Civilizational Incorporation of Indigenes: Toward a Comparative Perspective

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Introduction

In this paper I argue that the ways in which native peoples or indigenes have been incorporated into "civilizations" or "world-systems" exhibit deep historical patterns. I also argue that these patterns are changing in the late twentieth century in ways which reflect current conditions and global civilizational processes. Although this pattern is clear in broad outline, many more detailed studies are will be necessary to understand all the ramifications of the incorporation of indigenous peoples into civilization both for indigenous peoples and for civilizations.

I first attended the ISCS in 1988 (Hall 1988) where I began exploring the relations of nomads and civilizations. I developed this idea further the following year (Hall 1989b), and published my ideas two years later (Hall 1991a, 1991b). My basic argument was that nomad-civilizational relations cannot be studied by examining only one set of actors, or even dyadic relations. Rather, the entire world-system or core/periphery hierarchy must be studied. Phrased alternatively, the broad ecumene of a civilization must include its "barbarian" hinterlands. In short to ignore the roles of nomads in world-system or civilizational change, is not merely bad taste, but gives rise to bad theory.

In the intervening years I have been a participant in the continuing dialogue among world-systems, globalization, and civilization theorists. Although remaining in the world-systems camp, I want to continue the dialogue. I suggest that in much of the following analysis "civilization" could be substituted for "world-system." To be sure, a number of details and some terminology would need to be changed. However, the underlying processes and patterns I seek to describe would be much the same.

I also seek to extend my earlier arguments along three directions. First, rather than restrict my account to "nomads," I seek to include all nonstate or "noncivilizational" societies. I prefer the
term "noncivilizational" to "uncivilized" or "noncivilized" because of the unsavory connotations the latter terms carry. Second, I seek to present an account, only partially developed in my earlier papers, that can apply—with appropriate modifications and cautions—to all world-systems or civilizations. This account draws heavily on my work with Christopher Chase-Dunn and our recent book, *Rise and Demise: Comparing World-Systems* (1997a). Third, I seek to push the analysis of incorporation into the modern setting, specifying both the ways in which it remains the same, and the ways in which it is significantly different.

I begin with an overview of the processes by which world-systems incorporate nonstate (and, indeed, state) societies. I then turn to discussion of the modern setting and newer forms of resistance to (further) incorporation.

**Incorporation: An Overview.**

A key insight of a world-system perspective is that the world-system is a fundamental unit of analysis within which all other social processes and relations must be studied (Bach 1980). This does not mean that everything can be explained by or from a world-system perspective. It only means that a world-system perspective must be a part of any broad explanation of social change, or patterns of history.

Several scholars have modified and extended world-system theory into pre-modern, that is pre-1500 C.E., settings. Though they disagree on a number of issues, they all agree that processes of long-term social change since at least 5,000 years ago require study from a world-system perspective, as well as from more conventional, civilizational, state, and local perspectives. At least two points from my work with Christopher Chase-Dunn are especially germane here. First, all world-systems expand and "pulsate" (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997a, 1997b), that is they expand and contract, or expand rapidly then more slowly. Second, we argue that all world-systems have four boundaries demarcated by sharp declines and different types of interactions:

a) those shaped by bulk goods trade networks (BGN);

b) those shaped by political military interactions (PMN);

c) those shaped by prestige or luxury goods networks (PGN);
d) those shaped by information networks (IN).
Typically, these are nested, as shown in Figure 1. Only in very small, isolated world-systems, islands, and in the modern, global world-system in the late twentieth century do these four boundaries coincide.

Figure 1. Nesting of the boundaries of the Four Networks of Exchange.

Expansion of world-systems necessarily entails incorporation of new regions and/or new peoples into the system as it expands. When one world-system expands into the territory of another, typically there is some type of merger, rather than full incorporation (this is discussed in detail in Chase-Dunn & Hall 1997a). A key point here is that incorporation can occur along any of the four boundaries, and these may not coincide.

I have shown (Hall 1986, 1989a) that incorporation is not simply a matter of being in or out of the system, but rather is a matter of degree (see Figure 2). I further argued that changes in a world-system itself can cause lessening of the degree of incorporation, despite a general trend toward tighter and tighter incorporation. The pulsation of a world-system is one of the causes of these reversals, as are changes in frontier policies and practices of states, and heightened resistance to incorporation by those being engulfed.
Indeed, these shifting zones of incorporation make up many of the world's frontier regions. These are the places where the formation and transformation of ethnicity is most active as various peoples and regions are incorporated into world-systems. The process of incorporation varies with the type of world-system doing the incorporation—tributary or capitalist world-systems—and with the type of group being incorporated—state or nonstate group. The difference between states and nonstate groups is a salient distinction, but not the only one.

Both tributary and capitalist world-systems have a range of subtypes. Tributary can range from highly decentralized, or feudal, systems to highly centralized systems akin to Marx's "oriental despotism"—albeit not limited to or all that common in Eastern Eurasia. Capitalist systems range from early mercantile systems in 16th through 18th century Europe to fully productive...
capitalist systems, the one that has increasingly dominated the world since the late 18th century.

These processes differ in premodern settings from those in the contemporary world. In premodern settings, political considerations are as frequent as access to trade and resources as reasons for incorporation. These reasons remain common, if not the most frequent, reasons for incorporation in early merchant capitalism. Encounters with a large variety of nonstate societies are more common than in the modern world-system, although such encounters have been common in the modern world-system. What is distinctive, as McNeill (1986) argues, is that premodern systems or civilizations did not try to force ethnic uniformity. Rather, they tolerated difference as long as the goals of the state were met. This does not mean that there were no forced changes in religion, governance, customs and so forth. Only that complete assimilation was almost never a goal. Polyethnicity, or what we more conventionally call pluralism was the goal. Furthermore, since most states were multi-ethnic, there is no reason to expect that subjects would find it odious to be conquered by yet another ethnic elite, unless of course taxes increased or they were forcibly relocated or pressed into slavery. In that case their objections, and rare rebellions, would be couched in those terms, not ethnic terms.

Especially worthy of note are the transformative consequences of incorporation. Depending on a number of specific circumstances incorporation can fragment groups, destroying fragile states and thereby engendering a number of "tribes." Other circumstances favor formation of states by amalgamating nonstate societies. Both of these processes have occurred repeatedly among Central Asian pastoralists (Barfield 1989; Hall 1991a, 1991b; Frank 1992; Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997a:Ch. 8). Chiefdoms may be formed from formerly band organized groups (Comanches in the American Southwest [Hall 1989a], or Araucanians in La Plata [Hall 1998; Jones 1998]. Even bands and chiefdoms may incorporate new peoples or territories (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1998; Chase-Dunn and Mann 1998). If there is prolonged interaction and interbreeding (and sometimes intermarriage) new hybrid groups may be formed, such as Metis descended from Native American women and male French fur
traders; or *genizaros* descended from Native American and Hispanic populations in southwestern United States (Meyer 1994; Hall 1989a, 1989c).

Typically, incorporated groups lose autonomy and become ethnic minorities. Native Americans in the United States and Canada are familiar examples. This was also the fate of the Hispanic populations of New Mexico, California, and Texas after 1848 (see Hall 1989a). Entirely new identities can be created when groups are relocated and old identities stripped and replaced with new ones, as happened to African slaves imported into the United States. Where states, or portions of states are absorbed territorial minorities are created. This is especially common in the colonial areas of the modern world-system. These absorbed groups have given rise many ethnic movements and civil wars in the modern world (Gurr and Harff 1994).

**Incorporation in the Modern World**

The modern world differs significantly from the premodern world. First, states, for the most part, have become much larger, encompassing more minority groups. Second, states have increasingly emphasized ethnic unity in their nation-building efforts. Third, the right to a separate, ethnically homogeneous state is often used to justify claims of independence. Erstwhile native peoples have been especially savvy in using the doctrine of sovereignty to press such claims (Wilmer 1993). Fourth, this suggests that there has been a fundamental shift in the nature of ethnicity in the modern world from what it was in the premodern world (Hall 1984). Ethnicity, and identity in general, has become increasingly politicized.7

Some of these differences may be an artifact of differing time scales. For instance the formation of a new ethnic group, say *Metis* or *genizaros*, takes many generations, whereas many contemporary conflicts focus around shorter-term issues. Similarly, it took decades or even centuries of interactions among nomadic peoples and with Spaniards and Anglos to create or transform the loosely connected "bands" of nomadic peoples inhabiting what is now southwestern United States into the Indian nations we know today.

Our understanding of these differences is not helped by the
propensity of many such movements to impute deeply ancient roots to relatively recent events. Some of Vine Deloria's remarks (1995) about Lakota people always having been in what are now the Dakotas come to mind, as do recent controversies about the Bering Straights theory of the population of the Americas.⁸

According to Malcolm (1994) various partisans in Bosnia have sought to manipulate and use ancient conflicts to excuse or even obscure current motivations in the war there:

The biggest obstacle to understanding the conflict is the assumption that what has happened in that country is the product—natural, spontaneous and at the same time necessary—of forces lying within Bosnia's own internal history. That is the myth which was carefully propagated by those who caused the conflict, who wanted the world to believe that what they and their gunmen were doing was done not by them, but by impersonal and inevitable historical forces beyond anyone's control (p. xix).

Two points are germane here. First, external factors shaped the conflict. Second, the roots of the conflict are not ancient, but quintessentially modern.⁹ Ethnicity has become the "rationalization of choice" for a wide variety of conflicts. The irony here is that such conflicts may, themselves, be ethnogenetic, creating the very groups whose existence is imputed to have been the root of the conflict.

However, conflict as a cause of ethnogenesis is not limited to the modern world. Conflicts between Burmese language groups and Thai language groups helped form Burma and Siam out of loose federations of what appear to have been chiefdoms. Still, the groups today are clearly distinct in culture and state structure. However, the constant taking of prisoners in the centuries of warfare insures that neither group is genetically pure, or even distinct. This, however, does not seem to hold as strongly for the numerous "hill tribes" in those two states.¹⁰

The Modern Challenge of Indigenous Resistance to Incorporation

For centuries various writers have predicted, and even bemoaned the disappearance of indigenous peoples. All such predictions have been wrong. Indeed, Native Americans are experi-
encing demographic, political, and cultural resurgences. All over the globe people of the fourth world (Bodley 1994, p. 365; Wilmer 1993) continue to struggle to maintain and enhance their separate identities and political autonomy, often with surprising success.

Franke Wilmer (1993) argues persuasively that this is due to their ability to manipulate the cultural values of the first world in critical ways. Specifically, by basing their claims on the sovereignty of nations, Fourth World peoples force First World peoples to undermine the political and philosophical bases of their own sovereignties when they attempt to abrogate those of the fourth world groups (Wilmer 1995). That this has now become a global process suggests that it is, at least in part, a consequence of world-system processes, not just coincidence among various fourth world peoples. This is NOT to deny the importance of local conditions and local actors, but to place them in a larger context.

In terms developed above, one of the last, and strongest realms of resistance to incorporation is along dimensions of information or cultural level. Even though the four world-system boundaries now coincide in the late 20th century, the incorporation process has not proceeded at the same pace along all four boundaries.

Resistance to Incorporation: Early Modern Settings

Fred Riggs (1997a, 1997b, 1998a, 1998b) argues, persuasively, for an unpacking and differentiation of the term modern, not to mean since the beginning of the modern world-system (ca 1500 CE) or even recent or contemporary. Rather, he argues modern should be reserved for the constellation of nationalism, democracy, and industrialism. He argues further that this 'modern' configuration carries downsides, not the least of which heightened ethnic conflicts. Indeed, he goes so far to argue that contemporary ethnonationalism is itself a product of modernity.

I find his argument compelling, but incomplete. Much of what he calls "modern" are characteristics of core states of the recent (that is, late 19th and 20th century) world-system. Hence the downsides of modernity adhere not in the nation-state or even state, but in the world-system. Furthermore, they are older than the more narrow definition of modern. I have argued at length
elsewhere about the effects of incorporation into European based world-systems on native peoples of what is now southwestern United States, and how those processes created, transformed, and destroyed many groups (Hall 1986, 1989a, 1989c, 1996).

Wilma Dunaway (1994, 1996a, and especially 1996b and 1999) has made similar arguments for the Cherokees in what is now southeastern United States. Cherokees became involved extensively in what Dunaway calls "a putting-out system financed by foreign merchant-entrepreneurs" (1994:237). In this case not only was culture transformed, but techniques of production were changed. This was effective incorporation even in the terms of conventional world-system theory:

As export production was entrenched, there emerged new hunting and warfare techniques, an altered division of labor within the household and within the village, and a reformed relationship with precolonial society toward secular and national governance, eventually creating the "tribal half-government" that permitted the Europeans to treat the Cherokees as a unified corporate entity (Dunaway 1994:237).

In short, the southern fur trade led to massive changes among the Cherokee villages, developing a central political organization that was considerably different from earlier forms (Dunaway 1994, 1996a, 1996b).

Cherokees resisted incorporation by fleeing, fighting, and subverting. When these did not work, they modified and adapted European practices to Cherokee needs. As Wilma Dunaway (1996b, 1999) observes, the resistance may not always have been effective, but it often gave incorporated peoples a marginal degree of autonomy. In this light, much of the actions of Native American groups, whether they were attempts to flee a jurisdiction, like that of Chief Joseph, the myriad cases of armed resistance, legal attempts to preserve and enhance tribal autonomy, and the pursuit of some new economic opportunities such as gambling facilities, or the rejection of others like strip mining of coal, or indigenized versions of twelve step programs (Ward, et al. 1999) or insistence on a say in their own histories, become readily understandable. More importantly, they no longer seem like haphazard or irrational resistance to change, but rather intelligent,
often well-chosen attempts to control the process of incorporation.

In the twentieth century resistance has taken on new forms. Early in the twentieth century it was manifested in refusals to assimilate (Hoxie 1984), formation of Indian protection associations (Cornell 1988), and in the 1930s by various attempts to use, or resist, the Indian Reorganization Act (1934) to give tribal governments characters that reflected their traditions (Biolsi 1992; Iverson 1981).

Still, later in the century, since the rise of the Red Power movement (Nagel 1996), resistance has often taken an overtly political, and even cultural quality. Many writers have been vociferously opposed to the [mis]use of Indian culture. Wendy Rose (1992) and Ward Churchill (1992, 1994, 1996) have protested mightily against White Shamanism, calling it a new hucksterism. Their complaint is that Whites, having long since given up their own pre-modern (either meaning) religious practices and beliefs now attempt to regain them through [mis]appropriating practices of various Native American groups in assorted "new age" movements. Vine Deloria (1995) and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn (1996) have echoed this same complaint.

As noted earlier, Native American groups, and indigenous peoples throughout the world, have had considerable success in manipulating European notions of sovereignty to their own benefit. Putting European derived civilizations in the position of being forced to deny their own bases of sovereignty if they deny those of Native groups so far has worked. European civilization has found the ideological havoc wreaked by outright denial of Native sovereignty too dear a price to pay for the resources they have sought from Native Peoples.

This, of course, has not stopped them from trying, as both Carol Ward and David Wilson argue (Ward 1996, 1997; Wilson 1996, 1997; Gedicks, 1993). But what it has meant is that Europeans have had to resort to different sources of justifications such as: promises of economic development, jobs, increased access to industrial goods and services, education and health care chief among them.

Again, while Native peoples have met with some success in this arena, they had to fight on European grounds—within
European law. One of the more outstanding successes has been to use the doctrine of sovereignty to set up various gaming operations. By exploiting the contradictory desires for access to gambling and desire to forbid it, Indians have begun to turn considerable profits.

The question remains, how much have they had to give up to win these victories? By fighting European civilization on its own turf, they had to accept some of the premises of that turf. This, in turn, has massively disrupted Native American traditions. This is shown most dramatically and forcefully in the works of contemporary Native American writers (Alexie 1993, 1996; Erdrich 1984, 1988; Power 1994; Seals 1979, 1992; Silko 1977, 1991; and many more).

Conclusion

Clearly, the drive for incorporation and resistance to it is far from over. Today, however, the battle is as often over ideological, cultural, religious, or educational issues—in short over information—as it is over resources or territory. The battleground is shifting—inexorably, if sporadically—to issues of culture and identity. This is far from accidental. Jonathan Friedman (1994, 1998) argues that identity politics shift drastically in eras of hegemonic decline. New possibilities for identities open up as the leading core power becomes less powerful. As this happens, history and culture increasingly become contested grounds. But rather than a new, postmodern or post something else phenomenon, this is an ages-old struggle manifesting itself in a new form.

Cast in another light, the struggles are about identity and autonomy in an increasingly unified world. The world-system not only promotes sameness within similar regions (core, periphery, semiperiphery) but also promotes differences between and within regions. Changes in relative power of various core actors create spaces for less powerful groups to defend their own identities. Viewed in this way, we can see that many contemporary clashes, the so-called culture wars, are not entirely new processes, but continuation of much older civilizational clashes.
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NOTES

1. See Comparative Civilizations Review No. 30, especially Hall (1994) and Sanderson (1995b) for extended discussions of these theories.


3. For a reviews of this literature see Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997a: Chs. 1-3). Frank and Gills (1993), Peregrine (1996a; 1996b); Hall (1996a, 1996b; 1998c). As noted above Sanderson (1995b) provides both civilizationist and globalizationist views of these processes as well as several competing world-systems perspectives.

4. Readers of Comparative Civilizational Review will recognized a debt to David Wilkinson in considering this type of interaction. For a detailed discussion of how Christopher Chase-Dunn and I have used his ideas, see Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997a).


6. I want to point out the range of types and variation with types is far greater among nonstate societies than state societies. While vitally important to understanding both long-term social change and incorporation processes, discussion of these differences would detract from the discussion at hand. These issue are discussed in detail in Hall (1989a) and Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997a).

7. I explore these issues of ethnicity in more detil in Hall (1998b). Fred Riggs (1994, 1997a, 1997b) comes to a similar conclusion, that modern ethnicity is significantly different from earlier, premodern forms of ethnicity. He also draws a number of useful distinctions among types of ethnicity and movements that warrant closer examination than is given here (1998a, 1998b, 1999c).

8. For instance, the virtual discussion group, Native-L carried a great deal of debate about this issue, with some participants attributing
anthropological/archaeological explanations of the peopling of the Americas via the Bering land bridge as an attempt to undermine and degrade indigenous religions.

9. Malcolm notes in support of this analysis the efforts to bomb archives, as specific targets, in order to destroy the history — all the better to revise it to suit current purposes.

10. This discussion of Southeast Asia merely glosses very complex processes. These remarks are meant to be suggestive, not definitive. It is based on the following sources: Aung-Thwin 1985; Cady 1966; Chutintaranond 1995; Chutintaranond and Tun 1995; Coedes 1966, 1968; Hall 1985; Kulke 1986; Marr and Milner 1986; Penth 1994; Vickery 1986; Wang 1986; Wicks 1992; Wyatt 1984, 1994. Wang and Chutintaranond especially argue that the concepts of state and empire need to be rethought in the Southeast Asian context. Their discussions of the "manadala" of statelets resonates quite well with the discussion of marcher states, and state formation in Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997a, especially Chap. 5.

11. This discussion of Fred Riggs's ideas is much too abbreviated. It draws on numerous exchanges which occurred in 1997 in preparation for the International Studies Association meeting. These were subsequently published in a special issue of International Political Science Review (Riggs 1998c).

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