

## **A World-Systems View of Human Migration Past and Present: Providing a General Model for Understanding the Movement of People**

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### **Abstract**

Since *Homo erectus* left Africa over a million years ago, to the constant transfer of people between contemporary states, migration has been a key human response to environmental, social, political, and economic changes. Using world- systems analysis initially defined by Wallerstein and others to explain the rise of modern capitalism, we adopt a macro-view that sees human societies as interacting entities with constant contacts that engender cultural transformations across great geographic distances. We argue that such a systemic approach clearly indicates that globalization is not a new phenomenon, but rather an extension of old processes. We discuss several general mechanisms that characterize migration within a systemic context. First, migration creates ripple effects which are felt over great distances as successive groups move and impinge on the territory of their neighbors; the potential effects can stretch across continents. Second, migration patterns tend to be cyclical. Population movements relieve stress on local resources, and it takes time to build to another critical threshold. Third, since the creation of the state at about 3500 B.C., boundaries, frontiers, and ethnic character have become critical identifiers. Contemporary states grapple with the process of ethnogenesis (creation of ethnic identity) and its consequences for defining citizenship, with its attendant rights and obligations. Vast increases in transportation efficiency have heightened the fluidity of boundaries and complicated the processes of ethnic identification. A world-systems perspective facilitates a comprehensive view of past and current migration, and thus places modern issues in a historical context.

Most of those engaged in policy debates continue to make a number of assumptions about migration, assumptions that are contradicted by much of the recent research.

Lillian Trager 2005a: 31

### **Introduction**

Immigration issues flood contemporary news stories: Hispanic immigration into the U.S. and Congressional attempts, so far failed, to deal with it; the persisting guest worker issue of Turks in Germany; recent issues of Muslim immigrants in France, Netherlands, and the U. K.; and in the U.K. the movement of peoples from throughout the Commonwealth into Britain. Not often discussed as immigration, but clearly part of it are massive movements of peoples around the world fleeing political unrest; one might phrase this issue in terms of voluntary versus involuntary movement. Then there are the issues of internal migrations, primarily from rural to urban areas. Many have noted that within China this movement represents what most likely is the largest single movement of people in human history (e.g. Wang and Zuo 1999).

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We argue that there is a vital need for a long-term perspective on these and related issues. By long-term, we do *not* mean decades, not centuries, but millennia. Humans spread from origins in Africa to populate the entire globe. When viewed from this time scale, movement is normal for the human population as a whole, not the exception—even while the experience of most individuals is to stay put. Further, the persistence of languages and cultures shows that movement, when it has occurred is typically a group process, typically not a matter of individual choice.

But is movement the same as immigration? Immigration implies leaving one social unit and entering another. Once humans invented the state, initially in Mesopotamia some 5,000 years ago, and probably elsewhere several times, movement became immigration, or invasion. Indeed, we might gloss invasion as immigration on steroids! Still, we find many migrations in human history. Many, if not most, were contested, often with extreme violence.

So, what is new today? The term “globalization” is on everyone’s lips, but with no real consensus about what it means (Albert 2007; Chase-Dunn 2006; Gills and Thompson 2006; Robertson 1992, 1995; Robertson and Scholte 2006; Rosenberg 2005; Sklair 2002, 2006) other than something like “all the frantic changes happening in the last few decades.” Our argument here is that many of the processes of globalization, and especially those of immigration, are not new. Yet, some are. How do we recognize what is new? What are the consequences of these new processes? And, apropos of the Round Table title, what are the benefits and detriments of them, and for whom?

Debates about globalization and world-systems analysis entail discussions of how long these processes have been in operation. Which, if any, of these apply?:

- to the Neolithic (10 to 12k years ago [Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997; Chase-Dunn 2006]);
- to the invention of states [5k years ago (Frank and Gills 1993; Gills and Thompson 2006)];
- to the “prehistory of the modern world-system” (about 1k years ago [Abu-Lughod 1989]);
- to the rise of the modern world-system, (about 500 years ago [Wallerstein 2004]);

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- to the 19th century (Chase-Dunn et al. 2000; Boswell and Chase-Dunn 2000),
- or is it a quintessentially late 20th century phenomenon (Sklair 2002, 2006)?

Our answer is, all of them!

The answer, in fact, hinges on what one means by “globalization.” Much of the discussion is permeated by “global babble” or “globaloney.” If it means simply interactions of societies shaping the histories of individual societies and the reverse, then Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997) have the “correct” explanation. If it means the tendency of states to expand and interact and to shape each other’s histories, then one can bring Frank and Gills (1993) into the foray, adding a wrinkle about how old capitalism is. If one means increasing volume of international trade that has important effects on the histories of individual states, then one must examine carefully Janet Abu-Lughod’s (1989) analysis. If one adds political and military globalization, then one must also consult William Thompson (2000a, 2000b, 2000c; Gills and Thompson 2006). If one adds the further caveat that this is exclusively capitalist trade, then one must bring in the original Wallersteinian versions of world-system analysis (Wallerstein 2004; Hall 2002).

Pursuit of answers to these vexing questions only from a presentist position – if presentist extends back a few centuries – will lead to distorted answers. Historically this is because the last few centuries have been unusual in many ways in human history. The modern or industrial era is one characterized by very rapid social change compared with much of the history of the last ten millennia or so. A presentist approach can easily lead one to assume nation-states are normal, whereas, they are an invention of the last few centuries. Similarly, one could be led to assume that precisely defined borders are normal, when in fact they, too, are a recent invention, and a highly flexible one at that. Put more abstractly, a long-term view changes many “constants” into variables. A refined part of our argument is that many of the social, political, cultural, and economic problems associated with immigration can be located in the specific condition of these long-term variables in the modern era. More pithily, the modern state is the problem.

This is becoming clearer to many today precisely because various contemporary globalization processes are changing these recent constants (again), thus, highlighting their variability. Key components here are the speed of communication, transportation, and travel. A personal example

illustrates this. Hall's spouse's grandmother emigrated from Poland to the U.S. early in the 20th century. During her life she returned to Poland twice, at considerable expense both in time and money. In contrast, in the first decade of the 21st century a Filipino/a living in the U.S. can readily return home in one day's time [presuming on-time flights!] for a wedding, a funeral, a christening, or just to visit. The cost in terms of time and money is such that this person could make such a trip once or twice a year – as opposed to a lifetime – with relative ease. This could help to maintain the homeland culture and resist assimilation, or more likely promote a multicultural identity. Add to this the capacity for almost instantaneous communication through telephone or internet, maintenance of continuity with the home culture is now possible in ways never before possible in human history. THIS is new! But it is not all that is new.

Ours is a complex argument, covering a great deal of time and many changes. Much of it will of necessity have “sound bite” quality. Yet all of it is backed by considerable empirical evidence and a great deal of careful analysis. Our references will guide interested readers to those sources.

After a brief description of terms related to mobility, we present a chronological overview of human migration, followed by discussion of how such movements occurred in particular areas. We then explore models for understanding migration, with a focus on world-systems analysis (WSA), and conclude with a statement on how WSA provides a comprehensive, and we think clearer, picture of the linkage between migration and globalization because it permits the consideration of deep historical trends.

### **An Excursus on Mobility**

This section is very much a working discussion, meant to be thought provoking, and by no means definitive. Part of our claim is that humans have always moved. Indeed, nomadism of various sorts might be the “normal condition” of human beings, and not fixity. Even so, we can distinguish among nomadism, mobility, migration, and immigration. Glosses on the terms might be as follows:

- **nomadism**: movement within a fixed circuit, but with no permanent or long-term residence[s];

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- **mobility**: movement from one fixed location to another, or from one circuit of nomadism to another, movement into new territory for the movers;
- **migration**: intentional movement to a new location; this is often a group process; the new territory might or might not already be occupied by others;
- **immigration**: intentional movement of individuals or groups to a new, already occupied location, with an intention to stay for a long time (multiple years) or even permanently.

Obviously, in a Venn diagram, these would be overlapping terms, that share much, but have distinct “centers of gravity.”

Some might, somewhat reasonably (though we would demur), argue that immigration is restricted to the “modern era,” the last few centuries. Rather, we argue that discussions of mobility over millennia, as we attempt here, must encompass all of these terms. Care must be taken not to build theoretical conclusions into definitions, and to avoid historical “upstreaming” or “downstreaming”: i.e., reading the present into the past, or the past into the present.

That said, drawing on many readings (e.g. Trager 2005a, 2005b; Wang 1997a, 1997b) we find that mobility is a multidimensional concept. Our own methodological predilection is for continua rather than polar “types.” In that vein we suggest that at least the following are relevant continua, again somewhat overlapping. We suggest endpoints and approximate midpoints. We note that while endpoints are distinct, middle zones of these continua often are not.

- voluntary ← hungry/starving peasant → forced (slaves, conquered peoples, refugees, etc.)
- permanent ← sojourners → temporary
- trade diasporas: MNC [multi-national corporations] transfer ← expatriate movements → entire communities
- one way ← → two way (e.g. remittances and/or return migrations)
- distant ← intermediate → neighboring;
- (to the Americas from Europe in 1600s ← Turkey to Germany → Mexico to U.S.)

- origins: social ← exhausted resources, induced climate change → non-human, ecological/climatic change
- groups ← extended families and/or chain migration → individual
- across major “boundaries” ← frontier zones → internal migration

In short, mobility, and even migration, is much more complex than a simple enumeration of push and pull factors. The authors in the Trager collection (2005) show how in many ways even supposedly “simple” contemporary, economic processes such as remittances often derive from, are part of, or build or rebuild a variety of social relations. Also running through the preceding list is an inherent idea that mobility is a dynamic process, and not a one-time event. Intentionality is also quite variable; some temporary immigrations may, after decades, turn out to have been temporary; others intended to be temporary end up becoming permanent, as with Turkish “guest workers” in Germany (Harff and Gurr 2004).

### **Theoretical Background: Capsule Summary of World-Systems Analysis**

Since good summaries of world-system analysis abound (Babones 2006; Chase-Dunn and Babones 2006; e.g. Denmark et al. 2000; Chase-Dunn and Anderson 2005; Gills and Thompson 2006; Hall and Chase-Dunn 2006) we will not recapitulate them here. Rather, we present essential elements of the approach that are relevant to migration issues.

First, the “world” in world-systems does not mean global or planetary, rather a self-contained world. Obviously, no place is entirely isolated. But there can be steep gradients of density of interactions, and this is what the boundary means. In fact, world-systems have at least four sets of boundaries, in ascending order of size: bulk goods networks, political-military networks, luxury or prestige good networks, and information networks. These only coincide on small islands or the contemporary planetary world-system. By system we mean, and here we converge to some degree with Paul Eberts (2007), sufficient density of interaction that events in one place in the system have important effects on other parts of the system such that they shape its construction and change, and vice versa. Systems cycle or pulsate, or expand and contract or expand more, then less rapidly. There are other cycles within systems: dark age cycles of about 600 years; Ibn-Khaldun cycles of about 300 years; long cycles of about 100 years; and

Kondratieff cycles of about 50 years. How these cycles interact, combine, augment and impede each other are questions of much active research (for some good examples see the Hornborg volumes).

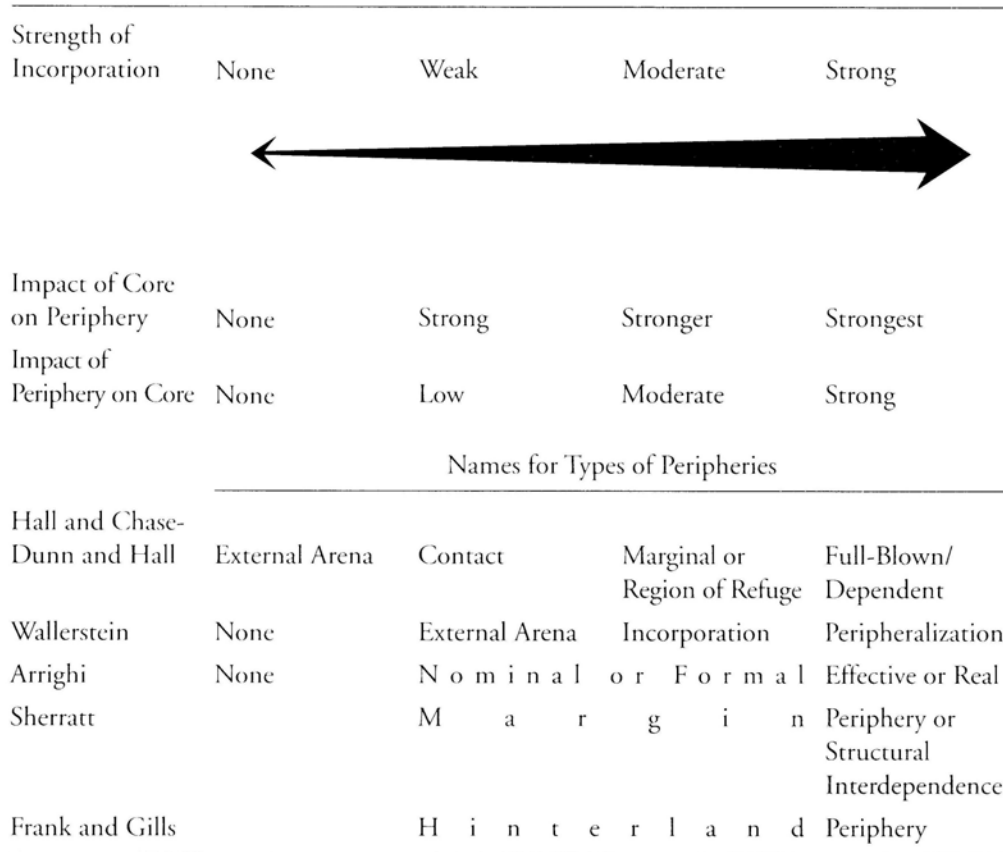
Often these cycles can become synchronized. Thus, West Asia and East Asia have been synchronized over the last two millennia (see Chase-Dunn et al. 2006 and literature cited therein for detailed evidence). Interestingly, it takes very low levels of contact between two regions to synchronize their cycles. While far from certain, evidence is mounting that luxury trade over the Silk Roads and diffusion of ideas have been sufficient to produce this synchronization (Hall and Turchin 2007; Turchin and Hall 2003). An interesting theoretical and empirical issue is when do two separate systems merge to become one larger system. This is where the different types of boundaries become salient. Arguably, Afroeurasia has been one system at the prestige goods and informational level for well over two millennia, and following Sherratt's argument (2003) possibly for 3 or 4 millennia. At the political-military level, Eurasia became one system under the Mongol conquest in the 13th century. At the bulk goods level, system unity only occurs in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

A consequence of expansion is that new areas and/or new peoples are incorporated into systems. Note here a multifaceted set of issues. If an expanding system, state, or empire is seeking new people – typically for slaves or workers – and those people flee incorporation, that is a “defeat” for the system and a “victory” for the people, albeit one that generates forced migrations which can have considerable subsequent consequences. If on the other hand a system, state, or empire is seeking new territory, flight of indigenous or current inhabitants may actually facilitate expansion. Of course, captured people, typically slaves, brought into an expanding system are another type of forced migration (e.g., the Babylonian captivity of the ancient Hebrews, and the African slave trade).

We also note that incorporation is a variable process whose strength runs along a continuum from minimal (not much beyond contact) to full-blown subordination of peripheral actors (Figure 1). The process is asymmetric in that core areas or states tend to have more impact on peripheral areas than is the reverse. Here we note that many of the exceptions occurred between mounted

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pastoralists and sedentary states. Incorporation is also to some extent reversible, but tends to be “sticky” and to move sporadically from less to more intense incorporation (for more details see Hall 2006; Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997, ch. 4).



**Figure 1.** The continuum of incorporation (Source: Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997:63). Used by permission of Westview Press.

Typically, once core-periphery differentiation has developed, core areas tend to exploit peripheral areas, with semiperipheral areas being exploited by core areas, yet exploiting peripheral areas in turn. Again, there are exceptions. Kohl (1987) notes that in ancient systems it was often more sensible to bring workers to the materials than the reverse. This is because finished products are often lighter and cheaper and easier to transport than raw materials. Thus, a core area might set up a mining community consisting of skeletal supervisory personnel and many slaves brought from the core to the periphery. This again is a forced migration of sorts, and one that can resemble both a trade diaspora and a migration. Here, too, we encounter an old

problem in archaeology, how to distinguish such movements from diffusion of ideas. Archaeologists have made some progress in disentangling these two processes (Burmeister 2000; Tsetskhladze 2003). Still, the record at times remains far from clear. We also note that in recent centuries core exploitation of peripheral areas is almost always one way, but not so in the ancient world.

### **History of Mobility**

Humans have been on the move since they first appeared in East Africa (recent account NYT Wade 2007). By at least 10,000 years ago they had spread to nearly all parts of the earth. But that was not the end of movement; it has continued apace since then, so much so that mobility might be considered the “normal” condition, and sedentary stability the exception. This movement, however, slowed somewhat with the development of sedentary states with monumental architecture some five millennia ago in Mesopotamia. Note, the operative word here is slowed, not stopped.

### **Prehistory, Protohistory, and Ancient Worlds**

Some fundamental facts demonstrate the role of migration in what Richard Klein (1989) calls the human career. The first hominids, the taxonomic group that includes modern humans and our fossil ancestors, arose in equatorial Africa between 4 and 6 million years ago (mya). One can argue that the first major migration that humans made was from the arboreal environment where their earlier primate relatives had evolved to the terrestrial niche, a move that necessitated physiological and social changes. Hominids are identified by a series of distinctive traits (some derived from their arboreal ancestors, others that developed as they became adapted to ground dwelling), among which are the following:

- (1) A cranium that becomes increasingly vaulted as the frontal lobes of the brain develop over time.
- (2) Rotation of the eyes to the front of the skull, providing stereoscopic vision for better depth perception.
- (3) A whole series of skeletal adaptations associated with bipedal locomotion. These include differential size in vertebrae, and a double s-curve in the spine. The pelvis becomes short and wide to support the weight of the internal organs. The structure of the lower limbs changes to

accommodate upright posture: the femur angles in slightly, the knee joint becomes robust, and the foot develops an arch and three-point support structure to facilitate walking and running on the hind limbs.

Combining the increased intelligence and curiosity with the ability to travel long distances efficiently through bipedal locomotion (unlike all other primates), hominids were predisposed to traverse significant distances.

A look at the distribution of hominids over time shows how humans extended their territory significantly in the course of their evolution. While there are several forms that have been discovered in the past decade that may extend the hominid line back to 5-6 mya, there is more agreement on slightly later forms. The Australopithecines originated ca. 4 mya in East and Central Africa. The famous Lucy find, dated at 3.6 mya, represents the *afarensis* species that was clearly bipedal. Finds in Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Kenya date to a period ca. 1 my before the first stone tools (from Gona in Ethiopia, 2.6 mya). These early human ancestors occupied savannah and forested regions. By about 2.5-2.0 mya, other Australopithecine forms (*africanus* and *robustus*) were present in South Africa as well as the east African region (Jurmain et al. 2005: 268-278). Since *A. afarensis* is not found in the south, we must assume that these early humans migrated over a substantial distance to reach the southern edge of the continent.

It is with the emergence of *Homo erectus* at about 1.8 mya, however, that hominids truly spread widely. Substantially larger in stature (Nariokotome skeleton of a young adolescent indicates a height of 5' 6"), and with a cranial capacity (750-1250 cc) more than twice that of earlier forms, *H. erectus* developed a more complex tool kit and adapted to a broader range of environments throughout the Old World. These first humans to leave Africa spread remarkably quickly. By 1.7 mya, *H. erectus* was in the Caucasus (site of Dmanisi in the Republic of Georgia), and on Java by 1.6 mya. Other important fossil sites are Gran Dolina in northern Spain (850,000-780,000 ya), Ceprano in Italy (900,000-800,000 ya), and Zhoukoudian in China (ca. 400,000 ya) (Jurmain et al. 2005: 300-312). So by 400,000 BP, humans could be found from one end of the Eurasian landmass to the other, as well as Africa. Several forces probably propelled this expansion. One may have been population pressure (see more on this below). It would not have

taken a great deal of time for *H. erectus* groups to have saturated home regions given the primitive foraging techniques at their disposal. A second critical factor would have been large scale climate change. During the Pleistocene epoch in which *H. erectus* existed, the earth experienced four major glacial advances and a series of minor fluctuations that radically altered climatic regimes and environments. The glaciers that covered much of northern Europe and Asia pushed climatic zones southward, so that the desert swath from the eastern Sahara, to the Negev and northern Arabia was more hospitable. Early humans probably followed both the lush vegetation and the animals that migrated into southwest Asia. In the warmer interstadial periods, regions such as the Caucasus and southern Europe would have provided inviting venues. During the glacial maxima, sea levels dropped and created the land bridges that permitted people to walk from southeast Asia onto the extended landmass that later became the Indonesian archipelago.

There is a continuing debate about the degree to which these dispersed human populations retained any contact. Some scholars argue that in-place evolution among the various *H. erectus* populations spread throughout the Old World led eventually to the emergence of anatomically modern humans (amh), *H. sapiens sapiens*. Interbreeding between contiguous groups created a large shared gene pool from which amh evolved at about the same time throughout the Old World (Wolpoff 1999; Wolpoff et al. 1994). Others contend that amh evolved in Africa at ca. 200,000 to 150,000 ya, migrated out of the homeland and with their superior intelligence and complex material culture out competed and eventually replaced other hominid forms (including the Neanderthals in Europe and the Near East, and late *H. erectus* in East Asia) throughout the Old World. This so-called replacement theory (aka Eve theory, based on data from mtDNA transmitted through females) thus requires a second major migration out of Africa. Whichever of the two approaches one endorses, it is clear in the archaeological record that *H. s. s.* was an intrepid explorer who occupied all the major landmasses and islands in a relatively short time. In addition to Africa and Eurasia, amh made their way to Australia by 33,000 BP (and perhaps up to 15,000 years earlier), the island continent that was never connected to the Asian landmass even when sea levels dropped up to 90 meters in the coldest periods of the Pleistocene. Thus, *H. s. s.* developed navigational capabilities that radically expanded their potential for migration. Perhaps Polynesians possessed the most remarkable seafaring abilities of any prehistoric people since they expanded from their home area in the western Pacific to New Zealand, the Hawaiian

chain, and that remote speck known as Easter Island, all by the middle of the first millennium AD. The situation in the Mediterranean presents an interesting contrast. Although people of the southern European and north African littoral zone were aware of the many islands in the Mediterranean and visited some of them in the Upper Palaeolithic to exploit certain resources such as the obsidian on Melos in the Aegean (Renfrew and Aspinall 1990; Perlès 1987: 142-145) as early as 11,000 BP, significant colonization of the islands did not occur until the Neolithic (Broodbank 2006; Cherry 1990). The reason for this delayed occupation seems to be the limitations of island environments. Even the larger islands (Sicily, Sardinia, Cyprus) do not provide sufficient space and food resources for a self-sustaining population of hunter-gatherers; the average population density of one person/km<sup>2</sup> for foragers means that groups could not reproduce themselves. Farming, on the other hand, dramatically expands the carrying capacity, and thus the population density, permitting sustainable communities to exist even on the small islands that dot the sea.

The other major area that witnessed human occupation for the first time with amh was the circum-polar region of the far northern hemisphere. By 35,000 BP, human groups resided successfully in northeast Siberia, despite the bitter conditions of the Wisconsin glacial episode. Some of these people eventually migrated across Beringia, the land bridge connecting Siberia and Alaska. Whether one argues for an early arrival (prior to 20,000 ya, and perhaps as early as 30,000 BP) or a late crossing (after 14,000 BP) of people into the New World, it is a remarkable fact that humans had reached the southern tip of South America by ca. 11,000 BP (Fagan 2005: 86). The peopling of the Americas, then, is one of the most dramatic episodes of migration in human history.

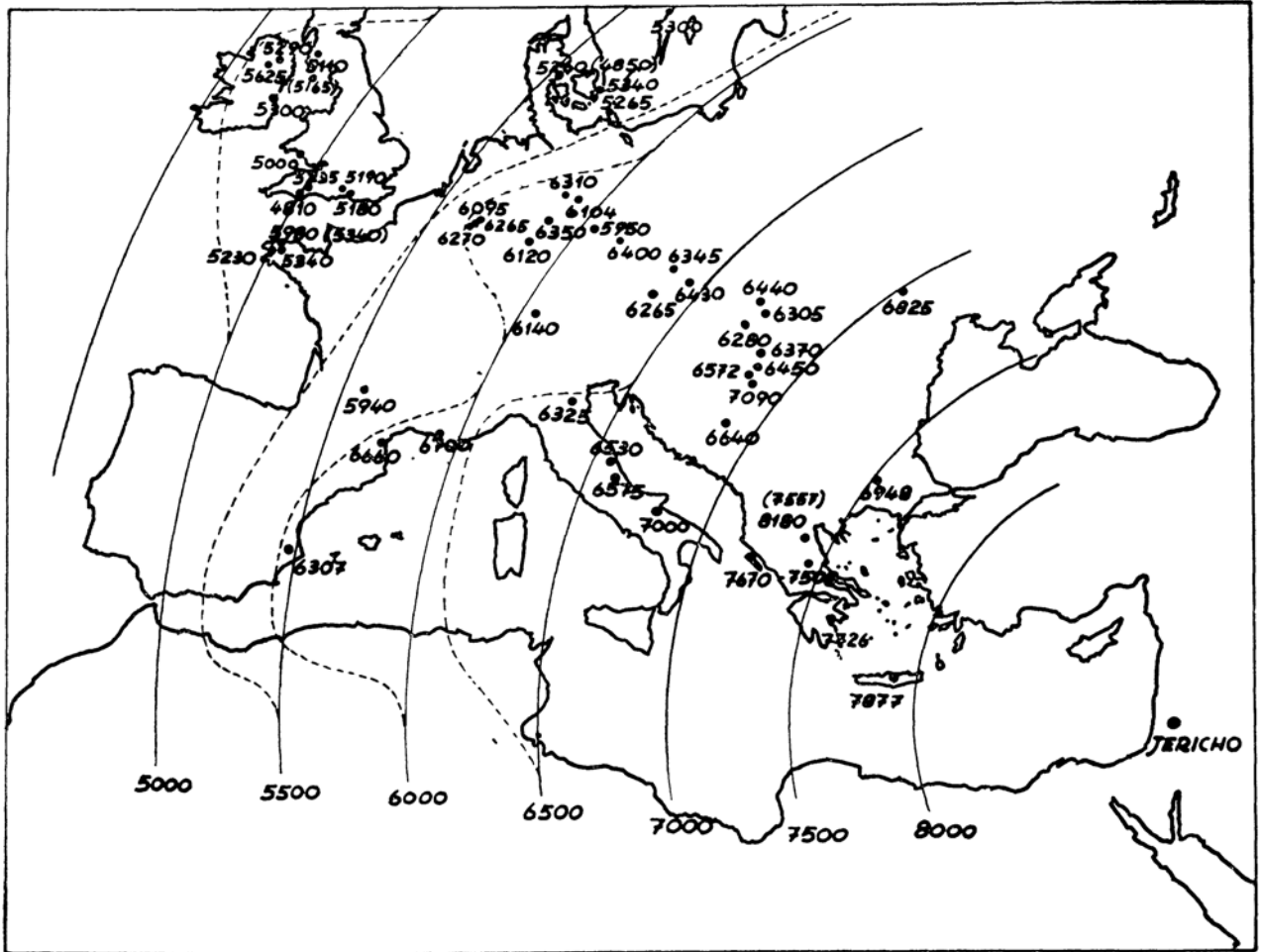
To demonstrate the mutual effects of migration and interaction in the late prehistoric and historic periods of the Old World, we will focus on Europe, the Near East, and the Mediterranean. What we see in these regions at various times is population movement engendered by a congeries of factors including climate shifts, social evolution, trade, and increase in human numbers. In this paper, we focus on several particular periods to demonstrate this process. The first period is the Neolithic, when people adopted agriculture and all its accoutrements (i.e., village-based sedentary settlements, adoption of domesticated plants and animals, unilineal kinship systems,

craft specialization, and significant land clearing). While farming initially reduced residential mobility, its success over time led to population increase and forced groups to move. Ammerman and Cavalli-Sforza (1971) described this process in their wave of advance model. Using archaeological data from a number of sites in the Near East and Europe, they argued that early farmers migrated from the Levant into Anatolia and then into the Balkans (Figure 1; see also Renfrew 1987 who equates early farmers with proto-Indo-European speakers who moved out of their homeland in southern Anatolia). The next major advance was along the Danube drainage into central Europe and along the Adriatic littoral. Finally, farmers reached northern Europe and the Iberian peninsula. What Ammerman and Cavalli-Sforza demonstrated was that the movement of agriculture involved the systematic, regular migration of people; the average movement was 1 km/yr, but probably actually occurred on a generational basis. That is, as the population of a Neolithic farming village grew, after one generation the group had to fission and the excess population had to move beyond the range of the parent settlement so that each group had sufficient cultivable land. One key question has been the nature of interaction between the migrating farmers and the native hunting and gathering peoples into whose territory the former intruded. Lawrence Keeley (1996; Keeley and Cahen 1989) has argued persuasively that the farmers of the Linearbandkeramik (LBK) culture who occupied the north European plain over 6000 ya did so aggressively. He and his colleagues have identified a series of fortified LBK villages on the farming frontier. This evidence dispels the common notion of early farming cultures as pacific. One can understand why indigenous foragers would have reacted aggressively to the presence of farmers; the clearing of land for cultivation eliminated the forested setting on which the Mesolithic peoples of central and northern Europe depended. The migration of Euro-Americans into the Great Plains of North America encountered native resistance for the same reason—what seems like empty space to a farmer is necessary open area for a forager. In general, what we see in the Neolithic is explosive population growth, followed by significant movement across a broad landscape.

A second episode we wish to explore is the migrations of people during the Bronze Age.

The development of bronze metallurgy coincided with the emergence of complex society and urbanism (i.e., civilization) in the Near East ca. 5500 BP. As Gordon Childe (1950) indicated, this urban revolution marked the rise of the state as a socio-political entity. A key characteristic

of these early states, and one that we still witness in the modern world, was the shift of emphasis from kinship to territory as the principal marker of identity. In this process, the early city-states and later empires placed great emphasis on borders as dividing markers between political units. In ancient Mesopotamia, each of the city-states (e.g., Ur, Eridu, Uruk, Isin, Larsa) had its own political leaders and institutions despite a common language and culture. But the borders and the states they defined were flexible and changed significantly over time. With these early states and all subsequent ones we witness what some world-systems analysts (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997) refer to as pulsation or oscillation, in which the political units expand and contract in fairly regular cycles. In Mesopotamia, for example, the nascent states of the Early Dynastic period are followed by the establishment of the first empire under Sargon (a process of large-scale incorporation in world-systems terms), then political disintegration after this Akkadian era. In Egypt we see a similar pattern: the Old Kingdom, followed by the First Intermediate Period, then the Middle Kingdom, Second Intermediate Period, and the New Kingdom. Population movements played a significant role in these events. Mesopotamian texts recite numerous instances of raids by mobile pastoralists who are beyond the political control of the city-states. In Egypt, the invasion and occupation of the Hyksos that ended the Middle Kingdom was eventually repulsed by Ah-mose I and Thutmose I by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century BC. About 400 years later, Egyptian chronicles record the advance of the Sea Peoples, a massive population displacement that probably contributed to the collapse or at least disruption of civilization in the Aegean, Anatolia (Hittites), and Levant (Pritchard 1958: 173-175, 185-186).



**Figure 2.** Map showing the expansion of Neolithic people, with Jericho in the Levant as a starting point. Dates are in years before present (BP) (after Ammerman and Cavalli-Sforza 1971: 685, fig. 6). Used with permission of Blackwell Publishing.

Migration was not always in the form of invasion. The extensive trade networks of the Bronze Age involved the establishment of trading posts, such as the Mesopotamian outpost at Hacinebi in Anatolia (Stein 1999); there were also emporia, such as Bahrain in the Persian Gulf that attracted merchants from Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley (modern Pakistan). While we do not know the exact route or mechanism, amber from northeastern Europe appears in Late Bronze Age contexts in Greece. Perhaps some of the most telling evidence comes from a shipwreck excavated off the southwest coast of Turkey. The Ulu Burun wreck has yielded several tons of copper in ingot form, ivory, myrrh and frankincense, a gold Egyptian scarab of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Near Eastern cylinder seals, Cypriot and Syro-Palestinian pottery, and a variety of other

durable goods and foodstuffs (Bass 1986; Haldane 1993; Pulak et al. 1992). We would submit that substantial numbers of people may have accompanied these goods; at the very least, the cosmopolitan nature of the Ulu Burun finds suggests a level of acculturation that obfuscated political boundaries. Based on the presence of Cretan forms in pottery, town planning, and artistic styles, Malcolm Weiner (1984, 1991: 31) suggests that Minoans were present in the Late Bronze Age Cyclades and Dodekanese in the form of “casual, unofficial, small-scale migration involving merchants... or an expanding Minoan elite seeking to carve out baronies, or a Cretan nobility exercising loose diplomatic control.”

As we move beyond the Bronze Age, two other groups require mention in this context. In the first millennium BC, the Phoenicians and then the Greeks undertook extensive colonization, perhaps with an initial economic incentive enhanced by population pressure in their respective homelands that had restricted amounts of arable land and other key resources. The Phoenicians established major ports in Cyprus at sites such as Kition (modern Larnaka), and then eventually spread across the Mediterranean. Their major colony of Carthage eventually set up its own commercial and political empire with holdings on Sicily, the Balearic Islands, and mainland Spain. Beginning in the eighth century BC, Greek city-states (*poleis*) founded colonies in the Adriatic, Sicily (Syracuse chief among them), southern Italy, France (Marseilles), and along the Black Sea coast. The ties with the mother cities became tenuous rather quickly, demonstrating again the problem of maintaining political allegiance between units, a fact that should not be lost on Americans given their relationship with the British crown in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. For the Mediterranean, the Phoenician and Greek exploits act as a prelude to the integrated world-system of the Pax Romana when Rome incorporated the whole basin into a network of allies, provinces, and client states. The Roman solution to the problem of political identity was to set up the *limes* in Europe and the Near East. But it also involved granting of citizenship to many of the *foederati*, often in exchange for military duty. The Roman frontier fort system was at best a limited success, since the border was frequently crossed by various barbarian groups. The great migrations that we often term the barbarian invasions were the culmination of a series of contingent events spanning the entire Eurasian landmass. For various reasons that may include climate change that affected grasslands, mobile pastoralists in eastern and central Asia were forced to move in search of pasture for their herds. In this fashion, groups like the Huns, and

later the Magyars and Mongols, impinged on their neighbors, setting them in motion like a chain reaction of billiard balls hitting each other. The Goths, Vandals, Franks, and others who crossed the Roman frontier were often pushed from the east. Under such great pressure, borders and the identities they tried to preserve had little hope of surviving.

The lesson to take away from this historical excursion is that borders or frontiers tend to be permeable and often confound the best efforts of states to maintain them because people are constantly on the move. The problem that the earliest states encountered in defining a territory and maintaining its integrity is still one that modern nations face (on borders and identity, particularly as these concepts apply to Europe, see Donnan and Wilson 1994, 1999, and Bellier and Wilson 2000).

To summarize, population movement in the past had the following main impacts:

- (1) Human exploration of virtually all ecological niches, and habitation in many.
- (2) Exploitation and in some cases overexploitation of local and regional environments (see Chew 1997), which in some cases engendered additional migration.
- (3) Genetic linkages between human populations around the world to an unprecedented degree for a terrestrial species (Cavalli-Sforza and Cavalli-Sforza 1995).
- (4) Among the key factors that motivated people to migrate are population pressure and climate change.

## **Eurasia**

We would like to explore some developments by region, beginning with Eurasia. According to Kristian Kristiansen (2007: 249):

Today it can be stated with some certainty that the third and early second millennia B.C.E. was a period of major social change over wide areas in Eurasia (Kuzmina 2002 [2003]; Sherratt 1997), and further that this change was in part linked to a complex pattern of interaction, ranging from travel and small-scale population movements to large-scale *migrations* (emphasis inserted).

Kristiansen further notes much of the Pontic steppe was transformed into steppe by a new combination of pastoral herding with some agriculture (2007: 162).

In an interesting brief book Andrew Bell-Fialkoff et al. (2000), provides a selective history of the role of migration in the development of Eurasia. Bell-Fialkoff undertakes a comparative analysis of Europe and China emphasizing the interplay of sedentary states (which he dubs civilization), pastoral nomads, and nonstate forest peoples (which he dubs forest tribes). He draws heavily on the model presented in Thomas Barfield's (1989) extensive analysis of Chinese-pastoral confederacies. This analysis is supported by many others (Kradin 2002, Kradin et al. 2003; Kuzmina 1998, 2003; Mair 1998, 2006; Sherratt 1997, 2006).

Among many other points, Barfield argues that steppe confederacies grew in tandem with, and in response to, Chinese prosperity. A gloss of his rich and nuanced argument is that one cannot gain wealth by "mugging" poor states. When the Chinese state collapsed, typically due to internal problems, the steppe confederacies also collapsed. A second point Barfield emphasizes is that the Mongols are exceptional in their expansion and conquest. Again as a gloss, they were too good at extortion through intimidation and conquered rather than exploited many states, thereby building the largest, albeit short-lived, empire in the history of the world.

Bell-Fialkoff then notes, following both Barfield (1989) and McNeill (1987), that whenever the Chinese state collapsed the ensuing chaos on the steppe initiated a complex series of conflicts and migrations that unleashed many migrations or invasions of Europe. Until early in the common era, these migrations, following what McNeill calls the steppe gradient (1987, p. 266), were largely chain migrations. It was only later, possibly as late as the Mongol Empire, that the migrations went all the way from China to Europe. If, in fact, the "Huns" are part of the Hsiung-nu, then the Hunnic migrations would have been the first.

Europe eventually was able to withstand these migrations and was less tied to them than China for several reasons. Key was European geography which put it at the periphery of the weaker end of the steppe. Other important factors were the multi-state organization of Europe, and the early eastward migration of Germanic peoples to Eastern Europe and Russia which served as a first

line of defense against migrating pastoralists. Also key was the geography of Europe which essentially forced pastoralists to become sedentary farmers, due to the lack of pasture and the abundance of arable land, once forests were cleared.

Bell-Fialkoff further claims that the two prime motivators of migrations were population growth and trade. The allure of state produced goods to nonstate peoples, whether from the forests or the steppe, fostered interest in trade and or raiding. This summary, more a gloss, does not do justice to his complex argument which recognizes nearly all of the continuua of mobility sketched above. His point is that population growth and trade deeply motivated migrations, but were mitigated and modified by a myriad of other factors. Still, these migrations shaped much of the history and socio-cultural evolution of Eurasian societies for several millennia. This is the sort of argument also made by world-system theorists (see Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997: ch. 7; 2000; Hall and Chase-Dunn 2006).

One set of factors that plays an important role in Eurasian migration is the propensity for people and animals to move laterally, east-west, as opposed to north-south. This was most recently and forcefully argued by Jared Diamond (1997). His argument is that movements tend to follow bands of similar ecological conditions, that is, ecotones. A study by Turchin et al. (2006) confirms this tendency. A key exception is the north-south diffusion along the Andean corderilla in South America. But as many have noted, in the Andes ecology is vertical, not directional. North-South diffusion actually supports Diamond's claim, in that it follows ecological zones.

Under many of these early conditions, calculating populations, and derivatively the proportions of people moving versus stationary cannot be done with any real precision. Still, it is quite reasonable to argue that the proportions of peoples moving were much larger than the movements in the last few decades which have produced a new focus on migration.

Here we might review the arguments of Chase-Dunn et al. (2000) that demonstrate that there was a strong wave of globalization in the late nineteenth century which has been repeating in the late twentieth and into the early twenty-first century. These waves of globalization correspond quite well with waves of European migration to much of the rest of the world.

In short, recent bursts of migration, as well globalization, are not all that new. Rather, they are the most recent rounds of what appear to be somewhat cyclical processes. None of this is meant to deny the very important consequences of contemporary migrations. As many of the Round Table papers show, current migrations raise many issues around development, industrialization, demographic transitions, and their interactions with state development, national identities, and assorted environmental crises.

### **Other Parts of the World**

Eurasians, of course, have had no monopoly on mobility. The history of the first peopling of the Americas remains quite controversial. Two waves of migration are no longer in doubt: one about 10 to 13 millennia ago, and another around 3 millennia ago. While evidence remains minimal and controversial, some argue for earlier migrations at 20 or even 30 millennia ago (see Mann 2005 for a detailed accounting). Then there are the massive demographic shifts that accompanied European expansion into the Americas. First are the immense depopulations of Native peoples primarily due to disease, but exacerbated by war, colonization, and genocide. Then there is at first a trickle, then a steadily growing stream of European migrants to the Americas which went through several waves, but peaked in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Similarly, Africa has not been static. As with the Americas, there has been a great deal of mobility (see Kopytoff 1987 for a summary). Then there are the immense consequences of the slave trade wherein many millions of people were forcibly removed from Africa, and untold other millions killed or displaced to other parts of the continent as the effects of coastal slave trade rippled far into the interior of Africa. It is interesting that in the case of Africa it was indigenous diseases that slowed European invasion, conquest, and colonization until the nineteenth century when the means of controlling those diseases and their vectors were discovered.

Similarly, the stories of the peopling of Southeast Asia, South Asia, Australia, and Oceania are complex stories, only beginning to be well understood in recent decades.

Throughout all these complex migrations, much more than the numbers of peoples changed. Technologies, cultures, means of making a living and adaptations to different environments also traveled.

### **Anthropology of Mobility and Identity**

Too often students of migration focus on cultural disruption and issues of assimilation, to the exclusion of other, and at times more significant social processes. Following the work of Fredrick Barth (1969; also discussed by Paul Eberts 2007) movement either requires or promotes new adaptations. Thus, when steppe pastoralists move into European forest zones they must abandon pastoralism and take up farming. This might better be thought of as ecological adaptation than assimilation. Furthermore, as Barth argued, people often change their identities when they cross such ecological divides. Lattimore (1940) and others have documented how Chinese/Han and Mongolian peoples changed identities as alteration of climate required the shift from pastoralism to farming, or the reverse.

Trager (2005b) and many contributors to her collection document that much more than money moves from migrants to the home community. Indeed, flows are often two-way. Food preferences, religious practices, kinship patterns, and so on often follow migrants and not rarely diffuse into host populations. It is arguable that this may be more common in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries because of the ease of communication and travel between home and host countries. What is not clear is whether this is a short on long-term process. The assimilation of 2nd and 3rd generation immigrants in the U.S., and among Turkish guest workers in Germany would point to this as relatively short-term. Bear in mind that changes that take one to four generations are short-term compared to centuries or millennia of change. On the other hand, evidence of persistent diagnostic aspects of trade diasporas (Curtin 1984) and preservation of Jewish traditions among some “crypto-Jews” in New Mexico (Tobias 1992) indicate that home country traditions and practices have residues that can last for centuries. Bell-Fialkoff (2000) notes similar ambiguities for many Eurasian migrations. Clearly, any claim that assimilation is inevitable or impossible is too extreme. The issue, rather, is when and under what conditions one or the other is more likely.

These more localized and “micro” processes are the stuff of many accounts and studies of mobility and immigration, but as Bell-Fialkoff’s analysis suggests there are larger, “macro” patterns that overarch these more local changes.

### **Macro Models and Mobility**

From the above it is clear that factors like climate, both macro and localized, geography, resources and so on shape migration patterns. It is also clear that social, cultural, economic, and political factors play major roles. One problem with many theories that connect migration and social, cultural, economic, and political factors is that they are rooted in one state or nation, or at best in “international relations” models. While all such models have their uses and values, none can encompass larger systems that inter-relate over large areas like Afroeurasia, or the world.

Not surprisingly we use world-system analyses as ways of approaching these larger issues. We begin however with some disclaimers. First, we do not claim world-systems analysis is the only, or even necessarily the best macro model. There may be others. Paul Eberts (2007) argues for a version of general systems analysis. In our first reading of his argument, however, we see more convergence than divergence in our approaches. Second, if one considers only Immanuel Wallerstein’s seminal article (1974a) and book (1974b), as critical as these have been in creating a new paradigm, one has missed the vast majority of world-systems analysis, a point Wallerstein (2004) himself makes in his recent overview of the topic. Third, the various attempts to extend world-systems analysis into times preceding the “long sixteenth century” (1450-1640), transform many assumptions in the original model into empirical questions. Further, many constants, must be seen as variables, and many historical givens must become problematized (for examples see Babones 2006; Chase-Dunn and Babones 2006; Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997; Kardulias 1999; Denmark et al. 2000; Hall and Chase-Dunn 2006; Hornborg and Crumley 2007; Hornborg et al. 2007; Gills and Thompson 2006). Fourth, all of this suggests that world-systems analysis is actually a paradigm made of up of many competing theories and approaches. And finally the issue is not whether the paradigm is correct, or which theory within it has the most explanatory power, but rather the kinds of questions they all lead scholars to ask, and how we use those answers to amend, modify, or replace existing explanations.

Much of the literature on this consists of “straw-man” attacks against the original Wallersteinian version, which was never intended to apply to pre “long-sixteenth-century” times. These attacks often ignore later attempts starting with Chase-Dunn and Hall (see especially 1997 for review up to that time) to turn theoretical assumptions to empirically researchable questions. Phil Kohl (1987, 2003) provides some succinct summaries of these debates.

What, however, is clear is that in the evolution of societies, interactions with other groups were often the key component shaping and driving change. In regard to the appearance of pastoral nomads in central Eurasia Andrew Sherratt (2003, p. 247) argues:

The societies of the steppes, and those of the agricultural and increasingly urban areas to the south, were very different in character, and became more different over the three millennia discussed here [fifth to second millennium BC]. But this differentiation *was not the outcome of isolation*, on the contrary, *it was a result of their interaction that each was able to develop further along its own lines*. Even when they shared domesticated animals and new traction technologies, they used them in very different ways (emphases, and note added).

This is a paradigmatic example of what Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997) call core-periphery differentiation. As they argue, how, when, and under what circumstances differentiation transformed into core-periphery hierarchy is a vexing empirical problem. Still, the key point is that differentiation grows from, and is intimately connected with, the nature of systemic interaction (a point echoed by Kohl [2003]).

### **World-Systems, Globalization, and Migration: Some Lessons**

What lessons can we draw about the interconnections of world-systems, globalization, and migration? One insight from world-systems analysis of ancient empires is that globalization, or at least globalization-like processes are quite old, almost as old as states, some five thousand years or so. We find some interesting structural parallels. While an expanding system creates some degree of uniformity or homogeneity throughout itself, it simultaneously creates

differences. That is, some processes, structures, etc. replicate throughout the system creating greater homogeneity. Yet simultaneously these same processes create differentiation as each local zone adopts, adapts, and adjusts to local conditions. Also while primary flows of adjustment and change move from core areas to peripheral areas, the flow is always **two-way**. In part this derives from efforts of peripheral peoples, especially newly incorporated areas, to resist system forces and processes. Also many new goods and practices return to cores from peripheries (e.g., see what Crosby [1972] calls the Columbian Exchange, in which maize, beans, squash, tomatoes, and other New World domesticates found their way to Europe, while wheat, barley, horses, cattle, and sheep were transplanted to the Americas).

System forces, processes, and structures can induce migration from one part of the system to another. This can range from extreme force as with captive slaves to voluntary attempts to gain the benefits of “civilization,” that is, core or more-developed areas. A key difference between ancient and modern processes seems to be that in recent centuries migration has been more and more an individual, family, or chain process whereas in ancient times it was more of a group process. Bell-Fialkoff (2000) notes throughout his account how “civilizations,” or dominant core states acted as attractors to “barbarian” outsiders both as sites to plunder and destinations for relocation.

What is distinctive about contemporary globalization is the speed with which it occurs, and the relative ease of movement from anywhere on the planet to attractive core areas. We see many people from Latin America, and especially Mexico, migrating to the U.S. In Europe we see members of former colonies migrating to their European “home countries.” While the building of the modern world-system and contemporary globalization has made European languages, especially English, the lingua franca of much of the world, many countries after pursuing the “imagined community” (Anderson 1991) of cultural uniformity for a century or so now find themselves facing new challenges of multilingualism and multiculturalism. This has shown up most dramatically in the recent migration of various Islamic peoples into core areas.

Furthermore, with the speed of current migrations, and especially with the ease of return visits, and maintained contact to “home” via telephone and internet, cultural identities are more readily

maintained now than even in the recent past of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, with this contact many other cultural practices and norms flow and are reinforced, a point empirically underscored by the many contributors to the Trager (2005) volume. Not insignificantly, all these processes are shifting the matrices of emerging, shifting, amalgamating, and differentiating identities (Cornell and Hartman 2007) and the attendant identity politics that often accompanies these changes.

We illustrate these points by “yes, but” critique of a recent book by Hatton and Williamson (2005) on immigration over the last two centuries. That is, we do not seek to contradict or deny their findings. Rather, we seek to show some reinterpretations of those findings when they are placed in a larger context. They note (pg. 9) that around 1820 there was a major “flip” in European migrations. Before that time 82 percent of migrants to the Americas were “slaves, servants and convicts.” From 1820 to 1880 “free migrants accounted for 81 percent of the 16 million who moved to the Americas.” This, indeed, is a remarkable change. If we follow what happened from 1880 on and add in Chase-Dunn et al.’s (2000) insights to changes between 19th and 20th century globalization, we see even more radical change. There have been attempts to curtail migration, and in the late 20th century a rise in migration, but from different sources.

Throughout their discussion there is a [false] assumption that migration is individual, or by individual families, and they apply economic analysis to account for shifts. The problem is that most migration in human history has been group migration. Further, most of it has been forced, if by “forced” we include changes in economic and ecological conditions. With these false assumptions, Hatton and Williamson (and many others) miss a much larger point that migration that is primarily individual or family, is a relatively recent development (again “recent” meaning the last five centuries or so). The underlying problem here is a failure to note that this “recent” change itself demands explanation.

Hatton and Williamson also note that “to the extent that the absorbing economy is subjected to periodic industrial crisis...immigration will reflect it...” (2005: 19). Where we demur on this assessment is that this has always been the case, but that in ancient times “periodic industrial crisis” should be replaced with “cyclical processes” in general, of which industrial crises are only

the latest manifestation. Again the same underlying problem that misses the point that while industrial crises are in one sense new, they are in a more profound sense only the latest manifestations of cyclical processes deeply rooted in the nature of world-systems.

If many of these cyclical processes have changed in the last half millennium, then there are considerable grounds for at least asking how they might change in the future. With the advent of global warming, the filling of the earth, and the spread of industrialization to the less developed world (albeit, sporadically and unevenly), such changes may be in the near future, years or decades, not centuries. Thus, taking many factors and processes that have not changed, or not changed much, in the last few centuries as both “normal” and unchanging, we blind ourselves to possible future changes, some of which may be radical.

After detailed and thoughtful examination of migration processes Hatton and Williamson (2005: 391) conclude:

There is not now, nor was there ever, too much global migration. The world would clearly be better off with more migration. The problem is not that there is too much global migration, but rather that we do not yet have effective ways whereby the gains from the global migration can compensate the losers. The problem is not global migration. The problem is lack of political will.

Here, too, we demur, but not to disagree with their sentiment, which we heartily endorse. Rather, it is to note, yet again, that this is not new in the last century, or last two centuries, or since Columbus got lost in the Americas, but ever since there have been states and peoples have migrated. And this is where we break with conventional economic analyses, and even conventional system analyses. Inequality and exploitation have been built into world-systems since states were first developed. Certainly, the intensity, the mechanisms, and even at times the directions of inequality and exploitation have changed, but they have ever been part of state-based world-systems.

Thus, these inequalities and exploitations, are not flaws in the system, they are inherent in the system. In this sense the claim that the current imbalance is due to a lack of political will is somewhat naïve. To find “effective ways whereby the gains from the global migration can compensate the losers” means to change the very nature and functioning of global capitalism. If, as many people have argued, labor were allowed, or more likely, to seize, the same rights of mobility claimed by capital and capitalists, the entire capitalist enterprise would be forced to shift to some sort of new system. It would lead to vast shifts in identity politics, and would play havoc with the nation-state system invented with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, and would render many current winners, losers. These losers will, and have, resisted such change. Witness the near hysteria about migration in some quarters in the U.S. Here it is useful to take an indigenous view: those who are not “Indians” are ALL illegal aliens in the U.S.

In a nutshell, then, migration is not a problem or flaw in the system. It is part and parcel of the system. It cannot be “fixed” with a little more political will. It can only be fixed by major system change, which would require maximum political will. Short of that, the best we can hope for is some degree of amelioration, which would be a good thing, but would not solve the problem.

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