



ABSTRACT

Globalization is a relatively new idea in the social sciences, although people who work in and write about the mass media, transnational corporations and international business have been using it for some time. The purpose of this paper is to critically review the ways in which sociologists and other social scientists use ideas of globalization and to evaluate the fruitfulness of these competing conceptions.

The central feature of the idea of globalization is that many contemporary problems cannot be adequately studied at the level of nation-states, that is, in terms of each country and its inter-national relations. Instead, they need to be conceptualized in terms of global processes. Some have even gone so far as to predict that global forces, by which they usually mean transnational corporations and other global economic institutions, global culture or globalizing belief systems/ideologies of various types, or a combination of all of these, are becoming so powerful that the continuing existence of the nation-state is in serious doubt. This is not a necessary consequence of most theories of globalization.

The argument of this paper is that much of the globalization literature is confused because not all those who use the term distinguish it clearly enough from internationalization, and some writers appear to use the two terms interchangeably. I argue that a clear distinction must be drawn between the inter-national and the global. The hyphen in inter-national is to distinguish (inadequate) conceptions of the 'global' founded on the existing even if changing system of nation-states, from (genuine) conceptions of the global based on the emergence of global processes and a global system of social relations not founded on national characteristics or nation-states. This global system theory is the framework for my own research.

Globalization studies can be categorized on the basis of four research clusters:

1. The world-systems approach;
2. The global culture approach;
3. The global society approach;
4. The global capitalism approach;

The body of the paper is an exposition and critique of these approaches. The paper argues that the global capitalism approach is most productive for theory and research in globalization and concludes with a brief discussion of resistances to globalization.

¹ This paper will be published in an extended form in Sklair (forthcoming).

INTRODUCTION

Globalization is a relatively new idea in the social sciences, although people who work in and write about the mass media, transnational corporations and international business have been using it for some time. Jacques Maisonrouge, the French-born former President of IBM World Trade, was an early exponent of the view that the future lies with global corporations who operate as if the world had no real borders rather than organizations tied to a particular country. The influential U.S. magazine, *Business Week* (14 May 1990) summed this view up in the evocative phrase: 'The Stateless Corporation'. The purpose of this paper is to critically review the ways in which sociologists and other social scientists use ideas of globalization and to evaluate the fruitfulness of these competing conceptions.

The central feature of the idea of globalization is that many contemporary problems cannot be adequately studied at the level of nation-states, that is, in terms of each country and its inter-national relations, but instead need to be seen in terms of global processes. Some globalists (for example, Ohmae, 1990) have even gone so far as to predict that global forces, by which they usually mean transnational corporations and other global economic institutions, global culture or globalizing belief systems/ideologies of various types, or a combination of all of these, are becoming so powerful that the continuing existence of the nation-state is in serious doubt. This is not a necessary consequence of most theories of globalization, though many argue that the significance of the nation-state is declining (even if the ideology of nationalism is still strong in some places).

There is no single agreed definition of globalization, indeed, some argue that its significance has been much exaggerated, but as the ever-increasing numbers of books and articles discussing different aspects of it suggest, it appears to be an idea whose time has come in sociology in particular and in the social sciences in general. The author of the first genuine textbook on globalization suggests that it may be 'the concept of the 1990s' (Waters, 1994, p.1; see also Robertson, 1992, Albrow, 1996).

The argument of this paper is that the central problem in understanding much of the globalization literature is that not all those who use the term distinguish it clearly enough from internationalization, and some writers appear to use the two terms interchangeably. I argue that a clear distinction must be drawn between the inter-national and the global. The hyphen in

inter-national is to signify confusing conceptions of globalization founded on the existing even if changing system of nation-states, while the global signifies the emergence of processes and a system of social relations not founded on the system of nation-states.

This difficulty is compounded by the fact that most theory and research in sociology is based on concepts of society that identify the unit of analysis with a particular country (for example, sociology of Britain, of Japan, of the USA, of Russia, of India, etc.), sub-systems within countries (British education, the Japanese economy, American culture, politics in Russia, religion in India) or comparisons between single countries and groups of them (modern Britain and traditional India, declining America and ascendent Japan, rich and poor countries, the West and the East). This general approach, usually called state-centrism, is still useful in many respects and there are clearly good reasons for it. Not the least of these is that most historical and contemporary sociological data sets have been collected on particular countries.² However, most globalization theorists argue that the nation-state is no longer the only important unit of analysis. Some even argue that the nation-state is now less important in some fundamental respects than other global forces; examples being the mass media and the corporations that own and control them, transnational corporations (some of which are richer than the majority of nation-states in the world today) and even social movements that spread ideas such as universal human rights, global environmental responsibility and the world-wide call for democracy and human dignity. Yearley (1995, chapter 1) identifies two main obstacles to making sociological sense of globalization, namely 'the tight connection between the discipline of sociology and the nation-state' (p.9) and the fact that countries differ significantly in their geographies. Despite these difficulties (really elaborations of the local-global problem which will be discussed below) he makes the telling point that a focus on the environment encourages us to 'work down to the global' from the universal, a necessary corrective to state-centrist conceptions which work up to the global from the nation-state or even, as we shall see from individualistic notions of 'global consciousness'.

² For some extremely interesting examples of cross-cultural data presented in forms that are not state-centrist, see United Nations Development Programme (1993).

The study of globalization in sociology revolves primarily around two main classes of phenomena which have become increasingly significant in the last few decades. These are the emergence of a globalized economy based on new systems of production, finance and consumption; and the idea of 'global culture'. While not all globalization researchers entirely accept the existence of a global economy or a global culture, most accept that local, national and regional economies are undergoing important changes as a result of processes of globalization even where there are limits to globalization (see, for example, Scott, ed. 1997).

Researchers on globalization have focused on two phenomena, increasingly significant in the last few decades:

- (i) the ways in which transnational corporations (TNC) have facilitated the globalization of capital and production (Dunning 1993, Barnett and Cavanagh 1994, Dicken 1998);
- (ii) transformations in the global scope of particular types of TNC, those who own and control the mass media, notably television channels and the transnational advertising agencies. This is often connected with the spread of particular patterns of consumption and a culture and ideology of consumerism at the global level (Featherstone 1991, Dowmunt 1993, Sklair 1995, Barker 1997).

The largest TNCs have assets and annual sales far in excess of the Gross National Products of most of the countries in the world. The World Bank annual publication *World Development Report* reports that in 1995 only about 70 countries out of a total of around 200 for which there is data, had GNPs of more than ten billion US dollars. By contrast, the *Fortune* Global 500 list of the biggest TNCs by turnover in 1995 reports that over 440 TNCs had annual sales greater than \$10 billion. Thus, in this important sense, such well-known names as General Motors, Shell, Toyota, Unilever, Volkswagen, Nestle, Sony, Pepsico, Coca Cola, Kodak, Xerox and the huge Japanese trading houses (and many other corporations most people have never heard of) have more economic power at their disposal than the majority of the countries in the world. These figures prove little in themselves, they simply indicate the *gigantism* of TNCs relative to most countries.

Not only have TNCs grown enormously in size in recent decades but their 'global reach' has expanded dramatically. Many companies, even from large rich countries, regularly earn a third or more of their revenues from

'foreign' sources (see Sklair 1998a). Not all *Fortune* Global 500 corporations are headquartered in the First World: some come from what was called the Third World or those parts of it known as the Newly Industrializing Countries (NICs).³ Examples of these are the 'national' oil companies of Brazil, India, Mexico, Taiwan and Venezuela (some owned by the state but most run like private corporations), banks in Brazil and China, an automobile company from Turkey, and the Korean manufacturing and trading conglomerates (*chaebol*), a few of which have attained global brand-name status (for example, Hyundai and Samsung).

Writers who are sceptical about economic globalization argue that the facts that most TNCs are legally domiciled in the USA, Japan and Europe and that they trade and invest mainly between themselves means that the world economy is still best analyzed in terms of national corporations and that the global economy is a myth (see, for example, Hirst and Thompson, 1996). But this deduction entirely ignores the well-established fact that an increasing number of corporations operating outside their 'home' countries see themselves as developing global strategies, as is obvious if we read their annual reports and other publications rather than focus exclusively on aggregate data on foreign investment.⁴ You cannot simply assume that all 'US', 'Japanese' and other 'national' TNCs somehow express a 'national interest'. They do not. They primarily express the interests of those who own and control them, even if historical patterns of TNC development have differed from place to place, country to country and region to region. Analysing globalization as a relatively recent phenomenon, originating from the 1960s, allows us to see more clearly the tensions between traditional 'national' patterns of TNC development and the new global corporate structures and dynamics. It is also important to realize that, even in state-centrist terms, a relatively small investment for a major TNC can result in a relatively large

³ On the NICs see Dicken (1998) and Sklair, ed. (1994).

⁴ All parts of all economies are clearly not equally globalized. However, there does appear to be increasing evidence that production and marketing processes within TNCs are being 'deterritorialized' from their 'home' countries into something like a new global system. This is a highly controversial issue in the study of TNC (see Sklair 1998a).

measure of economic presence in a small, poor country or a poor region or community in a larger and less poor country.

The second crucial phenomenon for globalization theorists is the global diffusion and increasingly concentrated ownership and control of the electronic mass media, particularly television (Barker, 1997). The number of TV sets per capita has grown so rapidly in Third World countries in recent years (from fewer than 10 per thousand population in 1970 to 60 per 1,000 in 1993, according to UNESCO) that many researchers argue that a 'globalizing effect' due to the mass media is taking place even in the Third World (Sussman and Lent 1991, Sklair 1995).

Ownership and control of television, including satellite and cable systems, and associated media like newspaper, magazine and book publishing, films, video, records, tapes, compact discs, and a wide variety of other marketing media, are concentrated in relatively few very large TNCs. The predominance of US-based corporations is being challenged by others based in Japan, Europe and Australia and even by 'Third World' corporations like the media empires of TV Globo, based in Brazil and Televisa, based in Mexico (Nordenstreng and Schiller, 1993).

MAIN APPROACHES TO GLOBALIZATION

As with other topics in sociology, there are several ways to categorize theory and research on globalization. One common approach is to compare mono-causal with multi-causal explanations of the phenomenon, as does McGrew (1992). This is a useful way of looking at the problem but it has two main drawbacks. First, it ends up by putting thinkers with entirely different types of explanations—for example those who see globalization as a consequence of the development of material-technological forces and those who see it as a consequence of ideological and/or cultural forces—in the same bag. Second, few thinkers present an entirely mono-causal explanation of anything; most of the thinkers McGrew identifies as mono-causal do try to show the relevance of a variety of factors even if they tend to prioritize some factors over others, while those he identifies as multi-causal do not always argue that everything causes everything else. Globalization, by its very nature, is a big and complex subject.

A second approach is to compare the disciplinary focus of globalization studies. This is certainly an interesting and fruitful avenue to explore: several

disciplines have made distinctive contributions to the study of globalization (to some extent all the social sciences have contributed to the debate, but anthropology, geography and international political economy in addition to sociology, can be singled out). These contributions are commonly borrowed by sociologists of globalization, and *vice versa*, and this will be reflected in my own categorization. I have chosen to categorize globalization studies on the basis of four research clusters in which groups of scholars are working on similar research problems, either in direct contact with each other or, more commonly, in rather indirect contact. Accordingly, I identify the following four sources of globalization research in contemporary sociology:

1. The world-systems approach;
2. The global culture approach;
3. The global society approach;
4. The global capitalism approach.

1. The World-Systems Approach

This approach is based on the distinction between core, semiperipheral and peripheral countries in terms of their changing roles in the international division of labour dominated by the capitalist world-system. World-systems as a model in social science research, inspired by the work of Immanuel Wallerstein, has been developed in a large and continually expanding body of literature since the 1970s (see Wallerstein 1979, and Shannon, 1989 for a good overview).

The world-systems approach is, unlike the others to be discussed, not only a collection of academic writings but also a highly institutionalized academic enterprise. It is based at the Braudel Center at SUNY Binghamton, supports various international joint academic ventures, and publishes the journal, *Review*. Though the work of world-systems theorists cannot be said to be fully a part of the globalization literature as such (see King, ed., 1990), the institutionalization of the world-systems approach undoubtedly prepared the ground for globalization in the social sciences.

In some senses, Wallerstein and his school could rightly claim to have been 'global' all along—after all, what could be more global than the 'world-system'? However, there is no specific concept of the 'global' in most world-systems literature. Reference to the 'global' comes mainly from critics and, significantly, can be traced to the long-standing problems that the world-

system model has had with 'cultural issues'. Wallerstein's essay on 'Culture as the Ideological Battleground of the Modern World-System', the critique by Boyne, and Wallerstein's attempt to rescue his position under the title of 'Culture is the World-System' (all in Featherstone, ed. 1990), illustrate the problem well.

Chase-Dunn, in his suggestively titled book *Global Formation* (1989), does try to take the argument a stage further by arguing for a dual logic approach to economy and polity. At the economic level, he argues, a global logic of the world-economy prevails whereas at the level of politics a state-centred logic of the world-system prevails. However, as the world-economy is basically still explicable only in terms of national economies (countries of the core, semiperiphery and periphery), Chase-Dunn's formulation largely reproduces the problems of Wallerstein's state-centrist analysis.

There is, therefore, no distinctively 'global' dimension in the world-systems model apart from the inter-national focus that it has always emphasized. Wallerstein himself rarely uses the word 'globalization'. For him, the *economics* of the model rests on the inter-national division of labour that distinguishes core, semiperiphery and periphery countries. The *politics* are mostly bound up with antisystemic movements and 'superpower struggles'. And the *cultural*, insofar as it is dealt with at all, covers debates about the 'national' and the 'universal' and the concept of 'civilization(s)' in the social sciences. Many critics are not convinced that the world-systems model, usually considered to be 'economistic' (that is, too locked into economic factors) can deal with cultural issues adequately. Wolff tellingly comments on the way in which the concept of 'culture' has been inserted into Wallerstein's world-system model: 'An economism which gallantly switches its attentions to the operations of culture is still economism' (in King ed., 1991, p.168). Wallerstein's attempts to theorize 'race', nationality and ethnicity in terms of what he refers to as different types of 'peoplehood' in the world-system (Wallerstein, 1991) might be seen as a move in the right direction, but few would argue that cultural factors are an important part of the analysis.

While it would be fair to say that there are various remarks and ideas that do try to take the world-systems model beyond state-centrism⁵, any

⁵ For example, research on the idea of commodity chains, networks of labour, production and marketing of goods, has shifted attention away from national economies to global forces, to some extent (see Gereffi in Sklair, ed. 1994, chapter 11).

conceptions of the global that world-system theorists have tend to be embedded in the world-economy based on the system of nation-states. The 'global' and the 'inter-national' are generally used interchangeably by world-systems theorists. This is certainly one possible use of 'global' but it seems quite superfluous, given that the idea of the 'inter-national' is so common in the social science literature. Whatever the fate of the world-systems approach, it is unlikely that ideas of globalization would have spread so quickly and deeply in sociology without the impetus it gave to looking at the whole world.

2. Global Culture Model

A second model of globalization derives specifically from research on the 'globalization of culture'. The global culture approach focuses on the problems that a homogenizing mass media-based culture poses for national identities. As we shall see below, this is complementary to, rather than in contradiction with, the global society approach, which focuses more on ideas of an emerging global consciousness and their implications for global community, governance and security.

This is well illustrated in the collection of articles in book-form from the journal *Theory, Culture and Society* (TCS) edited by Featherstone (1990) under the title *Global Culture*. TCS has brought together groups of like-minded theorists through the journal and conferences, which has resulted in an institutional framework and an intellectual critical mass for the development of a culturalist approach to globalization. Of the writers associated with TCS who have made notable contributions to this effort, Robertson—who has been credited with introducing the term globalization into sociology (Waters 1995, p.2)—is probably the most influential.

Although these researchers cannot be identified as a school in the same way as world-system researchers can be, their works do constitute a relatively coherent whole. First, they tend to prioritize the cultural over the political and/or the economic. Second, there is a common interest in the question of how individual and/or national identity can survive in the face of an emerging 'global culture'.

A distinctive feature of this model is that it problematises the existence of 'global culture', as a reality, a possibility or a fantasy. This is based on the very rapid growth that has taken place over the last few decades in the

scale of the mass media of communication and the emergence of what Marshall McLuhan famously called 'the global village'. The basic idea is that the spread of the mass media, especially television, means that everyone in the world can be exposed to the same images, almost instantaneously. This, the argument goes, turns the whole world into a sort of 'global village'.

Of considerable interest to sociologists theorizing and researching globalization is the distinctive contribution of anthropologists to these debates. Friedman, a Swedish anthropologist, argues, for example, that: 'Ethnic and cultural fragmentation and modernist homogenization are not two arguments, two opposing views of what is happening in the world today, but two constitutive trends of global reality. The dualist centralized world of the double East-West hegemony is fragmenting, politically, and culturally, but the homogeneity of capitalism remains as intact and as systematic as ever' (in Featherstone 1990:311). While not all would agree either that capitalism remains intact and systematic or that it is, in fact, the framework of globalization, the fragmentation of 'the double East-West hegemony' is beyond doubt. Ideas such as hybridization and creolization have been proposed in the effort to try to conceptualize what happens when people and items from different (sometimes, but not always, dominant and subordinate) cultures interact.⁶

Some 'globalization of culture' theorists have also contributed to current debates on postmodernity in which transformations in the mass media and media representations of reality and so-called 'hyperreality' play a central role. Indicative of similar interests is a compilation of articles edited by Albrow and King (1990) which raised several central issues relevant to the ideas of global sociology, global society and globalization, as new problem areas in the social sciences. One important emphasis has been the 'globalization' of sociology itself as a discipline. This connects in some important ways with the debate about the integrity of national cultures in a globalizing world. While the classical sociological theorists, notably Marx, Weber and Durkheim, all tried to generalize about how societies changed and tried to

⁶ See Stuart Hall's chapter 6 in Hall et al. (1992). Also relevant here are Appadurai's five dimensions of global cultural flows: ethnoscapas, mediascapas, technoscapas, financiescapas,

establish some universal features of social organization, none of them saw the need to theorize on the global level. This connects in some important ways with the debate about the integrity of national cultures in a globalizing world, and particularly the influence of 'Western' economic, political, military and cultural forms on non-Western societies.

Globo-localism

A subset of the global culture approach, characterised as 'globo-localism', derives from a group of scholars from various countries and social science traditions whose main concern is to try to make sense of the multifaceted and enormously complex web of local-global relations. There is a good deal of overlap between this and the 'globalization of culture' model, but the globo-local researchers tend to emphasize the 'territorial' dimension.

This view has been actively developed within the International Sociological Association (ISA). The ISA 12th World Congress of Sociology in Madrid in the 1990 was organized around the theme 'Sociology for One World: Unity and Diversity'. Mlinar (ed., 1992) reports that 'the issue of globalization was readily accepted' and his edited volume of papers from the conference illustrates the variety of issues raised in Madrid. The 1994 ISA Congress in Bielefeld, Germany, continued the theme under the title: 'Contested Boundaries and Shifting Solidarities' and again discussions of globalization were quite prominently featured on the agenda, and the 1998 Conference in Montreal continues the trend. It is not surprising that globalization and territory attracted attention, for in the background to the 1990 and 1994 conferences the wars in the former Yugoslavia were raging (Mlinar himself is from Slovenia, formerly part of Yugoslavia) and, of course, the first shocks of the end of the communist state system were giving way to new territorial issues created by an explosive mix of local and global forces.

If Mlinar is a European progenitor of the globo-local model, then the American progenitor is Alger (1988) who developed the concept of the 'local-global nexus'. There is no single common theoretical position in the work of Mlinar, Alger and the others involved in this enterprise. What unites them is the urge to theorize and research questions of what happens to *territorial identities* (within and across countries) in a globalizing world. Thus, it is part of the more general global culture model, but with a distinct territorial focus.

The main research question for all these writers is the autonomy of local cultures in the face of an advancing 'global culture'. Competing claims of local cultures against the forces of 'globalization' have forced themselves onto the sociological, cultural and political agendas all over the world. This is largely continuous with the focus of the third globalization model, based on the idea of global society.

3. Global Society Models

Inspiration for this general conception of globalization is often located in the pictures of planet earth sent back by space explorers. A classic statement of this was the report of Apollo XIV astronaut Edgar Mitchell in 1971:

It was a beautiful, harmonious, peaceful-looking planet, blue with white clouds, and one that gave you a deep sense...of home, of being, of identity. It is what I prefer to call instant global consciousness.⁷

Had astronaut Mitchell penetrated a little through the clouds, he would also have seen horrific wars in Vietnam and other parts of Asia, bloody repression by various dictatorial regimes in Africa and Latin America, dead and maimed bodies as a result of sectarian terrorism in Britain and Ireland, as well as a terrible toll of human misery from hunger, disease, drug abuse and carnage on roads all round the world as automobile cultures intensified their own peculiar structures of globalization. Nevertheless, some leading globalization theorists, for example Giddens (1991) and Robertson (1992), do attribute great significance to ideas like 'global awareness' and 'planetary consciousness'.

Historically, global society theorists argue that the concept of world or global society has become a believable idea only in the modern age and, in particular, science, technology, industry and universal values are increasingly creating a twentieth century world that is different from any past age. The globalization literature is full of discussions of the decreasing power and significance of the nation-state and the increasing significance (if not actually

⁷ This is quoted in many different places. My source is, significantly, from the back page of the 25th Anniversary Issue of *Earthmatters*, the magazine of Friends of the Earth, UK. The quote is superimposed on a very cloudy map of a rather polluted planet earth.

power) of supra-national and global institutions and systems of belief. Ideas of space-time distancing (see Giddens, 1991) and of time-space compression (see Harvey, 1989) illustrate how processes of globalization compress, stretch and deepen space-time for people all over the world thus creating some of the conditions for a global society.

In his attempt to order the field of globalization studies, Spybey (1996) contrasts the view that 'modernity is inherently globalizing' (Giddens, 1991, p.63) with the view that globalization predates modernity (Robertson, 1992). While Spybey comes down in favour of Giddens thesis that globalization is best conceptualized as 'reflexive modernization', he is less clear about why these differences matter and, in the end, as with so many debates in the social sciences, the main protagonists seem to be saying more or less the same things in rather different languages. However, it is important to establish whether globalization is a new name for a relatively old phenomenon (which appears to be the argument of Robertson), or whether it is relatively new, a phenomenon of late modernity (the argument of Giddens) or whether it is very new and primarily a consequence of post-1960s capitalism (the argument of Sklair). Why does this matter? It matters because if we want to understand our own lives and the lives of those around us, in our families, communities, local regions, countries, supra-national regions and, ultimately how we relate to the global, then it is absolutely fundamental that we are clear about the extent to which the many different structures within which we live are the same in the most important respects as they have been or are different. Two critics, in their attempt to demonstrate that globalization is a myth because the global economy does not really exist, argue that there is 'no fundamental difference between the international submarine telegraph cable method of financial transactions [of the early twentieth century] and contemporary electronic systems (Hirst and Thompson, 1996, p.197). They are entirely mistaken. The fundamental difference is, precisely, in the way that the electronics revolution (a post-1960s phenomenon) has transformed the quantitative possibilities of transferring cash and money capital into qualitatively new forms of corporate and personal financing, entrepreneurship and, crucially, the system of credit on which the global culture and ideology of consumerism largely rests. Some globalization theorists argue forcefully that these phenomena are all new and fundamental for understanding not only what is happening in the rich countries, but in

social groups anywhere who have a part to play in this global system. In this sense the idea of a global society is a very provocative one but, while it is relatively easy to establish empirically the objective dimensions of globalization as they involve the large majority of the world's population, the idea of a global society based on subjective relationships to globalization, planetary consciousness and the like, is highly speculative.⁸

There appears to be, however, a real psychological need for many writers to believe in the possibilities of a global society (which I share).⁹ As McGrew (1992) shows, this theme is elaborated by scholars grappling with the apparent contradictions between globalization and local disruption and strife based on ethnic and other particularistic loyalties. It is in this type of approach that a growing appreciation of the ethical problems of globalization is particularly to be found. The reason for this is simple: now that humankind has the capacity to destroy itself through war and toxic accidents of various types, a democratic and just human society on the global level, however utopian, seems to be the best long-term guarantee of the continued survival of humanity (Held 1995).

4. Global Capitalism Model

A fourth model of globalization locates the dominant global forces in the structures of an ever-more globalizing capitalism (for example, Ross and Trachte 1990, Sklair 1995, McMichael 1996; see also Robinson 1996). While all of these writers and others who could be identified with this approach develop their own specific analyses of globalization, they all strive towards a concept of the 'global' that involves more than the relations between nation-states and state-centrist explanations of national economies competing against each other.

Ross and Trachte focus specifically on capitalism as a social system which is best analyzed on three levels, namely the level of the internal logic of the system (inspired by Marx and Adam Smith), the structural level of

⁸. I take this argument further in the section on 'Globalization in Everyday Life' in Sklair (forthcoming).

⁹. For example, Strauss and Falk argue 'For a Global People's Assembly' in the *International Herald Tribune*, (14 November 1997), a publication that advertises itself as the newspaper for global elites!

Table 1 – The Transnational Capitalist Class

TRANSNATIONAL PRACTICES	LEADING INSTITUTIONS	INTEGRATING AGENTS
economic sphere transnational capital; International capital; State capital	economic forces Global TNCs; World Bank, IMF, BIS; State TNCs	Global Business Elite
political sphere TNC executives, Globalizing bureaucrats, Politicians and professionals; regional blocs; Emerging transnational states	political forces Global business organization, Open- door agencies, WTO, Parties and lobbies; EU, NAFTA, ASEAN; UN, NGOs	Global Political Elite
culture-ideology sphere Consumerism; Transnational neo-liberalism	culture-ideology forces Shops, media; Think tanks, elite social movements	Global Cultural Elite

historical development and the level of the specific social formation, or society. They explain the deindustrialization of some of the heartland regions of capitalism and the transformations of what we still call the Third World in these terms and argue that the globalization of the capitalist system is deeply connected to the capitalist crises of the 1970s and after (oil price shocks, rising unemployment, and increasing insecurity as the rich countries experience problems in paying for their welfare states). This leads them to conclude that: 'We are only at the beginning of the global era' (Ross and Trachte, 1990, p.230).

Sklair proposes a more explicit model of the global system based on the concept of *transnational practices*, practices that originate with non-state actors and cross state borders. They are analytically distinguished in three spheres: economic, political and cultural-ideological. Each of these practices is primarily, but not exclusively, characterized by a major institution. The *transnational corporation* (TNC) is the most important institution for economic transnational practices; the *transnational capitalist class* (TCC) for political transnational practices; and the *culture-ideology of consumerism* for transnational cultural-ideological practices (Sklair 1995). The research agenda of this theory is concerned with how TNCs, transnational capitalist classes and the culture-ideology of consumerism operate to transform the world in terms of the global capitalist project.

In global system theory the TCC acts as a 'global ruling class'. While the empirical evidence to support this argument is as yet in a very embryonic phase, Table 1 suggests how the TCC fits into the global system in terms of its economic base, its leading institutions and its integrating agents.

The culture-ideology of consumerism prioritizes the exceptional place of consumption and consumerism in contemporary capitalism, increasing consumption expectations and aspirations without necessarily ensuring the income to buy. The extent to which economic and environmental constraints on the private accumulation of capital challenge the global capitalist project in general and its culture-ideology of consumerism in particular, is a central issue for global system theory (Sklair in Redclift and Benton 1994; see also Durning 1992).

McMichael (1996) focuses on the issue of Third World development and provides both theoretical and empirical support for the thesis that globalization is a qualitatively new phenomenon and not simply a quantitative expansion of older trends. He contrasts two periods. First, the 'Development Project' (late 1940s to early 1970s), when all countries tried to develop their national economies with the help of international development agencies and institutions. The second period he labels the 'Globalization Project' (1980s onwards), when development is pursued through attempts to integrate economies into a globalized world market, and the process is directed by a public-private coalition of 'Global Managers'. He explains:

As parts of national economies became embedded more deeply in global enterprise through commodity chains, they weakened as national units and strengthened the reach of the global economy. This situation was not unique to the 1980s, but the mechanisms of the debt regime institutionalized the power and authority of global management within states' very organization and procedures. This was the turning point in the story of development. (McMichael 1996, p.135)

This contribution to the debate is notable for its many telling empirical examples of the effects of globalization on Third World communities.

To these writers on globalization and capitalism we can add other Marxist and Marx-inspired scholars who see capitalism as a global system, but do not have any specific concepts of globalization. The most important of these is the geographer, David Harvey, whose Marxist analysis of modernity and postmodernity is significant for the attempt to build a bridge between the

debates around economic and cultural globalization (Harvey, 1989, especially chapter 15).

SUMMING-UP THE APPROACHES.

Each of the four approaches to globalization has its own distinctive strengths and weaknesses. The world-system model tends to be economistic (minimizing the importance of political and cultural factors), but as globalization is often interpreted in terms of economic actors and economic institutions, this does seem to be a realistic approach. The globalization of culture model, on the other hand, tends to be culturalist (minimizing economic factors), but as much of the criticism of globalization comes from those who focus on the negative effects of homogenizing mass media and marketing on local and indigenous cultures, the culturalist approach has many adherents. The world society model tends to be both optimistic and all-inclusive, an excellent combination for the production of world-views, but less satisfactory for social science research programmes. Finally, the global capitalism model, by prioritising the global capitalist system and paying less attention to other global forces, runs the risk of appearing one-sided. However, the question remains: how important is that 'one side' (global capitalism)?¹⁰

RESISTANCES TO GLOBALIZATION

Globalization is often seen in terms of impersonal forces wreaking havoc on the lives of ordinary and defenceless people and communities. It is not coincidental that interest in globalization over the last two decades has been accompanied by an upsurge in what has come to be known as New Social Movements (NSM) research (Ray 1993, Spybey 1996, chapter 7, Sklair 1998b). NSM theorists, despite their substantial differences, argue that the traditional response of the labour movement to global capitalism, based on class politics, has generally failed, and that a new analysis based on identity politics (of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age, community, belief systems) is

¹⁰ Today, more or less every specialism in the social sciences has its 'globalization' perspective, for example, globalization of law, social welfare, crime, labour and politics. Among the most important substantive issues, widely discussed by globalization researchers inside and outside the four approaches outlined above, are global environmental change, gender and globalization, global cities and globalization and regionalization, discussed in Sklair (forthcoming).

necessary to mount effective resistance to sexism, racism, environmental damage, warmongering, capitalist exploitation and other forms of injustice.

The globalization of identity politics involves the establishment of global networks of people with similar identities and interests outside the control of international, state and local authorities. There is a substantial volume of research and documentation on such developments in the women's, peace and environmental movements, some of it in direct response to governmental initiatives (for example, alternative and NGO organization shadowing official United Nations and other conferences) but most theorists and activists tend to operate under the slogan: think global, act local (Ekins, 1992).

The main challenges to global capitalism in the economic sphere have also come from those who 'think global and act local'. This normally involves disrupting the capacity of TNCs and global financial institutions to accumulate private profits at the expense of their workforces, their consumers and the communities which are affected by their activities. An important part of economic globalization today is the increasing dispersal of the manufacturing process into many discrete phases carried out in many different places. Being no longer so dependent on the production of one factory and one workforce gives capital a distinct advantage, particularly against the strike weapon which once gave tremendous negative power to the working class. Global production chains can be disrupted by strategically planned stoppages, but these generally act more as inconveniences than as real weapons of labour against capital. The international division of labour and its corollary, the globalization of production, builds flexibility into the system so that not only can capital migrate anywhere in the world to find the cheapest reliable productive sources of labour but also few workforces can any longer decisively 'hold capital to ransom' by withdrawing their labour. At the level of the production process, globalizing capital has all but defeated labour. In this respect, the global organization of the TNCs and allied institutions like globalizing government agencies and the World Bank have, so far, proved too powerful for the local organization of labour and communities.

Nevertheless, the global capitalists, if we are to believe their own propaganda, are continuously beset by opposition, boycott, legal challenge and moral outrage from the consumers of their products and by disruptions from their workers. There are also many ways to be ambivalent or hostile

about global capitalism and cultures and ideologies of consumerism, some of which have been successfully exploited by the 'Green' movement (see Mander and Goldsmith, eds. 1996).

The issue of democracy is central to the advance of the forces of globalization and the practices and the prospects of social movements that oppose them, both local and global. The rule of law, freedom of association and expression, freely contested elections, as minimum conditions and however imperfectly sustained, are as necessary in the long run for mass market based global consumerist capitalism as they are for alternative social systems.¹¹

CONCLUSION

This account of the state of globalization studies to date has focused on what distinguishes global from inter-national forces, processes and institutions. It is almost exclusively based on the European and North American literature and it does not preclude the possibility of other and quite different conceptions of globalization being developed elsewhere. Despite the view, particularly evident in the accounts of 'global culture' theorists that globalization is more or less the same as Westernization or Americanization or McDonaldization (Ritzer, 1995), more and more critics are beginning to question this one-way traffic bias in the globalization literature. This critique is well-represented in the empirical cases and analytical points of those who are 'Interrogating Theories of the Global' (in King ed., 1991, chapter 6) and the work of African and Asian scholars represented in Albrow and King (eds. 1990), all of whom provide some necessary correctives to European-North American orthodoxies. These scholars, and others, are doing important research relevant for the study of globalization, and their work does not necessarily fit into the four approaches identified above. It is very likely that an introduction to globalization studies to be written ten years from now will reflect non-Western perspectives much more strongly. Nevertheless, although of quite recent vintage, it is undeniable that globalization

¹¹ I say in the long-run. In the short-term, authoritarian regimes can ignore demands for democratization and push forward consumerist market reforms. It is by no means obvious that everyone in the world prefers 'democracy' to 'economic prosperity', if that is the choice they are persuaded to accept.

as a theoretical issue and an object of research, is now firmly on the agenda of the social sciences.

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