

# Chapter 6

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## Theories of Globalization

WILLIAM I. ROBINSON

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### THEORY AND THE RISE OF GLOBALIZATION STUDIES

Globalization is reshaping how we have traditionally gone about studying the social world and human culture and a field of globalization studies is now emerging across the disciplines (Appelbaum and Robinson, 2005). These globalization studies arose around several sets of phenomena that drew researchers' attention from the 1970s onwards. One was the emergence of a globalized economy involving new systems of production, finance and consumption and worldwide economic integration. A second was new transnational or global cultural patterns, practices and flows, and the idea of 'global culture(s)'. A third was global political processes, the rise of new transnational institutions and, concomitantly, the spread of global governance and authority structures of diverse sorts. A fourth was the unprecedented multi-directional movement of peoples around the world involving new patterns of transnational migration, identities and communities. Yet a fifth was new social hierarchies, forms of inequality and relations of domination around the world and in the global system as a whole.

The scholarly literature on these phenomena has proliferated, as have specific studies of the impacts of globalization on particular countries and regions and on gender and ethnicity, not to mention much pop treatment of the subject. Recent research agendas have branched out into an enormous variety of topics, from transnational sexualities, to global tourism, changes in the state, the restructuring of work, transnational care-giving, globalization and crime, the global media and so on. This explosion of research points to the ubiquity of the effects of globalization. All disciplines and specializations in the academy, it seems, have become implicated in globalization studies, from ethnic, area and women's studies, to literature, the arts, language and cultural studies, the social sciences, history, law, business administration and even the natural and applied sciences.

The proliferating literature on globalization reflects the intellectual enormity of the task of researching and theorizing the breadth, depth and pace of changes underway in human society in the early twenty-first century. We find two broad categories of research: (1) those studying specific problems or issues as they relate to globalization; (2) those studying the concept of globalization itself – theorizing the very nature of the process. In a time when social relations and institutions are everywhere subject to rapid and dramatic change, and to the extent that this change is linked to globalization, theories of globalization are without doubt of major import to the contemporary world. How do we theorize this phenomenon which we will call globalization? What types of theories have been developed to explain twenty-first century social change? Are our existing theories adequate to capture this change, or do we need new theoretical models?

If it is true that globalization is one of the key concepts of the twenty-first century, it is also true that it is one of the most hotly debated and contested. There is no consensus on what has been going on in the world denoted by the term ‘globalization’; competing definitions will give us distinct interpretations of social reality. Hence the very notion of globalization is problematic given the multitude of partial, divergent and often contradictory claims surrounding the concept. Considering the political implications of these claims it is clear that, at the least, globalization has become what we refer to as an essentially contested concept. The contending battleground of such concepts is a leading edge of political conflict since the meanings of such concepts are closely related to the problems they seek to discuss and what kind of social action people will engage in. Knowledge claims are not neutral. They are grounded in situated social and historical contexts, often in competing social interests. Nowhere is this clearer than with globalization theories.

We cannot here, given space constraints, take up the political and the normative dimensions of the globalization debate and the relationship of distinct theoretical discourses on globalization to these debates. Nonetheless, it would be impossible to speak of globalization without reference to the highly conflictive nature of the process. Diverse actors have associated globalization with expanding worldwide inequalities, new modes of exploitation and domination, displacement, marginalization, ecological holocaust and anti-globalization. Others have trumpeted the process as creating newfound prosperity, freedom, emancipation and democracy. These normative issues, whether or not they are foregrounded, will loom large in any survey of theories of globalization. How we define the process will very much depend on what theoretical perspectives we bring to bear on the definition. At the same time, our theories cannot but both shape and reflect normative and political signposts.

## THE GLOBALIZATION DEBATE AND THEORETICAL DISCOURSES

While there is much disagreement among scholars on the meaning of globalization and on the theoretical tools that are best to understand it, we can identify a number of points with which, it is safe to say, most would agree. First, the pace of social change and transformation worldwide seems to have quickened dramatically in the latter decades of the twentieth century, with implications for many dimensions of

social life and human culture. Second, this social change is related to increasing connectivity among peoples and countries worldwide, an objective dimension, together with an increased awareness worldwide of these interconnections, a subjective dimension. As well, most would agree that the effects of globalization – of those economic, social, political, cultural and ideological processes to which the term would allegedly refer – are ubiquitous, and that different dimensions of globalization (economic, political, cultural etc.) are interrelated, ergo, that globalization is multidimensional. At this point agreement ends and debates heat up. How different theoretical approaches address a set of basic assumptions – what we will call ‘domain questions’ – will tend to reveal the domain of each theory and the boundaries among distinct and often competing theories. Theories consist of particular ontological assumptions and epistemological principles, both of which are of concern in examining globalization theories.

Perhaps the most important ‘domain question’, and one that cuts to the underlying ontological issue in globalization studies, is ‘when does globalization begin?’ The rise of globalization studies has served to reassert the centrality of historical analysis and the ongoing reconfiguration of time and space to any understanding of human affairs. How we view the temporal dimension will shape – even determine – what we understand when we speak of globalization. Among globalization theories there are three broad approaches. In the first, it is a process that has been going on since the dawn of history, hence a 5,000–10,000 year time frame. In the second, it is a process coterminous with the spread and development of capitalism and modernity, hence a 500 year frame. In the third, it is a recent phenomenon associated with such processes as post-industrialization, postmodernization or the restructuring of capitalism, hence a 20–30 year frame.

A second ‘domain question’ is that of causal determination(s) in globalization. Is the core of the process economic, political or cultural? Is there an underlying material or an ideational determinacy? Are there multiple determinations, and how would they be ordered? Whether distinct globalization theories choose to give a causal priority or empirical emphasis to the material or the ideational will depend on the larger metatheoretical and even philosophical underpinnings of particular theories, but as well on normative and political considerations.

Other major domain questions are:

- Does globalization refer to a process (as I have been assuming here) or to a condition? Most theories would see it as a process of transformation, and some theorists therefore refer to globalization as a process and globality as a condition.
- How do modernity and postmodernity relate to globalization?
- What is the relationship between globalization and the nation-state? Is the nation-state being undermined? Has it retained its primacy? Or is it becoming transformed in new ways? Does globalization involve internationalization, seen as an increased intensity of exchanges among nation-states, or transnationalization, involving emerging structures, processes and phenomena that transcend the nation-state system?
- Relatedly, to what extent is the relationship between social structure and territoriality being redefined by globalization? Is there a deterritorialization of social

relations under globalization? What is the relationship between the local and the global? How are space and time being reconfigured?

How different theories approach these 'domain questions' will reveal something of the core ontological and epistemological claims of each theory. Recall that there is not a single 'theory of globalization' but many theoretical discourses. These tend to be grounded in broader theoretical traditions and perspectives, such as Marxism, Weberianism, functionalism, postmodernism, critical and feminist theory, and involve a number of distinct approaches to social inquiry, such as cultural studies, international relations, post-colonial studies, literature and so on. However, most theories draw on the distinctive contributions and traditions of multiple disciplines. Indeed, one of the most refreshing hallmarks of globalization studies is its interdisciplinary – nay, transdisciplinary – character; a renewed holistic approach to the study of social structure and change. The traditional borders between disciplines have become blurred in both theories and empirical studies on globalization.

Rather than propose a classification of globalization theories I identify here a variety of theoretical discourses that typically serve as heuristic tools in concrete globalization studies. The focus is on key theories and theorists that have already – or are likely to – become markers across social sciences disciplines and humanities for the field of globalization studies. What follows is not a comprehensive review of extant theories, which would be impossible here, but a limited selection intended to provide a view of the range of theoretical discourse on which scholars researching globalization are likely to draw.

## A SAMPLING OF THEORIES OF GLOBALIZATION

### World-system theory

Some see the world-system paradigm as a 'precursor' to globalization theories, and indeed, as Arrighi has observed, 'world-systems analysis as a distinctive sociological paradigm emerged at least 15 years before the use of globalization as a signifier that blazed across the headlines and exploded as a subject of academic research and publication' (Arrighi 2005: 33). Yet what is distinctive to world-systems theory is not that it has been around longer than more recent globalization theories. Rather, this paradigm – and certainly its principal progenitor, Immanuel Wallerstein – tends to view globalization not as a recent phenomenon but as virtually synonymous with the birth and spread of world capitalism, *c.*1500.

World-systems theory shares with several other approaches to globalization a critique of capitalism as an expansionary system that has come to encompass the entire world over the past 500 years. As elaborated by Wallerstein, it is constituted on the proposition that the appropriate unit of analysis for macrosocial inquiry in the modern world is neither class, nor state/society, or country, but the larger historical system, in which these categories are located.

The capitalist world-economy emerged *c.*1500 in Europe and expanded outward over the next several centuries, absorbing in the process all existing mini-systems and world-empires, establishing market and production networks that eventually

brought all peoples around the world into its logic and into a single worldwide structure. Hence, by the late nineteenth century there was but one historical system that had come to encompass the entire planet, the capitalist world-system, a truly 'global enterprise' (1974). It is in this sense that world-system theory can be seen as a theory of globalization even if its principal adherents reject the term globalization (see below).

A key structure of the capitalist world-system is the division of the world into three great regions, or geographically based and hierarchically organized tiers. The first is the core, or the powerful and developed centres of the system, originally comprised of Western Europe and later expanded to include North America and Japan. The second is the periphery, those regions that have been forcibly subordinated to the core through colonialism or other means, and in the formative years of the capitalist world-system would include Latin America, Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Third is the semi-periphery, comprised of those states and regions that were previously in the core and are moving down in this hierarchy, or those that were previously in the periphery and are moving up. Values flow from the periphery to the semi-periphery, and then to the core, as each region plays a functionally specific role within an international division of labour that reproduces this basic structure of exploitation and inequality.

Another key feature of this world-system is the centrality and immanence of the inter-state system and inter-state rivalry to the maintenance and reproduction of the world-system. The world-system paradigm does not see any transcendence of the nation-state system or the centrality of nation-states as the principal component units of a larger global system. Other structural constants in the world-system are cyclical rhythms of growth and crisis, several secular trends such as outward expansion, increasing industrialization and commodification, struggles among core powers for hegemony over the whole system and the oppositional struggles of 'anti-systemic forces'.

Some would consider the world-system approach not a theory of globalization but an alternative theory of world society. This, however, would depend on how we define the contested concept of globalization. If a bare-bones definition is intensified interconnections and interdependencies on a planetary scale and consciousness of them, then certainly world-system theory is a cohesive theory of globalization, organized around a 500 year time scale corresponding to the rise of a capitalist world-economy in Europe and its spread around the world, and must be included in any survey of globalization theories.

On the other hand, however, it is not self-identified as a theory of globalization, is not a theory of the worldwide social changes of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and there is no specific concept of the global in world-system literature. Wallerstein has himself been dismissive of the concept of globalization. 'The processes that are usually meant when we speak of globalization are not in fact new at all. They have existed for some 500 years' (2000: 250). Wallerstein has put forward an explanation of late twentieth/early twenty-first century change from the logic of world-system theory as a moment of transition in the system. In an essay titled 'Globalization or the Age of Transition?' (2000), he analyses the late twentieth and early twenty-first century world conjuncture as a 'moment of transformation' in the world-system, a 'transition in which the entire capitalist

world-system will be transformed into something else' (2000: 250). In this analysis, the system has entered into a terminal crisis and will give way to some new, as of yet undetermined historical system by the year 2050. Wallerstein's thesis on the terminal crisis of the system can be said to provide an explanation for social change in the age of globalization consistent with his own world-system theory.

### Theories of global capitalism

Another set of theories, what I catalogue here as a global capitalism school, shares with the world-systems paradigm the critique of capitalism, an emphasis on the long-term and large-scale nature of the processes that have culminated in globalization, and the centrality of global economic structures. Yet this group of theories differs from the world-system paradigm in several essential respects. In particular, these theories tend to see globalization as a novel stage in the evolving system of world capitalism (hence these theorists tend to speak of capitalist globalization), one with its own, qualitatively new features that distinguish it from earlier epochs. They focus on a new global production and financial system that is seen to supersede earlier national forms of capitalism, and emphasize the rise of processes that cannot be framed within the nation-state/inter-state system that informs world-system theory – and indeed, much traditional macrosocial theory.

Sklair (2000, 2002) has put forward a 'theory of the global system', at the core of which are 'transnational practices' (TNPs) as operational categories for the analysis of transnational phenomena. These TNPs originate with non-state actors and cross state borders. The model involves TNPs at three levels: the economic, whose agent is transnational capital; the political, whose agent is a transnational capitalist class (TCC); and the cultural-ideological, whose agent is cultural elites. Each practice, in turn, is primarily identified with a major institution. The transnational corporation is the most important institution for economic TNPs; the TCC for political TNPs; and the culture-ideology of consumerism for transnational cultural-ideological processes. Locating these practices in the field of a transnational global system, Sklair thus sets about to explain the dynamics of capitalist globalization from outside the logic of the nation-state system and critiques the 'state-centrism' of much extant theorizing. His theory involves the idea of the TCC as a new class that brings together several social groups who see their own interests in an expanding global capitalist system: the executives of transnational corporations; 'globalizing bureaucrats, politicians, and professionals', and 'consumerist elites' in the media and the commercial sector (Sklair 2000).

Robinson (2003, 2004) has advanced a related theory of global capitalism involving three planks: transnational production, transnational capitalists and a transnational state. An 'epochal shift' has taken place with the transition from a world economy to a global economy. In earlier epochs, each country developed a national economy that was linked to others through trade and finances in an integrated international market. The new transnational stage of world capitalism involves the globalization of the production process itself, which breaks down and functionally integrates what were previously national circuits into new global circuits of production and accumulation. Transnational class formation takes place around these globalized circuits. Like Sklair, Robinson analyses the rise of a TCC

as the class group that manages these globalized circuits. Transnationally oriented fractions achieved hegemony over local and national fractions of capital in the 1980s and 1990s in most countries of the world, capturing a majority of national state apparatuses, and advancing their project of capitalist globalization. Globalization creates new forms of transnational class relations across borders and new forms of class cleavages globally and within countries, regions, cities and local communities, in ways quite distinct from the old national class structures and international class conflicts and alliances.

However, in distinction to Sklair, for whom state structures play no role in the global system, Robinson theorizes an emergent transnational state (TNS) apparatus. A number of globalization theories see the rise of such supranational political and planning agencies such as the Trilateral Commission, the World Economic Forum, the Group of Seven and the World Trade Organization as signs of an incipient transnational or global governance structure (see, *inter alia*, Held et al. 1999). Robinson, however, wants to get beyond what he sees as a national-global duality in these approaches. This TNS is a loose network comprised of supranational political and economic institutions together with national state apparatuses that have been penetrated and transformed by transnational forces. National states as components of a larger TNS structure now tend to serve the interests of global over national accumulation processes. The supranational organizations are staffed by transnational functionaries who find their counterparts in transnational functionaries who staff transformed national states. These 'transnational state cadres' act as midwives of capitalist globalization. The nature of state practices in the emergent global system 'resides in the exercise of transnational economic and political authority through the TNS apparatus to reproduce the class relations embedded in the global valorization and accumulation of capital'.

Hardt and Negri's twin studies, *Empire* (2000) and *Multitude* (2004), have been referred to by some as a postmodern theory of globalization that combines Marx with Foucault. They take the global capitalism thesis a step further, proposing an empire of global capitalism that is fundamentally different from the imperialism of European domination and capitalist expansion of previous eras. This is a normalized and decentred empire – a new universal order that accepts no boundaries and limits, not only in the geographic, economic and political sense, but in terms of its penetration into the most remote recesses of social and cultural life, and indeed, even into the psyche and biology of the individual. While for Sklair and Robinson the TCC is the key agent of capitalist globalization, for Hardt and Negri there is no such identifiable agent. In more Foucauldian fashion, an amorphous empire seems to be a ubiquitous but faceless power structure that is everywhere yet centred nowhere in particular and squares off against 'the multitude', or collective agencies from below.

Other variants of the global capitalism thesis have been taken up by McMichael (2000), Ross and Trachte (1990) and Went (2002), among others. There is as well a considerable amount of theoretical work on globalization among international relations (IR) scholars, a subdiscipline that has come under special challenge by globalization given that it is centrally concerned – by definition – with the state system and the interstate system. Here there is a tension between those theories that retain a national/international approach and view the system of nation-states as an



immutable structural feature of the larger world or inter-state system, and those that take transnational or global approaches that focus on how the system of nation-states and national economies are becoming transcended by transnational social forces and institutions grounded in a global system rather than the interstate system. Notable here is the 'neo-Gramscian school' in IR, so-called because these scholars have applied the ideas of Antonio Gramsci to attempt to explain changes in world power structures and processes from a global capitalism perspective. Scholars from the neo-Gramscian school have been closely identified with the works of Cox (see, esp., 1987), and have explored the rise of new global social forces and sets of transnational class relations, the internationalization of the state, and transnational hegemony and counter-hegemony in global society.

### THE NETWORK SOCIETY

Manuel Castells' groundbreaking trilogy, *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996, 1997, 1998), exemplifies a 'technologicistic' approach to globalization. While his theory shares with world-system and global capitalism approaches an analysis of the capitalist system and its dynamics, it is not the logic of capitalist development but that of technological change that is seen to exercise underlying causal determination in the myriad of processes referred to as globalization. Castells' approach has been closely associated with the notion of globalization as representing a new 'age of information'. In his construct, two analytically separate processes came together in the latter decades of the twentieth century to result in the rise of the network society. One was the development of new information technology (IT), in particular, computers and the Internet, representing a new technological paradigm and leading to a new 'mode of development' that Castells terms 'informationalism'. The other was capitalist retooling using the power of this technology and ushering in a new system of 'information capitalism', what Castells and others have alternatively referred to as the 'new economy'.

This new economy is: (1) informational, knowledge-based; (2) global, in that production is organized on a global scale; and (3) networked, in that productivity is generated through global networks of interaction. Castells' definition of the global economy is an 'economy with the capacity to work as a unit in real time, or to choose time, on a planetary scale', and involving global financial markets, the globalization of trade, the spread of international production networks and the selective globalization of science and technology. A key institution of this new economy is the 'networked enterprise', which Castells sees as the vanguard of a more general form of social organization, the network society itself. This involves a new organizational logic based on the network structure in interaction with the new technological paradigm. The network form of social organization is manifested in different forms in various cultural and institutional contexts.

Here Castells, along with global capitalism approaches, that of Harvey (see below), Lash and Urry (1987), Cox (1987) and others, draw on a number of strands of late twentieth-century political economy scholarship, especially that of post-Fordism and flexible accumulation, involving a breakdown of the old rigid, vertical corporate structures and the rise of new horizontal and flexible structures. In



Castells' view, 'the networked enterprise makes material the culture of the informational, global economy: it transforms signals into commodities by processing knowledge' (1996: 188). Castells goes on to argue that the image of giant transnational corporations (TNCs) as centralized structures driving the global economy is 'outdated' and 'should be replaced by the emergence of international networks of firms and of subunits of firms, as the basic organizational form of the informal, global economy' (1996: 206–7).

Castells sees a close linkage between culture and productive forces in this informational mode of development due to the centrality of the symbolic order, of sign production and of consumption to IT. Indeed, Castells' approach can be seen as much a cultural as an economic theory of globalization. Human society has moved from a verbal order in pre-literate societies to an alphabetic order and later an audiovisual system of symbols and perceptions. In the globalized age this gives way to the integration of various modes of communication into an interactive network involving the formation of hypertext and a meta-language integrating into a single system the written, oral and audiovisual (or text, image and sound) modalities of human communication. This interaction takes place along multiple points in a global network, fundamentally changing the character of communications. In turn, 'communication decisively shapes culture because we do not see . . . reality as it "is" but as our languages are'. He adds, 'we are not living in a global village, but in customized cottages, globally produced and locally distributed' (1996: 370).

The Internet, in this regard, constructs a new symbolic environment, global in its reach, which makes 'virtuality a reality'. One of Castells' core concepts that captures this image is the space of flows and timeless time. As a space of flows substitutes for the space of places, time becomes erased in the new communications systems, 'when past present and future can be programmed to interact with each other in the same message'. The space of flows and timeless time become 'the material foundations of a new culture' (1996: 406).

While the normative structure of world-system and global capitalism approaches is decidedly critical of what those theories conceive of as globalization, Castells is more upbeat on the possibilities opened up by the global network society. Nonetheless, a central theme is the division of the world into those areas and segments of population switched on to the new technological system and those switched off or marginalized, giving rise to the oft-cited digital divide.

## THEORIES OF SPACE, PLACE AND GLOBALIZATION

This notion of ongoing and novel reconfigurations of time and social space is central to a number of globalization theories. It in turn points to the larger theoretical issue of the relationship of social structure to space, the notion of space as the material basis for social practices and the changing relationship under globalization between territoriality/geography, institutions and social structures. For Anthony Giddens, the conceptual essence of globalization is 'time-space distancing'. Echoing a common denominator in much, if not all, globalization theories, Giddens defines time-space distancing as 'the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events

occurring many miles away and vice versa' – social relations are 'lifted out' from local contexts of interaction and restructured across time and space (1990: 64).

In a distinct variant of this spatio-temporal motif, David Harvey, in his now-classic 1990 study *The Condition of Postmodernity*, argues that globalization represents a new burst of 'time-space compression' produced by the very dynamics of capitalist development. While Harvey's concept is similar to that of Giddens, the former's involves a normative critique of the global capitalist order and its restructuring whereas the latter would seem to be almost celebratory. What Harvey means by time-space compression is the process whereby time is reorganized in such a way as to reduce the constraints of space, and vice versa.

Here Harvey is close to the global capitalism thesis (although he does not refer specifically to a new epoch in the history of world capitalism), and as well to world-system theory, in that a key causal determinant in the new burst of time-space compression that started in the late twentieth century was the cyclical crises of capitalism. In particular, the world economic crisis that began in the early 1970s led to the breakdown of the old Fordist-Keynesian model and the development of flexible accumulation models. Drawing on Marx's analysis of accumulation crises, Harvey shows how each major crisis in the historical development of capitalism has been resolved, in part, with new forms of social organization of capitalism made possible by new technologies and predicated on successive waves of time-space compression. And Harvey also makes reference to Marx's characterization of capitalist expansion as the 'annihilation of time through space'.

The matter of a transformation in the spatial dynamics of accumulation and in the institutional arrangements through which it takes place is taken up by Saskia Sassen, whose works have generated new imageries of a restructuring of space and place under globalization. Sassen's modern classic *The Global City* (1991) has had an exceptionally broad impact across the disciplines and left an indelible mark on the emergent field of globalization studies. Sassen's study is grounded in a larger body of literature on 'world cities' that views world-class cities as sites of major production, finances or coordinating of the world economy within an international division of labour, and more recent research on 'globalizing cities' (see, e.g., Marcuse and van Kempen 2000).

Sassen proposes that a new spatial order is emerging under globalization based on a network of global cities and led by New York, London and Tokyo. These global cities are sites of specialized services for transnationally mobile capital that is so central to the global economy. This global economy has involved the global decentralization of production simultaneous to the centralization of command and control of the global production system within global cities. Here Sassen draws on the basic insight from the sociology of organization that any increase in the complexity of social activity must involve a concomitant increase in the mechanisms of coordination. Global cities linked to one another become 'command posts' of an increasingly complex and globally fragmented production system. It is in these cities that the myriad of inputs, services and amenities are to be found that make possible centralized coordination. In Sassen's words, 'the combination of spatial dispersal and global integration has created a new strategic role for major cities' (1991: 3).

Sassen identifies four key functions of the global city: (1) they are highly concentrated command posts in the organization of the world economy; (2) they are key locations for finances and for specialized service firms providing 'producer services', which are professional and corporate services inputs for the leading global firms such as finances, insurance, real estate, accounting, advertising, engineering and architectural design; (3) they are sites for the production and innovation of these producer services and also headquarters for producer-service firms; (4) they are markets for the products and innovations produced and in these cities. Sassen documents how New York, London and Tokyo as the quintessential global cities have restructured from manufacturing centres to producer service centres, and how producer service activities become 'networked' across global cities.

The social order of the global city shatters the illusions of the affluent service economy proposed by such commentators as Bell (1976) and Toffler (1980). Producer service jobs are global economy jobs, yet they involve a new class and spatial polarization, involving new high-income sectors involved in professional work such as investment management, research and development, administration and personnel and so on, and enjoying affluent lifestyles made possible by the global economy. On the other side are low income groups providing low-skilled services such as clerical, janitorial, security and personal services. These low-income groups are largely constituted by transnational migrants drawn from Third World zones. In these global cities we see a concentration of new gendered and racialized transnational labour pools increasingly facing the casualization and informalization of work.

What this all represents is 'a redeployment of growth poles' in the global economy. Global cities are new surplus extracting mechanisms vis-à-vis transnational hinterlands. 'The spatial and social reorganization of production associated with dispersion makes possible access to peripheralized labor markets, whether abroad or at home, without undermining that peripheral condition' (Sassen 1991: 31). This new transnational structure creates new forms of articulation between different geographic regions and transforms their roles in the global economy. It involves as well a global hierarchy of cities. The stock markets of New York, London and Tokyo, for example, are linked to those of a large number of countries, among them Hong Kong, Mexico City, Sao Paulo and Johannesburg.

Global cities draw our attention to another leading motif in globalization theory, how to conceive of the local and the global. Roland Robertson's concept of glocalization suggests that the global is only manifest in the local. By glocalization, Robertson means that ideas about home, locality and community have been extensively spread around the world in recent years, so that the local has been globalized, and the stress upon the significance of the local or the communal can be viewed as one ingredient of the overall globalization process (Robertson 1995). For Appadurai, locality is less a physical than 'a phenomenological property of social life' (1990: 182) and involves in the age of globalization new translocalities, by which he means local communities located in particular nation-states but culturally and phenomenologically existing beyond the local and national context (such as tourist localities). For others, the local-global link means identifying how global processes have penetrated and restructured localities in new ways, organically linking local realities to global

processes. Burawoy and his students have called for a global ethnography. Their diverse locally situated studies show how 'ethnography's concern with concrete, lived experience can sharpen the abstractions of globalization theories into more precise and meaningful conceptual tools' (Burawoy et al. 2000: xiv).

## THEORIES OF TRANSNATIONALITY AND TRANSNATIONALISM

Although limited in the questions it can answer, the study of global cities gives us a glimpse of how transnationalized populations reorganize their spatial relations on a global scale, a topic taken up as well, and with quite a different perspective, by theories of transnationality and transnationalism. The former refers to the rise of new communities and the formation of new social identities and relations that cannot be defined through the traditional reference point of nation-states. The latter, closely associated, denotes a range of social, cultural and political practices and states brought about by the sheer increase in social connectivity across borders. Transnationalism is referred to more generally in the globalization literature as an umbrella concept encompassing a wide variety of transformative processes, practices and developments that take place simultaneously at a local and global level. Transnational processes and practices are defined broadly as the multiple ties and interactions – economic, political, social and cultural – that link people, communities and institutions across the borders of nation-states.

Within the field of immigration studies, transnationalism came to refer to the activities of immigrants to forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link their societies of origin and settlement as a single unified field of social action (Basch et al. 1994: 7). Innovations in transportation and communications have made possible a density and intensity of links not previously possible between the country of origin and of settlement. This, in turn, has allowed for these communities to live simultaneously in two or more worlds or to create and live in 'transnational spaces' to a degree not previously known. Recognizing this new reality, the scholarly literature undertook a paradigm shift from international migration to transnational migration, and began to refer to these communities as transnational communities. Such communities come in different varieties, including those formed by new immigrant groups migrating to First World countries, as well as those older diasporic populations whose status and attitude is continuously influenced by the accelerating pace of economic, cultural and institutional globalization.

Scholars such as Levitt (2001), Smith and Guarnizo (1998) and Portes and his colleagues (1999) point to the novel character of transnational links in the era of globalization. Transnational ties among recent immigrants are more intense than those of their historical counterparts due to the speed and relatively inexpensive character of travel and communications and that the impact of these ties is increased by the global and national context in which they occur (Levitt 2001; Portes 1995; Portes et al. 1999). Transnational migration theorists have in this regard questioned seemingly dichotomous and mutually exclusive categories, such as external vs internal, national vs international, sending vs receiving countries, sojourner vs settler, citizen vs non-citizen, and to look for continuities and overlaps between and among them. Scholars working within the framework of transnationalism generally see

transnational links, activities and spaces as both an effect of globalization and a force that helps to shape, strengthen and fuel it. The immigrants and non-immigrants who create these links and spaces are seen not only as objects upon which globalization acts but also as subjects who help to shape its course. Another set of questions these theories take up is the extent to which, and in what ways, transnational practices increase the autonomy and power of the migrants and non-migrants engaged in them; to what extent transnational ties or spaces are liberating or to what extent they reinforce or challenge existing power structures.

The concepts of transnationality and transnationalism have increasingly been given a broader interpretation beyond immigration studies. In acknowledgment of the broad and expanding range of experiences that are truly transnational, scholars have argued that the transnational experience should be conceived as involving several layers and that transnationality should be understood as a form of experience that cannot be restricted to immigrant groups (Roudometof 2005).

The experience involves, for instance, the transnational mobility of more affluent sectors, such as professional and managerial groups. Transnationality must be seen as constructed through class and racial boundaries and as a gendered process. Transnational social spaces can extend into other spaces, including spaces of transnational sexuality, musical and youth subcultures, journalism, as well as a multitude of other identities, ranging from those based on gender to those based on race, religion or ethnicity. They also involve communities constructed by members of professional and non-governmental associations (Kennedy and Roudometof 2002). Members of cultural communities who live in different countries but remain connected to each other through their cultural taste or pastimes may also construct transnational communities. Transnational social spaces, hence, are constructed through the accelerated pace of transnational practices of actors worldwide. These practices become routine to social life and may involve transient as well as more structured and permanent interactions and practices that connect people and institutions from different countries across the globe.

Transnationalism/ality has also been central to theories of ethnic group formation and racialization in global society. These theories have focused on transnational immigrant labour pools and new axes of inequality based on citizenship and non-citizenship (see, e.g., Espiritu 2003). A popular motif in post-colonial theory is a view of globalization as a new phase in post-colonial relations (Wai 2002). Similarly, studies of transnationalism have emphasized the gendered nature of transnational communities, changing gender patterns in transnational migration and the impact of globalization and transnationalism on the family. There has been an explosion of research and theoretical reflection on women, gender and globalization. Predicated on the recognition that the varied processes associated with globalization are highly gendered and affect women and men differently, research has taken up such themes as young women workers in export-processing enclaves, the feminization of poverty and the rise of transnational feminisms.

Notable here is Parreñas' (2001) theory of the 'international division of reproductive labor'. Women from poor countries are relocating across nation-states in response to the high demand for low-wage domestic work in richer nations. A global South to global North flow of domestic workers has emerged, producing a global economy of care-giving work and a 'new world domestic order' in which

reproductive activities themselves become transnationalized within extended and transnationally organized households, in broader transnational labour markets and in the global economy itself.

## MODERNITY, POSTMODERNITY AND GLOBALIZATION

Another set of theoretical approaches to globalization refers to the process in terms of modernities and postmodernities. Some theories conclude we are living now in a postmodern world while others argue that globalization has simply radicalized or culminated the project of modernity. Robertson, Giddens and Meyer and his colleagues take this latter view. For Robertson, an early pioneer in globalization theory, the process represents the universalization of modernity. In his 1992 study, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, Robertson provided perhaps the most widely accepted definition of globalization among scholars: 'Globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole . . . both concrete global interdependence and consciousness of the global whole in the twentieth century' (Robertson 1992: 8). In what appears as a clear application of the Parsonian social system to the globe as a whole, the 'global field' is constituted by cultural, social and phenomenological linkages between the individual, each national society, the international system of societies and humankind in general, in such a way that the institutions of modernity become universal. But Robertson's particular theory is also centrally concerned with the subjective, cultural and phenomenological dimensions of globalization, to which I will return below.

For Giddens, who advances a similar construct, this universalization of modernity is central to the very concept of globalization. This process involves the universalization of the nation-state as the political form, the universalization of the capitalist system of commodity production, a Foucauldian surveillance by the modern state and the centralization of control of the means of violence within an industrialized military order. Here Giddens views globalization, defined earlier as 'time-space distancing', as the outcome of the completion of modernization – he terms it 'late modernity' – on the basis of the nation-state as the universal political form organized along the four axes of capitalism, industrialism, surveillance and military power. Hence the title of his noted 1990 publication, [globalization constitutes] *The Consequences of Modernity*.

Meyer and his colleagues put forward an institutional and network analysis to globalization that can be viewed as a cultural as well as an institutional theory of globalization, and they have alternatively referred to their approach in terms of 'world polity' and of 'world society', as distinct from global society (for a synthesis, see Lechner and Boli 2005). Globalization is seen as the spread and ultimate universalization of sets of modern values, practices and institutions through 'isomorphic' processes that operate on a global scale. The growth of supranational institutional networks and of universal modern norms of organization bring about what they refer to as 'world society' (Boli and Thomas, 1999; Meyer et al. 1997). Educational institutions are singled out as central to the isomorphic transmission of culture and values that become global in scope.



For Albrow, in contrast, the transition from modern to postmodern society is the defining feature of globalization. A new 'global age' has come to supersede the age of modernity (Albrow 1997). Albrow argues that globalization signals the end of the 'modern age' and the dawn of a new historic epoch, the 'global age'. In Albrow's Weberian construct, the quintessence of the modern age was the nation-state, which was the primary source of authority, the centralized means of violence, and of identity among individuals, and hence the locus of social action. However, the contradictions of the modern age have resulted in the decentring of the nation-state, so that under globalization both individuals and institutional actors such as corporations relate directly to the globe, rendering the nation-state largely redundant. As the nation-state is replaced by the globe, the logic of the modern age becomes replaced by a new logic in which the globe becomes the primary source of identity and arena for social action.

Much of the literature on modernity, postmodernity and globalization exhibits certain continuity with an earlier generation of modernization theories associated with development sociology, so that globalization is insinuated to be a continuation at the global level of the processes of modernization that were formally studied and theorized at the nation-state level. Indeed, from this genealogical perspective, we could say that if mainstream modernization theory has metamorphosed into theories of global modernity and postmodernity, early radical theories of development have metamorphosed into theories of the world-system, global capitalism, time-space compression, global cities and so on. Nonetheless, another striking feature of the set of theories associating globalization with modernity and postmodernity is the continued centrality accorded to the nation-state and the inter-state system, in contrast to propositions on the transcendence of the nation-state that constitute a core motif of competing theories.

## THEORIES OF GLOBAL CULTURE

Finally, a number of theories are centrally, if not primarily, concerned with the subjective dimension of globalization and tend to emphasize globalizing cultural forms and flows, belief systems and ideologies over the economic and/or the political. Such approaches distinctively problematize the existence of a 'global culture' and 'making the world a single place' – whether as a reality, a possibility or a fantasy. They emphasize the rapid growth of the mass media and resultant global cultural flows and images in recent decades, evoking the image famously put forth by Marshall McLuhan of 'the global village'. Cultural theories of globalization have focused on such phenomena as globalization and religion, nations and ethnicity, global consumerism, global communications and the globalization of tourism.

For Robertson (1992), the rise of global or planetary consciousness, meaning that individual phenomenologies will take as their reference point the entire world rather than local or national communities, is part of a very conceptual definition of globalization. Such a global consciousness means that the domain of reflexivity becomes the world as a whole. Hence 'the world has moved from being merely "in itself" to being "for itself"' (1992: 55). In Robertson's account, the gradual



emergence of a global consciousness, an awareness of the world as a single place, signals a Durkheimian collective conscience that becomes now a global consciousness.

Cultural theories of globalization tend to line up along one of three positions (Tomlinson 1999; Nederveen Pieterse 2004). Homogenization theories see a global cultural convergence and would tend to highlight the rise of world beat, world cuisines, world tourism, uniform consumption patterns and cosmopolitanism. Heterogeneity approaches see continued cultural difference and highlight local cultural autonomy, cultural resistance to homogenization, cultural clashes and polarization, and distinct subjective experiences of globalization. Here we could also highlight the insights of post-colonial theories. Hybridization stresses new and constantly evolving cultural forms and identities produced by manifold transnational processes and the fusion of distinct cultural processes. These three theses certainly capture different dimensions of cultural globalization but there are very distinct ways of interpreting the process even within each thesis.

Ritzer (1993, 2002) coined the now popularized term 'McDonaldization' to describe the sociocultural processes by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant came to dominate more and more sectors of US and later world society. Ritzer, in this particular homogenization approach, suggests that Weber's process of rationalization became epitomized in the late twentieth century in the organization of McDonald's restaurants along seemingly efficient, predictable and standardized lines – an instrumental rationality (the most efficient means to a given end) – yet results in an ever deeper substantive irrationality, such as alienation, waste, low nutritional value and the risk of health problems, and so forth. This commodification and rationalization of social organization spreads throughout the gamut of social and cultural processes, giving us 'McJobs', 'McInformation', 'McUniversities', 'McCitizens' and so forth (Ritzer 2002; Gottdiener 2000). As McDonaldization spreads throughout the institutions of global society cultural diversity is undermined as uniform standards eclipse human creativity and dehumanize social relations.

Ritzer's McDonaldization thesis is part of a broader motif in critical approaches to the cultural homogenization thesis that emphasize 'coca-colonization', hyper-consumerism and a world of increasingly Westernized cultural uniformity (indeed, 'McWorld'). Ritzer has himself more recently extended the McDonaldization thesis with the notion of the 'globalization of nothing' (2004), by which he means culturally meaningful institutions, sites and practices locally controlled and rich in indigenous content – 'something' – are being replaced by (corporate driven) uniform social forms devoid of distinctive substance – 'nothing'.

Another recurrent theme among cultural theories of globalization is universalism and particularism. While some approaches see particularisms as being wiped out others see in cultural resistance, fundamentalism and so on, a rejection of uniformity or universalism. A key problematic in these theories becomes identity representation in the new global age.

Appadurai's thesis on the 'global cultural economy' refers to what he sees as the 'central problem of today's global interactions', the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization (1990: 296). To illustrate this tension he identifies 'global cultural flows' that 'move in isomorphic paths'. These flows generate distinct images – sets of symbols, meanings, representations and values – that

he refers to as 'scapes', or globalized mental pictures of the social world, perceived from the flows of cultural objects. These 'scapes' illustrate for Appadurai what he refers to as a disjunctive order, or a disjuncture between economy, culture and politics in the globalization age. Ethnoscapes are produced by the flows of people (immigrants, tourists, refugees, guest workers etc.). Technoscapes are produced from the flows of technologies, machinery and plant flows produced by TNCs and government agencies. Financescapes are produced by the rapid flows of capital, money in currency markets and stock exchanges. Mediascapes are produced by the flow of information and are repertoires of images, flows produced and distributed by newspapers, magazines, television and film. Finally, ideoscapes involve the distribution of political ideas and values linked to flows of images associated with state or counter-state movements, ideologies of freedom, welfare, right and so on. These different flows, in Appadurai's view, create genuinely transnational cultural spaces and practices not linked to any national society and may be novel or syncretic; hence a disjuncture between culture and the economy and culture and politics.

### A CONCLUDING COMMENT

As noted earlier, there are many theories I am unable to include in the preceding survey, intended only as a sample of the range of theoretical discourse on which scholars researching globalization may draw. These and other theories have informed empirical research into global processes, helped recast varied current social science agendas in light of globalization and provided paradigmatic points of reference for studying social change in the twenty-first century.

If we contemplate more broadly the monumental changes sweeping the planet in the new century we can truly appreciate the real and potential contribution of globalization theory. Clearly, future theoretical work into globalization would do well to theorize more systematically changes in the nature of social action and power relations in the globalization age, and how globalization may extend the 'limits of the possible'. Such urgent problems – indeed crises – as global terrorism, militarism, authoritarianism, ecological degradation and escalating social polarization make imperative the theoretical enterprise that has been the object of this chapter.

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