

Review: Delinking or Globalisation?

Reviewed Work(s): Delinking: Towards a Polycentric World by Samir Amin:
Eurocentrism by Samir Amin: Maldevelopment: Anatomy of a Global Failure by Samir
Amin

Review by: Jan Nederveen Pieterse

Source: *Economic and Political Weekly*, Jan. 29, 1994, Vol. 29, No. 5 (Jan. 29, 1994), pp.
239-242

Published by: Economic and Political Weekly

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4400726>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



Economic and Political Weekly is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Economic and Political Weekly*

JSTOR

Delinking or Globalisation?

Jan Nederveen Pieterse

Delinking: Towards a Polycentric World, by Samir Amin; Zed Books, London, 1990; **Eurocentrism**, by Samir Amin; Zed Books, London, 1989; **Maldevelopment: Anatomy of a Global Failure**, by Samir Amin; Zed Books/United Nations University, London/Tokyo, 1990.

TO those familiar with his earlier work Samir Amin's new books are not really new; they provide elaborations and further arguments in support of his theses rather than breaking new ground. But they do offer an opportunity to reconsider the arguments of one of the most outspoken dependency theorists and a way to measure what has changed since the time Samir Amin, along with Andre Gunder Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein, seemed to represent some of the most exciting and challenging work in international political economy. Revisiting these positions is an opportunity to gauge how part of this familiar family of perspectives and analytics of development Marxism is withstanding the time test of plausibility.

The focus of this review is Amin's argument of 'delinking'—the keynote of his thinking as well as his most distinctive contribution to alternative development. Delinking or autocentric development, as the positive part of his dependency argument, remains a significant policy orientation—at minimum, as the counterpoint to and polar opposite of what is now termed globalisation and globalism. The proposition of delinking, advanced in earlier works such as *Unequal Development*, is taken up in all the three books under review, frontally in *Delinking* (DL), updated in *Maldevelopment* (MD), and in relation to cultural politics in *Eurocentrism* (EC).

Amin cannot be accused of optimism. He objects to other alternative development approaches such as the 'global Keynesianism' of the NIEO proposals and the Brandt and Brundland reports, because the assumption that autocentric development would not be in conflict with worldwide interdependence is "based on a naive illusion as to the laws governing existing world capitalism" (MD, 60). Nor does he share the optimism about the NICs. Likewise he rejects the category 'semi-periphery' proposed by the adherents of world-system theory: "the NICs are not semi-peripheries on the way to catching up but in every sense the real peripheries of tomorrow" (DL, xi). He notes that the NICs are the most indebted of all the third world countries, and predicts: "The real periphery of tomorrow will be the NICs of Asia and America ... while the African 'fourth world' will no longer represent the 'typical periphery', but the last remnants of the periphery of yesterday *en route* for destruc-

tion" (MD, 65).

Structural adjustment, in his view, is just another installment of the liberal doctrine and the liberal utopia, which is doomed to failure because it ignores the fundamental factor of unequal development as the reality of capitalism. This reality is "recolonisation, sweetened by charity" (DL, xi). The choice facing the third world countries therefore is "adjustment or delinking" (MD, 70). In brief,

delinking is the refusal to submit to the demands of the world-wide law of value, or the supposed 'rationality' of the system of world prices that embody the demands of reproduction of world capital. It, therefore, presupposes the society's capacity to define an alternative range of criteria of rationality of internal economic options, in short a 'law of value of national application' (MD, 70-71).

The social forces which are to carry this programme are a "popular alliance" forged by "the revolutionary intelligentsia" made up of organic intellectuals. In political terms, delinking is a national and popular project. Amin envisages "national popular states" along the lines of 'people's democracies' model of Mao (MD, 189). This project belongs to the "second wave of national liberation": while "the first wave of national liberation is spent", "the forces entrusted with the second wave with its national and popular content—have not yet been assembled around an adequate alternative plan. We are passing through a trough in the wave, shown by this disarray and intellectual and political surrender" (MD, 73).

Several obstacles on the way fall under the heading of "the cultural aspect", which is taken up in all the three works. The closing chapter of *Delinking* is devoted to the question "Is there a political economy of fundamentalism?", in which he contrasts fundamentalism and rationalism as two irreconcilable approaches. In *Maldevelopment*, the discussion of "the cultural dimension of development" comprises ethnicity (essentially, according to Amin, a matter of ruling class competition) and the Nahda (the movement for "reawakening" in the Arab world from the late 19th century onward). In *Eurocentrism*, Amin discusses the "cultural constraints" on the path towards delinking on a fundamental level as part of a wide-ranging historical exposition. *Eurocentrism* may be the most interesting of these books because it seems to be a novel departure in Amin's work: a political economist ventur-

ing into culture, the traditional stepchild of Marxism.

Amin seeks to steer clear of, on the one hand, culturalism ("a tendency to treat cultural characteristics as transhistorical constants", EC, 6) and, on the other, "vulgar Marxism". He takes issue both with westernisation ("superficial", leads to "compradorisation") and cultural nationalisms ("feed fundamentalism", MD, 72). He makes a number of interesting, at times penetrating, observations on cultural history. The opposition Orient/Occident in his view is not tenable:

The opposition Greece = the west/ Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia = the east is itself a later artificial construct of eurocentrism... the geographic unities constituting Europe, Africa, and Asia have no importance on the level of the history of civilisation, even if eurocentrism in its reading of the past has projected onto the past the modern north-south line of demarcation passing through the Mediterranean (EC, 24).

Amin draws attention to the legacy of Hellenism which permeates both Christianity and Islam and which has been inappropriately annexed to Europe. This approach parallels Martin Bernal's *Black Athena*. In an interesting aside, he observes that Hellenism "was inspired by Buddhist thought, encountered in Afghanistan" (EC, 65).

Amin questions two erroneous axioms in western thought: "The first is that internal factors peculiar to each society are decisive for their comparative evolution. The second is that the western model of developed capitalism can be generalised to the entire planet" (EC, 109). Besides, of course, there is a fundamental tension between these assumptions. Interesting, furthermore, is Amin's discussion of early Islamic metaphysics and later the Nahda.

It follows from his critique of culturalism that Amin is disposed to acknowledge the plasticity of culture. He rejects, therefore, "the sharp, cutting judgments that have been made about Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and animism, claims that certain religious conceptions were 'openings' to progress and other obstacles" (EC, 84). Instead, he recognises the flexibility and "plasticity of religions": "religions are transhistorical, for they can readily outlast the social conditions of their birth", (EC, 84). Thus, Islam "has proven itself as flexible as its rival twin, Christian-

ity; an Islamic 'bourgeois revolution' is both necessary and possible, even though the concrete circumstances of the region's contemporary history have not allowed it so far" (EC, 65).

It is consistent with this general view that Amin rejects Weber's protestant ethic argument:

My thesis is not Weber's, but the thesis of a Weber 'stood on his feet'... Weber considers capitalism to be the product of Protestantism. I am suggesting quite the opposite: that society, transformed by the nascent capitalist relationships of production, was forced to call the tributary ideological construct, the construct of medieval scholasticism, into question (EC, 86).

In other words, capitalism generated Protestantism. These critiques of culturalism are pertinent particularly at a time of the revival of culturalist arguments, such as the notion of the Confucian ethic, the rhetoric against 'Islamic fundamentalism', and Huntington's 'clash of civilisations'. But several questions arise. Does Amin also manage to steer clear of 'vulgar Marxism'? How does his own rejection of Islamic fundamentalism differ from the mainstream western position?

Amin's analysis is based on a schema in which modes of production correlate with cultural and ideological patterns, in brief, as follows:

<i>Mode of Production</i>	<i>Culture</i>
Communal	Ideology of nature
Tributary	Religion, metaphysics
Capitalist	Economism

The notion of a tribute-paying mode of production, ranging from the empires of antiquity to feudalism, was first advanced in *Unequal Development*. Within each mode, central and peripheral variations are recognised, in line with Amin's insistence on the fundamental nature of centre-periphery relations. Thus, Confucianism in China was the ideology of a fully developed tributary mode of production, while Japan was a peripheral society in relation to China and Shintoism a proportionally underdeveloped version of a tributary ideology.

Even though Amin warns against the aspiration to formulate 'general laws' and thence the slippery slope of a cosmogony *a la* Engels (EC, 30), it is difficult to see how his own schema escapes this fate because likewise it relies on general laws. Although Amin is circumspect in some of his formulations, his analysis nevertheless consistently follows the base-superstructure schema, squarely within historical materialism. In his words, "The religious revolution takes place on its own terms" (EC, 87), i.e., Protestantism develops on its own—in the trail of and conditioned by capitalist development. The problem with the reflection theory of culture (culture reflecting material conditions) is that it becomes impossible to conceptualise 'cultural contra-

dictions', for instance those observed by Daniel Bell.¹ This kind of base-superstructure logic we no longer find in current international political economy, at any rate not in Harvey, Jameson, Cox. But then, these do not take on grandiose historical analyses, and that too on the basis of scant sources.

Eurocentrism, then, is not a novel departure theoretically; in fact, Amin restates and elaborates on what he wrote on the relation between modes of production and culture in works dating back to the 70s.² His approach, as a circumspect reformulation of historical materialism, is generally steeped in 19th century epistemology, and accordingly his reading of history is itself deeply eurocentric. The categories of 'barbarism' for the communal mode and 'civilisation' for the tributary mode (EC, 15-6) come right out of the textbook of eurocentrism. Amin's repeated recourse to the 'socialism or barbarism' rhetoric reinvents the evolutionist framework. Correlations between production systems and culture were first formulated in the French and Scottish Enlightenment and later entered Victorian anthropology and the analytics of Marx and Engels. Here they are recycled as instruments of historical analysis without a sense of the historical character of the categories themselves.³

A eurocentric bias also comes across in some of the fineprints of his history.⁴ Amin's reading of the Renaissance as the birth time of eurocentrism recycles another eurocentric cliché: "Things begin to change with the Renaissance because a new consciousness forms in the European mind" (EC, 75). According to Amin, we now say that this was due to the emergence of capitalism, but, he points out, "At the time, Europeans attributed their superiority to other things: to their 'europeanness', their Christian faith, or their rediscovered Greek ancestry... Eurocentrism in its entirety had already developed" (EC, 75).

This is an odd argument. First, it is an endogenist perspective on changes taking place in Europe, as if these were not conditioned by developments outside Europe. Second, why focus on the Renaissance—why not on the Crusades, as the first episode of Christendom trying to break out of the encirclement by the worlds of Islam and Byzantium? Third, which Renaissance? The 14th and 15th centuries, the standard favourite from the Enlightenment to the present, or the 12th century Renaissance—which stood on the shoulders of the Islamic 11th century cultural awakening?⁵

That 'eurocentrism in its entirety had already developed' by the 15th century is an unhistorical claim. Eurocentrism, in Amin's view, "implies a theory of world history and, departing from it, a global political project" (EC, 75). For one thing, 'europeanness' (rather than *christianitas*) does not come into the picture until the 18th

century: the emergence of a 'European' consciousness dates from circa 1700.⁶ Why make such an odd and unnecessary claim? This matches his criticism of Edward Said—according to whom Orientalism had its beginnings in the Middle Ages, hence does not correlate with the epoch of capitalism. Since Amin rebukes Said for not acknowledging the differences between medieval Orientalism and the 19th century version, he opens himself to the same criticism by not acknowledging the differences between Renaissance eurocentrism and the 19th century version. As a consequence he constructs eurocentrism as a static and monolithic concept.

Amin takes on 'Islamic fundamentalism' as one of the culturalist constraints on the path towards delinking and because in the Islamic world it is itself an alternative project of delinking. Amin rightly criticises the general clamour about Islamism in the west: "There is an element of hypocrisy on the part of the west in lamenting current Islamic fundamentalism when it has fought in every way possible against the progressive alternative" (MD, 109). Yet the foundation of his own critique is the cliché dichotomic view of fundamentalism versus rationalism: "Rationalism and fundamentalism constitute two states of mind irreducible to one another, incapable of integration" (DL, 184). This dichotomising view is an instance of the Marxist allegiance to the Enlightenment thinking at a time when this is left behind as too simplistic in most other quarters: the tension between science and religion, rationality and the irrational is now perceived as far more problematic than in the age of Voltaire and Diderot. A more complex frame of analysis would enable us to see the modern and rational features (in a context of limited political options and vocabularies) of the Islamist turn, an approach which is now common to all but the most parochial western accounts.⁷

Amin's predictions are consistent with his analysis: in a book first published in 1985 he predicts that the socialist countries (USSR, China and others) will seek "to retain control of their external relations" rather than submit to the exigencies of capitalist expansion (DL, xi). He predicts catastrophe of these developments in 10 years' time (DL, xi).

All these features—evolutionism, Renaissance worship, dichotomy rationalism and irrationality, predictions of catastrophe—belong to a familiar profile: it may not be enough to be a neo-Marxist to be free from the rendezvous with 19th century epistemology. Neo-Marxism does not mean reconstructed Marxism. Amin devotes an unremarkable chapter to the eurocentric lineage of Marxism in which he observes that "Marxism was formed both out of and against the Enlightenment" (EC, 119). Marx shared the excessive optimism prevalent in the

19th century, but actually existing capitalism has not homogenised but polarised the planet, and hence Amin's analytic medicine is, predictably: unequal development and centre-periphery contradictions. This step from Marxism to neo-Marxism leaves all the other questions about the eurocentric lineages of Marxism unsettled. Thus, how can one repudiate eurocentrism and yet continue to talk of barbarism and civilisation as if the 19th century is still on? Why, for all its powerful analytics, does Marxism keep being delivered in packages of pig iron?

In the process, unequal development becomes the answer to all questions. Unequal development has become Amin's amulet and talisman against both liberalism and classical Marxism, the backbone and central tenet of his perspective. As a general view, this is problematic in several respects. First, not only does Amin present unequal development as the basic law of capitalist development but also the tributary mode is marked by centre-periphery relations (the Islamic world and Europe, China and Japan). In fact, the relationship between feudal China and Japan is presented as proof of the general validity of the centre-periphery principle, for this "has produced the same 'miracle' witnessed in the Mediterranean region: the rapid maturation of capitalist development in the periphery of the system" (EC, 64). Thus, peripheries in the tributary mode have a headstart in capitalist development. This sounds like Trotsky's law of combined and uneven development fine-tuned by means of his argument of the advantage of backwardness. If this were valid as a general law, we would expect the Mongol empire to have a headstart in capitalist development. Second, if in Amin's view there is a dialectical relationship between the tributary and capitalist modes, then it follows that a dialectics within the capitalist mode would be equally plausible. There is no acknowledgement, however, in Amin's work of such dynamics within capitalist relations. Quite the contrary, hammering on centre-periphery contradictions and rejecting the notion of semiperiphery, Amin does not show any awareness of the historical movements of the rise and decline within capitalism—centres declining to peripheries, peripheries ascending to core status—even though this is a well developed line of analysis.⁸ In line with the principle of perpetual polarisation, peripheries ever remain peripheries: "all the regions that were integrated in the world capitalist system with peripheral status have remained like that to the present... New England, Canada, Australia and New Zealand were never peripheral formations; by contrast, Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia—with the exception of Japan—were and have remained so" (MD, 169).

Third, 'centre' and 'periphery' are adopted as unproblematic categories across history,

as transhistorical co-ordinates—as if these nodal points themselves are not historical constructs, which cannot simply be extrapolated backward or forward in time. Thus, in the context of post-Fordism and flexible accumulation, centre and periphery carry quite different meanings than in the context of Fordism and, in turn, during the accumulation regimes of competitive and monopoly capitalism. These notions themselves need to be rethought and reworked, as part of a historical economic geography or what Foucault called a 'history of space'. Moreover, there have been episodes of peripheries playing a central role (e.g. OPEC provoking the 1973 energy crisis). In fact, it may be necessary to mix and combine these polarities, as in the 'pericentric' theory of imperialism of Fieldhouse.⁹ Furthermore, in the context of the co-existence and articulation of modes of accumulation within the same space, spaces are layered in multiple configurations—central in some relations, peripheral in others.

Amin rejects culturalism because of the tendency to treat cultural forms as transhistorical constants, but historical materialism is not exposed to the same scrutiny: its co-ordinates are unreflexively presented as transhistorical constants. Unequal development, centre and periphery are used as analytical tools as if they are constants from feudal times through the stages of capitalist development. Apparently Amin views unequal development as a transhistorical law of evolution. Thus stretched over time, the argument becomes proportionally thin and it becomes imperative to take into account counter-tendencies, which are absent in Amin's account, except for the instances mentioned. The result is a one-dimensional and one-sided representation of history. With respect to capitalist development, the overall result is a monolithic view in which polarisation is recognised as the only dynamic. Amin's ignoring the dialectics within capitalist development is the corollary of and rationale for posing an alternative external to 'the system'. This is precisely the point of delinking.

The original form of delinking (decoupling, dissociation) was mercantilism, a strategy of states in the early stages of industrialisation: close the borders to foreign products to protect infant industries. This was an option mainly for larger countries, such as China and India, with the potential to effect an industrial transition on their own. At present levels of technology, industrialisation without foreign investment has become unrealistic: the cost and quality differential between domestic and imported end products has become too great. Besides, this was a matter of delinking for relinking (*recler pour mieux sauter*)—re-entering the world market once a certain level of competitive ability had been achieved. Presently, on the basis of backward technology,

relinking would hardly be possible. The second form of delinking was disengagement from capitalism as part of the transition to socialism. This strategy of neomercantilist closure and 'socialism in one country' was not voluntary but imposed from without. A subsidiary plot in this scenario was a strategy of weakening world capitalism from without: "In time, if enough peripheral societies are closed, the capitalist world system will shrink, and...this shrinkage will reduce prosperity in the core".¹⁰ If this might still have been believable in the 1970s (in combination with capitalist crisis), it is no longer now. The third form of delinking has been part of national liberation and anti-imperialist in content. With the wave of decolonisation past and non-alignment at its lowest ebb, this is no longer on the cards. All along, delinking has also been a statist project, premised on a strong and hard state, capable of imposing tight controls and political repression. Presently, with higher levels of communication and mobility, even if this kind of state-controlled closure would be desirable, the scope for this option has considerably narrowed. Also with Amin, the state is "the means to national protection and assertion, the instrument of what we have called 'de-linking'" (MD, 181).

The politics of delinking is the litmus test of Amin's perspective. At the same time, this case is not as obvious as it appears, also because his views have been changing over the years. In the early 80s, Amin defined delinking as semi-autarky.¹¹ Now Amin repeatedly points out that delinking is not autarky: "Delinking is neither commercial autarky, nor chauvinist culturalist nationalism" (MD, 231). In every definition and discussion, Amin presents delinking as a national project that is to be based on a national and popular alliance. One wonders how, in the age of postnationalism, this is to materialise. Yet in another formulation, delinking parallels polycentrism. Polycentrism has been an ambiguous turn in Amin's thought (originally inspired by Togliatti). First, does it supersede unequal development and centre-periphery relations? Second, doesn't it reproduce 'centrism' and centre-periphery relations on other, regional or internal, levels? Earlier, in 1982, Amin cautioned against "regional subimperialisms" and "mini-hegemonisms" in Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and south-east Asia. Now a section heading puts it in these terms: "The genuine long-term option: transnationalisation or a polycentric world and broad autocentric regions" (MD, 228). If delinking is now redefined as an autonomous form of regionalisation, how then is this to be carried off by a national and popular alliance? How does this mesh with delinking as a "law of value of national application"? Are nationalism/populism not superseded by regionalisation?

Amin's current formulations of delinking are so broad and opaque that delinking can mean almost everything to everyone, to the point that his prescriptions become self-contradictory. Delinking can mean, presumably, a popular anti-western, anti-capitalist posture—yet Amin wants to save precisely “the universalism begun by capitalism” “at the level of a popular, cultural and ideological universalism” (MD, 231). Delinking can mean self-reliant development—as such it is meaningless because self-reliance has long been a universally endorsed development cliché. Or, delinking can mean regionalisation—which is also an increasingly widely endorsed, though difficult to implement, policy orientation. The problem is that the centrepiece of delinking—autocentric accumulation—is a loose screw because the unit that is to be autocentric—the nation or the region—is not defined, or rather its definition can shift according to circumstance. With respect to southern Africa, Amin speaks of delinking as a regional scenario,¹² but in other recent statements, on the future of South Africa, Amin continues to view delinking as a national agenda.¹³ It is not possible on the basis of Amin's formulations to distinguish delinking as a strategy of national or regional self-reliance.

Also, on an empirical level, I believe, Amin's general argument is belied by ongoing developments, more clearly now than 10 years ago: the deepening of globalisation; the overall development of the NICs; and the development of regional associations and trade agreements across centre-periphery boundaries (NAFTA, ASEAN, APEC, EU, EFTA).

In a world in which countries in the south vie for preferential trade access to markets in the north, for foreign investment, technology and finance, delinking is not the most obvious policy option. Actual delinking is presently the shortest way to the Albania effect: isolation from foreign trade, technology, finance, communications, and precisely the obverse of the universalism which Amin advocates. It may be true that a number of African countries are in the process of being virtually cut off from global connections—Amin calls this “passive delinking” (MD, 65; DL, xi). The record of voluntary delinking gives us, besides Albania, Sekou Toure's Guinea, Pol Pot's Cambodia, and Yemen, and currently Burma, while North Korea and Iraq are instances of involuntary delinking. Delinking has also meant linking up with socialist bloc countries—this option is no longer open since 1989. Along with the deepening of globalisation, the overall balance has shifted to the disadvantage of the strategy of closure.¹⁴ More than ever, delinking has become a *cul de sac*.

It is not surprising that at present the only ideologies of delinking that remain are not

industrialisation strategies nor part of a transition to socialism. Radical Islamism is civilisational in emphasis—with a nexus to oil revenues and as such a distributionist mode of rentier development; a posture rather than a strategy. Green projects, also endorsed by some indigenous peoples, envisage delinking along the lines of a ‘small is beautiful’, ‘no growth’ scenarios. The aims of the green movements are, according to Amin, the same as those of communalism; but because of their culturalist analysis he places them in the same category as religious fundamentalism (MD, 165-73). Delinking is further upheld by small Maoist currents, e.g. in the Philippines and the Senderistas in Peru, where the emphasis is anti-imperialist and low on economic strategy.

At the present juncture, regional integration may increasingly become one of the major (alternative) development strategies—the buffer against globalisation, or, more precisely, a way to negotiate globalisation.¹⁵ Taking into account, of course, that there are different modes of regionalisation. Now that national delinking is no longer a viable option, Amin is reformulating delinking in such a way that it is a form of regionalisation. None of the current forms of regional cooperation in the south (e.g. the Maghrib Union, Conosur, Central American Co-operation), however, subscribes to regional delinking or ‘collective self-reliance’. Rather the objective is, through pooling of resources and sovereignty, to achieve economies of scale and scope, to better attract foreign investment by increasing market size, and to arrive at a stronger bargaining position *vis-à-vis* external forces. Regional integration, then, is itself a function and subsidiary mode of globalisation and not a counter to it.

The problem with Amin's position is that delinking offers a rhetoric of autonomy in combination with, apparently, a multipurpose politics. It is, therefore, a posture rather than an analytics or a distinct policy. The most pernicious problem with the delinking posture is that it is a posture of retreat, turning one's back on the big bad world—one in which strength is generated through engagement with realities, no matter how unpleasant, and dialogue with opponents. “In this world, the only thing worse than being part of the evolving economic hierarchy is being excluded from it.”¹⁶

Amin's perspective on development is narrower even than world-system theory. World-system theory at least acknowledges dynamics and dialectics within capitalist development: the notion of semi-periphery is part of that. Frank and Wallerstein never agreed with Amin's delinking strategy. In their view, delinking had been neither successful nor voluntary.¹⁷ At the same time, world-system paradigm theorises capitalism as a closed system, and the tendency of seeking an alternative external to it marks world-system theory as well, as in the con-

cept of ‘anti-systemic movements’. Conversely, Amin views social movements as part of the system (MD, 111).

There are underlying problems with this outlook which are not confined to Samir Amin alone. One is the tendency towards stereotypical thinking about capitalism in terms of the general laws of motion of capital carved in stone tablets. While the greatest contribution of Marxism has been its powerful analytics in showing the varieties of capitalism, its greatest weakness has been to underestimate the varieties of capitalist development.

Notes

[With thanks to Peter Waterman for comments.]

- 1 D Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, New York, 1978.
- 2 In particular, S Amin, *Class and Nation, Historically and in the Current Crisis*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1980 (orig Fr ed 1979), Chapters 2-4.
- 3 Amin's inclination toward wooden formulations raises additional questions (e.g. is the ideology or worship of nature not a religion?).
- 4 Amin also reproduces a eurocentric reading of the history of mathematics, centred on Greece (EC, 19). Elsewhere in the same text Amin cites Bernal's work, so this interpretation is possibly a lapse. Cf S Amin, ‘Black Athena: la fabrication de la Grèce antique’, *Ifda Dossier*, 77, 1990: 93-94. M Bernal, *Black Athena: the Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilisation*, Vol 1, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1987.
- 5 Episodes discussed in J Nederveen Pieterse, *Empire and Emancipation*, Pluto, London, 1990, Chapter 5.
- 6 E.g. J Lively, ‘The Europe of the Enlightenment’, *History of European Ideas*, 1 (2), 1981.
- 7 E.g. J.L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1992.
- 8 E.g. E Friedman (ed), *Ascent and Decline in the World-System*, Sage, London, 1982.
- 9 The pericentric theory of imperialism is discussed and the centre-periphery argument generally is criticised in Nederveen Pieterse, *Empire and Emancipation*, Chapter 1.
- 10 D Chirot, *Social Change in the Twentieth Century*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1977, p 169.
- 11 S Amin, ‘Crisis, Nationalism, and Socialism’ in S Amin, G Arrighi, A G Frank and I Wallerstein, *Dynamics of Global Crisis*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1982, p 225.
- 12 S Amin, D Chitala and I Mandaza (eds), *SADCC: Prospects for Disengagement and Development in Southern Africa*, United Nations University Press, Tokyo, 1987.
- 13 ‘The Perils of Utopia’, interview with Samir Amin by Monty Narsoo, *Work in Progress*, December 1992: 28-30.
- 14 Compare the balance sheet drawn by Chirot 1977 on ‘The Issue of Closure’, pp 203-08.
- 15 E.g. H P Gray, ‘Globalisation versus Nationhood: Is Economic Integration a Useful Compromise?’, *Development and International Co-operation*, 9 (16), 1993: 35-49; C Oman, ‘Globalisation and Regionalisation in the 1980s and 1990s’, *Development and International Co-operation*, 9 (16), 1993: 51-69.
- 16 D Henwood, ‘Global Economic Integration: The Missing Middle East’, *Middle East Report*, 184, 1993, p 8.
- 17 Amin et al, 1982, p 241.