



Fifty Key Thinkers on Globalization

William D. Coleman and Alina Sajed

ROUTLEDGE



KEY GUIDES

FIFTY KEY THINKERS ON GLOBALIZATION

Fifty Key Thinkers on Globalization is an outstanding guide to often-encountered thinkers whose ideas have shaped, defined and influenced this new and rapidly growing field. The authors clearly and lucidly survey the life, work and impact of fifty of the most important theorists of globalization including:

- Manuel Castells
- Joseph Stiglitz
- David Held
- Jan Aart Scholte.

Each thinker's contribution to the field is evaluated and assessed, and each entry includes a helpful guide to further reading. Fully cross-referenced throughout, this remarkable reference guide is essential reading for students of politics and international relations, economics, sociology, history, anthropology and literary studies.

William D. Coleman is Professor of Political Science at the University of Waterloo and the Balsillie School of International Affairs in Canada. He has published widely in the areas of globalization studies and global public policy.

Alina Sajed is Assistant Professor of International Relations at the University of Hong Kong in Hong Kong, China.

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*William D. Coleman
and Alina Sajed*

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INTRODUCTION

This book provides the reader with a 30-year span of debates over globalization and its history. As one of our key thinkers, Jan Aart Scholte, has observed, the word ‘globalization’ is a relatively late addition not only to the English language but to other languages as well. The term itself was only coined in the second half of the twentieth century. The word ‘globe’ as a denotation of a spherical representation of the Earth dates to the fifteenth century. The word ‘global’ entered the scene in the late seventeenth century but came to mean ‘planetary-wide scale’ only in the late nineteenth century. The words ‘globalize’ and ‘globalism’ emerged during the 1940s (see Scholte 2005: 50–51), while ‘globalization’ entered academic analysis of particular processes that potentially take place on a trans-planetary scale during the 1980s. The term ‘globalization’ was, at the same time, picked up by public intellectuals and then entered fully into public discourse in many parts of the world, particularly more wealthy countries, at the start of the 1990s. In reviewing the ensuing debates about globalization both in the academic and the broader public realms, we see gradual changes to meanings of the term but never consensus. And, of course, these various meanings themselves become a subject for study, particularly in humanities disciplines where the contours of public discourses are interpreted and assessed.

This book presents a study of thinkers in the academy, in society at large and in social movements who have commented at some length on what globalization(s) means as processes. In reading the works of the 50 thinkers in this book and of many others in preparation for selecting our entries, we concluded that the use of the word ‘globalization’ points to concerns, conclusions, questions and observations about significant changes in the contemporary world. What these changes involve remains a matter of debate to be sure. But there seems little doubt in the minds of globalization thinkers that profound challenges of unusual character and geographical extensity confront the world’s varied peoples.

A changing world

The thinkers in this book point to significant events and changes that mark a profound shift in the world and engage with these by drawing upon the concept of globalization. Some thinkers see these changes as unique in human history, while others view them as an intensification of globalizing processes that have been occurring for centuries. Unique or new variations on old, the changes that have triggered their thinking about the connectedness of the world and their interest in the concept of globalization concern five interrelated domains: capitalism, technology, environmentalism, culture and identity, and governance.

Capitalism

Many globalization thinkers point to the collapse of the post-World War II economic order in the early 1970s as a key event triggering globalization. The US abandoned its role in that order, one which saw the US dollar currency serve as the regulator of the world's economy. In floating its currency on financial markets, the US responded to a growing crisis in its own economy. In doing so, its decision led to the floating of other currencies and gradually the end of capital controls by almost all the wealthier countries in the world. Some argue that this decision by the US led to a process of 'financialization' – that is, a period in which financial leverage overwhelmed capital or equity and financial markets came to dominate over the more traditional industrial and agricultural markets. Some globalization thinkers see these events as marking the beginning of the end of US hegemony over the world economy and a movement towards global financial markets.

Accompanying these changes in the world economy, many thinkers also point to the rise in importance of neoliberal theories and policies. The thinking behind these theories emphasizes the greater efficiency of markets when compared to the nation-state's provision of public goods, particularly related to the social welfare of its population. Complementing this thinking was an emphasis on individualism, a subtly masculinist view of the rugged individual fending for himself in the dynamic economic realm. As these ideas gained influence, they led to important policy changes by the US and the UK, in the first instance, and by many other governments later on. At the same time, these ideas were picked up by international financial institutions, themselves dominated by the US and its allies, particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The ideas were imposed

upon poorer countries in the world that needed financial support to deal with their growing economic difficulties in the changing economic order.

These two changes, in turn, led to the rise of a less fettered capitalism in the wealthier countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The IMF and the World Bank, in turn, promoted this form of capitalism in the so-called Third World where countries had been experimenting with socialism or border controls to expand their economies. As these countries were being impelled by these international institutions to open up their economies to an unbridled capitalism, the Iron Curtain suddenly collapsed. The world's largest economy, China, had already begun to embrace capitalism beginning in 1978. During the early 1990s, other formerly communist states in Eastern Europe and Russia ended their experiments with socialism and adopted capitalism as well. By the early 1990s, these rapid and comprehensive economic changes involving capitalism's reaching into virtually every part of the globe contributed to a sense of the world being one in ways never before experienced.

Technology

Almost simultaneously with the breakdown of the world economic order in the early 1970s, the world was on the verge of what many have called the information technology revolution. Synergetic development in three technological fields – micro-electronics, computing and telecommunications – culminated in the creation of the desktop computer. When networking technologies that were being developed independently in the 1960s were adapted for desktop computing, the key elements for the emergence of what is now called the internet were in place (Castells 1999: chapter 1). Quickly, restrictions on the use of the internet were lifted such that from the early 1980s, there have been continuous rounds of innovation that have permitted the linking together of persons, corporations and other technologies in more and more places.

A fourth component of the technological revolution – gene technology – also began to take shape during the 1970s. Rapid advances in microbiology and chemistry since the end of World War II had increased scientists' understanding of genes. With these advances, genetic engineering technology gained increased prominence: the capacity to act on genes, themselves nodes of information, led to important advances in medicine, controversial inventions in agriculture, and

new understandings of what 'life' means, challenging longstanding religious beliefs.

There have been important synergies between the information technology revolution and capitalism: the global marketplaces that have emerged over the past 40 years depend heavily upon the trans-world instantaneity now possible with the new technologies and their being made widely available. Beyond these synergies, however, the kinds of linkages that became possible between individuals have ushered in profound social changes in varying degrees in more and more countries and societies in the world. These social changes, in turn, have tended to reinforce a sense of experiencing the world as one, which has come to be associated with global capitalism.

Environmentalism

Concern about the impact of human and technological development upon the environment also became a growing worldwide movement by the early 1970s. Those participating in what is often called environmentalism advocate the sustainable management of resources and stewardship of the plants, animals, oceans, lakes, atmospheres and other aspects of the 'natural' world. In 1972, the United Nations sponsored the Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden, which for the first time united the representatives of multiple governments in discussions relating to the state of the global environment. Since that time, the movement has spread to include followers in virtually every part of the world. It has led to increasing discussion of environmental protection not only by states, but also by non-governmental organizations, transnational corporations and social movements. Further world conferences occurred in 1987 and 1992, while nation-states have begun negotiating several agreements to cooperate in protecting the environment.

Crucial to understanding contemporary globalizing processes is again the sense of sharing a common destiny by sharing a common environment. These linkages foster globality, the idea of being together on the planet. However unique this globality might be, environmentalism, in fostering the concept of a unique natural world, reinforces changes in capitalism and technologies that link people together across the planet.

Culture and identity

While these economical, technological and environmental changes were taking place and as 'globalization' became part of public

discourses worldwide, questions arose about culture and identity. Were the changes experienced in the world going to level the cultural differences between societies? Would the new technologies coupled with capitalism create a form of materialism that will undermine cultural practices everywhere? Would the power of the wealthier countries, particularly that of the US after the fall of communism, lead to a single worldwide, consumer-based culture? Almost immediately, as these questions emerged, a counter-discourse developed about how economic and technological changes were, in fact, reinforcing differences between cultures.

These discourses pushed to a global scale debates over the role of women in human societies that had been gathering force since their emergence in the 1950s and 1960s out of the second wave of the women's movement. Simply raising the question about women's roles pointed to what Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (2005) terms the 'frictions' that occur when supposedly universal ideas in one part of the world, in this case the roles of women in societies, are introduced into places in other parts of the world. What appears as 'universal' to some societies appears as 'localized' and 'from another place' to other societies. In the religious realms, some scholars noted a growth in fundamentalist interpretations and practices within Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and other religions, which constitute assertions of difference in profound ways. What is important about these debates, conflicts and new identities surrounding the transformations of culture in a globalizing world is that they are again anchored in perceptions of the world as one.

Governance

By the beginning of the 1970s, the legal processes of decolonization had been largely completed. Accordingly, the United Nations hosted a much larger and more diverse set of states than it had at its founding in 1945, where the US and the UK were dominant players. By the 1960s there were already hints of challenges to transnational governance arrangements favouring wealthy countries from poorer countries. Notable among these was the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), held in 1964, which went on to be institutionalized in representing the poorer countries in discussions of the world economy. Its presence, in turn, led to a counter-reaction by the wealthy countries: the definition of a more formal role for what is now known as the OECD, the home of the dominant 'industrial powers'. The establishment of these opposing organizations

presaged the growing efforts by the countries outside the OECD to have a role in governing global matters. By the early 1970s, the number of less wealthy countries endorsing the human rights covenants of the UN had also risen, with human rights becoming more globalized as a political and social ideal.

The early 1970s also saw the growing presence of indigenous peoples' organizations at the United Nations. With the UN being open to participation in its activities in limited ways by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), this period signals the establishment of conditions for 'global' governance. In this usage, the word 'global' means the trans-world dimensions of governance issues, on the one side, and the involvement of non-state actors such as NGOs, social movements and transnational corporations, on the other. Outside the UN, in 1974, the world's financial powers had set up a transnational organization to deal with some of the changes in risk arising from rapidly growing global financial markets. These endeavours foreshadowed new governing institutions that have become more globally extensive over time.

In summary, these discussions of the arrival of global capitalism, the rapid advances in communication and information technologies, the increasing acceptance of the concept of a world environment, the global scale of debates over cultural practices and accompanying new identities, and increasing involvement of poorer countries in governance have together fostered the growth of a planet-wide consciousness involving more places and more people than at any time in human history. In wrestling to understand these changes, many persons have focused on the concept of globalization as a conceptual way of comprehending them. How the concept is used, how it is understood, and how it structures discourses are remarkably variable. Most agree that over the past four decades there is not one globalization, but many globalizations. These processes sometimes complement, but just as often contradict, one another. What the thinkers in this book share is the belief that studying these processes carefully constitutes an important step towards a better understanding of the contemporary world.

Globalization thinkers

Our objective in writing this book is to increase understanding of globalization in all of its dimensions. One of the thinkers discussed in this book, John Tomlinson, points out that the complexity of globalizations includes:

[...] phenomena which social scientists have laboured to separate out into the categories into which we now, familiarly, break down human life: the economic, the political, the social, the interpersonal, the technological, the environmental, the cultural and so forth. Globalization arguably confounds such taxonomy.
(Tomlinson 1999: 13)

For us to realize our objective, therefore, we needed to consider thinkers who in their own right have tended to be interdisciplinary. They understand that if they do not see the multidimensional character of globalizations, they would be misrepresenting the phenomena. As Tomlinson (1999: 14) adds: 'lose the complexity and you have lost the phenomenon'.

Accordingly, our goal has not been to present a 'hall of fame' of globalization thinkers. Rather we have selected scholars, public intellectuals and activists whose works, when put into dialogue with each other in this book, will enrich readers' understanding of globalizations. Our work is limited and incomplete, however, because we have only chosen thinkers whose publications are available in the English language. Admittedly, many of our authors have published in other languages as well, with English being a second language. We want readers to come away from this book with a deeper understanding of the world in which we are living. We believe that the book will assist them to be more aware of the long history of globalizing processes and how the processes we experience today have roots in the past. We also aim to help readers understand better what is particularly distinctive and novel about contemporary dynamics of change. We hope that readers will have new thoughts about how they might be active in seeking social change, anchored on enriched thinking about globalizing processes.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of persons have written about globalization over the past three decades. It is inevitable that readers of this book will find some thinkers with whom they are familiar and others whom they do not know. They will wonder why still other thinkers are not included in the book. All authors of books in the Routledge Thinkers series face these reactions. They also need to address the intellectual challenge of not presenting an 'A to Z' of a given phenomenon. Rather, their task is to write an integrated book, involving a diverse set of thinkers, which when read together increases readers' knowledge about given phenomena. The choice of thinkers is targeted at ensuring that readers can realize this goal.

The majority of authors in this book have a base in academia. They have 'home disciplines', so to speak. In studying globalizations, however,

they have reached beyond their disciplines; they are interdisciplinary in their approaches. Some of them are 'early' contributors to the discussion in that their writings were influential during the late 1980s and early to mid-1990s. Others engaged in research and entered the debate in reaction to the public controversies about globalization that emerged during the 1990s and to the so-called, but usually misnamed, anti-globalization movement. In fact, the more or less universal disappearance of the latter term points to new generations of globalization scholars. These scholars emphasize the multiplicity of globalizations and point to the possibilities of 'counter-hegemonic' globalizations.

In moving from one thinker to another, we have inserted references to other thinkers so that the reader can gain a full appreciation of the range of scholarship and public discussion in the field of study. At the end of each entry, we provide readers with a short bibliography should they want to explore a given author's writings on globalization in greater depth. All of the thinkers in this book have written books and articles about other topics; in fact, they may be better known for their expertise in those other areas. In this book, however, we point readers only to their writings on globalization. If we are successful in our goal of deepening understanding of globalizations, we hope that our work will foster further study of the increasing trans-planetary connections and their effects in the contemporary world.

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FIFTY KEY THINKERS ON GLOBALIZATION

JANET ABU-LUGHOD (1928–)

Janet Abu-Lughod (née Lippman) completed her BA and MA degrees at the University of Chicago and her Ph.D. at the University of Massachusetts, US. Trained as a sociologist, she taught at Smith College, American University of Cairo, Northwestern University, and the New School for Social Research. She has published over 100 articles and 13 books dealing with urban sociology, the history and dynamics of the world system, and Middle Eastern cities, including an urban history of Cairo that is still considered one of the classic works on that city, *Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious*.

Her contribution to the study of globalization is primarily through her work on the history of globalization and global cities. Most notable here is her highly influential book on the thirteenth century, *Before European Hegemony: The World System AD 1250–1350*. Scholars who have written about the history of globalization usually highlight processes that began in the sixteenth century and feature aggressive hegemony-seeking European actions over increasingly large parts of the world. Abu-Lughod argues that our understanding of this history is enriched if we take into consideration the nature of the world system in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, specifically between AD 1250 and 1350. This world system was as extensive as the early European one, but took a different form. Continuing her work on this theme, she also looks at ‘global cities’ and makes an argument that this phenomenon is not new in the contemporary period, but extends back in history through the era of developing European hegemony (see also **Amin, Arrighi, Braudel, Brenner, Taylor**).

Globalization

Abu-Lughod builds history into her conception of globalization by defining it as:

[...] an ongoing process whereby larger and larger portions of the world become increasingly linked to one another – via material exchanges of resources, commodities, and currencies as well as through a widening of the geographic range over which populations move.

(Abu-Lughod 1999: 399)

She adds that this process involves more integration not only economically and politically, but also more contact on the symbolic and cultural levels. Accordingly, globalization can include:

[...] an increased ‘range’ and ‘depth’ of awareness, as larger numbers of people in many regions of the globe know about one another and can be influenced, at least potentially, by ideas, values and practices that originate far beyond the localities in which they live.

(Abu-Lughod 1999: 399)

World systems vary over time, therefore, based on the range and depth of such interconnections.

She adds that the experience of globalization is not equally distributed across the world: 'effects are disproportionately caused by forces emanating from hegemonic powers (whether imperial, neo-colonial or class based) and hegemonic cultures' (Abu-Lughod 1999: 399). This variability is also seen in 'global cities' ('urban concentrations or nodes through which a disproportionate fraction of national and international interaction flows') (1999: 400). These are cities that contain the command centres for the global system. London and New York are command centres, for example, when it comes to global financial markets (see also **Sassen**). In rounding out her definition, Abu-Lughod cautions against assumptions often made that globalization brings increasing convergence in culture: 'what we are experiencing is rapid, incomplete and highly differentiated flows in global transmission. We have a globalizing but not necessarily homogeneous culture' (Abu-Lughod 1997: 135).

History of globalization

Abu-Lughod enriches our understanding of the history of globalization through her study of the 'world system' that had developed by AD 1250 and lasted about 100 years. She identifies three circuits of trade and communication that became systematically linked during this period: one from Western Europe built around Flanders, east-central France, and Genoa and Venice; a second in the Middle East, including Constantinople, Alexandria and Cairo, Baghdad and some coastal areas of East Africa; a third that contained China, South-East Asia and parts of India. Of these three circuits, the European one was the least developed. This world system was not entrenched in all parts of the world, but did contain a large portion of the world's population at that time.

The three geographic areas shared some similarities (Abu-Lughod 1989: 15–17). All contained important manifestations of capitalism, which permitted the development of a commercial network of production and exchange. States played an important role in minting, printing (China had gone to a paper money system by 1280) and guaranteeing currencies. They had mechanisms for pooling capital and distributing risk. In each area, wealthy merchants independent of the state played an important role. China had reached a high level of economic development and was the strongest area in the world system. The Chinese had invented paper and printing, iron and steel,

and made important innovations in weaponry, shipbuilding and navigation techniques. They also had begun producing sophisticated artistic forms with silk and porcelain.

Within this world system, a large variety of cultural systems coexisted and cooperated, despite important differences. Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam, Judaism and Zoroastrianism existed side by side, as did different economic systems ranging from 'near' private capitalism with some state support to 'near' state capitalism, assisted by private merchants (1989: 355). The latter differences were not congruent with geographic region or religious domain. For example, the state built boats for trade both in Venice and China, whereas elsewhere privately built vessels were commandeered when states felt the need (1989: 355).

Looking at later world systems, Abu-Lughod argues that these systems arise when connections increase and decline when connections diminish along older pathways. The connections in the thirteenth-century world system fell into disuse as a result of the bubonic plague. When they were resurrected in the sixteenth century by a world system in which Europe moved towards an increasingly hegemonic role (see **Braudel**), links across the Atlantic to the Americas were added, as well as to parts of Eastern Europe and Western Africa. Consistent with her definition of globalization, successive world systems became increasingly global as they came to include more and more of the world, while the depth of the economic and cultural relations rose as more people from various strata of societies were involved. Abu-Lughod predicts the rise of the US to hegemon as the last step in the development of the European-led world system (see also **Arrighi, Braudel, Cox, Helleiner**). She sees the world shifting away from European and American hegemony towards a return to a system balancing multiple centres, as occurred in the thirteenth-century system (1989: 371) (see also **Amin, Arrighi, Braudel**).

Global cities

Abu-Lughod's research on global cities adds more layers to our understanding of the history of globalization. She looks at the role of cities as nodes in world systems in supporting global expansion. She challenges arguments by scholars such as **Sassen** who suggest that 'global cities' have emerged only in the contemporary phase of globalization, and points to cities in earlier world systems that were already playing these roles in early phases of globalization. That said, Sassen stresses the importance of global services firms in creating global cities, an emphasis not found in Abu-Lughod's work.

Abu-Lughod defines 'global cities' as 'urban concentrations or nodes through which a disproportionate fraction of national and international interactions flow' (Abu-Lughod 1999: 2–3). What distinguishes global cities from other cities integrated within world systems is their degree of economic, political and cultural dominance. Global cities contain the control or 'command centres' of the global system and thus are linked strongly to one another. Their role is different from other large cities whose function is to help mediate between the global system and more regional and local economies. In the UK, for example, London plays a role consistent with that of a global city, while Birmingham and Manchester function more as centres of the British economy (for a different point of view, see **Taylor**).

Defined in this way, Abu-Lughod argues that in earlier world systems, there were cities that fulfilled the global city role (1999: 401). She supports this argument through a historical study of three US cities: New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. She demonstrates that New York became a key node in the global economy in the latter half of the nineteenth century, followed successively by Chicago and Los Angeles. She also shows that the nature of these roles changed over time as the global economy expanded and deepened across the world. For example, although New York began as a weak node compared to London, it expanded its influence as financial markets globalized. As world systems have changed and become more global, some cities lost this role (e.g. Amsterdam, Genoa, Venice and Constantinople), while others grew into the role (Hong Kong, Singapore, Beijing, Tokyo and Mumbai).

Major globalization writings

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See also: **Amin, Arrighi, Braudel, Cox, Helleiner, Sassen, Taylor.**

SAMIR AMIN (1931–)

Samir Amin is an Egypt-born political scientist who is best known for his neo-Marxist writings on development theory and for his advocacy for the conscious

self-reliance of developing countries. He has dedicated a major part of his work to studying the relationships between developed and underdeveloped countries. For him, the differences between state institutions in Northern and Southern countries can be found in the very basis of capitalism and globalization.

He gained a Ph.D. degree in political economy in Paris (1957) as well as degrees from the Institut de Statistiques and the Institut d'Études Politiques. He has held the position of full professor in France since 1966 and was the director of the United Nations African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (in Dakar) between 1970 and 1980. Since 1980 he has directed the African Office of the Third World Forum, an international non-governmental organization for research and debate. He is currently the president of the World Forum for Alternatives, an international network of research centres and militant intellectuals from the South and the North. He has written more than 30 books, mainly in French and Arabic.

Capitalism, imperialism and production

Amin argues that capitalism is invariably globalizing through its increasing expansion in various regions of the world and through its increasing commodification of various human activities. This global expansion of capitalism takes place through imperialism. The contemporary period, especially after 1980, has deepened globalization in unprecedented ways. Amin rejects the view held by some Marxist scholars that imperialism is a stage of capitalism. He also does not accept the position of mainstream economics scholars who speak about systems with 'market laws' that generate 'optimal equilibria' when left to themselves. In his view, capitalism is 'by its very nature a regime whose successive states of disequilibrium are produced by social and political conflicts beyond the market' (Amin 2003: 2). Therefore, references to 'deregulated markets' are misleading because these markets are steered by powers based on monopolies held by dominant groups outside the market. He stresses that imperialism is a permanent feature of the global expansion of capitalism. The combination of capitalism and imperialism invariably produces a polarization of wealth and power between a dominant core set of countries and those on the periphery.

In successive phases of the history of imperialism and globalization, the core countries enjoy certain 'monopolies' that secure their dominance. He identifies three phases of imperialist support of capitalism: a mercantilist one from 1500 to 1800; a 'classical' imperialist era from 1800 to the start of World War II; and the present era, which begins in 1945, but intensifies after 1980. Globalization intensified in the second phase with the European imperial powers securing the opening up of China and the Ottoman Empire, repressing the Sepoy mutiny in India, and carving up the African continent (2003: 7). As globalization has continued into the present day, the gaps between centres or dominant countries and peripheries have constantly widened.

In the third and current phase of capitalist imperialism, this widening gap results from the dominant powers' possession of five 'monopolies' (Amin 1997: 4–5; 2003: 63–64):

- 1 technological monopoly (only large and wealthy states can afford the huge expenditures needed);
- 2 financial control of worldwide financial markets;
- 3 monopolistic access to the world's natural resources;
- 4 media and communication monopolies;
- 5 monopoly over weapons of mass destruction.

In the second phase of imperialist capitalism, the space of (industrial) production coincided with the national space of political and social management. The nation-state thus shaped the structure of the international system (Amin 1997: 32). In the contemporary period, the relationship between the national and the global is reversed: 'whereas national power used to determine the global presence, it is now the reverse that happens. Transnational corporations, whatever their nationality, therefore have a common interest in the management of the world market' (Amin 2003: 71). The transnational corporations of today have common interests in running the global capitalist system, despite the competitive relationships between them (Amin 2006: 17). These interests are addressed and supported by states through enforcing the five monopolies noted above.

Contemporary imperialism and globalization

Between 1945 and 1980, the competitive conditions changed gradually to a point where corporations needed to succeed in markets of 500 to 600 million consumers (Amin 2003: 71). Accordingly, corporate battles took place in markets operating increasingly on a wider global scale, leading capitalists to push for deeper globalization. While these changes were becoming more necessary over the 1945 to 1980 period, Amin argues that this period was a unique one in that imperialism had less influence than in the periods before World War II and after 1980 (see also **Arrighi, Cox**). Due to the strengthening of the welfare state in the Western countries and the social protections provided by the communist state of the Soviet bloc societies, or by the national state in the 'Third World of Bandung', large-scale regional and social transfers took place, and high levels of growth and modernization of productive forces followed. The results included:

[...] the highest economic growth rates of modern times; huge social advances, in the core countries of the system and ‘actually existing socialism’, as well as in the great majority of countries in the liberated periphery; a flowering of new, proud and modern national identities.

(Amin 2006: 116)

Amin also comments positively on the role of the newly founded United Nations in preserving the peace during these years.

Gradually, over the same period, however, a new system of rule for the world capitalist system emerged around the five monopolies noted above. Unlike the situation of competing imperialist powers and empires that characterized the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there emerged a *collective* imperialism to oversee the deepening of globalization (see also **Hardt and Negri**). Amin terms this system the ‘Triad’: ‘the United States plus its Canadian external province, Europe west of the Polish frontier, and Japan – to which we should add Australia and New Zealand’ (Amin 2006: 9). The Triad developed a system of global governance to fit the needs of the transnational corporations and the world economy built around two pillars: economic and military. And holding up these pillars was the US as the world hegemon (see also **Cox**). In moving to this new system, the Triad has gradually pushed aside the United Nations in favour of the Group of 7 (G7: France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, the US and Canada) and later the Group of 8 (G8: with the addition of Russia).

On the economic side, the World Trade Organization (WTO) was created largely by the Triad in order to increase the comparative advantages of transnational capitalists. Industrial and intellectual property rights were to perpetuate the monopolies of transnational corporations. The WTO was set up to ‘create uniform rules for the management of both internal markets and the world market, to eliminate any distinction between them, in the name of an extreme vision of free trade that has no precedent in history’ (Amin 2003: 96). Amin sees the role of the WTO to be analogous to the ‘colonial ministries’ of the nineteenth century: ‘to prevent colonies from becoming competitors, by denying them the right to legislate and regulate in connection with the activities of metropolitan capital in their own countries’ (2003: 96). The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) play supporting roles in this system of global economic management.

On the military side, the Triad has pushed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to overturn international law and the

UN, particularly the General Assembly, to function as the disciplining institution on behalf of the 'international community'. Central to this discipline is the hegemon, the US, and its military. Since the end of World War II, the US has put in place a global military strategy, divided the world into regions and set up military commands to take responsibility for each. The goal, according to Amin, is to make the US the worldwide master of last resort, with NATO being its cover as it pursued its sovereign national interests (Amin 2006: 10).

Amin comments on the frequent use of war by the US since the collapse of the Soviet bloc as a means of exerting its hegemony. Convenient enemies are chosen, the odious behaviour of their leaders is exploited (while ignoring such behaviour elsewhere in the same region), and then war is declared on the given state, usually with NATO's help. When the war is finished, the US usually leaves behind one or more military bases to help establish 'stability'. The members of the Triad work with or defend the US in these 'adventures' because they share common interests in overseeing the world market and in securing the success of transnational corporations.

Alternative globalization

Amin also discusses potential alternatives to the neoliberal globalization dominated by the Triad, which manages the imperial capitalist system. He argues that any new, more democratic arrangements will still function on a global scale. He invokes the term 'polycentrism' to refer to the change (see also **Arrighi, Bello, Scholte**). By this term, he means that there will no longer be imperial powers exploiting peripheral societies. Instead, the world order would be decentred, with different regional arrangements in play, perhaps building on institutions such as the European Union, Mercosur, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and so on. And with the emergence of a polycentric world, we would see the end of military imperialism, of global financial markets dominated by a small number of states and corporations, and of the military disciplining role of the US and NATO. The five monopolies would be replaced by arrangements that democratize each of these areas of dominance. Negotiations between the various regions of the world would be necessary to achieve the reduction of inequalities between people.

Throughout his writings on alternative globalization, Amin calls for a revitalization and a renaissance of the United Nations: 'The UN should be fully restored to its major responsibility of ensuring the

security of peoples (and states), safeguarding the peace, prohibiting aggression on any pretext whatever (such as those mendaciously invoked on the occasion of the Iraq war)’ (Amin 2006: 131). He would prefer to see the General Assembly given greater importance and to have a reformed Security Council being responsive and accountable to the Assembly.

He underlines the importance of international law and would like to see the establishment of a system of universal courts to uphold that law. International business law would become a responsibility of the UN, while the WTO, IMF and World Bank would be dismantled. He would like to see a reinvigoration of the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (see also **Bello**) and of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Further discussion will be necessary on the sustainable and democratic management of the world’s natural resources, including water, ‘a common good of humanity’. Finally, he calls for fuller institutionalization of international justice. In summary, he writes: ‘The alternative to worldwide apartheid is a pluri-centric globalization that can ensure different economic and political relations among regions and countries, less unequal and therefore less unfavourable to those which have suffered the most destructive effects of globalization’ (2006: 155).

Major globalization writings (in English)

- Amin, S. (1997) *Capitalism in the Age of Globalization: The Management of Contemporary Society*, London: Zed Books.
 —(2003) *Obsolescent Capitalism: Contemporary Politics and Global Disorder*, trans. P. Camiller, London: Zed Books.
 —(2006) *Beyond US Hegemony? Assessing the Prospects for a Multipolar World*, trans. P. Camiller, London: Zed Books.

Further reading

- Johnson, C. (2004) *The Sorrow of Empire*, New York, NY: Henry Holt and Co.
 See also: **Arrighi, Bello, Cox, Hardt and Negri, Helleiner, Scholte.**

ARJUN APPADURAI (1949–)

Arjun Appadurai was born and educated in Bombay (now Mumbai) before moving to the US. He completed his Ph.D. in 1976 at the University of Chicago, US. He has held academic positions at the University of Chicago, Yale, The New School and New York University. He is currently the Goddard Professor of Media, Culture and