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On: 23 August 2012, At: 00:07

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



New Political Science

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cnps20>

The Modern World-System IV: Centrist Liberalism Triumphant, 1789-1914

Gregory P. Williams^a

^a University of Connecticut, USA

Version of record first published: 21 Aug 2012

To cite this article: Gregory P. Williams (2012): The Modern World-System IV: Centrist Liberalism Triumphant, 1789-1914, *New Political Science*, 34:3, 428-431

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07393148.2012.703869>

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In concluding, the authors emphasize several points: the mobilization of negative images of the poor as a conservative political tactic, the persistence of this stigmatization across time, and perhaps their most distinguishing contribution, that neoliberalism has not transferred power from the government to the private market; rather it has re-figured governmental power in service to market goals. This transformation is at the core of the neoliberal turn and, in poverty governance, subjugates all other values—family, self-determination, and even dignity—to the demands of the labor market. Finally, they call, ambitiously, for a re-imagining of poverty, inspired by Amartya Sen’s vision of deprivation as a political rather than primarily economic position that will provide structure for a poverty governance that aims towards democracy and social justice.

I remain concerned that the authors’ structuring of their theory suggests that, no matter how important, race can be construed as an output, rather than an input in the functional development of neoliberal paternalism. However, the authors remain consistent in their emphasis on the racial implications of the neoliberal turn at every point, assuaging worries that this, like some neoliberal critiques, might be shunting race in an effort to hone in on the marketization of human interaction. Overall, the authors make a significant contribution to empirically grounded, theoretically driven analysis of contemporary poverty governance.

WENDY L. WRIGHT

Rutgers University, USA

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/073,93148.2012.70,3868>

Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System IV: Centrist Liberalism Triumphant, 1789–1914*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011, 377 pp.

For his earliest professional writing, Immanuel Wallerstein sent a letter to Joseph McCarthy posing as a devotee who hoped to circulate copies of the senator’s speeches. In truth, his devotion was to understanding the nature of conservatism in America: its origins, its character, and the emergence of what C. Wright Mills called practical conservatism. Now in his eightieth year, Wallerstein has returned to ideology in a fourth volume of his magnum opus. Two decades have passed since the last installment, in part due to the vast literature on the nineteenth century, but the wait has been worthwhile: not since the first volume has Wallerstein produced an installment so interesting. His subject is centrist liberalism, the geoculture of capitalism.

The previous three volumes (published in 1974, 1980, and 1989) covered the origins, consolidation, and expansion of modern capitalism. When finished, Wallerstein intends to have written the history of the capitalist world-economy in its entirety. Originally outlined in four parts, he now plans, “if [he] can last out” (p. xvii), a fifth volume on the system’s final expansion (1873–1968/89) as well as a possible sixth (or seventh) volume on the end of capitalism (1945/68–2050). Readers might find this ambition ironic, but the structural crises of the capitalist world-economy are well in place. Their character can be described without having reached the system’s ultimate conclusion.

To write the history of an era, the first question is always: what story should be told? Wallerstein addresses this question directly, since so many books about the nineteenth century focus on events like the formation of capitalism or Europe's industrial revolutions. Wallerstein argues that the "key happening" was the installment of centrist liberalism as the geoculture of the world-system. It encompassed the dominant "ideas, values, and norms" that "constrained social action thereafter" (p. xvi). While the French Revolution taught the masses that sovereignty now resided with the people, the aristocracy responded with conservatism, which was an attempt to stall political change and conserve the rate of placement as a second choice to the outright repeal of popular sovereignty. The bourgeoisie responded with liberalism. They promoted sovereignty "managed prudently," defined by its proponents as the proper speed of placement (p. 137). In practice, this meant that bourgeois interests would be represented without allowing the masses to gain control. By contrast, the workers responded with radicalism, which called for the immediate placement of sovereignty in the entire public.

The story Wallerstein tells is a tragedy: centrist liberalism came to dominate early forms of conservatism and radicalism. Today, they exist only as derivations of the center, as a conservative liberalism and a radical liberalism. It is not, however, a story of bourgeois revolutions, since the notables (aristocratic and bourgeois classes) used liberal principles of inclusion and equality to maintain their advantage over the masses. Liberalism's great advantage was that it appeared to be all things to all people. In this sense, the modern world-system is different than all previous historical systems, not in the presence of inequality (which has been a historical constant), but in that it is the first system in history to maintain inequality amidst a narrative of equality. In fact, the confusion over various liberalisms—economic, political, social behavioral (or, libertarian)—"has served liberal ideology well, enabling it to secure maximal support" (p. 5). Tested in Great Britain and France, the notables used liberalism to divide the lower class, forcing workers, women, and minority ethnicities to fight separately (and against one another) for inclusion.

As Wallerstein tells it, liberalism, conservatism, and radicalism had some striking similarities. All used anti-state rhetoric even though they would require a strong state to advance their goals. All ideologies were essentially oppositional: conservatives opposed the French Revolution; liberals opposed conservatism; and radicals opposed liberalism. Each blamed its opponent for causing present problems and blocking resolutions. Each proclaimed itself as the solution. In addition, all three claimed the people were sovereign, yet disagreed on *who* the people were: the liberal subject was the individual; the conservative subject could be found in traditional groups like the church; and the radical subject was the whole of society. This uncertainty over state-society relations in part explains why the exact number of ideologies is unclear and how odd alliances occasionally occur (like the totalitarian combination of conservatism and socialism).

The liberal state helped the ruling elite establish a structure that appeared to be popular in orientation but was in fact hostile to the interests of the masses. With Napoleon, foresighted conservatives began to see liberalism's strategic potential. Since they could no longer ignore popular claims to sovereignty, a move to the center was in their interests. Liberalism over time came to embody the beliefs not only of the bourgeois merchant but the "enlightened conservative" as well (p. 92).

Wallerstein's frontispiece, a 1914 photograph of Emmeline Pankhurst's arrest in London, represents how the notables benefitted from the divisions they struck within the masses. In fact, each of the eight images placed throughout the book reveals a different aspect of citizenship, ranging from the revolutions of 1848, the localization of political debate, and the place of workers, women, and Blacks in society. They show the centrality of citizenship in *The Modern World-System IV*. With the norm of sovereignty, it became necessary for the notables to distinguish between the types of people over which they ruled:

Too many persons were citizens. The results could be dangerous indeed. The story of the nineteenth century (and indeed of the twentieth) was that some (those with privilege and advantage) continually attempted to define citizenship narrowly and that all the others responded by seeking to validate a broader definition. (pp. 144–145)

In his most convincing section, Wallerstein shows how the notables created two categories of citizens, *active* and *passive*, the former representing those who contribute to the formation of society and policy and the latter identifying those who should not participate because of their supposedly reduced intellectual capacity. By creating binary distinctions, workers, women, and Blacks were pitted against one another, effectively ensuring that citizenship would only be a "partial liberation" (p. 147).

Notions of citizenship taught liberals that they were closer to conservatives than they had previously believed, and that they must better justify denying active citizenship for the masses. Conservatives realized the usefulness of liberalism, making some concessions for the sake of self-preservation. This bourgeois-aristocratic alliance was guaranteed by the common fear of the potential, yet forever unrealized, dominating power of the masses. Soon, liberalism embodied the "moderate status quo" (p. 49). Its supremacy was solidified in the events of 1848, which liberals won by repressing radicals. Radicals, in turn, learned that they must be organized. But they too moved to the center, finding the liberal "lure of the reward of citizenship too strong," and becoming less radical over time (p. 173). Liberals ensured worker commitment by further sub-dividing their ranks, distinguishing by race and sex. "Once again, inclusion was being achieved by exclusion" (p. 182).

The women's movement mirrors the experiences of all passive citizens. Divided by the notables along class and ethnic lines, passive citizens often worked against one another. Male workers at times blocked parts of the women's movement. Aristocratic women resented women of lower classes for their expulsion from property ownership: "in the more egalitarian mood of the French Revolution, all women were treated equally—all having no rights whatsoever" (p. 152). And some activists, like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, supported anti-abolitionist male candidates who backed women's suffrage.

Against the common perception of liberalism as the free market and rights-maximizing state, Wallerstein depicts the post-1850 liberal-imperial state as one of limitations on dangerous masses: it created a strong market, but a market defended via colonialism and free trade imperialism, even as its leaders theoretically opposed "infringement on human freedom" (p. 126). For Wallerstein, underlying all nineteenth century liberal-imperial states was a

commitment to intelligent reform by the state that would simultaneously advance economic growth (or rather the accumulation of capital) and tame dangerous classes (by incorporating them in to the citizenry and offering a part, albeit a small part, of the imperial economic pie). (p. 137)

The result of separation and co-optation was racism—a belief in racial superiority that permeated not only society, but the academy too. Consequently, centrist liberalism’s dominance was legitimated by the emerging social sciences, which appeared to embrace value-free scholarship, but remained committed to the values of liberalism. Wallerstein writes that in the nineteenth century, moral, political, and ideological statements could be couched as independent, scientific, truth. For it was now “urgent to understand what generated normal change in order . . . to limit the impact of popular preferences” (p. 220). The increasingly empirical field of history created national biographies of the liberal state that served as a foundation for patriotism. Three other disciplines took on the present, helping liberal states to head-off anti-liberalism from the masses: economics, for the market; sociology, for civil society; and political science, for the state. In the name of value neutrality, the new social sciences renounced both radicalism and conservatism. Yet their belief in prosperity through science ultimately served the liberal center.

Despite totaling nearly 300 pages of text, Wallerstein’s narrative occasionally leaves the reader wanting more, especially in his insightful opening chapter on the modern origins of ideology. Still, the preface nicely summarizes previous volumes for readers unfamiliar with his history of capitalism. It is also worth noting that, despite writing a book about ideological combat, Wallerstein draws on an impressive bibliography that includes ideological opponents. His history of how centrist liberalism befriended the disadvantaged for the sake of the powerful is well-substantiated. It is a work of rigorous social science. And yet its passion is not lost.

GREGORY P. WILLIAMS

University of Connecticut, USA

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/073,93148.2012.703869>

Laura Zanotti, *Governing Disorder: UN Peace Operations, International Security and Democratization in the Post-Cold War Era*, University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011, 200 pp.

This book takes its cues from Michel Foucault’s general approach to power and his account of disciplinary power in particular. It is certainly not the first book to make extensive use of Foucault’s analysis of disciplinary power in international relations, but its contribution is unique. Laura Zanotti brings Foucault’s analysis of disciplinary power to bear on the manifold intricacies of post-Cold War United Nations (UN) operations. The meticulous detail and critical insights in Zanotti’s book derive from her own experiences as a UN official in Haiti and Croatia, as well as from the progressive distance obtained from these experiences through a sustained engagement with Foucault. Zanotti informs us that she began to develop the idea of using Foucault’s conceptual toolbox to make sense of international security while reading a UN booklet consisting of laws and