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Gusts of Change
The Consequences of the 1989 Revolutions for the Study of Globalization

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Abstract
Since the 1960s, the concepts of the 'global' and the 'transnational' have challenged the state-centred orientation of several disciplines. By 1989, the 'global' contained sufficient ambiguity and conceptual promise to emerge as a potentially new central concept to replace the conventional notion of modernity. The consequences of the 1989 revolutions for this emerging concept were extensive. As a result of the post-communist 'New World Order', a new vision of a single triumphant political and economic system was put forward. With the 'globalizing of modernity' as a description of the post-1989 reality, 'globalization' became the policy mantra of the Clinton and Blair administrations up until the late 1990s when 'anti-globalization' activists were able to question the salience of this dominant theory of 'globalization'. In scholarly discussion, 'globalization' became a floating signifier to be filled with a variety of disciplinary and political meanings. In the post-9/11 era, this Western-centred 'globalization' has been conceptually linked to cosmopolitanism while it has played a minor role in the multiple modernities agenda. The article concludes with an assessment of the current status of the 'global' in theory and research.

Key words
■ culture ■ global ■ globalization ■ localization ■ modernity ■ transnational

This article explores the consequences of the 1989 revolutions – and the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe – in shaping the dominant scholarly interpretations of the concept of globalization. I first outline the emergence of the new vocabulary of the 'transnational' and 'global' in social scientific vocabulary over the course of the post-war period. The next section describes the theoretical narrative developed as a result of the 1989 revolutions. With the 'globalizing of modernity' as a description of the post-1989 social reality, the cross-national diffusion

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of Western modernity (e.g., 'McDonaldization' or 'Westernization' or 'Europeanization') was reinterpreted as 'globalization', while in economic policy the adoption of the 'globalization project' meant the triumph of neo-liberalism. 'Globalization' provided the policy mantra of the Clinton and Blair administrations. It was only in the late 1990s that the rise of the 'anti-globalization' movement challenged this dominant interpretation of 'globalization'. In the third section, the article discusses the way in which the post-9/11 reality has contributed to a restructuring of the terms of the intellectual conversation by casting aside the image of a triumphant and unstoppable globalization. With the emergence and proliferation of the debates on cosmopolitanism and the popularization of the multiple modernities agenda, the initial juxtaposition between the pre-1989 and post-1989 interpretations of globalization has been superseded by different research agendas. In contemporary discourse, the post-1989 interpretation of 'globalization' has gained scholarly acceptance over pre-1989 interpretations of the 'global'. Finally, after 1989, there has been extensive theoretical refinement of the pre-1989 notion of the 'global'.

Emerging Concepts for the Twenty-first Century: The Story Up to 1989

While the term 'global' dates back to 1944 – at least according to Scholte (2000: 43) – its adoption into social-scientific discourse has been a feature of the post-1960 period. It is important to highlight the nearly simultaneous emergence of the 'global' (and its related term 'transnational') in different areas of inquiry (or disciplinary fields) – such as political economy, international relations, and culture/religion. Certainly, depending upon individual interpretations, it is entirely possible and potentially credible to argue that there has been a strong civilizational component in the writings of classical sociology (Weber, Durkheim, Simmel, Marx). That is, the classical authors did not, in fact, subscribe to what in later days has become known as methodological nationalism (Chernillo, 2006). The tendency to equate society with the nation-state has been an inevitable component of the post-war period and the emergence of the entire problematic of having to face the issue of 'development' for those regions of the planet that were until the mid-twentieth century European colonies or were subjected to semi-colonial regimes. The very notion of the 'three worlds' (Worsley, 1984) contained in the problematic of post-war 'development' entailed the possibility of grouping states into different constellations in accordance to their political-economic regime and level of economic development.

It was only in the late 1960s and early 1970s that social scientists began exploring the problematic of trans-national or world-systemic or global processes (see Waters, 1995, for an overview of these precursor theories). Implicitly, the notion of the 'global' (and the related notion of the 'transnational') suggested that, contrary to the state-centred nature of the modernization and dependency approaches key aspects of social change could not be located within the state but

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rather in trans-national or trans-state processes. Already in the 1960s, the economists' debate over whether major corporate actors should be designated as transnational or multinational enterprises indicated the magnitude of the sea change in thinking about social change. If enterprises were multinational, they still maintained allegiance to particular homelands while transnational enterprises were floating freely without having to submit their profit-making impulse to national priorities.

From that initial debate, the term 'transnational' was transferred to international relations (IR) theory in the 1970s, causing a seismic shift in the nature of that discipline. While 'inter-national' relations were traditionally conceived as involving state actors, the post-war reality forced upon the experts the need to acknowledge that such relations were no longer shaped exclusively (and at times not even primarily) by state actors. Rather, an impressive list of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the entire network of post-war international treaties and a voluminous list of inter-governmental agencies and organizations (UNESCO, WHO, etc.) meant that the new rules of the international system of states were increasingly global in aspiration – albeit not always in practice (McGrew and Lewis, 1992). Accordingly, globalization was the harbinger of the 'end of the nation-state' (Ohmae, 1995) or the reconfiguration of state sovereignty (Sassen, 1996). In sociology, this line of thinking challenged the dominant approaches of the post-war period – both of modernization theory and its mirror opposite, dependency theory. Wallerstein's (1974; 1979) world systems theory aimed originally to displace precisely the state-centred nature of these approaches, and it is not surprising that key criticisms against his approach were levelled by state theorists. But while Wallerstein's project entailed accounting for the power of individual states as a consequence of trans-state or 'systemic' processes, it remained squarely rooted in neo-Marxist political economy. Consequently, the 'global' was mostly understood as a geographical descriptor of the reach of capitalism.

In contrast to that use of the term, the 'global' emerged in sociological literature as an autonomous frame of reference in direct connection to the post-war ecumenical movement, the creation of the World Council of Churches, and the influence of Parsons' evolutionary theory (Parsons, 1977). In fact, it was within the sociology of religion that the concepts of globalization and globality originally emerged by the mid-1980s (Robertson and Chirico, 1985; Robertson and Lechner, 1985). Initial statements stressed the 'global' as a general frame of reference for individuals and collectivities alike (Robertson, 1992) thereby suggesting that the territorial circumcision of culture within a nation-state was no longer a viable proposition. In meta-theoretical terms, overturning the materialist foundations of political economy offered the opportunity to present the 'global' as *the* 'culturalist' alternative to Wallersteinian theory (Robertson, 1988; Robertson and Lechner, 1985). In terms of influences from the already existing scholarly traditions, the notion of the 'global' was an implicit extension of Parsonian evolutionary theory (Parsons, 1977). Parsons postulated the inevitable universalization (or 'globalization' in the sense of their universal applicability and adaptation) of certain institutions (such as democracy) in the *longue durée* of human history.

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Parsons reached such a conclusion based on these institutions' adaptive ability. Consequently, the notion of 'globalization' contained elements involving the universalization of Western institutions, culture, and so on. It was thus connected to a specific vision of Westernization that had been articulated in the context of the Cold War.

But these initial influences had to face up to the fact that cultural analysis and especially the post-modernism of the 1980s questioned precisely the universalization of this Western-centred vision – just as it questioned the so-called 'scientific socialism' of the communist bloc (Baudrillard, 1975). Post-modernism declared the 'end of grand narratives' (Lyotard, 1984) and it therefore opened up the theoretical space for filling the 'global' with a multiplicity of meanings not necessarily connected to Westernization. Around the same period, the rise of post-colonial critique – especially in the writings of Said (1978) – offered additional ammunition to those voices that would argue that modernization should not be equated with Westernization.

The critique of Eurocentric systems of thought was based precisely on equating the 'modern' with the 'European' or more broadly, the 'Western'. Equating the 'West' with the 'modern' has been a long-standing Euro-American conceit that contains several questionable connotations:

> [This association] effectively massages the egos of western Europeans and Americans in two ways: first, by insinuating that their culture is somehow single-handedly responsible for the shape of the modern world, and second, by suggesting that the only way for other peoples of the world to attain economic, political, and even personal success is to abandon their indigenous social and cultural patterns and adopt the cultural forms prevalent in western Europe and the United States. (Lewis and Wigen, 1997: 52–3; see also Bhambra, 2007)

Recognizing cultural difference meant recognizing the Other as an autonomous voice and not reducing the contributions of non-western cultural traditions to mere appendages in world history. The very process of re-writing world history was predicated upon this understanding – and its multifaceted implications remain to this day a matter of debate both for intellectuals and the public (Allardyce, 1990).

But while modernization theorists have long debated the extent to which modernization would lead to convergence or divergence among developing societies, post-colonial and post-modernist theory questioned the very notion of the 'modern' as a concept that is borne out of the European experience and hence tainted in its very core by assumptions of Eurocentrism (Bhambra, 2007; Said, 1978). The 'global' could therefore be put forward as a fresh term that did not suffer from that association and moreover, as a concept that could be shaped according to each particular civilizational or cultural tradition: As Flusty (2004: 103) argues, 'all views of the global are views from the inside. *We* are the inscribers of globalization, *we* are the participants in complex webs of emerging relationships that are simultaneously spatially extensive and psychically intensive' (emphasis in the original).

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Therefore, presenting globalization as the 'central concept' (Robertson, 1990) at precisely that point in time that communism's walls 'came tumbling down' (Stokes, 1993) provided a conceptual alternative that contained implicitly two very different and conflicting lines of interpretation: On the one hand, there was the policy-oriented vision of extending Western-centred modernization to the formerly communist countries and to the 'Third World' countries that used to be part of the non-aligned movement, therefore attempting to 'globalize' Western modernity. On the other hand, there was a post-postmodernist and post-colonial vision of opening up the intellectual debate to the construction of a new paradigm that would displace 'modernity' from its master ontological status in the narrative of social change and socio-historical analysis in favour of 'globalization' and 'globality' as the foundation for a new paradigm that would make sociology truly 'global' in its reach, orientation, scope and relevance (for examples, see Albrow, 1997; Roudometof, 1994).

The Post-1989 Image of 'Globalization': Rhetoric and Performativity

The consequences of the 1989 revolutions for the intellectual contours of this emerging problematic were extensive. When US President G.H. Bush (1988–92) famously referred to the post-communist reality as a 'New World Order', he implicitly called for the creation of a new vision of a single triumphant political and economic system that would capitalize on the aftermath of the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. In fact, the end of the Cold War offered the opportunity to promote the more policy-oriented vision of Western-centred globalization. Eventually, G.H. Bush lost the 1992 US Presidential elections to Bill Clinton in large part not only because of the 1991 recession but also because of his inability to articulate that 'vision thing' (in Bush's own words). With Robert Reich, Labour Secretary in the Clinton cabinet, the new Washington mantra involved projecting the policies of neo-liberalism – opening up state markets via NAFTA and GATT and removing all types of state controls and protections – into the world arena as a self-conscious effort to combat the USA's own economic troubles by creating new high-paid high-skilled positions in the US service sector (see Reich, 1992, for the scholarly argument of this policy agenda). As a result, the image of globalization popularized among journalists, the public and the scholarly community was that of a recent stage or phase closely connected with neo-liberal policies of market deregulation or environmental degradation – as evidenced by the emergence of the self-proclaimed anti-globalization movement in the late 1990s (Lechner and Boli, 2005: 153–72).

Anthony Giddens somewhat unexpectedly – given his lack of prior engagement with the problematic of globalization – came to be referred to as a key theorist of this post-1989 'globalization'. In fact, Giddens is the theorist who most successfully put forward the theoretical expression of that vision that had eluded G.H. Bush (but not Bill Clinton). For Giddens (1990: 64), however,

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'globalization' is 'essentially . . . a stretching process, in so far as the modes of connection between different social contexts or regions become networked across the earth's surface as a whole'. This 'stretching' is what Giddens means when he talks about modernity being 'inherently globalising' (p. 63). Modernity, in turn, refers to 'modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about the 17th century onwards and which subsequently became more or less world-wide in their influence' (p. 1). This rather explicitly Eurocentric 'globalizing of modernity' is but the latest twist in what in past centuries was the Europeanization of the 'world' (e.g., of the European colonies) or what in the twentieth century was referred to as 'Westernization' or 'Americanization'.[1]

The collapse of the communist bloc offered the opportunity to popularize this public policy agenda as a practical recipe for modernization and economic development. Transferring this particular vision to the public arena has provided a more sustainable orientation than Fukuyama's (1988) 'end of history' thesis or Huntington's (1996) 'clash of civilizations' scenario.[2] Throughout the 1990s, the Giddensesque 'globalising of modernity' meant that a single – and after 1989, politically triumphant – economic and political system would provide a universal model for economic development, social policy, trade, culture and numerous other areas of social organization. Giddens' (1994; 1999) policy writings about managing globalization provided an ideological infrastructure for the Clinton and Blair administrations, the two governments that were at the forefront of this global political agenda in the 1990s.

Numerous authors eventually subscribed to this view of globalization as a recent contemporary phenomenon – most often as an extension or phase of capitalism (for examples, see Connell [2007] and the majority of chapters in Rossi [2007]). Grew sums it up as follows:

> The current pre-eminent approaches treat globalisation in terms of large historical tendencies, as an outcome of capitalism and the play of market forces . . . or as a cumulative result of international politics and the escalating play of power . . . and sometimes the two are combined. (2007: 276)

Suffice to say, these interpretations are not congruent with the studies of historical globalization (for example, see Robertson, 2003; for an overview, Grew, 2007).

Nevertheless, in the aftermath of the 1989 revolutions and with the scholarly success of the 'globalising of modernity', both ends of the political spectrum came – for the most part and with some notable exceptions[3] – to accept the notion that globalization is not only a process of relatively recently instigated increased social contact but also the proposition that the end result of these contacts is likely to be increased social integration. Suffice to say, this is a highly dubious proposition at least in terms of its sheer descriptive aspects.[4] Consequently, the free market ideology of *globalism* was for a period viewed as synonymous with or unwittingly conflated with globalization (= social integration) *per se* (for a critique, see Beck, 2000). In numerous journalistic but also scholarly articles, these associations have been implicitly or explicitly made or just assumed – making use of the 'global' as a 'buzzword' or floating signifier.[5]

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In response, many critics asserted that this new 'buzzword' was nothing else than a revival of earlier modernization theory (for example, see Joas, 2004). In fact, as Alexander (1994) noted, it was quite ironic that the 1990s consensus contained a U-turn on behalf of theorists – like Giddens – who, after making a name for themselves by questioning the salience of Parsonian evolutionary theory, ended up advocating developmental strategies that were in accordance with that theory's original prescriptions. But one of the inescapable consequences of the 1989 revolutions for social theory was precisely this initial surrender of intellectuals to the inevitability of neo-liberalism.

The Image of Globalization in the Debates on Cosmopolitanism and Multiple Modernities

However, this initial surrender did not take long to overcome. Reaction to this post-1989 'northern theory of globalization' (as Connell [2007] has called it) took the guise of proposing 'localization' as a conceptual alternative to the post-1989 Giddensesque 'globalisation' or suggesting a plurality of 'globalizations' – a strategy that even gave birth to an academic journal (*Globalizations*) devoted to this very project. 'Localization', Hines (2001: 4) has argued, 'is a process which reverses the trend of globalization by discriminating in favour of the local.' Hines argues that:

> [Localization is] not about restricting the flow of information, technology, trade and investment, indeed these are encouraged by the new localist emphasis in global aid and trade rules . . . It is not a return to overpowering state control, merely governments' provision of a policy and economic framework which allows people, community groups and businesses to rediversify their own local economies. (2001: 5)

In Hines' view, globalization is tantamount to capitalist economic integration; hence the contrast between the global and the local is one between corporate power and community.

Hines' view reflects the growing dissatisfaction with the consensus of the Clinton era. It was only in the late 1990s, however, that the 'battle of Seattle' signalled the effective end of that short-lived consensus and initiated the rise of the anti-globalization movement in most Western European and North American countries. It is a truism, of course, that the anti-globalization movement was itself embedded in global processes and it therefore constitutes an important aspect of global interconnectivity: the very fact of calling it an 'anti-globalization' movement reveals the extent to which 'globalization' as a term has been understood not simply in an open-ended sense of global interconnectivity (see Robertson, 2001) but rather in the sense of global social integration (Held et al., 1999).

The anti-globalization movement sought to bring into everyday life the increasingly visible consequences of the post-1945 integration of hitherto separated labour and consumer markets and the subsequent trends toward economic restructuring, relocation of factories outside the traditional industrialized centres, and

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the rising tide of global competition from latecomers in economic development (India, China, Brazil, etc.). These processes certainly contributed to the rise of political and intellectual agendas favouring economic and cultural protectionism in North America and Europe – a trend already visible in the 1990s and prominently displayed by voices on both ends of the political spectrum (Bourdieu, 1998; Buchanan, 1998). The collapse of communism further contributed to these trends because formerly communist countries exported their labour in the form of immigrants moving into Western Europe and North America and also because corporate actors sought to capitalize on the former communist countries' reduced labour costs by transferring parts of their plants in them or subcontracting part of their production locally. Hence, the collapse of communism in 1989 further intensified the global trends already present after 1945 – and in so doing caused bitter complaints amongst the middle and working classes of Western Europe and North America, which have been the groups most directly affected by such processes.

While in the 1990s protesting voices were unable to prevent the successes of neo-liberalism – such as the NAFTA Agreement – the situation changed dramatically in the aftermath of 9/11. Almost overnight all visions of simplistic 'one-worldism' collapsed and the short-lived chimera of post-1989 Giddensesque 'globalization' was exposed. As Alexander (2007) has pointed out, in the post-9/11 world, the disappointed globalists of the 1990s found in the concept of cosmopolitanism a new mantra of social policy, one that allowed them to draw an explicit contrast between US unilateralism and EU cosmopolitan governance. During the tenure of US President G.W. Bush (2000–2008), EU policy grew apart from US unilateralism. In fact, the 2004 EU enlargement was a visible manifestation of extending the EU into the former Eastern European communist countries, and thereby terminating the division of Europe into an Eastern and Western part. The 2003 US-sponsored unilateral invasion and occupation of Iraq by the self-declared 'coalition of the willing' and the related excesses of the US 'war on terrorism' further intensified the gap between the two shores of the Atlantic. Both the 2004 EU enlargement and the 2003 Iraq invasion provided the context for the Habermas–Derrida inspired debate on 'core Europe' (see Levy et al., 2005). In that debate, the vision of a unified Europe was forcefully put forward – only to be rebutted by those newcomers who refused to accept the proposition of a Europe that would once more be divided between those in its 'core' and those in its 'periphery'. Soon afterwards, the failed 2005 referenda on the EU Constitution showed the public's extensive reservations vis-à-vis this agenda.

The end of the G.W. Bush Presidency might provide the occasion to revive the public policy agenda that was temporarily suspended between 2000 and 2008: in his July 2008 visit to Europe, US Presidential candidate Barack Obama explicitly promised the restoration of the trans-Atlantic relationship or a reconstruction of the joint Euro-American agenda of the Clinton era. Obama's call to bring down the walls that separate Europe from the USA is not far from Beck's call to tear down the walls of national isolation in favour of cosmopolitanism.

Yet, Beck's (1999; 2002; 2006) call to overcome nationalism in favour of cosmopolitanism was met with mixed response. For some, cosmopolitanism might have

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a special relationship to the European project (Delanty and Rumford, 2005) but it is far from a universal recipe for development and progress. Others were far less generous: 'nationalism is not a moral mistake,' Calhoun (2007: 1) proclaims, arguing that the conceptual opposition between nationalism and cosmopolitanism is theoretically and empirically unsound. But what often both sides in this debate uncritically accept is the proposition that globalization and cosmopolitanism are conceptually linked – a link that consists of pure rhetoric since even Beck (2002) admits the fact that locals will never disappear from even a cosmopolitan society. Substantively, the key mechanism of connecting globalization to cosmopolitanism involves the notion that transnational practices or values or orientations will contribute to greater levels of cosmopolitanism – a notion that is far from certain both empirically and theoretically (Roudometof, 2005; Roudometof and Haller, 2007).

But most critics (see, for example, Alexander, 2007) do not accept this policy-oriented Western-centred interpretation of globalization advanced in the post-1989 period by Giddens and eventually absorbed into Beck's theory of cosmopolitanism. Instead, they point out that seen in these lenses 'globalization' is but a revival of modernization theory and as such, it is not helpful in accounting for the successful and multiple modernizations observed in numerous countries around the globe since the 1950s (Joas, 2004: 311). On the contrary, an action-centred perspective in the social sciences needs to pay more attention to the construction of multiple modernities around the globe. In fact, the multiple modernities agenda might be viewed as the other mainstream alternative to the cosmopolitan programme. In historical sociology, several authors have postulated the existence of multiple paths or routes to modernity (see, for example, Gran 1996; Roudometof 2001; Therborn 1995) as a means of dealing with the non-European modernization projects. Under the rubric of such terms as 'global modernities' (Feathersone et al., 1995) or 'multiple modernities' (Eisenstadt, 2002; 2003), social theorists have sought to explore the possibility of a pluralistic view of modernity, one that does not postulate a single developmental path. While in principle a sound solution, this research agenda is also intertwined with a historical perspective that takes the *longue durée* as its main frame of reference and views world history and multiple modernizations in terms of the diachronic development of Axial civilizations (Arnason et al., 2005). Needless to say, a full account of this evolving research agenda cannot be provided here. For the purposes of this discussion, the only issue of relevance is the relationship between globalization and the multiple modernities agenda.

While there is no uniform or singular authoritative statement on this relationship, in most of the emerging multiple modernities literature the interconnections among civilizational constellations are stressed. Furthermore, the notion of 'Atlantic modernity' has been evoked as a bridgehead connecting Western European and American versions of modernity (Smith, 2006). As a result, it is not always clear that non-Western cultural difference is given sufficient autonomous space – or whether the multiple modernities agenda is useful only in delineating internal differences within the West but fails to accommodate the non-Western

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Other (Bhambra, 2007). Moreover, by connecting geographical territories to specific historically constituted multiple modernities this research programme accepts the geographically constrained character of modernization as such – and this logic runs contrary to globalization's dialectic of de-territorialization and re-territorialization (Roudometof, 2003; Scholte, 2000). In this regard, the multiple modernities research programme seems to be revising and/or extending several of the original proposals set forth by various earlier versions of modernization theory. In terms of its relationship to the 'global', then, this research programme is paying mere lip service to the notion of historical globalization – it is not historical globalization as such that constitutes *in itself* the object of inquiry for this research programme but rather it is a concept that is simply evoked as an umbrella term for discussing divergent paths toward modernity or modernities.

Conclusion

The pre-1989 emergence of 'globalization' in social scientific literature was an attempt to provide a synthesis of post-war intellectual developments in the fields of IR theory, culture and religion. That synthesis contained sufficient ambiguity to incorporate key elements of post-modern cultural theory and postcolonial critique while simultaneously holding to elements of Parsonian theory. The result was the existence of two different lines of interpretation. While one of them viewed globalization as an extension and revamping of Western-centred modernization, the other viewed globalization as a new concept capable of providing the groundwork for a new synthesis between the modernists and postmodernists and Westernizers and post-colonial theorists.

The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe offered the opportunity to assert the former interpretation of 'globalization' at the expense of the latter. 'Globalization' provided the policy mantra of the Clinton and Blair administrations until the late 1990s when 'anti-globalization' activists were able to question the salience of this dominant 'northern theory' of 'globalization'. In scholarly discussion, 'globalization' became a buzzword or a floating signifier to be filled with a variety of disciplinary and political meanings. The overview of globalization's intellectual contours described in this article clearly show the intertwining between public policy and social and cultural theory. The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe contributed to the use of globalization as a shorthand expression for the implementation of neo-liberalism into public policy. The subsequently popularized and almost universally accepted (at least among laypersons) image of globalization invoked in the Western-centred or 'Northern theory' of globalization (Connell, 2007) is that of global social integration (see Held et al., 1999). That image is quite doubtful as an empirical description and is one that has not been endorsed by knowledgeable authors – such as Scholte (2000), Castells (1996–98) or Beck (2000) – but it has nevertheless shaped the public's imaginary.

Furthermore, this image provides a powerful rhetorical device upon which to connect the cosmopolitan agenda with globalization. The vision of post-1989

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triumphant globalization has since merged into the vision of a future post-national cosmopolitan constellation (see, for example, Rossi, 2007). Connecting globalization to cosmopolitanism is but the latest revamping of the Giddensesque public policy vision of the 1990s. While this vision was temporality shelved during the G.W. Bush Presidency, Barack Obama's victory in the 2008 US Presidential election is suggestive of its resurrection. The appointment of Hillary R. Clinton in the post of Secretary of State and her initial statements during her confirmation hearing about using diplomacy, building coalitions and employing smart power are all indications of restoring an official trans-Atlantic policy reminiscent of her husband's presidency. As soon as he took office on 20 January 2009, one of Obama's first decisions was to order the closing down of the infamous prison in Guantanamo Bay. That is also a strong indication of a US policy adjustment away from the nationalist unilateralism of the G.W. Bush presidency and closer to a cosmopolitan multilateralism.

There is an alternative perspective to this particular interpretation, which comes from within the multiple modernities research programme. From that point of view, globalization provides the umbrella term for the emergence of multiple modernities. Such a view acknowledges variability within the confines of a universalized human civilization. Its major shortcoming, however, lies precisely in convincingly demonstrating the practical acceptance of cultural difference as a constitutive component – an essential necessity for avoiding the pitfalls of reproducing a different, more contemporary version of Parsonian evolutionary theory. Moreover, connecting multiple modernizations to geographically grounded territories runs contrary to globalization's logic of de-territorialization and re-territorialization.

In conclusion, then, the question that has been lurking on the background of this discussion should be posed directly: is the promise of globalization's second interpretation – that of producing a meta-theoretical synthesis of opposite camps – still viable? Can globalization still be 'the central concept' today? For, in the meantime, scholarship has become aware of the growing complexity of the theoretical issues and dilemmas surrounding this emergent conceptual vocabulary of twenty-first-century sociology. Even in the realm of public policy, the notion of neo-liberal globalization has been met with the counter-notion of multiple or alternative 'globalizations'. In the realm of social theory proper, ever since the fall of communism, the original or pre-1989 concept of the 'global' has been further refined and differentiated into a threefold constellation: First, there is the post-1989 notion of the 'global' in the sense of global social integration outlined in the course of this discussion and championed by Giddens and numerous others. Second, there is the notion of the 'glocal', in the sense of cultural hybridity and heterogeneity produced by the world's growing interconnectedness (see Pieterse, 1995; Robertson, 1994). Third, there is revamped notion of the 'local' in the sense of Appadurai's (1995) 'production of locality', that is, of the 'local' being produced as a result of a new fusion between global and local influences, and therefore as an entity perpetually reproduced as part of (or in a dialectical relationship with) the 'global' itself. Therefore, *the 'global' itself is no longer a singular concept*.

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At the same time, the related concept of the 'transnational' has provided the foundation for the emergence and proliferation of an extensive research agenda both in the fields of immigration and religion, and elsewhere (see, for example, Levitt, 2007). In 2008, Global and Transnational Sociology became the American Sociological Association's newest Section. Given the demographic strength of the ASA for the world's sociological community, it is fair to say that these two concepts are now entering their institutionalization phase. That is, the terms 'global' and 'transnational' have already contributed to the revitalization of sociology's research agenda and in the future they will undoubtedly be further refined in order to meet the growing complexity of social life in the twenty-first century.

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Notes

1 See Scholte (2000: 44–5) for a critique of several notions of globalization. Scholte argues convincingly that the interpretation of globalization as neo-liberalization is redundant, while the interpretation of globalization as 'Westernization' or imperialism is covered adequately by these terms. Scholte also considers that the notion of interconnectedness is separate from the notion of globalization.

2 Giddens, Huntington and Fukuyama all provide general explanations that can be equally applied to Eastern Europe as well as the rest of the world regions. Other accounts stress the peculiar conditions of Eastern Europe and evoke the legacy of communism as the foundation for an enduring East European exceptionalism. See, for example, Jowitt's (1992) view of Leninism as a durable legacy for former communist East European countries.

3 Held et al. (1999) and Castells are aware of the necessity of including the theoretical countertrend of localization into their analyses. Castells (1997) highlights the extent to which globalization creates both 'identity movements' that are highly particularistic in nature and orientation, yet they are embedded within globality (such as the case of the Zapatista revolt in Mexico); as well as 'black holes' or entire zones excluded from access to the 'information superhighway' of the information age. These are, as Castells (1998) observes, not 'outside' globality. On the contrary, they become 'incorporated' into the globalized world as new zones of marginality and exclusion, zones of war, famine, disease, illegal trafficking of drugs and women, terrorism and chronic insecurity.

4 It is important to note here that the most acute authors – including Scholte (2000), Beck (2000), Castells (1996) and others – have resisted this interpretation. See note 3 above. But the tendency has persisted in the face of their analyses in large part because conceptual development lacked behind empirical description, and because journalistic and common-sense use of the word 'global' remained inconsistent and often loaded

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with the notion of social integration. For a review of the various debates on the nature of globalization, see Guillen (2001).

5 There is a notable absence of uniformity in terminology. For example, 'globalism describes the reality of being interconnected, while globalization captures the speed at which these connections increase or decrease' Joseph Nye claims in his 'Globalism Versus Globalisation' (Nye, 2002b) By 'globalism', Nye means what in sociological discourse is usually referred to as 'globality', that is, the sheer existence of global interconnectivity

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