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SAMIR AMIN'S LAST LETTER: A CALL FOR UNITY AND IDEOLOGICAL RENEWAL IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

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Abstract

This article examines Samir Amin's final political letter, analyzing its critique of global capitalism and its proposed roadmap for emancipatory praxis in the Global South. It assesses the letter's key themes—particularly Amin's call for a new International Alliance of Workers and Peoples—to determine their relevance for contemporary anti-capitalist movements. The study employs a close textual analysis of Amin's last letter, situating it within his broader theoretical contributions and the historical challenges facing Global South movements. It draws on political economy, critical development studies, and decolonial theory to interrogate three systemic obstacles: (1) the fragmentation of anti-capitalist struggles, (2) the destabilizing role of "humanitarian" interventions by triad nations, and (3) the lack of a unifying ideological framework. The analysis reveals that global capitalism persists partly due to disorganized resistance in the Global South, where movements lack ideological cohesion and coordinated action. Amin's proposed alliance underscores the urgency of South-South solidarity, grassroots mobilization, and a shared emancipatory vision. The article concludes that his framework remains vital for countering hegemonic capitalism, offering a template for unity and ideological renewal in contemporary struggles.

Keywords: Capitalism, Samir Amin, Globalized Capitalism, International Workers and Peoples, Global South, Ideological Fragmentation, Anti-Capitalist Movements

1. Introduction

In this article, I revisit Samir Amin's last letter, which he wrote shortly before he passed on. This letter must be analyzed and read as Amin's last testament. It will be a submission of the contribution he made both to scholarships and to the eradication of exploitation, poverty, marginalization, and the humiliation of the peoples of the global south by capitalism. In the letter, Amin implored the people of the Global South to get together and form a new international organization whose purpose would be fourfold. First, to be the central organizing movement for people of the Global South in their fight against global capitalism. Second, to form a global South-centric ideology. Third, we must take advantage of this decadence in global capitalism as a propitious moment to topple it. People, the proposed International Alliance of Workers and People

would function as a platform to represent the people of the global South. I also explain why Amin's dream has not yet materialized. This is done by analyzing the resilience of the global capitalist project. Giving examples of current conflicts, such as the Russia-Ukraine war, the article discusses how global capitalism tends to reinvent itself each time it is in crisis.

In making this analysis, it is fitting that I incorporated one of Amin's main theoretical contributions: the theory of unequal development and exchange (Amin 1976). His other theoretical works will augment this, mainly the notion of the triad (Amin 2006; Amin 2009), capitalist accumulation, and delinking to 1492 (Amin 2014) not as a date on the calendar but as a conceptual and analytical departure point. The year 1492 is not the year in which global capitalism was inaugurated. Most importantly, it was the year when the organizing mechanism for international capitalism, the modern version of the state, was also inaugurated (Mamdani 2020). The modern version of the state was inaugurated as a product of the Reconquista, together with its current challenges, which can be summed up into the four following characteristics: (1) a paradigm of war, (2) divisiveness, (3) will to power, and (4) survival of the fittest.

My contribution to Amin's call for forming an international movement for the peoples of the Global South is three times (conceptually, analytically, and pragmatically). Conceptually, I identify the modern version of the state as the underwriter of global capitalism. Analytically, I identify that 1492 was the year in which the state and capitalism were simultaneously inaugurated. I cast the relationship between this state and capitalism not as antagonistic but as symbiotic and mutually reinforcing at the very least and parasitic at the most. Pragmatically, I expand the call of Amin to include other marginalized populations of the global South, such as women, peasant farmers, students, minority communities, indigenous communities, and those suffering from the excesses of capitalism, such as countries most affected by global warming.

Amin's most significant contribution is his unmasking the notions of free trade and competitive advantage as the ultimate hoaxes in the international arena, which masquerade as win-win situations. Yet, they are the archetype of an equal exchange, pillage and subordination of the same system by the other. Just like the myth and hoax of Adam Smith's invisible hand of the market (Smith 1776), Amin informed us that there is nothing called free trade as there is a powerful cartel and what Nhemachena termed the colonality of network and networks of colonality (Nhemachena 2018) and capitalist syndicates who connive not only to control but also to manage and massively profit from global trade. Similarly, comparative advantage is also a hoax and a misrepresentation. According to Andre Gunder Frank, this misrepresentation of the notion of comparative advantage can be traced back to 1817 when David Ricardo misinterpreted and misrepresented Portugal's advantage in the wine industry as a product of its comparative advantage, and not correctly as a product of the exploitative satellite-metropolis relationship that existed between Portugal and its colonies, especially Brazil (Frank 1967). Competitive advantage does not occur naturally; it is the product of history, power, and war.

2. Encountering Amin

Given the vastness of both thinkers and pseudo-thinkers alike, it is rare that one thinker can stand out to influence a generation of students and fellow thinkers like Amin did. I was first introduced to the work of Samir Amin as a second-year student in 1995 at the University of Zimbabwe while studying a subject aptly titled Theories and Philosophies of Change and Development. We were introduced to the thinking of Samir Amin by Dr Edmore Mupoki Kambudzi, who had also studied in France, making the work of Samir Amin, which was written in French, accessible to us as a class. We immediately established a resonance between Samir Amin's conceptualization of the problems of the Global South in general and specifically those of Zimbabwe, which at that time was undergoing the Structural Adjustment Program as part of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank's financial aid conditionalities. As students of Political and Administrative Studies, we had struggled to make sense of Zimbabwe's problems, especially its economic stagnation, until we were introduced to Samir Amin's work, especially his thesis on an equal exchange, which he perfected in 1970 by arguing that unequal exchange allowed capitalists to protect their profits at the detriment of the Global South where these capitalists dominated and purposefully distorted these economies. We realized that peripheral countries such as Zimbabwe

were induced to incur (post) colonial heavy debts to their (former) colonies because of Amin's thesis of an equal exchange. This process perpetuated the dependence of the supposedly independent states on their (former) colonizers. We learnt from Amin how the global capitalist system works to perpetuate what I later learned was coloniality. Amin did not use the term coloniality, but his work fits into what has been currently termed as coloniality of the markets (Tafira and Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2017).

At that moment, we began to doubt the meaning of the independence of various countries of the Global South, including Zimbabwe, given the facts and logic laid bare by Amin, which was that trade was organized at a global scale, not by countries, but by multinational cooperations who milk the resources of the Global South while simultaneously benefiting the Global North. This was done with little or no regard for citizens and workers in the Global South. It is at this moment that, as students of politics, we began to doubt and problematize notions such as aid, human rights, and development as we incrementally started to realize how these were part of the project to pillage and subjugate the Global South continually. Hitherto, we were taught that Africa was poor and undeveloped because Africans were lazy and lacked civilization and history. Africa was poor because it was being robbed, mis developed, miseducated, and subjugated.

Most importantly, Amin enabled us to interpret Structural Adjustment Programs not as programs to prepare the Global South for (post) colonial international competitiveness and comparative advantage but as programs to create neo-colonies out of the (post) colonies. It is precisely because the Global South consists of neo-colonies that Amin called for forming what he termed the Firth International.

3. Samir Amin's Last Letter: A call for an international movement for the peoples of the Global South

In his final letter, Samir Amin articulates a compelling vision for a new international movement to unify the Global South's peoples against the pervasive forces of global capitalism. My contribution to Amin's call can be framed through three lenses: conceptually, analytically, and pragmatically. Conceptually, I argue that the modern state functions as a crucial underwriter of global capitalism. Amin highlights how globalized capitalism has entered a decadent phase characterized by quasi-totalitarian political and economic power. This observation aligns with my assertion that the state is not merely a passive entity but an active participant in maintaining capitalist structures. The state's role is to uphold and legitimize the capitalist system, often at the expense of marginalized populations. By viewing the state as an underwriter, we can better understand how it facilitates economic exploitation and perpetuates social inequalities, necessitating a collective response from those adversely affected.

Analytically, I identify 1492 as a pivotal year marking the simultaneous inauguration of both the modern state and capitalism. This year symbolizes the beginning of colonial expansion and the establishment of capitalist economies built on exploitation and dispossession. The relationship between state and capitalism is not antagonistic; rather, it is symbiotic and mutually reinforcing at best or parasitic at worst. The emergence of capitalism was inextricably linked to the formation of modern states that sought to control resources and populations. This historical context is essential for understanding contemporary struggles against global capitalism, as it reveals how deeply rooted these issues are in our political and economic systems.

Pragmatically, I expand Amin's call to include other marginalized populations within the Global South, such as women, peasant farmers, students, minority communities, indigenous peoples, and those suffering from the excesses of capitalism, including countries most affected by global warming. Amin's letter emphasizes the need for unity among diverse groups fighting against capitalist exploitation; however, it is crucial to recognize that these groups face unique challenges that must be addressed within an international movement. By including a broader spectrum of marginalized voices, we can create a more inclusive framework that acknowledges varying experiences and struggles while working towards common goals. Amin's vision for a new International Alliance of Workers and Peoples resonates with these ideas. He calls for a structured organization that sets clear objectives for collective struggles while fostering regional solidarity.

This approach aligns with my belief that addressing systemic inequalities requires an intersectional perspective considering various forms of oppression.

In his final letter, Samir Amin passionately implored the people of the Global South to unite and form a new international organization to confront global capitalism. He outlines a fourfold purpose for this proposed movement: first, to serve as the central organizing force for those fighting against global capitalism; second, to establish a South-centric ideology; third, to leverage the current decadence of global capitalism as an opportunity to dismantle it; and fourth, to function as a platform representing the diverse voices of the Global South. Despite the urgency of Amin's call, his vision has yet to materialize fully, and understanding the barriers to its realization is crucial. Amin's first objective emphasizes the need for a cohesive movement to challenge global capitalism effectively. He recognizes that fragmented struggles hinder progress and dilute efforts toward meaningful change. By advocating for a central organizing body, Amin envisions a collective force capable of mobilizing citizens across various nations and backgrounds. This unity is essential for mounting a robust resistance against the entrenched interests of global capital, which often exploits divisions among marginalized communities.

The second purpose of establishing a South-centric ideology is equally significant. Amin argues that existing ideologies often reflect the interests of Western powers and fail to address the unique challenges faced by countries in the Global South. By developing an ideology rooted in the experiences and aspirations of these nations, the proposed organization can empower citizens to articulate their needs and goals more effectively. This ideological framework would serve as a guiding principle for action and foster a sense of identity and solidarity among diverse groups.

Amin's third point highlights the current crisis within global capitalism as an opportune moment for transformative change. He asserts that this decadence presents a unique opportunity for citizens to mobilize against an increasingly fragile system. Rather than viewing this crisis with despair, Amin encourages activists to seize it as a chance to dismantle oppressive structures and envision alternative futures. This perspective is vital in inspiring hope and action among those disillusioned by the status quo.

The fourth purpose of Amin's call is to create a platform that genuinely represents the voices of the Global South. He emphasizes inclusivity by advocating for representation from various marginalized populations—such as women, peasant farmers, students, minority communities, and indigenous peoples—who are disproportionately affected by capitalist exploitation. Amin aims to ensure that diverse experiences and perspectives inform collective strategies and actions by amplifying these voices within the proposed organization.

Despite Amin's compelling vision, several factors have impeded its realization. One significant barrier is the persistent fragmentation of social movements within the Global South. While there are numerous grassroots initiatives aimed at challenging capitalism and advocating for social justice, these movements often operate in silos, lacking coordination and shared objectives. This fragmentation weakens their collective power and undermines efforts to build a unified front against global capitalism. External pressures from powerful nations and international institutions further complicate efforts to form a cohesive movement. The influence of neoliberal policies often undermines local initiatives and exacerbates inequalities within countries in the Global South. As these nations navigate complex geopolitical landscapes, they may prioritize short-term economic gains over long-term solidarity with other marginalized groups. Historical legacies of colonialism continue to shape power dynamics within many societies in the Global South. The enduring impact of colonial structures often manifests in governance systems prioritizing elite interests over ordinary citizens. This reality complicates efforts to establish an inclusive organization that represents diverse populations.

4. On Amin's last request and its relevance

Amin's life and legacy have been explored, debated, interpreted, and misinterpreted. This is common when one has enjoyed such a long academic and activist career. Resultingly, there are as many views about Samir Amin as there are viewers, yet most of them agree that his work remains relevant as an analytical tool to the problems of the Global South. Samir Amin was a

well-read man. He was a man of letters with qualifications in mathematics (1947), statistics (1956), economics (1957), and political sciences (1952). What makes Samir Amin stand out among his peers is that he not only provided practical solutions but also was often part of the solutions he proposed. This makes him a rare breed of intellectual, comfortable both in the streets and the classroom. His PhD thesis, which was initially titled *The Origins of Underdevelopment – Capitalist Accumulation on a World Scale* but was later amended and retitled *The Structural Effects of The International Integration of Precapitalist Economies: A Theoretical Study of the Mechanism Which Creates So-called Underdeveloped Economies*, Samir Amin, was already laying the theoretical and conceptual groundwork for much of the work that he would later pursue in his life as a leading political economist.

The Global South owes Samir Amin a response to his last request, which he made before he died. In this article, I restate Amin's request, reiterate the importance of the request, and position the call made by Amin for the people of the world to unite against global capitalism as a solution to the current world order, which is anti-people and pro-profit. The work of Amin can be summarized by his analysis of world capitalism, which was structured according to the five monopolies of capitalism, control over new technologies, natural resources, the global financial system, communications, and weapons of mass destruction' (Amin 2014). Amin's current relevance lies in his contribution to the five monopolies of capitalism. These five monopolies of capitalism enable one to make sense of many current and historical developments, such as, but not limited to, the war in Syria, the invasion of Iraq, the geopolitics in the Middle East, the tension between China and the United States, the tension between the West and Venezuela, the tension between Zimbabwe, the European Union, and the United States, and finally the current war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. These wars and belligerences are not about human rights and development as often alleged (Campbell 2013). They are about the control of the world's resources and, most importantly, to continue the domination of the Global North by any means necessary, including war, even if it means the execution of a sitting President such as the late Libyan President Muammar Qaddafi. Hence, Nicolas Sarkozy's war cry: "We will fight to save the euro" (Campbell 2013). In other words, these tensions are related to the very existence of capitalism as a system. In his last letter, Amin wrote: "Dear comrades, dear activists, dear workers, Globalized capitalism, which has entered its decadent phase, is combining a quasi-totalitarian political and economic power with an increasing aggressiveness that is problematic in bringing about the risk of widespread war. In this paroxysmal crisis, the imperialist countries of the historical West (United States, Western Europe, Japan) do not intend to allow other emerging states to emancipate themselves from the framework imposed by them and to leave the status quo—dominated peripheries. The tension between the West and Russia, China, [and] Iran is not a passing phenomenon but the epicenter of a new violent world remodeling for the benefit of the Western bourgeoisie (Amin 2019)."

In this opening paragraph, Amin made five cardinal contributions. Firstly, he observed that the global capitalist project had entered its final decline, hence the world's crises. Arguing against fragmentation, Amin advised that the 'tension between the West and Russia, China, Iran' was the epicenter of the crisis of capitalism as it attempts to remodel the world order. Second, as the global capitalist project enters a crisis mode, this will increase Western authoritarianism and the spread of war. Thirdly, the triad of the United States, Western Europe and Japan will not easily allow the Global South to emancipate itself from the status quo of being dominated by neo-colonial peripheries. This will result in many actions, such as increased attention by the Triad on Africa. Recently, the United States Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, was on a continent-wide tour in Africa. This came on the heels of another visit to Africa by a senior US official. According to official US records, the congressional delegation led by Chairwoman Barbara Lee visited Ghana from August 25-27, 2022, to reaffirm the strong partnership between the United States and Ghana'. The visit reaffirmed the strong partnership between the United States and Ghana; this demonstrates how the Triad is trying to hold on to its new colonies. Fifthly, current crises signal not only the decline and final demise of global capitalism but also the inauguration of a new global order, non-Western.

5. Amin's contributions to scholarship and praxis

It is a mammoth task to synthesize the contributions made by an academic doyen such as Amin, whose work spans decades, covers multiple disciplines, responds to existential questions across geographies, and responds to multiple problems. Many before me attempted to summarize, rest and emphasize Amin's central contributions, especially to the discipline of political economy in Africa (Amin 2011; Chandrasekhar; C. P. 2018; Juego 2019; Martins 2019; Moghadam 2019; Dearden 2022). Others questioned and evaluated his theoretical contributions (Smith 1980). Others paid moving personal and academic tribute to Amin (Desai 2019; Herrera 2019; Theodra 2019). A body of literature also celebrates and recognizes a means of contribution to the fight against global capitalism (Juego 2019; Martins 2019). Amin's call for what he and his comrades termed as the Fifth International order to coordinate support for grassroots, progressive and other movements in the fight against global capitalism is of central importance to this article. This call has also been a subject of scholarly attention (Martins 2019; Moghadam 2019).

Samir Amin contributed to scholarship and praxis, profoundly influencing development economics, political economy, and post-colonial studies. His work critically examined the dynamics between developed and developing nations, particularly focusing on the exploitative relationships characterizing global capitalism. Amin was instrumental in developing dependency theory, which critiques the structural inequalities imposed by colonialism and neocolonialism. He argued that underdevelopment in the Global South is not merely a result of internal failings but is deeply rooted in historical injustices and exploitative global relationships. Building on Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems theory, Amin emphasized the role of unequal exchange in perpetuating global inequalities, illustrating how peripheral countries are integrated into the world economy in ways that primarily benefit core nations.

In his seminal work, *Accumulation on a World Scale*, Amin explored how capitalism leads to uneven development across different regions. He asserted that economic policies must address these disparities rather than perpetuate them. His critique of neoliberalism was particularly notable; he argued that such policies exacerbate inequalities and undermine social welfare. Instead, Amin advocated alternative development models prioritizing human needs over profit. Amin also delved into the cultural dimensions of development, arguing that cultural imperialism significantly shapes identities and social structures in post-colonial societies. He believed that understanding these cultural factors is essential for addressing the broader issues of inequality and injustice.

In addition to his scholarly contributions, Amin was an active political figure. He engaged in various movements advocating for socialism and anti-imperialism, closely collaborating with liberation movements across Africa to promote self-determination and social justice. His commitment to praxis led him to establish institutions like the Third World Forum, which provided a platform for dialogue among scholars, activists, and policymakers from the Global South. Amin served as an advisor to several African governments and organizations, using his expertise to influence policies aligned with his vision of equitable development. As a public intellectual, he raised awareness about global inequalities through his writings and lectures, inspiring generations of activists and scholars dedicated to social justice.

6. Why does the global capitalist project continue to thrive?

The weak are expected to adjust to the needs and demands of the strong. The needs of the strong are expressed through various means and mechanisms such as laws, constitutions, norms, principles, conventions, and, in some extreme cases, through violence, war, and genocide. For Amin, humanity's greatest challenge is that the strong always impose their will on the weak and expect the weak not only to agree and conform but to normalize these demands and realities. When Russia began its war on Ukraine, the West expected Africa and the Global South to join them in condemning Russia, notwithstanding the national interests of the various countries of the Global South. It was a given that the Global South must align with them in isolating, cancelling, and condemning the Russian Federation. For the worst, their history of enslaving, colonizing and pillaging Africa is something that the Global South must quickly forgive, forget, and move on in a

hurry to condemn Russia. This is why Samir Amin's request effectively addresses the global South problem: perennial marginalization, commodification, objectification, victimization, and trinitization by the international capitalist project (Cesaire 1955). The agenda to liberate the global South has been formalized since the 1955 Bandung Conference. Amin believed that world capitalism – a rule of oligopolies based on the rich world – maintains its rule through five monopolies: control of technology, access to natural resources, finance, global media, and means of mass destruction. Only by overturning these monopolies can real progress be made.

They practice a sort of collective imperialism through military, economic, and financial tools such as NATO, the World Bank, the IMF, and the World Trade Organization. The triad enjoys the monopoly of five advantages: weapons of mass destruction, mass communication systems, monetary and financial systems, technologies, and access to natural resources. It wishes to keep these at any cost and thus has engaged in the militarization of the world to avoid losing these monopolies. Samir Amin saw capitalism—not just currently but since its inception—as fundamentally a global system, determined in its nature and functioning by the unequal relationship between center and periphery. He saw this as characterized by the five monopolies that reproduce global capitalism. These are the monopoly of technology generated by the military expenditures of the imperialist centers, the monopoly of access to natural resources, the monopoly over finance, the monopoly over international communication and the media, and the monopoly over the means of mass destruction. These monopolies tend to be regionally concentrated in the countries of the north, the 'advanced world', but could also persist in a more multipolar world. So, even as he greatly welcomed the emergence of new powers and the warning of US global power, he recognized that multipolarity does not necessarily represent a decline in imperialist tendencies or the traditional center-periphery relations of hierarchy and domination. Capitalism has reached a dead end, and it can only be survived by waging war, Amin professed in 2018. Back then, Amin correctly predicted that there was going to be a war waged by the West against Russia. Having studied capitalism since its inception summa, Amin was better positioned to notify the world about its provision and, most importantly, that it was at its most dangerous stage because it was facing an existential threat from the East. Samir Amin helped us diagnose the current problem of global capitalism and the way forward. Amin argued that the challenge today is: [...] not to attempt moving out of the crisis of capitalism, but to start moving out of capitalism in crisis...

Capitalism is facing one of its darkest moments, and this is an opportune moment for global citizens to galvanize so that they escape from the clutches of this perennially exploitative system. The war in Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic, the global economic crisis of 2008, and the impending global recession are all indications of the failures of the capitalist project. The project to escape capitalism in crisis is an agent because the university, which hitherto was crucible for society's most pertinent problems, has also been hijacked by the global liberal capitalist project. Instead of being part of the solution to the problem of capitalism, the university is now part of the problem, and in some cases, even complicit in that it has been commercialized codified. University education is now a marketized commodity. The only way to tackle the globe's intertwined, multi-layered, and dependent crises, such as climate change, the worsening quality of life and the prominence of War as a way to settle political differences, is to develop the argument intellectual rigor and inquisitive nurse is that demonstrated by Amin.

7. Similar approaches to expanding Samir Amin's Theory

Samir Amin's critique of global capitalism and his call for a unified Global South resistance have inspired numerous scholars and activists who share his vision of emancipatory praxis. While Amin's work remains foundational, several theorists have expanded, updated, critiqued, applied, or paralleled his ideas, offering adopted and adapted frameworks to address his identified systemic challenges. This section explores key contributions that align with or build upon Amin's theories. Given the breadth and depth of the work being done around what Samir Amin termed the systemic challenges faced by the global, I will focus on three of them. Dependency theory, decolonial thought and contemporary movements for South-to-South solidarity. These exemplify the practicality, adaptability, and feasibility of Amin's work. In a way, Amin's work laid the

foundation for what is being called decolonial thought today, mainly the branch termed coloniality of power.

7.1. Dependency Theory and Unequal Exchange

Amin's analysis of unequal exchange and peripheral capitalism resonates with earlier dependency theorists like Andre Gunder Frank (Frank 1967; Frank 1972; Frank 1978b; Frank 1978a; Frank 2015) and Raúl Prebisch (Prebisch 1959; Prebisch 1962), who argued that underdevelopment in the Global South was structurally linked to the enrichment of the Global North. Frank's *satellite-metropolis* model (Frank 1967) echoed Amin's critique of comparative advantage, revealing how colonial histories shaped exploitative trade relations. However, Amin advanced this framework by emphasizing the *five monopolies* of capitalism (technology, resources, finance, media, and weapons), which provided a more granular tool for analyzing contemporary imperialism. Leading scholars, such as Immanuel Wallerstein (Wallerstein 1974b; Wallerstein 1974a; Wallerstein 2004), integrated Amin's insights into world-systems theory, framing capitalism as a global hierarchy rather than a collection of national economies. Wallerstein's core-periphery model complemented Amin's call for delinking (Wallerstein 1989; Wallerstein 2004). However, Amin stressed the need for ideological coherence in the periphery, a gap this article addresses by proposing a *South-centric ideology*.

7.2. Decolonial and Postcolonial critiques

Amin's work intersects with decolonial theorists like Achille Mbembe (Mbembe 2001; Mbembe 2019; Mbembe 2021), Walter Dignolo (Dignolo 2000; Dignolo 2008; Dignolo 2009) and Aníbal Quijano (Quijano 2000a; Quijano 2000b; Quijano 2000c; Quijano and Dignolo 2007), who examine the coloniality of power, the structures of racial and economic hierarchy post-independence. Quijano's concept of coloniality aligns with Amin's critique of the modern state as a capitalist underwriter, particularly in how colonial-era divisions (e.g., ethnic or national fragmentation) persist in weakening solidarity in the Global South. This article's decolonial rereading of Amin's last letter builds on these ideas, arguing that active citizenry must confront the coloniality of markets (Tafira and Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2017). For instance, Nhemachena's critique of the coloniality of networks (Nhemachena 2018), how digital capitalism replicates colonial extraction, parallels Amin's warning about technology monopolies. Both highlight the need for grassroots mobilization to reclaim the Global South's autonomy.

7.3. Contemporary Movements and South-South Solidarity

Amin's proposed *International Alliance of Workers and Peoples* resonates with contemporary efforts like the BRICS bloc, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), and the African Union's Agenda 2063. While these initiatives often prioritize state-led economic cooperation over radical ideological unity, they reflect Amin's vision of collective emancipation. Scholars documented how such movements attempt to counter Western hegemony (Im 1991; Carroll 2007; Prashad 2017; Carroll [no date]). However, they frequently replicate capitalist logic (e.g., BRICS' neoliberal trade policies). This article's pragmatic expansion of Amin's call, especially to include women, indigenous groups, and climate-vulnerable communities, draws from feminist and ecological critiques of capitalism. For example, several works on social reproduction theory aligns with Amin's focus on women marginalized labor (Federici 1975; Oyewumi 1997; Barnes 1999; Haraway 2006; Lugones 2010; Vergès 2021), while the degrowth paradigm offers a structural alternative to Amin's delinking strategy (Kallis *et al.* 2020; Hickel and Hallegatte 2022; Aanestad 2023; Robinson 2024).

7.4. Gaps and this article's contribution

While the above approaches share Amin's anti-imperialist ethos, they often lack his systemic integration of theory and praxis. Dependency theory tends to be economically deterministic,

decolonial scholarships can be overly abstract, and contemporary movements frequently lack ideological cohesion. *Conceptually* tying the modern state's symbiotic relationship with capitalism (à la Mamdani 2020) to Amin's five monopolies (Mamdani 2020). *Analytically* framing 1492 as the birth of capitalism and the colonial state is a synthesis absent in earlier works. *Pragmatically*, this broadened Amin's alliance to include intersectional struggles and addressed critiques that his class-centric approach sidelined gender and ecology. While Amin's theory has been enriched by parallel scholarship, this article's tripartite (conceptual-analytical-pragmatic) approach offers a unique roadmap for unifying disparate critiques into a cohesive Global South praxis, fulfilling Amin's unfinished call for ideological renewal.

8. The state and capitalism: the evil twins

Throughout his career and mostly in his last letter, Amin pointed out that the problems of the Global South are rooted in the destructive relationship between the state and capitalism. This relationship shapes and sustains global inequality, as evidenced by a symmetrical power, termed coloniality, between the former colonizers and the former colonized. Capitalism laid the foundation upon which the state was built. This infrastructure of colonialism continues to be efficacious long after the end of official colonization.

At its core, the modern state often acts as an underwriter of global capitalism. This relationship is symbiotic and mutually reinforcing. The state facilitates capitalist interests by creating legal frameworks that protect property rights and maintain social order, thereby ensuring that capital accumulation occurs without significant disruption. In this context, the state's role becomes one of enforcing the status quo, allowing wealth to concentrate in the hands of a few while marginalizing vast segments of the population.

Historically, this relationship was inaugurated around 1492, a year that marked the beginning of European colonial expansion and the simultaneous rise of capitalism. The establishment of colonial states was predicated on exploiting resources and labor in colonized regions, laying the groundwork for contemporary global inequalities. The state apparatus was designed to serve capitalist interests, often at the expense of indigenous populations and local economies. This historical backdrop reveals how deeply entrenched these systems are in shaping power dynamics and economic disparities.

In Zimbabwe, for example, the constitutional framework has been shaped by colonial legacies that continue to influence governance today. The 1979 Lancaster House Constitution, which was negotiated under unequal terms between nationalists and the white minority government, exemplifies how constitutions can encode power relations that favor elites while disenfranchising marginalized groups. The Constitution served as a legal document and a tool for maintaining existing inequalities, effectively encrypting power within a framework never intended to promote genuine democratic governance or social justice.

The state's role in perpetuating global capitalism is evident in its response to social movements and demands for equity. As Amin pointed out in his last letter, emancipatory movements have become fragmented and overly focused on national issues, losing sight of broader goals for global transformation. This fragmentation weakens collective action against capitalist exploitation and allows states to suppress dissent while maintaining their alignment with capitalist interests.

The implications of this relationship extend beyond national borders. Global power dynamics influence local struggles for justice and equality, often resulting in interventions by powerful states prioritizing their economic interests over the needs of marginalized populations. For instance, countries most affected by climate change—many of which are in the Global South—find themselves at the mercy of international policies that fail to address their unique challenges. This further exacerbates inequalities as these nations grapple with environmental degradation while lacking the resources to adapt or recover.

To effectively address global inequality, it is essential to recognize and challenge the intertwined nature of state power and capitalism. Emancipatory movements must unite across borders to confront these systemic issues collectively. By expanding Amin's call for an international movement to include diverse marginalized populations—such as women, peasant

farmers, students, minority communities, and indigenous peoples—we can create a more inclusive framework for resistance against capitalist exploitation.

9. Obstacles to Amin's call for a United Global South

One of the primary obstacles to forming a new international organization in the Global South is the historical legacy of colonialism, which has resulted in fragmented identities and political landscapes. The colonial experience created divisions among nations, often pitting them against one another based on historical grievances or competition for resources. This fragmentation is evident in the lack of cohesion among various social movements within the Global South. Many of these movements operate independently, often focused on national issues rather than pursuing a collective agenda that could challenge global capitalism. Amin's call for unity among the peoples of the Global South recognizes this fragmentation as a significant barrier to achieving a coordinated response to global capitalism. The coloniality of power framework helps us understand that these divisions are not merely coincidental; they are deeply rooted in the structures established during colonial rule, which sought to divide and conquer through strategies that undermined solidarity among colonized peoples.

The coloniality of power also illuminates the structural inequalities that persist within and between countries in the Global South. Many nations continue to grapple with disparities in wealth, political influence, and access to resources. These inequalities are not only a result of historical exploitation but are also perpetuated by contemporary global economic systems that favor wealthier nations and multinational corporations. Amin's vision for a united Global South emphasizes the need for an organization to challenge these structural inequalities effectively. However, achieving this goal requires overcoming significant obstacles related to power dynamics within the proposed organization. Wealthier nations or more influential groups may dominate discussions and decision-making processes, sidelining the voices of poorer or less politically connected countries. This dynamic perpetuates existing hierarchies and undermines efforts to create an inclusive platform for all marginalized populations.

10. Ideological divisions

The ideological landscape within the Global South presents another significant obstacle to forming a united international organization. Diverse political ideologies—from socialism to nationalism—often lead to conflicting priorities among various movements. These ideological divisions can result in fragmentation, making it difficult to establish a common agenda or set of objectives. The coloniality of power framework suggests that these ideological divisions are influenced by historical contexts that have shaped how different groups perceive their struggles. For instance, some movements may prioritize economic development while others focus on cultural identity or environmental justice. Without a shared ideological foundation, efforts to create an international organization may falter due to competing interests and perspectives.

Then, there is the challenge of geopolitics, which only got worse after the end of the Cold War. Geopolitical pressures from powerful nations further complicate efforts to form a cohesive international organization. The influence of global capitalism often manifests through interventions by wealthier countries that seek to maintain their dominance over developing nations. This can include economic sanctions, military interventions, or support for authoritarian regimes that align with their interests. Amin's assertion that we must take advantage of the current decadence in global capitalism highlights the potential for transformative change; however, this moment is also fraught with risks. As powerful nations seek to maintain their dominance, they may resort to tactics that stifle collective action among countries in the Global South. The coloniality of power framework underscores how these external pressures can exacerbate internal divisions and weaken efforts toward solidarity.

11. Criticisms and weaknesses of Samir Amin's work and propositions

Samir Amin's influential contributions to dependency theory and his incisive critiques of global capitalism have significantly shaped discussions about Global South emancipation. Yet, his work has been subject to several important criticisms. These critiques emphasize theoretical limitations, practical challenges, and notable omissions in his analysis. One key criticism is Amin's tendency toward economic determinism and class reductionism. By focusing predominantly on unequal exchange and the five monopolies of capitalism—technology, resources, finance, media, and weapons—his framework often reduces systemic inequality to a binary core-periphery dynamic, overlooking the complex interplay of race, gender, and culture in shaping oppression. Feminist scholars like Silvia Federici argue that Amin's class-centric approach neglects how patriarchy and social reproduction sustain capitalist exploitation. At the same time, postcolonial theorists such as Aníbal Quijano contend that his critique of Eurocentrism fails to fully account for the racial hierarchies embedded in coloniality (Quijano 2000a; Quijano 2000b; Quijano 2000c). Another major critique concerns the feasibility of Amin's proposed solution of delinking the Global South from global capitalism. While his vision of autonomous development is compelling, critics argue that complete delinking is practically unworkable in an era of financialized globalization. Attempts at regional autonomy, such as Venezuela's Bolivarian project or the BRICS bloc, often replicate extractive dependencies or neoliberal trade practices. Though sympathetic to Amin's goals, Immanuel Wallerstein warned that delinking could further isolate peripheral nations, exacerbating poverty without fundamentally challenging global capitalist structures. Amin's call for a unified International Alliance of Workers and Peoples has also been questioned for its assumption of a shared consciousness across the Global South. This vision underestimates the deep-seated historical rivalries, ethnic conflicts, and class divisions that persist within and between postcolonial nations. For instance, the African Union's challenges in fostering pan-African solidarity reveal how postcolonial elites often prioritize national or elite interests over transnational unity. Mahmood Mamdani highlights how colonial-era divisions, such as those between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda, continue to fracture collective action, complicating Amin's ideal of seamless solidarity.

A further contradiction in Amin's work lies in his simultaneous critique of the modern state as a capitalist underwriter and his reliance on state-led or party-driven movements for emancipation. His admiration for Maoist China and other socialist experiments reflects this tension, drawing criticism from anarchists and autonomists who argue that hierarchical organizations risk reproducing the very power structures they seek to dismantle. The failures of 20th-century socialist states to achieve equitable development underscore this paradox. Additionally, Amin's framework exhibits significant blind spots regarding contemporary capitalism's technological and ecological dimensions. His analysis of the five monopolies, developed before the digital age, does not adequately address how data colonialism and algorithmic governance now reinforce exploitation, as critics like Nhemachena have pointed out. Similarly, his work pays little attention to ecological crises, a glaring omission in an era of climate collapse, where theorists like Jason Hickel argue that anti-capitalist struggles must center on climate justice.

Amin's later work has been criticized for its pessimistic tone and strategic vagueness. While his diagnosis of capitalism's decadence is compelling, his prescriptions often lack concrete, actionable steps. Political economist Juego notes that Amin's proposed Fifth International remained an abstract ideal (Juego 2020), devoid of a clear organizational blueprint or meaningful engagement with existing grassroots movements. This gap between critique and praxis has led some scholars to view his work as more diagnostic than transformative. Despite these limitations, Amin's contributions remain vital for understanding global inequality, though they necessitate supplementation with intersectional, ecological, and digitally informed perspectives to address the complexities of 21st-century imperialism.

12. Rereading Samir Amin's last letter as a call to active citizenry: a conclusion and a way forward

It is unavoidable that when a letter is written to as many people as the citizens of the Global South, such a letter would have multiple, diverse, and, at times, conflicting interpretations. So, how do we read Samir Amin's last letter? I suggest that we read it from a decolonial perspective. This is not only because Samir Amin was a decolonial thinker himself but also because the contents, calls, and recommendations made therein fit into decoloniality as both a theoretical and analytical framework. The decolonial conceptual framework warns us that the most important and effective framework is embedded and based on the lived experiences of those advocating for it.

Reading Amin's letter from the decolonial perspective, I see this as a call for Global South citizens to take an informed and active role in how they are ruled. This implies, among others, the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of citizen-based policies. Active citizenry means that citizens not only wait for elections to have a say in how their countries and communities are governed but should also be proactive by instituting bottom-up monitoring and performance evaluation mechanisms for governments, policies, and many of the interventions they put in place. This rereading of Amin's letter calls for a process and end evaluation of government policies and a call to leave elections as the predominant way of summative assessment of political performance.

Amin articulates a vision for an international movement transcending national boundaries, urging citizens to recognize their shared struggles against a common adversary: the imperialist powers seeking to maintain dominance. He critiques the fragmentation of current movements, which he believes dilutes their effectiveness and undermines the potential for meaningful change. By calling for a new International Alliance of Workers and Peoples, Amin encourages citizens to unite, fostering solidarity and collective action that can challenge existing power structures.

The letter underscores the importance of active citizenry by framing it as a response to the increasing aggressiveness of global capitalism. Amin warns that this system is entering a decadent phase characterized by quasi-totalitarian political and economic power, which poses significant risks, including widespread war. In this context, he calls upon citizens to rise against these threats, emphasizing that their struggles must extend beyond national issues to encompass a broader agenda for global transformation.

Amin's emphasis on popular sovereignty further reinforces his call for active engagement. He insists that citizens participate in movements and shape their objectives and strategies. This approach empowers individuals and communities to take responsibility of their struggles, fostering a sense of agency crucial for effective activism. Moreover, Amin expands his call to include various marginalized groups within the Global South—such as women, peasant farmers, students, minority communities, and indigenous peoples—who are often disproportionately affected by the excesses of capitalism. By advocating for inclusiveness in these movements, he highlights the need for diverse voices and perspectives in shaping a more equitable future. This inclusivity is essential for building a robust and representative movement capable of addressing the multifaceted nature of global inequality.

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