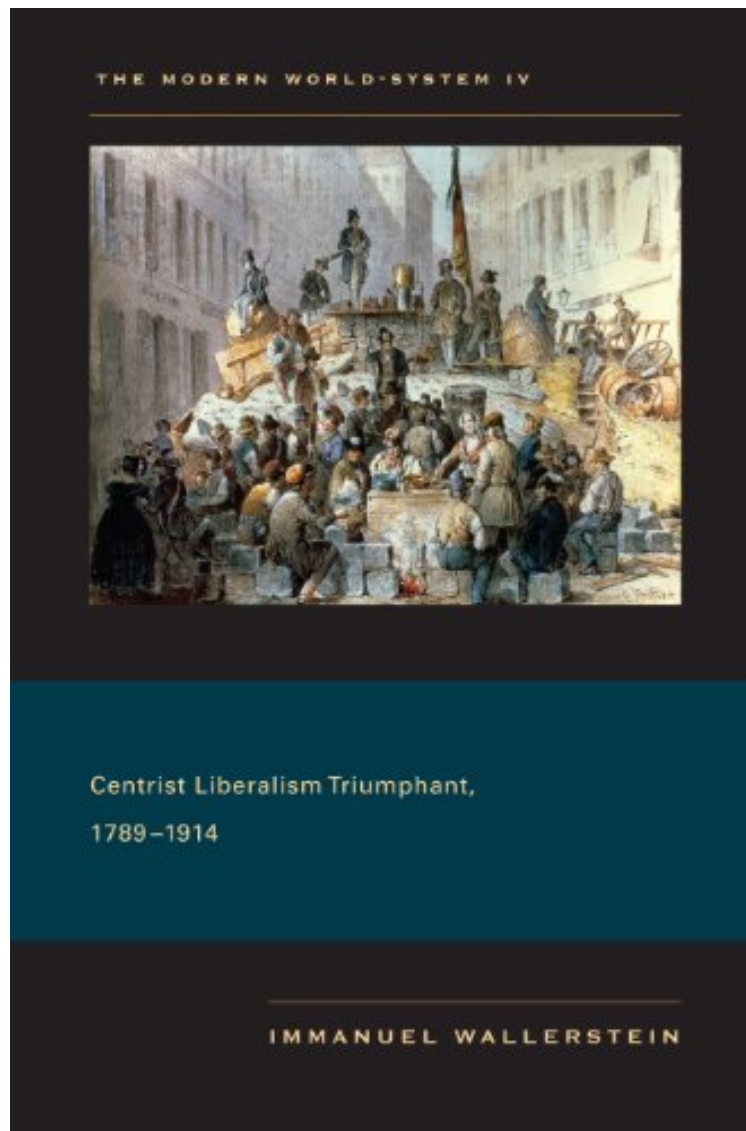


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The Modern World-System IV: Centrist Liberalism Triumphant, 1789ndash;1914

Immanuel Wallerstein

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Immanuel Wallerstein : The Modern World-System IV: Centrist Liberalism Triumphant, 1789ndash;1914 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Modern World-System IV: Centrist Liberalism Triumphant, 1789ndash;1914:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Required Reading for People into Intelligent Historical WritingBy J. LewisThis is the fourth and most recent volume in Wallerstein's analysis of what he calls "the modern world system" and what since the 1990s has been called "globalization" in popular discourse. Focusing on the European 19th century,

it situates that history in a larger global history evolving since the late 15th century, when the Portuguese and Spanish overseas conquests of that era began constructing the modern world system referenced in the titles of Wallerstein series; a system that centered around particular regions of western Europe. This fourth volume focuses on the consolidation of this globalization around the ideology and practices of classical Liberalism and its political economy, laissez-faire capitalism. Wallerstein correctly emphasizes the centrality of an Anglo-French axis in the aftermath of the French Revolution as the key element in this stage of "globalization," with the British being the dominant partner. He also discusses with great detail and nuance the double-edged swords of cultural and ideological constructs that sustained this hegemony such as Romanticism, nationalism and classical Liberal ideology (what here in the United States might be called rightist libertarianism these days). Wallerstein's discussion of how and why particular regions of northwest Europe became the model of "the West" that did not include regions to the east (Poland, Russia) is another particularly interesting aspect of this book. What's most refreshing and intellectually novel in Wallerstein's work is, paradoxically, its old-fashioned rigor and presentation. In an era in which much academic writing is dominated by codified language drawn from the dubious theoretical models from post-modernist, feminist, and other intellectual fashions of doubtful value and little clarity, Wallerstein's text is clear, rigorous and grounded in a breath-taking grasp of the historical literature dating from the 19th century to the present. While Wallerstein is a prominent academic with a well-established reputation that even his critics must take seriously, this volume is entirely accessible to the general educated public who is not in the least familiar with or interested in the precious academic "discourses" that dominates so many academic "spaces" these days, but would be interested in an analysis of exactly how what we today call globalization came into being in an intellectually serious and clear manner. Wallerstein's discussion here of the 19th century is one of the best possible places to get it.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Centrist Liberalism: a Geo-culture On the Road By Fang

In the fourth volume of *The Modern World-System*, Wallerstein characterized the third "long century" in capitalist world system as one that witnessed the rise of "centrist liberalism". According to Wallerstein, three major ideologies emerged after the French Revolution: conservatism, or reaction against massive and radical social changes; radicalism/socialism, or demand for speedy and total progresses; and liberalism, or desire of rational, gradual, controlled changes (pp.3-6). Wallerstein's account of centrist liberal project is in some ways a belated response to the critique of lack of state perspective in his world-system paradigm. Since none of the three major ideologies fundamentally required a strong state to advance their respective social projects (pp.14-17, and pp. 21-23), and since a centrist version of liberalism (with significantly more "scientific" and collective elements than classic liberalism) was responsive to radical demands while containing its endowment measures in a way that satisfied the conservatives (pp.77-80, pp.140-141, pp.146-147), it became the central pillar of elite political alliance (pp.86-87). In this "long nineteenth century", Wallerstein argued, major social, political and cultural changes centered on advancement of centrist liberal project. Strong states, based on bureaucratic hierarchy, trade protectionism and parliamentary governance model were fabricated with legislations and administrative policies favorable to gradual reforms in Britain, France and Germany (Chapter 2). "Sovereignty of the people" was nominally recognized as the fundamental political principle, but not without significant constraints of mass power by defining categories citizenship in a political polity and excluding undesired population, qualified yields to lower classes and crackdown of radical movements and revolutions (Chapters 3 and 4). Colonial imperialism was both a booster of capitalist economy in the core and shifting of class conflict pressures from the core (pp.137-139). Knowledge production was also reformed in response to the need of centrist liberalism: political science, economics and sociology were separated corresponding to divided social areas in need of "scientific" understanding and managed reforms, and taught in hierarchically organized departments in elite universities (Chapter 5). In the end, centrist liberalism became widely accepted within the core of capitalist world-system as a pervasive "geo-culture". Wallerstein rejected "Industrial Revolution" as a useful label for this long century since it was only one of the many system-wide "blips" (p.xv), yet he left us wondering if this centrist-liberal-imperial state project was possible without technological advancements and correspondent social transformation, or if it was unprecedented in responding to particular social challenges in this period. Wallerstein had also limited his system-wide perspective in exchange for a more detailed account of the core of world-system (especially in his national account of the rise of strong liberal state), but retained his functionalist principle: changes emerged as they were demanded by a particular central Zeitgeist. It is difficult to distinguish this argument with one based on Industrial Revolution, rise of the capitalist class and the capitalist class's push of class interest. In the end, to claim centrist-liberalism as a "geo-culture", Wallerstein still must resolve the tension between regional concentration and his proclaimed system-wide angle of analysis, as well as extend this account to the semi-peripheral and peripheral areas, which hopefully he will do in Volume V.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Informing By Bradley Farless

This isn't my usual area of study in history. That being said, I found the writing style to be clear and persuasive and it's certainly informing. Without having been exposed to other streams of thought regarding the subject, though, I can't speak on the strength of the arguments.

Immanuel Wallerstein's highly influential, multi-volume opus, *The Modern World-System*, is one of this

century's greatest works of social science. An innovative, panoramic reinterpretation of global history, it traces the emergence and development of the modern world from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. This new volume encompasses the nineteenth century from the revolutionary era of 1789 to the First World War. In this crucial period, three great ideologies—conservatism, liberalism, and radicalism—emerged in response to the worldwide cultural transformation that came about when the French Revolution legitimized the sovereignty of the people. Wallerstein tells how capitalists, and Great Britain, brought relative order to the world and how liberalism triumphed as the dominant ideology.

ldquo;Wallerstein offers a timely topic that answers our dilemmas about modern society and the historical sense of the Western civilization.rdquo;