Consumption and the Globalization Project
International Hegemony and the Annihilation of Time

Edward A. Comor
Associate Professor
and
Rogers Chair in Journalism and New Information Technology
University of Western Ontario
Canada
## Contents

*List of Illustrations and Table*  ix  
*Preface*  x  
*List of Abbreviations*  xiii  

### 1 Introduction  1  
- Consumption and growth  4  
- Consumption, consent and American foreign policy  5  
- The globalization project  7  
- Globalization and commodification  9  
- Hegemony and consumption  11  
- Globalization, time and space  13  
- Chapter previews  15  

### 2 Power, Hegemony and the Institution of Consumption  19  
- Conceptualizing power  20  
- Consumption as an institution  24  
- The capitalist dynamic and the mediation of change  29  
- Consumption and hegemonic order  32  
- Carrots, sticks, treadmills and common sense  36  
- Conceptual systems  40  
- Hegemonic framing  43  

### 3 The Birth of Capitalist Consumption  47  
- From feudalism to capitalism: Existential implications  48  
- The decline of community, the ascent of the impersonal  52  
- Capitalism and the mediation of relations  55  
- Competitive consumption and the new bourgeoisie  57  
- Temporal transformations and working class life  61  
- Commodity fetishism, electricity and the department store  63  
- Twentieth-century advertising and working class consumption  67  
- The press, radio and branding  68  
- Television, suburbia and the commercialization of conceptual systems  72  
- Transforming conceptual systems  75
4 Global Civil Society or Global Consumer Society? 80
GCS and globalization theory 81
ICTs, identities and the GCS delusion 86
GCS's more sophisticated proponents 91
From delusion to the reality of illusion 94
Towards a different GCS 99

5 'Developing' Political Economies and Global Consumer Society 106
Global consumer society? The case of India 107
Indian 'middle class' consumption 113
Global consumer society? The case of China 117
Post-revolution consumption 122
The 'developing' world and abstract universalisms 124
The global commodification of human relations 127
Common sense and resistance 132

6 Neo-Imperialism, Consumption and the Crisis of Time 135
America's neo-imperialist turn 136
The globalization project challenged 142
Time, space and the ascent of the sensual 145
Temporal neglect-cum-imperial policy 147
Suicidal implications 151
Contradiction, resistance and a plea for time 154
Alternative futures 157

7 Conclusion 160
Notes 172
Bibliography 191
Index 199