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Borders of Global Theory – Reflections from Within and Without

Edited by Barrie Axford

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Contents

Global Theory – To be Continued

Introduction: Global Scholarship from Within and Without

Barrie Axford

"Where do we go from here?" Whether from parvenu or more established scholarship this cry is familiar regardless of the field of study. The scholarship of globalization – or more tellingly, of the global – is no exception. For the field of global studies is a welter of contrasting positions on the generation and nature of knowledge about concepts with a global root. Overall, it remains highly contested science (Nederveen Pieterse, 2013; Globalizations, 2013; Axford, 2013a and b). Even as I write the world turns; and as it turns so, on the face of it, does the remit and temper of global scholarship. But here things get a little messy, in part because we are all mired in, though also informed by, knowledge traditions that are bounded in their address to imagined and material worlds; in part because we cannot agree on what constitute world-changing moments, periods and forces.

Out of this wrack a neophiliac's fervour might seem utterly germane to the pursuit of more ambitious global scholarship premised on new knowledge and governed by new rules of engagement. On the other hand, it might smack of a mentality that obsesses only on the next big thing (Rosenberg, 2005). In what follows, I offer some thoughts on the state of global studies and identify what seem to me to be exemplary factors in the construction of knowledge about the global. Please note, I am not claiming anything resembling complete coverage of a rich and varied field and my take on the theme addressed by this volume may appear idiosyncratic. Moreover, in this introduction I do not reference the contributions that follow, all written by authors whose research has fruitfully informed study of the global in recent times. That privilege is left to Jan Aart Scholte, himself one of the foremost commentators in this field, in his end-piece to the issue.

The transformative motif in global studies – for sceptics, always too much in thrall to the promise of the new – has attracted its share of praise and opprobrium, along with what many commentators take as its less salubrious bedfellow, hyperglobalism. Both concepts do not quite fall into Ulrich Beck's category of zombie concepts, but they are much less abroad of late (2007). Indeed, when gauging the temper of scholarship since the late 1980s, one might incline to the view that, after a frenzied dalliance with hyperglobalism and an on-off romance with transformationalist thinking (of which stance I am a cautious devotee), a

jobbing skepticism has pretty much held sway. This despite the contrary arguments of academic curmudgeons (I use the term with some approbation) like Justin Rosenberg (2005) that "global theorists" successfully, though mistakenly, conjured an edifice built on sand, all without firm conceptual foundations and empirical bricks. We might agree that while the global and the rise of global studies and global knowledge has been a problem shift in the annals of social-scientific endeavor, to date it has not been a game changer.

Indeed, the transformationalist versus sceptic motif continues to play in academic discourses, if more sporadically. In popular and populist rhetoric it still conjures a good deal of vigour, whether on the part of those "left behind" by globalization or, *pace* the UK after Brexit, those destined to reap the rewards of an imagined (imaginative) global future. With less panache, but perhaps more accuracy, the Mackinsey Global Institute predicts that we are experiencing a new wave of global becoming, of either liberating or oppressive globalization, this time in the guise of a digital globality (McKinsey Global Institute, 2016; Morozov, 2013). Far from globalization having stopped at some point in the past twenty years – or never begun, as some sceptics favour – the argument put by supporters of this thesis is that the world is now more interconnected than ever, and increasingly conscious of that state. Digital culture has become incessant, ubiquitous and global.

Echoing past faults on how to construe this development it is still presented by Mckinsey as an economic phenomenon mustering a "datafied" global economy, based on data flows that transmit information, ideas and innovation. Global flows of data comprise information searches, one-to one and one-to-many communications, transactions, video and intra-organizational traffic among governments, business enterprises and other non-state actors. Individuals too are participating in global and glocal networks directly and promiscuously, using digital platforms for leisure, to learn, to combat or guard against illness, find work and build inter-personal relationships. In the Internet of Things (IoT) data speaks only to data, mediated by smart machines; there are even "bot" wars. In turn this claim spills over into debate about the posthuman features of a new global cultural economy, where communication technologies produce an indifferent globality of machines and the hidden "agency" of algorithms (Harari, 2017). Sometimes, there is a tendency to play down what might pass as a moment of putative transformation by treating it as no more than another frisson in the unfolding of mediatized capitalism (Ampuja, 2011), or else drown it in the cacophony of talk about the end of globalization; for some presaged in the illiberalism of Brexit, in Trumpism, with its rejection of the global liberal order in favour of a latter-day Jackso-

nianism, and in shades of the down-home populisms seen from Marseilles to Moscow.

But overall there is a built-in social-scientific caution about the threat or promise of ascribed or predicted new times, whatever their hue, and whether they require changes to the ways we make social theory and conduct social analysis. Notwithstanding frequent upheavals in the phenomenal world, there is even coyness and, occasionally, outright hostility, to ascribing novelty to the temper of what is happening around us. Global scholarship has always attracted a weight of skepticism of the *plus ca change* variety when it essays something more than a description of things as they are, and where it ventures too far beyond the confines of methodological nationalism.

Yet there is also cause for celebration because, apart from the odd frisson, the academy has indeed moved on from the hackneyed trinity of hyperglobalism, transformationalism and skepticism; and profitably so. Let's take one example of this shift in address to the global; one that resonates with some of the contributions to this volume, before further gauging the temper of current scholarship. Students of the global have been much exercised of late by the idea of the *anthropocene* as the first period of significant human impact on the earth's geology, climate and ecosystems (Crutzen, 2002). Even at its most restrained this focus demonstrates a proper regard for truly planetary forces and processes, and encourages a research agenda based on what looks like overwhelming global evidence that humans alter atmospheric, geological, hydrological, biospheric and other earth system processes. That humans are culpable in the seemingly willful destruction of planetary resources is now taken as good science. What is of particular interest to the social sciences is that on this reckoning there is, and can be, no hard science of globality, because any notion of objectivity is always suborned by "the presence of humans in the phenomena so described" (Latour, 2014, 2).

But social science has different ways of ascribing agency and its role in social constitution. And if we wanted evidence that this engagement is always contested science, the anthropocentric model articulated by Bernard Latour and many others has itself been challenged in claims that planetary ecology is far from entirely human made (Latour, 2014; Mosca, 2016). Attention to the nonhuman and posthuman features of the planetary future (Kroker, 2014; Benedikter and Giordano, 2011) blurs the distinction between human and nonhuman and subject and object (Chandler, 2015). This is obviously so in a world that is increasingly datafied, and in such a world, global studies – comprising all social and natural sciences, the humanities and some areas of neuro-science – *inter-alia* must address the idea of algorithmic agency and the indifferent glo-

bality of Big Data and the Internet of Things (IoT). As Arthur Kroker opines, with possibly just a shade of hyperbole, this is a world of "information everywhere, connectivity pervasive, bodies augmented and self-monitored by cybernetic systems, perception illuminated, truth a purely phantasmagorical effect, perception coded by media feeds, attention fully wired" (2014,178; Benedikter and Giordano, 2011).

And what about ex-orbitant globality, a notion that raises the perceptual and intellectual game yet another notch (Clark, 2005)? In February 2017, NASA astronomers reported the discovery of a new solar system where life may have evolved. *Trappist – 1*, a dwarf star, has in its orbit seven Earth-like planets (exoplanets) perhaps capable of supporting life (Daily Telegraph Online, February 23 2017). With this information, what Pierre Bourdieu called the "repertoires of possibility" available to students of global constitution are expanded hugely, at least in the long-term; even if the designation "global" ceases to be strictly accurate. Indeed, the very language of "the global" becomes problematic, although that has been true for different reasons throughout its brief period of intellectual celebrity. Should we now talk seriously about cosmos studies, as some commentators have suggested?

As early as 2005, Nigel Clark pointed to the dynamic characteristics of the solar system, galaxy and universe, and developed the idea of an ex-orbitant globality that treats the earth as a system in active and ongoing interchange with its cosmic environment (see also Clark, 2016). Meanwhile, *SpaceX*, the rocket development company plans to send two tourists around the moon in 2018 on a week-long "cruise". Moon tourism – certainly moon settlement – may well become the early, if banal, face of extra-global modalities; new states of exception perhaps – re-defining aspects of sociality, the meaning of social ties and the spatial confines of intimacy, trust and security. And here I offer a last example, perhaps more poignant than the others. *Mars One*, a largely privately financed mission to Mars by 2024 aims to send four volunteers to begin the human population of the Red Planet. Candidates for this mission know that they will never return from that journey and will be stranded in the desert of deep space.

But the thing is, that Mars is already within the communicative compass of the Internet, having a satellite in stationary orbit that exchanges data with similar machines orbiting Earth. As Laurence Scott muses, " a miracle has already occurred: that long-familiar dusty twinkle in the night sky has been hooked into the network" (2016, 208). Of course, Anthony Giddens prefigured such developments more than two decades ago when consigning the conceptual meat of globalization-as-process to the notion of space-time distanciation; though his address was resolutely terrestrial (1990). The *SpaceX* scenario, and

perhaps *Mars One,* along with any kind of personal relationship entirely mediated by digital technology ceases to be the stuff of science-fiction and more and more the grain of the quotidian. And in the case of extra-planetary travel and settlement, the concept of "glocal" also takes on a whole different flavor, while the idea of ex-orbitant globality itself works against the particular – and rather narrow – grain of skepticism that continues to inform accounts of terrestrial globalization (Roudometof, 2016).

Now, you may think that any such focus or prescription is frivolous, or requires too great a dose of creative and extrapolative thinking to give it legs. I raise it here in part to demonstrate the dynamism, but also the promise, of global scholarship. After all, this issue of *Protosociology* is a set of reflections on what we construe as "within" and "without" the remit of global theory, and that includes recognition of other-than-human influences on the constitution of globality, as well as the ex-orbitant variety. So, it is appropriate to locate it as an intriguing, possibly important, intellectual riff in the short history of a profitably contested field. An extra-planetary, a cosmic and even a posthuman, dimension to global studies has begun to inflect the temper and remit of what still musters as a determinedly terrestrial scholarship moving largely to disciplinary impulses and national academic traditions about knowledge creation, concept devlopment and empirical focus (Kamola, 2013).

In that mostly terrestrial scholarship the salience of the global is, as Jan Nederveen Pieterse opines, a reflection of "the growing pace, scope and intensity of global relations and effects" This is a tautology of course, but obligingly true nonetheless (2013, 2). The field of global studies with both theoretical and empirical purchase has been growing apace because of the "exponential growth of global relations, dynamics and problems; it is a response to ramifying, intensifying and deepening processes of globalization" (ibid). But that is not to say the condition of globality – always a more nuanced concept in the lexicon of global studies – is simply the sum or *telos* of linear processes of globalization. Globalization is never – hardly ever – just mere connection; even if connectivity is a necessary staple in any theory of global constitution. Globalization seen as connectivity is a very inclusive concept, but connection and exchange, while necessary, are not sufficient indicators of globality. The latter reside in both practices and consciousness, while the very idea of institutionalization points to those cultural and organizational features of social ontology that frame action and consciousness.

Usefully, Nederveen Pieterse identifies what he calls three "levels" of global knowledge. The first is amenable to both hyperglobalist cant and claims that globalization is dead and buried. It consists of the sprawling arrays of data col-

lected and curated by divers actors – governments, corporations, international organizations, epistemic communities, security pacts and the like – for all kinds of purposes. In this warp, the graph of globalization rises and falls depending on trend and circumstance, and possibly in line with greater world-historical forces. This level comprises the raw data of global studies and is largely untheorized, while carrying great clout in the polemics of journalists, free market politicians and business people, along with subalterns previously referenced and "left behind" by the juggernaut of market capitalism and the global success of cosmopolitans; those "winners" that David Goodhart arrestingly calls "anywhere" people. (Goodhart, 2017).

Nederveen Pieterse's second level of global knowledge comprises studies of globalization still largely organized by disciplinary fiat, sometimes glossed with ideological or normative agendas. What globalization is and how, or whether, it should be studied is governed by these disciplines and sub-disciplines and the temper of dominant (if passing) schools of thought within them. For example, neo-Marxist thinking, notably out of critical international political economy (IPE), until recently dominated the way international relations as a discipline has approached the study of globalization, equating the latter with the endless search for accumulation as manifested in the theory and practices of neo-liberalism and neo-imperialism. Despite the influence of neo-Gramscian thinking on this corpus, which goes some way to round out hard-nosed economistic interpretations of social change, the overall effect has been to vitiate the pursuit of a global scholarship that is multidimensional (as well as interdisciplinary) and – Gramsci notwithstanding – that gives explanatory credence to culture as a feature of social constitution.

The third level identified by Nederveen Pieterse is more of a hortatory challenge, a call to arms in pursuit of a global scholarship that is multidimensional and interdisciplinary; a mantra we all endorse, but seldom achieve. He proposes the need to transcend the national frame of reference; that global studies must be multi-centric and thus embrace the critique of Eurocentrism and orientalism, and that there must be proper address to key notions such as *glocalization*, for too long neglected or underplayed in simple models of globalization as a dialectic of domination and resistance (Roudometof, 2016). He also counsels a scholarship that abjures rigid micro-macro distinctions and is critical of other convenient analytical dualities: local-global, state-society and, of course, agency-structure, that simplify complex social processes.

Finally, this scholarship must be kaleidoscopic in its coverage and multi-perspectival, addressing global issues from the standpoints of north and south, east and west, national and local, collective and personal identities. Posed thus, a

rule of thumb for the remit of global theory or global scholarship, is that nothing is ruled out provided that the subject or theme carries global content in the sense that it addresses the idea of the global through the lens of individual and collective experience and how, if ever, these mesh; of the relationalities between local or mobile subjects and more encompassing structures of materiality and meaning; and all with one eye on history.

Much of this is unexceptionable, if at a rather high level of generality and prescription. What it demonstrates, I believe, is that interdsciplinarity, multidimensional and multi-perspectival thinking are three of the key rules of engagement for global scholarship. Hard to deliver and perhaps to conceptualize, these speak to a scholarship not in thrall to boundaries. Interestingly, if with some measure of paradox, in a recent article, Michael Burawoy mounts a defence of public sociology as a way of combating what he sees as the depredations of a hegemonic knowledge order, the claims of western "universalization" of knowledge and the ingrained prejudices of national sociologies. At the same time he disparages the "domination" of economics and political science in framing the temper of a global social science, or a social science of the global (2016, 958). Burawoy's argument is couched as part of a wider strategic mission seen in some areas of research on global constitution and on globalization – Wallersteinian world-systems analysis is anther contender – to effect a scholarship of engagement around key themes and issues that lay bare the constitution and sustenance of hegemonic orders and depict the global condition as playing out generic and particular mobilizations of bias.

The burden of Nederveen Pieterse's criticisms of existing knowledge on the global can be distilled thus: taking the academic exploration of globalization / globality seriously in cognitive, affective and evaluative terms means addressing the variety of the human condition globally and accepting that what hyperglobalists once thought was an ineluctable process of secular integration is in fact a tortuous dialectic of sameness and difference. Of course, his prescription is not new and the history of ideas is full of reflections couched in pretty much the same light. Cosmopolitan thinking, certainly in its ethical and transcultural variants – and even Ulrich Beck's insistence that a cosmopolitan impulse should replace the focus on globalization – along with periodic warnings of a clash of civilizations (Beck, 2007; Huntington 1996) – all traffic visions of a universal, westernized modernity, with, and occasionally without, its secular component. Something resembling a cosmopolitan thesis also finds expression in classical thought from the Stoics and in some Muslim scholarship (Casanova, 2011).

A world arrayed as multiple centres and as epistemologically decentred is

a clear advance on Western / Eurocentric accounts of global dynamics. But that said, we do have to look closer to assess the gains made and to identify remaining problems. Once scholars have parted company with theories of convergence and linearity and with Western dominated models of global development, the difficulty resides not only in being able to tell a story with multiple centres and multiple narratives, but in forging an account that sometimes has no centre at all (Crossley, 2008). Without doubt a good starting point is to accept the quotidian reality of different global narratives, but in doing so scholars must not assume that global history, global processes and global events, play to all these narratives equally. If there is an intellectual and even moral wrong to be righted, its prosecution is not best served by ignoring the ways in which western modernity – the western cultural account – has, in Fouad Ajami's stark expression, cut deep furrows across the face of civilizations and other collective identities; indeed, other modernities (Ajami, 1993).

It is here that the multiple modernities thesis carries analytical weight, because what exercises students of the genre is very much a summary of global scholarship's current preoccupations (Preyer and Krause, 2017). These include the fragmenting of US hegemony and the rise of successor powers, or none; the emergence of a more fluid multi-polarity and the crisis or transformative potential in the existing order of (Western) modernity, including the hollowing out of liberal democracy. In all this, modernity remains seminal unfinished business for research on globalization (Browning, 2011). But many accounts continue to treat the latter as either the global spread of western secular modernity glossed as a universal process of modernization and human development, or as a facet of the particular dynamism of the Judeo-Christian tradition delivered through American foreign policy and cultural economy (Casanova, 2011; Wohlrab-Sahra and Burchardt, 2012). Even where inroads into this account have been made, for example by post-colonial theory and the multiple modernities research agenda – thus bringing non-Western perspectives closer to the mainstream of debate – profound issues remain.

Because of this, it is hard to cavil at sentiments found in an article in *International Political Sociology* a few years ago (Kamola, 2013) that many scholars writing on globalization find it easy to accept some things as inherently – maybe "obviously" is a better word – global (the Internet, McDonald's, etc.) but not others (Kamola says genocide in Rwanda, refugee camps, etc.) Like Burawoy, Kamola's argument here is that who is positioned to designate what is "global," and thus what constitutes firm ground for a theory of globalization, is shaped by a skewed political economy of knowledge production, not least between scholars in the global north and the global south. Casanova makes the related

and entirely cogent point about the assumptions of much globalization theory where secularization parades as *a*, perhaps *the*, analytical and normative centrepiece (2011). In cosmopolitan thinking (Archibugi, 2008) and even in some particularist versions of the flawed and fragile triumph of western civilization religion and religious identity are either neglected as a source of world-making practices or alternative globalities, or else recognized only as the basis of 'fundamentalist' resistance to the secular ideology of modernity (Appadurai, 2006).

And even if one took the thesis of a universal western modernity seriously as a description of the global condition and a prescription for the good society writ large, some current research still questions the conceptual cornerstones of sociality as conceived by that version of modernity. Writing in 2011, Benedikter and Giordano argue that changes in communications technology are shaping, defining and establishing the future of the globalized social sphere with "increasing pace and impact". Seen from a systemic viewpoint, where this suggests an enactment of process and structures, the overall dynamic comprises a two-fold movement, in which an outer process of transition is joined by an inner transformational drive. They argue that while new social media like Facebook, Twitter and webcams, along with smartphones and iPads change the "outer dimension of how we perceive, interpret and handle our social lives, thus transforming our habits of cultural consumption, contemporary brain and consciousness research are changing the inner dimension of the contemporary social by dramatically re-shaping the self-perception and interpretation of the individual through the findings, cultural distribution and practical applications of neuroscience and neurotechnology" (2011, 14). This two-fold schematic syncs with our remit in this volume to examine global knowledge from the inside out and the outside in. The primary task, they say, now may not be trying to "explain" the meaning(s) of the new developments, but rather to identify an array of crucial questions at the inter- and trans-disciplinary crossroads between the different societal fields, culturo-political trends and scientific disciplines" (ibid, 16).

All this kind of reflection provides an appropriate backdrop to this issue of *Protosociology*. When I bruited this volume the intention was to encourage a diversity of reflection under the broad remit of what now constitutes global theory, from scholars intimately engaged in theoretical and empirical research. I was not looking to compile anything that resembles a representative sample of work being done on global theory, because I am not sure such a device is possible or desirable. Also, I did not want the issue simply to mirror the disciplinary tensions apparent in much scholarship, nor reproduce hackneyed divisions between varieties of hyper-globalists, sceptics and transformationalists. Rather,

I was aiming for a critical engagement with a still contested field that promises (at the least) insights on how the world is being made and on how knowledge about that is generated. Moreover, I was not looking to reprise post-mortems on global theory and on globalization that enjoy a periodic vogue, but did not rule that out as a mode of address for some contributions. The idea of "post-global" social science, or the shift to a glocal or cosmopolitan version clearly invest these debates with a credible liveliness and should be entertained by the broader constituency of researchers. So should injunctions to treat with the cosmos as signifying the absence of limits in social-scientific discourse, and awareness of the non-human and "indifferent" globalities that abound. Other perspectives – gender; and non-Western or post-colonial are serious contenders – each inflect global theory critically and for the better.

If this sounds a little like a free-for-all, I apologise. But it is permissiveness aimed at producing a vibrant, even ground-breaking contribution to the body of reflection on the global, delivered by very respected academics whose own work has often pushed back the boundaries of global research and global theory. I am pleased to report that the contributions that follow have made good on this promise.

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Reflections on "Critical Thinking" in Global Studies

Manfred B. Steger

Abstract

Much of what passes today as "global(ization) theory" falls within the new transdisciplinary framework of "global studies" (GS). GS constitutes an academic space of tension that generates critical investigations into our age as one shaped by the intensifying forces of globalization. Indeed, the young field both embraces and exudes the "global imaginary" – a sense of the social whole that frames our age as one shaped by the forces of globalization. Moreover, few GS scholars would object to the proposition that their field is significantly framed by "critical thinking." But they need to be prepared to respond to a number of questions regarding the nature of their critical enterprise. What, exactly, does critical thinking signify in this context and how is it linked to GS? Do globalization scholars favor specific forms of critical thinking? If so, which types have been adopted and for what purposes? Finally, what forms of internal and external criticism have been leveled against GS itself and how have these objections been dealt with? These four questions provide the guiding framework for these reflections on the significance of critical thinking in GS.

Introduction

Much of what passes today as "global(ization) theory" falls within the transdisciplinary framework of "global studies" (GS). Emerging as a new field of academic inquiry in the late 1990s, GS explores globalization's central dynamics of interconnectivity, reconfiguration of space and time, and enhanced mobility of people, goods, and ideas (Steger 2013). Although globalization has been extensively studied in the social sciences and humanities, it falls outside the established disciplinary framework. It is only of secondary concern in traditional fields organized around different master concepts: "society" in sociology; "resources" and "scarcity" in economics; "culture" in anthropology; "space" in geography; "the past" in history; "power" and "governance" in political science, and so on. By contrast, GS has placed the contested keyword "globalization" at the core of its intellectual enterprise. The rise of GS represents, therefore, a clear sign of the proper academic recognition of the new global interdependencies that cut across all disciplines and geographical scales. Moreover, as the work of leading GS scholars suggests, interconnectivity does not merely

Globality and the Moral Ecology of the World: A Theoretical Exploration

Habibul Haque Khondker

Abstract

The paper argues that the world is facing a condition of moral recession with profound and debilitating consequences in all spheres of life. Highly specialized social sciences are failing to address the issue of the moral conditions in a systematic manner. Differentiation, a master sociological process, has relativized the world to the extent that issues of morality and ethics are assigned to specialists, i.e., theologians and moral philosophers. It is only the extreme cases of inhumanity and moral depravation that bring the moral issues to public attention. Defining the value of life as a key moral value, and discussing the deaths and human sufferings in the seemingly endless wars, the paper draws attention to the need for shared global moral values to underpin a global society.

> "If you want a description of our age, here is one: the civilization of means without ends."
>
> Richard Livingstone (quoted in B. Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter*, 2001)

> "Never before have men had so many reasons for ceasing to slaughter each other. Never before have they had so many reasons for feeling involved in one and the same undertaking."
>
> Raymond Aron, *Politics and History*, 1978, p. 233

Few will disagree that the world circa 2016 is not in a great shape. Not only the ecology of the planet is facing various strains and showing visible scars with rising global temperature and the increase in the emission of harmful Greenhouse gas in the atmosphere, the moral ecology of the world, too, is under strain and remains scarred. The invocation of ecology is to highlight the interconnected nature of the multifarious challenges that beset the planetary society. The endless wars, the sufferings of the people living in the cross-fire of war, the streams of refugees, displacement, economic uncertainty, extreme social inequality, political repression, the overall rise in the number of people

Real Leaps in the Times of the Anthropocene: Failure and Denial and 'Global' Thought

Anna M. Agathangelou

Abstract

The notions of failure and denial are co-constitutive of both "global" theory and social order. Though these concepts have been used to evoke an array of metaphors and images to understand the condition of international relations as a knowledge production site and in relation to other social sciences, they have not been deemed pivotal for much theorizing of world politics' events, including the "success" of a sovereign state, or the subjects and knowledge production of decolonial realities. The article critically assesses how the term failure is used by IR's scholarly community as signifier and analogy and what it signifies and analogizes. It grapples with Bruno Latour's "The Immense Cry Channeled" by Pope Francis and '"Love your Monsters."' It concludes with a discussion of the ethics of critical theory and its emphasis on critique. I problematize its critical moves to lodge racializations in the enslaved and colonized body and body politic of 'failed' states, and the normative projects it bolsters. I also point to its broader social and political implications, including its acknowledging of certain publics at the expense of others and its death limits in times of terror and the Anthropocene. I finally argue for a 'global' decolonizing social analysis that in an Fanonian sense, is a "real leap" as it introduces "invention into existence" by rupturing evolutionary trajectories and linear temporalities (i.e., pure immanence, or transcendentalism).

Introduction: Time out of Joint?

> I am not a prisoner of History. I should not seek there for the meaning of my destiny. I should constantly remind myself that the real leap consists in introducing invention into existence. In the world through which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself.[1]

In 1952, Frantz Fanon wrote in *Black Skins White Masks* that "it seems inappropriate to elaborate the conclusions that the reader will find."[2] And he gives us two facts without elaborating on them: "There is a fact: White men consider themselves superior to black men. There is another fact: Black men want to

1 Franz Fanon, *Black Skin*, (New York: Grove Press, 1952), 229.

2 Fanon, *Black Skin*, 12.

On the Possibility of a Global Political Community: The Enigma of 'Small Local Differences' within Humanity

Heikki Patomäki

Abstract

Is anything like a global political community – and thereby ideals such as global democracy and justice – achievable? This is a key question not only for political theory but also for contemporary political practices. Many political realists believe that humans are essentially tribal beings, or at least will remain so in the foreseeable future. Post-structuralists maintain that historical identities are based on contrasts and oppositions, on the play of negative differences, which is necessary for language to exist. Thus identities must always exclude something. My first point is that it is possible to define our shared identity as humans and earthlings in the context of a cosmic setting. Big History not only frames world history in cosmic terms and imagines a future world community but is also systematically critical of Eurocentrism and other forms of centrism. Second, otherness can also be located either in our own past or, alternatively, in our contemporary being, when seen from a point of view of a possible future position in world history. Third, utilizing the concept of a horizon of moral identification and developing further Todorov's axis of self-other relations, I conclude by outlining a cosmic, geo-historical, relational and ethico-political conception of global identity that is based on both positive and negative elements.

Introduction

Is anything like a global political community – and thereby ideals such as global democracy and justice – achievable? This is a key question not only for political theory but also for contemporary political practices. For instance, a call for global solidarity in the face of rapid global warming (UNDP 2007), which seems ever more urgent in 2017, assumes a shared planetary identity across the currently prevailing differences and divisions. It seems that there can be no solidarity without a common identity at some level of human being. Environmentalists maintain that all humans share an important thing in common, namely planet Earth and its sphere of life, to which we essentially belong.

In contrast, many political realists believe that humans are essentially tribal beings, or at least will remain so in the foreseeable future. This belief may be grounded on anything from speculative philosophical accounts of the human

Geohistory of Globalizations

Peter J. Taylor

Abstract

The social time and space constructs of Manual Castells (network society), Fernand Braudel (capitalism versus markets) Immanuel Wallerstein (TimeSpace) and Jane Jacobs (moral syndromes) are brought together to provide a set of conceptual tools for understanding contemporary globalization. Three successive globalizations are identified and named for their constellations of power: imperial globalization, American globalization, and corporate globalization. These are treated as unique historical products of modern, rampant urbanizations; each globalization is described as an era of great cities with distinctive worldwide networks. Focusing on urban demand, it is suggested that current corporate globalization might elide into a planetary globalization covering both social and environment relations.

The ideas presented in this paper are born from my long held frustration of how much mainstream social science has reacted to contemporary globalization. At its crudest level state-centric ideas are simply 'up-scaled' in an attempt to continue business as usual: national economy, national governance and national civil society become global economy, global governance and global civil society. Even with more sophisticated studies, by starting with the unexamined primacy of the state in framing enquiry, an understanding of globalization is inevitably curtailed. I first appreciated this on reading David Held and his colleagues hugely influential textbook entitled *Global Transformations*. They popularized the notion that there are three tendencies in conceptualizing globalization distinguished by their various views on the position of the state – hyperglobalists, sceptics and transformationalists. Not surprisingly, their argument culminated in discussing 'transformation of state power' (Held et al. 1999 10, 436; Taylor 2000). Does globalization have to be interrogated through state lenses? In this essay I will employ ideas from four scholars whose work transcends conventional state-centrism: Manuel Castells, Fernand Braudel, Immanuel Wallerstein and Jane Jacobs. Their contributions to understanding contemporary society are well known; my contribution is to combine selected parts of their oeuvres in order to inform an interpretation of globalization. As such it is an extension of discussions on their works in my research on cities and reference can be made there for more detailed and extended analysis (Taylor 2013, chapter 2).

Autonomy, Self-determination and Agency in a Global Context

Didem Buhari Gulmez

Abstract

Offering a transdisciplinary study that benefits from the conceptual and theoretical contributions of sociology, political science and international relations, this article focuses on three key notions that shed light on the promise and limitations of the prevailing globalization scholarship. The proposed notions are self-determination, autonomy, and agency, which are often seen as merely antagonistic – if not a 'prey' or victim – to globalization. They are worthy of attention for their common emphasis that rests on the increasingly blurred boundaries underlying the nexus between agent and environment, agent and action, and capability and expectations. Besides, they constitute an important source of inspiration for the rise of critical studies on globalization with a special emphasis on glocalization (Robertson) and world society (Meyer). Focusing on the prevailing global context in which claims to agency, autonomy and self-determination emerge, spread and receive diverse reactions, the study aims to discuss the complexity defining the relationship between homogenizing and heterogenizing, universalizing and parochializing, converging and diverging logics, forces and processes underlying globalization. Overall, the article emphasizes that far from being hostile to global phenomena, self-determination, autonomy, and agency are both the products and key constitutive ingredients of the globalization as we understand it today.

Introductory Remarks

Ending great empires in the past and now challenging the Westphalian system of nation-states, self-determination in general and secessionism in particular, have continuously attracted the attention of students of politics and international relations, sociology, cultural studies, international and domestic law, economics, among others (for example, see Cassese 1995; Quane 1998; Summers 2007; Moltchanova 2009; Hannum 1993; Dahbour 2003.). In spite of its social and political causes and effects, the scholarly discussion of self-determination movements and criteria has been mostly limited to the confines of international law. It is crucial to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the multifaceted question of self-determination from a transdisciplinary perspective that 'brings in' non-legalistic contributions of political science, international relations and sociology with a special emphasis on the current global context.

The Neglect of Beauty: What's In and What's Out of Global Theorising and Why?

Heather Widdows

Abstract:

This paper explores why some issues count as acceptable topics for global ethics and justice and some do not. It argues that over the last few decades a cannon of global ethics and justice has emerged, and that, like other canons, it is prescriptive and exclusionary. It asks why beauty is excluded from the cannon given there are standard ethical and justice concerns which attach to beauty. The paper considers possible reasons for this exclusion, including that beauty is a concern only of the rich and that it is a trivial or minority issue. It argues that underlying and compounding such reasons are discipline-specific reasons which derive from the parent discipline of Philosophy. It concludes that what is in and out of global theorising is a matter of justice itself and one which global theorists should address.

Introduction

In this paper I critically explore what is 'in' and what is 'out' of global justice theorising and argue that the exclusion of certain topics is a matter of justice in itself. Over the last few decades a canon of global ethics and global justice has emerged which standardly includes issues such as climate ethics, trade and poverty, global governance and institutions, and war and conflict. In this paper I look critically at the emerging canon. I argue that the list of standard global ethics and justice topics has become prescriptive and, like other canons, serves to demarcate which topics are to be taken seriously and which are not, and in turn prescribes what can and what cannot be worked on. I will argue that this is problematic for a number of reasons, not least, it tends to serve those who are already established and makes it easier for certain people to succeed and alienates others. I introduce beauty as one neglected topic and suggest that beauty should be a topic in the canon of global justice theorising; first, because it shapes and limits what individuals can be and do, and second, because it raises standard justice concerns.

In order to make this argument I begin, in Part 1, by exploring the canon of global ethics and justice as it has emerged and developed as part of the develop-

Mastery Without Remainder?[1] Connection, Digital Mediatization and the Constitution of Emergent Globalities

Barrie Axford

Abstract

This article approaches the question of what musters, or should muster, as global theory for these times through the lens of mediatization. Emergent globalities – states of global (perhaps glocal) becoming – are seen as constituted by world-making practices that are obviously, perhaps paradigmatically, referenced in processes of digital communication within and across borders. This is no hymn to "mere connection", but a sustained attempt to marry process and consciousness with a proper regard for the vagaries of human interaction with the structures of indifferent technology and indifferent globalities.

Introduction

Let me begin with a normative lament and an aesthetic aside. In a *New York Times* article written in 2012, the cultural observer Sherry Turkle warns, "(w)e live in a technological universe in which we are always communicating. And yet we have sacrificed conversation for mere connection". Her anxiety is a staple of critics who deplore what they see as the debilitating effects of digital culture on social intercourse and civility – in Turkle's case, on the art and joys of conversation – and because it evokes some of the unease felt about the consequences of digital lives more generally.

The normative weight of this dystopia is compelling and depressing. But Turkle's reference to *mere connection* as a way of describing (and decrying) the mechanics of globalization, strikes me as a good starting point for an article on global theory for today's world. Of course, I do not mean to endorse her jeremiad in anything like its entirety. Rather, I am convinced that to understand the vagaries of global constitution, *pace* John Urry, we must employ a theory of connection; though not of "mere" connection and just catalogued exchange (2003). Of axial importance to the ontology of globalization's current moment, – and perhaps across its whole span – is communicative connection.

1 "mastery without remainder" is a quote from Bernadette Baker's valuable and many-layered book on *William James' Sciences of Modernity and Anti-Imperial Discourse"*. It seemed an appropriate title for this piece.

Whither Global Theory?

Jan Aart Scholte

Abstract

After several decades of intensive efforts to theorize the global in contemporary society, what are the endeavour's main accomplishments and future challenges? This article develops five main observations in this regard: (a) that the transdisplinary promise of global theory remains largely elusive; (b) that global thinking might productively give way to transscalar conceptions of social space; (c) that global theory still struggles to move from universalist to transculturalist dispositions; (d) that global theory remains subject to substantial marginalizing knowledge/power hierarchies; and (e) that global studies can further develop an ethico-political role of helping to improve possibilities in actually lived global lives.

Introduction

'Where do we go from here?' asks Barrie Axford in the opening words of this special issue on 'Borders of Global Theory'. This question accompanied me throughout a compelling read of the eight articles. Indeed, the collection is, to the extent that academic prose can be, a page-turner. Unlike the archetypal whodunit, though, this story ends in ambiguity. All eight contributions suggest that future courses of global theory are anything but clear. Hence the editor's invitation to offer a synthesising conclusion is no easy task.

Certainly this special issue – and circumstances of today's surrounding society and politics – convincingly demonstrate the continued relevance of global theory. The articles show that 'globality' and 'globalisation' offer fruitful conceptual framings for critical and creative debates about contemporary social worlds. Meanwhile, outside academe the global fills headlines around climate change, digital communications, disease, employment, financial crises, migration, sports, tourism, and more. As discourse, also, the global is continually resurgent as a touchstone of political contestation, most recently around populist-nationalist movements across several continents. Hence sceptics' repeatedly pronounced post-mortems for global theory and practice appear ever premature (Hirst and Thompson 1996; Rosenberg 2005). Much as notions of the international proved to be no passing fad upon their emergence in the late

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