

Week III: Globalisation Questions

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Axelrod & Hamilton (1981)

1. pp 1395, column 1:

“Lower organisms must rely on mechanism that drastically limit the number of different individuals or colonies with which they can interact effectively.”

So, why are some communities of humans less materially well off than others? This statement seems to imply some sort of race-science explanation, that the ones who are losing are just comparatively under-evolved. Is it not possible that Defection occurs in human society because something has skewed the reward matrix to favour one prisoner over the other? Lets face it: not all states playing the game of international political economy are on equal footing – rather than the players being the US and the Soviet Union vs. the Cops of nature, it’s more like the US is the cops and Haiti and Cuba are the prisoners! So my question is, is the prisoner’s dilemma a good game with which to accurately model the global economy?

2. Is the comparison to mutualism between different species (bacteria with plants for instance) warranted in human sociology?
3. If we were to apply the tit-for-tat strategy to our relations with our employers, what would change about the world? Or even just your own job?
4. Is society under a capitalism a population of Tit-for-Tat players or an always-defect strategy? If modern society is Always-Defect, then how did that group break in and overwhelm the rest? Didn’t Axelrod & Hamilton say it was *mathematically impossible* to invade a T4T population with an any alternative strategy?
5. To what extent does socio-political “Otherisation” affect the variable w ? How does that affect the outcome of the tournament?
6. Related to the previous question, what is the relationship between Kinship theory and Otherisation?
7. The variable p is planned in advance in the computer tournament, but in real life we only ever have the expectation that p will be large. What happens when our *perception* of the remaining rounds of play diminishes? In other words, what sort of events or ideas convince the players that time is running out? And what happens when they convince themselves that the end is near?

8. How would one characterise parasitism as a strategy of the game?

Steger

1. Steger namechecks pandemics as one of the threats that could derail the globalisation project. What do we think: is this a turning point? Or will the answer to the pandemic's disruption become "more globalisation"? (Week 2's readings discussed interpermeation of lower-tier governments in response to the pandemic)