

The Modern World-System IV: Centrist Liberalism Triumphant, 1789-1914. By Immanuel Wallerstein. University of California Press, 2011. xvii, 377pp. Bibliography. Index.

Recent publications in the fields of sociology, social anthropology and history seem to give importance for multidisciplinary approaches transecting each other's boundary of discipline. A good number of scholars representing these three disciplines do not seem content to limit their endeavor with a mere task of borrowing an approach from one another. Current trends unveil a surge in synthesizing historical and sociological approaches for a comprehensive analysis of the social world. "Without the combination of history and [social] theory," argues the renowned social historian Peter Burke⁸, "we are unlikely to understand either the past or the present." Immanuel Wallerstein's multivolume work addresses the aforementioned urgency to realize unison in epistemological ground between history and sociology. The current publication is part of the series titled "The World System," which the author has been working on since 1974. Like the earlier volumes, number four also fits into a methodological synergy of history and sociology for which the author's reputation seem to rest on. If "Social reality is always and necessarily both historical...and structural," (xi) Wallerstein plainly argues, that there has to be a common ground between the two disciplines wherein methodological synergy can be possible.

The central theme of the current volume is the triumph of liberalism as an ideology and consequently the advent and later consolidation of the Liberal state in some countries of Western Europe and in the United States during the nineteenth century. The first two chapters of the book are entirely devoted for setting the background and presenting the two pillars of the central theme, the liberal state and what it seems its tentacle—liberal ideology. The rest three chapters of the book attempt to uncover the inherent tension among forces of different economic and social interest groups during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

As in the previous volumes, the author craftily identifies a world system in his current volume. This time, however, the system is a global culture propelled by the centrist triumphant liberalism. It has an external shell delimited by chronological watersheds, 1789 to 1914. The whole system has also internal components of various levels of which relationship towards the whole and among the parts is based on internal tensions and contradictions in what it seems a dialectical interplay. The author has skillfully unfolded a multitude of contradictions that deeply rooted in the modern capitalist world system. One can observe structural tensions at different levels of this world throughout the nineteenth century. We can observe these tensions along the lines of citizenship, discourse versus praxis, vying for global hegemony, protectionism versus disguised *laissez-faire*, liberal states versus non-liberal states, center versus periphery and so forth.

Though the author argues that the structural relationship embedded in the current volume manifests hierarchical nature of structural components—viz., center, semi-periphery and periphery; the author's claims in this volume are relatively weak and fuzzy at least in a global context. Even if the application of this conceptual toolkit is appropriate and helpful to understand the alienation of the working class, women, and some ethno-racial groups within the core states; its historical validity seems highly precarious insofar as the inclusion of none European polities, but USA, within the same schematic outline is considered.

Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992. A review by Hugh L. Guilderson in *Theory and Society*, Vol. 24, No. 6 (Dec., 1995), pp. 877-881 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/657822>> Accessed: 01/01/2012

Structurally also, apart from explaining the dynamics that led to the consolidation of the liberal state and liberal ideology deep within the core, the book does little to show what role those presumed to be situated on the periphery played in the construction of 'Geo-culture'. "By a geo-culture," the author defines it as, "values that are very widely shared throughout the world-system, both explicitly and latently." (277) Far beyond confining himself with the task of presenting the structural transformation that merely took place at the heart of the core zone during the two chronological watersheds of the present volume, it would have been more appealing if the author had also told us as to how the transformation mentioned earlier reached into the other zones outside the core; such as, Africa and Asia. If division of labor was the basic structural component which was instrumental in holding the world system together like a network—as well indicated in the previous volumes, then one would be forced to ask which integral component of the 'Geo-culture' played the role that was previously filled by international division of labor.

Despite its limitations, the book is well researched, uses an abundance of written and visual sources. Though the author largely confines himself to accessible British and French historical sources, tribute should be paid to the author for digging into the rich British and French archival materials to supplement his theoretical analysis of the Modern capitalist World System during the nineteenth century. Above all, it could be argued that the book has achieved its objective, in delivering historical and sociological synergy for the study of the common territory.

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