

Globalization: Theoretical Perspectives
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Lecture 2
Globalization Key Debates – 1

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Globalization: Key debates



Welcome to the class. We are beginning some interesting discussions about globalization. In the previous class, we had a brief session in which I introduced you to the syllabus, the structure of the syllabus, and an overview of the themes and topics that we will be discussing. We also discussed a series of important scholars, whom we will come across in this particular course. I also described their rationale in which various chapters are arranged, so I hope you must have got some fairly good idea about the overall structure of the course, both its content as well as the structure of the course.

Now, in this class, I want to give you a very broad overview of some of the important key debates in globalization literature. So, it becomes evident as we proceed that there is hardly any consensus among scholars regarding exactly what constitutes globalization; there are a plethora of definitions. There are a plethora of arguments

about what exactly is globalization in terms of its definition, in terms of theoretical frameworks which have to be used to make sense of this particular phenomenon.

Starting from this question 'what exactly is globalization?', Is there anything that is happening specifically that can be termed as globalization? Starting from these debates, there are a series of debates, a host of issues in the globalization literature when you try to understand the kind of scholarly arguments and counter-arguments about globalization. There are discussions about substantive themes, for example, I think I mentioned in the previous class that there are very interesting academic works or theorizations about globalization taking place in different themes or on different areas or different substantive themes. For example, globalization and religion, globalization and economy, globalization and polity, globalization and democracy, globalization and inequality, globalization and health. There are a host of areas. I do not think that you can understand any area in contemporary society without using the framework of globalization.

In this class, maybe this session as well as the next session, I want to make it a continuous two sessions, we will have a very broad overview of some of the key debates, key debates in terms of both substantive theoretical aspects as well as debates about various political positions, scholarly attitudes towards certain things, different kinds of positions that one needs to adapt, a host of things.

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Definitions



- Internationalisation
- Liberalization
- Universalization
- Westernization or Americanization
- Respatialization; 'transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions- centrality of time and space'



One of the very first concerns of the scholars who engage in these debates is about the very definition of globalization, how do we define globalization?. Is there a universally accepted definition of globalization, and as you all know that it is very difficult for social sciences to reach a definition of a particular phenomenon that is agreed upon by everyone.

There are different interpretations about certain things and this should not be seen as a weakness of social sciences. Rather, it needs to be seen as the complexity of the subject that we are talking about. A particular phenomenon, for instance, poverty, state or any theme or any particular phenomenon that you choose, there are multiple perspectives from which this particular phenomenon is being analyzed and tried to be made sense of, theorized and explained.

Each of these attempts, each perspective would provide you with different definitions. This is also extremely applicable in the case of globalization, there are a plethora of definitions, there are a host of definitions, so we'll just have a brief overview of some of the important definitions. One of the important definitions is about the question of whether it is internationalization, things are becoming internationalised.

Internationalization is a major kind of definition that has been arrived at by many scholars, so they would argue that there are larger processes where things that were considered to be locally rooted are now becoming international, so everything is going at the international level. There is another set of scholars who want to emphasize more on the economic aspect, looking into liberalization.

This is a term that we will come back again and again because we know that in India, we usually say that India began to experience the process of globalization after the 1990s or after 91 after the Indian economy was opened up by the then Narasimha Rao government where Manmohan Singh was the finance minister.

Some scholars argue that globalization needs to be seen as liberalization of the economy, and a liberalized economy is what is pushing globalization forward. In a liberalized economy where you open up your markets, where you allow free trade, where you open up your market and you let go a host of protective measures and the policy of protectionism, you invite other countries investment, you allow

multinational companies to come and open shops in your country. That is one of the most important driving forces of globalization.

One set of definition revolves around the question of liberalization while another set of definition revolves around the question of universalization, something very similar to internationalization, but when you talk about internationalization it is more to do with the kind of a nation-state, whereas here you are talking about the kind of things are becoming universal. We are all everywhere, people living in India or people living in the USA or Europe, we are all experiencing similar kinds of things. We are all eating similar kinds of things, we are experiencing and watching similar kinds of media, so things are becoming more and more universal.

Every society is being uprooted from its local traditions and becoming more familiar with universal ideas. A more stringent or a more narrow definition about this universalization because then the question comes, what does this universalization mean? Has it got any specific form? Has it got any particular character? Are there countries that dominate in this whole process of universalization? Whose values and ideas are being universalized? So, this has led a series of scholars to argue that what is happening in the name of globalization is nothing but westernization, or more specifically Americanization.

This is again not a very new debate, not a very new topic, because we know that the term westernization is a very important term in almost all erstwhile colonies. In Indian society, those who study Indian sociology would recollect that there are very interesting arguments about the modernization and westernization of Indian society because it was under the rule of British colonialists. So there are arguments, for example, people like M. N. Srinivas argues that Indian society underwent a very steady process of westernization.

The scholars who subscribe to these arguments would emphatically argue that what is happening is Americanization rather than a broader concept of the West. They would say that America has been the most hegemonic power. They have been the most important and powerful nation, so the influence of America has reached everywhere in terms of the powerful media houses, the powerful technological

companies, the multinational companies, their industries. You name it, they are there in every field.

So, there are arguments that what we are seeing is nothing but Americanization. An important theoretically informed definition of globalization revolves around the whole question of respatialization, which revolves around the question of space and time. Respatialization transformation in the special organization of social relations and transactions in which time and space assume the central position. So, I would say that this is one of the very important rather acceptable theoretical definitions of globalization which looks at the processes, because they are talking about the transformations in the spatial organization of social relations.

We know that sociology is the study of social relations, we try to understand how human beings interact and what are the conditions under which human beings interact and what are the kind of transformations taking place when people interact, how did people interact in say, during feudal times, how do people interact or how do people interact when they live a primitive tribal kind of life and how do people live and interact in modern industrial society.

The focus of sociology has always been on the question of social interaction. Now, this particular definition argues that there is a major transformation taking place with the aid of technological facilities and infrastructure, there is a major transformation happening in social relations, especially concerning its spatial organization.

We will come back to this particular topic. We will have an extensive discussion on the kind of sociological theorization on respatialization. What are the arguments about the transformation of space and time in modern society? There are very interesting arguments about time-space compression. There are interesting arguments about time-space distancing, so we will come back to that. I am just flagging these ideas.

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Globalists and Sceptics



- Globalists- supporters and opponents
- Economy
- State
- The reach of globalization



Then, another set of key debates are between people who take very different positions, for example, the group of globalists, globalists would argue that we are living in a global world, globalization has become complete, we are living in a globalized world. So, they take it for granted that the process of globalization has been underway for the past two or three decades, and we are living in a completely global world.

Their basic premises start from the assumption that globalization has become a reality, and whether you agree with it or you do not agree with it that is a different question, but the world has moved, definitely into the next stage, whereas the sceptics do not agree that, again, a host of scholars I am not mentioning the scholars who come under either of these groups. There are scholars who argue that it is too premature to say that we are living in a globalized world.

There are scholars who argue that the world was interconnected, even earlier they talk about maritime trade, they talk about how, for example, Immanuel Wallerstein would say that there is nothing new about globalization because the world was already an interconnected globe, an interconnected world. So, among these globalists, you have both supporters and opponents of globalization. These globalists represent a prime position of the scholars who assume that globalization has become a reality.

There are differences of opinion among them about whether they need to support or oppose because there are a lot of reasons why there are scholars who support globalization, there are scholars who are opposed to globalization as well. So, these debates revolve around the question of economy.

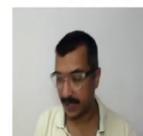
What has happened to the global economy? Has it become a really true global economy where the role of the nation-state is very subdued? What is the interesting relationship between the nation, the national economy and the global economy? Have all these countries become a part of this global economy? There are interesting debates about the state.

We will take up this particular topic very extensively in the coming weeks because this is a very important topic. The reach of globalization as I mentioned, to what extent has it moved forward? Are there still countries and large areas, large sections of the population who are not yet integrated into globalization, how do we make sense of that? So, there are a series of very interesting debates about the two sections of people, about the very argument whether or to what extent globalization is a reality.

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Old or new

- Origin?
- Cyclical
- linear- 'germination' and 'take off' Walt Rostow.
- Connection with the Modernization Theory
- Future?



Another interesting question as I just mentioned — Does globalization represent a completely new phase in human history? Can we say that globalization, which

roughly started maybe by the 1980s,1990s really represents such a turning point in human history? Is it something quite new, or is it a continuation of much larger lasting changes that have happened over the past several centuries?

There is no consensus among scholars. There are scholars who argue that there is nothing new about it because you had an extremely globally interconnected world even before that. You had global trade, you had global maritime trades and they were interconnections between countries; but other scholars who would very emphatically argue that why those connections and relations and trade relations existed then, what has been happening as a part of globalization since the 1970s, or 80s, is something quite new. It is quite incomparable with anything that the human race of human civilization has witnessed so far.

So, there are very important debates about that. Then, there are very important debates about its origin. When did it exactly begin? Again, as I told you, scholars like Immanuel Wallerstein would say that there was already a world system in operation during the colonial period. So, what you are seeing as a form of globalization is only an extension of that.

Other scholars would say that the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Second World War and then you had these two major blocks- the Soviet bloc and the American bloc, and then the Berlin wall which signified the decline of communism as a major political idea, and the triumph of capitalism. Socialism or communism is no longer an alternative to capitalism, so the triumph of capitalism is the one that actually pushes forward globalization.

Questions about the nature of globalization —Is it cyclical or linear? Those who are familiar with Walt Rostow's argument, especially when he describes the whole idea of a modernization theory, he talks about 'germination' and then 'takeoff'. Certain societies when they reach a certain stage of their development, then they take off. So, our entire imaginations about development are very closely connected with modernization theory. And I will come back to this theory later.

I hope that those who have studied sociology or other social sciences are familiar with the term 'modernization theory', but in the upcoming classes, I will spend some time trying to explain them. Let me just mention here that the idea of development, the idea of globalization, the idea of progress, all these things are extremely interconnected with the idea of modernization.

And what is this connection with modernization theory? And then what is the future of globalization? Again, a series of fascinating discussions and debates, what is happening to globalization? What is the future of globalization? Will the globe become a truly completely integrated global village, the kind of imagination we always had. When it becomes a global village what does it mean to be completely integrated at a global level? What does it mean to the nations? What does it mean to individuals?

Now let me tell you that there are very powerful indications or there is a major sense of scepticism among the social scientists or thinkers that globalization is leading to some kind of a crisis. We may not go back to a pre-global world, but the kind of push towards globalization, the kind of momentum that globalization had before 2010 is lost and some of the most recent developments that we are seeing are definitely towards a more bleaker picture expressing the scenario where globalization may not happen where we really visualized.

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What drives globalization



- Idealist or materialist?
- Individualist or structuralist?
- Anthony Giddens and Structuration
- Objectivists and Subjectivists- political positions?



Another set of important questions—what drives globalization? How do you explain what drives globalization? What are the main reasons behind this kind of larger transformation? And this, again goes back to some of the old and central debates within social sciences, for example, the debate between idealists or materialists, and the debate goes back to Hegel and Karl Marx. These idealists argue that it is the ideas that are really bringing social change, human beings think more rationally and as a result of their thinking they are able to change society as per their ideas.

Whereas materialists do not agree with that. Materialists would argue that it is material conditions that are actually bringing social change. And then, individualist or structuralist? For example, this goes back to the idea of what are the possibilities, what are the potentials of an individual thing, to what extent individuals have agency or are these changes happening because of the structural factors where individuals have no role, things are happening because of social structure and the human beings are only acting on the dictates of the larger social structure.

There is an interesting intervention by Anthony Giddens, a very important British sociologist who talks about Structuration, where he brings in these possibilities of both the individual as well as the social structure, again I am not going into that. Then, objectivists and subjectivists, again, an age-old debate, a central debate in sociology, whether we can understand globalization objectively? Can we understand globalization from a distance?

Can we have an objective, scientific understanding about what globalization is? And another group argues that such a position is impossible, because you can understand globalization only subjectively. Your subjective position will become important. And of course, the most important question, what is the kind of a political position that you want to adopt? You want to welcome globalization or are you against globalization, and if you are against or for globalization. What are the areas in which you are either against or for globalization? So, these are some of the important debates.

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Continuity or Change



A very important theme of discussion is whether it is Continuity or Change? What we are seeing in a globalized world, is it the continuation of preexisting institutions and arrangement or have they assumed a completely different character? Is it altogether an ontological change that has happened in terms of society, social institutions or is it peripheral changes which force us to think that some substantive change must have happened. So, there are a series of themes and let us explore them one by one.

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Production

- New mode of production or continuation
- A third wave of Knowledge society?

- Still prevailing centrality of industrial production and capitalism

Or

Change within continuity? Restructuring?



For example, production, one of the central concerns of social sciences, especially that of economists. With respect to production, does globalization represent a completely new face in the history of human civilization? And this particular question assumes more significance in the larger debates, say, for example, in Marxian debate. Karl Marx identified at least three or four major modes of production, starting from a primitive communism, slavery, feudalism and to that of a capitalism, and he predicted of course it will lead to socialism and communism. .

We know that that prediction did not come true, but can we say that this particular globalization is bringing in yet another fundamentally new form of production? Are our basic economic production fundamentally undergoing new transformations? Is it a new mode of production or is it only a continuation? Is it a third wave of knowledge society? For example, there are scholars like Manuel Castells who talk about the age of informationalism or he talks about networked society.

So, Castells represents a group of scholars who very strongly argue that globalization really represents something new, there was a rupture, there was a break from the capitalist modern society, and we have reached a completely new type of society. There are scholars who do not agree with that.

There are scholars who argue that there is still a prevailing centrality of industrial production and capitalism. So, while the scholars talk about the new third wave of knowledge society, they talk about the late capitalism, new liberal era, but these scholars would argue that the industrial production, the more conventional industrial production of the modern times is still important.

It is still important as it is still the mainstay of the world economy, and capitalism. Of course you can say that capitalism has become more advanced. We are talking about late capitalism or advanced capitalism, but it is still capitalism, or is it kind of a change within continuity? or is it kind of a deeper restructuring taking place in the economy? So, these are some of the central debates about the whole question of production.

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Governance



- What is happening to nation state?
Opposite positions

- Shifting notions of sovereignty and internal governance



Another set of questions, again central debate is regarding governance. What is happening to governance at a global level? How is governance undergoing drastic transformations during the time of globalization? What is happening to the nation state? This is again a very fascinating question, which we will take up in detail in the coming classes. What is happening to nation states? So, we know that nation states are a very modern phenomena, you know about this Westphalian treaty, you know about how colonialism came to an end by the Second World War and then nation states became more important, kind of a reality.

Now, there are arguments that globalization will seriously affect the nature of the nation- state. It will significantly weaken the nation states and they will gradually lose their significance. Now, there are the opposite groups who very strongly criticize those who argue that it will not happen. Similarly, there are debates about shifting notions of sovereignty and internal governance, because we always associate nation states with that of sovereignty. We think one of the very fundamental definitions of our nation states is that the nation state has a sovereign authority over its territory.

Scholars would argue that globalization has fundamentally undermined the nature of this territory, or it has fundamentally undermined the concept of boundary. Your geographical boundary is no longer significant, the boundary has been breached significantly or the boundary has been made redundant insignificantly. So, that has

really impacted the whole notion of sovereignty, and internal governance, what is happening to internal governments and the host of questions about democracy and other issues.

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Identity



- Cultural synchronization- diffusion of Americana- McDonaldization
- Progressive universalization or oppressive imperialism
- Increased cultural diversity through glocalization



Another important area of contestation is about identity. What is happening to identity. This is again a very important debate, especially after the 1980s there is a proliferation of identities. We are all talking about identity politics, we are all talking about how identities have assumed a kind of significance that has never been the case in human history.

So, there are arguments about something similar to what I mentioned earlier. Are we leading to a kind of a cultural synchronization, is homogenization of culture taking place? Are all the cultures losing their significance, and then differences and are they becoming to look like something similar. Is there a kind of synchronization taking place? Is it a diffusion of Americana, the Pan Americana?

Is the American culture going to be prevalent everywhere? Is it going to displace native cultures of various societies? Of course, you must have heard a lot of people talking about how we are losing our culture and our youth. Our boys and girls are imitating the American culture. So, we need to protect our culture.

What exactly is happening? There is also a very interesting argument about McDonaldization by George Ritzer, which I will discuss in the coming class. When we talk about cultural globalization this is very important. McDonaldization talks about homogenization of cultures. There are different political positions about this cultural globalization happening in the realm of culture. So, one group would argue that what is happening is a kind of a progressive universalization because you are increasingly talking the language of human rights, you are increasingly talking the language of democracy and liberalism.

So, essentially what is happening is the dissemination of larger global universal humanist values, whereas the other group argues that what is happening is nothing but oppressive imperialism in the name of democracy. In the name of human rights, a particular kind of political agenda is being imposed on all countries by completely destroying their own innate nature and their traditional cultures.

And the third position is more important, interesting, maybe more appropriate, is that there is an increased cultural diversity through 'glocalization'. I want you to understand this term more, I want you to look at this term more closely. It is glocalization, there is a global as well as local dimension. So, they do not look at it as a one-dimensional process.

They do not think that whatever is local is all losing and then only the global things are becoming local. No, they are talking about glocalization, a very interesting transformation between the local and the global, we will come back to this particular topic later.

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- Assertion of nationalities, primordial identities including religion, ethnicity
- Rise of rightwing politics and Xenophobia
- Clash of civilization coming true?
- End of multiculturalism?



Then, As a part of this discussion on identity, what we are seeing today is assertions of nationalities, assertions of primordial identities including religion and ethnicity. why am talking about this in terms of cultural globalization is that there were times when we believed that people will become more cosmopolitan, you will become global citizens, people will be able to move around, people will not have to be really bothered about the color; the whole humanity will say goodbye to their primordial identities and they will only treat each other as individuals.

This was one of the dreams or one of the utopian dreams of modernity, at least a substantial section of scholars believed that all our primordial identities will lose their significance. Nationalism, or nationality or race or ethnicity or religion, or caste, these things which are considered to be traditional, which are considered to be backward, these things will lose and we all will emerge as modern individuals, but we know that it only remains in utopia. That only remains as an unfulfilled dream.

And what we are seeing is a kind of a reverse process. Everywhere, increasingly we are seeing that assertions are based on nationalities, based on primarily identities, religion, ethnicity, rise of right-wing politics across Europe and many other parts of the globe. In recent xenophobia, there is fear of the other people, fear of the migrant's fear of the refugees, fear of the migrant labourers. So, we need to protect

our own soil. The other cannot be allowed to come and live here, this becomes a very important political storm. Is the clash of civilizations coming true?

Clash of civilization, we will discuss again those who are not familiar, this is a very, maybe rather infamous argument put forward by an American political scientist, Samuel Huntington argued that in the future there could be a serious crisis, serious conflict between people on the base of religions especially between Islam and Christianity. So, is this the era of multiculturalism?

Again, this multicultural project was a very important project during the 60s and 70s, especially in Europe. Even in the USA, it was seen as a heaven of multicultural societies, people coming from all over the globe and everybody is free to have their own culture. So, it was seen as a celebration of different cultures. Now, are we witnessing the end of that particular dream?

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knowledge

- Does it create new ontologies-, epistemologies and methodologies?
- Changes in the understanding of space and time,
- Crisis of rationalism
- Challenge to disciplinary boundaries
- Methodological nationalism and cosmopolitanism



Now another set of questions. What is happening to knowledge in globalization? Does globalization bring in new ontologies? Does it bring in new epistemology? Does it bring in a new methodology? And these are again fundamental questions. Ontology, you might know, is the whole concern of questions about what is reality. It is the whole concern about the whole question of being what is, so what is our understanding of certain things? Is that particular thing itself changing in its character? Epistemology is a kind of knowledge system that is appropriate to make sense of that.

There is a very close connection between ontology, epistemology and methodology. Globalization warrants a completely new approach towards our understanding of what is and how we make sense of, through what kind of methodologies.

And changes in the understanding of space and time, I mentioned about that. Some of the important theorizations revolve around the question of space and time. And these two things, space and time are some of the most fundamental concerns of physics, it is some of the most fundamental concerns of social sciences as well. So, are we talking something that significant, that fundamental about a kind of a change, and the kind of crises of rationalism, because a crisis of modernity, is also the crisis of rationalism. Are we reaching or have we reached a scenario where the rationalist epistemologies no longer make any sense. And the challenge to disciplinary boundaries.

You know that globalization has brought in a host of new disciplines. Like, for example, media studies, cultural studies, development studies, sexuality studies, masculinity studies or conflict studies. So, these are some of the important disciplines in the disciplinary fields that are emerged by challenging the more conventional, disciplinary boundaries and interesting debates about methodological nationalism and methodological cosmopolitans, which again I will discuss in detail, especially when we discuss people like Ulrich Beck, he argues that social sciences can no longer follow the kind of conventional disciplinary methods. Rather, it has to be different.

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social change and globalization



- Post modernity? High modernity? Late modernity? Liquid Modernity?

'hyper capitalism is still capitalist; polycentric governance is still bureaucratic; multiple identities are still formed by othering; reflexive rationalism is still rationalist'



Is it social change and globalization? This is an interesting set of questions. Are we talking about globalization from the standpoint of postmodernity? How do you characterize it as high modernity, or do you characterize it as late modernity or liquid modernity or any other term?

There is no consensus among scholars, especially there are lot of sociologists who do not agree with the argument that we have already reached postmodernity, or we are in a postmodern scenerario, they are critical of that, they agree that we are at a more radical form of modernity, but they are not ready to agree that we have to say goodbye to the project of modernity. That is why this is a very important quote. Hyper capitalism is still capitalist, polycentric governance is still bureaucratic, multiple identities are still formed by othering, reflexive nationalism is still rationalist.

The first part of these sentences represent the globalized postmodern kind of positions, for example, hyper capitalism. They would say that capitalism is changing and what we are seeing is hyper capitalism, but it is still capitalist. Polycentric governance is where the nation state loses its significance and all these kinds of radically different and radically new forms of governance, but that is still bureaucratic and bureaucracy is specifically modern. Those who know scholars like Max Weber know why Max Weber spent so much time analyzing bureaucracy, because for Max Weber a bureaucracy really represented everything that is characteristic of

modernity and rationality and multiple identities are still formed by othering. Again, a very important point.

Now we are talking about the proliferation of identities, we are talking about the celebration of identities, we are talking about the necessity to move beyond binaries, especially in courses about sexuality we are talking about the need to move beyond heteronormativity. However, the underlying process is othering. You cannot have an identity formation without the process of othering. Reflexive rationalism is still rational.

I specifically like this particular quotation because it reminds you of some of the fundamental processes of what is happening, even in the most contemporary period it is still something that can be captured within the framework of modernity. So, I am just closing the class now. We are ending here, but we will continue with this discussion for one more session. So, see you then. Thank you.