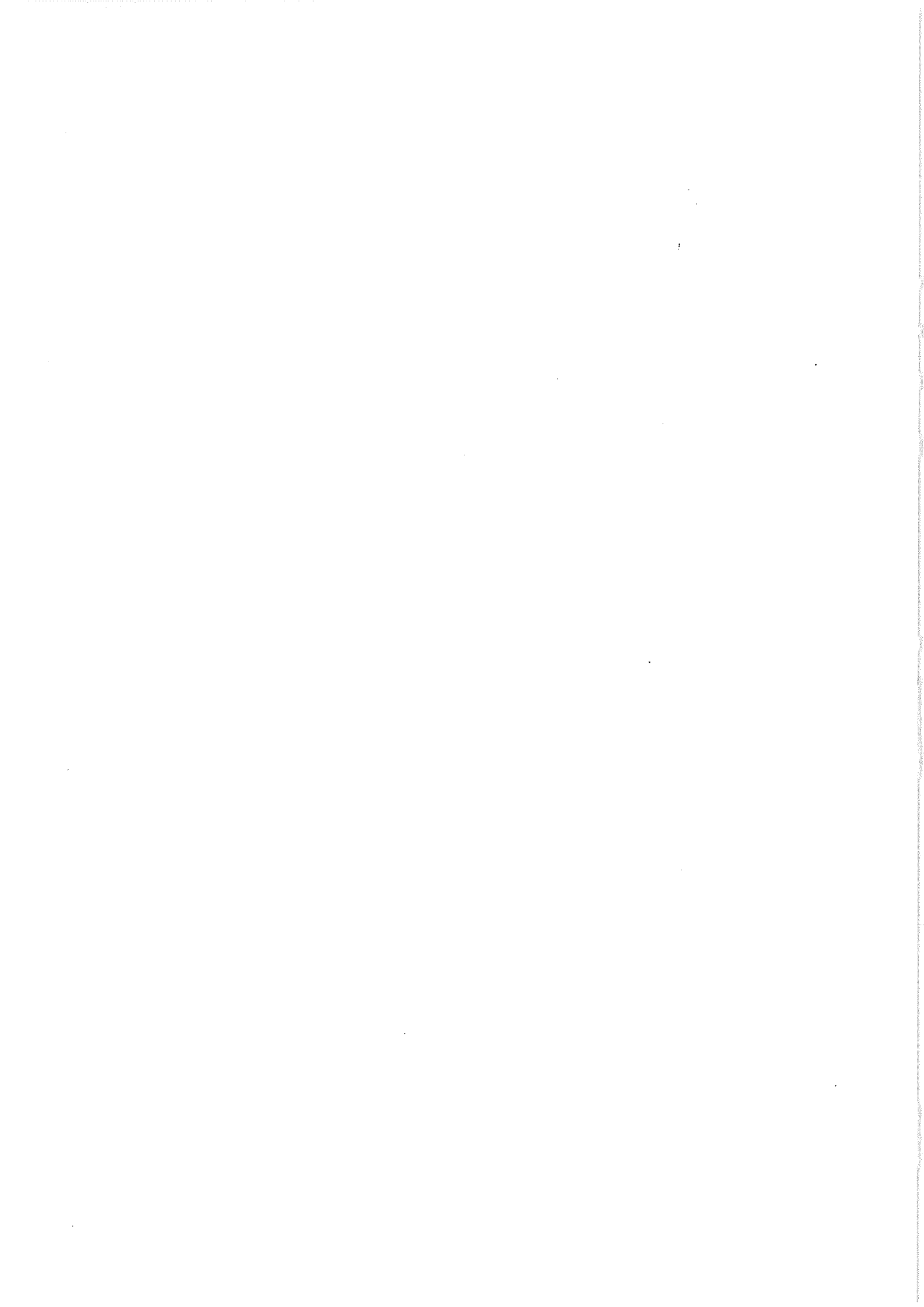


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**GLOBALIZATION AS HYBRIDIZATION**

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## GLOBALIZATION AS HYBRIDIZATION

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The most common interpretations of globalization are the idea that the world is becoming more uniform and standardized, through a technological, commercial and cultural synchronization emanating from the West, and that globalization is tied up with modernity. These perspectives are interrelated, if only in that they are both variations on an underlying theme of globalization as westernization. The former is critical in intent while the latter is ambiguous. My argument takes issue with both these interpretations as narrow assessments of globalization and instead argues for viewing globalization as a process of hybridization which gives rise to a global *mélange*.

### **Globalizations plural**

Globalization, according to Albrow, 'refers to all those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society, global society' (1990: 9). Since these processes are plural we may as well conceive of globalizations in the plural. Thus in social science there are as many conceptualizations of globalization as there are disciplines. In economics, globalization refers to economic internationalization and the spread of capitalist market relations. 'The global economy is the system generated by globalising production and global finance' (Cox 1992: 30). In international relations the focus is on the increasing density of interstate relations and the development of global politics. In sociology the concern is with increasing worldwide social densities and the emergence of 'world society'. In cultural studies, the focus is on global communications and worldwide cultural standardization, as in CocaColonization and McDonaldization, and on postcolonial culture. *All* these approaches and themes are relevant if we view globalization as a multidimensional process which, like all significant social processes, unfolds in multiple realms of existence simultaneously. Accordingly, globalization is to be understood in terms of an open-ended synthesis of several disciplinary approaches. This extends also beyond social science, for instance to technology (Henderson 1989), agricultural techniques (e.g. green revolution), and ecological concerns. Another way to conceive of globalizations plural is that there are as many modes of globalization as there are globalizing agents and dynamics or impulses.

Historically these range from long-distance crosscultural trade, religious organizations and knowledge networks to contemporary multinational corporations, transnational banks, international institutions, technological exchange, and transnational networks of social movements (Willets 1982). We can further differentiate between globalization as policy and project - as in the case of Amnesty International which is concerned with internationalizing human rights standards - or as unintended consequence - as in the case of the 'globalizing panic' of AIDS. *Globalism* is the policy of furthering or managing (a particular mode of) globalization. In political economy it refers to policies furthering economic internationalization (Petras and Brill 1985); and in foreign affairs, to the global stance in US foreign policy, in its initial postwar posture (Ambrose 1971) and its post Cold War stance. These varied considerations all point to the inherent fluidity, indeterminacy and open-endedness of globalizations. If this is the point of departure it becomes less obvious to think of globalizations in terms of standardization and less likely that globalizations can be one-directional processes, either structurally or culturally.

### **Globalization and modernity**

Modernity is a keynote in reflections on globalization in sociology. In several prominent conceptualizations, globalization is the corollary of modernity (Giddens 1990). It's not difficult to understand this trend. In conjunction with globalization, modernity provides a structure and periodization. In addition this move reflects the general thematization of modernity in social science from Habermas to Berman. Together globalization and modernity make up a ready-made package. Ready-made because it closely resembles the earlier, well established conceptualization of globalization: the marxist theme of the spread of the world market. The timing and pace are the same in both interpretations: the process starts in the 1500s and experiences its high tide from the late nineteenth century. The structures are the same: the nation-state and individualization - vehicles of modernity or, in the marxist paradigm, corollaries of the spread of the world market. In one conceptualization universalism refers to the logic of the market and the law of value, and in the other, to modern values of achievement. World-system theory is the most wellknown conceptualization of globalization in the marxist lineage; its achievement has been to make 'societies' as the units of analysis appear as a narrow focus, while on the other hand it has faithfully replicated the familiar constraints of marxist determinism (Nederveen Pieterse 1987).

There are several problems associated with the modernity/ globalization approach. In either conceptualization, whether centred on capitalism or modernity, globalization begins in and emanates from Europe and the West. In effect it is a theory of westernization by another name, which replicates all the problems associated with eurocentrism: a narrow window on the world, historically and culturally. With this agenda it should be called

westernization and not globalization. Another problem is that globalization theory turns into modernization theory. While modernization theory is a passed station in sociology and development theory, it makes a comeback under the name of globalization - the 1950s and 1960s revisited under a large global umbrella. Robertson takes issue with the prioritization of modernity, notably in Giddens's work (1992: 138-45). His own approach to globalization is multidimensional with an emphasis on cultural processes. At the same time, according to Arnason, his preoccupation with themes such as 'global order' is 'indicative of a Parsonian approach, transferred from an artificially isolated and unified society to the global condition' (1990: 222). Neo-modernization theory (Tiryakin 1991) and the contemporary thematization of modernity indicate the continuing interest in modernization thinking, but the problems remain. The tendency to focus on social structure produces an account from which the dark side of modernity is omitted. What of modernity in the light of Bauman's *Modernity and the Holocaust?* While the marxist perspective involves a critical agenda, the thematization of modernity, whether or not it serves as a stand-in for capitalism, does not.

... the ambiguities involved in this discourse are such that it is possible, within it, to lose any sense of cultural domination: to speak of modernity can be to speak of cultural change as 'cultural fate' in the strong sense of historical ... inevitability. This would be to abandon any project of rational cultural critique. (Tomlinson 1991: 141)

Generally questions of power are marginalized in both the capitalism and modernity perspectives. Another dimension which tends to be absent from modernity accounts is imperialism. Modernity accounts tend to be societally inward looking, in a rarefied sociological narrative, as if modernity precedes and conditions globalization, and not the other way round: globalization constituting one of the conditions of modernity. The implication of the modernity/globalization view is that the history of globalization begins with the history of the West. But is not precisely the point of globalization as a perspective that globalization begins with world history? The modernity/globalization view is not only geographically narrow (westernization) but also historically shallow (1500 plus). The timeframe of some of the perspectives relevant to globalization is as follows.

**Timing of globalization**

<u>Author</u>	<u>Start</u>	<u>Theme</u>
Marx	1500s	modern capitalism
Wallerstein	1500s	modern world-system
Robertson	1500s, 1870-1920s	multidimensional
Giddens	1800s	modernity
Tomlinson	1960s	cultural planetarization

Apparently the broad heading of globalization accommodates some very different views. The basic understanding is usually a neutral formulation, such as 'Globalization can thus be defined 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' (Giddens 1990: 64). The 'intensification of worldwide social relations' can be thought of as a long-term process which finds its beginnings in the first migrations of peoples and long distance trade connections, and subsequently accelerates under particular conditions (the spread of technologies, religions, literacy, empires, capitalism). Or, it can be thought of as consisting only of the later stages of this process, from the time of the acceleration in the formation of global social relations, and as a specifically global momentum associated with particular conditions (the development of a world market, western imperialism, modernity). It can be narrowed down further by regarding globalization as a particular epoch and formation - as in Tomlinson's view of globalization as the successor to imperialism (rather than imperialism being a mode of globalization), Jameson's view of the new cultural space created by late capitalism, and Harvey's argument where globalization is associated with flexible accumulation and the postmodern condition. But, whichever the emphasis, globalization as the 'intensification of worldwide social relations' presumes the prior existence of 'worldwide social relations', so that globalization is the conceptualization of a *phase* following an existing condition of *globality* and part of an ongoing process of the formation of worldwide social relations. This recognition of historical depth brings globalization back to world history and beyond the radius of westernization/ modernity.

One way around the problem of modernization/westernization is the notion of multiple paths of modernization (e.g. Therborn 1992), which avoids the onus of Eurocentrism and provides an angle for reproblematising western development. This approach is similar to the notion of the *historicity* of modernization common in Southeast and East Asia (Singh 1978). That Japanese modernization has followed a different path from that of the West is a cliché in Japanese sociology (Tominaga 1990) and well established in China (Lulu 1989; Sonoda 1990), Taiwan, etc. It results in an outlook that resembles the argument of polycentrism and multiple paths of development (Amin 1990). But this remains a static and one-dimensional representation: the multiplication of centres still hinges on centrism. It's not much use to make up for Eurocentrism and occidental narcissism by opting for other centrisms such as Afrocentrism, Indocentrism, Sinocentrism, or polycentrism. In effect, it echoes the turn of the century pan-movements - pan-Slavism, pan-Islamism, pan-Arabism, pan-Turkism, pan-Europeanism, pan-Africanism, in which the logic of nineteenth century racial classifications is carried further under the heading of civilizational provinces turned into political projects. This may be the substitution of one centrism and parochialism for another and miss the fundamental point of the 'globalization of diversity', of the *mélange* effect permeating

everywhere, from the heartlands to the extremities and vice versa.

### **Structural hybridization**

With respect to cultural forms, hybridization is defined as 'the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices' (Rowe and Schelling 1991: 231). This principle can be extended to structural forms of social organization.

That globalization does not necessarily mean the weakening of nation-states has often been stated. E.g., it is 'misleading to conceive a global culture as necessarily entailing a weakening of the sovereignty of nation-states' (Featherstone 1990: 1). The formation of nation-states in postcolonial countries is a case in point. At the same time it is apparent that the present phase of globalization involves the relative weakening of nation-states - as in the weakening of the 'national economy' in the context of economic globalism and, culturally, the decline of patriotism. But this too is not simply a one-directional process. Thus the migration movements which make up demographic globalization can engender absentee patriotism and long distance nationalism, as in the political activities of Irish and Jewish diasporas and emigré or exiled groups of Sikhs in Toronto, Tamils in London, Tibetans in India (Anderson 1992; Appadurai 1990).

Globalization can mean the reinforcement of or go together with localism, as in 'Think globally, act locally'. This kind of tandem operation of local/global dynamics is at work in the case of minorities who appeal to transnational human rights standards beyond state authorities, or indigenous peoples who find support for local demands from transnational networks. The upsurge of ethnic identity politics and neotraditional religious movements can also be viewed in the light of globalization. 'Identity patterns are becoming more complex, as people assert local loyalties but want to share in global values and lifestyles' (Ken Booth quoted in Lipschutz 1992: 396). Robertson argues that particularity is a global value and that what is taking place is the 'universalization of particularism' or 'the global valorization of particular identities' (1992: 130). Global dynamics such as the fluctuations of commodity prices on the world market can result in the reconstruction of ethnic identities, as occurred in Africa in the 1980s (Shaw 1986). State development policies can engender a backlash of ethnic movements (Kothari 1988). Thus,

globalisation can generate forces of both fragmentation and unification ...  
globalisation can engender an awareness of political difference as much as an awareness of common identity; enhanced international communications can highlight conflicts of interest and ideology, and not merely remove obstacles to mutual understanding. (Held 1992: 32)

Globalization can mean the reinforcement of both supranational and subnational

regionalism. The European Community is a case in point. Formed in response to economic challenges from Japan and the United States, it represents more than the internal market policy and is in the process of becoming an administrative, legal, cultural and political formation, involving multiple Europes: the Europe of the nations, of the regions, 'European civilization', Christianities, etc. The dialectics of unification mean, for instance, that constituencies in Northern Ireland can appeal to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg on decisions of the British courts, or that Catalonia can outflank Madrid and Brittany outmanoeuvre Paris by appealing to Brussels or by establishing links with other regions (e.g. between Catalonia and the Ruhr area). Again there is a ongoing flow or cascade, globalization - regionalism - subregionalism. Or, 'Globalization encourages macro-regionalism, which, in turn, encourages micro-regionalism' (Cox 1992: 34).

Micro-regionalism in poor areas will be a means not only of affirming cultural identities but of claiming pay-offs at the macro-regional level for maintaining political stability and economic good behaviour. The issues of redistribution are thereby raised from the sovereign state level to the macro-regional level, while the manner in which redistributed wealth is used becomes decentralised to the micro-regional level. (Cox 1992: 35)

What globalization means in structural terms, then, is the *increase in the available modes of organization*: global, transnational, international, macroregional, national, microregional, municipal, local, institutional. Globalization increases the range of organizational options, all of which are in operation simultaneously. Each or a combination of these options may be relevant in specific social, institutional, legal, political, economic, or cultural spheres. No single mode has a necessary overall priority or monopoly. This is one of the salient differences between the present phase of globalization and the preceding era from the 1840s to the 1960s, the great age of nationalism when by and large the nation-state was the single dominant organizational option (Harris 1990). While the spread of the nation-state itself has rightly been interpreted as an expression of globalization (Robertson 1992), the dynamic has not stopped there.

Furthermore, not only these modes of organization are important but also the informal spaces that are created in-between, in the interstices. Inhabited by diasporas, migrants, nomads, exiles, stateless people, these are sites of what Michael Mann (1986) calls 'interstitial emergence' and identifies as important sources of social renewal. In addition there are the borderzones, the meeting places of different organizational modes - such as Free Enterprise Zones and offshore banking facilities (hybrid meeting places of state sovereignty and transnational enterprise), overseas military facilities and surveillance stations (Enloe 1989). 'World cities' (Sassen 1992) and ethnic *mélange* neighbourhoods (such as Jackson Heights in Queens, New York) are other hybrid phenomena on the global horizon.



Accordingly the overall tendency towards increasing global density and interdependence, or globalization, translates into the pluralization of organizational forms. This is the structural corollary to the contemporary phenomenon of multiple identities and decentering of the social subject. The ability of individuals to make use of several organizational options at the same time is one of the bases of multiple identity. Thus globalization is the framework for the diversification and amplification of 'sources of the self'.

A different concern is the scope and depth of the historical field. The westernization/modernity views on globalization only permit a global momentum with a short memory. Globalization taken widely however refers to the formation of a worldwide historical field and involves the development of global memory, arising from shared global experiences. Such shared global experiences range from various intercivilizational encounters such as long-distance trade and migration to slavery, conquest, war, imperialism, colonialism. It has been argued that the latter would be irrelevant to global culture:

Unlike national cultures, a global culture is essentially memoryless. When the 'nation' can be constructed so as to draw upon and revive latent popular experiences and needs, a 'global culture' answers to no living needs, no identity-in-the-making. ... There are no 'world memories' that can be used to *unite* humanity; the most global experiences to date - colonialism and the World Wars - can only serve to remind us of our historic cleavages. (Smith 1990: 180)

If, however, conflict, conquest and oppression would *only* divide people, then nations themselves would merely be artefacts of division for they too were mostly born out of conflict (e.g. Hechter 1975). Likewise, on the larger canvas, it would be shallow and erroneous to argue that the experiences of conflict merely divide humanity: they also unite humankind, even if in painful ways and producing an ambivalent kind of unity (Abdel-Malek 1981; Nederveen Pieterse 1990). Unity emerging out of antagonism and conflict is the abc of dialectics. It's a recurrent theme in postcolonial literature, e.g. *The Intimate Enemy* (Nandy 1983). The intimacy constituted by oppression and resistance is not an uncommon notion either, as in the title of the Israeli author Yoram Binur's book about Palestinians, *My Friend the Enemy*. A conflictual unity bonded by common political and cultural experiences, including the experience of domination, is part of the make-up of hybrid postcolonial cultures. Thus the former British Empire remains in many ways a unitary space featuring a common language, common elements in legal and political systems, infrastructure, traffic rules, an imperial architecture which is in many ways the same in India as in South Africa, along with the legacy of the Commonwealth (King 1991).

Robertson makes reference to the deep history of globality, particularly in relation to

the spread of world religions, but reserves the notion of globalization to later periods, starting in the 1500s, considering that what changes over time is 'the scope and depth of consciousness of the world as a single place'. In his view 'contemporary globalization' also refers to 'cultural and subjective matters' and involves *awareness* of the global human condition, a global consciousness that carries reflexive connotations (1992: 183). No doubt this reflexivity is significant, also because it implies the potential capability of humanity acting upon the global human condition. On the other hand, there is no reason why such reflexivity should halt at the gates of the West and not be cognizant of the deep history of intercivilizational connections including, for instance, the various ways the 'world' religions 'promoted images of "one world"' (1992: 175).

### **Global mélange**

How do we come to terms with phenomena such as Thai boxing by Moroccan girls, Asian rap, Irish bagels, Chinese tacos, Mardi Gras Indians, or 'Mexican schoolgirls dressed in Greek togas dancing in the style of Isidora Duncan' (Rowe and Schelling 1992: 161)? How do we interpret Manouchkine in the Théâtre Soleil staging a Shakespeare play in Japanese Kabuki style for a Paris audience? Or, Arabs who prefer blondes and Scandinavians who seek out Mediterranean types? Cultural experiences, past or present, have not been simply moving in the direction of cultural uniformity and standardization. This is not to say that the notion of global cultural synchronization (Schiller 1989; Hamelink 1983) is irrelevant, on the contrary, but it is fundamentally incomplete and cannot be taken at face value. It overlooks the countercurrents - the impact nonwestern cultures have been making on the West. It downplays the ambivalence of the globalizing momentum and ignores the role of local reception of western culture - e.g. the indigenization of western elements. It has no room for crossover culture - as in the development of 'third cultures' such as world music. It overrates the homogeneity of western culture and overlooks the fact that many of the standards exported by the West and its cultural industries themselves turn out to be of culturally mixed character if we examine their cultural lineages. Centuries of South-North cultural osmosis have resulted in a global crossover culture. European and western culture are *part* of this global mélange. This is an obvious case if we reckon that Europe until the fourteenth century was invariably the recipient of cultural influences from 'the Orient'.<sup>1</sup> The hegemony of the West dates only of very recent time, from 1800, and, arguably, from industrialization.

One of the terms offered to describe this interplay is the *creolization* of global culture (Friedman 1990; Appadurai 1990). Creolization itself is an odd hybrid term. In the Caribbean and North America it stands for the mixture of African and European (the Creole kitchen of New Orleans etc.), while in Hispanic America *criollo* originally denotes those of European descent born in the continent (as against *peninsulares*, born in the Iberian

peninsula, and *indigenes*, or native Americans). 'Creolization' presents a Caribbean window on the world. Part of its appeal is that it goes against the grain of nineteenth century racism and the accompanying abhorrence of miscegenation, *métissage*, as in Gobineau's view that race mixture leads to decadence and decay for in every mixture the lower element is bound to predominate. The doctrine of racial purity involves the fear of and *dédain* for the half-caste and the impossibility to acknowledge the *métis*. By stressing and foregrounding the *mestizo* factor, the mixed and in-between, creolization highlights and valorizes the experience of boundary crossing. It also implies an argument with westernization: the West itself may be viewed as a mixture and western culture as a creole culture.

The wider Latin American term *mestizaje* also refers to boundary crossing mixture. Since the early part of the century, however, this has served as a hegemonic elite ideology, which, in effect, refers to 'whitening' or Europeanization as the overall project for Latin American countries: while the European element is supposed to maintain the upper hand, through the gradual 'whitening' of the population and culture, Latin America is supposed to achieve modernity (Graham 1990; Whitten and Torres 1992). A limitation of both these terms is that they are confined to the experience of the post-sixteenth century Americas.

Another terminology is the 'orientalization of the world', which has been referred to as 'a distinct global process' (Featherstone 1990). In Duke Ellington's words, 'We are all becoming a little Oriental' (quoted in Fischer 1992: 32). It reminds us of the theme of 'East wind prevailing over West wind', which runs through Sultan Galiev, Mao and Abdel-Malek. In the setting of the 'Japanese challenge' and the development model of East Asian NICs, it evokes the Pacific Century and the 21st century as the 'Asian century' (Park 1985).

We need not opt for any of these terms - creolization, *mestizaje*, orientalization - to acknowledge the global *mélange*. In the United States *cross-over culture* denotes the adoption of black cultural characteristics by European Americans and of white elements by African Americans. This notion describes global intercultural interplay and osmosis more aptly than any of the other terms. Global crossover culture may be most appropriate to characterize the long term global North-South *mélange*. Still, what is not clarified are the *terms* under which cultural interplay and crossover take place. Likewise in terms such as global *mélange*, what is missing is acknowledgement of the actual unevenness, asymmetry and inequality in global relations.

### **Politics of hybridity**

Given the backdrop of nineteenth century discourse it's no wonder that arguments that acknowledge hybridity often do so on a note of regret and loss - loss of purity, wholeness, authenticity. Thus, according to Hisham Sharabi, neopatriarchal society in the contemporary Arab world is 'a new, hybrid sort of society/ culture', 'neither modern nor

traditional' (1988: 4). The 'neopatriarchal petty bourgeoisie' is likewise characterized as a 'hybrid class' (1988: 6). This argument is based on an analysis of 'the political and economic conditions of distorted, dependent capitalism' in the Arab world (1988: 5), in other words, it is derived from the framework of dependency theory. It may be stretching the notion of hybridity, but dependency theory generally could be read as a theory of hybridization: dependent capitalism is a *mélange* category in which the logics of capitalism and imperialism have merged. Recognition of this hybrid condition is what distinguishes neomarxism from classical marxism (in which capital was regarded as a 'permanently revolutionizing force'): i.e. regular capitalism makes for development, but dependent capitalism makes for the 'development of underdevelopment'. Here hybridity is a negative condition, the outcome of an unfortunate marriage, suffused with the effects of asymmetry and unequal exchange on a global scale and giving rise to a general syndrome of 'stunted development' and 'immiserizing growth'. Articulation, or the fusion of modes of production, another perspective in international political economy, may likewise be read as a hybridization argument. Counterposed to the idea of the dual economy split in traditional/modern and feudal/capitalist sectors, the articulation argument holds that what has been taking place is an interpenetration of modes of production. Uneven articulation has, in turn, given rise to phenomena such as asymmetric integration (Terhal 1987).

In arguments such as these hybridity functions as a negative trope, in conformity with a nineteenth century epistemology according to which hybridity, mixture, mutation are regarded as negative developments which detract from prelapsarian purity - in society and culture as in biology. Since the development of Mendelian genetics in early twentieth century biology and genetics, however, a revaluation has taken place according to which crossbreeding and polygenic inheritance are positively valued as enrichments of gene pools. Gradually this has been seeping through in wider circles. In poststructuralist and postmodern analysis, hybridity and syncretism along with boundary and border crossing, have become keywords. Thus hybridity is the antidote to essentialist notions of identity and ethnicity (Lowe 1991). Cultural syncretism refers to the methodology of montage and collage, to 'cross-cultural plots of music, clothing, behaviour, advertising, theatre, body language, or ... visual communication, spreading multi-ethnic and multi-centric patterns' (Canevacci 1993: 3). Interculturalism, rather than multiculturalism, is the keynote of this kind of perspective. But it also raises different problems. What is the political portée of the celebration of hybridity? Is it merely another sign of perplexity turned into virtue by those grouped on the consumer end of social change? According to Ella Shohat, 'A celebration of syncretism and hybridity per se, if not articulated in conjunction with questions of hegemony and neo-colonial power relations, runs the risk of appearing to sanctify the *fait accompli* of colonial violence.' (1992: 109)

Relations of power and hegemony are inscribed and reproduced *within* hybridity for wherever we look closely enough we find the traces of asymmetry in culture, place, descent. Hence hybridity raises the question of the *terms* of mixture, the conditions of mixing and *mélange*. At the same time it's important to note the ways in which hegemony is not merely reproduced but *refigured* in the process of hybridization. Generally, what is the bearing of hybridization in relation to emancipatory politics?

At times, the anti-essentialist emphasis on hybrid identities comes dangerously close to dismissing all searches for communitarian origins as an archaeological excavation of an idealized, irretrievable past. Yet, on another level, while avoiding any nostalgia for a prelapsarian community, or for any unitary and transparent identity predating the 'fall', we must also ask whether it is possible to forge a collective resistance without inscribing a communal past. (Shohat 1992: 109)

Isn't there a close relationship between political mobilization and collective memory? Isn't the remembrance of deeds past, the commemoration of collective itineraries, of victories and defeats - such as the Matanza for the FMLN in El Salvador, Katipunan for the NPA in the Philippines, Heroes Day for the ANC - fundamental to the symbolism of resistance and the moral economy of mobilization? Still this line of argument involves several problems. While there may be a link, there is no necessary symmetry between communal past/collective resistance. What is the basis of bonding in collective action - past or future, memory or project? While communal symbolism may be important, collective symbolism merging a heterogeneous collectivity in a common project may be more important. Thus, while Heroes Day is significant to the ANC (December 16 is the founding day of Umkhonto we Sizwe), the Freedom Charter, and more specifically, the project of non-racial democracy (non-sexism has been added later) is of much greater importance. These projects are not of a 'communal' nature: part of their strength is that they transcend communal boundaries. Generally, emancipations may be thought of in the plural, as a project or ensemble of projects that in itself is diverse, heterogeneous, polyphonous. The argument linking communal past/collective resistance imposes a unity and transparency which in effect reduces the space for *critical* resistance, for plurality *within* the movement, diversity within the process of emancipation. It privileges a communal view of collective action, a primordialist view of identity, and ignores or downplays the importance of *intragroup* differences and conflicts over group representation, demands and tactics, including reconstructions of the past. It argues as if the questions of whether demands should be for autonomy or inclusion, whether the group should be inward or outward looking, have already been settled, while in reality these are political dilemmas. The nexus between communal past/collective resistance is one strand in political mobilization, but so are the hybrid past/plural projects, and in actual everyday politics the

point is how to negotiate these strands in roundtable politics. This involves going beyond a past to a future orientation - for what is the point of collective action without a future? The lure of community, powerful and prevalent in left as well as right politics, has been criticized often enough. The politics of hybridity, in contrast, is subversive of essentialism and homogeneity, disrupts static spatial and political categories of centre and periphery, high and low, and in crossing boundaries and classifications, widens the space for critical engagement and emancipation. Thus the nostalgia politics of community has been contrasted to the landscape of the city, along with a reading of 'politics as relations among strangers' (Young 1990).

What is the significance of this kind of outlook in the context of global inequities and politics? Political theory on a global scale is relatively undeveloped. Traditionally political theory is concerned with the relations between sovereign and people, state and society. It's of little help to turn to the 'great political theorists' from Locke to Mill for they are all essentially concerned with the state-society framework. International relations theory extrapolates from this core preoccupation with concepts such as national interest and balance of power. Strictly speaking international relations theory, at any rate neorealist theory, precludes global political theory. In the absence of a concept of 'world society', how can there be a notion of a worldwide social contract or global democracy? This frontier is opening up through concepts such as global civil society, referring to the transnational networks and activities of voluntary and non-governmental organizations: 'the growth of global civil society represents an ongoing project of civil society to reconstruct, re-imagine, or re-map world politics' (Lipschutz 1992: 391). Another alternative notion is 'global society' (Shaw 1992). A limitation to these reconceptualizations is the absence of legal provisions that are globally binding rather than merely in interstate relations.

The question remains what kind of conceptual tools we can develop to address questions such as the double standards prevailing in global politics: perennial issues such as western countries practising democracy at home and imperialism abroad; the edifying use of terms such as self-determination and sovereignty whilst the United States are invading Panama or Grenada. The term *imperialism* may no longer be adequate to address the present situation. It may be adequate in relation to US actions in Panama or Grenada, but less so to describe the Gulf war. Imperialism is the policy of establishing or maintaining an empire, and empire is the control exercised by a state over the domestic and foreign policy of another political society (Doyle 1986: 45). This is not an adequate terminology to characterize the Gulf war episode. If we consider that major actors in today's global circumstance are the IMF and World Bank, transnational corporations and regional investment banks, it is easy to acknowledge their influence on the domestic policies of countries from Brazil to the Philippines, but the situation differs from imperialism in two ways: the actors do not make

up a state and the foreign policy of the countries involved is not necessarily affected. The casual use of terms such as recolonization or neocolonialism (Bangura 1992) to describe the impact of IMF conditionalities on African countries remains just that, casual. The situation has changed also since the emergence of regional blocs which can potentially exercise joint foreign policy (e.g. the European Community) or which within themselves contain two or more 'worlds' (e.g. NAFTA). Both these situations differ from imperialism in the old sense. Current literature on international political economy shows a shift from 'imperialism' to 'globalization'. The latter may be used with critical intent (e.g. Miliband and Panitch 1992) but is more often used in an open-ended sense. I've used the term critical globalism as an approach to current configurations (Nederveen Pieterse 1992). According to Tomlinson, the distribution of global power that we know as 'imperialism' ... characterised the modern period up to, say, the 1960s. What replaces 'imperialism' is 'globalisation'. Globalisation may be distinguished from imperialism in that it is a far less coherent or culturally directed process. ... The idea of 'globalisation' suggests interconnection and interdependency of all global areas which happens in a less purposeful way. (1991: 175)

This is a particularly narrow interpretation in which globalization matches the epoch of late capitalism and flexible accumulation; still what is interesting is the observation that the present phase of globalization is less coherent and less purposeful than imperialism. That does not mean the end of inequality and domination, although domination may be more dispersed, less orchestrated, more heterogeneous. To address global inequalities and develop global political theory a different kind of conceptualization is needed. We are not entirely without points of reference but we lack a theory of global political action. Melucci has discussed the 'planetaryization' of collective action (1989; Hegedus 1989). Some of the implications of globalization for democracy have been examined by Held (1992). As regards the basics of a global political consensus, the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and its subsequent amendments by the Movement of Nonaligned Countries, may be such a point of reference (Parekh 1992).

Structural hybridization, or the increase in the range of organizational options, and cultural hybridization, or the doors of imagined communities opening up, are signs of an age of boundary crossing. Not, surely, of the erasure of boundaries - thus, state power remains extremely strategic; but it's no longer the only game in town. The tide of globalization has reduced the room of manoeuvre of states, while international institutions, transnational transactions, regional cooperation, subnational dynamics and non-governmental organizations have expanded in impact and scope (Griffin and Khan 1992). A politics of hybridity means navigating these zones of instability, without clinging to the notion of fixed units, whether they be nations, classes or ethnic groups, as the necessary or ultimate basis of politics. What

appears as a loss from an orthodox standpoint, from the point of view of a politics of hybridity, premised on diverse actors and multiple projects from the outset, may appear in a different light. It may be argued that the fixities of nation, community, ethnicity and class have been grids superimposed upon experiences more complex and subtle than reflexivity and organization could accommodate. In relation to the global human condition of inequality, the hybridization perspective provides no ready answers but it does release political reflection and collective action from the boundaries of nation, community, ethnicity, or class. Fixities have become fragments and fragments realign as the kaleidoscope of collective experience is in motion.



## Notes

This is the revised version of a paper presented in the panel on Globalization and Modernity at the 10th anniversary conference of Theory, Culture and Society in Champion, Pennsylvania, August 1992. I have appreciated comments by Roland Robertson on an earlier version of the paper.

1. Elsewhere I've argued this case extensively (Nederveen Pieterse 1993).



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