The Northern Theory of Globalization*

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Recent sociological theories of globalization represent a second encounter between sociology and global issues. Their underlying concept of "global society" was constructed from an idea of abstract linkage, given content by existing theories about metropolitan society emphasizing modernity, postmodernity, or system dynamics. Antinomies within the globalization theory, such as the global/local opposition and chaotic argument about power, arise from the metropole-centered logic itself, not from conflicts of evidence. The rhetoric and performativity of globalization theory construct a relation with metropolitan audiences, and sociological theories constitute themselves in multiple ways as Northern theory. If we want a genuinely global analysis of globalization we must reconstruct sociological theory as a markedly more inclusive dialogue.

The sociology of knowledge tells us that the social location of a group of thinkers is significant for the ideas they produce. We now readily recognize the effects of class, gender, race, and generation. In terms of geopolitical location, however, sociological theory has been unreflexive. Most theoretical texts are written in the global North, and most proceed on the assumption that where they are written does not matter at all. But it can be shown, both for specific fields such as urban theory (Robinson 2006) and for highly abstracted texts of general theory (Connell 2006), that "where" does matter. With few exceptions, social theory sees and speaks from the global North.

Theories of globalization therefore have a special significance for contemporary sociological thought. Globalization theories name the world-as-a-whole as their object of knowledge. Thus in principle they include the global South, and offer a way for social theory to overcome its most devastating historic limitation.

To discover whether this possibility has been realized requires a close reading of the sociological texts that attempt to theorize globalization. In this article I look at Anglophone theoretical texts centered on this concept, examining their methods for constructing the concept of global society, their antinomies, and their language and performative effectiveness. I begin by glancing at the history of sociology's encounters with global issues and the circumstances in which recent globalization theory emerged.

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SOCIOLOGY'S ENCOUNTERS WITH THE GLOBAL

When sociology was first constructed, as a current in 19th-century evolutionary speculation and then as an academic discipline, its scope was unquestionably global. The whole inhabited world and the whole of human history were the new science's object of knowledge. This is amply demonstrated by the detailed content of books such as Sumner's *Folkways* and Toennies's *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*; by the first generation of teaching textbooks in sociology; and by Durkheim's fabulous attempt to survey all current sociological knowledge, the *Année sociologique*. It is shown by the conceptual structure of the most influential sociology book ever written, Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*, which traced an evolution from the primitive to the advanced in every type of institution. Information from the frontier therefore played a key role in sociological theorizing—as shown by Durkheim's use of data from Algeria in *The Division of Labour in Society* and data from the Australian central desert in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Theorists did not think they were learning *from* more "primitive" peoples, but learning *about* them in order to place them in a worldwide grid. The colonized world functioned as a data mine for social theory (Connell 1997, 2005a).

The global scope of sociology was lost when the evolutionary framework collapsed. During the 1920s and 1930s a very different enterprise took shape in the intellectual space still called "sociology." Its focus was social differentiation and social problems within the society of the metropole. In English-speaking universities the study of "primitive" society was handed over to the new discipline of anthropology. Closely associated with the rise of welfare capitalism, the new sociology was fertile in methods for studying its immediate surroundings. This was the heyday of both the Chicago School and the quantifiers who invented modern survey methods. Theoretical change soon followed—in particular, theories that encouraged the discipline to understand "society" as a self-contained system. It was, appropriately, Parsons (1937:3) who celebrated the sea change with the famous gibe "Spencer is dead," and who launched a new disciplinary origin story.

From the 1940s to the 1970s, it was common to take the boundaries of a nation-state as the boundaries of "society." For instance, the first textbook of sociology written in Australia, when the new discipline was being installed there, was simply called *Australian Society* (Davies and Encel 1965). "Development" was typically formulated as a comparative sociology of national societies. Sociology took one step beyond in theories that addressed the cluster of nation-states that represented "industrial society" and "postindustrial society." A few years later the same territory was disputed in debates on postmodernity, "risk society," "reflexive modernization," etc. (Touraine 1971; Crook et al. 1992; Seidman 1994; Beck 1992; Giddens 1990).

Most participants in these debates took no notice that the cluster of "industrial," "postindustrial," "modern," or "postmodern" countries was also the global metropole. By "metropole" I mean the group of capital-exporting and raw-material-importing economies, mostly former imperial powers with continuing postcolonial connections, and the centers of military, communication, and intelligence networks. This global context was pointed out at the time by Wallerstein (1974) and others building on the concept of imperialism (Amin 1974). Their arguments launched an expanding world-systems research agenda (Chase-Dunn and Grimes 1995), but had little immediate impact on mainstream sociology.

But with the crisis of the metropolitan welfare state, the rise of neoliberalism, and world-wide economic restructuring, the conditions of existence for sociology changed. By the 1980s sociology seemed to be entering its own crisis of relevance.

During the 1980s the term "globalization" became popular among business journalists and management theorists, and began to generate a research literature in economics. The word described the strategies of large corporations based in Japan, the United States, and Europe but operating internationally—"multinational corporations" as they were called at the time. These strategies included international marketing campaigns, global sourcing by manufacturing firms, and shifting investment, employment, and profit among different countries. More generally, "globalization" in business journalism and economics referred to the integration of capital markets that was part effect, part condition, of those corporate strategies. Hence the concentration of early articles about globalization in the financial rather than the general sections of newspapers, documented in Fiss and Hirsch's (2005:39) recent study of the U.S. print media.

Around 1990 the term was picked up by a group of sociological theorists, mainly in the United Kingdom and the United States. A remarkable burst of writing reestablished the contemporary relevance of sociology by making "globalization" one of its central topics. Suddenly, Spencer had come back to life, and sociology was speaking once more about the world as a whole.

Sociologists could respond to this issue in two ways. One was to start from the new trends in international economic organization and inquire into their social conditions and consequences. This was the approach taken in Sassen's (1991) sombre masterpiece *Global Cities*, which took the control needs of global businesses as a point of departure, examined the growth of new service markets and elite workforces around this function, and studied the consequences for urban inequality.

Most sociologists of globalization, however, were more conceptually ambitious and followed a second path. In a constitutive act of reification, the idea of globalization as an economic strategy was replaced by the idea of globalization as *a new form of society*. As Beck declared:

> A new kind of capitalism, a new kind of economy, a new kind of global order, a new kind of society and a new kind of personal life are coming into being, all of which differ from earlier phases of social development. Thus, sociologically and politically, we need a paradigm-shift, a new frame of reference. (Beck 1999:2)

Theories of globalization offered varying answers to the resulting question—How should we understand this "new kind of society?"

By and large, sociological theory did not question the idea imported from business journalism. "There is, by now, little dispute about the facts of the matter," said Meyer (2000:234), and most of the literature agreed. Bartelson (2000) rightly called attention to this as a problem. Sociologists widely accepted globalization as a *fact* rather than treating the term as a debatable interpretation.

There have been skeptics. Mann (1997, 2001) bluntly stated that "these views are false," and argued that globalization processes are multiple and contradictory, and that what was going on was an incoherent growth of different kinds of social networks, not the creation of a new system. There are well-known arguments that question the economic globalization thesis itself (Hirst and Thompson 1996). But it seems that in the development of the sociological literature, to question the factualness of globalization was more to place oneself outside the debate, than to take up a position within it.

There is now a huge polemical and empirical literature on the topic; *Sociological Abstracts* currently lists more than 7,000 texts that have "globalization" as a

descriptor. My focus is much more specific. As Gane (2001) argues, this period has seen the emergence of a "sociological *theory* of globalization." My focus is on Anglophone texts that offer a general conceptualization of globalization, rather than studies of particular processes or effects. I propose to explore how this theory is constructed, in its characteristic texts, to see how far it provides a solution to sociological theory's geopolitical problem.

GLOBAL SOCIETY AND ABSTRACT LINKAGE

The basis of most sociological thinking about globalization, from the first wave of theoretical work, was the idea of global society (Turner 1989; Smart 1994). Albrow put the core idea very clearly:

> The real break, rupture with the modern, shift to a new epoch, comes not with the victory of the irrational over the rational, but *when the social takes on a meaning outside the frame of reference set by the nation-state*. (Albrow 1996:58, my italics)

The concept of global society was built on the idea that boundaries were rapidly breaking down and there was a new intensity of links across distance among people, social entities, or regions. Declarations of this idea, which we might call the concept of abstract linkage, are highly characteristic of the "globalization" literature. They are found in texts of all outlooks:

- the rapidly increasing compression of the entire world into a single, global field (Robertson 1992:174).
- complex connectivity . . . the rapidly developing and ever-densening network of interconnections and interdependences that characterize modern social life (Tomlinson 1999:2).
- a process leading to greater interdependence and mutual awareness (reflexivity) among economic, political, and social units in the world, and among actors in general (Guillén 2001a:236).
- Globalization . . . is unifying the world into a single mode of production and a single global system and bringing about the organic integration of different countries and regions into a global economy (Robinson 2001:159).

The concept of abstract linkage was often combined with a critique of the "methodological nationalism" (Beck and Sznaider 2006) of sociological writing in the previous generation. The underlying idea of globalization thus involved a concept that is, from a Parsonian point of view, a paradox—a system without a (social) boundary. The first task of globalization theorists, then, was to show how the new unbounded social system could be specified.

Given sociology's longstanding concern with transitions to modernity, a simple way of specifying "global society" is to understand it as modernity spreading across the world. Beck (1999), in a classic statement of this view, presents a straightforward progression: once there was "risk society," now there is "world risk society." Beck acknowledges an evolution from calculable external risks to "self-generated manufactured uncertainties"; but substantially his picture is about the familiar politics of risk being played out on a larger geographical stage.

The same idea is found in Giddens's (2002) popular account of globalization, *Runaway World*. This book paints a picture of global society emphasizing the politics of risk, the breakdown of tradition, the decline of family forms, the emergence of the pure relationship, the spreading of democracy, and the rise of active citizenries and civil society. To readers of Giddens's other books since the mid-1980s, this list is familiar. It summarizes his account of modernity in metropolitan society.

The idea of modernity spreading from its heartland in Europe and North America to cover the whole world is probably the most widespread of all views of global society. It is close to neoliberal ideology, with its concept of the universal market. It is flexible enough to admit diversity; Berger (1997), for instance, sees four Western-derived subcultures (managerial, intellectual, commercial, and religious) spreading out to form "global culture." The approach does not necessarily imply metropolitan domination because theorists usually see the uptake as voluntary, attributing agency to the many "eager participants in the formation of universalized global culture" (Meyer 2000:240). And as a sociological concept, it matches some popular ideas about development, such as the Chinese expression "linking up with the tracks of the world," that is, participating in capitalist modernity (Zhang 2001).

However, from the early days of sociological writing on the topic, this interpretation has been contested (Robertson 1992; Albrow 1996). Featherstone, the most sophisticated theorist of cultural studies, sharply criticized the idea of globalization as generalized modernity:

> The process of globalization, then, does not seem to be producing cultural uniformity; rather it makes us aware of new levels of diversity. If there is a global culture it would be better to conceive of it not as a common culture, but as a field in which differences, power struggles and cultural prestige contests are played out. (Featherstone 1995:13–14)

In the context of theoretical debates in sociology in the 1980s and 1990s, this led to an alternative specification of globalization, which is vividly presented in Bauman's (1998) *Globalization: The Human Consequences*. In this text Bauman describes an increase in social diversity, growing difficulty in forming social norms, the impossibility of rational planning, the predominance of consumption over production, and the transformation of politics into spectacle and media manipulation. These themes also are familiar. They can be found in Bauman's earlier writings about Europe, and in the broader literature on postmodernity as a condition of the advanced societies (Crook et al. 1992).

There is, then, a second view of global society, as constituted by the condition of postmodernity on a world scale. The complexity and difference that Featherstone perceived in global culture, he had already perceived in the metropole, in analyses of consumer culture and the critique of integrationist sociology (Featherstone 1995:80).

A third approach characterizes global society, not in terms of its traits, but in terms of its constitutive dynamic. This is a more interesting theoretical strategy, but its content is very familiar, since most such arguments are built on a Marxist concept of exploitation and accumulation. Brennan (2003) regards globalization as driven by capitalism's inherent need to occupy more space, speed up production and circulation, and exploit nature as well as labor more intensively. Robinson (2001) presupposes the political economy and focuses on the way the global interests of capital drive the making of a transnational state.

With Hardt and Negri (2000), what is operating on a world scale is capital's response to the de-structuring effect of proletarian struggle—a faithful translation of a model of capitalist dynamics in Italy worked out long before. Kellner's (2002) model of "technocapitalism" sees the interweaving of capitalist restructuring with scientific and technical development as the core process in globalization. Sklair (2001) traces the institutional restructuring in greater detail, but shares the view of globalization as driven by the search for corporate profit and the restless search for wider markets and labor forces.

These three approaches to characterizing global society share an intellectual strategy. They leap straight to the level of the global, where they reify perceived trends as the nature of global society. The trends thus reified are based on concepts that have previously been worked out, not for speaking about colonies, empires, or world affairs, but for speaking about *metropolitan societies*—that is, the cluster of modern, industrial, postmodern, or postindustrial countries that had been the focus of theoretical debates in sociology for decades before.

The globalization literature is not entirely defined by these three strategies of reification. Sklair, while presuming a dynamic of capitalist accumulation, also takes the view that global society can only be understood by examining the actual links between the parts. He argues (2001:4) that a global system must be constructed by "transnational practices," and this implies a research agenda tracing such practices. Sassen (1998), also looking at world-wide corporate operations, focuses on the practices of central control made necessary by a globally dispersed economy, and their indirect social consequences.

Tracing transnational practices has proved to be a very fruitful research strategy, not confined to the corporate world. Another important practical link, as Sassen notes, is population movements; Schuerkens (2005:549) speaks of a "global world linked by transnational migrants." Feminist theorists now often argue that "globalization is a gendered phenomenon" (Chow 2003:446; Acker 2004). But feminism has learnt a certain skepticism about world-spanning generalizations from the metropole (Mohanty, Russo, and Torres 1991). So the focus has been on using empirical research techniques to document actual links: the creation of international networks of women's movements (Moghadam 2000), gender relations that involve transnational movement or pressures (Marchand and Runyan 2000), and emerging gender forms in global arenas (Hooper 2001).

Linkage approaches show that problems of globalization can be treated in a less reified way. They have not, however, had the general impact of the conceptualizations of global society as global modernity or postmodernity, or as produced by an overarching dynamic. It is the debates around these ideas that have so far defined the conceptual literature on globalization.

THE ANTINOMIES OF GLOBALIZATION THEORY

Argumentation in this field takes a characteristic form, which becomes visible in attempts to classify the themes of the literature (Therborn 2000; Guillén 2001a). Having constructed a reified concept of global society, the mainstream sociological theory of globalization is led into a series of debates that show very little sign of being resolved. I will discuss three of the most prominent.

Global versus local. From the first moments of sociological writing about globalization, the global was seen in opposition to the local. The dichotomy was drawn from the business literature, and so was a way of resolving it. The term "glocalization"

was translated from Japanese business jargon (Robertson 1995) to refer to amalgams of local and global forces, such as the distinctive local marketing strategies of transnational advertisers.

To speak of "glocalization" is to resolve nothing. It is to assert both terms of a static polarity at once. The local/global opposition has not been conceptually resolved. In various forms—local/global, national/global—it continues to structure both debate and research (Therborn 2000; Sassen 2000; Schuerkens 2003). In an attempt to make the idea more dialectical, a well-known sociologist has been driven to invent the even more appalling word "grobalization" to represent the forces that attempt to expand beyond the local (Ritzer 2003). But that restates the opposition, it does not transcend it.

From the late 1990s sociologists began to take more notice of "antiglobalization" resistance movements (Mann 2001; Eckstein 2002; Appelbaum and Robinson 2005)—a trend also seen in media discussions of globalization (Fiss and Hirsch 2005). Such movements were typically seen as a reassertion of the local, or at least of local mediations of the global (Auyero 2001). But antiglobalization movements themselves have strongly insisted on the systematic character of global power, so the dichotomy tends to be reinstalled. This is particularly clear in the work of Hardt and Negri (2004:129). They proclaim "an open network of singularities" as the essence of the forces of resistance. But the core of their model of global society is a concept of world-wide capitalist domination. Their whole picture of contemporary history is based on an absolute alterity between two constitutive forces, multitude and empire (Connell 2005b).

Homogeneity versus difference. The discourse of globalization, with its themes of boundarylessness, common fate, and growing integration, constantly hover on the edge of assertions of global homogeneity, especially in culture. We all use the same technology, we have common consumption styles, we follow the same best practice, and so on. As Guillén (2001b:3) notes, this emphasis reflects the concept's origins in management and business literature. In neoliberal theory and practice, the project of linking national markets was driven forward to create homogeneous business environments.

Yet sociological theorists have also been sharply aware of difference. Robertson (1992:172) emphasized that "diversity is a basic *aspect* of globalization." Guillén argued for the significance of institutional diversity, but the more popular theme was cultural diversity. In the 1990s sociologists generally set their faces against the thesis of Western cultural domination, the idea of the "McDonaldization" of the world. Instead, most adopted the theme of cultural mixing, mosaics, and hybridity (Tomlinson 1999). Nederveen Pieterse pushes the theme of cultural diversity to an extreme, arguing that globalization is characterized by "structural hybridization" that produces an increased range of organizational and cultural options:

> How do we come to terms with phenomena such as Thai boxing by Moroccan girls in Amsterdam, Asian rap in London, Irish bagels, Chinese tacos, and Mardi Gras Indians in the United States... How do we interpret Peter Brook directing the Mahabharata, or Ariane Mnochkine staging a Shakespeare play in Japanese Kabuki style for a Paris audience in the Théatre Soleil? (Nederveen Pieterse 2004:69)

Theorists with a background in ethnography have been especially prone to think that diversity is the heart of the matter. For instance, Appadurai's (1990) neologisms

"ethnoscapes," "technoscapes," "mediascapes," and "Ideoscapes" (alongside "financescapes") offer names for the irregular configurations of cultural mixing and disjunction on a world scale. The trope of "network" and an emphasis on diversity, difference, and coalition has reappeared in recent discussions of resistance, for instance, discussions of the Seattle protest, the World Social Forum, and "Internet-worked" social movements (Mittelman 2004; Langman 2005). Some recent writers, however, have turned back. Kellner (2002:292), for instance, muses on the "strange amalgam" of homogenizing forces and heterogeneity that constitutes globalization; and Guillén's recent research suggests there is life in the convergence thesis yet (Henisz, Zelner, and Guillén 2005; Polillo and Guillén 2005).

Dispersed versus concentrated power. The business discourse of globalization began with claims about the declining power of the national state and the rising power of the market. A vigorous debate has continued among economists and political scientists (Kalb 2004; Mittelman 2004); it is not surprising that sociologists have also addressed this question.

They have not found agreement about the answer. Bauman accepts the thesis of states in decline, unable to regulate an international economy that is now effectively out of control. Arrighi suggests that many states in the world system have never had much power, the general view in world-systems analysis. Therborn thinks that states are still powerful in most parts of the world, and Guillén agrees, emphasizing that they can choose different development paths. Evans considers the fate of the state contingent, not settled, while Mann emphasizes the diversity of forms of power. To Sklair, the international economy has grown in importance compared with the nation-state, but there is nothing fragmented about it. Robinson agrees and sees business power materialized in a transnational state. Meyer denies that any such thing exists. Sassen sees business power reflected in some deterritorialization of sovereignty. Giddens and Beck, while agreeing that the economy is moving out of control, are optimistic about the power of the state to control events—if the state's will is stiffened by an extra dose of democracy and civil society. Albrow sees a global state already emerging, not from capital but from the activities of citizens oriented to the common interests of world society.

Such spectacular disagreement about the locus of social power—an issue with which sociology as a discipline has a great deal of experience—strongly suggests an underlying problem. This is best analyzed by thinking about these three debates together.

As the global/local debate shows, globalization theory is marked by a persisting polarity between system and singularity. It is clear that such concepts must coexist within any reified model of "global society." For the idea of the global is constituted by the idea of abstract linkage (i.e., "compression," "connectivity," "network," "reach"), as was shown in the set of definitions quoted above. The idea of abstract linkage has such appeal that even world-systems theory adopted it: "the world-system is all of the economic, political, social, and cultural relations among the people of the earth" (Chase-Dunn and Grimes 1995:389). The ground on which these concepts are defined, the difference that makes the definition of the global, is an equally abstract idea of nonlinkage. This constitutes the concept of the local, the singular, and as a concept it has no meaning other than being the nonglobal. Its empirical content, in different authors' arguments, is wildly heterogeneous.

Unless the whole analysis is constituted another way, the polarity cannot be overcome. It sits in globalization theory, not as the basis of a dynamic, but as an antinomy. Theorists may choose to emphasize one pole or the other, or proffer

some mixture of the two (glocalization), but all such choices are conceptually arbitrary.

A similar difficulty afflicts the homogeneity/heterogeneity debate. Friedman (1994) has criticized the "cultural mixing" view of globalization in scathing terms, and he is surely right. The only way in which a model of hybridization can be sustained is by a prior reification of culture. The idea of "a culture" as a thing, available to be mixed or inserted in a mosaic, rests on a professional construct of metropolitan social science (especially ethnography), which breaks down precisely when a culture is treated as an actor among others in a global arena. On the other hand, the notion that a generalized "global culture" exists, or is even being constituted, involves a startling exercise in synecdoche—taking the cellular phone plus the *anime* movie for the kind of working social order of which classical ethnography spoke.

To put the point in a slightly different way, the homogeneity/heterogeneity debate is undecidable. This antinomy does not arise from a conflict of evidence, but from the presuppositions at work in the concept of global society. The key presupposition concerns a process of integration that is both boundaryless and formless. This supposes an endless series of differences being overcome, and the process will appear as homogeneity whenever the observer focuses on the overcoming, heterogeneity whenever the observer focuses on the differences. Again, the choice is conceptually arbitrary.

The spectacular disagreements over the locus of power in globalization provide a way of understanding what is happening in this body of theory. Metropolitan sociology in the 1990s constructed a concept of global society mostly by scaling up its existing conceptual tools rather than by launching a fresh research agenda on a global scale.

This scaling-up was structured by a prior concern—to avoid the main existing theories that dealt with power on a world scale. The sociological discourse of globalization, as it emerged in the early 1990s, explicitly distanced itself from theories of imperialism, and had at best an embarrassed relationship with world-systems analysis. There is a widespread refusal, in the literature based on a reified concept of global society, of any analysis that *named the metropole* as the center of power, as the agent of cultural domination, or as the site of accumulation. Thus sociological globalization theory, produced in the metropole, was constituted in a way that concealed the conditions of its own existence. This produced limits to thought that sometimes appear as antinomies, sometimes as massive uncertainties.

Not all writings about globalization are trapped in these problems. There are certain treatments of the concept that are geopolitically reflexive (notably Martin and Beittel 1998; Appadurai 2001). But there is really not much sociological writing at a conceptual level that does "name the metropole," in the sense of the argument above.

RHETORIC AND PERFORMATIVITY IN GLOBALIZATION THEORY

If sociological theorizing on globalization is systematically bogged in antinomies and undecidabilities, we can hardly attribute the genre's influence to its intellectual force. But there are other possible sources of influence. In this section I consider some of the textual devices in the globalization literature, and particularly how writings in this field construct a relation between writer and reader.

Some of the literature on globalization is written in the good gray prose of sociology journals and is remarkable only for its tacit claim to scientificity. Another part, however, is written in a declamatory style with a colorful use of images and figures of speech.

For instance, the idea that globalization involves a weakening of boundaries and a multiplication of links is often conveyed by panoramic gestures (Spann 1966) like this:

> One can watch CNN in an African safari lodge. German investors converse in English with Chinese apparatchiks. Peruvian social workers spout the rhetoric of American feminism. Protestant preachers are active in India, while missionaries of the Hare Krishna movement return the compliment in Middle America. (Berger 1997:23)

Or by images that evoke instant communication across tremendous distances:

> In the new global electronic economy, fund managers, banks, corporations, as well as millions of individual investors, can transfer vast amounts of capital from one side of the world to another at the click of a mouse. As they do so, they can destabilise what might have seemed rock-solid economies—as happened in the events in Asia. (Giddens 2002:9)

Such passages work by emblematic instances rather than by considered evidence, and there are many other examples in the globalization literature, such as the passage from Nederveen Pieterse quoted earlier. Such images convey the idea that we are all in the same boat, no matter where our bodies are located. We are all impacted by electronic technology, we all face global risks, etc.

Yet even if we are in the same boat, there is no captain on board. Bauman (1998:58) puts the point in italics: *"No one seems now to be in control*." Norms cannot be formed, mobile global capital evades all responsibility, the rich hide themselves away in fortresses. "The world society is a stateless polity," says Meyer (2000:236). Even Robinson, who is pretty sure that a transnational state does exist, says there is no "single headquarters for world capitalism" (Robinson 2001:160).

"Out of control" may also mean unstoppable. "*The new globality cannot be reversed*," says Beck (2000:11) in italics. Sociological writing on globalization does not generally share business journalism's imagery of a tidal wave of change, but some texts come close to that, and most share this language of irreversibility.

The popularity of emblematic instances and panoramic gestures suggests considerable underdetermination by evidence. In other fields of sociology such texts might be cause for skepticism; here, they almost define the field. Is globalization theory, then, mainly trying to analyze something, or to accomplish something? In a perceptive article Bartelson (2000) argues that the theorizing of globalization to some degree constitutes the fact. A startling demonstration is provided by Roxborough (2002), who shows that the sociology of globalization was picked up by the U.S. military in working out its post-Cold War strategic doctrine, now at work in Iraq.

But the intended audience, for much of this writing, is a professional or "educated general reader" audience. The texts themselves imply that this audience is metropolitan. They highlight metropolitan experience, and engage metropolitan debates and anxieties. Sociologists writing in the technical prose of professional journals are also, by default, addressing the metropole, since that is where the vast majority of the world's professional social scientists are concentrated.

Austin (1961), who invented the concept of performative utterance, famously remarked that the statement "I do," uttered at the appropriate moment, does not so

much report on a marriage as indulge in one. Many globalization texts have a performative role in this sense. Such texts put a metaphorical arm around the reader's shoulder and speak confidentially about the problems "we" now face:

> we all live more and more in a "glocal" manner . . . The global does not lurk and threaten out there as the Great All-Encompassing; it noisily fills the innermost space of our own lives. Our own life is the locus of the glocal. (Beck 2000:73–74; cf Bauman 1998:77–78; Tomlinson 1999:108)

The performative unity of writer and reader accounts for much of the declamatory style in globalization texts. It implies a shared knowledge that can simply be recalled by panoramic gestures and emblematic instances—there is little need for laborious examinations of evidence when the reader already has the news. What the reader may need is names for the news items, and sociological texts have been fertile in neologisms: "Global Age," "glocalization," "world risk society," "technoscapes," "hybridity," and more.

The texts performatively construct a political agency. The "we" in Beck's writing stands for cosmopolitan citizenship, civil society, oppositional groups, and defense of the welfare state. Albrow, Brennan, Giddens, Therborn, Kellner, Mann, and Evans in different styles all project a citizenry filled with a new consciousness, "people of good will" engaging in "performative citizenship," global "norm formation," or more modest local improvements informed by global awareness. Though most think that this agency is worldwide (Evans being an exception), and though Beck has even written a "Cosmopolitan Manifesto" for it, the substance remains metropolitan. It is not really surprising that Beck's (2000:129ff.) account of "responses to globalization" is almost entirely about Europe.

The shared experiences of metropolitan theorists and metropolitan readers do not include much of the sharp end of global social processes. The result is sociological texts that persistently underplay systemic violence. Little of the writing of the 1990s suggested the eruptions of transnational violence that were soon to follow. Beck's *What is Globalization?*, first published in 1997, hardly mentions violence; nor does Guillén's (2001a) survey of the globalization literature of the 1990s; nor do Giddens's Reith Lectures first published in 1999. After the 9/11 al-Qaeda attack, Giddens (2002:xvi), obviously shocked, reached for the Star Wars image of the "dark side" of globalization to discuss crime and terrorism. He still missed the escalation of violence by metropolitan states—which, we should not forget, had been covertly bombing Iraq right through the 1990s.

This does not imply that sociological theory is automatically complicit with neoliberal globalization. A good many texts (Kellner 2002; Robinson 2001; Sklair 2001; Chase-Dunn 2002) are openly oppositional. Indeed, the genre's main tendency has been to question the pure market agenda in the name of an extended concept of the social—thus reasserting the importance of sociology as a specific form of knowledge (Albrow 1996; Connell 2000). But it does not challenge the way that knowledge of the social is constituted.

THE NORTHERNNESS OF GLOBALIZATION THEORY

At this point, the answer to the question with which I opened this article is reasonably clear. Sociological theorizing about globalization embeds a view of the world from the global North, and therefore has not opened a fresh path for sociology.

In this section I will try to formulate the main mechanisms by which a northern viewpoint is embedded in these texts.

The first and simplest mechanism is the exclusion of other viewpoints. Here, for instance, are the authors whom Hardt and Negri (2000:368) consider helpful for thinking about transition from the possible to the real: Lukács, Benjamin, Adorno, Wittgenstein, Foucault, Deleuze. Not Gandhi, not Fanon, in fact no one with a black face, no women, and no one from outside Europe.

Neither Bauman nor Beck, nor Robinson nor Kellner nor Sassen, refers to nonmetropolitan social thought when presenting theories of globalization. Nor does Robertson, despite his career in development studies. Evans's (1997) review of the state under globalization uses metropolitan sources with hardly an exception; so does Guillén's (2001a) survey of the sociology of globalization. In Martinelli's (2003) introduction to the International Sociological Association presidential session papers on globalization, every citation is Northern. At the end of *Runaway World* Giddens helps the reader with an annotated reading. All 51 books mentioned are published in the metropole, and only one of them centrally concerns a nonmetropolitan point of view. Giddens's account simply does not address nonmetropolitan thought about globalization.

It is a striking fact that this body of writing, while insisting on the global scope of social processes and the irreversible interplay of cultures, *almost never* cites nonmetropolitan thinkers and *almost never* builds on social theory formulated outside the metropole. In making this observation I am not intending a personal criticism of the writers concerned, and I am happy to acknowledge some exceptions, such as Tomlinson's (1999:138–41) discussion of the Argentinian/Mexican cultural theorist Néstor García Canclini.

The point is about the *genre* of globalization theory. The rich body of nonmetropolitan thought about globalization processes is almost totally unreferenced in the sociological theory of globalization because that genre is almost totally embedded in metropolitan academic routines of citation and affiliation. Martin and Beittel (1998) made this point some years ago and it remains true and important. A body of writing about the global in which Weber is a major point of reference, while al-Afghani is not, defines itself as profoundly limited. Sociologists' characteristic rejection of the "cultural dominance" model, and refusal to recognize the metropole as the center of global power, were only credible because the many nonmetropolitan voices that have been discussing these themes for the last 150 years were not heard.

Lacking these intellectual sources, it has been common to create a picture of global society by projecting traits already recognized in metropolitan society. The three strategies of reification discussed above are, in essence, three projections— of modernity, postmodernity, and socioeconomic dynamics, respectively. Even the accounts of forces of resistance have a familiar ring. Hardt and Negri project proletarian self-valorization; Beck and others project an enlightened citizenry. The antiglobalization movements discussed by Kellner and others are still mostly Northern antiglobalization movements. Theory insists that globalization is something new; but theory at the same time tells familiar stories, and these stories are usually metropolitan.

Some globalization theorists do go out to the periphery and conduct or supervise research there. This leads to another characteristic literature about globalization, the comparative study of effects and strategies. Admirable examples are Evans's (1995) *Embedded Autonomy*, on the role of the state in the industrial development of Korea, Brazil, and India; Guillén's (2001b) *The Limits of Convergence*, on institutional patterns in economic development in Argentina, Korea, and Spain; and Sassen's

(2002) *Global Networks, Linked Cities*, an edited collection focusing on cities such as São Paulo, Shanghai, and Mexico. What we see in this literature is a methodological projection. Data from the periphery are framed by concepts, debates, and research strategies from the metropole. There is no reference to the *social thought* of the periphery in these texts.

There are, again, good institutional reasons for this. Such projects are mainly organized through U.S. universities and funded by U.S. foundations. Guillén with unusual candor informs us that the research for *The Limits of Convergence* cost more than a quarter of a million U.S. dollars. The authors and editors are intellectually responsible to professional peers in the metropole, however much their hearts may be with communities in the South.

Globalization theorists know that the majority world is out there, even if they have not done fieldwork in the periphery. For instance, Bauman and Beck quote figures on global poverty and have sharp things to say about the global rich. But as Robinson (2006) has shown for urban theory, and as the texts considered here amply show, the social experiences generated in the majority world are rarely a major basis of globalization theorists' argument. Often, nonmetropolitan experience is simply replaced by metropolitan experience, as in the "all in the same boat" trope.

We may speak, therefore, of an erasure of nonmetropolitan experience in the globalization literature. "Erasure," to follow the early Derrida, does not mean obliteration; rather, it means an overwriting. The most important erasure in globalization theory concerns colonialism. The fact that the majority world has deep prior experience of subjection to globalizing powers is surely known to all the theorists. But this experience of subjection does not surface as a central issue in *any* of the theories of globalization considered here. Some theorists explicitly deny that the old imperialism has relevance to the present; on this point, if no other, Giddens is at one with Hardt and Negri. Others make this erasure implicitly. Their distancing from world-systems theory, which did take colonial history seriously, is significant. Even the world-systems literature, however, makes the kind of methodological projection mentioned above, and rarely takes account of nonmetropolitan social thought.

Again I am happy to acknowledge exceptions. Therborn (2000:161) acknowledges the "full-scale disaster" that colonial penetration represented for societies in Africa and America. Yet Therborn does not follow the point through when discussing the later waves of globalization. Discussions of "hybridity" in cultural globalization sometimes draw on postcolonial theory, but remain mostly a celebration of diversity. They make little reference to the devastating colonial histories of forced disruption (Bitterli 1989), nor to the continuing effects of this disruption shown, for instance, in the *Bringing Them Home* report on the children of the "stolen generations" in Australia (National Inquiry 1997).

The performative unity of writer and reader constructed by many of the globalization texts also erases nonmetropolitan experience. Perhaps the most remarkable example is in Beck's *What is Globalization?*, which ends with a short essay on "The Brazilianization of Europe" (Beck 2000:161–63). This does not discuss Brazil at all, but uses the name to evoke a horrific scene of social fragmentation, violence, and selfishness, which the European readers, surely, do not want. The remarkable social and educational reconstruction efforts undertaken *by the Brazilians*, in the aftermath of a violent military dictatorship and in the teeth of corporate power, does not enter Beck's argument.

TOWARD A MORE GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE OF GLOBALIZATION

The experience erased by mainstream sociological writing does not, of course, vanish from the world. If we move a little beyond the professional circuits of sociology, it is not hard to find attempts to turn subaltern experience into a general rethinking of the global order. For instance, Lal's (2002) *Empire of Knowledge* provides a contrast to reified globalization theory by giving a central role to systemic violence in creating and maintaining global inequalities. This leads her to emphasize nonviolent pathways beyond neoliberal development.

Lal's exploration of Gandhian ideas implies a key principle. Inhabitants of the majority world are not the objects of globalization theory, the data mine for sociology. Rather, they are the subjects, that is, *producers* of globalization theory. Every colonized culture produces interpretations of imperialism, and intellectuals in the majority world have been talking about globalization processes as long as intellectuals in the metropole have. For instance, there is a long and sophisticated discussion about the growth of European power, and the spread of Western science and culture, by Muslim intellectuals from Iran, starting with al-Afghani himself. The problem of culture and global power is central to Al-e Ahmad's influential analysis of "westoxication" in Iranian society, the mediating role of intellectuals, and the social alliances that resist Western cultural domination (Vahdat 2002).

It would be a fundamental mistake for metropolitan sociologists to ask: What does this *add* to the existing theory of globalization? For that question presupposes the metropolitan point of view from which the existing theory is constructed. To recognize the validity of nonmetropolitan experience is, necessarily, to challenge the terms in which the theory is constituted. Again, modern Iranian theorists make the point. As Ghamari-Tabrizi (2004) shows, Ali Shariati and Abdolkarim Sorush, though taking different positions on ideology, politics, and religion, both start from a valorization of public religion that contrasts strongly with the implicit secularism, and privatization of religion, characteristic of metropolitan thought.

To recognize such voices is now vital for social science, as I argue in *Southern Theory* (Connell 2007). The wealth to be found is seen in the work of Ashis Nandy (1983, 2004). Here, discussions of colonizer/colonized relationships, changing social structures and identities, and contemporary politics in the majority world are grounded in studies of intellectuals going back to Rabindranath Tagore, Girindrasekhar Bose, and even Rammohun Roy. Nandy's arguments about the psychological presuppositions of modernization, and the way in which development ideology selects from, rather than simply obliterates, older knowledge and belief systems grow out of a long and complex Indian debate.

Yet these arguments are also relevant beyond India. For instance, Nandy's suggestion that "development" processes need not directly attack older knowledge systems, but destroy their ecology, speaks also to African debates about indigenous knowledge. This, too, is a complex literature. Its relevance to globalization theory is directly shown in research by Paulin Hountondji (1983, 2002) from Benin, a sharp critic of romantic notions of "African philosophy." In some of the finest of contemporary work on the sociology of knowledge, Hountondji shows the importance of colony/metropole relations in the production of knowledge, the tendency to locate theory in the metropole, and the persistence of this structure in the postcolonial period.

Postcolonial dependency at the economic level was the focus of the well-known Latin American literature launched by Prebisch and carried forward by Cardoso,

Frank, and others. These debates did not stop, though they have changed focus under neoliberalism. The experience of subordination and its long-term consequences—a theme of Octavio Paz's famous *Labyrinth of Solitude* half a century ago—is also a launching point for Néstor García Canclini's (2001) subtle contemporary theorization of identity, consumption, and citizenship in Latin America. The region has also generated ambitious attempts to theorize globalization as a whole from a southern standpoint, such as Milton Santos's (2000) *Por uma outra globalização.*

There is no absolute gulf between these literatures and the intellectual world of the global North. Writers such as Sorush, Hountondji, Nandy, Canclini, and Santos are well informed about social thought in the metropole—one could wish that the compliment were returned! In general, knowledge work outside the metropole is organized in interaction with the metropole, through practical relations such as travel and training as well as intellectual influence and cooperation (Connell, Wood, and Crawford 2005).

There are, then, bases for linking metropolitan research on globalization with the resources of the nonmetropolitan world. To make this link fruitful it is essential to get beyond the reified theory of "global society." There are other trends in metropolitan sociology more likely to connect with nonmetropolitan thought, especially those that see globalization not as a "new kind of society" but as a historically specific *project*. This is the approach of McMichael's (2000) *Development and Social Change*. McMichael treats contemporary globalization as the attempt by a new generation of capitalist leadership to get past the historic restraints on corporate power represented by welfare states and postcolonial socialism. This is consistent with the "linkage" studies mentioned earlier, which focus on the collective projects of actors in transnational contexts—whether the powerful corporate actors studied by Sklair (2001) and Sassen (1998), or the migrant workers discussed by Weiss (2005).

There is in fact a long history of globalization practices "from below." International feminism, international unionism, and links between anticolonial movements, all date from the 19th century CE. Current investigations of the contestation of global power can therefore draw on a tradition of sharing knowledge, and are more able to acknowledge nonmetropolitan subjects of theory (Brecher, Childs, and Cutler 1993; Naples and Desai 2002). Appadurai (2001:20), shifting ground somewhat from his earlier writing on globalization, has called for metropolitan intellectuals to adopt this approach. He notes that to do so requires "a new architecture for producing and sharing knowledge about globalization," and this is undoubtedly right.

For metropolitan sociology to become more inclusive in this sense is a major project. It requires breaking with professional customs such as the monocultural curriculum in graduate education. It requires an investment of time and resources, in which metropolitan institutions—controlling as they do most of the world's financial resources for social research—must give a lead. Among the tasks are to break the intellectual habits created by the deep eurocentrism of schools such as critical theory (Kozlarek 2001), a process involving risks for careers and reputations.

To develop a global sociology of globalization is, necessarily, to enter dialogue across regions and intellectual traditions. As Kozlarek (2001:620) argues:

> critical theory of globalization can only work as a multifocal project in which the experiences of different modernities find a place of articulation.

Smart's (1994) thoughtful suggestion that international sociology needs to function as a translation service is only the beginning. There is also a formidable critical

task, as Quijano (2000) reminds us by analyzing the eurocentrism embedded in Latin American thought by 500 years of imperialism. We will need, ultimately, a new language for theorizing, since the style of authoritative declaration—so well illustrated by the declamatory style in the globalization literature—is incompatible with real dialogue. Yet the rewards are potentially very large. Taking this path will not only enrich our immediate understanding of globalization processes, but may also prove vital for the renewal of sociology as a whole.

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