International Review of Modern Sociology Volume 38, Number 2, Autumn 2012

"THE GREAT RECESSION" OF 2008 AND THE CONTINUING CRISIS: A Global Capitalism Perspective

William I. Robinson
University of California-Santa Barbara

This article analyzes the global crisis from the perspective of global capitalism theory, in particular, with regard to the rise of a globally integrated production and financial system, a transnational capitalist class, and transnational state apparatuses. It situates the causal origins of the global crisis in a combination of over-accumulation and in contradictions of state power. This 21st century crisis is unprecedented in terms of its magnitude, its global reach, the extent of ecological degradation and social deterioration, and the scale of the means of violence. The global economy experienced a period of hyper-accumulation in the 1980s and 1990s as a result of capitalist globalization but stagnated by the turn of the century. Transnational capitalists and elites turned to two major mechanisms for unloading surplus and sustaining accumulation in the face of chronic stagnation: financial speculation and militarized accumulation. Reformist-oriented elites have responded to the crisis by calling for a neo-Keynesianism from above and mechanisms for transnational regulation while popular and working classes have resisted attempts to transfer to them through austerity, wage cuts, and unemployment the burden of the crisis.

Most commentators refer to the global crisis in economic terms and date it to the U.S. sub-prime loan debacle that began in mid-2007, followed by the global financial collapse of September 2008 and "The Great Recession."[1] The crisis that exploded in 2008 springs from contradictions in global capitalism that are expressed in immanent crisis tendencies and in a series of displacements over the past three decades that had served to postpone a "day of reckoning." I attempt in this essay to situate the causal origins of the global crisis in *over-accumulation* and also in *contradictions of state power*. The system cannot expand because the marginalization of a significant portion of humanity from direct productive participation, the downward pressure on wages and popular

consumption worldwide, and the polarization of income, has reduced the ability of the world market to absorb world output. This is therefore a crisis of social polarization, that is, of *social reproduction*; the system cannot meet the needs or assure the survival of millions of people, perhaps a majority of humanity. At the same time, given the particular configuration of social and class forces and the correlation of these forcers worldwide, national states are hard-pressed to regulate transnational circuits of accumulation and offset the explosive contradictions built into the system.

Yet I want to evoke here the concept of global crisis in a broader sense. This crisis, in my view, is unprecedented in terms of its magnitude, its global reach, the extent of ecological degradation and social deterioration, and the scale of the means of violence. Moreover, because the system is now global, crisis in any one place tends to represent crisis for the system as a whole. National states face spiraling crises of legitimacy as they fail to meet the social grievances of local working and popular classes experiencing downward mobility, unemployment, heightened insecurity and greater hardships. The legitimacy of the system has increasingly been called into question by millions, perhaps even billions, of people around the world, and is facing expanded counter-hegemonic challenges. Global elites have been unable to counter this erosion of the system's authority in the face of worldwide pressures for a global moral economy. My notion of global crisis is best captured in the notion of a *crisis of humanity*, by which I mean a crisis that is approaching systemic proportions, threatens the ability of billions of people to survive, and raises the specter of a collapse of world civilization and degeneration into a new "Dark Ages."

In historic perspective, this 21st century global crisis shares a number of aspects with earlier structural crises of the 1970s and the 1930s, but there are also several features unique to the present:

(1) The system is fast reaching the ecological limits of its reproduction. We may have already reached a point of no return. The ecological holocaust underway cannot be underestimated…..peak oil, climate change, the extinction of species, the collapse of centralized agricultural systems in several regions of the world, and so on (see, inter-alia, Parenti, 2012; Dyer, 2010; McKibben, 2012; Foster, Clark, and York, 2011).

(2) The magnitude of the means of violence and social control is unprecedented, as is the concentration of the means of global communication and symbolic production in the hands of very few powerful groups. Computerized wars, drones, bunker-buster bombs, star wars, and so forth, have changed the face of warfare. Warfare has become normalized and sanitized for those not directly at the receiving end of armed aggression. At the same time we have arrived at the panoptical surveillance society and the age of thought control by those who control global flows of communication and symbolic production;

(3) Capitalism is reaching apparent limits to its *extensive* expansion. There are no longer any new territories of significance that can be integrated into world capitalism, de-ruralization is now well advanced, and the commodification of the countryside and of pre- and non-capitalist spaces has intensified, that is, converted in hot-house fashion into spaces of capital, so that *intensive* expansion is reaching depths never before seen. Capitalism is like a bicycle in that it must continually expand or collapse. How or where will it now expand?

(4) There is the rise of a vast surplus population inhabiting a "planet of slums,"[2] alienated from the productive economy, thrown into the margins, and subject to sophisticated systems of social control and to destruction - to a mortal cycle of dispossession-exploitation-exclusion;

(5) There is a disjuncture between a globalizing economy and a nation-state based system of political authority. Transnational state apparatuses are incipient and have not been able to play the role of what social scientists refer to as a "hegemon," or a leading nation-state that has enough power and authority to organize and stabilize the system.

In short, we have entered a moment of great upheavals, momentous changes, and uncertain outcomes, fraught with dangers, including the very real possibility of collapse as well as the growing threat of repressive social control systems to contain the explosive contradictions of a global capitalism in crisis. If nothing else, it is clear that global capitalism is a highly unstable and crisis-

ridden system. If we are to avert disastrous outcomes to the crisis we must understand both the nature of the new global capitalism and the nature of its crisis.

Situating the Global Crisis: From Nation-State to Transnational Capitalism

Several years after the 2008 collapse, wide ranging debate continues on the ongoing crisis, and more generally on the nature of the 21st century global order in which the crisis is situated. I have been centrally concerned with these matters and have written widely on them over the past two decades. I have above all sought to construct a theoretical framework for situating these matters, specifically a theory of global capitalism (see, in particular, Robinson 2004; 2008, chapter one). The world in which Karl Marx analyzed capital has radically changed. The global capitalism perspective offers a powerful explanatory framework for making sense of the crisis. Following Marx, we want to focus on the internal dynamics of capitalism to understand the crisis. And following the global capitalism perspective, we want to see how capitalism has qualitatively evolved in recent decades. The system-wide crisis we face is not a repeat of earlier such episodes of crisis such as in the 1930s or in the 1970s precisely because world capitalism is fundamentally different in the 21st century.

How, specifically, is world capitalism different now than during previous episodes of crisis? Globalization in my view constitutes a qualitatively new epoch in the ongoing and open-ended evolution of world capitalism, marked by a number of qualitative shifts in the capitalist system and by novel articulations of social power. First is the rise of truly transnational capital and a new global production and financial system into which all nations and much of humanity has been integrated, either directly or indirectly. We have gone from a *world economy*, in which countries and regions were linked to each other via trade and financial flows in an integrated international market, to a *global economy*, in which nations are linked to each more organically through the transnationalization of the production process, of finance, and of the circuits of capital accumulation. No single nation-state can remain insulated from the global economy or prevent the penetration of the social, political, and cultural superstructure of global capitalism.

Second is the rise of a transnational capitalist class (henceforth, TCC), a class group that has drawn in contingents from most countries around the world, North and South, and has attempted to position itself as a global ruling class. This TCC is the *hegemonic fraction* of capital on a world scale. It is grounded in global rather than national markets and circuits of accumulation. Third is the rise of transnational state (henceforth, TNS) apparatuses. Such a TNS is constituted as a loose network made up of trans- and supranational organizations together with national states that functions to organize the conditions for transnational accumulation and through which the TCC has attempted to institutionally exercise its class power. Fourth are novel relations of inequality, domination and exploitation in global society, including the increasing importance of transnational social and class inequalities relative to North-South inequalities geographically or territorially-conceived.

Since the 1970s, the emergence of globally mobile transnational capital increasingly divorced from specific countries has facilitated the *globalization of production*. This involves the fragmentation and decentralization of complex production processes, the worldwide dispersal of the different segments and phases in these processes, and their functional integration into vast chains of production and distribution that span the globe. Values cross borders seamlessly as the move swiftly – often instantaneously – through these new transnational or global circuits of accumulation. This new system is driven, at the strictly technical level, by new information technologies and organizational innovations in capitalist production that have modified how value is created, circulated, and appropriated around the world. National economies have been dismantled and then reconstituted as component elements of this new global production and financial system, which is a qualitatively distinct world economic structure from that of previous epochs, when each country had a distinct national economy linked externally to one another through trade and financial flows. This is a shift from international market integration to global productive integration. At the same time an integrated global financial system has replaced the national bank-dominated financial systems of the earlier period. Global financial flows since the 1980s are qualitatively different from the international financial flows of the earlier period.

The globally-integrated production and financial system underscores the increasing interpenetration on multiple levels of capital in all parts of the world, organized around transnational capital and the giant transnational corporations (TNCs). It is increasingly difficult to separate local circuits of production and distribution from the globalized circuits that dictate the terms and patterns of accumulation worldwide. There are still local and national capitalists, and there will be for a long time to come. But they face ongoing pressures to "de-localize" and link to transnational capital if they are to survive. Territorially restricted capital cannot compete with its transnationally mobile counterpart. Transnational capital is the *hegemonic fraction* of capital on a world scale in the sense that it imposes its direction on the global economy and it shapes the character of production and social life everywhere.

Some of the empirical indicators of the increasing transnational interpenetation of national capitals are: the sharp rise in foreign direct investment; the spread of TNC affiliates; the phenomenal increase in cross-border mergers and acquisitions; the increasing transnational interlocking of boards of directorates; the increasingly transnational ownership of capital shares; the spread of cross-border strategic alliances of all sorts; vast global outsourcing and subcontracting networks; and the increasing salience of transnational peak business associations.[3] There are important new mechanisms that facilitate the transnationalization of capital. The spread of stock markets, for instance, from the principal centers of the world economy to many if not most capital cities around the world, combined with 24 hour trading, facilitates an ever greater global trading and hence transnational ownership of shares. The global integration of national financial systems and new forms of money capital, including secondary derivative markets, as I will discuss later, has also made it easier for capital ownership to transnationalize.

An emergent TCC, the manifest agent of the system, has attempted to exercise its domination through dense and expanding transnational networks of national states and inter- and supranational institutions that form an incipient TNS apparatus. Globalization does not bring about the "end of the nation-state" but rather the transnationalization of national state apparatuses that are

penetrated and transformed by the TCC and by allied with transnationally-oriented bureaucratic and other strata. Once captured by such forces, national states tend to serve the interests of global over national or local accumulation processes. The TNS has attempted in recent years to construct a supranational legal and regulatory system for the global economy and to synchronize the policies of national states around structural adjustment and integration into the global economy, including the imposition of the neo-liberal model on the old Third World.

It is through a TNS apparatus that global elites attempt to convert the structural power of the global economy into supranational political authority. Indeed, as capitalism globalizes, the 21st century is witness to new forms of poverty and wealth, and new configurations of power and domination. Global capitalism has generated new social dependencies around the world. Billions of people have been brought squarely into the system, whereas before they may have been at the margins or entirely outside of it. The system is very much a life and death matter for billions of people who, willing or otherwise, have developed a stake in its maintenance. Global capitalism achieved a restricted hegemony in recent years not only because its ideology became dominant, but *also*, and perhaps primarily, because it has had the ability to provide material rewards and to impose sanctions.

Social Origins of Global Capitalism and the Current Crisis

Capitalist globalization is an ongoing, unfinished, and open-ended *process*, one that is contradictory and conflict-ridden, driven by social forces in struggle; it is *structure in motion, emergent*, with no consummated end-state. In the dialectic, emergent means there is never a finished state, only open-ended process driven by contradictions, in this case by ongoing struggles among contradictory social forces worldwide. If we are to understand global capitalism and its crisis, we must train our focus in the first instance on configurations of these contradictory social forces analytically prior to our focus on the ways in which they become institutionalized and expressed in political, cultural and ideological processes.

This globalization stage of world capitalism itself evolved out the response of distinct agents to previous episodes of crisis, in

particular, to the 1970s crisis of Fordism-Keynesianism, or of redistributive capitalism. In the wake of that crisis capital went global as a strategy of the emergent transnational capitalist class and its political representatives to reconstitute its class power by breaking free of nation-state constraints to accumulation. These constraints – the so-called "class compromise" - had been imposed on capital through decades of mass struggles around the world by nationally-contained popular and working classes. During the 1980s and 1990s, however, globally-oriented forces captured state power in most countries around the world and utilized that power to push capitalist globalization.

Global mobility gave transnational capital newfound structural power over nationally-based working classes. Globalization and neo-liberal policies opened up vast new opportunities for transnational accumulation in the 1980s and 1990s. What took place, in broad strokes, in these decades? Privatizations facilitated a new round of primitive accumulation as public and community spheres were commodified and turned over to capital. Deregulation, liberalization, and free trade agreements allowed for a wave of foreign direct investment, for a sharp increase in cross-border mergers and acquisitions, and for a heightened concentration and centralization of capital on a global scale. The incorporation of the former Soviet bloc and Third World revolutionary regimes into global capitalism provided vast new markets and investment outlets. The revolution in computer and information technology and other technological advances helped emergent transnational capital to achieve major gains in productivity and to restructure, "flexibilize," and shed labor worldwide. This, in turn, undercut wages and the social wage and facilitated a transfer of income to capital and to high consumption sectors around the world that provided new market segments fueling growth. In sum, globalization made possible a major extensive and intensive expansion of the system and unleashed a frenzied new round of accumulation worldwide that offset the 1970s crisis of declining profits and investment opportunities.

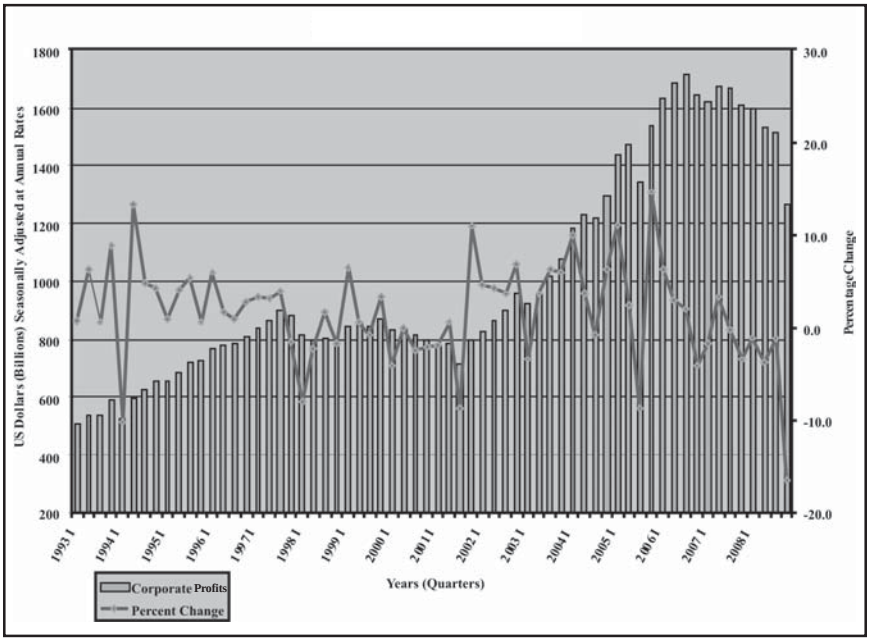
But crises of over-accumulation follow periods of hyper-accumulation. At the structural level, the current global crisis is above all one of overaccumulation, or the lack of outlets for the profitable absorption of surpluses. Global elites giddily declared

"the end of History" in the heyday of global capitalism's hegemony in the early 1990s, but by the end of that decade the limits to expansion became clear as global markets became saturated. As privatization programs ran their course, the well of assets to privatize dried up. The initial boom in investment opportunities in the former socialist and revolutionary countries began to taper after they were brought into global markets. Once plants and infrastructures made the switch to computer and information technology the remarkable rate of fixed capital turnover that the initial system-wide introduction of these technologies generated could not be sustained. Investment in high tech slowed greatly in the 21st century and in 2008 telecommunication and computer orders were down 50 percent from their late 1990s high (Gosselin, 2009). By the turn of the century it became apparent we were headed towards a structural crisis. The system was generating ever more massive surpluses yet opportunities diminished for the profitable absorption of those surpluses, after the boom of the 1980s and 1990s. Global economic expansion and global market contraction reflect a – perhaps *the* – fundamental contradiction of capitalism: *overaccumlation*.

Crisis theory suggests that overaccumulation may be manifested in different ways (see, inter-alia, Harvey's 2006 discussion). How is it manifested in the current crisis? In the last major crisis, that of the 1970s, it took the form of a falling rate of profit, as "profit squeeze" theorists writing in that decade demonstrated. But a "profit squeeze" does not explain the current situation as profits soared in the period leading up to the crisis (see Figure 1). In the 1970s, overaccumulation also took the form of stagflation, or inflation together with stagnation. Working and popular classes fiercely resisted in the early and mid-1970s a transfer of the costs of the crisis to themselves. Neither these classes nor capital were willing to shoulder the costs of crisis; this stand-off is what in my view generated stagflation. But working and popular classes were able to put up resistance precisely because they faced capital within the confines of the nation-state. The gains these classes had made within nation-state capitalism and their ability to resist capital's impositions is precisely what led capital in the first place to go global, that is, to undertake a restructuring of the system through globalization. But stagflation and stand-off does not

characterize the current crisis, at least not as I write in mid-2012. As has been amply documented, the portion of value going to workers has dropped sharply and living standards have plummeted since the late 1970s. Instead, it seems clear that overaccumulation is now expressed, as it was in the 1930s crisis, as over-production/under-consumption. In the wake of the 2008 collapse, for instance, the world press was full of images of car lots overflowing with vehicles that could not be marketed as factories shut down and production plummeted. And if there was a "credit crunch" it is not because bankers and investors did not have money to lend but because they could not do so profitably due to consumer insolvency.

Figure 1: Corporate Profits, 1993-2008



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, National Economic Accounts, NEPA Tables.

The capitalist system, in sum, is again facing the recurrent challenge of how to profitably unload surpluses. The system had been stumbling from one lesser crisis to another since the mid-1990s. First were the Mexican peso crisis of 1995 and its "tequila effect" elsewhere. This was followed by the Asian financial meltdown of 1997-98 that also spread to other parts of the world.

Then came the recession of 2001. Between the Asian meltdown of 1997-8 and the recession of 2001 global elites began to sound alarm bells. Billionaire financier George Soros warned of the need to save the system from itself (Soros, 1998). These elites became wracked by divisions and infighting as the more politically astute among them clamored for a "post-Washington consensus" project of reform – a so-called "globalization with a human face" (see, inter-alia, Stiglitz, 2003). The neoliberal monolith began to crack, although it would take several more years before its downfall. By the new century two major mechanisms for unloading surplus would provide a perverse lifeline to the system: financial speculation and militarized accumulation.

Financial Speculation

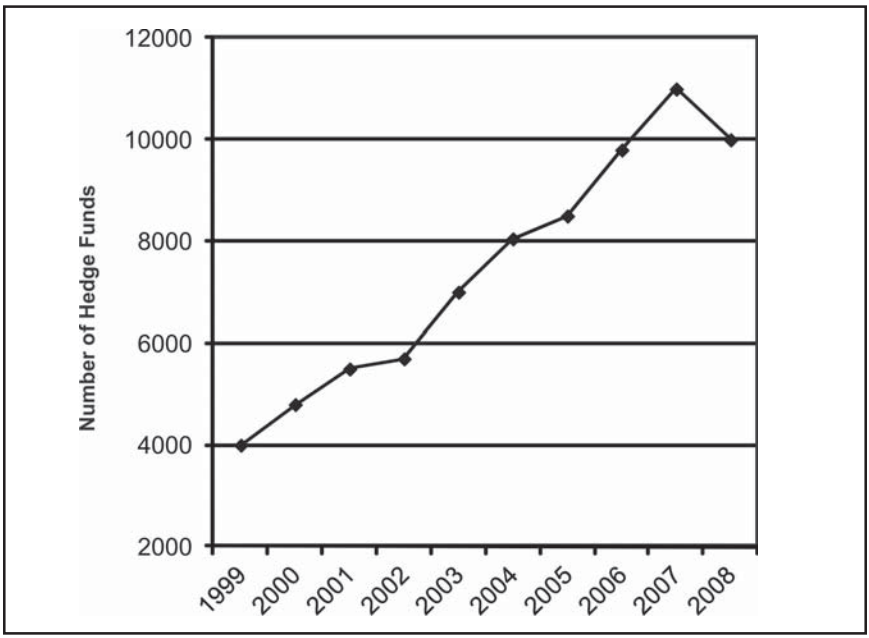
Globalization has, in large part, been a finance-led process. Deregulation of the financial industry together with the introduction of computer and information technology made possible the creation of a globally-integrated financial system. Transnational finance capital is the most mobile fraction of capital and became the hegemonic fraction on a world scale in the late 20th century. The "revolution in finance" included over the past few decades all sorts of financial innovations - a vast and bewildering array of derivatives, from swaps, futures markets, hedge funds, institutional investment funds, mortgage-backed securities, collateralized debt obligations, ponzi schemes, pyramiding of assets, and many more. These innovations make possible a global casino, or transnational financial circuits based on speculation and the ongoing expansion of fictitious capital. Securitization made every pile of money, such as pensions, as well as debt itself, or negative money, a "tradable" and therefore a source of speculation and accumulation. These innovations allowed global speculators to appropriate values through new circuits that were in many respects irrespective of space and irrespective of "real" value or material production.

Transnational finance capital proved to be utterly predatory, seeking out one outlet after another for frenzied speculation. The sequence of speculative waves in the global casino since the 1980s included real estate investments in the emerging global property market that inflated property values in one locality after another,

wild stock market speculation leading to periodic booms and busts, most notable the bursting of the dot-com bubble in 2001, the phenomenal escalation of hedge-fund flows and pyramiding of assets (see Figure 2), currency speculation, one ponzi scheme after another, and later on frantic speculation in global commodities markets, especially energy and food markets, which provoked a spike in world prices in 2007 and 2008 and sparked "food riots" around the world. Worldwide investment in commodities markets rose from 2006 to 2011 by almost 300 percent, from $141 billion to $431 billion (The Economist, 2011:79).

Subsequently, the speculative frenzy shifted to the global bond market, as governments facing insolvency in the wake of 2008-09 turned to bond emissions in order to stay afloat. Global speculators

Figure 2: Global Hedge Funds



Source: International Financial Services London, Report - Hedge Funds 2009 (datasheet) 07/04/2009 [Chart 1, Global Hedge Funds]. Estimates of the size of the hedge fund industry vary due to restrictions imposed on advertising and reporting of performance by hedge funds. As there are no authoritative estimates, we have relied in this report on commercial databases and index providers which rely on information provided voluntarily.

used the U.S. state's bailouts to channel a new round of speculative investment into the market in state-issued bonds and into bank lending to these cash-strapped states. Once the private banking and financial institutions recovered from the 2008 collapse—in large part thanks to government bailouts—they turned to unloading their surplus into these sovereign debt markets that they themselves helped to create. The global bond market climbed to some US$95 trillion by the start of 2011 and constituted the single biggest market for financial speculation in the wake of the 2008 collapse. In 2011 government bonds accounted for 43 percent of the value outstanding, up from 39 percent a year earlier (for these details, see *The City UK*, 2011). Gone are the times that such bonds are bought and held to maturity. They are bought and sold by individual and institutional investors in frenzied 24-hour worldwide trading and bet on continuously through such mechanisms as credit default swaps that shift their values and make bond markets a high stakes gamble of volatility and risk for investors, as I will mention further below. Moreover, the sovereign debt crisis has been presented as caused by working peoples living beyond their means, a convenient smokescreen that conceals the origins and nature of deficits and legitimates the call for social spending cuts and austerity.

The austerity sweeping across Europe (and in the United States) from 2008 and on is particularly revealing; it represents an acceleration of the process of the "Thirdworldization" of the "First World," in which the wealth concentrated at some poles of accumulation in the world is no longer redistributed downward locally towards First World labor aristocracies. Regardless of the outcome of the financial crisis in each individual country, capital wins in both the short and the long term. In the short term, investors cash in on a would-be defaulter with higher bond rates and/or through state bailouts that are channeled into their coffers. In the long run, austerity intensifies the processes of regressive taxation, of privatization, and the dismantling of the social wage. Behind massive cuts in education and increases in tuition in both Europe and the United States, for instance, is the steady march of the privatization and commodification of public education. In short, the toxic mixture of public finance and private transnational finance capital in this age of global capitalism constitutes a new

battlefield in which the global rich are waging a war against the global poor and working classes.

As speculation in the global financial casino reached a feverish pitch following recovery from the 2001 recession the gap grew ever greater between fictitious capital in this casino and the productive economy, or what the media popularly called the "real economy." This "real economy" was kept afloat momentarily by a massive increase in consumer debt (largely credit cards and mortgages) and federal deficit spending in the United States, which converted that country into the world's "market of last resort" and temporarily postponed the crash. U.S. consumer debt climbed from $355 billion in 1980 to $1 trillion in 1994, to $2 trillion in 2004, and then peaked at $2.6 trillion in 2008, while the U.S. current account went from a surplus in 1992 to deficits of $100 billion in 1998, $700 billion in 2004, and $1.2 trillion in 2008, according to Federal Reserve data. The Federal Reserve decision to reduce interest rates to about one percent in 2003 as a mechanism to overcome the recession also triggered a wave of speculation in the U.S. mortgage market and prompted investors to begin subprime lending, including the infamous "teaser" interest rates aggressively sold to millions of people who would later be unable to meet their mortgage payments once the rates were readjusted to jack up payments. Consumption driven by U.S. consumer credit card and mortgage debt and state deficit financing sustained accumulation worldwide and displaced momentarily the crisis. In the perverse world of predatory transnational finance capital, debt and deficits themselves became new sources of financial speculation.

I want to stress that it was *transnational* – not "U.S." – capital that relied on U.S. debt and deficits to sustain profit-making around the world. The sub-prime mortgage market, for example, attracted trillions of dollars from individual, institutional, and corporate investors from all continents. It is a mistake to see things in terms of "U.S. capitalism" rather than global capitalism. The U.S. state has acted as an instrument of global capitalism and the United States as a major axis or nodal point for globalized accumulation. U.S. treasury bailouts of the Wall Street-based banks in late 2008 and early 2009, for instance, went to bail out individual and institutional investors from around the world, while the U.S. debt was itself financed by these same investors from all over the world.

According to a 2011 report by the U.S. government's General Accounting Office, the U.S. Federal Reserve undertook a whopping $16 trillion in secret bailouts between 2007 and 2010 to banks and corporations from around the world (GAO, 2011).

Global casino capitalism produced an ever-greater expansion of fictitious capital – that is, money thrown into circulation without any base in commodities or in productive activity. Financial speculation fueled industrial production in part, so that the global casino kept the global factory running for a while. But much credit went not to expanded production but to inflate the prices of assets already in place. The gap between the worldwide speculative economy and the productive economy grew to an unfathomable chasm. In 2000, for instance, the worldwide trade in goods and services was less than $10 trillion for the entire year, according to IMF data, while *daily* movements in currency speculation stood at $3.5 trillion, so that in just a few days more currency circulated as speculation than the international circulation of goods and services in an entire year! By the early years of the 21st century these massive concentrations of transnational finance capital were destabilizing the system and global capitalism ran up against the limits of financial fixes. The bottoming out in 2007 of the sub-prime mortgage market that triggered collapse a year later of the global financial system headquartered in Wall Street was merely the "straw that broke the camel's back."

Militarized Accumulation

Alongside frenzied financial speculation, the U.S. state militarized the global economy. The cutting edge of accumulation in the "real economy" worldwide shifted from computer and information technology before the dot-com bust to a military-security-industrial-construction-engineering-petroleum complex that also accrued enormous influence in the halls of power in Washington. Military spending skyrocketed into the trillions of dollars through the "war on terrorism" and the invasions and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, acting to throw fresh firewood on the smoldering embers of the global economy (see Table 1). Spin-off effects of this spending flowed through the open veins of the global economy – that is, the integrated network structures of the global production, services, and financial system. In this way, the U.S. state has

mobilized vast resources and political pressures, taking advantage of the dollar's role as the global currency and therefore of the extraordinary power of the U.S. Treasury, to absorb surpluses and sustain global accumulation by militarizing that accumulation and creating a global war economy. But the "war on terrorism" also has collateral political and ideological functions. It legitimates new transnational social control systems and the creation of a police state to repress political dissent in the name of security. It allows these states to criminalize social movements and "undesirable" populations, such as undocumented immigrants in the United States.

Table 1
U. S. Military Spending, 2000-2012 (in billions of dollars)

Year	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
Amount	360	366	422	484	544	601	622	654	731	795	848	879	902*

Note: * Projected.

Source: usgovernmentspending.com, http://www.usgovernmentspending.com/spending_chart_1997_2012USb_13s1li111mcn_30t_30_Defense_Spending_Chart

Many interpreted militarization and renewed U.S. interventionism under the Bush administration through "new imperialism" theories (see, e.g., Harvey, 2003; Wood, 2003; Foster, 2006; Gowan, 1999; Callinicos, 2009). These theories were quite popular during the Bush years because they allowed critics to identify a visible enemy – a state and its direct agents – responsible for the horrors of global intervention and domination. According to these theories, the United States set about to renew a U.S. empire and offset the decline in its hegemony amidst heightened inter-imperialist rivalry. But this was a fundamentally flawed interpretation of militarized accumulation, as I have argued at length elsewhere.[4] We would do better to see the U.S. state as the most powerful institution in advancing global capitalism, in organizing and sustaining global accumulation. "New imperialism" theories confused capitalist competition with state competition and conflated the disarray, factionalism, and parochial and sectoral interests among transnational capitalist groups and global elites with nation-state rivalries. The U.S. state has attempted to play a leadership role *on behalf of* transnational capitalist

interests, taking the lead in imposing a reorganization of world capitalism.

The hallmark of "new imperialism" theories is the assumption that world capitalism in the 21st century is made up of "domestic capitals" and distinct national economies that interact with one another and a concomitant "realist" analysis of world politics as driven by the pursuit by governments of their "national interest." But these interpretations ignore the changes that have taken place in world capitalism. These changes have vast implications for how we analyze world political and social dynamics as well as the responses by distinct agents to the current crisis. Interpreting the U.S. state as playing a leadership role on behalf of transnational capitalist interests is a more satisfactory explanation than that of advancing "U.S." interests. The U.S. state has taken the lead in imposing a reorganization of world capitalism. But this does not mean that U.S. militarism and interventionism seek to defend "U.S." interests. As the most powerful component of the TNS, the U.S. state apparatus attempts to defend the interests of transnational investors and the overall system.

The beneficiaries of U.S. military action around the world have not been "U.S." but transnational capitalist groups. This is the underlying class relation between the transnational capitalist class and the U.S. national state. Despite the rhetoric of neo-liberalism, the U.S. state undertook an unprecedented role in creating profit-making opportunities for transnational capital and pushing forward an accumulation process (the "free market") that left to its own devices would have grounded to a halt much sooner than 2008. The "creative destruction" of war (and natural and humanitarian disasters) generated new cycles of accumulation through "reconstruction." The trillions of dollars invested by the U.S. state in war and "reconstruction" in Iraq and elsewhere has gone to a vast array of investors and sub-contractors that spanned the globe. For instance, Kuwaiti Trading and Contracting, Alargan Trading of Kuwait, Gulf Catering and Saudi Trading and Construction Company were just some of the Middle East-based companies that entered into multiple subcontracting relationships with Halliburton and Bechtel and shared in the bonanza, along with companies and investor groups as far away as South Africa, Bosnia, the Philippines, and India (on these details, see Robinson, 2007).

The picture that emerged was one in which the U.S. state mobilized the resources to feed a vast transnational network of profit making that passed through countless layers of outsourcing, subcontracting, alliances and collaborative relations, benefiting transnationally-oriented capitalists from many parts of the globe as the class relations of global capitalism became deeply internalized *within* every nation-state. The crisis then hit the global system as a whole and is as much political – a crisis of legitimacy – as it is economic.

Responses to the Crisis and Alternative Futures

Is the current crisis cyclical, structural, or systemic? *Cyclical crises* are recurrent to capitalism about once every 10 years and involve recessions that act as self-correcting mechanisms without any major restructuring of the system. The recessions of the early 1980s, the early 1990s, and of 2001 were cyclical crises. In contrast, we are now in a deep structural crisis. *Structural crises* reflect deeper contradictions that can only be resolved by a major restructuring of the system. The crisis of the 1970s was a structural crisis that was resolved through capitalist globalization. And prior to that, the 1930s was a structural crisis that was resolved through the creation of a new model of Fordist-Keynesian or redistributive capitalism. A *systemic crisis* involves the replacement of a system by an entirely new system or by an outright collapse. A structural crisis opens up the *possibility* for a systemic crisis. But if it actually snowballs into a systemic crisis – in this case, if it gives way either to capitalism being superseded or to a breakdown of global civilization – it is not predetermined and depends entirely on the response of social and political forces to the crisis and on historical contingencies that are not easy to forecast. This is an historic moment of extreme uncertainty, in which collective responses from distinct social and class forces to the crisis are in great flux.

Many global elites have responded to the crisis by pushing for a global reformism or neo-Keynesianism from above, aimed at saving capitalism from itself and from contending radical challenges. The Obama administration articulated such a project, involving a shift from neo-classical to institutionalist economics, a limited re-regulation of global market forces, and multi-trillion dollar state intervention programs to bail out transnational capital.

A global reformism appeared to be the dominant response from elites in the wake of the 2008 collapse but there was no global elite consensus and it is entirely premature to predict or describe a new model of global capitalism as social forces will be battling it out for a long time to come. Moreover such a project must contend with the fundamental contradiction of a globalizing economy within a nation-state based system of political authority and legal enforcement. "We now have global financial markets, global corporations, global financial flows," stated British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, speaking at a late 2008 emergency summit of the G-20 countries. "But what we do not have is anything other than national and regional regulation and supervision," he complained, adding: "We need a global way of supervising our financial system … we need very large and very radical [political, institutional] changes" (Brown, as cited in Bretcher, et. al, 2008). In fact, global elites have been scrambling since the Asian crisis of 1997-98 to develop more effective TNS apparatuses or institutions and mechanisms that allow for transnational coordination and supervision. These efforts have intensified since the collapse of 2008. In March 2009, for instance, the Chinese government called for the creation of a new global reserve currency to replace the dominant dollar – a super-currency made up of a basket of national currencies and controlled by the IMF (Lee, 2009).

What are the prospects of a "new New Deal"? At the time of writing (mid-2012) there were little signs that capitalist states could foment a shift back from financial to productive accumulation. Global capital has become a leviathan in which capitals from around the world are so deeply inter-penetrated not only across borders but through the overlap of productive and financial circuits that it is not clear how meaningful it is to continue to make a distinction, in the classical way, between the two. The giant global financial conglomerates draw in individual and institutional investors from around the world and in turn circulate unfathomable amounts of capital into productive, commercial and service circuits. There did not appear to be the political will or even the notion among global elites and capitalist state managers in 2012 to restructure the system in any way that would reestablish some boundaries between financial and productive circuits or that would modify the role transnational finance capital has played as the

regulator of the circuit of accumulation and the causal agent in the crisis. While some state officials called for a re-regulation of the global financial system, none appeared to challenge in any fundamental way the very structure in which transnational finance capital exercises such utter domination over the world.

Reformist forces from above in the 1930s were able to restructure capitalism by curtailing capital's prerogatives without challenging its fundamental interests. Now, in contrast, I do not see any way a reformism from above could adequately address the crisis without a head-on collision with the interests of global capital – the transnational banks, the oil/energy sector, the military-industrial-reconstruction complex, and so forth. This is to say that the capitalist state in order to salvage the system from its own self-destruction would have to exercise a remarkable degree of autonomy not just from individual capitalists and investor groups but from the leviathan that is the inextricably entangled mass of global capital. Such a role could only come about under a change in the worldwide correlation of class and social forces in favor of popular and working classes. The principle underlying difference between the 1930s New Deal project of reform and restructuring and the 21st century conjuncture is this correlation of class and social forces worldwide. There is no socialist-oriented bloc of countries currently that could exercise a critical counterweight to capitalist elites in response to the crisis, and mass socialist and workers' movements, although they are burgeoning, are weak compared to the 1930s.

On the other hand, although these forces are weaker in a comparative historical sense, they are also more coordinated across borders and regions in the new global age and reinvigorated by the crisis. To speak of a global justice movement is not mere rhetoric because resistance and counter-hegemonic forces around the world are acutely aware in a way that we have not previously experienced that local resistance struggles and alternative projects acquire their meaning in the context of and in relation to transnational struggles and projects. In the late 1990s popular resistance forces in different parts of the world calling for transformative projects formed a critical mass, coalescing around an agenda for global social justice. Resurgent left, radical, and anti-capitalist forces worldwide have again placed socialism on the world political agenda. Latin

America appears to be the "weakest link" at this time in the global capitalist leviathan. The Venezuelan revolution is attempting to construct a 21st century socialism and to stake out a radical anti-capitalist pole in South America. Everywhere popular forces are in ferment and mass struggles escalating. The organized left has had a renewed presence in many countries.

These counter-hegemonic forces call for the resolution of the crisis through a more far reaching transformation of the global social order. But severe fragmentation of the popular classes brought about by decades of global informalization and flexible accumulation continues to challenge counter-hegemonic forces to find new ways to aggregate dispersed groups into collective projects of transformation. Anarchist-inspired aversions to struggling for state power and the illusion of being able to "change the world without taking power" (Holloway, 2005) are under heightened challenge. A radical response from below to the crisis lacks at this time a "post-modern prince" or political vehicles and concrete projects for reordering the world, a deficiency that the global justice movement seems to be more acutely aware of than prior to the crisis. At the close of a 120,000-strong meeting of the World Social Forum in Belem, Brazil, in January 2009, representatives from social movements from around the world declared:

> We are facing a global crisis which is a direct consequence of the capitalist system and therefore cannot find a solution within the system….In order to overcome the crisis we have to grapple with the root of the problem and progress as fast as possible towards the construction of a radical alternative that would do away with the capitalist system and patriarchal domination. We, the social movements, are faced with an historic opportunity to develop emancipatory initiatives on a global scale. Only through the social struggle of the masses can populations overcome the crisis….The challenge of social movements is to achieve a convergence of global mobilization (Assembly of Social Movements, 2009).

The initiative seemed to pass in early 2009 from global elites to oppositional forces from below. Global elites meeting in January 2009 for the annual summit of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, appeared to be rudderless – confused and divided, unable to come up with coherent solutions to the crisis and on the defensive. In contrast, the 120,000 participants from the Belem World Social Forum meeting were clearly on the offensive.

In the following years the Arab Spring erupted in the Middle East, Europe became engulfed in anti-austerity strikes and mobilizations, the Occupy movement took the United States by storm, and Chilean student and worker protests underscored the ongoing popular and revolutionary challenges to global capitalism emanating from Latin America. Could such global mobilizations from below push reformist-minded elites further to the left or even push them beyond reformism? Popular forces from below need to convert counter-hegemony into a hegemony within the gamut of social and political responses to the unfolding crisis. This hegemony must involve a radical critique of the crisis. Now is the time to move from opposition to neoliberalism to opposition to the mildly reformist proposals that do not challenge the power of the transnational capitalist class and the global capitalist system.

The Dangers of Neo-Fascism and Collapse

Nation-states will remain for the foreseeable future a fundamental terrain of battle among contending social forces. National states face spiraling fiscal and legitimacy crises. Managers of the capitalist state need to generate conditions for a reactivation of transnational accumulation yet they also must respond to mass popular pressures from below. Many governments will likely collapse, such as happened in Iceland in January 2009, and may happen in Greece, Spain and elsewhere, as states find no way to manage the explosive pressures generated by the crisis. Global elites clearly were unable to counter the erosion of the system's authority. Might states turn to national protectionism in response to pressure from national constituencies to address the crisis? The integrated nature of the global production and financial system makes it difficult for it to be disassembled into national systems. Moreover, it is not in the interests of transnational capital to seal off any national territory, which would undermine the transnational circuits of accumulation that are based on vast and overlapping chains of suppliers and subcontractors across the globe and thoroughly transnational ownership and cross-investment of what appear in namesake alone as "national" corporations.

Apparent protectionist measures in late 2008 and early 2009 sought not to shield national capitals in rivalry with one another, as in the 1930s, but to bail out *transnational* capital within particular

nation-states. National constituencies pressing for protectionism were not capitalist groups, who are transnational in character even when headquartered in one nation or another, but popular and working classes. U.S. trade unions, for instance, called for a "buy American" provision to be included in the early 2009 U.S. government bailout of auto firms while the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other business groups railed out against such provisions (Wallsten, 2009). Such labor protectionism may be progressive in some cases but in others is clearly chauvinist, such as in the United States and England, where it has been directed by privileged, largely white, sectors of the working class against immigrants. And it is this constituency that could form the social base for far-Right responses to the crisis. Crises of state legitimacy and vacuums in institutional power, in this regard, open up space not just for popular forces from below but also for the far-Right forces that compete with reformist and radical responses to crisis.

This proto-fascist Right seeks to fuse reactionary political power with transnational capital, to organize a mass base among historically privileged sectors of the global working class, such as white workers in the North and middle layers in the South, that are now experiencing heightened insecurity and the specter of downward mobility. The proto-fascist response to the crisis involves militarism, extreme masculinization, racism, the search for scapegoats (such as immigrant workers in the United States and Europe), and mystifying ideologies. The need for dominant groups around the world to assure widespread, organized mass social control of the world's surplus population and of rebellious forces from below gives a powerful impulse to a project of 21st century global fascism. A 21st century fascism could develop police states drawing on new sophisticated systems of surveillance and coercive and ideological control and the mechanisms they make possible for controlling space and exercising more selective repression than what we traditionally associate with early 20th century fascism. Images of what such a political project would involve spanned from the late 2008/early 2009 Israeli invasion of Gaza and "ethnic cleansing" of the Palestinians, to the scapegoating and criminalization of immigrant workers in the United States, genocide in the Congo, the spread of neo-Nazis and skinheads in Europe, and the incipient breakdown of constitutional order under

the George W. Bush administration (for an extended discussion see Robinson and Barrera, 2012).

Could global civilization collapse if one or another project is unable to impose its hegemony and stabilize the system? There are many historical episodes of collapse when civilizations are unable to resolve the contradictions that tear them apart (Diamond, 2005). When no social or political force is able to prevail and impose a stable system of domination collapse has been the outcome. This was the case, for instance, with the collapse of the Roman and Mayan empires, several Chinese dynasties, and the Easter Island civilization. The current moment is distinct in that this time the collapse would be of global civilization. Ecological constraints also played a role in previous collapses. However, we face the prospects of a more far-reaching systemic implosion in the 21st century through ecological crisis – as suggested in peak oil and other resource depletion scenarios, the spiral of species extinctions, and scientific predictions of a collapse of central agricultural systems in China, Australia, the U.S. Midwest and other global breadbaskets in the coming decades. The ecological constraints to a resolution of the global crisis circumscribe the political possibilities for its resolution. Even if global capitalism could manage to stabilize in the next few years, a recovery would be ephemeral without a more fundamental resolution of the fundamentally unsustainable nature of the system. Sociologist Sing Chew has studied "recurrent dark ages" in world history, including mass dying, political chaos and a regression in levels of social organization and productive forces. He has warned that we face the possibility now of a "new dark ages" on a planetary scale (Chew, 2006).

Conclusions: Who Will Pay?

A crisis of overaccumulation means that the system's capacity for surplus absorption is exhausted and that a phase of the devaluation or destruction of capital surpluses has begun. In 2008 close to $7 trillion was wiped out on Wall Street through such devaluation (Merle, 2009). The neo-Keynesian bailouts and stimulus packages totaling trillions of dollars were financed by printing money. The resolution of one crisis may thus generate another – hyperinflation not unlike what Latin America experienced in the late 1970s and 1980s. This in turn is part of a more fundamental historical process,

in which uneven accumulation should be understood less in territorial than in transnational class and social group terms. Although core and periphery still carry geographic meaning, the process by which capital appropriates and disposes of surpluses worldwide takes place in an increasingly integrated yet highly polarized global society and results ever less in a redistribution of that surplus downward to labor aristocracies in the First World. The crisis is already resulting in a further concentration and centralization of capital worldwide in hothouse fashion in the hands of the transnational capitalist class. This process was one of the great untold stories of the 1990s boom in the global economy (Robinson, 2004). It has accelerated since the financial collapse; to wit, the eight great Wall Street financial houses became only four in 2008 alone.

Crises are times of great uncertainty so that short-term predictions are of little value. They are also moments in which political agency may prevail over the structural determinations. Depending on the elements of contingency and agency, crises may tilt the correlation of social and class forces in distinct directions. Crises may therefore also present opportunities for dominant groups, particularly for capital, to utilize unemployment and hardship to carry through further dispossession. In this respect, the 2008 financial crisis was a major turning point. The multi-billionaire Warren Buffet, chairman of Berkshire Hathaway, and one of the richest men in the world, famously stated in 2006 that "There's class warfare, all right, but it's my class, the rich class, that's making war, and we're winning" (as cited in Carroll, 2010: 1).

In fact, the global crisis provided the TCC with an opportunity to intensify this war. As the crisis spread, it generated the conditions for new rounds of massive austerity worldwide, greater flexibilization of labor, steeply rising under and unemployment, foreclosures, furloughs, reduced working hours, amid mounting debt peonage have been some of capital's mechanisms for transferring the cost of crisis onto the masses of popular and working classes. The crisis allowed transnational capital to squeeze more value out of labor, directly through more intensified exploitation and indirectly through state finances. Social and political conflict escalated around the world in the wake of 2008, including, as mentioned above, repeated rounds of national strikes

and mass mobilization in the European Union, uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East, etc. While the TNS failed to intervene to impose regulations on global finance capital, it did intervene to impose the costs of devalorization on labor. By 2010 global corporations were registering record profits and corporate income escalated. After suffering losses in 2008, the top 25 hedge-fund managers were paid, on average, more than $1 billion each in 2009, eclipsing the record they had set in pre-recession 2007 (Freeland, 2011). In 2011 corporate profits in the United States hit their highest level since 1950, while in that same year real wages fell. Between 2009 and 2011, 88 percent of national income growth in the United States went to corporate profits while just one percent went to wages (Garofalo, 2012). The Dow Jones, which had dropped from 14,000 to 6,500 in late 2008 and early 2009, rose to 13,000 in early 2012.

Unless there is effective resistance, global capital is likely to make permanent the further flexibilization of labor and other concessions it is wringing out of workers through the crisis. The bailouts of transnational capital, particularly transnational finance capital, come at the expense of taxation on working classes and therefore represent in themselves a transfer of the devaluation of capital onto labor. Will popular sectors manage to forge a social solidarity of the oppressed, the exploited, and the subordinate majorities across ethnic and national lines? Dominant groups, especially in the heartlands of global capitalism, will try to aggravate existing national and ethnic hierarchies of labor, to scapegoat immigrants, unemployed Black people, and so forth. Gary Dymsky has shown how financiers shifted from redlining African American communities in the United States in their mortgage lending to predatory lending to them, that is, from racial exclusion to racial exploitation (Dymysky, 2009). Since the subprime collapse the dominant discourse attempts to shift blame to these African American families as "irresponsible borrowers." Similarly, anti-immigrant forces in the United States have shifted from a blatant racialist anti-Latino discourse to an economicist discourse of "protecting citizens' employment." These discursive shifts underscore that a major dimension of the battles to come is *whose* interpretation of the crisis will prevail. How majorities in global society understand the threats to their security and survival will shape their social and political agency.

It is at times of crisis rather than equilibrium in a system, to reiterate, that space opens up for new ideas and for collective agency to influence the course of structural change. We are entering a period of turbulence, upheavals, collapse of states, political vacuums and prolonged conflict as we step into the unknown. In my view, resolution of the crisis must involve a radical redistribution of wealth and power downward to poor majorities. Social justice requires, at the minimum, reintroducing a redistributive component into the global accumulation process. This raises the question of what forces in favor of social justice can hope to achieve if and when poor people and popular sectors are able to win state power in particular countries, or at least to place into state agencies people who are responsive to their plight, aware of their needs, and willing to challenge the prerogatives of transnational capital.

Yet this brings us full circle back to globalization and to what makes the early 21st century distinct from previous moments in the history of world capitalism. In this qualitatively new stage of global capitalism there are clear limitations to the reintroduction of a redistributive project at the nation-state level. It is not clear how effective national alternatives alone can be in transforming social structures and resolving the crisis. If the (capitalist) state as a class relation is becoming transnationalized then any challenge to (global) capitalist state power must involve a major transnational component. Struggles at the nation-state level are far from futile. They remain central to the prospects for social justice, to progressive social change, and to any resolution of the crisis. But any such struggles must be part of a more expansive transnational counter-hegemonic project, including transnational trade unionism, transnational social movements, transnational political organizations, and so on. And they must strive to establish sets of transnational institutions and practices that can place controls on the global market and rein in some of the power of global capital as the first step in a resolution of the crisis. An alternative to global capitalism must be a *transnational* popular project. The popular mass of humanity in its struggle for social justice must develop a *transnational* class consciousness and concomitant global political protagonism involving strategies, programs, organizations and institutions that link the local to the national, and the national to the global.

Notes

1. Many works have been published in the aftermath of the 2008 collapse, too vast to list here. Among those that I have found useful (despite my disagreement with their interpretations) are: Konings (2010); Harman (2010); Chossudovsky and Marshall (2010); Marazzi (2011); Meszaros and Foster (2010).
2. The phrase is from Davis' (2007) excellent study.
3. For summaries and assessments of this evidence, see inter-alia, Robinson (2004); Sklair, 2001 and 2002); Kentor (2005); Kentor and Jang (2004); UNCTAD, various years; Carroll, (2010); Staples (2008) and (2006); Murray and Scott (2012).
4. For a review of the "new imperialism" literature and my critique, see Robinson (2007).

References

Assembly of Social Movements. (2009). "Declaration of the Assembly of Social Movements at the World Social Forum" (February 5), downloaded on April 5, 2009, from *http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=ASS20090204&articleId=12160*

Brecher, Jeremy, Tim Costello, and Brenda Smith. (2008). "The G-20 vs. The G-6 Billion," *Znet* (Nov. 20), retrieved on Nov 21 from *http://www.zmag.org/znet/viewArticle/19707.*

Callinicos, Alex. (2009). *Imperialism and Global Political Economy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Carroll, William, K. (2010). *The Making of a Transnational Capitalist Class: Corporate Power in the 21st Century*. London: Zed.

Chew, Sing C. (2006). *The Recurring Dark Ages: Ecological Stress, Climate Changes, and System Transformation*, Lanham: AltaMira Press.

Chossudovsky, Michel and Andrew Gavin Marshall (editors). (2010). *The Global Economic Crisis: The Great Depression of the XXI Century*. Quebec, Global Research Publishers.

Davis, Mike. (2007). Planet of Slums. London: Verso.

Diamond, Jared. (2005). *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, New York: Penguin.

Dicken, Peter. (2007). *Global Shift*, Fifth Edition. New York: Guilford.

Dyer, Gwynne. (2010). *Climate Wars: The Fight for Survival as the World Overheats* Oxford: Oneworld.

Dymsky, Gary A. (2009). "The Political Economy of the Subprime Meltdown," Paper Presented at the Symposium, Financial Crisis and Globalization, Institute for Global Cooperation and Conflict (IGCC), University of California at Riverside, (13 January).

Foster, John Bellamy. (2006). *Naked Imperialism: U.S. Pursuit of Global Dominance*, New York: Monthly Review.

Foster, John Bellamy Brett Clark, and Richard York. (2011). *The Ecological Rift: Capitalism's War on Earth*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Freeland, Chrystia. (2011). "The Rise of the New Global Elite," *The Atlantic* (Jan/Feb), inter-net edition, accessed on August 3, 2012, from *http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/01/the-rise-of-the-new-global-elite/8343/*

General Accounting Office. (2011). Federal Reserve System: Opportunities Exist to Strengthen Policies and Processes for Managing Emergency Assistance, GAO-11-696, July, Washington, D.C.

Garofalo, Pat. (2012). "Corporate Managers and Profits are Increasing, but Workers' Wages Aren't," *Thinkprogress Economy*, on-line magazine, February 22, retrieved on August 3, 2012 from *http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2012/02/22/430190/corporate-profits-wages-2012/*

Gosselin, Peter G. (2009). "U. S. Economy May Sputter for Years," *Los Angeles Times*, (19 January), A1.

Gowan, Peter. (1999). *The Global Gamble: Washington's Bid for World Dominance,* London: Verso.

Harvey, David. (2006). *The Limits to Capital*, London: Verso.

_____. (2003). *The New Imperialism*, 2nd Edition, New York: Oxford University Press.

Harman, Chris. (2010). *Zombie Capitalism: Global Crisis and the Relevance of Marx*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.

Holloway, John. (2005). *Change the World Without Taking Power*, London: Pluto.

Kentor, Jeffrey. (2005). "The Growth of Transnational Corporate Networks, 1962 to 1998," *Journal of World-Systems Research*, 11 (2), 262-286.

Kentor and Yong Suk Jang. (2004). "Yes, There is a (Growing) Transnational Business Community," *International Sociology*, 19 (3): 355-368.

Konings, Hans, ed. (2010). *The Great Credit Crash.* London: Verso.

Lee, Don. (2009). "China Pushes for Bigger Role in Reshaping the World Economy," *Los Angeles Times*, April 2, A1.

Marazzi, Christian. (2010). *The Violence of Financial Capitalism*, Los Angeles: Semiotics(e).

McKibben, Bill. (2012). "Global Warming's Terrifying New Math," *Rolling Stone*, 2 (August 2012), on line edition, accessed 3 August 2012 from *http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/global-warmings-terrifying-new-math-20120719?print=true.*

Merle, Renae. (2009). "Wall Street's Final '08 Toll: $6.9 Trillion Wiped Out," *Washington Post* (January 1), A1.

Meszaros, Istvan and John Bellamy Foster. (2011). *The Structural Crisis of Capital*, New York: Monthly Review Press.

Murray, Georgina and John Scott (eds). (2012). *Financial Elites and Transnational Business: Who Rules the World?"* Camberley, UK, and Northhampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd.

Parenti, Christian. (2012). *Tropic of Cancer: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence*. Nation Books.

Robinson, William, I. (2004). *A Theory of Global Capitalism.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

_____. (2007). "Beyond the Theory of Imperialism: Global Capitalism and the Transnational State," *Sociology Without Borders* (2), 5-26.

_____. (2008). *Latin America and Global Capitalism*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press.

Robinson, William, I. and Mario Barrera. (2012). "Twenty-First Century Fascism: a U.S. Case Study," *Race and Class*, 53 (3), 4-29.

Sklair, Leslie. (2001). *The Transnational Capitalist Class*. Oxford: Blackwell.

_____. (2002). *Globalization: Capitalism and Its Alternatives*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Soros, George. (1998). *The Crisis of Global Capitalism: Open Society Endangered*, New York: Public Affairs.

Staples, Clifford L. (2008). "Cross-Border Acquisitions and Board Globalization in the World's Largest TNCs, 1995-2005," *The Sociological Quarterly*, 49:31-51.

_____. (2006). "Board Interlocks and the Study of the Transnational Capitalist Class," *Journal of World-Systems Research*, XII, 2:309-319.

Stiglitz, Joseph. (2003). *Globalization and its Discontents*. New York: W.W. Norton.

The CityUK . (2011). "Global Bond Market Up 5% in 2010 to Record $95 Trillion," internet blog, published on-line 04//7/2011 and downloaded on August 2, 2012 from *http://www.thecityuk.com/media/press-releases/global-bond-market-up-5-in-2010-to-record-95-trillion-more-than-two-thirds-the-size-of-equity-market/.*

The Economist. (2011). "Back to the Futures." (Sept. 17), 79.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Various years. *World Investment Report*. Geneva: United Nations.

Wallsten, Peter. (2009). "Liberals Watch Obama, and Worry." *Los Angeles Times* (February 16), A1.

Wood, Ellen Meiksins. (2003). *Empire of Capital,* London: Verso.