

4 Interpretations and Meanings of Globalization

4.1 Theorists of Globalization I: Arjun Appadurai

present situation involves much more cultural interchange between individuals and communities than ever before in history

- ▶ the world we live in is “rhizomic”
- ▶ tensions between cultural *homogenization* and cultural *heterogenization*

The building blocks of “imagined worlds”

- ▶ *ethnoscapes* the world of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live
- ▶ *technoscapes* the circulation and inter-linkages between technologies, machines
- ▶ *financescapes* development of international banking, securities and derivatives markets
- ▶ *mediascapes* the distribution of electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information
- ▶ *ideoscapes* chains of ideas, terms, and images including *freedom, welfare rights, sovereignty, representation, democracy*

Central Argument: *global cultural flows occur in and through the growing disjunctures among ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes*

detrterritorialization: what is characteristic of these flows of people, machines, money, information and ideas is that they are much less bound or tied to territory or defined political borders than at any time in the past.

- ▶ Québec, Khalistan, Kurdistan
- ▶ Nations and states have become one another's projects

Some Conclusions:

1. The globalization of culture is not the same as its homogenization.
 - ▶ *The central feature of global culture today is the politics of the mutual effort of sameness and difference to cannibalize one another . . .*
2. Patterns of *enculturation* are changing
 - ▶ culture becomes less a matter of *habitus*
3. *Imagination* has taken on a singular new power in social life.

4.2 Theorists of Globalization II, Anthony Giddens

“modernity” refers to modes of social life or organisation which emerged in Europe from about the 17th century onwards. It is an era distinguished by:

- ▶ the pace of change
- ▶ the scope of change
- ▶ particular institutional forms (e.g. capitalism, nation-state)

Characterizing Modernity

1. The dynamism of modernity

What are the characteristics of the modern age that give it its dynamism?

A. The separation of time and space and their recombination in forms which permit the time-space zoning of social life

B. Disembedding: the lifting out of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time and space.

- ▶ creation of symbolic tokens
- ▶ development of expert systems

C. Reflexive

a constant process of reconsidering, re-evaluating, and then re-inserting knowledge into social practices.

2. The Institutional Dimensions of Modernity

Giddens argues that four institutional dimensions or clusters of institutions characterize modernity.

A. *Capitalism*: a system of production of commodities predicated upon the relation between private ownership of capital and propertyless wage labour.

B. *Industrialism*: use of inanimate sources of material power in the production of goods, coupled to the central role of machinery in the production process.

These two institutions together help produce what Giddens calls a *capitalist society* which is a sub-type of modern societies. A capitalist society has:

- ▶ an economy that is capitalistic and industrial
- ▶ the economy is distinct and fairly insulated from other areas.
- ▶ the insulation of the polity and the economy is founded upon the pre-eminence of private property in the means of production
- ▶ the autonomy of the state is conditioned by its reliance on capital accumulation over which its control is far less than complete.

C. *Surveillance capacity* the supervision of the activities of subject populations in the political sphere

D. *Control of the means of violence.*

3. The Globalising of Modernity

globalisation is 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.*

a. *The Nation-State System.*

b. *World Capitalist Economy.*

►Note that this has brought changes to the organisation of corporations.

c. *World Military Order.*

d. *Global Division of labour in industrial development.*

globalisation of risk.

1. Intensity of risk.
2. Expanding number of contingent events that affect everyone or at least large numbers of people.
3. Risk coming from the *created environment* or *socialised nature*.
4. The development of institutionalised risk environments that can have widespread effects (e.g. world securities markets, foreign exchange markets etc.)
5. Awareness of risk as risk. These phenomena cannot be easily created into certainties by religious or magical knowledge.
6. This awareness of risk is well-distributed.
7. Awareness of the limitations of expertise.
8. The commodification of risk.

4.3 Theorists of Globalization III: Roland Robertson

globalization: “the compression of the world as a whole and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole.”

Four major components or reference points for the ‘global-human condition’:

- ▶ the self or the individual
- ▶ national societies
- ▶ the relationships between national societies
- ▶ and a generic conception of *humankind*

relativization: these four components are becoming increasingly differentiated over time

Robertson and Giddens

1. Giddens stresses too much the movement toward one world, organized around the core institutions of modernity
2. Modernity does not lead inevitably to globalization

3. Absence of a place for the consideration of culture is a very fundamental flaw. *The whole idea that one can sensibly interpret the contemporary world without addressing the issues that arise from current debates about the politics of culture, cultural capital, cultural difference, cultural homogeneity and cultural heterogeneity, ethnicity, nationalism, race, gender, etc. is implausible.*

Universalization and Particularism

we are, in the late twentieth century, witnesses to - and participants in - a massive, twofold process involving the internpenetration of the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism

Particularism: the idea that particularity, uniqueness, difference, otherness is expected and that there are no limits to how far it might extend

Universalism: the idea that there are principles and ideas that can be applied to all

A general characteristic of this globalizing age is the institutionalization of these twin processes

Fundamentalism

A value-oriented, antimodern, dedifferentiating form of collective action--a sociocultural movement aimed at reorganizing all spheres of life in terms of a particular set of absolute values.

The current phase of very rapid globalization facilitates the rise of movements concerned with the 'real meaning' of the world, movements and individuals searching for the meaning of the world as a whole.

4.4 Theorists of Globalization IV: Zygmunt Bauman and Postmodernity

4.4.1 Technology and the Moral Self

4.4.2 Globalization as a Polarizing Phenomenon

(Bauman) “rather than homogenizing the human condition, the technological annulment of temporal/spatial distances tends to polarize it. It emancipates certain humans from territorial constraints and renders certain community-generating meanings extraterritorial--while denuding the territory, to which other people go on being confined, of its meaning and its identity-endowing capacity.”

1. Deterritorialization of power goes hand in hand with the structuration of territory
 - construction of “interdictory” or “forbidden” spaces in metropolitan areas.
 - the decline in the availability of public agoras or meeting places.
2. The locality loses the capacity to construct norms and values to be debated and agreed upon.
3. The process of globalization is accompanied by a process of a world-wide *restratification* in which a new socio-cultural hierarchy on a world-wide scale is put

together.

- *glocalization*

- the total wealth of the top 358 ‘global billionaires’ equals the combined incomes of 2.3 billion poorest people (45 per cent of the world’s population).
- only 22 per cent of global *wealth* belongs to the so-called ‘developing countries’, which account for 80 per cent of the world population.

4. The global mass media distort the presentation of these kinds of inequalities.

- problems are usually paired with successes
- The news is so scripted and edited as to reduce the problem of poverty and deprivation to the question of hunger alone.
- The spectacle of disasters as presented by the media support and reinforce the ethical indifference of the wealthier population to the poorer populations.

4.4.3 Globalization, Diversity and the Self

1. *She constantly migrates, and among many places, and always to and fro. She does it alone, not as a member of a community, although many people act like her . . . The kind of culture she participates in is not a culture of a certain place; it is the culture of a time. It is a culture of the absolute present.*

Let's accompany her on her constant trips from Singapore to Hong Kong, London, Stockholm, New Hampshire, Tokyo, Prague and so on. She stays in the same Hilton hotel, eats the same tuna sandwich for lunch, or, if she wishes, eats Chinese food in Paris and French food in Hong Kong. She uses the same type of fax, and telephones, and computers, and watches the same films, and discusses the same kind of problems with the same kind of people.

2. *At fifteen, her hair was one day red, the next blonde, then jet-black, then teased into Afro kinks and after that rat-tails, then plaited, and then cropped so that it glistened close to the skull . . . Her lips were scarlet, then purple, then black. Her face was ghost-white and then peach-coloured, then bronze as if it were cast in metal. Pursued by dreams of flight, she left home at sixteen to be with her boyfriend, who was twenty-six . . .*

At eighteen she returned to her mother, with two children . . . She sat in the bedroom which she had fled three years earlier; the faded photos of yesterday's pop stars still stared down from the walls. She said she felt a hundred years old. She'd tried all that life could offer. Nothing else was left.

The Tourist	The Vagabond
globally mobile; space has lost its constraining qualities	‘locally tied’; barred from moving; bound to bear passively whatever change is visited upon a locality
perpetual present, always busy, perpetually short of time	nothing ever happens; crushed under the burden of abundant, redundant, useless time
state borders are levelled down	immigration controls, residence laws, ‘clean streets’ directives--all deepen the moats that separate them from the sites of their desire and of their dreamed-of redemption.*
travel at will, get much fun from their travel	travel surreptitiously, often illegally, sometimes paying more for crowded steerage in a boat than others pay for business class in an airplane; to be free is <i>not to have to</i> travel around
travel for pleasure and for work	travel because ‘staying at home’ is unbearable
always welcome wherever they go	welcome nowhere
always have a ‘green light’	always face a ‘red light’

