

From flows to violence

Politics and knowledge in the debates on globalization and empire

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Abstract

Recent globalization theory reflected a chain of world historical events since the end of the Cold War. Globalization theories were tools for the making of political alliances between market liberals and political liberals. From the mid-1990s a broad range of institutionalist social science programs showed that globalization outcomes were often better explained by institutional logics (including cultural ones) than by global flows per se. This is, among others, illustrated by the debate on global inequality data. The emerging debate on empire and imperialism is discussed as a logical offshoot of the globalization discussion just as the phenomenon itself is seen as a likely outcome of an epoch of market-driven globalization. Globalization was predicated on the emergence of a US-led transnational western state structure on behalf of the transnational capitalist class based in finance and the large corporations. Territory and space have become more important rather than less, but the explanation of regional trajectories must now be located more firmly in the interaction between local and global structures. This leads to a new agenda in the social sciences: one oriented toward common interdisciplinary programs with a limited range of core questions – about state formations, class formations, mobilizations, claim making, and associated cultural processes. Programs should be more theory driven, comparative, and in search of explanations of divergent spatial and temporal outcomes of universal process.

Key Words

dual polarization • empire • globalization • imperialism • Polanyi • transnational capitalist class

INTRODUCTION

This article discusses the various currents and critiques of recent globalization theory (including empire theory) as it reflected and helped to produce a chain of world historical events since the end of the Cold War. It argues that globalization theories were emic as well as etic tools for the making of political positions and alliances to guide political agency in the One World created by the collapse of really existing socialism. **In**

the years after 1989 globalization theories became the vehicle to express an emergent coalition between neo-liberals/market liberals and political liberals.

The liberal alliance first **claimed the cumulative convergence of the projects of market-making, democracymaking, the strengthening of civil society and the provision of prosperity for many into one mutually reinforcing set of forces. This set of forces, globalization, was held to be unifying the world under a liberal aegis. Globalization theory was also translated into paradigms for global governance – such as the Washington Consensus.** This is discussed in section 1.

From the mid-1990s onwards political liberals started to claim more ground vis-a-vis neo-liberalism within this coalition. They expressed their growing self-consciousness in institutionalist critiques of market-led development and the supposed institutional goods that would automatically spring from it. Their ascendance reflected deepening material inequalities within all states and between the West/North and the rest of the world as a consequence of stepped up marketization. It also responded to the unexpected rise of national, ethnic and religious parochialisms in the course of the 1990s. Institutionalists transformed the globalization debate by shifting attention to questions of power, history, place and agency, pointing to the continued centrality of states and public institutions and introducing concepts such as sequencing and hybridity. They also reopened the debate on globalization and world inequality. This is discussed respectively in sections 2 and 3.

Two political processes undermined the intellectual hegemony of the liberal alliance. Dissent and criticism radicalized in Left directions after 1997 as labor movements, embattled poor country governments, peasant organizations, environmentalists, indigenous movements and associated non-governmental organizations (NGOs) joined in the emergent anti-globalist or Global Justice Movement. After 2000, resurgent conservatives, neo-conservatives and nationalists in the USA capitalized on the sustained neo-liberal cosmopolitanism of the Democratic Party (as did conservatives elsewhere, such as in Holland and Denmark) and conquered state power. White working classes in various places increasingly felt alienated from the reformed social democratic parties and had started to embrace conservative agendas. The conservative alliance responded to a series of deep financial crises and the Islamist attack of September 11 to push for more overt empire, unilateralism, and militarized institutional engineering worldwide. Both the left and right shifts led to a new wave of theorizing about empire and imperialism, which I see as an integral part of the globalization debate.

The aim of this article is to show in broad outline the shifting temporal and political contexts of the debate about globalization, and investigate in some detail the interdisciplinary discussion of key questions, concepts and evidence. The article interrogates the competing hypotheses of the market liberals, political liberals and empire theorists, and explores available evidence.

The author does not pose as a neutral discussant. I take a position not unlike **Polanyi** in arguing that **globalization in its recent forms should be seen as a political project of globally imposed marketization.** It is sponsored by transnational class segments within the core northern states and its comprador allies in dependent economies, which are its first beneficiaries; and it oscillates between liberal technocratic modes of rule (multilateralism and ‘global governance’) and more militaristic and unilateralist impositions in which the US state pushes its own interests and the interests of its corporate classes to

the foreground vis-a-vis its allies. The difference between the modes is less fundamental than often thought; they should be seen as different varieties of the same phenomenon.

I identify three systematic social outcomes of this process: the ongoing proletarianization of the world population, including the accelerated transformation of the peasantry into informal and mobile labor; the gradual de-legitimation of the post-welfare and post-developmental state, as also argued by authors such as Friedman (2003) and Wallerstein (2003) – I claim that state collapse in the weakest zones is just the tip of the iceberg of this more general and systemic process; and the ‘indigenization’, ethnification and parochialization of post-citizens as a response to the formation of transnational classes with cosmopolitan agendas (also Friedman, 2003).

I also believe that, the **globalization rhetoric notwithstanding, territory and space have become more important as signifiers of patterned bundles of social relationships and institutions rather than less** (in contrast to Hoogvelt, 2001; Robinson, 2002). **The explanation of such patterned outcomes (trajectories), however, must now be located more robustly in the interaction between local and global structures than in any intra-territorial properties per se.** Finally, I hold that this is **leading to a new agenda in anthropology** and the social sciences: one in its basic dynamics less descriptive and geared to local detail than was the case under the sign of postmodernism in the 1980s and early 1990s – though respecting some of its advances – and one more oriented toward common interdisciplinary programs with a limited range of core questions and concepts

– about empire formation, state formations, class formations, mobilizations and claim making, associated cultural processes such as parochialization and ethnification, and their mutual linkages.

1. MOMENTS OF THE LIBERAL ALLIANCE

The notion of globalization is a complex multi-layered concept. It has in fact served three cognitive goals at once. It was at the same time an emic idea, a scientific term and a political program. At bottom it does not claim more than that people and places in the world have become and are becoming ever more extensively and densely connected with each other so that what happens at place A has unforeseen repercussions in place

Z. Seen in this way it is also nothing particularly new. Globalization thus refers to an evolutionary process of what David Harvey has called ‘time/space compression’, the progressive increase in human capacities to annihilate space by reducing the time needed to cross it (Harvey, 1989). This is the core of the folk, scientific and political referents alike. Every next stage of conceptual specification, however, is contested. Is it good? For whom? Who or what drives it? And what is the valid evidence for answers to these questions? **On this level, science and politics are inevitably blurred.**

Two considerations guide the next steps. First an observation from the sociology of knowledge: **the globalization concept was hardly used before 1990, became a veritable fad in the course of the decade, and finally gave rise to what David Held has called ‘the great globalization debate’, sliding into the debate on empire. This suggests that even though the term does refer to a long-running evolutionary process, it is precisely the acceleration of that process in or around the 1990s that forced it onto our minds.**

Second: subsequent research has demonstrated that globalization as a long-term process, whether originating in ideological and religious forces (Robertson, 1992), in human evolution itself (the oeuvre of William MacNeill or Norbert Elias), in the dynamics of the capitalist world system (Arrighi, 1994; Wallerstein, 1974, 1980), or in all three together (Held et al., 1999), is not linear but comes in waves and spirals, producing ‘discontinuous change’, epochal transformation or qualitative shifts rather than merely continuous and quantitative trends. It is a story of epochs and periods, not just of time passing by. What characterizes our epoch? Which forces drive our period?

The recent shift toward empire helps us to see that much of globalization theory until at least the mid-1990s was extremely time-bound in its scope, concepts, and presumptions. Its claims were grossly overstated, enthralled as their authors were by the liberal politics and prospects of the day. Globalization theory, I argue, was the platform of a coalition of forces consisting of neo-liberal free-market proponents on the one hand and political-liberal civil society advocates on the other (see Kalb, 2000). The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 had occasioned the unification of these two world-historical projects into one epoch-making vision, globalization. Both had been driven first of all by the US political agenda since the early 1970s: the Helsinki process of human rights advocacy and the monetarist cum liberalizing reform of national political economies. They now became embodied on the one hand in the Washington Consensus, tried out in Latin America in the 1980s and succinctly formulated for world-sweeping use by John Williamson in 1990 (Williamson, 1990, 1993), and on the other in the cosmopolitan humanitarianism of the UN, the International Criminal Court, and the international NGO world.

Liberals and neo-liberals joined their forces in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall in an effort to shape George Bush senior’s ‘New World Order’. This was a genuine globalizing alliance, reflecting the belief that liberal capitalism was now ‘the only game in town’. It revitalized the old Enlightenment hope of the *doux commerce* by claiming that: (1) if commodities are freely exchanged between people and places, (2) actors everywhere will discover their self-interests as producers and consumers and will let these interests prevail over collective passions and hot politics; (3) they will then form into modern ‘independent’ and productive ‘middle classes’, (4) who will demand civil rights and vote against inefficiencies and insider interests, (5) which will foster trade, prosperity, freedom and growth, and will further deepen global interdependence among mankind (see Kalb, 2000, 2002). Liberal globalization theory generalized this virtuous circle over world space (and world history). It explained why globalization was good and why everyone could gain from it.

Both liberal streams also argued that globalization was a causal, anonymous, and more or less irresistible force. Time/space compression set the whole virtuous circle in motion, as a consequence of which space was further annihilated. Markets as well as human morality had now outgrown the cage of the national state and the state nation, as proven by the collapse of the socialist world. We had finally arrived on the threshold of a free world civilization and we were on our way to an era of cosmopolitan rule. Arrangements for transnational governance now had to be put in place in order to guide the process further. Globalization, thus conceived, constituted a veritable new grand narrative which superseded the grand narratives of modernity (liberalism, socialism, corporatism), based as they were in the 19th and 20th-century struggles for the social constitution of the national state in a capitalist world. **It became the new grand narrative precisely a**

decade after the grand narratives of modernity had been declared dead by postmodern philosophers. Globalization theory was (neo-)liberalism writ large, pushed from its Anglo-Saxon homeland onto planetary dimensions (Kalb, 2000). We could have safely predicted, therefore, that socialist, corporatist, imperialist and regionalist alternatives, some of them framed through nationalism or religion, would be explicitly put forward in the near future; by now they are demonstrably emerging.

Globalists would point to an expanding array of multilateral institutions that undergird cosmopolitan governance, from the IMF, the World Bank, the GATT and later the WTO in the economic domain, to UNHCR, the International Criminal Court, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and other organizations in the sphere of international law and human rights. All of them gained in media exposure and responsibility during the 1990s. Globalists would also enlist international cooperation such as in the G8 meetings, Nato, Nafta, EU, Apec, Asean and other regional forums as efforts to elevate political and juridical coordination above the level of the national state. In addition, globalists would show that below the top level of world politics there had emerged a dense network of professional coordination, such as on drugs, technical standardization, health, telecommunications, fishing, tourism, aviation, banking supervision, atomic energy, insurance, accounting and so on. As a consequence, while in the middle of the 19th century there were just two or three interstate conferences per year, there were more than 4000 per year by the end of the 1990s (Held and McGrew, 2002: 19). In the early 20th century there had been 37 International Governmental Organizations. In 2000 there were 6743 of them (Held and McGrew, 2002).

Political liberals, moreover, would proudly point to the rapid growth of a global civil society of NGOs that specialized in advocacy on environmental, humanitarian, juridical, social, and gender issues which sometimes successfully mobilized to help change global or national arrangements, such as in the case of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, the Greenpeace actions against Shell, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Transparency International, Médecins Sans Frontières, and recently Jubilee 2000, which succeeded in putting debt relief for the poorest countries on the agenda of the G8 and the World Bank. These examples showed that civil society action had the capacity to actually intervene in global high politics and behind-the-doors expert negotiation, even to the point of forcing them to create the permanent World Bank Inspection Panel (see for example O'Brien et al., 2000; Khagram, 2002, 2004; Smith and Johnston, 2002). It demonstrated that cosmopolitan governance was real and capable of democratizing itself. Their actions also forced formal institutions to open up their proceedings and prove that they were actually accountable to the world society of citizens. By 2000 there were more than 47,000 international NGOs (Held and McGrew, 2002: 18). Global consciousness, the awareness of mutual interdependency between human beings worldwide, described by Giddens (1995), Falk (2000), Held (1995), Kaldor (2003) and others as a driving force as well as an index of cultural globalization, was best proven by this dense web of global civil society actors, especially those in the fields of human rights, feminism, and the environment.

There is a group of more social democratic authors, such as Castells (1986, 1996), Reich (1991) and Sassen (1991, 1998), who helped to partly strengthen and partly weaken the case for globalism. Their work comes out of a 1980s engagement with the social consequences of de-industrialization in the West and it keeps highlighting the tendencies toward social and territorial exclusion generated by the globalizing economy.

But at the same time it underwrites the basic globalist claim that there has been a market and technology driven transition from a space of places to a space of flows occurring in the course of the 1980s and 1990s. Location mattered ever less, they claimed, and insertion within global networks ever more. Reich, Castells and others had argued that national economies were now largely fictitious and that the fate of social groups and territorial spaces had come to depend on their marketable skills and their consequent insertion in or exclusion from global networks of production and exchange. In the process, multinational corporations had transformed into transnational corporations, selecting their spaces for production and marketing on the basis of global criteria of productivity, added value, and purchasing power. **Economic power and political power was now substantially de-linked, it was implied.** They also made a point of arguing that corporate monopolies had lost their durability. This was both a threat to established insiders, first of all male blue-collar workers in the core countries, as well as an opportunity for outsiders, especially women in both the North and the South. The message was that the global market had become a surprisingly **open and dynamic terrain**, accessible for all those who had acquired the necessary marketable skills, from software developers in Bombay and Ireland, to metal workers in Sao Paulo and Seoul, to women workers in Chengzen, Monterrey or Manila. Education and market supportive policies could be trusted to help prevent social exclusions.

Globalists also pointed out that foreign trade had been growing much faster than world output since the 1970s. More importantly even, foreign direct investment had increased hugely since the early 1980s and was accelerating during the 1990s (up to 1997). Portfolio investments, short-term lending and foreign exchange had multiplied and were reaching historically unprecedented levels. An enormous pool of excess capital was available, partly produced by transnational enterprises, partly by pension funds, mutual funds and insurance corporations, and partly the result of new financial instruments such as hedge funds and derivatives. Via the surging stock markets in global cities such as London, New York, Tokyo, Paris, and Frankfurt (Sassen, 1991), and through their regional linkages in the emerging market economies which all opened bourses in this decade, these mobile funds were recycled in search of quick valuation. Such valuation was often found in rapidly growing export zones in Southeast Asia, China, Mexico, Brazil or central Europe. Part of it was invested in the privatized industries and utilities of de-regulating states in the core as well as the periphery, which in the first years facilitated new investments by these enterprises on a scale impossible for debt-bound states to achieve. Another part flowed into state bonds issued by countries that commanded confidence among the financial elite, again both in the core and the periphery.

The message implied by such figures was that access to the global markets was becoming democratized to a degree never seen before. Capital now appeared to be working for us all, albeit perhaps less so for the insiders of old (globalists were often not particularly moved by the 'farewell to the working class'). This enabled the territories of what was once called the Third World access to earnings from export-led industrialization and not just from commodities exports (tea, coffee, rubber and so on). Neither was this only through labor-intensive manufactures in textiles, shoemaking or apparel: South Korea featured the amazing examples of conglomerates such as Daewoo, which jumpstarted itself into the middle to high technologies of car and electronic manufacturing; or Hyundai, which was transformed in less than a decade from a toolmaker into a corporation putting out everything from elevators to laptops. In combination with rising

incomes and investment in infrastructure facilitated by the World Bank, IMF and private lenders, these demonstrable trends were lifting up whole territories into the select club of the elite economies of the globe. 'By the late nineteen nineties', write Held and McGrew, basing themselves on UNDP data, 'almost 50 per cent of total world manufacturing jobs were located in developing economies, while over 60 per cent of developing country exports to the industrialized world were manufactured goods, a twelve-fold increase in less than four decades' (Held and McGrew, 2002: 52).

Early globalization theory was about the hopeful convergence of democracy, civil society and open markets (everything communism was not) into a stable precondition for world civilization and cosmopolitan rule. It was a political platform that allowed freemarket liberals and political liberals to sustain a coalition of forces that helped to shape an entire epoch of world history in the immediate aftermath of the fall of socialism. That platform was enchanted by the promise of a final liberal equilibrium that would be beneficial for all at the closing years of the 20th century.

But the closing decade itself would be far from stable. This was to a considerable extent produced by the liberal paradigm for global governance itself, as it interacted with, and confronted, prior social and territorial structures and set about transforming the bases of livelihood for the whole world population. As a consequence, from the mid 1990s onwards, political liberals and market liberals started to part ways. The continued emphasis of **Castells, Sassen, Reich and others on social and territorial inequalities had been a constant critical undercurrent** (see later in this article for more substantial treatment). But from **1996 onwards, the World Development Reports of the World Bank** began signaling explicitly that markets were not enough to build institutions and functioning civil societies and began to care about the condition and maintenance of the state in the globalizing world (World Bank, 1997). **At the end of the decade, in an atmosphere of open disagreements among researchers and directors (Wade, 2001a, 2001b), World Bank reports described large-scale poverty and endemic corruption (World Bank, 2000).**

Political liberals and 'new institutionalists' began to demand increased investments in 'good governance', civil society, education and health, while downplaying the wisdom of the classical conditionalities of the Washington Consensus such as privatization, stabilization and liberalization (for example Stiglitz, 2002). 'Sequencing' became a key policy concept, aiming to slow down the onslaught of marketization on transitional societies. It articulated serious doubts about the purported links in the chain connecting economic liberalization, democracy, growth and equity (see also ILO, 2004).

Political liberals like Beck (1997) and Held (1995) began differentiating the concept of globalization (a good thing: read global civil society) from globalism (a bad thing: corporate globalization). Benjamin Barber (1996) and others explained that the **MacWorld of globalizing capital threatened to produce Jihads of religion and absolute values** everywhere if civil society was neglected as it was. Michael **Hardt concluded that the expansion of the operating sphere of capital had produced nothing less than a 'postcivil society'** (Hardt, 1995).

The outcomes of transition in post-socialist societies, arguably the ultimate test case of the globalist paradigm, had everywhere been disappointing and often squarely criminal. The catastrophes in Bosnia and Rwanda had not been prevented by humanist

cosmopolitanism, while new ones were being inaugurated in the Congo and East Timor. The increasingly visible polarization of rich and poor within countries and among countries (see later) and the continued degradation of public goods from education to the environment, in particular in the post-socialist world and Africa, were in blatant contrast with the wealth of local comprador bourgeoisies and the transnational class, both in the North and the South.

Political liberals gradually grew dismayed with their deal in the globalist alliance. **European Third Way social democrats had superseded conservative governments from the mid-1990s onward, and their intellectual avant gardes were now pressing for more civil society in the deal with free market liberalism, just as the Clintons were doing in the US.** But the concept of civil society was too malleable, too woolly, and in its practice too elitist to give much guidance in analysis and action, as noticeable in, for instance, Giddens' political writings (1995, 1998, 1999). Its intellectual pedigree was too solidly rooted in liberalism and tainted with pre-1848 beliefs in the happy confluence of markets and democracy on behalf of popular emancipation.¹ But even so, both dissent against as well as demonstrable material refutation of the predictions of the virtuous circle of globalism was clearly getting off the ground after the mid-1990s.

2. SKEPTICS AND REALISTS

The critique was built out and substantiated by political economy and social policy researchers on the one hand and anthropologists on the other, fuelling the debate with issues of history, space, institutions, power and difference. This was happening against a background of deepening intellectual and political contention. The first **French protest wave against neo-liberal reforms in the mid-1990s triggered a radicalization of the cultural sociology of Pierre Bourdieu and associates in France and elsewhere, which gave a strong impetus to the anti-globalist journal par excellence, Le Monde Diplomatique.**

These Parisian circles sought collaboration with Latin American activists and laid some of the intellectual groundwork for the later World Social Forum and the anti-globalist movement (or Global Justice Movement), which was 'suddenly' to emerge in 1999 (Fisher and Ponniah, 2003; Sen et al., 2004). There was also a remarkable surge of attention for the work of the Austrian émigré historical political scientist, Karl Polanyi, among others by the conservative and well exposed philosopher **John Gray** (1998) in London as well as by some authors on the Left, including **Giovanni Arrighi** (1994), whose impressive work of the early 1990s, linking **Braudel, Wallerstein and Polanyi** in new and seminal ways, prefigured key themes in turn-of-the-millennium debates. This work suggested that globalization might well be, first of all, an epochal imposition of markets by centralized transnational institutions dominated by the core capitalist economies, just as Polanyi had described for the 19th and early 20th century world system under British auspices. In this context of deepening contention (see later), **the new 'reformist' body of academic literature advanced two key routes for critique on globalist liberalism, both of them embodying institutionalist perspectives; the former of a more structuralist variety and the latter more actor-centered.** The first was packed in the concept of 'path dependency', the second in notions of 'hybridity' and, somewhat later on, 'placemaking'.

Structuralist institutionalists were skeptical about the actual emergence of an open global space in which incessant flows would lead to an equalization of 'factor costs',

Gleichschaltung of local/national institutional designs and global integration. Hirst and Thompson (1996; Hirst, 2000), for example, demonstrated that Castell's space of flows was, with respect to actual trade in goods, still less internationalized than the Britainbased world economy of the late 19th century. The 'real' economy, in their account, was regionalizing rather than globalizing, giving rise to three regional clusters of national economies: the Triad of the EU, US/Nafta, and East Asia (see also Mittelman, 2000). They showed that roughly two-thirds of all transactions remained within these regional clusters. Such internal transactions were 'embedded' (Polanyi) in a texture of local institutions in labor markets, housing, education, law, networks of trust and familiarity and so on, all of them ultimately anchored in a more or less public institutional heritage organized by states. It followed that real economic growth, as distinct from the nominal growth in the virtual economy of stock markets, did not first of all depend on the freeing of flows in global space but rather on the maintenance of production cultures on the ground. Such production cultures came in various genres, among others East Asian development states, European continental welfare states, and Anglo-Saxon liberal and stock-market-based regimes. It made no sense to impose one version as the only rational one (Dore, 2000). Similarly the work of Amsden (1992, 2003), Weiss (1998, 2003), Wade (2004) and other historical institutionalists on East Asian states underlined the centrality of state action in preparing economies for successful export performance. East Asia, thus, squarely denied the path to export earnings recommended by the globalists. Not shock-therapeutic opening, but patient and carefully managed integration was the lesson. The Hirst and Thompson argument was supported by a renewed interest in economic anthropology, sociology, and institutional and social economics, much of it reworking the old Polanyian insight of embeddedness as well as the related notions of networks and trust (for overviews see Gudeman, 2001; Guillen, 2002; Narotzky, 1997; Smelser and Swedberg, 1995; Swedberg, 2003).

Hirst and Thompson shrewdly switched the attention away from the supposed bipolarity of global flows versus states and towards the regional state clusters that actually served to produce and localize the overwhelming majority of such flows (See also Kalb, 2000). This at once took the sting out of the globalist argument for two reasons. First, states immediately lost the malign status of the enemy. On the contrary, state structures became the guarantors of cultures of work and consumption as well as the organizers of successful international integration (see also Milward, 1999). Second, it demonstrated that the economies just over the border of the old heartlands were rapidly being integrated into the core economies of the US, Japan and Europe. This resulted in a dramatically different estimation of the spatial spread of the 'global' economy: exportled manufacturing in low developed countries (LDCs) had only really taken off in a select few, mainly those situated close to the backdoor of the core economies, such as the northern Mexican states, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Malaysia, the Czech Republic or western Hungary. The rest of the less developed world remained largely excluded from Foreign Direct Investment in manufacturing, even more so than used to be the case under classical imperialism (Hoogvelt, 2001).

Instead of singing their praise, Hirst and Thompson showed that international markets did not do the work they were supposed to do. The cause: market failure caused by a lack of public interventionism, institution building, international and internal redistribution, and active state involvement in general. The consequence: exclusion of large spaces and populations from the markets of the North and West. The skeptics thus successfully put the globalist argument on its head. Market failure, the classical point of

what Keynes had called the ‘underground tradition’ in economics, was their main tool (see for instance Baker et al., 1999).

While market-failure arguments showed why whole tracts and populations remained excluded from the potential gains of integration in the circulatory networks of the advanced economies, global commodity chain analysis (or value chain analysis) explained why producers in LDCs that were actually integrated were being pauperized nevertheless. These analysts (for example Gereffi and Korzeniewicz, 1994; Haugerud et al., 2000; Kaplinsky, 2000; Kaplinsky et al., 2002) countered the trickle-down assumption of global marketization by pointing out that markets were not anonymous hidden hands but rather structured relations of power between nodes in a network in which the weak found it practically impossible to improve their relative positions vis-a-vis the strong. While design, research and development, and marketing functions remained controlled by the North, southern producers found it very hard to move upwards in the chain of added value and seemed to be condemned to low barrier/low skill/low value added activities. This was not only the case in simple commodity productions but also in manufacturing and large foreign direct investment (FDI) layouts. The accelerating integration of China and South Asia in Northern networks since the mid-1980s had enormously expanded the supply of unskilled and medium skilled workers. This was resulting in an intensifying downward pressure on income among workers and firms in global commodity chains in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Latin America, as well as in increased feminization of labor forces (on gender see Mills, 2003). **Rather than marketization per se, it turned out to be positionality within the chain, as well as the class relations and path-dependence of regional systems within the world economy, that explained the outcomes.**

Marketization now appeared in a different light: instead of leading to trickle down, it served to bloc upward trajectories by continuously enlarging the reserve army of labor. It turned out to be a force for monopolistic control rather than democratic participation. It allowed capitalists to structurally depress incomes in manufacturing. Maquiadoras of Tijuana were out-competed by Chinese producers (see Financial Times, 1 July 2003), coffee growers in Brazil and Colombia were crowded out by even cheaper producers in Vietnam. **Commodity chain analysis implied that only collective action and public intervention would help regions to move upward into higher value added productions. That was also the only cure against deepened gender and generational exploitation – a classic Labor argument.**

Similar emphasis on the relevance of path dependence and public choice was produced by policy and poverty research in the North and West. In her work on global cities in the core, **Saskia Sassen had maintained that the transition from industrial welfare states to neo-liberal urban economies based on service sector growth was generating a new social polarization in big Northern cities** (Sassen, 1991, 1998). This was no longer a classical class divide rooted in property and production between owners and workers but a much more desperate one between isolated groups in sharply segregated labor markets: the high wage, highly educated, ‘white’ and formal job-holders in the producerservices sector (finance, real estate, insurance, high tech) on the one hand, and insecure, informalized, ‘colored’ and lowly skilled workers in the consumer services. An insulated middle class and a self-exploiting lumpen-proletariat with little in between – this was Sassen’s prediction for metropolitan areas in the North (see, for an early statement, Castells, 1986).

An avalanche of urban **and regional research that really took off by the mid-1990s now showed that this was not universally the case. Institutions, public and private, largely explained the differences. First, different regional paths and regimes of industrialization responded differently to the postfordist/postindustrial transition.** The more skill-intensive regimes in, for example, Germany or Japan were capable of moving into higher added value while constantly re-educating their workers (see for example Dore, 2000). Mass production sites typical of liberal regimes in the UK or the US industrial heartland gave way to disinvestments, de-industrialization and communal degradation.

Second, **social outcomes were significantly mediated by prior social policy structures that were all but overlooked in the original Sassen thesis. Comprehensive welfare states had a much better record in this respect than liberal ones and the marginalization predicted by Sassen turned out to be a special case rather than a universal.** The most effective European welfare states had succeeded in preventing the rise of the working poor by keeping up collective labor standards while simultaneously finding various solutions for the trade-off with unemployment. Esping Andersen's work (1999, 2002) emphasized that 'Third Way' social democrats in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Austria had discovered how to mobilize public policy structures to generate job machines and put national budgets in order. The experience of Europe as a whole also denied the globalist argument by combining the integration of European markets with an upwards convergence of social standards.

Against the unilineal idea of progress inherent in the neo-liberal account, this body of research on mainly European public policy structures made a case for the continued path-dependence of outcomes of global integration. **Path-dependence in this context signaled that outcomes of large-scale social transition were always mediated by a prior public heritage of institutions of governance. It showed that states did matter.** It also implied that **earlier social struggles for rights and the balance of forces by which their outcomes had been maintained through time had repercussions for the next rounds of social change (Kalb, 2003). Prior power balances within civil societies in any given national or regional context apparently pre-selected the possible institutional responses, resistances and potential mobilizations of citizens. They also structured public preferences more than could be deduced from the globalist assumption of citizens as merely consumers. Location therefore mattered, and hence culture. !!!!!!!**

Anthropologists – often more actor-oriented – destroyed the cosmopolitan illusions about **the spread of global civil consciousness and one-worldism. Appadurai (1996), for example, distinguished between his five disjunctive forms of flow** (techno-, finance-, ideo-, media-, and ethnoscapes). Flows were not all of a piece, he implied, and the actual local import of flows depended on the combinations in which they arrived, which was far from uniform from place to place. Kalb (2002) in the same vein emphasized that much of the South and East received software rather than hardware. With public infrastructures in disarray, incomes far from sufficient and inequality rising, software without hardware left the globalist offer for all practical purposes restricted to ephemeral images of commodities, a fantasy world fuelling illusions of personal becoming rather than offering tools for practical empowerment. The Comaroffs (2001), as well as Verdery (1996) and Humphrey (2002), similarly suggested that the neo-liberal market, excluding actors from production but including them in public fantasies of millennial

wealth creation by abstract and obscure mechanisms, led to the proliferation of vernacular 'occult economies' centered on drugs, martial and spectator sports, crime, gambling, pyramid schemes and other rituals of quasi-achievement and hit-and-run success under **casino-capitalism**. Several authors also noted the **upsurge of highly mediatized, ritualist, pay-as-you-go religions, such as Pentecostalism, which focus on this-worldly pecuniary success rather than relief in the afterlife, in particular in Africa, East Asia and Latin America**.

Such illusions of consumption were strongly gendered and had age-specific appeals. This invited an upsurge of counter-narratives of nationalism, localism, religion and tradition (Kalb, 2002), often of a male-chauvinist and paternalist persuasion. These reactive narratives helped to subsequently establish what Geschiere and Meyer (1998), following Bayart (1993), have called cultural closure, or what Ẓị iẓjek at an early moment and in relation to East European transition had already identified as the return of the cultural super ego (Ẓị iẓjek, 1990). Geschiere pointed at the increasing incidence of accusations of witchcraft and manifestations of the occult in both Africa and China, as inequality and visibly uneven access to the cornucopia of global consumerism increased. Verdery (1996) and Tismaneanu (1998) described the emergent paranoid fantasies, myths, conspiracy theories, 'chosen traumas' and other populist predicaments that spread in the wake of the Soviet implosion and the Yugoslav wars. They sprang up anew in the aftermath of the East Asian crisis in places such as Indonesia and Malaysia. They targeted Jews, Gypsies, westerners, Albanians, and Chinese, among others, as scapegoats for dark conspiratorial forces that threatened the integrity and livelihood of imagined majority folk-communities. Thus, places and popular identities were becoming hamstrung between an intensifying dialectic of infinite openness and reactive and fearful closure. **Instead of helping to create a cosmopolitan public sphere, neo-liberal globalization tended to generate 'culture talk' (Stolcke, 1995), insider/outsider fights, populist paranoia, and intense struggles for 'place-making' in general (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997a, 1997b; Kalb and Tak, 2005).**

Culture talk, insider/outsider cleavages, and place-making were additionally propelled by accelerating migration, in its turn pushed by the forces of global marketization and regime collapse (another closely associated phenomenon, see later). Discourses of culture rapidly festered, both among migrant populations and among receiving communities during the 1990s. This was the case everywhere, in poor as well as in rich societies. While there were not more people on the move between countries in the 1990s than in the late 19th century (Staring, 2000), the new migration clearly invited heightened spatial and cultural border patrols.

The dynamics of cultural closure embedded in the contradictions of neo-liberal globalization got an extra push from increasing competition for scarce resources in land, labor, housing, education, and sometimes marriage markets. Appadurai (1996) and others suggested that longing for belonging in the global age created strong fantasies of home among diasporic groups in, by definition, less than friendly receiving societies. Imaginary homelands often became more radically 'traditional' than 'at home'. Some migrant groups joined transnational radical nationalist movements, which often became powerful factors in homeland politics in countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, Croatia, Estonia, and others. Transnationalism in general was understood as a relatively new force, facilitated by cheap communication and transport. Its complex consequences for 'home' countries included, apart from the intensification of political

contention through increased diaspora activism and funding, the steeply rising importance of remittances as against development aid, diversion of funds from investment to conspicuous consumption, but also 'brain drain' (see Mazzucato, 2004; Vertovec and Cohen, 1999; Vertovec et al., 2003). Among refugee populations and people displaced by civil war or prosecution, diaspora nationalisms often gave rise to violent dreams of purification and sacrifice, as among Hutu and Tutsi fugitives in central Africa (Malkii, 1995), Tamils in India, Europe or the US, and of course among Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza and Lebanon.

In addition to the deep play of cultural flux and closure and the intensifying boundary patrols associated with moving and receiving populations, the globalist era featured another systemic source of anti-liberalism that originated from its very own imperatives of democratic transition in the context of global marketization. The 'third wave' of democratization was less unproblematic and self-evident than initially assumed. This became immediately clear in the unfolding drama of the breakdown of Yugoslavia. In Poland and the Soviet Union nomenclatura elites, including high party functionaries and members of the secret services, had chosen en masse to insert themselves in time and profitably in the emerging networks of transnational trade and finance, often by taking private control over socialist property (L/o's and Zybortowicz, 2001; Staniszki, 1991; Volkov, 2002). They traded political power for property and network gains. But in complex federations like Yugoslavia, entrenched regional elites defended themselves against rising democratic claims by playing the nationalist card (Glenny, 1996). This was facilitated by state control over much of the media (Bowen, 1996), helping to stir traumatic memories of mutual slaughter in earlier periods.

Financial flows played a little recognized but important role in illiberal mobilizations. Ethno-nationalism in the 1980s and 1990s became a way to mobilize local populations threatened by 'structural adjustment' and IMF-imposed austerity programs. Such global programs helped to systematically delegitimize heavily indebted central states vis-a-vis their popular classes. Illiberal mobilizations were intended to rally local populations behind entrenched bureaucratic and military elites in order to prolong their hold on power and give them time to regroup, monopolize strategic resources and organize their client networks around paramilitary booty and illegal trade. Global monetarist imposition thus sponsored both the impulse toward democratic opening and transnational markets among elites – by weakening the state as an accumulation vehicle – as well as the opposite: xenophobic closure tending toward fascism in the context of collapsing states.

One of the least discussed causes behind this path to catastrophe, thus, was an international environment that offered very few incentives to national elites to actually relax their hold on bureaucratic levers (Kalb, 2002). While the 'international community' reduced Poland's national debt by half and the reformers of the Russian state were offered lavish IMF and other funds as well as ample opportunities for fraud and self-enrichment during the privatization processes (Wedel, 2001), federal elites in Yugoslavia were cornered by strict application of IMF rules and a state department that in the memorable words of James Baker III 'had no dog in this fight'. Again, place and geopolitical position mattered hugely, turning one territory into a showcase of globalist transition while pushing the next to turn itself into a slaughterhouse. A comparable conjuncture arose in Indonesia in the wake of the East Asian crisis, the intervention of the IMF, and the partial success of the democratic movement in forcing

the Suharto clan to step down. Indonesia's transition to democracy, consequently, was marked by central state paralysis and surging nationalist and religious conflicts, as regional military and bureaucratic elites began to sponsor radical ethnic and religious groups in order to usurp local power vis-a-vis the center, cause permanent emergencies and deflect popular anger toward minority scapegoats. Religious bureaucratic regimes in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia functioned according to comparable paranoid logics of rule, as did post-socialist Romania until the mid-1990s and Zimbabwe after 1999. Central Asia and the Caucasus were characterized as a whole by this illiberal syndrome. Thus, in the course of the decade it became increasingly clear that the globalist opening was throwing up its own unexpected obstacles as entrenched elites organized illiberal popular mobilizations playing into traumatic memories of violence and fears for national decline in a harsh neo-liberal world context.

In these and similar ways structuralist and actor-oriented institutionalists destroyed both the assumptions and the causal links in the globalist grand narrative. In a sense, **path-dependence, hybridity and place-making were ingenious tools that united the most enduring elements from world systems theory ('historical systems'), political economy and postmodernism in a new emergent paradigm. This paradigm studied historically situated, dynamic and contingent, though by definition power-suffused, dialectics of local and global histories** (see also Kalb, 1997). In the process, the global as an overbearing and imposing structure with inevitable local outcomes was rapidly hollowed out. At the end of the decade, the Marxist social theorist and ethnographer Michael Burawoy would write that **'Globalization is produced through a conflictual, negotiated process within and between nodes of a global chain'** (Burawoy, 2001: 157), thus effectively evening out the supposed theoretical hierarchy of macro and micro. Criticizing James Ferguson's (1994) work on the stifling influence of World Bank activities on popular politics in Lesotho, he wrote that **'[globalization] is not a machine but a production process with its own politics, no less and no more than every other node in the global chain – even if its resources and organizational endowments can subjugate nodes further down the chain'** (Burawoy, 2001: 157). However, **'effects in one node reverberate down but also up the chain . . . the local no longer opposes but constitutes the global'** (Burawoy, 2001: 157). Struggle and contingencies between differently situated actors and 'levels' were replacing globalist mechanics and teleology. Globalization became ever more often presented as a mantra rather than a natural fact of life, as an ideology that sought to mystify the contingent conditions of its own production and to obscure the always present potentialities for public choice and local action.

However, in retrospect and despite all the genuine methodological gains and key political insights, **the institutionalist counter-case was seriously overstated because of a lack of awareness of how global marketization was actually transforming local institutional structures**, both from within and without. The East Asian crisis led instantly to a new round of severe indebtedness of nations that had featured unprecedented economic growth for a whole generation and had been the single example of how to escape Third World predicaments. It also led to forced and major devaluations of local currencies and savings accounts while opening the way for western capital to buy up a considerable part of the family silver and enforcing the opening up of internal governance structures. Russia was 'lost' after the ruble crisis of 1998 and did not 'return' into the vault of the western parliamentary democracies again. Argentina, a model student of the Consensus, would collapse soon. Competitive devaluation threatened continuously among East Asian exporters, inexorably propelled by economic expansion in

China. After the stock market bubble had exploded, the dollar began to fall rapidly and started to lose its crucial function of world consumer-anchor of last resort, producing economic crises in Europe and Asia. Contradictions of the neo-liberal global system thus worked themselves out ruthlessly and had painful consequences on the ground, notwithstanding the active presence of local institutions.

Policy research in Europe, too, had clearly exaggerated the autonomy of public policy. Europe immediately slipped into recession in the wake of the US stock market collapse and both unemployment and budget deficits began rising again (European bourses even lost considerably more of their value than Wall Street). Third Way social democrats started to lose elections and visibly lost belief in their cause. Voters were right: while gross GDP indicators showed that European governments had indeed kept up total welfare expenditures, closer inspection revealed that in many states a severe shift had taken place in the target populations of benefits, from young people to senior citizens and from outsiders to insiders (Esping Andersen et al., 2002). Income inequalities had been on the rise in most states since the mid-1980s and had not been mended during the boom of the late 1990s. The ideology of social rights, presumably central to the ‘European model’, was slowly reduced to window dressing, except for those who practically ‘owned’ their rights. Material outcomes were rather neo-liberal after all, even though cloaked in rhetorical traditions of social cohesion – though one must admit that US poverty figures remained far higher than European ones, UK figures much higher than Continental ones.

3. AN INTERMEZZO ON WORLD INEQUALITY DATA

The intensifying debates between market-liberals and institutionalists in the 1990s came ultimately together in the question of whether the proportion of the world population below the poverty line grew or declined as a consequence of globalization policies – marketization, privatization, liberalization, stabilization – and what explained the outcome. Was the opening up of markets by itself sufficient to produce ‘trickle down’ of wealth, as the market liberals believed, or was state intervention and increased institutional capacity necessary for outcomes that could benefit larger majorities, as the institutionalists argued? A ‘Google’ internet search on the themes of globalization and inequality produces at the moment of writing 325,000 internet items that explicitly deal with the issue, a clear measure of how crucial the question had become for the legitimacy of globalizing states and transnational actors in the eyes of the wider public.

The World Bank played a key role in this debate, being the sole organization gathering worldwide income data independent from the national accounts. Predictably, in the course of the 1990s the Bank increasingly became an arena of controversy (Deacon, 1997; Wade, 2001a). Its Eastern Europe research unit became a catalyst of methodological innovation after new personnel from transition countries, among others the Croat Branko Milanovic (1998, 1999), started to criticize the Bank’s poverty and inequality indices for the post-socialist nations – they were less sanguine about transition than the Bank. His evidence demonstrated that world inequality between 1988 and 1993 had been unambiguously on the rise.

By the end of the 1990s new senior officers such as James Wolfensohn and George Stiglitz, both nominated by the Clinton administration, nurtured a more pro-poor stance within the Bank. Subsequently, the World Development Report (WDR) of 2000/1 – chief author Ravi Kanbur, subject world poverty – signaled a slight increase in extreme poverty over the last two decades as well as an increase in inequality. The US Treasury did not like the first drafts. It had already been mobilizing against Stiglitz's institutionalist influence in the Bank and now pressurized the chief author of the WDR openly so that he felt forced to resign before completion. Stiglitz left the Bank too and wrote a critical and best-selling book on the misconceived policies of the Bank and in particular the IMF (Stiglitz, 2002). The subsequent World Development Report of 2002 on globalization and economic growth, authored by David Dollar (sic), denied the earlier findings of increasing inequality and poverty and sought to demonstrate that trickle down did exist, in particular in those nations that had opened up their national markets and reduced internal regulations. Which reasonable claims can be made on the basis of existing large-scale data? I want to make three such claims.

While the World Development Reports of 2001 and 2002 contradicted each other on this score, it seems plausible to argue, as Robert Wade (2002) does, that the number of people with less than a dollar a day has been declining. Why? If globalization is, as Polanyi would infer, a grand imposition of markets by core global actors, we cannot but expect a higher frequency of cash earnings among the world population at large. The process includes an acceleration of the transformation of the world peasantry into a class of casualized proletarian and proto-proletarian labor. The under-theorized downside of globalization is proletarianization (see also Harvey, 2003). This also implies the monetization of family relationships as women and children become more closely associated with market incomes. As such, globalization cannot but generate a growing percentage of households that become dependent on cash earnings. Extremely limited access to cash must decline if markets indeed spread.

But it is a non-sequitur to conclude from here that absolute poverty must be falling; nor, for that matter, that it is rising. What we are seeing, strictly speaking, is just increased participation in markets and a deepening dependence on monetary incomes. This is so if only because of the decline of non-market forms of livelihood. Whether increasing cash incomes do or do not allow people access to a basket of basic necessities, including care, we do not yet know. The answer is contingent upon aspects of social relationships that cannot be represented as statistical aggregates. This is another way of saying that absolute poverty in the end is more about having no one than about having no thing (even though they are closely intertwined). On the bare bones of survival, poverty is first of all a relational (micro) phenomenon (see for example Mittelman, 2000).

This is arguably much less the case for issues of relative poverty/social inequality. And here is the second claim and the basic piece of evidence for any inference about rising or declining world inequality in the era of globalization: it is only China (and East Asia) which has succeeded in narrowing the income gap with the developed world over the last decades (Wade 2001b, 2002; Wilterdink and Potharst, 2001).³ India remained stable, while populations in all other world regions declined in relation to the West, just as incomes in the West became more unequal (Wilterdink, 2000). Altogether the data indicate a slight increase or, depending on method, no change in overall inequality

(Wade, 2002). The income growth of hundreds of millions of Chinese explains the relatively stable situation of world inequality as a whole. Without the Chinese, however, it becomes a tragedy.

Three conclusions follow from this: (1) globalization policies have different effects on economic growth and inequality in different world regions. Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and West and Central Asia have been much more negatively affected than China or India. Ergo: there are no unmediated outcomes of marketization policies. Outcomes depend on starting positions, national histories, and relations with the core, as institutionalists and world systems theorists would appreciate. (2) But where Washington Consensus-Globalism has been adopted wholesale, inequality has risen dramatically, as in the post-colonies of Africa and Latin America. (3) China's key role suggests that the explanation must start not with attributing this overall outcome to the success of Washington Consensus style policies, as the World Bank did in its 2002 World Development Report – China was much too independent for that – but with the rise of coastal China.

The World Bank, in its 2002/3 report on globalization and economic growth, took the easy way. Chinese productivity growth (as growth anywhere else), it claimed, was closely correlated with the implementation of globalization measures such as increases in external trade and decreases in state regulation. As often, the correlation was subsequently treated as an explanation. It skipped over the essential point that China was hardly a good exemplar of neo-liberal globalization policies, not nearly as good as most places in Latin America, Eastern Europe or Africa, which had shown little growth and often even outright decline over the last two decades. China, of course, is a huge, nondemocratic imperial state that was never colonized, with a continuing socialist heritage and a mercantilist economy that is far from fully open to world market flows. In fact, mainland China is first of all being reconnected to its own Chinese diasporas throughout Asia and America (Vancouver). Its capital account, for example, which might appear fully open when one looks just at the impressive figures for FDI, is strictly controlled and first of all open to Chinese capital from abroad. It is the reorientation of far-flung Chinese capitalist networks on mainland China and vice versa that explains the rise of the coastal economy rather than an anonymous insertion into abstract global markets, as the aggregate figures of the IMF appear to suggest. If a particular set of policies should explain this process it is hardly the globalist prescriptions from Washington but rather the 'one country/two systems' project of the Communist Party of China.⁴

Finally a note on the social nature of Chinese export-led industrialization, claim number three. Though export-led growth in manufacturing does help to increase incomes in the coastal cities, it is predicated not just on increased class and spatial polarization but perhaps even more significantly on the intensification of gender and generational inequalities, indeed the deepening of outright exploitation. This does not show up in any household-based data at all. China replicates older forms of within-family exploitation that have historically been closely associated with the apparel, toy, textile and electronics industries (Chan, 2001; Kalb, 1997; Lee, 1998; Sequino, 2000). In this respect, China stands as an illustration of the contradictory and partly perverse relation between globalization and women's emancipation in general (Freeman, 2000; Mills, 2003). China's particular path of extrication from Maoist-communism and its consequent hybrid mode of insertion in a specific segment of the world economy, therefore, does not testify to globalism tout court but rather to the close association of its export

led success with an intensifying regime of gender and generational exploitation that remains hidden in any World Bank inequality count.

4. EMPIRE

Skeptical and realist critiques of liberal globalization theory were largely based on meso and micro-observations. When they did connect their findings with world-level structures they often imperceptibly blurred with a new wave of writing on imperialism gathering steam by the later 1990s. When institutionalists hinted at systematic, purposeful, and self-interested action by key actors in core states behind the drive to global marketization policies, they fed into a radicalization of visions that began to depart decisively from the liberal middle ground. Empire theorists appeared both on the left (see for example Gowan, 1999; Harvey, 2003; Panitch, 2000) and on the right (Ferguson, 2004). Two key issues emerged in the question of empire: the uses and nature of state power, in particular the structural violence exercised by the US state, in the making of a new global empire form; and the role of an emergent transnational capitalist class.

The emergent Global Justice Movement after Seattle, 1999, the attacks of September 11, the resolute splitting of the UN, NATO, and the EU by the Bush administration, uncontrolled US militarism and the unfinished wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, but also the unprecedented globally synchronized anti-war demonstrations of spring 2002, all served to radicalize the critique on the US-driven globalization policies of the 1990s. But, and this is important, it happened in a confusing and turnaround context, the nature of which still haunts the new radical theorizing. In a matter of months, core principles of the post-1989 liberal alliance were overhauled as neo-liberal multilateralism was subordinated to selective unilateralism and militarism by the US state. Market-driven policies were reduced to an adjunct role in the service of security-driven strategies. Wall Street lost influence and first the Pentagon, and then also the State Department, took priority. Migration and visa regimes almost everywhere in the world were hardened and the ethnic nationalism of majority populations in many parts now finally turned into proclaimed government policies.

Self-victimization in the US after September 11 led to strong protectionist, security, and America-first obsessions. Unprecedented hikes in the military budget led the Pentagon by 2005 to monopolize about half the world defense expenditures. Strict monetary policies, formerly a linchpin of Washington Consensus prescriptions, were reversed 180 degrees to keep up lavish consumer borrowing in the US and put a floor under stock-market values rather than supporting a strong dollar. In a matter of months, the US economy was thus turned from world consumer of last resort and global financial entrepot into the largest debtor nation in history. It was only saved from steep inflation and depression by huge inflows of East Asian and European surplus funds that helped keep the dollar somewhat in its place and secure exports to the US while the Pentagon was running its expensive protectorates in Afghanistan and Iraq and gearing up for future military expeditions.

Globalization was now unmasked as the soft side and ideology (Petras and Veltmeyer, 2001) of a US-centered imperialism. The unmasking went together with a reappraisal of the classics of imperialism: Rosa Luxemburg's *The Accumulation of Capital* was republished for the first time since 1973, nota bene by the commercial press Routledge

(Luxemburg, 2003), while Monthly Review Press brought out a compilation of her political writings (Luxemburg et al., 2004). Nikolai Bukharin's original treatise on Imperialism and World Economy (2003), the example on which Lenin's Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism was built, had already been published in English in 1995 but a new edition made it prominently onto the bookshelves in London, New York, and elsewhere in the spring of 2003. The stage was set, however, by **Hardt and Negri's iconoclastic but obscurantist and anarcho-utopian Empire (2000; and see Balakrishnan, 2003, for an assortment of critiques). This philosophical update of the European autonomista/autonomen experience of the 1970s was instantly turned into a totem of the Global Justice Movement right before the turn of the tide.**

These texts make up a hardly coherent intellectual mumbo jumbo. A huge gap yawns, in style and substance, between the early 20th-century Marxist treatises on imperialism and the anarchist siren call of Hardt and Negri. In the current context they suffer from mirrored inadequacies. The inadequacies focus on the nature of the contemporary capitalist state (see also Harvey, 2003; Tilly, 2003; Wood, 2003). In genuine autonomista fashion, Empire, a philosophical essay, celebrates the increasing irrelevance of the modern state and its hierarchic industrial production paradigms by the onslaught of global capitalism. The book is beholden to its pre-2000 origins by painting an anonymous empire of capital that pulverizes the obsolete social hierarchies of modernity, in particular those associated with industrial classes, nations, and patriarchal families. Such collectivities all dissolve into formless 'multitudes' which, having little left to lose, now seek to turn liberation into liberty by claiming a space for subjectivities beyond capitalism. In a sense, Hardt and Negri, inspired by the mobile, digital and networked context of the late 1990s, discover precisely the collective actor that was once missing from Herbert Marcuse's One Dimensional Man (which, tellingly, was republished in 2002, again by Routledge), while bringing Marx's dialectic up to date for postmodern times. The heroes are now transnational migrants and networked artisan-intellectuals.

Classical Marxist critiques of modern imperialism had a totally different purchase and style. They were grounded in concrete empirical analyses of the problems of national capitalisms around 1900 and pointed to a movement contrary to the one pictured by Hardt and Negri: the increasing mobilization of core states behind the interests of national capitalists at home and abroad, ultimately leading to the militarization of social economies, colonialism, and inter-imperialist war. Where Hardt and Negri see multitudes liberated from the cage of the modern state by global capital, subsequently liberating themselves from the demands of the capitalists, Luxemburg, Bukharin, Lenin (and Hobson and Hilferding) describe growing state involvement in the reproduction of capital and labor, 'social imperialism', territorial conquest and militarism. Which way to go for radical theory in the present epoch?

The mirrored inadequacies of Empire and classical imperialism theories concern the role and nature of the state in the current globalizing conjuncture, the place of geopolitics, and the precise ways in which current imperialism is connected with the class structures of prior neo-liberal globalization (see also Harvey, 2003; Panitch, 2000; Wood, 2003). I will argue that empire in the current context can best be seen as the outcome and practice of a volatile but nevertheless robust alliance between (1) the emergent transnational western state, (2) the transnational capitalist class by which it is supported, and (3) the military cum hegemonic powers of the US state.

First, it is a confusion of myth and reality to argue, as Hardt and Negri do – bound to the ideological context of the late 1990s – that the new imperialism, in contrast to the old, is more or less state-less or anti-state. This view suffers from a fetishism of the national state and misses an important recent development. There is a strong new body of literature that analyses the emergent transnational western state and – notwithstanding other important disagreements among its authors – convincingly points at an uneven and far from finished patchwork of global administrations, juridical practices, and financial and military networks and mechanisms that form the nucleus of an emergent transnational state-like structure with regionalist offshoots (Arrighi, 1994, 2000; Gilpin, 2000, 2001; McMichael, 2003; Mittelman, 2000; Panitch, 2000; Robinson, 2002, 2004; Sassen, 1998, 2003; Shaw, 2000). This structure is built and supported by the core governments of the OECD and the G8. It facilitates global trade and cooperation, helps to turn national states into market-led competition states, and serves to embed them upwards and sideways in opaque juridical commitments that place them significantly beyond the control of national democratic sovereignty.

While Held and Archibuggi (Archibuggi et al., 1998) argue that the emergent transnational state could well be the harbinger of a future cosmopolitan democracy, political economy authors (Arrighi, 1994, 2000; Gowan, 1999; McMichael, 2003; Panitch, 2000; Robinson, 2002, 2004; Sassen, 1998, 2003; Wood, 2003) see transnational governance structures serving primarily the interests of an emergent transnational capitalist class (Sklair, 1998; Van der Pijl, 1998). They point to the fact that transnational state structures are by far the most coherent and authoritative in the domain of finance: the IMF and the World Bank together with the coordinated network of treasuries and Central Banks, and their out-branching linkages with the top of the private banking sector, brokerage and arbitrage firms. While the IMF and World Bank originated in the outcomes of the Second World War and the need to manage a liberal peace via multilateralism and international Keynesianism, these organizations have been fundamentally transformed by the capitalist profitability crises of the 1970s and 1980s (Stiglitz, 2002) and have become reoriented towards financialization (Arrighi, 1994, 2000): the valorization imperatives of liquid and speculative capital. They have thus become geared to the interests of the haute finance and large transnational corporations in a hypercompetitive world and have become the arena for the formation of a self-conscious transnational class, recruited from financial, corporate and state personnel. The transnational class and the organs it dominates employ neo-liberalism and globalism as unifying ideologies that seek to (re)commodify aspects of social relationships and social reproduction that were hitherto the object of state or community regulation, social entitlements and protection, thus expanding and deepening the circuits of capital (Harvey, 2003). By so doing, they encroach routinely on the sovereignty of national states or regional conglomerates of states, among others by helping to ‘constitutionalize’ neo-liberalism, by empowering the transnational class segments within any individual country, and by decapitating the social contracts between classes forged in the prior period of Fordism/ Keynesianism/developmentalism/really-existing socialism. In sum, instead of a liberal and/or civil society reading of global governance, this work combines aspects of Marx, Gramsci and Polanyi in pointing out that structures of global governance have become hijacked by an emergent transnational capitalist class that aims to impose world-wide marketization and ‘generalized debt-peonage’ (Harvey, 2003) from above.

In addition, the same authors have insisted that **this emergent transnational state obeys the interests of some states far more than others**. The structure was created step by step as a vehicle for the global extension of the US state and its ruling financial interests, supported by similar class actors among key allies in Europe and Japan. The US state, thus, has become a class actor closely associated with the transnational classes of other developed nations through its own transnational class. While some global forums function as communication and planning departments of this US-led transnational state, for instance the Trilateral Commission, the G8, the OECD and the World Economic Forum, others, such as the IMF and the World Bank, have been transformed into effective bureaucratic ‘debt collection devices’ (Bienefeld, 2000) for global financial flows and, increasingly, as vehicles for institutional re-engineering of obsolete national institutions. **Regional alliances such as the EU, Asean and Nafta, similarly, have first of all served to translate the issues of free trade, deregulated capital flows and property rights as agreed in GATT, WTO and other global organizations downwards into other jurisdictions** (Mittelman, 2000). Instead of cosmopolitan democracy in the making, this work argues that actual global governance is US-led imperialism in action, what Peter Gowan (1999) has called the ‘Dollar-Wall Street-Regime’. In this vision, the multilateral UN organizations as well as the global civil society of NGOs, organizations that political liberals cherish, have for all practical purposes been reduced to serving as its fire department, its expert toolbox, and its public relations group. These arenas may be necessary for the maintenance of hegemony but they hardly affect the core financial operations that are the undemocratic prerogative of the treasuries of their key sponsors, first of all the US, in close alliance with core banking interests.

Two final questions: the issue of current imperialism and territory, and the question of inter-imperialist rivalry. First, the new imperialists are not nearly so keen on occupying territory, ruling over its inhabitants, and waging wars to that end, as the classical imperialists were, even though control over territories with strategic resources may well invite war (Harman, 2003; Klare, 2004; Wood, 2003). Rather, they prefer to work through financial and vassalage linkages: the ultimate form of indirect rule. Secondly, inter-imperialist rivalry, the classical cause of the formation of exclusive trade blocs and modern war, is uniquely prevented from taking a military or openly radical form by the fact that all potential claimants are dependent on the techno-military might of the one single player, the United States, that can both wield unprecedented military superiority over all other potential contenders as well as exert hegemony – soft power combined with hard force – via the United Nations, post-Bretton Woods frameworks, and bilateralism.

In conclusion: rather than recycling the debates within Marxism of a century ago or embracing the free-floating utopias of the present-day narodniki, that is, indeed, rather than reproducing the old divides within the Left, the imperialism critique of the new radicals should come to terms with these three more or less new properties of the state in the age of empire. The contemporary imperialism argument thus emphasizes that what Bourdieu has called ‘the right hand of the state’ – finance and coercion – has become globalized and placed beyond any democratic control, while the ‘left hand of the state’ has been locked into increasingly defensive, under-funded, local and parochial conditions.

Beyond the **conventional institutionalist visions, which remain largely fixed**

to micro-or meso-environments, it claims that this has not just been the largely contingent outcome of institutional designs and actors in situ, but rather the systematic local outcome of a global imperial framework imposed on behalf of finance capital and the transnational class by the US state in alliance with similar class fractions among its allies.

CONCLUSION

I have argued that the evolution of the globalization debate can be explained by the coming together and then drifting apart of the western political projects of market liberalism (neo-liberalism) and political liberalism in the course of the 1980s and 1990s. I have suggested that interdisciplinary institutionalist scholarship in the social sciences helped the political liberals to gain the intellectual upper hand in the later 1990s as local and territorial outcomes of globalization were better explained by institutional capacities and trajectories on the ground than by marketization per se, including the consequences for global inequalities. I have also argued that the rise of empire centered on the US state and transnational classes – as fact and as focus for debate – was the predictable outcome of an epoch of accelerated global marketization imposed from above.

Several issues that emerge from this actual and intellectual development have not been adequately addressed in the framework of this article though they are of key concern to anthropology. **The non-exhaustive list includes: global proletarianization ('the decline of the peasantry') and its multiple social consequences; state collapse in the weaker zones of the world-system; mobilization and renewed popular claim-making – often with a non-modernist and potentially anti-imperialist inclination; intensified efforts at regionalism on jumbo-regional level; and the consequent complexities of imperial hegemony. I have emphasized the importance for anthropology and other social sciences to move from postmodern fascinations with local narratives per se to theory driven global questions realized in a comparativist program with a research focus on local/global outcomes.**

Jonathan Friedman (2003, for instance) has consistently stressed the double polarization associated with globalization: the polarization between classes as well as the polarization between increasingly traditionalized and culturally 'enclosed' populations. This double polarization is an intermediated one. And the intermediating factor is precisely the systematic shortage of legitimacy on the part of the modern national state under neo-liberal globalization and empire (see also Wallerstein, 2003). **A major paradox: the emergence of a transnational class operating with digital technologies and advanced management decision systems in the capillary branches of an emergent world empire is willy-nilly acting to parochialize the denizens of the contemporary post-welfare states of the North and South, West and East. Our pasts, ethnic or religious, are becoming our future now because categorical values, beliefs and loyalties, buried deeply in the imagined roots of our cultures, are taking the place of the universalist modernisms gone awry.**

They are the cloak that deeply uncertain societies are increasingly wrapping around their shoulders, embodying the desperate claim to community, identity and legitimacy. Their leaders, meanwhile, are sneaking out through the magnificent backdoor-exit offered by empire.

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Notes

1 For pre-1848 political languages see Bill Sewell (1980).

2 Any detailed discussion requires a lengthy treatment of technical issues, such as the internal and external validity of statistical constructs like purchasing power parities; the validity and comparability of data gathered by household surveys; the arbitrariness and inadequacy of the one-dollar-a-day line for measuring extreme poverty and other World Bank poverty lines for middle-income countries (which are often 50–100% below national poverty lines in the relevant states); the differences between world inequality and the sum of national inequality ratios, with or without weighting of population numbers. Such discussion can obviously not be made in this context.

3 This is the case whether measured in terms of purchasing power parity, market exchange rates, distances between deciles/quintiles of population, or Gini-coefficients. Of course market exchange rates make the distance of incomes between developed and developing countries much bigger – compare Milanovic (1999), for example, with Arrighi and Silver (1999). Market exchange rates are the only realistic numerical approximation of global class formation. Purchasing power parities are no real relation, just a statistical measure of ways and degrees of local survival.

4 The UNCTAD report (2004), ‘Linking International Trade with Poverty Reduction’ (www.unctad.org), diverges significantly from World Bank orthodoxies and confirms some of the arguments made earlier as well as presenting more fresh data.

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