thought to be too weird to be truly human.  The bizarre beings in Pliny—the dog-headed people, people whose faces are on their chests, and so on—are matched by the beings in the Chinese Classic of Mountains and Seas (2000) (*Shan Hai Jing* 1999), which apparently represent shamanistic visions of spirit lands.

This brings us to the important and underappreciated fact that *worldwide, strangers are generally welcomed.*  Field anthropologists have found themselves welcomed everywhere except in societies that had had recent and frequent negative interactions with outsiders.  Even E. E. Evans-Pritchard (1940), carrying out ethnographic research on a group that had been subjected to seven major British colonial military assaults in the recent past, managed to do a thorough ethnography in spite of intense early suspicion. Most field ethnographers report incredible levels of hospitality, generosity, and help.  It is the neighbors that one hates, not the aliens.  Almost every comprehensive ethnography records negative stereotypes and historic feuds with neighbors.


**Stone Age Othering**

As populations grew the annual migration routes of nomadic foragers shrank and eventually sedentism emerged as people learned how to store enough food to remain longer in winter camps that became hamlets and then villages (Nassaney and Sassaman 1995). The transition from larger to smaller annual migration routes corresponded with the emergence of regional styles of tool kits, especially projectile points, that archaeologist interpret as evidence of the emergence of regional ethnic identities.

We begin with Marshall Sahlins's (1972:196–204) typology of the institutional forms of interaction in small-scale, Stone Age, societies. In small-scale human societies the economy and the polity are mainly organized around kinship, a consensual normative moral order that designates social obligations based on a set of kin categories that individuals occupy. Sahlins notes that sharing and reciprocity are usually organized in such societies based in kinship distance. Sharing, or what Sahlins calls generalized reciprocity does not calculate who gets what and so there is no quantification of debt.[2]

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[2] Sharing is seen as altruism.  Evolutionary psychologists claim that altruistic behavior in insects, animals and humans is biologically based on shared genes.  We would argue that for humans this does not work, and not only in large-scale modern nation-states in which people identify with one another with very little regard to genetic similarity, but also in small-scale systems based on kinship. Human kinship structures are socially constructed. In many matrilineal societies the father is the mother's brother and the guy who is married to mom is in a different clan and has no authority of me.

All the interactors have the right to take what they need and the failure to reciprocate does not result in the giver ceasing to give. In Sahlins's model of the "domestic mode of production this form of interaction occurs among very close kin, usually within the household. His diagram of kinship distance and forms of exchange (1972:199 Figure 5.1. Reciprocity and Kinship Residential Sectors) is a nested set of circles with the household in the center. As we move out from the center to the lineage and village sector the type of interaction becomes "balanced reciprocity" in which a gift is expected to be repaid.[3] Beyond the village sector is the tribal sector, and beyond that is the intertribal sector where something called negative reciprocity is in operation. Negative reciprocity is a relationship in which theft is legitimate. There is no expectation of repayment. One is supposed to get as much as one can and give as little.

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He is like an uncle. In patrilineal kinship systems the genetic connections on the mother's side are not validated. Human kinship is a bunch of agreed upon categories that may or may not correspond with genetic closeness.

[3] Alvin Gouldner's (1960) distinction between strong and weak reciprocity involves the issue of how long a debt is expected to last before it is repaid. In Sahlins's model this is probably also related to kinship distance. Sahlin's refers to Gouldner's essay on the norm of reciprocity in his study of Stone Age economics.
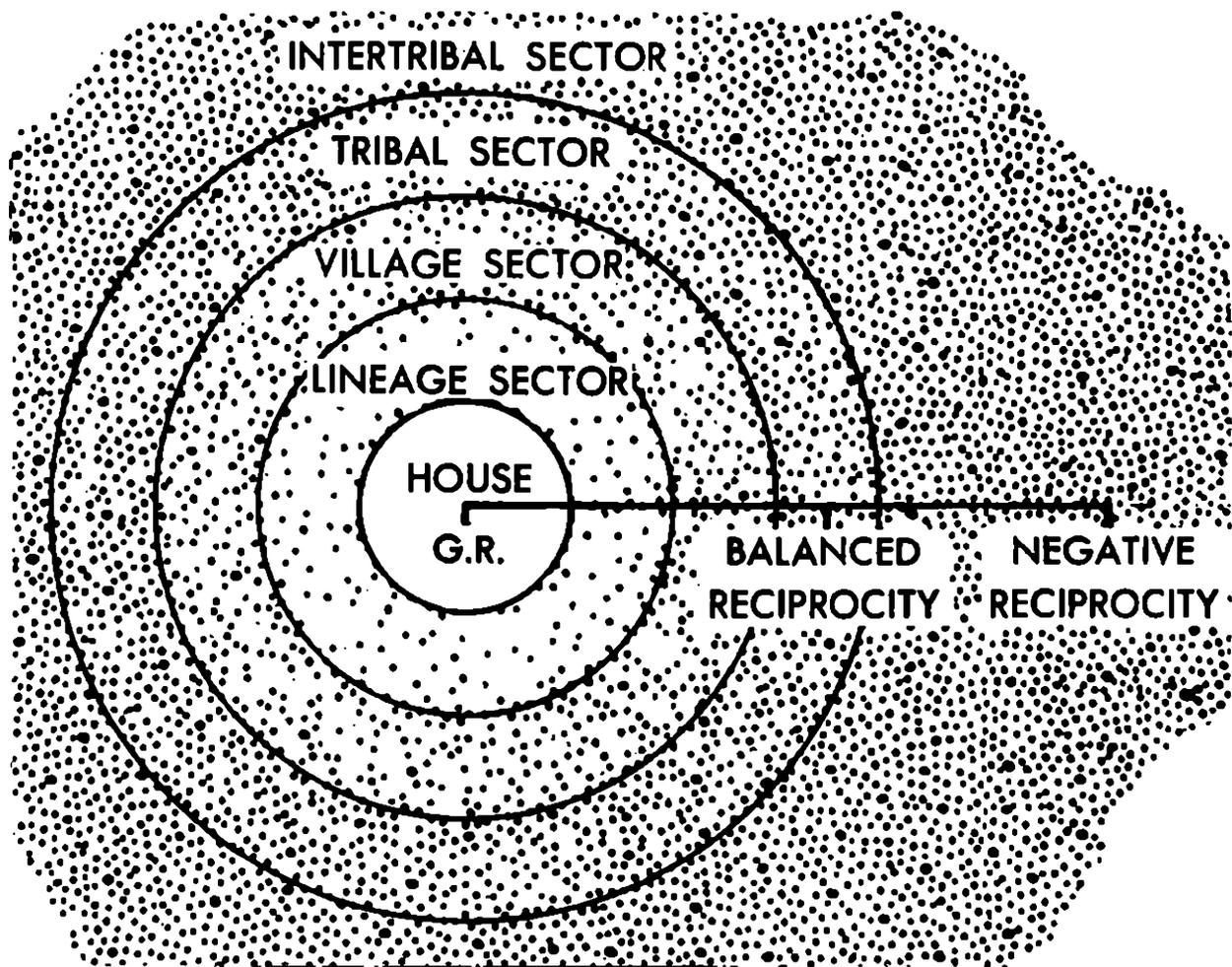
**Figure 1. Reciprocity and Kinship Residential Sectors**
**Source: Sahlins 1972: 199 Figure 5.1.**

This model of institutional types of interaction is germane to understanding the ways in which individual and collective identities operate within small-scale societies and is both similar and different from the ways in which modern individual and collective identities and the other operates. The self has much obligation to socially close others and obligation decreases with social distance until it becomes negative reciprocity involving either no obligation or active enmity. Most small-scale societies had little inequality among lineages and so rank did not play a big role in structuring forms of interaction.[4] We know from ethnographic studies of small-scale societies that genders were highly differentiated, though some had third-gender men who lived socially as

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[4] But see Graeber and Wengrow 2018 for a list of archaeologically-known instances of short-term hierarchy in small-scale societies

women and had important jobs. But gender differentiation was usually not accompanied by gender hierarchy. The identities of men and women were constructed as different, but women usually had important participation in group decision-making. And these small-scale societies usually had a form of individualism that was organized as differentiated relations with spiritual allies. Coming of age for each person involved a spirit quest in which a deal was made with one or more powerful allies. Thus, the relationship with the powers of the universe was somewhat constructed by each individual and each had a personal relationship (or relationships) with these that changed over time.

Every person was unique with regard to his or her relationship with spiritual others. Those individuals, both women and men, who spent more time communicating with their spiritual allies were deemed to be doctors or shamans who had the ability to help others ward off bad spirits causing sickness. This form of individualism existed despite a very simple societal division of labor in which all men were hunters and all women were gatherers. Animistic religions saw non-humans and what moderns see as inanimate objects, such as trees or mountains, as the other. A mountain is a spiritual power that requires demonstrations of respect lest it do injury. The universe is alive, and the entities require respectful communication. Shamanic specialists become possessed by spirits and can take the form of a bird or an animal or insect. Every person has the capability to use spiritual allies to do harm or good to others, and so everyone could become a witch. This possibility can undermine the solidarities and trust expected of close kin and co-villagers, which could cross-cut the outer edges of reciprocity in ways that reduce the ability of polities to mobilize warfare with one another (Bean 1974).

Leadership was usually a matter of a designated head man who welcomed visitors on ritual occasions and gave speeches. The head man is also often entrusted with the care of the village medicine bundle that is the symbol and substantiation of the sovereign polity. This position usually passed from father to son, but if no son with appropriate rhetorical skills were available the position might pass to a daughter. Specialized leaders were sometimes designated to coordinate intergroup hunting efforts such as deer drives. Usually the best hunter was selected for this.

In some ethnographically-known societies of sedentary foragers the head man sometimes had more than one wife, often the sister of the first wife (sororal polygyny). Sovereign polities usually included one or a few villages. Beyond that, alliances were

formed based on participation in ritual feasting, dancing, gambling, reciprocal gift-giving and support in warfare (Vayda 1967). Wars were of two kinds: line wars were ritual encounters meant to resolve violation of collective territorial claims to gathering or hunting sites or other transgression. The two sides would line up and throw rocks or shoot arrows at one another until someone was injured. Then the headmen from each side would talk about whether what had happened could resolve the issue or not. If not, the "fighting" could continue. Eventually the issue was usually resolved without much injury. Line wars tended to occur among polities who shared a language or who had ties by inter-marriage. The other kind of warfare was raiding. In a raid, a village of the enemy was attacked, and an effort was made to exterminate all the residents. Raid wars occurred primarily between polities that did not share a language and between which there were few intermarriages.

The difference between line wars and raid wars suggests an important distinction between types of negative reciprocity. There is a big gap between indifference and a level of enmity that justifies extermination. *Close othering* involves both similarities and obligations, while *distant othering* involves differences and either no obligation or negative obligation (enmity). In many small-scale societies the word for those who share a language often means "the people." This implies that others outside of this collective identity are the non-people. This is an important form of distant othering that is similar too, but also different from, distinctions between in-groups and out-groups in larger scale polities. Often distinctions about differences in beliefs about creation or differences in food preferences are used to denigrate proximate and more distant others. All human polities have something like modern nationalism, a collective identity in which people see themselves as similar to one another and different from others. The general term for such a collective identity is "solidarity." Collective identities are first constructed in kinship terms, but later they are constituted in different ways.

Trade among small-scale societies is usually organized as gift-giving between heads of physically adjacent polities. Goods may travel long distances from being traded from group to group (so-called down-the-line trade) but there are no long distance "merchants" bringing goods from afar. This is because strangers from afar are usually seen as trespassers and are likely to be killed. Long-distance trade or procurement treks are extremely dangerous. An example of an internal stranger would be a witch who is believed to use spiritual power to harm others. Such internal strangers are often killed.

Distant othering also involves stories about giants, demons, wild men (sasquatch or big foot) and old women who steal children and eat them (Suttles 1987:Chapter 6).

An intermediate form of distant othering also found in some small-scale societies occurred when war captives were taken to be traded. The pre-contact Pacific Northwest of North America feature a large, hierarchical system in which the core polities had enough economic power to motivate the peripheral polities to employ warfare against one another. Within the coastal polities (Haida, Kwatkiutl, Tlingit, etc.), hereditary "big men" maintained their status and power in a system of competitive feasting and gift-giving known as the potlach. These maritime polities were hunter-gatherers with access to valuable coastal food resources (marine mammals, fish and shellfish): they had enough economic power to extract war captives from peripheral polities. The peripheral polities raided one another and sold captives in exchange for food and other valuables. The coastal polities had ranked lineages, slaves, and a very strong ideology of superior birth. Between five and twenty-five percent of the population of the coastal polities were slaves (Mitchell and Donald 1985). This was an unusual kind of core/periphery hierarchy.

The Pacific Northwest shows the existence of economic imperialism in the absence of pronounced commodification. A proto-money (dentalium shells) was used as medium of exchange. But most exchange took the form of reciprocal gift-giving carried out by village heads. This down-the-line trade relocated war captives from distant slave raiders to the maritime core polities. But slaves and their children in the core polities usually became integrated into the local kinship system by marriage and adoption: so, this was a very different kind of system from the better-known chattel slavery based on racism that emerged in and was an important developmental feature of the modern Europe-centered world-system (Patterson 1982). Regarding the issue of distant othering, the ability of the war-captive slaves to regularly become integrated into the core kinship structures implies the absence of a form of distant othering that conceptualizes subordinates as permanently inferior (like racism). This case is unusual both because it was a form of imperialism and core/periphery exploitation that was not based on the project of military power from the core to the periphery, and because it formed a core/periphery hierarchy that was not based on racism or a form of distant othering similar to racism. The integration of former slaves into the kin networks of the core societies implies a lack of distant othering similar to racism.

**Othering in Big Man and Chiefdom Systems**

Human settlements and polities grew, and socially constructed inequalities increased, at first in chiefdoms and then in early states. Big man and chiefdom polities evolved hierarchical forms of kinship in which lineages were ranked and class distinctions between commoners and sacred chiefs became institutionalized. Chiefs were members of lineages that were thought to be more closely descended from founding ancestors and to have special powers over the forces of the universe. Commoners had no legitimate independent claim to land and were thought to be only very distantly related to revered ancestors. This was the birth of class society and it had significant consequences for the social construction of selves as well as close and distant others. Land and nature, rather than seen as a living spirits that all were empowered to placate, became the property of chiefs because of their alleged descent from revered ancestors. Creation myths typically involved stories about ancestor coming out of local caves or geographically dramatic islands. Topophilia was reconstructed as legitimation of power. This provided the basis for chiefs to convert reciprocity into centralized redistribution. Yet, the idea that the leaders and the led were still linked by generalized reciprocity remained. As Sahlins (Sahlins 1972:205) notes, "*noblesse oblige"* hardly cancelled out the "*droits du seigneur*."

To have access to land for horticulture, commoners had to turn over a portion of their production to chiefs. The chiefs had obligations to the commoners, but the basis of unequal exchange was laid in the institutionalization of land ownership. And this was maintained by ideological constructions and by the exercise of institutionalized coercion. Chiefs imposed taboos to regulate resource use, and commoners who violated taboos were punished and sometimes killed. This was the beginning of the tributary mode of accumulation.[5] But the remaining aspects of reciprocity attached to kinship obligations were a limitation on how large and centralized a chiefdom could be. This limitation was eventually transformed by the emergence of states in which the connection between power and kinship was separated, allowing priests and kings to autonomously control resources that were not subject to reciprocity.

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[5] The kin-based mode of accumulation, which Sahlins calls the domestic mode of production, mobilizes social labor by means of a consensual moral order constructed around kinship (Wolf 1982). The tributary mode of accumulation uses institutionalized coercion organized as claims to property to extract rent, taxes and tribute from producers.

Cannibalism and ritual sacrifice of war captives is known from both chiefdom cultures and early states. This presumes distant othering, but there are interesting ironies. Maori warriors ate enemy warriors to gain their power, though once this had happened it became a source of pride for the eater and shame for the eaten. "I ate your grandfather" was a putdown said by the descendent of a warrior who had eaten someone's ancestor. The practice of ritual human sacrifice is frequently found in archaeological evidence from early states. Ethnographic knowledge often implies that being sacrificed when a kind died or when a new temple was erected was seen as a badge of honor, not a statement about distant othering.

**Bronze Age Othering**

Early states and cities first emerged in Bronze Age Mesopotamia in a region that already had paramount chiefdoms and the beginnings of irrigated agriculture. States are different from chiefdoms in that they have specialized institutions of regional control and the central power of the state is less organized around kinship. The form this took in Mesopotamian cities was theocracy in which the temple was the state and both the city residents and the priests were slaves of the city god. The temple economy, which tithed and redistributed food and other goods, was on top of a kin-based economy organized around sharing and reciprocity (Zagarell 1986). Kinship identities were still important, but a new identity had been added –slaves of the city god. The first city to emerge was Uruk, but copycat cities emerged nearby on the flood plains of the Tigris and the Euphrates, each organized around a different city god. The city was the god and the state. The collective identity was organized as membership in an urban community. "Citizenship" was organized as obligations to the temple and rights to participate in rituals and feasting. The temple owned property within the city and agricultural land outside the city. But kin groups also owned both. These early states shared a Sumerian language and culture, but earlier Semitic-speaking migrants from surrounding regions also became residents, forming an ethnically distinct class of workers and servants (Yoffee 1991).

Cuneiform writing was invented in the Mesopotamian states to keep records regarding transactions in the temple. Mental labor and abstract cognition allowed for the altering of the self of the ruling class and distinguished them from the selves of the direct producers (Chase-Dunn and Lerro 2015:Chapter 9).

Because the Mesopotamian flood plain contained little stone, and because trees and timber quickly became scarce, the cities organized long-distance trading with adjacent regions, trading grain and pottery for copper, tin, building and precious stones and other goods desired but not locally available. Uruk organized what was probably the first colonial empire in which citizens of Uruk moved to quarters in distant settlements to carry out this trade (Algaze 1989, 1993). This was also an early example of what Philip Curtin (1984) called a "trade diaspora." Trusted co-citizens or co-religionists take up residence in distant locations to carry out long-distance trade. This has implications for distant othering.

Non-citizens and non-co-religionists are not likely to observe the norm of reciprocity. Trade diasporas emerge in a situation in which trade is profitable but trust and other institutional mechanisms that ensure payment of debts are not in place (negative reciprocity). When minority ethnic groups specialize in long-distance trading they become Simmel's stranger, an internal socially distant other. Trade diasporas lose their function when trust and institutional mechanisms emerge that allow direct trade with distant peoples – what Curtin calls a "trade ecumene." The institutionalization of money and markets allows strangers to interact with and trust one another even though they do not know much about each other or share a lot of cultural assumptions. Thus, does the emergence of commodification of goods and wealth, decrease reliance on cultural consensus and facilitate multicultural interdependence.

Bronze Age Mesopotamia may be the birth place of a set of othering distinctions organized around ideas of civilization, barbarism and savagery. But most healthy human societies see themselves as the center of the universe and this conviction is usually based on beliefs about cultural superiority vis-à-vis distant others. As reported above, sedentary foragers already did this and they had beliefs about the "wild man" that functioned to reproduce what they believed authentic humans to be. Gilgamesh was a king of Uruk in a period in which competing city states were emerging and the palace, home of the battle king, had emerged as an important locus of power contending with the temple (Chase-Dunn and Lerro 2015:Chapter 8). Fragments of early stories about Gilgamesh were woven into single "epic of Gilgamesh" during the late Bronze Age when Gilgamesh was deified as a culture hero during the Third Dynasty of Ur, a Sumerian restoration that occurred after the fall of the Akkadian Empire. The epic of Gilgamesh reflects the competitive relationship between the temple and the palace. Gilgamesh refused to

become the consort of Inanna, a powerful priestess. And Gilgamesh got important support from his Wildman friend Enkidu, with whom he was able to fight and defeat powerful enemies. The Enkidu figure is an interesting instance of the idea of the noble savage. This is a recurring trope in all systems that have a core/periphery hierarchy. Peripheral peoples are often seen as inferior and sometimes as threatening savages, but sometimes they are depicted as noble savages living in a pure state of nature. Distant othering in core/periphery hierarchies seems to include both versions at least since the Bronze Age and they contend with one another. Beliefs about the Wildman are similarly ambivalent in many cultures (Anderson 2005; Bartra 1994, 1997).

Bronze Age Mesopotamia also developed the threatening savage version of the distant other. The accumulation of stored wealth was greater than ever before, and this constituted a license to steal for peripheral nomads. Incursions by nomads from the periphery were an important phenomenon that influenced the development of agrarian empires and cities in several world regions (Thompson and Modelski 1998). The Amorite tribes were nomadic pastoralists who came into Mesopotamia from the deserts of the northwest. In order to prevent their incursions, the Ur III dynasty constructed a Great Wall of Mesopotamia clear across the northern edge of the core region (Postgate 1992:43). This led to an ideology of "subhuman barbarism" that seems to have been somewhat like modern racism. Jerrold Cooper (1983) contends that the Mesopotamians did not generally vilify different ethnic groups, but saw the Gutians as savage, beastlike imbeciles, and the Amorites as curious primitives, less horrible, if every bit as threatening militarily, than the Guti. Cooper's characterization of the Sumerian beliefs about the Gutians and the Amorites suggests that something like racism is not a uniquely modern phenomenon. Of note here, is that the very negative distant othering in Mesopotamia seems to have emerged regarding peoples who were seen as threatening to the core societies. In this case Wallerstein's hypothesis of a connection between core/periphery hierarchy and racism is borne out.

Peter Turchin (2003) argued that the relevant process is one in which group solidarity is enhanced by being on a "metaethnic frontier" in which the clash of contending cultures produces strong cohesion and cooperation within frontier societies, thus promoting state formation and empire formation (see also Turchin (2009)). Turchin focuses especially on relations between polities that face each other on a transition boundary between steppe and irrigated agricultural ecological

zones. His mirror-empires model proposes that antagonistic distant othering interactions between nomadic pastoralists and settled agriculturalists often resulted in an autocatalytic process in which both nomadic and farming polities scaled up their polity sizes (Turchin 2009). This phenomenon is an instance of Simmel's contention that in-group solidarity is produced by between-group competition, especially when the within-group/between-group difference involves a large cultural divide.

**Iron Age and Axial Age Othering: The Rise of World Religions**

Cities and empires rose and fell, but they got larger in episodic events that are known as upsweeps (Inoue et al. 2012, 2015). Empires rose because states developed the military capability to conquer adjacent regions and the governance capability to extract resources from the conquered regions. The law (written rules), bureaucracies, armies, transportation technologies and the emergence of commodified exchange using money facilitated the expansion of empires. Trading city states emerged within the interstices of tributary empires, encouraging commodity production and the expansion and intensification of trade networks (Chase-Dunn et al. 2015). The law emerged as written rules to extend over groups of people who did not share a single consensual moral order. This was functional for states that had conquered and incorporated culturally different groups. Normative order based on consensus continued to exist, but within a framework in which the state proclaimed and enforced laws. The state had now become an institution that could claim to rule over peoples that spoke different languages and had different beliefs. But authority in this situation, is frequently seen as illegitimate and this raises the level of resistance and rebellion. People who had been conquered often saw themselves as subject to illegitimate power. Religious social movements emerged in colonized regions that produced new forms of individual and collective identities and expanded moral orders to catch up with the scale of legal orders.

Peter Turchin (2003:Chapter 9) notes the relevance of Ibn Khaldun's cyclical model of the rise and fall of regimes and the importance of changing levels of *asabiyah* (loyalty, solidarity and group feeling) as old regimes became decadent and new challengers emerged from the desert to form new regimes (see also Amin (1980); Chase-Dunn and Anderson (2005); Anderson (2014)). The phenomenon of peripheral and semiperipheral

march states and their role of these in the formation by conquest of larger and larger empires is related to issues of solidarity and internal othering (Inoue *et al* 2016). As empires got larger inequalities within states also became more extreme. Non-core polities were usually less stratified than core polities in premodern world-systems.

Peripheral and semiperipheral marcher lords are often alpha males who have strong solidarity with their warriors, whereas the elites of urbanized agrarian empires are socially distant from their soldiers and have trouble inspiring their trust. Institutions like the harem undercut class solidarity among men, as many poor men must go without female mates because the king or emperor has so many.

**Sex and Empire**

Walter Scheidel's (2009b) fascinating discussion of empires and harems employs an evolutionary psychology approach to explain why men with power wanted to gain sexual access to large numbers of women; but it also provides an insight into the spreading of a global moral order that can allow distant othering. Wealthy and powerful kings could have both the r and the K reproduction strategies.[6] But why did monogamy become the predominant form of marriage in modern global culture, even for rich and powerful men. Most polities had allowed polygyny (one husband, more than one wife) for a small number of men. Human instincts probably have not changed much over the past 2000 years, but there are few polities remaining that allow wealthy and powerful men to have more than one wife (at the same time). So evolutionary psychology cannot supply the answer.

In subsequent work, Scheidel (2009a) has tried to address what is known about the causes of what he calls the institution of "socially imposed universal monogamy" (SIUM) and its displacement of polygyny[7] in world history. A purely historicist explanation would note that the Romans and the Greeks were monogamous and the European polities that descended from them eventually took over the world and so monogamy was

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[6] In ecology the r strategy is pursued by weeds and most fish. They have a large number of offspring and only a few survive. The K strategy, which is better in more stable contexts, involves having only a few offspring spending a large amount of resources on these as the bearers of the genetic future of the parents. Kings could do both by having a legitimate male heir with their primary wife (the queen) and by also having a lot of children with their concubines.

[7] Polygamy is a general term that includes both polygyny (one husband, more than one wife) and polyandry (one wife and more than one husband). Polyandry exists but is very rare. Polygyny was allowed in the majority of human societies. It attained extreme forms in the gigantic harems of kings in ancient and some classical empires (Scheidel (2009a), but has now been replaced by monogamy as the predominant form of marriage.

imposed by the powerful. Christianity got monogamy from the Romans, as a perusal of the Old Testament will make plain. Christians took over most of the world because of European colonialism and the rise of industrial capitalism. Thereby, the rules of the winners became the global moral order. This is probably the best overall explanation, although Scheidel points out that there is very little research on the history of colonialism and monogamy that would substantiate this account.

Henrich *et al* (2012) have published a study of polygyny and monogamy that suggests several ways in which SIUM is functional for society. This raises the issue of the direction of the causal arrow between winners and monogamy. Is SIUM a competitive advantage in competition among polities, and if so how does that work? Since the gender birthrate is naturally 50/50, elite polygyny deprives some men of wives. This is a well-known problem for modern religious groups who practice polygyny. Many young men have no prospect of marrying because older richer men have taken most of the women. Henrich *et al* (2012) contend that monogamous marriage systems reduce competition among males for mates and decrease the number of unattached males who are an important group in the commission of violent crimes. So, monogamy decreases competition among men and lowers the crime rate. And women also benefit from SIUM because it reduces the average male/female age difference within marriages, lowers the fertility rate, and reduces gender inequality and within-household violence. Henrich *et al*. (2012) also contend that polygyny may have been functional for war-making empires because it increased the size of the pool of unattached young males who could serve as soldiers who were strongly motivated to capture women from other polities. Still, this is only one study on this particular relationship between polygyny and war-making and violence.

But it also likely that SIUM facilitates greater solidarity between elites and their soldiers than does elite polygyny. Greater solidarity between classes is a big advantage in competition among states. Soldiers and citizens are more likely to identify with, and to support, leaders who appear to follow the general moral rules regarding legitimate access to women. This might have been an important source of Greek and Roman advantages over their polygynous opponents. However, once monogamy became sanctified by the religion of the European West, it became part of the cultural package that European colonialism imposed on most of the rest of the world. So economic and military power, as well as possible functional advantages must be an important part of

the explanation of the spread of SIUM. And, once a global moral order has emerged, emulation of global modernity also becomes a factor.

China was never a colony, but the Peoples Republic made polygyny illegal in 1955. Laws prohibiting polygyny were adopted in 1880 in Japan as part of the modernization effort that was the Meiji Restoration. Post-colonial India made polygyny illegal in 1953 (Henrich et al. 2012). Therefore, the global spread of monogamy was a matter of comparative advantage in warfare, imposition by the victors and emulation. This is relevant for our examination of othering because class relations within polities are part of othering and because the expansion of polities and the rise of the West has produced convergence on a global moral order in which cannibalism, ritual human sacrifice and polygyny are proscribed. This reduces the cultural differences upon which distant othering is usually based.

The rise of the world religions[8] during and after the Axial Age[9] display the interaction between social movements and forms of governance. World religions in our sense separate the moral order from kinship, allowing for and encouraging the inclusion of non-kin into the circle of protection. This is the expansion of human rights beyond the bounds of kinship and the expansion of what Peter Turchin (2016) calls "Ultrasociety" – altruistic behavior among non-kin. Marvin Harris (1977) pointed to the frequency of ritual cannibalism practiced on enemies in systems of small-scale polities. In small systems non-kin are viewed as non-humans. They are "enemy others" that are not due any positive reciprocity (1972). The question of who the humans are and who are not the humans is important in all cultures. In small-scale polities the distinction between "the people" and the non-people is usually a mixture of kinship relations and familiarity with a language. The moral order applies to the circle of the people and heavy othering sees the non-people as not fully human.[10] When interaction networks and polities expanded, important debates occurred as to whether newly encountered peoples had souls, or not.

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[8] The term "world religions" in everyday discourse simply means organized religions with large numbers of adherents in the contemporary world. Here we use it in a narrower sense to mean religions that combine universalistic claims with a proselyting mission that is expansive across kinship and language groups.

[9] The Axial Age was a period in the middle of the first millennium BCE in which innovative thinkers and philosophers emerged in several world regions.

[10] But nearly all tribal societies intermarried freely and happily with their neighbors. In some areas the concept of a monolingual person did not exist, because everybody had so many relatives from different tribes. Marrying into enemy or potentially enemy groups was frequent. And marriages were often contracted specifically to turn rivalry into alliance. Children were also fostered out, cross-adopted, or sent out as pages and maids for the same reasons.

The rise of what we currently call humanity as a social construction was a long slow, back and forth and uneven process that continues in the current struggle over citizenship.

World religions locate great agency in the individual person even if it is only the right to declare obedience. To become a member of the moral order a convert must confess and proclaim belief in the godhead. This is the act of an individual person. One's own action is required. Non-world religions usually tie membership to one's birth parents. Salvation is also a further democratization of the afterlife. Now the masses too may go to heaven or become enlightened.

Marvin Harris (1977) contend that the rise of world religions was functional for expanding empires because they included the conquered populations within the moral order of the conquerors. This proscribed cannibalism and in part, reduced the amount of resistance mounted by the soon-to-be conquered. The king makes you pay tribute and taxes, but he will not eat you. However, it is important to point to the fact that it was not simply the fear of cannibalism that brought populations to their feet, it was the totality of the king, his religion, backed by his massive military, and the idea of empire. Nevertheless, most world religions began as social movements from the semiperiphery or the periphery (Bactria, Palestine) that were eventually adopted by the emperors.

Prophets and charismatic leaders mobilized cadres who spread the word orally and with written documents. Sects and communities of believers were organized, eventually producing formally structure churches. Older institutions resisted, often repressing the new movements, but they continue to spread, in some cases becoming conquering armies, and in other cases becoming adopted by kings and emperors. Some of the world religions were monotheistic, but others had no single godhead and paths to enlightenment. Peter Turchin's (Turchin 2016:Chapter 9) depiction of the rise of the world religions during the Axial Age focusses on the importance these moral orders had for the construction of legitimate authority. The king and even the emperor were supposed to also obey the religious commandments, at least in theory. This gave the conquered a claim to membership in the moral community and provided a basis for claims against the authorities if they were violating the rules. Turchin mentions that monotheism puts God above the Emperor, but in China the same function was performed by the idea of the mandate of heaven without godhead. These religions often include a large dollop of magical wishful thinking that gives hope to the downtrodden, such as the promise of immortality.

There is a well-developed and convincing literature on early Christianity as a social movement (Blasi 1988; Mitchell, Young, and Bowie 2006; Stark 1996). The interesting thing already mentioned is world-systemic context of the origin of the movement. Christ and his followers emerged in a context of a powerful Roman colonialism in which the colonized peoples were faced with overwhelming force. The ideology of individual salvation and rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar's, with concentration on the rewards of life after death was a powerful medicine for those who faced a mighty Roman imperialism. Paul's mission to other colonized peoples and the delinking of salvation from ethnic origin was a recipe that allowed the movement to spread back to the poor peoples of the core. And eventually it was adopted by the Roman emperors themselves as a universalistic ideology that could serve as legitimation for a multi-ethnic empire. The prince of peace and salvation ironically proved to be a fine motivator for later imperial projects such as the reconquest of Spain from the Moors and the conquest of Mesoamerica and the Andes (Padden 1970). And as Cora Dubois (2007:116) has said, it also worked for the conquered as a way for them to survive psychologically and to adapt to a world in which their indigenous lifeways were coming to an end (see Chase-Dunn's discussion on "revitalization movements").[11]

Another interesting characteristic of early Christianity is that it was primarily an identity movement. The early Christians did not propose to change the larger social or political order (Blasi 1988). They simply wanted the freedom to be allowed to have dinner together in Christ's name. Repression of the movement by authorities who saw this as a violation of religious propriety was a driving force in the formation of the early Christian communities.

Hinduism and Confucianism are not very proselytizing but they both spread successfully because they provided a new justification for hierarchy and state-formation. The spread of Hinduism to mainland and island Southeast Asia occurred because its notion of the god-king (deva-raja) provided a useful ideology for the centralization of state power in a context of smaller contending polities (Wheatley 1975). Confucianism provided a different justification for state power based on the notion of the mandate of

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[11] While reading about human sacrifice in Mayan religions Chase-Dunn arrived at a village in the mountains above Guatemala City to witness an Easter Parade in which the local indigenes were dressed up as Roman soldiers to escort Jesus on his way to the cross.

heaven and it spread from its original heartland to the rest of China and Korea. It must be clarified that Confucianism by itself is not a religion. Rather, it spread along with Buddhism, while Korea and Japan concurrently retained their shamanistic religions. Confucian morality and belief got incorporated into those as it had into Chinese folk religion and the Imperial cult.

East Asia also saw periodic eruptions of popular heterodox religious movements. Mass heterodox movements are known to have been a recurrent feature of East Asian dynastic cycles (Anderson 2019). During a period of peasant landlessness during the Han dynasty large numbers of poor people were drawn to worship the Queen Mother of the West who grew longevity peaches that, once eaten, made people immortal (Hill 2015). The Queen Mother lived in a mythical palace on a mountain somewhere in the West. This idea seems to have been present as early as the Shang Dynasty, but recurrent eruptions of the worship of the Queen Mother corresponded with periods in which there were large numbers of landless peasants. The attraction of stressed masses, to "pie in the sky when you die" reoccurs in world history.

The world religions developed important new forms of individualism and new kinds of collective solidarity that legitimated and facilitated larger empires and trade networks. These were important steps on the way to modern individualism and human rights.


**Chinese and Japanese Distant Othering**

The Chinese are famous for their low opinion of "barbarians," but of course, the story is more complex. Early groups now called "barbarians" (or the Chinese equivalent) were called by specific ethnic terms that do not appear to have been particularly pejorative at the time. They were simply the names of the groups. Most were neighbors and thus often enemies, and their lifestyles were judged negatively, but they were not quite as uncouth and loathsome as the English word suggests. The literature from the Warring States period and later Han Dynasty histories refers to the Rong and Di in the north and northwest, the Qiang in the west, the Koreans in the east, and the Yue in the south. The Qiang and of course the Koreans are still with us. The Rong and Di were early conquered and assimilated, and we have no idea what languages they spoke. The "Hundred Yue" were a diverse group, speaking a wide range of languages including Tai, Hmong, Mien, and Vietnamese ("Viet" is the Vietnamese pronunciation of "Yue"). They were judged

negatively in proportion to how different their cultures were from the Chinese. Unassimilated ones were "raw" barbarians, Sinicized ones were "cooked."

In the Han Dynasty, the Xiongnu state arose in Mongolia and conquered southward, taking a large slice of northwest China and menacing the entire country. They were the first of many steppe empires to attack China's frontiers. China's attitude toward them were more negative and they were viewed as the other. The Chinese described them as wandering nomads, "people of the mutton-reeking tents," and other unflattering stereotypes. A whole literary tradition developed from those stuck among the supposed uncouth nomads, whether as prisoners, as brides, or as traders.

Over time, and usually through conquest, northwest Chinese grew accustomed to steppe ways, and were laughed at by other Chinese, who saw them as sunken into barbarism with their mutton, yogurt, kumys (fermented mares' milk), and rough clothing suitable for horse-riding (Anderson 1988, 2014).

The steppe nomads developed a low opinion of settled people: slothful, weak, degenerate, eating soft foods that weakened them (Barfield 1989). This stereotype they carried with them into Central Asia, where they attacked Iranic societies, only to learn quickly that Iranians could fight hard whether settled or not (Allsen 2001). A steady drift of Turkic steppe people settling in towns and cities complicated the picture (Allsen 1987).

Once most Yue were conquered and assimilated into south China, Chinese began to regard southeast Asians in an increasingly slighting way. *Man* and *fan* became more prejudicial terms for foreigners, especially southern ones. The Europeans were assimilated to this slot. Famous in English colonial days in Hong Kong and southeast Asia was the Cantonese insult *fan kuai lou* (Mandarin *fan gueizi*), literally "foreign ghost person" but usually translated "foreign devil". However, *fan* was also continually used as a simple nonjudgmental word for "foreign".

Quite separate and distinct are the Chinese myths of the *ye lang*, "wild man." This is the Chinese version of the Tibetan *yeti*. Both are local forms of the universal human belief in wild, hairy, humanoid creatures that do not speak but are powerful and wily—in short, "savages" of the "wodewose" form. They most likely represent local stories inspired by bears, monkeys, or memories of the orangutan (once native to China). In Tibet, hairs and footprints of *"yeti"* are often found, and so far, have invariably turned out to be from bears (Netburn 2017). Unlike even the rawest of raw barbarians, the *ye lang* and *yeti* are not considered to be fully human.

The Japanese in early times competed with the Emishi (presumably related or like the Ainu) and judged them harshly as uncouth and uncultured sorts—true barbarians. They continued through time to regard outsiders as frightening, uncultured, and unpleasant (Brown 1993a, 1993b). As usual, this was most true of their immediate neighbors, especially the Koreans. The Chinese were greatly respected. Truly strange aliens, the Europeans, suddenly and mysteriously appeared in the 16th century, and were widely distrusted—not without reason, since the Portuguese soon started to plot invasion. This led to a closed, xenophobic mindset that dominated well into the late 20th century.

It is often claimed that racism is a modern phenomenon, particularly when genetic makeup is brought into the discourse. Genes are a recent discovery, but earlier ideas about blood and phylogenetic differences in skin color, facial features, hair color and texture, etc. have all been used in distant othering. Cedric Robinson (1983) found evidence of white racism toward Africans in medieval Europe, thus concluding that racism existed before European colonialism and the predominance of capitalism. Still, John Craig Venter, who helped mapped the human genome has argued that "the concept of race has no genetic or scientific basis; and… there is no way to tell one ethnicity from another in the five Celera genomes" (Venter 2001:317) and "skin colour as a surrogate for race is a social concept, not a scientific one" (BBC News 2007) (also, see Fields and Fields (2012)).

The modern story of racism focuses on white racism and the non-white peoples of lands that were colonized by the Europeans. Whiteness itself was created in this process. And the categorization of non-white peoples into different, and inferior races was a complicated process. From the perspective of distant othering this was the construction of superior and inferior identities to justify genocide and exploitation. But the exact terms of the constructions of racial hierarchy took some interesting turns. One of the most important was a dispute in 16th century Spain about whether "Indians" (indigenous peoples of North and South America) had souls. Bartolome de las Casas, a Spanish priest, contended that the Indians did have souls and were fully human. He opposed slavery and the encomienda and is seen as a progenitor of the human rights movement.

Regarding the effects of racist slavery on the slaves and slave owners Toni Morrison (2017) uses several examples to demonstrate how sadistic and morally depraved slave owners (including the wives) were, while claiming the savagery of the

Africans. The most compelling examples come from the writings of Thomas Thistlewood who documents the repeated rapes of African women in the same way he documents his household management details. It is cold, removed and written with no emotion, even making a notation about whether he had an orgasm (see Burnard (2004) for a collection of Thistlewood's writings). Another appalling example was from *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave*, written from the slave's perspective (Prince 1831). In it, is a description the wife of a slave owner beating Mary for a broken vase which Mary was not at fault for breaking. She beats Mary until she is exhausted, takes a break, and gets back to beating Mary. Morrison writes, "how hard they work to define the slave as inhuman, savage, when in fact the definition of the inhuman describes overwhelmingly the punisher" (2017:29). [12]

Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker (2000) contend that the connection between race and slavery emerged in England during the 17th century as Africa became the main source of slaves for New World plantations. Before this, slavery was a legal status that could be held by any person, not just Africans. The story of the incorporation of Africa into the expanding Europe-centered world-system is relevant for our study of distant othering. Africa was an external arena, largely disconnected from the emerging modern world-system in the long 16th century. The earlier discussion of Jordan (1968), Williams (1944), and Davis (1984), help illuminate the particular, racist vehemence toward Africans while also keeping in mind that post-emancipation, racism toward Black people persisted, became institutionalized and endures around the globe. It is also important to note that racism continues to inform core/periphery relationships and involves not just Blacks but people of color.

The plantation complex was an organizational structure based on the Roman latifundium in which slave labor was used to produce agricultural commodities. Its use in the production of sugar cane began on islands in the Mediterranean and then spread to islands in the Atlantic adjacent to Africa and then to the Americas (Curtin 1990). The Atlantic slave trade arose to supply labor to the plantation economies of the European colonies in the Americas. Africa was a source of labor power obtained by buying slaves that were captives of African polities specializing in capturing and selling people

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[12] The same point is made in John Stedman's narrative of his time in Surinam putting down a slave revolt and Aimee Cesaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* (1972).

(Rodney 1970, 1972). This was a phase of plunder and parasitism that had severe consequences for African societies and produced a racialize core/periphery hierarchy. Most of Africa was colonized by European states only in the last quarter of the 19th century. At the Berlin Conference on Africa in 1884 the European states parceled out Africa. This was an effort by the British to peacefully incorporate rising Germany into a world economy in which Britain was still the hegemon. But it gave the Europeans a stake in colonial economies within Africa and transitioned from plunder to parasitism (Wallerstein 1986).

There is a huge gulf between the traditional rivalry of the French and English – fighting a lot but seeing each other as fully human, and frequently shifting residence, intermarrying, and admiring each other's achievements –and the extreme racism seen in the enslavement of Africans and Native Americans by European colonists. Most othering is somewhere in between. There is a vast range, with societies distributed along a complex gradient.


**The Rise of Secular Humanism and Science**

Humanism and science are core ideologies of modernity. Usually these are understood as products of the European Enlightenment but they both have roots in the world religions of the Axial Age discussed above. And secular humanism was much more central to both Buddhism and Confucianism than it was to the "patriarch in the sky," religions of the West.  As we have already mentioned, world religions make a crucial step toward individualism when they separate kinship from the moral order by erecting a moral community in which an individual can become a member by means of confession or self-declaration. Locating this power at the level of the individual person is the beginning of modern individualism.  The world religions all did this.  The rise of humanism also raises the issue of how human nature is conceived and where the boundaries between the human and the not human are placed. These boundaries continued to evolve as polities and trade networks got larger.

Secular humanism and science are still challenged by religious fundamentalism, and these are sometimes counter-hegemonic ideologies that mobilize resistance to contemporary global institutions.  Though religious fundamentalism is a recurrent phenomenon, it is notable that it did not play a very important counter-hegemonic role in the world revolutions of the past. However, since the demise of the Soviet Union and

the secular socialist and communist movements of the 20th century, religious fundamentalism has taken an increasingly counter-hegemonic role (Moghadam 2009, 2012; Wallerstein 2008).

Nationalism is perhaps the most important collective identity in the contemporary world-system. Ethnic identities have long emerged and ethnogenesis has been an important process since the Stone Age (Barth 1969; Hall 1984). Benedict Anderson's (1991) important study of nation-building focusses on the importance of literacy and the printing press as communications technologies that facilitated the growth of what he called "imagined communities."[13] Nationalism is constructed in different ways, and its strength varies across countries and over time within countries. Civic nationalism is based on shared histories, traditions and customs. Racial nationalism is based on beliefs about hereditary similarities. Patriotism is a sentiment that motivates cooperation and sacrifice for the nation. As with other collective identities, rituals, symbols, songs, political constitutions and historical memories are important for producing and reproducing membership. The solidarity produced by nationalism is a vital component of the ability of countries to compete with one another, especially militarily.

Furthermore, the deeply institutionalized nature of nationalism is an important feature of global society that demonstrates the power of socially constructed solidarities that are beyond the scope of genetically produced altruism. Nationalism is viewed as part of the global moral order but so is individualism, which justifies a degree of distance from nationalism and patriotism. Individuals are supposed to be loyal to their nation, but they are also supposed to be loyal to their families and to themselves. Hyper-nationalism seems to reemerge in periods in which the global political economy is in crisis, as in the first half of the 20th century and the early decades of the 21st century. Fascism in the 20th century was primarily organized around hyper-nationalism.[14] It can be understood as a reaction against internationalism and global cosmopolitanism, that gains strength when

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[13] Our only quibble is that there never have been unimagined communities. All human collective solidarities are imagined in the sense that they are socially constructed identities. Humans have lived in a virtual world of linguistic categories since the emergence of language.

[14] W.E.B. Du Bois (1947:23) argued that fascism owed its conception to colonial regimes in Africa: "There was no Nazi atrocity—concentration camps, wholesale maiming and murder, defilement of women or ghastly blasphemy of childhood—which Christian civilization or Europe had not long been practicing against colored folk in all parts of the world in the name of and for the defense of a Superior Race born to rule the world"

there is economic and political turmoil. People go back to earlier collective identities when they feel threatened or afraid.

The abolition of slavery and serfdom, decolonization and the extension of citizenship have been important modern processes that have had large consequences for both within-society and between society othering. The French Revolution was a blow against monarchy and the divine right of kings and for the legitimation of governance from below --- popular sovereignty. The extension of the franchise to men of no property and to women and the abolition of legal slavery were important developments in the further institutionalization of human rights. These developments were made possible by social movements from below that were mobilized by elites that were competing with other elites, and by energy regime transitions that reduced the reliance on unskilled human labor. The core/periphery hierarchy has not been abolished and global inequality is still huge, but neocolonialism is still an improvement over colonialism.

Individualism is another pillar of modernity. Possessive, honorific, socialist and anarchist individualism are forms that vie with one another in the context of social changes that increasingly locate legitimacy and responsibility at the level of the person (2009). Beck and Beck (2002) call the organizational and cultural features of this transition "individualization." It corresponds with the reorganization of work and occupations that has produced the replacement of the proletariat with the precariat (Kalleberg 2009; Standing 2011, 2014). The human rights movement supports the idea that individuals are unique and should be empowered. This strong emphasis on individual freedom has been an important legitimation for capitalism, but it does not follow that individualism should be attacked by those who wish to organize a more humane and less ecologically destructive form of human society. Human rights and individualism are enemies of distant othering.

The current wave of anti-immigrant sentiment and racism can be understood as a reactionary response to neoliberal globalization that scape-goats certain people for problems caused by neoliberal capitalism. Distant othering is back in the form of white nationalism, shithole countries, terrorists, and MS-13 animals. Alternative forms of progressive cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism are in retreat, as is neoliberal globalization. We are entering a period of deglobalization corresponding with U.S. hegemonic decline. But the long and uneven upward trend toward the extension of

citizenship and humanism is likely to continue after the current downturn has had its day.

What about the future of distant othering and racism? Transhumanism, cyborgs and machines that are smarter than humans are going to provide opportunities for more distant othering in the future. And sadly, scientific racism is still around. Herrnstein and Murray (1994) are still infamous. More recently we have the work of Cochrane and Harpending (2009) who summarize the evidence from the HAPMAP study that shows that biological change among humans has speeded up over the past 10,000 years contrary to what most social scientists believe, but then they go on to speculate about how this could account for uneven development of different world regions and inequalities among contemporary groups. The implication is that existing inequalities have been caused by genetically-based differences in intelligence. The winners really are smarter and the losers are getting what they deserve. Fields and Fields (2012) call it by its correct name – *Racecraft*, a jedi mind trick used to justify exploitative, repressive action.

Color-blind racism and the idea of racial formations are mainly restatements of the existence of what has long been called structural racism – a focus on unequal outcomes that does not add much to our knowledge of what causes these outcomes.

While we are in the midst of a downturn in the expansion and institutionalization of human rights, the long-run evolutionary trend has been toward more inclusive solidarities and the extension of citizenship to the whole human species. While racism is still used by politicians to mobilize fear and support we think that humanity will eventually construct a democratic and collectively rational global commonwealth in which conflicts can be resolved peacefully. This is by no means inevitable because we have developed the technical capability to destroy ourselves. This is possible, but unless it is thorough, the humans will survive and will eventually get back to something like the situation we are now in. We are hopeful that the 21st century will not be as bad as the first half of the 20th century was. The long run trajectory of distant othering gives us hope.

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