

Orienteering West Mexico
The Mesoamerican World System [200–1200](#) CE

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ABSTRACT

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As world-systems theory came to the fore in archaeology during the 1980s and 1990s, it became evident that the analysis of pre-capitalist core/periphery relations required modifications of this theory for its further use in the discipline. As a result, the comparative approach for world-systems analysis (Chase Dunn and Hall 1997) discerned four interaction networks that defined pre-capitalist world-systems. The appearance of the comparative approach coincided with archaeology's detour into the diverse inquiries of postmodernism, for which conceptual advances in world-systems analysis went largely unnoticed by the discipline. The present study applies the nested network interaction framework of the comparative approach to examine material evidence for core/periphery relations between on the one hand two state level societies of central Mexico: Teotihuacan and Tula; and, on the other, West Mexico, one of the largest subareas of Mesoamerica. The operationalization of the nested networks as a material culture model for the Early Classic and Early Postclassic periods indicates that West Mexico was integrated into macroregional developments and change between [200-1200](#) CE. The present study represents one of the first comprehensive applications of the comparative approach in areal research undertaken in Mesoamerica.

Keywords: Archaeology, World-systems theory, World-systems analysis, Nested networks, Mesoamerica, West Mexico, Central Mexico, Early Classic, Epiclassic, Early Postclassic