

Globalization As Imperialism

By [Stop NATO](#)

Theme: [Global Economy](#)

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The metropolitan West continues to hold exploitative sway over the peripheral rest. Here are some of the facts:

Economic globalization: There are 65,000 MNCs in the world, with 860,000 affiliates. Only 200 transnational mega corporations, 96 percent of which are headquartered in eight rich countries, have a combined volume of sales that is higher than the GDP of all the countries in the globe except the nine largest.

Sixty-eight percent of global media exports originate from the US. The UK is a distant runner-up (9 percent), but British export is still three times as much as its nearest rivals, France and Australia.

From G8 to WTO, all international bodies worth their salt strengthen the US' global hegemony. NATO reinforces US position as global cop. What's so new here?

Globalization as Imperialism

by Farooq Sulehria

Globalization is a fashionable but vague term. The ambiguity is owed largely to the mystification of globalization by its enthusiastic proponents. Definitions offered by these enthusiasts disguise more than they reveal. In their bid to define globalization, David Held and his colleague Anthony McGrew have paraphrased some leading scholars as follows:

"Globalization has been variously conceived as action at a distance (whereby the actions of social agents in one locale can come to have significant consequences for 'distant others'); time-space compression (referring to the way in which instantaneous electronic communication erodes the constraints of distance and time on social organisation and integration); accelerating interdependence (understood as the intensification of enmeshment among national economies and societies such that events in one country impact directly on others); a shrinking world (the erosion of borders and geographical barriers to socio-economic activity); and, among other concepts, global integration, the reordering of interregional power relations, consciousness of the global condition and the intensification of interregional interconnectedness."

Having reworded other scholars, Messrs Held and McGrew coin their own definition. Globalization, in their view, "denotes much more than a stretching of social relations and activities across regions and frontiers." Unfortunately, what they offer as definition hardly

improves our understanding. Globalization, they suggest, is a “growing magnitude or intensity of global flows such that states and societies become increasingly enmeshed in worldwide systems and networks of interaction.”

And why has globalization come about? The obvious answer is new information and communication technology.

Stanley Hoffman elaborates the technological logic. Globalization, he says, has three forms. “First is economic globalization, which results from recent revolutions in technology, information, trade, foreign investment, and international business...Next comes cultural globalization. It stems from the technological revolution and economic globalization...Finally there is political globalisation, a product of the other two.”

Unlike post-modernist and liberal mystifications to disguise globalization as something ‘integrating’, inclusive, or beneficial, I argue that all these fashionable characteristics attributed to globalization are baseless. Globalisation, to quote Robert McChesney, is capitalism “constituted on a transnational basis, not only in the trade of goods and services but, even more important, in the flow of capital and the trade in currencies and financial instruments” whereby, to quote Boyd-Barrett, the “underlying character of globalisation is similar to that of imperialism. Both are narratives of domination and exploitation.”

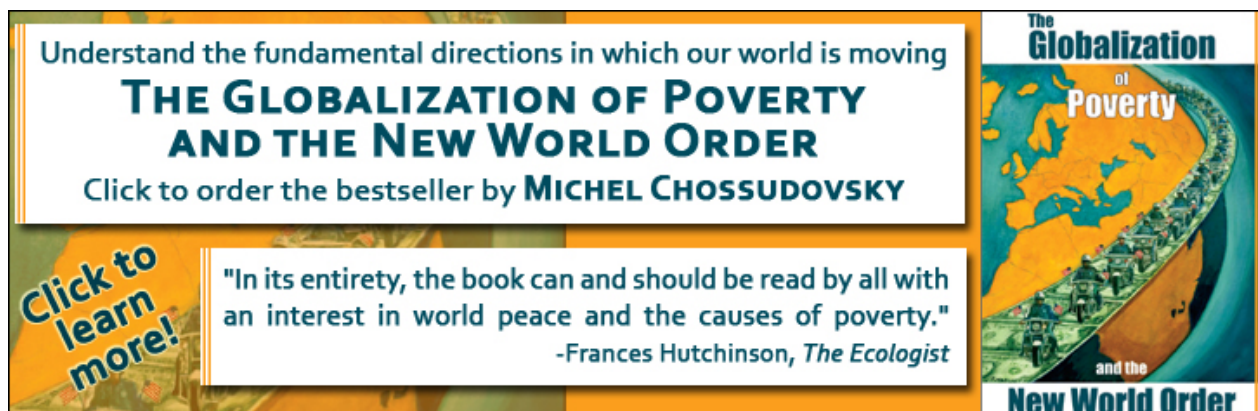
People like Held and McGrew, who self-servingly describe themselves as ‘globalists’, refuse to acknowledge unequal power relations embedded in the ‘growing magnitude and intensity of global flows’. The metropolitan West continues to hold exploitative sway over the peripheral rest. Here are some of the facts:

Economic globalization: There are 65,000 MNCs in the world, with 860,000 affiliates. Only 200 transnational mega corporations, 96 percent of which are headquartered in eight rich countries, have a combined volume of sales that is higher than the GDP of all the countries in the globe except the nine largest. From 1972 to 1995, \$4.5 trillion was transferred to North from South. Between, 1990-98, \$700 billion left Latin America and ended up in Europe and USA.

Cultural globalisation: The global media, often presented as the epitome of globalisation, is the province of fewer than one hundred firms. Sixty-eight percent of global media exports originate from the US. The UK is a distant runner-up (9 percent), but British export is still three times as much as its nearest rivals, France and Australia. Cultural artefacts contribute some \$110 billion to American GDP and £11.6 billion in the case of the UK.

- Political globalisation: From G8 to WTO, all international bodies worth their salt strengthen the US’ global hegemony.
- NATO reinforces the US position as global cop. What’s so new here?

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