

## Study Questions

### *The Global Economy: Connecting the Roots of a Holistic System*

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## Chapter 1. An Overview of the Global Economy

Quote

1. What is your reaction to the quote at the beginning of the chapter (p. 15)

### Section 1.1 The Global Economy

Terms to Consider:

paradox

“big picture”

globalization

holistic

over-determined

economic globalization

Questions to Consider:

#### 1. Introduction to the Global Economy

- a. What is the paradox of the global economy? Do you think there is a paradox? Explain.
- b. Do you question our global economic system? In what ways?
- c. Do you think our global economic systems are rooted in the past? Explain.
- d. What does our economic system need to consider?
- e. What is your response to Bill McKibben’s statement? Explain.
- f. How would you describe the past system?

#### 2. Globalization

- a. Research different definitions of globalization. Compare them to the book’s definition. What definition do you think is the best? Why.
- b. List the 15 Key Features of Globalization in the order that you think is most important.
- c. What is the Global Wave?

#### 3. Economic Globalization

- a. What does overdetermined mean? Why is economic globalization considered to be an overdetermined word? Can you think of other overdetermined words? Why do you think they are overdetermined?
- b. What does economic globalization mean to you?
- c. Before we go any further, it might be a good idea to jot down a few ideas about what you think economic globalization is all about.
- d. Why is this approach to economic globalization holistic? What is your opinion about the holistic approach?

### Section 1.2 An Overview of Economic Systems

Terms to Consider:

*homo economicus*

capitalism

neoliberalism

John Maynard Keynes  
 managed capitalism  
 Karl Marx  
 socialism  
 communism  
 state capitalism  
 sovereign wealth funds

Questions to Consider:

1. Five Economic Systems

- a. Describe the 5 economic systems in your book.
- b. Make your own continuum (like the one in the book) and place these economies on your continuum.

2. Communism and Capitalism

- a. What does the simple riddle, "Capitalism is the exploitation of man by man; Communism is the opposite: the exploitation of man by man," mean to you?
- b. What are the similarities between communism and capitalism? Differences?
- c. What is your reaction to the list of similarities of the communist and capitalist economic systems?

3. Capitalism

- a. Research different definitions of capitalism. Compare them to the book's definition. What definition do you think is the best? Why?
- b. What is the difference between the market economy and capitalism?
- c. What does "capitalism has diverse ways of functioning" mean?
- d. What different forms does it take?

4. Neoliberalism

- a. What are the distinguishing features of neoliberalism?
- b. What other terms describe the concept of neoliberalism? Which term do you prefer?
- c. What reasons do supporters of neoliberalism give for considering it the best economic system? Do you agree with all these reasons? What reasons would you add or subtract?
- d. What are the 10 principles of neoliberalism? Do you agree that they should all be included? Are any left out?

5. Managed Capitalism

- a. Why was there a reconsideration of neoliberalism in the 1930s?
- b. What is the significance of John Maynard Keynes? Do you agree with his ideas?
- c. What is managed capitalism? Do you agree or disagree with its principles? Why?
- d. What was the "Golden Age" of capitalism? Why was it golden?

6. Socialism and Communism

- a. Why did socialism/communism arise?
- b. Who was Karl Marx? Why were his ideas so popular?
- c. What are the basic principles of socialism/communism? Do you agree or disagree with these principles? Why?
- d. Why is ownership of the means of production so important to socialists?

7. State Capitalism

- a. What is a definition of state capitalism? Do you think this is a good economic system? Why or why not?
- b. How is state capitalism different from neoliberalism or socialism?
- c. What are sovereign wealth funds?

d. What nations are considered to follow state capitalism?

8. General

- a. From these brief descriptions of the various economic systems, which one do you prefer? Explain.
- b. In your opinion, what are the benefits and drawbacks of each kind of system?

### Section 1.3 The Global Economy: Definitions, Terms, and Concepts

Terms to Consider:

primary industries  
 secondary industries  
 service industries  
 services  
 core  
 periphery  
 middle  
 external  
 Western  
 modern  
 right  
 left

Questions to Consider:

1. Wealth Accumulation

- a. What are the four ways wealth grows and accumulates?
- b. Give two examples of each.

2. Core and Periphery

- a. How are the terms core and periphery used in this book?
- b. What other terms are used that mean essentially the same as core and periphery?
- c. What terms do you like the best? Why?
- d. Give examples of the core. Of the periphery.
- e. Where are core area of development? Periphery areas?
- f. What does the term middle mean? External.
- g. How do people fit into this model of core and periphery?
- h. How do the core and periphery shift over time?
- i. What are reasons for the periphery status of nations?
- j. How are the core and periphery seen in the U.S. today?
- k. Why are some people in the U.S. in the periphery?
- l. If not the economy, what criteria do you think should be used for judging a nation?

3. Western and Modern

- a. What are the differences and similarities between the concepts of Western and modern?
- b. How and when did Western ideas emerge?
- c. Give examples of nations in each of the categories. Do any nations cross-over into both?

4. Right and Left

- a. What is the difference between left and right?
- b. Where does your nation fall in this political spectrum?

## 5. Eight Interest Groups

- Can you think of other interest groups that should be added to this list?
- What interest group(s) do you most closely associate yourself with?
- How do these interest groups influence the government?

## Section 1.4 Understanding the Global Economy: Two Approaches

Terms to Consider:

holistic  
 system  
 systems thinking  
 conventional thinking  
 feedback  
 reinforcing feedback  
 balancing feedback

Questions to Consider:

### 1. Your Approach

- Why is your particular approach or bias important in studying the global economy?
- How does your approach or bias influence your views on the economy?
- What are the different biases in studying the global economy?

### 1. Holistic Approach

- What is a holistic approach in studying the global economy?
- Give an example of using a holistic approach to study the global economy.
- What is your opinion about this holistic approach? What are the benefits and drawbacks of this approach? .

### 2. Systems Thinking

- What is a system?
- What is systems thinking?
- Why haven't we been using systems thinking all along to solve problems?
- What is conventional thinking?
- In what ways does conventional thinking continue to shape Western society? Give examples.
- Do you think systems thinking is a valuable tool for examining problems and trying to arrive at solutions? Why?
- Do you think a systems thinking approach is a beneficial way to study the global economy? Explain.
- What are the benefits of systems thinking? Do you agree with these benefits?
- Is fault-finding a futile activity? Give examples of why or why not.

### 3. Interacting Parts of a System

- How do systems remain stable? How do they change?
- Give examples of stable systems. Unstable systems.
- What is leverage? Give examples of leverage.
- Why are feedback loops important in a system?
- Explain how reinforcing feedback drives a system in the way it is going. Give examples.
- What is balancing feedback? Give examples.

### 4. The Two Approaches

- a. What is the difference between a holistic and a systems approach to the global economy? Give examples of each one.
- b. How do the two approaches overlap?

### **Section 1.5 Worldviews: The Way We Look at the World**

Terms to Consider:

events  
 episodes  
 patterns  
 worldview  
 Global Wave  
 indigenous  
 modern worldview  
 fundamentalism  
 globalized worldview  
 overshoot  
 transformative worldview  
 consumer creed

Questions to Consider

1. Iceberg
  - a. What are events?
  - b. What are episodes?
  - c. What are patterns?
  - d. What are worldviews?
  - e. What are human commonalities?
  - f. Give examples of how the iceberg model works.
  - g. How does the iceberg model explain how problems are so hard to change?
2. Worldview
  - a. What is a worldview?
  - b. What are the five major worldviews today?
3. Indigenous Worldview
  - a. Briefly describe the indigenous worldview.
  - b. Where do people who hold an indigenous worldview live?
  - c. What can we learn from the indigenous worldview?
4. Modern Worldview
  - a. Briefly describe the modern worldview.
  - b. What is the relationship between capitalism and a modern worldview?
  - c. What is the relationship between communism/socialism and a modern worldview?
5. Fundamentalist Worldview
  - a. What is the fundamentalist worldview?
  - b. Why is this worldview popular among millions of people today?
  - c. What similarities do those holding to a fundamentalist worldview share?
  - d. Why do different fundamentalist groups around the world share similarities?

#### 6. Globalized Worldview

- a. What is a globalized worldview?
- b. What are different characteristics of a globalized worldview?
- c. What opinions do people holding a globalized worldview have of the environment?
- d. How does the consumer creed fit into the globalized worldview?
- e. What are the benefits of a globalized worldview? What are its drawbacks?

#### 7. Transformative Worldview

- a. Why did a transformative worldview develop?
- b. What elements of the worldview do you agree with? Disagree with?

#### 8. Worldviews

- a. Which worldview to you most closely identify with? Least identify with? Why?

### **Section 1.6 Concluding Insights**

#### 1. Examination of the Global Economy

- a. What does the author mean when she says the global economy has historically profited from addictions?
- b. Do you feel that the global economy needs transforming, or is fine that way it is? Explain.
- c. What are some of the problems with the way the global economy is structured?
- d. How do you think we should respond to some of the global issues before us today?