

Globalization: The Word and the Debates

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Few terms have evoked the range of responses, or been quite so used, and abused, as the term ‘globalization’. It has been variously described as a process, a period, a force and a condition. The resulting ascriptions and attributions are diverse and invariably invite confusion. There are those who would enthusiastically argue for globalization’s merits, setting it up as panacea to all the ills of contemporary political, economic and social organisation. Others argue equally vociferously and convincingly that it has done more harm than good, exacerbating and entrenching inequalities. For still others, there is no point in arguing for or against globalization; ‘progress’ (and by implication the neoliberal logic) inexorably leads us into more intensely global settings, and we must either adapt to it and move forward, or be left to languish by the wayside.

Even though the term globalization is used liberally in political rhetoric and in the press, its meaning is somehow assumed to be intuitively known; it is rarely spelt out. Indeed, ‘globalisation’ is often the term being explained and the explanation itself. In contrast, the academic literature offers an amazing variety of different theories and definitions, with almost every researcher in the social sciences having something to add to the ongoing debates and discussions. However, here again, nothing about globalization is uncontested -- there is little consensus on what globalization actually is, what drives it, whether it is a qualitatively new phenomenon, and whether it is a primarily beneficial or damaging process. Some define it as the development of a global society, characterized by the denationalization of markets, politics and legal systems. Other scholars tend to focus on the ‘symptoms’ of globalization, such as transnational migration, global cultural flows or external environmental effects. Globalization’s critics regard it as something of a myth, created by the neoliberal school in order to spread capitalism around the globe, divert attention from the suppression of local cultures, and to eventually effect the ‘Americanization’ of the international political economy. Yet, also visible around the world is a greater involvement in grass roots organisations and movements, regionalism, and efforts for greater local autonomy, making any universal statement about globalisation, let alone its effects, quite untenable.

This introduction will draw out some of the key trajectories of thinking on globalization, highlighting the complex nature of the subject, and offering a framework for navigating through the rest of the volume. It flags up some of the usages that dominate academic and non-academic discourses, applied to various dimensions of economic, political,

social, environmental, technological and cultural transformations. We begin by asking whether there is something substantively new about globalisation – a discussion that leads on to the etymology of the term ‘globalisation’ and the evolution of its finer nuances and contemporary connotations. Following from there, this introduction seeks to understand some of the ways in which globalisation is currently theorised, looking at what globalization is seen to be doing in its economic, political, cultural and social incarnations. Thus, the following sections look at the globalist arguments for the triumph of the market and the end of the nation-state; the challenges posed by deterritorialisation, including the perceived threats of cultural homogenisation; to finally conclude by asking whether globalization is ‘good’ or ‘bad’. Posing this question is necessary in so far as most of the arguments for or against globalization look at its perceived effects or outcomes. As will be seen, it is equally important to understand where, or from which positionality, these arguments are coming from, as these in turn determine particular understandings of globalization and arguments for or against it.

Globalization – Old or New?

There is nothing intrinsically new about philosophical ideas about global interconnectedness or economic interdependencies, trade in commodities, or intellectual and cultural exchange. From the sixteenth century onwards, European colonization and industrialization established the foundations of the contemporary global political economy. Marxist scholars, for instance, have long argued that contemporary globalization is simply a more advanced stage in this process – the latest stage in the development of capitalism, itself a product of historical evolution. Capitalism, or the exploitation of the many by the few, Marxists would argue, is built on the back of the industrial revolution and the subsequent European imperialism of the 19th and early 20th century, which has created the contemporary division of the global political economy into a developed Global North and an underdeveloped Global South.

Many a writer has been tempted to draw up historical checklists of the key developments that have preceded today's stage or phase of globalization. For instance, Roland Robertson (1992) distinguishes five phases. The first phase (1400-1750), witnessed the age of European exploration, the global spread of the Roman Catholic Church, the emergence of the Westphalian state-system and the advent of modern geography. The second phase (1750-1875) saw the consolidation of the state-system based on sovereign nation-states in Europe and North America. Relations between sovereign states were increasingly structured by international regimes based on diplomatic norms and conventions. The

Enlightenment and the first stage of industrialization transformed European societies and economies alike. European colonialism spread and the first international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) emerged with the foundation of the Red Cross in 1863. In the third phase (1875-1925) globalization went through several significant changes. It roughly coincided with the beginning of a second industrial revolution -- a revolution in communication and transport technology, leading to a significant increase in the volume and speed of communications. Steel hulled ships were surpassing sailing vessels in tonnage and speed. There was a massive expansion of railroad networks. The period also heralded the introduction of the factory system, industrialism and mass production. Other innovations included the telegraph, the first transatlantic cable, the introduction of the telephone, the widespread use of electricity, the radio and the airplane. Global trade flourished. Phase four of globalization (1925-late sixties) witnessed the creation of international regimes and institutions with global reach such as the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) [Footnote 1]. The Bretton Woods system, set up in this phase, was designed to manage the global political economy. Contemporary globalization (1969- to date) is distinguished from the previous stages by new patterns of migration and the global impact of information and communications technologies, which have increased the speed and volume of the circulation of goods, capital, services, ideas and people.

Writers such as Keohane and Nye (2003) argue that while globalisation itself might be an old phenomenon, its degree and intensity have varied. They distinguish between ‘thin globalization’, such as the time when trade through the Silk Route connected diverse parts of the world but affected only a comparatively limited amount of trade and a small number of people, and ‘thick globalization’, which has created a dense network of extensive and overlapping relationships and an intensification of economic, social, cultural and political interdependencies, which is the way globalisation manifests itself today.

Others see the roots of globalization in antiquity. Stoic philosophy and the idea of the cosmopolis, it is argued, were some of the earliest conceptualizations of a community of humankind across political and cultural borders. Today, elements of Stoic philosophy can be found, for instance, in modern conceptions of universal human rights. Thus, it is argued that the idea of links, of certain rights and duties transcending political communities, pre-dates the nation-state and the formulation of notions of sovereignty.

It is probably important here to take a step back and look at the basis of the term ‘globalization’. While this term itself might have been in use only for the last 45 years, it is

derived from the words 'globe' or 'global', which have a much longer history. Both terms derive from the Latin 'globus', meaning a round body, a sphere, or a ball, and came into usage in English in the sixteenth century. However, in English usage, the term 'global' was used more in the sense of 'all-inclusive' or 'comprehensive' in the sense of 'relating to or embracing the whole of something, or a group of things' (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 10th ed.).

The meaning of 'global' as 'of or relating to the whole world; worldwide', is relatively new. This was not a term Adam Smith, for instance, had access to; instead he wrote 'in the whole globe of the earth'. The English translator of Marx and Engels' work 70 years later did not have recourse to it either; he was still writing of 'the whole surface of the globe' (Sheil 2001). 'Global' as relating to the whole world came into usage only by the end of the nineteenth century; no coincidence here that by now the physical discovery and mapping of the world was complete.

In the early 1940s, American military authorities combined the older sense of 'total' with its newer interpretation as 'worldwide' in the concept of 'global war' (Sheil 2001). The war of the forties now came to be known as World War II, and the Great War of 1914-19 was retrospectively re-christened World War I. But the sense of 'global' as 'world encompassing' needed another impetus to enter the wider imagination, and that came with Marshall McLuhan's conception of the 'global village' in 1960. The usage of the term since then, has conflated the senses of something experienced instantly and simultaneously across the world, attracting media attention, and, as if by implication, something very significant or important. Other events speeded up the take-up of the term. For instance, 'global economy' came into use when national controls on international movements of capital and currencies began to be relaxed in the mid-1970s.

The term 'globalization' first entered English lexicon through the *Webster's Dictionary* in 1961, where it was used to describe the interconnectedness of social events and relationships (Waters 1995). By and large that definition has not changed. For instance, according to the British political theorist David Held's much-cited definition:

Globalization is best understood as a spatial phenomenon, lying on a continuum with 'the local' at one end and 'the global' at the other. It denotes a shift in the spatial form of human organisation and activity to transcontinental or interregional patterns of activity, interaction and the exercise of power. [...] Globalization today implies at least two distinct phenomena. First, it suggests that many chains of political, economic and social activity are becoming interregional in scope and, secondly, it suggests that there has been an intensification of levels of interaction and interconnectedness within and between states and societies (Held 1997: 3).

Equally quoted today is British sociologist Anthony Giddens' definition of globalization 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' (1990: 64). The term entered common parlance following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the bipolar world. The first reference to the word in the *Oxford English Dictionary* speaks of its use in the *Spectator* magazine of October 1962, which had declared that 'globalization is, indeed, a staggering concept' (Cerami 1962).

Over time, 'globalization' has acquired political meanings and nuances not quite captured in that earliest definition of globalization in the *Webster's Dictionary*. The most dominant strands of thinking around globalization might be discussed in terms of two words, both with their roots in the word 'global' -- 'globality' and 'globalism'. 'Globality' comes nearest to the *Webster's Dictionary* meaning of globalization. It is a social concept referring to the emergence of a global society in the sense that the notion of closed spaces has become illusory so that nothing that happens on earth is only a limited local event (Beck 2000). It evokes the emergent and contradictory condition of global-ness (Shaw 1999). 'Globalism', on the other hand, is much more politically charged in that it is endowed with neoliberal meanings and values. For advocates of globalism, the 'world market' is now powerful enough to take the place of (local and national) political action; indeed, it suggests that the nation-state is on the verge of becoming a thing of the past.

Today, the term 'global' summons up the planet as a physical entity, but it also hints at something more than just the sum of its parts. It suggests a transformation of the spatial content of social relations, as it evokes something over and above just the territorial. Indeed, its usage today might be said to evoke the self-consciously common framework of human society worldwide (Shaw 1999). Thus, quite apart from the physical 'shrinking' or 'compression' of the world due to the impact of information and communication technologies and improved transport systems, there is also seen to be an enhanced consciousness of the world as a whole, of a common global fate, and as such, it is also suggestive of conscious global-oriented action.

It is perhaps this 'global' consciousness, and action directed at the 'global', which makes globalization as we understand it today something 'new'. This is manifested in our use of terms to encompass the whole, such as 'global economy' or 'global factory', meant to convey the worldwide proliferation of activities, where events or actions in one part of the world, or changes somewhere along the production chain in one location, can have consequences throughout the globe. Thus, globalisation is both, a spread of tangible, physical

global forces and relations, as Immanuel Wallerstein (1979) would have it, as also the spread of an idea, an intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole through the ever-increasing proliferation of global connections, as Roland Robertson (1992) would argue.

A number of writings on globalization see it as a set of projects that require us to imagine space and time in particular ways. Thus, for David Harvey (1989), the technologies of globalization, particularly electronics and telecommunications, together with the ease of travel, have rendered it possible to reorganise time such that space is no longer a constraining factor, and vice versa. His phrase, 'time-space compression', suggests a speeding up of economic and social processes which has experientially shrunk the globe so that neither distance nor time are any longer major constraints on the organisation of human activity. A related but different connotation might be attributed to that other favourite phrase -- 'time-space distancing'. This phrase, coined by Anthony Giddens (1990), suggests the stretching of social relations across distances, and reducing their consciousness of their own local status, as technologies speed up communications and start to connect distant localities. Here, social relations get 'disembedded', or lifted out of their local contexts of interaction, to be restructured across time and space.

Amongst the globalization theorists who argue that the extent and pace of globalization today is unprecedented are those who see this world as characterized by borderless worlds. These are the voices of the 'hyperglobalizers', who tom-tom the triumph of the market and the death of the nation-state. Let us examine the arguments for seamless global markets and the end of the nation-state.

Seamless Global Markets or the March of Western Capitalism?

For hyperglobalizers, the contemporary phase of economic globalization began in 1944, when the Bretton Woods system established a new way of managing the international economy based on binding rules and a fixed exchange rate system. The Bretton Woods agreements also created new international economic institutions to oversee the international political economy -- the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. This was followed in 1947 by the establishment of the predecessor of the contemporary World Trade Organisation (WTO), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The aim of these international organisations was to prevent an economic recession that could potentially give rise to conflict.

Social and economic policies espoused at the time followed a welfare state model, based, in the widest sense possible, on a Keynesian compromise, which included raising wages and assuaging class conflicts, at least temporarily. States could not trust markets to always get it right, and hence the need to intervene. However, when the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates ran into problems in the 1960s, and collapsed in the early 1970s, a prolonged structural crisis of the global economy paved the way for a new economic and social order (Duménil and Lévy 2005). Following a decade of inflation, high unemployment and low economic growth in the Western world, a more neoliberal approach began to replace the Keynesian compromise, as illustrated by the social and economic policies ushered in by US President Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (Palley 2005). These policies championed entrepreneurial and individual freedom, unregulated and free markets, and private property rights as the best routes to economic development and improved human well being (Harvey 2007).

Meanwhile, the World Bank and the IMF managed to consolidate and enhance their weight in international economic affairs in the aftermath of the debt crisis of the developing world in the early 1980s. The IMF, in particular, gained a new role with the formulation of the so-called Washington Consensus, focusing on market liberalization, fiscal austerity and privatization, replacing a critical role for governments with a strong focus on the free market. As such it might be said to represent the triumph of economic neoliberalism as the favoured paradigm for economic development. In return for much-needed development loans, the IMF and the World Bank demanded the implementation of structural adjustment programmes, which gave these institutions unprecedented influence over the domestic economic and social policies of sovereign nation-states [**Footnote 2**].

Trade liberalisation had long been on the agenda of successive GATT rounds of multilateral negotiations, aimed to reduce tariffs on cross-border merchandise trade. Several factors converged towards the end of the 1970s to usher in a new phase of globalization as the deregulation of interest rates and the removal of credit and capital controls significantly increased the transborder flow of capital. An entirely new financial infrastructure began to emerge from the 1980s aided by satellite dishes, fibre optic cables and Internet-based technologies, and the innovation of new financial products. Large sums of money could now be transferred in nanoseconds across the globe. The development of e-businesses and dot.com companies are amongst the latest signposts of this new economy.

A key feature of this phase has been the growing amount of foreign direct investment (FDI). Indeed, from the 1980s, FDI grew four times faster than world Gross National Product

(GNP). However, FDI was by no means universally distributed across the globe. It was concentrated in developed countries, with significant amounts now also being directed to the dynamic emerging economies in East and Southeast Asia and Latin America. The number of countries acting as sources of FDI has also diversified considerably, with a number of the newly industrialising countries also becoming sources of FDI between 1985 and 2000. Today, for instance, Indian and Chinese firms are now said to be starting to give their rich-world rivals a run for their money. So far in 2007, Indian firms, led by Hindalco and Tata Steel, have bought some 34 foreign companies for a combined \$10.7 billion.

Coming into the forefront here were transnational companies (TNCs). Aided by technological innovations and financial and trade liberalization, TNCs [**Footnote 3**] were increasingly concentrating control over a large share of global capital, technology and market access. They account for about a two-thirds share of world exports of goods and services, with a significant share within that held by intra-firm trade. The power held by these large corporations, and the transnational, and in some cases global, nature of their operations, has enabled them to bypass trade unions, labour laws and to actively influence government legislation in both developed and developing countries.

Throughout this period, and particularly from the late eighties, a neoliberal orthodoxy had been taking hold. It was argued that international economic institutions, multinational enterprises and transnational activities distributed common values and benefits through the spread of market-oriented economic policies, which in turn would encourage more democratic and representative governments and human rights. Markets were best given a free rein to sort the world out; the state was an inconvenience, it was being argued. If markets were allowed to function without undue state intervention, economic globalization would be able to unfold its real potential. Milton Friedman (1962), for example, advanced the idea of organising society through the mechanisms of private enterprise. Economic activity would be decentralized and states would be restricted to providing the legal framework for economic activities. In the same vein, Jagdish Bhagwati (2004) sees globalization as the most powerful force of social good today, when properly managed. Neoliberal globalization, in this view, is a process that increases economic efficiency, individual freedom and overall living standards, and alleviates poverty. The many problems faced by the developing world is not the result of too much liberalization but too little, it is argued. Protectionism, for instance, is still rampant, both in the developing and in the developed world. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Union (EU) is just one notorious example of how misplaced protectionism impedes the chances for developing countries. Thus, neoliberalism in practice often diverges

widely from neoliberalism in theory, leaving its true potential unrealised (Munck 2005, Navarro 2006, Harvey 2007).

Market liberalisation is perceived as further supporting the spread of human rights and democracy throughout the world. Indeed, for some writers, liberal democracy and free market capitalism are synonymous terms. In his 1989 essay 'The End of History' and in his 1992 book *The End of History and the Last Man*, Francis Fukuyama argued that with the end of the Cold War, historical progress defined as the quest for human freedom has reached its final stage. Communism, the last great ideological challenge to liberal democracy, has failed and liberal democracy based on the principles of liberty and equality, together with capitalism as the organizing principle, has triumphed.

The Demise of the Nation-State?

For hyperglobalizers, globalization is primarily driven by economic and technological forces (Ohmae 1996). As such, hyperglobalizers pronounce the dawn of a 'borderless world' and the decline of territorial sovereignty as the important reference point for political, economic and social organisation. The crumbling nation-state is seen very much as an artefact of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is described as:

an unnatural, even dysfunctional unit for organizing human activity and managing economic endeavour in a borderless world. It presents no genuine, shared community of economic interests; it defines no meaningful flows of economic activity. In fact, it overlooks the true linkages and synergies that exist among often disparate populations by combining important measures of human activity at the wrong level of analysis ... On the global economic map the lines that matter now are those defining what might be called 'region states' (Ohmae 1993: 78)

States have thus been usurped and/or sidelined by global markets (Strange 1996). Or, as Philip Bobbit (2002) contends in his provocative book, *The Shield of Achilles*, nation-states are transforming themselves into market states. Indeed, the only role left for the state is to provide a legal framework for the market system to operate effectively. Furthermore, political power will be located in 'global social formations and expressed through networks rather than through territorially based states' (Steger 2003: 61).

The hyperglobalisers are not without their detractors. The opposition believes that the retreat or disappearance of the state has been grossly exaggerated. They highlight the importance of politics in unleashing the economic forces that characterize globalization. The rapid expansion of economic activity in the last twenty years is not so much the result of the 'quasi-natural' forces of economic activity. Rather, it has been driven by political decisions

creating a framework for free market economies to flourish, they argue. In particular, the neoliberal policies of the United States and Great Britain in the 1970s and 1980s have been instrumental in liberalizing international trade and capital flows and in unleashing the forces of economic globalization. Or, as Hay (2006) would argue, it was states, after all, that put the current neoliberal infrastructure that facilitates globalization in place. And at least the larger, wealthier states, or their governments, remain in a position to determine the 'rules of the game'.

Governmental policies, and not economic activities are, therefore, behind the globalization process:

[G]lobalisation is not the global release of an imminent desire of individuals and businesses to truck, barter and exchange, it is rather a neoliberal project, based on a conviction that markets manage resources in a superior way to states, but that public institutions are required to impose and maintain those markets (Harrison 2004: 154).

Alan Milward (1993) goes a step further, arguing that the state has actually grown stronger as the result of global forces. The pressures of globalization driving European integration, for instance, have ironically rescued the state rather than undermining it, by allowing it to operate more effectively, he argues.

Indeed, states still hold enough power to influence their domestic economies (and in some cases the global economy) decisively. Among international actors the nation-state will remain in a key position, at least for the foreseeable future. There is no apparent alternative which could command or enforce the same amount of respect, loyalty and authority and, hence, focus and organise social energies in the way governments still can and do by appealing to a sense of shared identity (Mauil 2000). States are able to restrict and manage transnational flows such as international migration through stricter border controls and to stifle the flow of capital through the imposition of capital controls. National security measures, especially following the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre have further enhanced the power of national governments and restricted civil liberties and freedoms. Nation-states continue to define, discipline, control and regulate populations, whether these are on the move or in residence.

However, it is important to recognise that the nation-state's normative character may have been challenged: globalization is changing traditional conceptions around the practice of national sovereignty. One of the main features of the Westphalian nation-state is an explicit connection between sovereignty and territoriality.

[...] sovereign states rooted in territorial notions of social space have been the prime unit for facilitating, impeding and mediating interaction between the social groups, organisations, and citizens and other categories of collective and individual social units contained within their borders (Hughes 2000: 5).

But the Westphalian model might no longer be so relevant. For instance, Jan Aart Scholte (1997: 21) argues:

[...] owing to globalization, the Westphalian system is already past history. The state apparatus survives, and indeed is in some respects larger, stronger, and more intrusive in social life than ever before. However, the core Westphalian norm of sovereignty is no longer operative; nor can it be retrieved in the present globalizing world. The concept of sovereignty continues to be important in political rhetoric, especially for people who seek to slow and reverse progressive reductions of national self-determination in the face of globalization. However, both juridically and practically, state regulatory capacities have ceased to meet the criteria of sovereignty as it was traditionally conceived.

There has been a reduction in the capacity of national governments to set independent national objectives and to impose their own domestic policies. Devolutionary pressures, regional integration and international organisations have forced national governments to transfer some of their traditional powers and functions, often from the national to the municipal and the provincial level. Thus, globalization has resulted in direct trans-border links between different sub-state authorities, sometimes in association with central state authorities, but also often bypassing them. For instance, ‘global cities’ such as London, Tokyo or New York, tend to have very close links with each other. Within Europe, several subnational regions are increasingly involved in forging transnational alliances with other regions, creating new cross-border regional entities.

This ‘top-down’ transfer of policy-making power has often also been supplemented by a ‘bottom-up’ movement of other state competencies to the international level, evidenced in the steady growth in the number and scope of international organizations and intergovernmental networks in every part of the world. Examples range from regional organizations such as the European Union, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to institutions with a global reach such as, for instance, the UN, the IMF, or the World Bank, who must all, however, answer to their governing councils, made up of representatives from various states.

Global governance is also increasingly shaped by the emergence of a ‘global civil society’ characterized by numerous non-governmental organisations (NGOs) [Footnote 4] such as Greenpeace, Amnesty International or Oxfam International. Global civil society organizations are distinct from official and commercial structures and include, apart from NGOs, consumer protection bodies, academic institutions, environmental campaigns, farmer’s associations, trade unions, peace activist groups, human rights advocacy networks

and more. Taken together, global and regional governance and subnational governance structures tend to break the formal institutional framework of the nation-state and exclusive national sovereignty, replacing it with a more fluid multi-level governance structure where sovereignty is increasingly shared in many areas (Bullman 1997). These dynamics are causing many structural changes including a rethinking of the role of national governments (Lipsey 1997). Globalization is seen here as leading to a reworking of the nature of national sovereignty and national borders. It transforms the organisation of society and opens up new political spaces, creating new challenges.

Theories of hyperglobalization seem to constitute a package built around the premise that markets need to be free to function, and that markets will ensure well-being all round. For hyperglobalisers, globalisation is new, in that this global economic interconnectedness, together with the death of the socialist challenge and the unipolarity thus established are all new. Indeed, it is in this context that we must view the arguments by those who would not cede that there is something completely 'new' about globalization (such as Hirst and Thompson 1996 and Hay 2006). By arguing that today's world market is not unprecedented, they are able to defend certain political responses to globalization -- such as European social democracy -- as still viable; options that hyperglobalizers (and neoliberals) have already banished into history as things of the past. It is also in this context that we must understand Hirst and Thompson's (1999: 6) words, that globalization is 'a myth suitable for a world without illusions, but it is also one that robs us of hope for it is held that Western social democracy and socialism of the Soviet bloc are both finished. One can only call the political impact of "globalization" the pathology of over-diminished expectations'.

The Challenges of Deterritorialisation

The increasing movement and operation of people, goods, businesses and services in markets beyond national borders are said to have led to the erosion of any 'natural' relation of a culture with a geographical and social territory. The deregulation and liberalization of markets has immensely contributed to this process of deterritorialisation. Sovereign national states are now 'criss-crossed and undermined by transnational actors with varying prospects of power, orientations, identities and networks' (Beck 2000: 11). As such, any 'natural' relation of a culture or process with a geographical and social territory is sundered, and the connections between cultural structures, relationships, settings and representations are torn apart. While there are those who hark for an older world and bemoan deterritorialization, it

also creates new opportunities. For instance, it creates new markets for businesses that thrive on the need of deterritorialized populations to keep in touch with 'home'. Thus, both deterritorialisation and greater connectedness are consequences of globalization.

However, this deterritorialization of culture is not seen by all as a benign matter. Fears around deterritorialization stem from the fear of cultural imperialism -- a fear that the world is being made over in the image of the West, spreading a shallow, 'inauthentic' homogeneity and uniformity throughout the world. The use of English as the global medium of communication is thought to ensure the global transmission of Western-style consumerism. The influence and reach of Western media and entertainment industries (like CNN and Time Warner), and the values they espouse, are seen to be encroaching on and destroying the variety of traditions in the world in insidious ways, primarily by spreading, and validating as superior, Western ways of seeing and knowing.

This purportedly homogenising and universalising trend is seen to be creating a 'global culture', slowly obliterating and replacing local and regional cultural practices. Westernised/largely Americanised culture in the form of pop music and Hollywood blockbusters is seen to have created a global culture that binds together young people of different national, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. According to this view, global culture is directly related to the restructuring of the global political economy, in particular to the spread of capitalism.

Indeed, the outcome of economic globalisation is portrayed as being both negative and limited, largely benefiting the developed world and already powerful TNCs, and leading to 'corporate globalization' or 'globalization-from-above' (Steger 2003). This proliferation of global capitalism is seen as a form of neo-colonialism, undermining the political, social and economic fabric of many societies, making them vulnerable to the volatility of markets, systematically destroying the environment, endangering the rights of minorities and, ultimately, rendering ineffective democratic principles. Globalization, from this perspective, is another name for Westernization, and the systematic exploitation of the Global South by Western capitalism. [**Footnote 5**].

The term 'McDonaldisation' is used to capture the process of the dissemination of Western consumerism. According to Ritzer, who coined the term, it is 'the process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as of the rest of the world' (1993: 1). The term also evokes the ubiquity of brands, industrial giants and entertainment icons such as Coca Cola, Disney, Benetton, Unilever, BP, BASF, Shell, Nike, Adidas, Hollywood or Levi's, all of which shape desires, create new needs, establish brand awareness and contribute to capital accumulation.

The fears of a homogenizing global culture have, however, been criticised as being largely unfounded. They are seen to be built upon rather simplistic constructions of Third World subjects as passive consumers of the West's exports, rather than actors who creatively engage with these cultural forms, interpreting and adapting them to local circumstances, or sometimes simply rejecting them. Roland Robertson (1992), for instance, points to a much more complex local/ global connection (glocalisation). It would be far too simplistic to reduce the relationship between global and local culture to a one-dimensional one of domination and subordination. First, while global culture might be dominated by Western ideas, global cultural flows are always interpreted in local contexts. Imported commodities are often indigenised in order to cater to local tastes. McDonald's, for instance, adopts its menu to suit local tastes. Similarly, non-Western cultures localise Western cultural influences. Indian women, for example, may change between wearing a traditional saree and Western style clothing according to occasion and context. As Anna Tsing (2001) argues, there has been a tendency to naturalise the notion of a global culture, with very little exploration of the possibility that different manifestations of capitalism and governmentality are themselves born of particular contexts, are culturally circumscribed, and are often contradictory. While the homogenising tendencies are certainly very powerful, they do not necessarily extinguish cultural differences.

Second, cultural flows are by no means uni-directional, from West to East or from the Global North to the Global South. As diverse and remote cultures become accessible, both as signs and as commodities, the flows move in both directions as well. Indeed, a deterritorialized world is said to have engendered a 'new cosmopolitanism' uniting the cultural, financial and political flows within and between western and non-western countries into a single conceptual whole. And third, Westernisation invites a reaction when advocates of marginalized cultures feel their identity being threatened. Benjamin Barber (1996) points out that the colonising and imperialistic tendencies of 'McWorld' provoke cultural and political resistance in the form of 'Jihad'. This finds its expression in the efforts of fundamentalist orthodoxy in the Third World and in xenophobia and right wing nationalism in many developed countries. Other expressions of resistance against these homogenizing forces may take the form of the ban on satellite dishes in some Middle Eastern countries or the censorship of the Internet in China.

Cultural imperialism theorists also fail to consider circuits of culture that bypass the West. This could take various forms, such as the movement of capital into China from Taiwan, Hong Kong or Southeast Asia. Or it could be a cultural influence -- while CNN and

Time Warner might boast an extensive reach, there is no gainsaying the hold Bollywood has on large parts of Asia, the Middle East and even Africa, or the triumph of Cantopop in the West.

Deterritorialization has been accompanied by other changes. The very notion of citizenship, for example, conventionally based on political rights and participation within a sovereign state, is now understood differently. Arjun Appadurai (1996), for instance, argues that diaspora populations around the world comprise emerging 'post-nations' that deterritorialize states. Transnational ties, and their legalisation through, for instance, dual citizenship regimes, are seen to raise new challenges for the construction of national identities and processes of decision-making. At the same time, managers, technocrats, and professionals on the move often seek to both circumvent and benefit from different nation-state regimes by selecting different sites for investment, work and family relocation. The term 'flexible citizenship' is often used to capture both these strategies and the effects of such manoeuvres (see, for instance, Ong 1998, 2006). As such, globalization is seen to have made economic calculation a major element in diasporic subjects' choice of citizenship, as well as in the ways in which nation-states redefine immigration laws.

A number of writers on global governance maintain that globalization will facilitate the emergence of a transnational cosmopolitan democracy where rights and obligations become detached from national and, ultimately, territorial contexts. Such a cosmopolitan model of democracy requires the creation of regional (or global) parliaments connected to states, regions and localities; the extension of the authority of regional bodies such as the EU; the setting-up of a new International Court of Human Rights which entrenches a new charter of rights and duties in different national parliaments, the separation of political and economic interests and a working global legal system including effective enforcement mechanisms (see, for instance, Archibugi and Held 1995, Kaldor 2003 a and b, Held 1995, and Archibugi et al 1998).

Deterritorialisation has led to new ways of conceptualising relations in the world. The centre-periphery model, set out by Froebel, Heinrichs and Kreye in their work on the international division of labour (1980) and Wallerstein's world systems theory (1979), and variations on that theme, had for long defined the contours for the discussion on relations between different parts of the globe. The newer notion is that of flows or circulation, evoking very different images, and a profoundly different understanding of globalisation. While flows or circulation conjures up images of markets and trade, it might equally suggest the breaking down of barriers among cultures, races and nations. Appadurai's 'scapes' (1996), for

instance, exemplifies this new imagery –ethnoscapes, the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which people live; technoscapes, the global configuration of technologies moving at high speeds across previously impermeable borders; financescapes, the global grid of currency speculation and capital transfer; mediascapes, the distribution of the capabilities to produce and disseminate information and the large complex repertoire of images and narratives generated by these capabilities; and ideoscapes, ideologies of states and counter-ideologies of movements, around which nation-states have organized their political cultures. For Appadurai (1996), the movements of people are increasingly making it difficult to neatly distinguish between core and periphery or here and there as the core gets ‘peripheralised’ with the reverse traffic in people and culture setting itself up at the heart of the west.

Meanwhile, a new entity that has entered discussions of deterritorialisation is cyberspace, a simulated space spawned by computers and online networks. It has become a site that holds the potential to simulate innumerable spaces of action, with its own agendas, interests and values, which are beyond the containment of the nation-state. It has become a ‘new imaginary location of escape, promise and profit’ (Eisenstein 1998). Time too is transfigured here, shifting away from the linearity of past-present-future, ‘becoming either a static, frozen moment that breaks time down into discrete instances, or an automatic, continuous flow, similar to a video monitor with its screen switched on and waiting for an event to happen’ (Boyer 1996).

Several countries have made attempts to secure, regulate or even ‘handcuff’ cyberspace, and bring it in line with national laws and concerns (including the US government’s National Strategy to Secure Cyberspace in February 2003). China and Saudi Arabia are examples of two countries that have placed significant restrictions on their citizens’ access to parts of cyberspace. There are also efforts to start a global dialogue to effect comprehensive and harmonised laws in this domain.

Conclusion: Is Globalisation – ‘Good’ or ‘Bad’?

As we have seen, the concept of globalization can be approached from various different directions. It is a highly contested concept and the standpoint one takes depends ultimately on one’s ideological disposition. It concerns questions of governance, as also with the distribution of wealth and resources, and it tends to often pitch ‘tradition’ against new symbols and images ‘imported’ in, primarily through the media. Although some authors

present globalization as a largely apolitical process, almost everything related to it is political in one way or another. Indeed, as we have seen, claims to its neutrality are value-laden in themselves, and represent a particular position of interest in the contemporary global political economy.

It should come as no surprise then that the most vocal proponents of neoliberal globalization as a force for social, political and economic progress have been stakeholders in the contemporary global political economy. Support is evident in the neoliberal policies of many international organisations such as the World Bank, the IMF or the WTO but also in the foreign and domestic policies of the G8 countries. Other advocates include the chief executives of large transnational enterprises, corporate managers, corporate lobbyists, investment banks and large insurance companies, as also journalists and academics, bureaucrats and politicians, propagating the merits of free market capitalism and consumerism, all suggesting that the distribution of wealth and power is central to one's position in the whole globalization discourse.

While there may be increased opportunities for the movement of people, goods, businesses and services in markets beyond national borders, and transnational diaspora are producing conditions for new hybridised cultures and identities, this is hardly weakening existing relations of power or in any way threatening Western hegemony. Indeed, there is increasing 'inter-culturalism' (as opposed to multiculturalism), including processes of both 'dis-integration' and 're-integration' at both the state and global levels. There are processes of homogenization or integration such as, for instance, unifying commodity and consumer cultures such as Coca Cola, the Big Mac, Dallas or Lost, while processes of differentiation or fragmentation could take the form of ethnic resilience, fragmentation and the re-emergence of powerful nationalist sentiments associated with the myths, memories and symbols of local places rather than global spaces.

Moreover, the movement of people is still restricted, with better-off states and economies fast developing a siege mentality, nervous about large-scale immigration from poorer parts of the world. A security dimension has now been added to these concerns since the events of 9/11, taking fear to new dimensions.

Neoliberal globalisation, it is argued, has subordinated both nature and social values to the drive for economic growth. The increase in international trade and the liberalisation of markets has environmental implications as it promotes unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and potentially hastens an overall lowering of environmental regulations and standards (race-to-the-bottom). Anthropocentric notions are deeply enshrined in the

current neoliberal globalization discourse. Industrial development, unrestrained consumption and population growth have placed an unprecedented strain on natural resources and atmospheric conditions, resulting in large-scale pollution of rivers and oceans, deforestation and desertification. However, we are also very conscious of the conditions we are creating. We live in what Ulrich Beck calls a 'risk society', reflexively aware of the damages we ourselves are causing the environment, such as the loss of biodiversity and global warming, and aware of the imminent threat these pose to life not just locally, but across the globe. Yet, concerted political will to effect change has been lacking. The US, the largest producer of carbon emissions, for instance, has refused to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. And despite large commitments of funds from the EU and other sources, without US participation, and with no clear enforcement mechanism, it is unclear how effective this treaty will be.

Neoliberal globalization is seen to be generating new inequalities while exacerbating the gap between the richest and the poorest:

[It] reinforces patterns of global exclusion and disempowerment while also making globalization ethically, if not politically, unsustainable. ... This architecture, which divides humanity into elites, the bourgeoisie, the marginalized and the impoverished, cut across territorial and cultural boundaries, rearranging the world into the winners and the losers of globalization (Held and McGrew 2002: 81).

It would be a mistake, however, to believe that globalization sceptics represent a united front. Indeed, there are arguments from many different quarters that point to the negative sides of contemporary globalisation. Samuel Huntington's foreboding concerning a 'clash of civilizations' in the post-Cold War world is relevant in this context since it predicts violent conflict around the politics of religion, culture and identity (Huntington 1993).

The ideological opposition to globalism comes from the left and the right of the political spectrum. On the right are particularist protectionists, critics who blame neoliberal globalisation for many of the economic and social problems faced by national societies. They are motivated by a fear of reduced living standards, a loss of national identity and culture due to unwanted foreign influences and the loss of national sovereignty. Proponents of this view denounce free trade agendas, the power of transnational companies and international institutions, the perceived 'Americanisation' of national cultures and the general permeability of national borders to transnational influences. On the left is the so-called 'anti-globalization movement', a group of loosely organised universalist-protectionist networks challenging neoliberal globalism. Sporadic anti-globalization struggles occurred throughout the 1990s in the developing world. A significant event was the 1994 Zapatista uprising in the Mexican state of Chiapas when the constitution was amended following the ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect on 1 January 1994, abolishing

their communal land rights and opening the economy to market forces. However, a large-scale confrontation between supporters of globalism and its challengers did not erupt until the WTO meeting in Seattle in 1999, when an alliance of human rights groups, trade unions, labour groups, environmentalists, animal rights activists, consumer rights proponents, feminists, advocates of Third World development and debt relief gathered in Seattle to raise their voices against the WTO, free-market capitalism and corporate globalisation.

The term 'anti-globalisation', however, does not quite capture the spirit of this movement. Most protestors are not against globalization as such but against a neoliberal vision of globalization. They actively voice their support for a bottom-up form of globalization where democracy, labour rights and environmental standards would not be marginalized by the market. Furthermore, campaigners employ the technologies that characterise globalization with great efficiency and effect. Indeed, modern communications such as the Internet, mobile phones and laptop computers have made the global coordination of protest possible. Several commentators, such as Noam Chomsky, have therefore suggested that 'global justice movement' or 'global social movement' may be more appropriate names.

There have also been several regional and local movements that might be termed 'anti-globalization'. Though varying widely in their aims and political complexions, they share a common sense of injustice. While challenging processes whose origins lie beyond their immediate localities, they profess the aim of establishing greater control over their own lives and spaces.

It appears then that globalization remains a controversial and highly contested term. Given such a wealth of differing opinions, almost everything related to globalization let alone the definition of the concept, or its social, political, economic and cultural implications, is notoriously difficult to pin down. The aim of this short introduction has been to introduce the reader to some of the literatures at the centre of the debate, and provide a framework for the rest of the volume.