

The Globalisation Discourse

IP 6 Institutional Change and Livelihood Strategies

Working Paper 2

Norman Backhaus

2003

dialogue

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The Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South is based on a network of partnerships with research institutions in the South and East, focusing on the analysis and mitigation of syndromes of global change and globalisation. Its sub-group named IP6 focuses on institutional change and livelihood strategies: State policies as well as other regional and international institutions – which are exposed to and embedded in national economies and processes of globalisation and global change – have an impact on local people's livelihood practices and strategies as well as on institutions developed by the people themselves. On the other hand, these institutionally shaped livelihood activities have an impact on livelihood outcomes and the sustainability of resource use. Understanding how the micro- and macro-levels of this institutional context interact is of vital importance for developing sustainable local natural resource management as well as supporting local livelihoods.

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Cover Photo

Entrance to the former 'Ranbo Bar' in Lhasa. The old quarter beneath the Potala was torn down at the end of the 1990s.

(Photo: Norman Backhaus)

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Introduction

Most people experience globalisation¹ as an economic process that affects prices of goods and services as well as job opportunities, or as proliferation of communication technology and information. The term ‘globalisation’ that has entered the Oxford Dictionary in 1962 (Waters, 1995: 2 in Werlen, 1997: 231) and every day speech in the 1990s, is nowadays often equated with external forces that urge governments to liberalise their economies and to open their markets to foreign investments and businesses. It has thus for many people become a synonym for the negative consequences that are attributed to liberalisation, such as sinking wages, increasing pressure on the work force, decreasing prices for cash crops etc. These aspects are indeed part of important debates on how the global economy works and how it should be shaped. However, there is more to globalisation than just global economy and communication. Moreover, there are scientific approaches that could help to better understand its (highly complex) processes and one’s own role in them. It is therefore the aim of this paper to show different aspects of the phenomenon called globalisation as well as different approaches to grasp it theoretically.

First it will be explained how globalization can be perceived as a discourse. Second, the most important topics of this discourse and its most controversial threads will be discussed. Third, different aspects of the scientific discourse are described and finally as an example, debates on globalisation in India will be briefly analysed with regard to the scientific discourse.

This introduction ends with a short definition of globalisation, based on the theory of structuration (Giddens, 1995). Since globalisation is a highly controversial concept, there are many different definitions circulating. The NCCR North-South (Hurni et al., 2003: 3) defines it very broadly as “increasing interlinking of political, economic, institutional, social, cultural, technical, and ecological issues at the global level.”²

In this paper we use the following definition: *Globalisation is a result of the increasingly (spatially and temporally) distanced consequences of everyday actions. It is a process that not only comprises economic activities but virtually every aspect of people’s lives. Globalisation has to be understood as an aggregation of intended as well as unintended consequences of actions. It is therefore neither goal-oriented nor an external force, and it can be at the same time homogenising as well as fragmenting.*

¹ Globalisation can either be written with ‘s’ or ‘z’. The former is mainly used in British English, the latter in US English. However, there are also British authors using ‘z’.

² It seems necessary to make a note on the term ‘global change’, which is sometimes equated with globalisation. The NCCR North-South (Hurni et al. 2003: 3) defines it broadly as “global-scale human, human-induced, and natural changes that modify the functionality of the natural, social, economic, and cultural dimensions of the earth system”. Other organizations (e.g. Proclim, 2003) define it as climate change. In this paper, in order to avoid misunderstandings, ‘global change’ is not used in the broader sense (or even synonym for globalisation) but rather as equivalent to climate change.

A few explanations to clarify some terms and expressions used in this definition may be useful. A *spatially* and *temporally distanced consequence* of an *everyday action* could be driving a car. This simple act can have an impact on many people in spatially distanced (but also near) areas virtually all over the world. The burning of gasoline has an impact on people in oil producing countries. Depending on the oil price on the world market this impact can vary. Moreover, the production of exhausts can have temporally distanced consequences, if they contribute to climate change. Every action has consequences, even the decision *not* to do anything. Some consequences are *intended*, i.e. covering distances in short time by driving a car, but others are *unintended*, such as air pollution by the same activity. Moreover, globalisation as a process cannot be *goal-oriented* even if there are people or groups who would like to shape that process in a certain way. First, there are many different and opposing opinions about the shape that globalisation should have and second, the unintended consequences of actions cannot be controlled entirely. Globalisation is not *external* to the lives of virtually every human being on the planet. Although, there are many processes that are not controlled or influenced by most individuals, all people are with their actions part of globalisation. Even isolated tribes living in remote areas contribute to globalisation by the fact that they choose to keep their live-style, because they are often threatened by processes of globalisation (i.e. the trade with timber) and because there are local and international groups that are engaged in the protection of their environment. Globalisation is often equalled with *homogenisation* (i.e. McDonaldisation, Americanisation) and indeed many of its processes have homogenising effects. For example the spread of the English language as global *lingua franca* or the distribution of computer software are such homogenising processes. However, there are also fragmenting processes that are part of globalisation. For example the movements against the anglicisation of European languages or the development of alternative software to “microsoft” products can be mentioned.

Globalisation as discourse

We refer to globalisation as a discourse, because it is a phenomenon or process for which there is no clear and widely acknowledged definition and because people talk and write about it. In doing so they engage in debates or discussions about the issue and thus form a discourse. The discourse on globalisation is not shaped uniformly, it consists of different threads regarding different aspects and notions. In the following paragraphs it is explained what a discourse is and which discourse threads can be found within the overall discourse on globalisation.

Discourse

In relation to the term ‘discourse’ the name of Michel Foucault, who looked into the subject during the 1970s and 1980s, is often mentioned. According to him discourses are the conditions of social practices and agencies. They are based on an interlacing of knowledge and practice which share the following characteristics: they exclude certain topics but also certain individuals, they organise (discourse specific) rationality, and they claim to be true (Fuchs-Heinritz et al., 1995). Thus, discourses are public, planned and organised discussion processes, which refer to topics of public interest and concern (Keller et al., 2001).

Individual texts belonging to a discourse are called *discourse fragments*. They relate to other texts or fragments in a way that is regulated by the discourse. A discourse is established, if practices continue to relate to it in a structured way. Discourses are the result of people’s daily making of history; they change over time, can become more powerful or vanish (see figure 1). Since people are embedded into social and historic contexts, in which knowledge is handed down over generations, written or spoken text is never only individual, but has also social aspects (Hoffmann, 1999). Therefore, discourses are transporting knowledge with which people interpret and shape their environment. All people who are involved in a discourse are shaping – or structuring – it, but rarely a single person or group is determining its shape and outcome (Jäger, 1993). “In other words, social reality is produced and made real through discourses, and social interactions cannot be fully understood without reference to the discourses that give them meaning” (Phillips & Hardy, 2002).

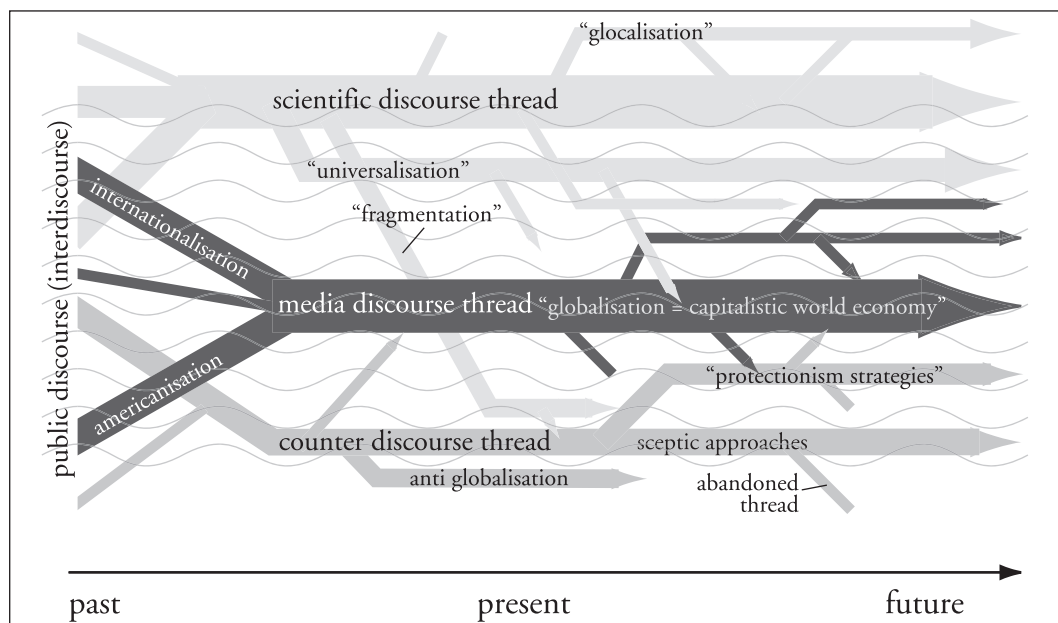
The discourse on globalisation is relatively new, the term only entered the public mainstream during the 1990s. However, it became rather powerful and today people relate to it in many contexts of their every-day life (Marshall, 1996).

Kinds of discourses

As mentioned above, a discourse is not an aggregation of uniform texts that all point in the same direction. If it were that way, a discourse would most certainly soon cease to exist, since it involves discussion, and discussion only takes place if different opinions

meet. Rather most discourses are controversial and changing all the time. Texts – or discourse fragments – relate to the same aspect of a discourse and share the same opinion, form a discourse thread. The different threads are interrelating and influencing each other. Basically within a broad discourse such as the globalisation discourse we usually discern between the ‘media discourse’, ‘special discourses’ such as the ‘scientific discourse’ and ‘counter discourses’, in which ideas opposing the main idea of a specific discourse are discussed (Jäger, 1993). As shown in figure 1 there is also a public discourse, which comprises the media discourse but also parts of the scientific and the counter discourse. The public discourse can be called inter-discourse too, because it comprises discourse fragments that are accessible by the greater public and shape the way they discuss the discourse’s issues. The use of the term ‘discourse’ here instead of ‘discourse thread’ shows that it depends on the point of view and the scale whether elements of a discourse are categorised as the former or the latter.

Figure 1: The web of discourses within the globalisation discourse



Source: Own draft based on Jäger (1993).

Categories of the current scientific globalisation discourse

The discourse on globalisation has grown in size considerably during the last decade with a current negative bias due to the global economic recession. If we compare the different parts of the globalisation discourse, we can see that the scientific discourse comprises more different topics than the public discourse (Hoffmann, 1999). Although the scientific discourse is interrelated with the public discourse, there seems to be little permeability between them. In the following the most important topics of the scientific

discourse are presented, drawing on the ‘categories of globalisation’¹ by The Group of Lisbon (Gruppe Von Lissabon, 1997):

1. The *globalisation of finance and capital holdings* is currently one of the most prominent and advanced processes. Although capital is moved around the world since centuries, it is the speed with which it is moved and its amount that has become staggering in the last two decades. The news almost daily report on mergers, take-overs and concentrations of enterprises in big corporations.² In addition, the mobility of capital increases with the current possibilities of telecommunication. Within split seconds large amounts of currency can be allocated³ where they bring the most profits. During the 1960s there were roughly 7,000 transnational corporations (TNCs), whereas in the middle of the 1990s there were estimated 40,000 TNCs world wide. Consequently, they have an increasing share of the world market and it is estimated that around 40% of world trade is intra corporate trade (Chomsky & Dieterich, 1995).
2. Therefore, it does not surprise that the *globalisation of markets and market strategies* is an important category in the public discourse. Business procedures become increasingly integrated and standardised with the aim to diminish friction losses – or transaction costs – in production processes. Consequently, the location of the production of goods and services becomes less important. Thus, components of a product can be bought worldwide, which increases competition and lets prices fall. A negative consequence of this standardisation can be the loss of jobs in countries with high costs of labour but also job insecurity in developing countries.
3. Through the *globalisation of technology, knowledge* and research it is much easier to acquire knowledge about sales markets and about where components can be bought cheaper. Especially in industrialised countries technology is used to increase competitiveness which in many cases makes human labour redundant. Often the production of (high-tech) goods and services is accompanied by rationalisations and outsourcing, which creates uncertainties and fears among the work force.
4. Due to the increasing power of TNCs new *possibilities of regulation and steering* political and economic processes have emerged. National economies become less important and nation states have less influence on production and markets. In the current neo-liberal economic mainstream, which propagates liberalisation and privatisation, national borders become much more permeable to trade. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) – as a global player – has become a major force for the

¹ Giddens’ four dimensions of globalisation – ‘capitalistic economic system’, ‘international labour division’, ‘nation state’ and ‘military system’ (Giddens, 1996: 93) – roughly overlap with the categories of The Group of Lisbon here presented, which is why they are not included in the elaborations of this chapter.

² Although many companies have experienced (financial and cultural) problems after a merger (i.e. AOL and Time Warner), there is still a great concentration of enterprises going on.

³ Capital can also be withdrawn quickly, which was a major problem for many countries during the ‘Asian currency crisis’ 1997/98, when more than 100 billion US\$ were withdrawn from the area within a few days (Golub, 1998).

implementation of neo-liberalism. However, although the WTO as supra-national organisation is regarded as a powerful agent enforcing new economic regulations, it is not an independent institution. It is governed by (powerful) nation states that try to put their interests through. The United Nations (UN) try to establish political regulations on the global level (i.e. with the human rights or peace missions), but they are even less than the WTO able to work without the consent of nation states, most important the USA. Another aspect of this category is the increasing decentralisation within nation states as a means to make regions more competitive and more responsible.

5. Although the power of supra-national organisations is limited, we experience a *political coalescence of the world*. The UN peace missions give evidence of the will to enforce political stability in the world. The growing European Union (EU) is a regional integration of nation states, which regulates many issues that previously were under the sole command of individual nation states. However, these organisations are based on the voluntary association of nation states and can, therefore, not be seen as a sign for the disbandment of the latter.
6. Since the economy is a major force of globalisation it also affects *consumer behaviour and life styles*. However, especially people's life styles are not solely influenced by production and markets, but also by cultural globalisation. An increasing amount and also variety of cultural messages is available to an ever growing public. These messages are disseminated by the media – in the form of TV broadcasts, movies, newspapers, magazines, books, music etc. – that are dominated by a few global corporations, but also through people's integration into global production processes and cycles. A consequence of these processes is a levelling of communication forms and languages with English establishing itself as a global lingua franca (Le Monde Diplomatique, 2003).
7. Mostly through the media people realise that they live in one and the same world. However, the *globalisation of perception and consciousness* does not necessarily mean that peoples' perceptions become homogenised. It can even cause opposition when people are confronted with cultural messages that are controversial to their own cultural norms and values. The knowledge about and confrontation with other life styles and ideologies can both cause people to be more conscious of their own culture and to adapt traits of other cultures.

These categories of globalisation are intertwined with one another and there are different opinions about their relative importance. Whereas the categories can be regarded as the fields in which globalisation processes take place – an which are subject of extensive research in various fields –, the threads of the discourse, which are discussed below, describe the perception and evaluation of the development in these fields.

Threads of the globalisation discourse

It was shown that globalisation encompasses a great variety of processes that are part of or affect the livelihoods of many people (if not of all people) in different ways. Accordingly, there are different opinions about the impacts of these processes and whether people – in general, or certain groups of people – can benefit from them or not. Some of these contrasting notions (mostly within the scientific discourse) are discussed in the following sections.

Optimism versus pessimism

Within the scientific discourse there are only few authors who are unquestioningly favouring globalisation the way it is working now. Positive evaluations are often followed by an “if-clause”. This is not surprising, if we regard the current global economic recession, the increasing number of poor people and the seemingly never ceasing conflicts in the world. Indeed most books and articles have a negative bias regarding the current state of globalisation, but try to show a direction in which globalisation should develop in order to have mostly positive consequences.

Kenichi Ohmae can be regarded as an advocate of neo-liberalism and thus is in favour of many current thrusts of globalisation (Ohmae in Schirato & Webb, 2003: 36-37). In contrast to Fukuyama’s dictum that we have reached the end of history, Ohmae emphasises that an increasing number of people is entering history with their economic demands. Thus he presumes that all people and cultures want to share the benefits of globalisation and subscribe to a capitalist, commodity-driven world view, or in other words that they want to catch up with Western economic standards. In the neo-liberal and capitalistic world view this catching up works best if there are no barriers to free trade (i.e. import tariffs or other measures to protect a national economy). Ohmae argues that... “[e]conomic activity tends not to follow the artificial boundary lines of traditional nation states, or even cultural boundary lines. It follows information-driven efforts to participate in the global economy. Physical distance has become economically irrelevant. Economic borders have meaning as contours of information flow – where information reaches, demand grows; where demand grows, the global economy has a local home. (...). If governments hold on to economic control for too long, it will become worthless and expensive, and the global economy – which could rush in to help – will be kept out” (Ohmae in Stonham, 1996: 109-110). Essentially the Bretton Woods Organisations IMF and Worldbank as well as the WTO subscribe to this point of view, although they admit that in the past some developing countries had to suffer from the negative aspects of the capitalist system (Schirato & Webb, 2003: 33-84).

Although there are many critics or sceptics of globalisation, there are only few who perceive its processes as completely negative. Most critics say that globalisation has positive and negative consequences and that at the moment the balance tips in favour of the latter. Consequently, sceptics of globalisation (Baudrillard, 1998, Bourdieu, 1998) say that the despair of those excluded from the world system shows itself for example in terror acts against symbols of Western capitalism or dominance (i.e. the terror attacks of September 11th 2001). Besides terrorism, which is probably the most extreme negative

consequence that is associated with globalisation by some authors, mostly the increasing inequality between rich and poor, the nation state losing control and influence, the change or erosion of culture, as well as environmental pollution are regarded as negative consequence (i.e. by the following authors: Albrow, 1998; Altvater & Mahnkopf, 1996; Appadurai, 1996; Augé, 1995; Barber, 1995; Bauman, 1997; Beck, 2002; Beyer, 1994; Chomsky & Dieterich, 1995; Greider, 1998; Gruppe Von Lissabon, 1997; Kagarlitsky, 2000; Klingebiel & Randeria, 1998; Menzel, 1998; Novy, Parnreiter & Fischer, 1999; Robertson, 1992; Sassen, 1998; Schirato & Webb, 2003; Schmidt, 1998; Tomlinson, 2000).

However, they do not only criticise, but also propose ways to change the current thrust of globalisation in a direction that solves more problems than it causes. For most of them the key to a more social and just globalisation lies with the concepts of 'state' and 'democracy'. Whereas a few favour a strong state that is able to regulate influences of TNCs in order to grant a certain standard of welfare within their boundaries (see for example Bourdieu et al., 1997), others opt for a new (cosmopolitan) concept of state which is not necessarily bound to a specific territory (see especially Beck, 2002; McGrew, 1998; Tomlinson, 2000).

Homogenisation versus fragmentation

In the public discourse globalisation is usually understood as a process through which societies and cultures become unified in one way or the other. Globalisation is, therefore, often perceived as synonym for *homogenisation*. Indeed there are many processes that support this point of view:

- The way how goods and services are produced become standardised in a way that increases compatibility considerably. Virtually no car is assembled anymore exclusively from parts that have been developed and produced at the same factory.
- Most personal computers are configured with software, which allows the easy global exchange of documents. Mobile phones are compatible with the nets of different countries, which enables their users to use them wherever there is a net.
- Global food chains – i.e. McDonalds (Geisel, 2002) – serve the same food in the same manner all over the world, and the same fashion brands can be found in any big city.
- The same music can be heard from radio stations all over the globe.
- Many movies (especially those from Hollywood and increasingly those from Bollywood) and TV series are known to an increasingly global public.
- English has in many parts become the lingua franca for communication.

Consequently, many aspects of people's every-day life are in the process of being standardised or homogenised with those of people living far away and that have different

cultural backgrounds. It is sometimes surprising how easily some aspects of homogenisation, that are regarded as useful and handy, are accepted (i.e. the introduction of mobile phones or plastic containers), whereas others are rejected vehemently and perceived as a threat to one's own culture or identity (i.e. pop-music, movies). This happens especially when culture and tradition are perceived as being connected with a certain territory and the source of the change-bringing process is presumed to come from the outside (Backhaus & Hoffmann, 1999; Bauman, 1999). Reactions to tendencies of homogenisation can be as mild as a radio station's decision not to neglect productions from their own country and as harsh as to regard everything coming from "the West" as evil that has to be banned.

Such reactions can be regarded as *fragmentation* and – from a theoretical point of view – they are also part of globalisation because they mostly relate to globalisation processes. Here the differences between the scientific discourse and the public discourse are quite significant. While opposition against (some) homogenising processes (see for example Bové & Dufour, 1999) of globalisation – mostly referring to its negative economic consequences – is almost invariably depicted as 'anti-globalist' in the media, many scientists see it as a part of the same process (Barber, 1995; Beck, 1997; Beyer, 1994; Dicken, 1998; Giddens, 1992; Nederveen Pieterse, 1995; Robertson, 1992; 1995; Sassen, 1998).

Often aspects of one's own cultural background become "visible" only when one is confronted with cultural messages that deal differently with the same aspect. For example the Balinese went through different stages regarding their own perception of their religion (Backhaus, 1996; 1998; Hobart, Ramseyer & Leemann, 1996; Kaler, 1993; Leemann, Tarnutzer & Wälty, 1987; Picard, 1995; Ramstedt, 2000; Vickers, 1989; Wälty, 1997); in Japan discussions about local and national identity were launched (Bauman, 1997), or local markets with local products were revived in Europe (Hard, 1987).

The concept of the nation state may be seen as an example of homogenisation and fragmentation at the same time. Each nation state delimits social, economic, political and jurisdictional aspects of its society against other nation states in one way or the other and thus the world's societies become fragmented into different nations. However, the concept of the nation state can be regarded as a homogenising process, because it regulates all kinds of communication between different nations, which reduces complexity and uncertainty.

The examples show that while globalisation is often only seen as a homogenising force, there are fragmenting consequences that are also part of the same processes.

Global versus local

Along with the myth that equates globalisation with the triumph of culturally homogenising forces, the process is often regarded as something big, all-embracing that can only be analysed on the macro-level. However, globalisation becomes most comprehensible on the micro-level, in the locality, in cultural symbols and in one's own life. Moreover, a consequence of globalisation is the contraction of local cultures, Beck

(1997) even calls it a “clash of localities”. Therefore, the local should not be seen as the opposite of the global, but as its counterpart. Because if we look closely, almost all consequences of globalisation are localised. Even the probably most global aspect of globalisation, the internet, is localised as electronic or magnetic charge in servers, cables and personal computers. But it is not only the global that has local ramifications. The local itself is often constructed in the light of the global, as we have seen with the example of Balinese religion that has been adapted to a (more) global notion of Hinduism as a reaction to outside pressure. Also the “ethno-boom” in Europe during the 1990s, where traditional clothing became fashionable, has to be understood as perceiving the local (traditional shirts and jackets) in the context of the global (fashion).

Robertson (1995), therefore, postulates the use of the expression ‘glocalisation’¹ instead of globalisation, because it is more accurate. However, the term did not catch on entirely, although it is used more and more. The phenomenon of local adaptation of global goods², services, ideas etc. has been described with other concepts such as indigenization (Tomlinson, 2000), créolisation (Friedman, 1995), hybridization (Nederveen Pieterse, 1995) or (global) mélange (Nederveen Pieterse, 1998). While each term stands for a special kind of “mixing”, with regard to globalisation they all describe local adaptations of things that come from outside the context. If we look at the discussion about homogenisation it becomes evident, that a universal levelling of culture, society and economy is not likely to occur.

Universalism versus relativism

If the debate about homogenisation versus fragmentation revolves around the question which consequences processes of globalisation have, the discussion about universalism versus relativism is about whether different cultures or societies can be compared or not. If we presume the existence of a plurality of cultures, then we have for every cultural product at least two – and probably much more than that – possibilities for their interpretation, namely from the inside and from the outside (Bauman, 1999). Generally we assume that the insider’s interpretation is privileged over all the others and therefore, researchers from the outside have to come as close as possible to the insider’s interpretation in order to find the truth.

¹ The expression glocalisation has its roots in Japanese dochakuka (deriving from dochaku “living on one’s own land”), originally the agricultural principle of adapting one’s farming techniques to local conditions. It was used in marketing, meaning to adapt a product to local conditions (i.e. to market a Japanese car in Europe or the USA, where consumers have different needs and desires) (Petrella, 1996).

² “No imported object, Coca-Cola included, is completely immune from creolization. Indeed, one finds that Coke is often attributed with meanings and uses within particular cultures that are different from those imagined by the manufacturer. These include that it can smooth wrinkles (Russia), that it can revive a person from the dead (Haiti), and that it can turn copper into silver (Barbados)... Coke is also indigenised through being mixed with other drinks, such as rum in the Caribbean to make Cuba Libre or aguadiente [sic] in Bolivia to produce Ponche Negro. Finally it seems that Coke is perceived as a ‘native product’ in many different places – that is you will often find people who believe the drink originated in their country not in the United States” (Howes 1996: 6 in Tomlinson, 2000: 84).

The researcher's interpretation is subsequently translated into his/her context of life as well as into the scientific context. With the translation the researcher enters a dilemma: if it should be comprehensible for outsiders it must be written or told in the language of the outsiders, which can mean a distortion of the matter in the view of the insider. From a (extreme) universalist position this dilemma is either inexistent or easily solvable, from the (extreme) relativist position it is insurmountable. The former supposes that people and with them cultures are essentially the same¹ and that there are only gradual differences between them. The latter starts from the assumption that people from different cultures are essentially different from each other and that, therefore, comparisons are not feasible and translations must always be inaccurate.

Both positions have their disadvantages. *Universalism* tends to ignore differences between cultures and to neglect translation problems.² Relativism ignores the fact that many people with a different cultural background understand each other without problem and emphasises assumed incompatibilities too much. Moreover, the relativistic position is sometimes used (or misused) for political goals, when the uniqueness of certain cultural traits or traditions is protected against outside influences.³ A good example, where the two positions stand against each other, is the question about the implementation of human rights. The UN tries to implement and enforce them globally with the argument that they are essentially universal. However, certain states (i.e. China, Malaysia) claim that certain aspects of the declaration of human rights have a Western bias and are not compatible with their respective societies (Bretherton, 1998). In this paper we perceive universalism and relativism as two end points of a scale on which we position ourselves somewhere between the extremes, thinking that translations between different societies, cultures, but also people are (increasingly) necessary and should be undertaken with care. However, according to our opinion most of the cultural differences can be bridged one way or the other, even though we presume that there are things that remain in-translatable. Thereby, translation is an ongoing, unfinished and inconclusive dialogue, because there is no supra-cultural observation point (which thus would be free from contingency or context) from which the true meaning of cultural messages can be seen (Bauman, 1999).

Within the globalisation discourse there are constantly translations going on, either consciously or unconsciously, which should be born in mind when we deal with people – and consequences of their actions – from a (presumably) different context.

¹ The discussion about the question whether the ability to speak and to use language is genetically determined or socially acquired is being discussed since the issue was brought up by Chomsky and Piaget in the 1970s (Piatelli-Palmarini, 2001).

² This very paper is an example of the problem: since English has become the lingua franca of science, it is written in English in order to make it readable and accessible to a wide range of people. However, it is not written by native English speakers and thus our thoughts were translated from German into English. Moreover, the paper will probably be read by other non-native English speakers with different cultural backgrounds. Depending on whether one looks at the issue from a universalist or a relativist standpoint, this is more or less of a problem.

³ Such discussions can range from debates about whether people should or should not wear a traditional attire to religious or public ceremonies to discussions about the imminent extinction of certain ethnic groups.

Theoretical approaches to globalisation

Since globalisation is such a wide field and since it is discussed in many scientific and public subjects and spheres the assessment and interpretation of the processes and consequences of globalisation depends on one's respective viewpoint or theoretical background. In the following sections three of the most important theoretical approaches of the social sciences will be outlined and it will be shown how they deal with globalisation. We are well aware that we both generalise certain fine points of these approaches and omit others altogether (i.e. post-modern approaches to globalisation). First, the concept of 'world society', which is based on system theory will be outlined. Second, globalisation is regarded as 'consequence of modernity' from the background of action (and structuration) theory. And third the concept of 'reflexivity' (which is related to the second concept) emphasises the way how individuals relate to globalisation.

World society¹

The concept of 'world society' is based on system theory, its advocates are Peter Heintz, John Meyer and Niklas Luhmann and it originates in the 1960s and 1970s. The concept goes beyond the 'world system theory' by Immanuel Wallerstein (Wallerstein, 1974, reprinted: 1980, 1989; 1990), which mostly concentrates on economic factors and is criticised for neglecting political and cultural aspects. The basic idea of the concept of world society is that all societies in the world are interconnected and form a world society, which is an emergent phenomenon of the system² and as such more than the sum of its parts.

Society is communication

World society does not have an outside reference, because it comprises all communication on the globe: "World society is the coming about of world within communication" (Luhmann, 1997 in Wobbe, 2000: 55). And although all individuals are part of the system and are influenced by it, they do not feel it in their everyday life. The reason for this is pointed out by Luhmann, who says that (single) communication has not per se a global scope, but that it forms global networks, because communication is referring to other communication and so on. These networks have started with the process of colonisation and have increasingly become more widespread and denser. Important milestones were the invention of printing³ in the 15th century, the increasing

¹ If not mentioned differently the following references were used for this chapter: Berghaus, 2003; Dürschmidt, 2002; Wobbe, 2000.

² Wallerstein as well as Heintz, Meyer and Luhmann refer to the 'world system' as a result of global communication. While the 'world system theory' refers to Wallerstein's concept, the term 'world system' is more widely used and not only connected to the former concept.

³ We are mostly unaware that we often refer to inventions of the 16th century, when we use computer typescript. For instance the body of this text is set in 'Times Roman', a font developed by the British typographers Stanley Morison and Victor Lardent in the 1930s, based on van den Keere's 'Canon blackletter' of 1580 (Myfonts 2003).

velocity of traffic and communication, and the establishment of time zones in the 19th century up to the current rapid development of computer sciences, which make the location of (certain) communication arbitrary. Since every single act of communication is embedded in a network of other communication, which is itself embedded in other networks, change can come from different angles and is not primarily bound to the society of a nation state anymore.

World society theory is not a normative theory, it rather tries to describe what happens in the world. The world system is a relatively new phenomenon, which started after the second World War¹, it is highly heterogeneous (also its different approaches are heterogeneous) and consists of nested layers of (sub-)systems (i.e. international, intra-national, inter-individual).

The world society can be described from different angles and viewpoints:

- The world society as *structure of power* and dominance operates with the notion of a centre-periphery dichotomy and constructs the world economy analogously to political power relations (Wallerstein in Wobbe, 2000).
- World society as *international system of stratification* focuses on unequal distribution; nations become a part of this stratification.
- World society as *conglomerate of different cultures* emphasises the heterogeneity of cultures in contrast to the notion of a common system of development stages.
- The *combination of the codes of dominance and stratification* can cause an international division of labour, which determines differences in the development status of nations and regions.
- World society as *result of history* focuses on the coexistence of actors that form stable units such as nations.
- World society as *global meaningful interaction* describes it as the totality of interactions (Luhmann in Wobbe, 2000).

The development of World Society

After 1945 the following developments were important for the emergence of the world system as a single stratification system, which shows increasingly more isomorphisms (similarities of structures):

¹ The base for the world society, was laid much earlier in the 19th century, when (Western) societies shifted from a stratified differentiation to a functional differentiation. The former characterised societies with a more or less rigid stratification in lower, middle and upper strata or classes with little permeability between them. The latter denotes modern societies, in which functions (i.e. politics, economy, art, science) are more important and where it is easier for an individual to reach a higher status in an emerging meritocracy (Luhmann, 1984).

- The *expectations regarding consumption* spread globally and caused societies to integrate economically.
- *Nation states* with different preconditions show increasing structural similarities and their development progress is measured with the same standards and indicators (e.g. GDP, HDI etc.).
- The *reorganisation of the international order* – through decolonisation, the establishment of the UN, IMF and Worldbank, but also through the participation of women in politics – made the system of nation states more equal and decreased some hierarchies. Meyer points out that national constitutions, while differing from one another in the detail, are very similar, which can be interpreted as a sign for the existence of an exogenous system (Meyer in Beyer, 1994; Wobbe, 2000).
- Through the world *educational revolution* – 1950-1970 – national educational systems conform strongly with each other. It is surprising how similar the individual curricula look like (formally).

Especially the last point is interesting, because it does not follow a neo-liberal path, in which countries use their comparative advantages. Rather, all states formed educational systems that are very similar to all other such systems. Nevertheless, there are great differences between different nation states or national societies regarding the means that are allocated to education, which can cause structural tension and conflicts. The world society theory makes a difference between endogenous and exogenous factors that influence a (sub-)system (e.g. a nation state) and asks how it can cope with them. Regarding the coping of nations that newly have become independent, Heintz (Wobbe, 2000) discovered that there are different rationalities with which those countries deal with exogenous factors. The socialist way was to internalise the solution of problems, and the capitalistic way is to externalise and monetarise issues. Both, he claimed, are not politically rational ways to cope with external problems. The important thing about that is not to find the right way to deal with problems, but the fact that the world system is not determining the development of its sub-systems.

A newer development is the “delegitimisation” of the stratification of the system of nation states¹ that enabled the emergence of new centres of power and prestige differentiation (i.e. TNCs). The reasons for the emergence of the TNCs’ power can be found within the educational system that becomes increasingly levelled as well as in the fact that in industrialised countries a high degree of saturation prevails. In many Western countries – but also in others – the state has ceased to be the prime source of identification, rather cultural forms that have spread globally (i.e. pop-culture, (neo-)liberalism) have gained importance for the formation of people’s identity. TNCs

¹ This is contrasting with the world system theory of Wallerstein, which postulates an increasing stratification within the system of nation states up to the point, where the system breaks down.

are producing cultural goods (i.e. “Hollywood”¹, but also “Nokia” or “Nestlé”²) and have therefore an influence on the aspects that refer to people’s identity.

According to system theory world society is an emerging (or autopoietic) system of communication with the globe as sole outside boundary.³ Although the borders of nation states have become less important for the limitation of communication (and society which is congruent with communication), the world society is by no means a homogenous and unified system. Rather the communication networks can transport differing messages and the sub-systems are different from each other.

The greatest advantage of the world society theory is at the same time its greatest weakness (seen from the standpoint of action or structuration theory). The system – consisting of communication – is regarded as an emerging phenomenon, which individuals relate to when they communicate. Thus the system can be perceived as an outside phenomenon to the individual actor that can only partly be controlled. This notion is concurrent with many people’s perception of globalisation as something that just happens and which rapidly changes people’s living conditions. However, critics (for example Giddens, 1995; Werlen, 1995) point out that systems do not exist outside individuals and that there is no such thing as a world society that has somehow emerged and is sustained by itself. They emphasise that globalisation is a result of the intended and unintended consequences of individual actions and decisions and thus clearly a direct effect of what people do.

Global modernity⁴

While in system theory modernity plays an important role, globalisation is not explicitly tied to the emergence of world society, rather world society is seen as a coincidental result of developments connected to modernity. Other globalisation theorists emphasise and discuss the importance of modernity much more. In the following sections the concept of globalisation as a consequence of modernity will be outlined.

A brief history of globalisation

There is no consensus about either the beginning of globalisation or of modernity. Depending on how modernity is conceived, its beginning can be situated somewhere between the early 16th (focus on the emergence of capitalist modernity as response to

¹ Although India and the Philippines are producing more movies than the USA, the films from Hollywood are distributed more widely and generate far more revenues than films from other countries (Le Monde Diplomatique, 2003).

² Nokia primarily produces mobile phones. But with them Nokia promotes and sells a certain lifestyle that spreads with the product, the same applies for many of the food products made by Nestlé.

³ To be correct the space around the earth as well as the moon (though only during a few years in the 20th century) have to be included, because communication has gone already further than the surface of the earth.

⁴ If not mentioned differently I used the following references for this chapter: Albrow, 1998; Backhaus, 1999; Giddens, 1996; Robertson, 1992; Tomlinson, 2000.

the ‘crisis in feudalism’), to the mid-19th century (focus on democracy and nation building as well as on industrialisation). Therefore, periodisation becomes a pragmatic issue of drawing plausible historical lines separating processes that are relevant for us from those that are not. Giddens argues that “[t]he modern world is born out of discontinuity with what went before rather than continuity with it” (Giddens in Tomlinson, 2000: 36). According to him, modernity is a distinct period, which is more than a continuation on an evolutionary process of history as for example Elias (1977) saw it.

Of course modernity should not be perceived as entirely disconnected from earlier developments because there are plenty of cultural ‘survivals’ in modern societies. However, the kind of connectivity that has developed since the 17th century was not present before, even though huge empires existed (i.e. the ones of the Chinese, the Persians, Alexander the Great, the Romans, Charlemagne or Ghengis Khan). Neither did they have the capacity for cultural and political integration over distance nor the techniques for the routine monitoring and surveillance of political-territorial borders that modern nation states have. The shift that happened between pre-modern and modern societies is not one of introduction of mobility, technology and connectivity, because these things existed in pre-modern societies too. It is rather an axial shift towards a complex connectivity that overcomes (at least partly) cultural distance through routine integration into daily local life through education, employment, consumer culture and mass media.

Robertson (1992) formulated five stages – a minimal phase model as he calls it – of the development of globalisation, which are characterised by specific events or processes.

1. The *germinal phase* (early 15th until mid-18th century in Europe) started with the expanding scope of the Catholic church, the spread of the Gregorian calendar, the emergence of the helio-centric world view, the accentuation of the individual and ideas of humanity. Slowly national communities developed, especially after the Treaty of Westphalia 1648, after which it was agreed to acknowledge nation states and not the (Catholic) church as the supreme and sovereign rulers over a territory.
2. The *incipient phase* (mid-18th century until the 1870s mostly in Europe) provided a sharp shift towards the idea of a homogeneous, unitary state. Consequently, formalised international relations were developed and a more concrete conception of humankind emerged. Discussions about nationalism and inter-nationalism start.
3. The *Take-off phase* (1870s until the mid-1920s) is characterised by the moving together of the four reference points of national societies: generic individuals (with a masculine bias), a single international society, a singular (but not unified) conception of humankind. Connected with this development were discussions about national and personal identities. Towards the end of this phase immigration restrictions became globalised and the speed of global communication increased considerably. Finally, the first global competitions – i.e. the Olympics, Nobel prizes – were conducted and the war from 1914 to 1919 was considered as the First World War.

4. The struggle-for-hegemony phase (mid-1920s until the late-1960s) was dominated by conflicts (i.e. the Second World War, the Cold War, struggles of colonised societies for independence) about the form of modernisation and consequently of globalisation. The holocaust and the use of the atomic bomb sharply brought the form and prospect of humanity into focus. The establishment of the League of Nations and then the United Nations was a step towards a global humanity. The crystallisation of the Third World¹ and the recognition of national independence marked a milestone towards the establishment of a system of emancipated nation states.
5. The *uncertainty phase* (late 1960s until the early 1990s) was marked by the moon landing and rapid acceleration of global communication but also by the awareness of global pollution. The end of the Cold War left capitalism as the only viable economic mode and ended bipolarity. The conception of individuality became more complex due to gender, sexual, ethnic and racial considerations. Global institutions and movements greatly increased as well as the number of TNCs and NGOs. The media system was consolidated and globalised and Islam became the most prominent force of counter- or antiglobalisation. At the same time Islamic circles initiated an (Islamic) reglobalisation, making much more paths of the development of globalisation conceivable than before.
6. The years from 1990 until now could either be added to the uncertainty phase or seen as a *consolidation phase*, where the principles of neo-liberalism as well as of democracy are adapted by more and more societies. Moreover, the dominance of the USA as hegemonic power became more visible, but was also increasingly disputed. However, it should not be forgotten that the disparities between rich and poor (countries as well as individuals) increased and that there are only few trends that point into another direction.

Globalisation as a consequence of modernity

As we have seen globalisation is – according to many theorists – closely connected to modernity, which is regarded as a distinct epoch with disjunctive connections to the pre-modern area. Giddens is probably the most prominent and fervent advocate of the connection of globalisation and modernity when he says: “Globalisation concerns the intersection of presence and absence, the interlacing of social events and social relations ‘at distance’ with local contextualities. We should grasp the global spread of modernity in terms of an ongoing relation between distanciation and the chronic mutability of local circumstances and local engagements” (Giddens, 1991: 21-22 in Tomlinson, 2000: 47).

Therefore, modernity as *time-space transformation* facilitated the development of globalisation. The invention and mass distribution of the mechanical clock² severed the

¹ The term ‘Third World’ was coined at the conference of Non-Aligned Nations 1955 in Bandung (Indonesia) and was meant to emphasise the existence of a third power between the big power blocks. The deprecatory connotation developed later (Nohlen & Nuscheler, 1994).

² Although mechanical clocks existed since medieval times, the mass distribution only occurred between 1800 and 1850. Before that the significance of clocks and watches as well as their reliability was rather limited.

tie between time and place. Before that, it was almost impossible to tell the time without referring to the context of a specific locality. For example the expressions ‘at dawn’, ‘at dusk’, or ‘at noon’ are tied to a place. As measurement of time they only make sense for people living in the same context. Thus, the uniform and abstract nature of clocked time freed the co-ordination of social activity from the particularities of place. For example the term ‘person-hours’ can be used anywhere regardless of place in order to measure how much time is needed to fulfil a specific task. Of course there are (local) differences of productivity, but that is not the point. Rather, the unit serves as (globally) transferable mode to measure work. The introduction of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) 1880 in Britain and its subsequent adoption as reference for the world time zones 1884 signified the irreversible destruction of all other temporal regimes in the world.¹ However, the invention of the clock did not determine modernity. It rather facilitated changes in everyday life, without which the watch would not have gathered such importance.

The ‘emptying of time’ had implications for the ‘emptying of space’, in which space is separated from place. Place or locale can be described as physical setting of interaction (i.e. a room in a house, a street corner of a town, a field in a rural area, but also territories of nation states). Space is an abstract concept of the relation of objects and distances.² Modernity fosters relations at distance which are not based on the face-to-face presence (the mode of interaction of a majority of people in pre-modern eras) of a locale anymore. A global middle-class family house is still a locale, but it is also the setting for distanced interaction. With communication technologies (i.e. a letter box to receive mail and newspapers, TV, telephone, internet) it is connected to the world, with the supply of electricity it is connected to expert systems which maintain them, and with the way a house is owned (i.e. via loans and mortgages) it is connected to the global system of finance. Thus, social activity is *disembedded* from contexts of co-presence, which means that other persons can be reached or influenced over distance, they do not have to be physically present in order to perceive the consequences of someone’s action. This disembedding lifts social relations from their embeddedness in locales via two mechanisms: ‘symbolic tokens’ and ‘expert systems’. *Symbolic tokens* are media of exchange with a standardised value, they are interchangeable across a plurality of contexts (Giddens, 1996). The most prominent token is money and its most globalised form is the credit card that is not even tied to a specific currency. *Expert systems* provide (technical) knowledge that is valid independent of the people who make use of them. We are increasingly depending on such expert systems in which we have to put our trust. If we for example drive a car we trust the experts who engineered it that it works properly and we trust the traffic planners that the traffic rules work not just in the place we live. Expert systems are relevant to almost every aspect of social life and the requirement to trust them is also a disembedding force that promotes globalisation.

The way it has been explained so far, modernity and consequently globalisation are western projects that spread over the globe and that have a distinct western bias. Indeed,

¹ Whereas years are not calculated the same way (for example the Balinese calendar displays seven different systems: Western, Arab, Jawa, Çaka, Chinese, Ichi Gatsu, Buddhist), the measurement of days, hours, minutes and seconds has been globalised.

² For a discussion of the definition of ‘space’ see: Glückler, 1998; Lossau, 2002; Werlen, 1995.

many of the aspects which we connect to globalisation are of western origin. However, there are also critics (for example Nederveen Pieterse, 1995; Said, 1994) who say that while there exists a prominent and powerful western modernity, there are other modernities that are interconnected with the former but not the same. We will not go into a discussion of this issue, for one thing because many aspects of African or Asian modernities are similar to western modernity, but also because the discourse on globalisation – also in non-western societies – focuses on the aspects that are related to modernity in general, meaning western biased modernity.

In contrast to world society theory the concept of globalisation as consequence of modernity puts actions of people in its centre. They are shaping the social system, which subsequently is the precondition for further actions and not the other way round. In the next chapter the active involvement of individuals into the process of globalisation is being looked at even more closely.

Reflexivity or how we participate in globalisation

The concept of modernity – as we already have seen – is by no means regarded as the adequate term to describe the time we currently live in. Expressions such as ‘post-modernity’, ‘second modernity’, ‘late modernity’, ‘liquid modernity’, ‘cyber-modernity’ or ‘reflexive modernity’ are being discussed, often heatedly. We do not want to delve into that discussion, which at times seems to be rather academic, however, we want to bring up the concept of *reflexivity* which is, in our opinion, essential, in order to grasp important consequences of globalisation and to avoid misunderstandings.

Reflexivity and reflex

According to Habermas (1998) reflexivity can mean two things: First, the application of systemic mechanisms on the system itself (*reflex*) – e.g. the coping of ecological problems resulting from economic activities with other economic activities¹. And second, self-reflection as self-perception and self-influencing of collective actors – e.g. changing the conditions of global markets through political influence.²

The first meaning refers to the fact that modernity – mostly due to technology and production – has negative consequences or side-effects, which are dealt with using the technology of modernity. The so called ‘millenium bug’ or ‘Y2K problem’ was caused by the computer industry in the 1980s, when memory space was limited and programmers saved “space” limiting the year fields to two digits, which was later thought to cause system crashes when the date fields changed from ‘99’ to ‘00’. Towards the end of the 1990s the same companies (if not the same programmers) who have caused the problem were fixing it with basically the same technology (and more memory space). The millenium bug is a good example for the reflex of modernity, its bending towards itself. Especially in the discussion about environmental problems caused by the

¹ An example would be the (paid) cleanup of beaches after an oil leakage from a freight ship.

² For example the protection of the agricultural sector of a country from cheaper imports or the boycott of goods that were manufactured with child labour.

use of modern technology, this reflex becomes important, because it causes great risks, which is why our society is also called risk society (Beck, 1986).

The second meaning refers to the more individual aspect of assessing situations and choosing the “right” thing to do. Self-reflection is crucial to the theory of structuration (Giddens, 1995). It is not simply a mode of reaction to the consequences of one’s own or other people’s actions, it is an assessment of the context of these consequences and encompasses the choice of different possibilities to (re)act.

Smart (1999) calls the era of modernity in which people were not aware of the negative environmental consequences of modern technology, ‘simple modernity’. In simple modernity people wanted to control the uncertainties of life – initially, the goal was (and still is) to remove the dearth of food – by means of (technological) progress. Thereby, simple modernity combined two kinds of optimisms. First, the notion of *linear scientification* presupposes that the more we know about the world, the more we can control it. And second, *side-effects* of modernisation (i.e. reflex) and progress can be handled with better technology (if not now then in the future). The historic experience – i.e. due to environmental pollution –, however, tells us that these optimisms are not justified. We have made the experience that side-effects of modern use of technology cannot be entirely controlled and removed by improved technology (like the millennium bug). Therefore, we increasingly have to deal with human-made risks with a high potential of imminence that spread globally (i.e. climate change, thinning of the ozone-layer, pollution of the sea etc.). Many damages, thus, lose their spacial and temporal limitations and often cannot be ascribed to distinct polluters, because many actors are contributing a little to the problem (e.g. in the case of global warming).

Risk society and reflexive modernity

Principally, individuals can deal with risks in two ways: fatalistic or self-reflexive. Fatalism is the easier way, for, no change of one’s behaviour is required. Although we cannot state that system theory (or the theory of world society) is causing fatalism, we could still say that it can have a bias towards this behaviour. This is because, if the system of a society is regarded as an outside phenomenon (i.e. outside the influence and control of what people are doing in their everyday life), people regard their ability to change or alter it as marginal. A (self-)reflexive reaction, which is more in line with action or structuration theory, is more demanding. According to the theory of reflexive modernity individuals have to decide whose expertise they want to believe in, because expert systems are not regarded anymore as being reliable per se but that expert opinions can differ from each other.

Regarding global warming (reflexive) people have to decide whether they believe the experts who claim that the problem is human-made and that it can be (partly) solved by reducing CO₂ output or whether they believe those who say it is caused by the increased occurrence of sunspots or other natural factors. If they believe the former, people should reflect on their own role in producing CO₂ and whether they can and want to do anything about its reduction. Since it is often difficult to know what consequences one’s actions have (because some of the consequences are spacially and temporally

distanciated), reflecting upon them is not always easy. And since so many of people's actions have consequences in far-away places, reflection can become a burden and can be perceived as tyranny. Nevertheless, (positive) changes only happen if people reflect on their behaviour and act accordingly. Therefore, the member of a research team that sets out to mitigate syndromes of global change, should reflect on his/her use of air-planes if he/she believes the experts who found out that planes are among the greatest producers of CO₂. The western consumers of coffee should reflect on whether the coffee growers in India or Ethiopia get an adequate share of the price of a cup of java. And the rubber producer in Malaysia should reflect on his/her role in the global rubber market (and thus its price structure), if he/she decides to increase the acreage of his/her plantation. Although by reflection alone no changes occur yet, it is the first step – and *conditio sine qua non* – towards conscious action in the direction of change.

In order to be able to reflect, people need information about an issue. Knowledge is broadly available but not equally accessible for all people. Certain topics such as 'global warming' have entered the public discourse and can be regarded as common knowledge (though not in its details and all consequences). Others – e.g. the relation of an increase of the demand of low-fat products in Europe and the USA with the income of Balinese seaweed farmers (Backhaus, 1998), or the impact of the decreasing number of cars sold on prices of raw rubber – are only known to few (interested) groups of people.

Examples from the debates on globalisation in India

The debate about globalisation is taking place in virtually every country. Therefore, we can talk about a globalised discourse. However, the discourse threads do not have the same “thickness” in every country, which means that certain topics are discussed more than others and that the discourse threads are embedded in a mesh of other local discourses that are specific and not globally harmonised. In the following examples from the Indian discourse are taken in order to have a brief look at a debate discussed in the South. Of course this is not the place to depict the whole discourse, which is why the chosen examples should not be regarded as representative for the entire discourse. In the following chapters we mostly draw on an overview of the globalisation discourse by Gail Omvedt (2000) and use examples of the media discourse to illustrate the individual positions.

In India the public discourse on globalisation started with the introduction of a “new economic policy” by the Narashima Rao government in 1991, which allowed for a certain liberalization of the economy. The debates since then take place in different fora: in newspapers and magazines, in electronic media, and in public events such as seminars or demonstrations. The term ‘globalisation’ was increasingly used for political purposes and was connoted either positively or negatively (Omvedt, 2000: 175-178). In the following impressions of the globalisation discourse from the viewpoint of outsiders will be presented. We are well aware, that we take up a specific position and that other viewpoints are possible. Moreover, we do not attempt to represent and analyse the whole discourse in its totality. Rather the most prominent positions were chosen.

Pro globalisation

While supporters as well as opponents of globalisation both agree that the process was somewhat forced upon India from the outside, they fervently disagree on its consequences. The supporters envisage globalisation as a force that helps to unleash the potential of “India the caged tiger” that was shackled by the “Nehru model” of development. Jawaharlal Nehru, they claim, created a commando economy which proved to be nonviable. The term ‘*licence raj*’ stands for the disadvantages of this model. It describes the fact that every entrepreneur from the rich capitalist to the smallscale farmer has to go through a bureaucratic maze in order to get the *allowance* for productive work. Thus, the main argument in favour of globalisation is that if all these restrictions are removed, the Indian economy is able to face global competition and to make a leap forward. Indeed, when many barriers fell in 1995 many business people got into a state of euphoria. Later, when it became apparent that not all enterprises benefited from the change – especially those who used the *licence raj* to establish certain monopolies – it was argued that foreign companies had an advantage in India over the domestic industry. The consequence of this development was, that within the group of supporters of globalisation the term ‘negotiated globalisation’ arose, which means that

the nation state should keep a certain control on the developments and should not open the country entirely to unregulated capitalism (Omvedt, 2000: 185-189).

Example of globalisation support

Manu Shroff (1999) can be regarded as a strong supporter of globalisation in India. He perceives it as “a process of moving away from something that is less desirable to a goal which is more satisfactory...” For him globalisation is strictly an economic process that has its roots in the time after the Second World War, where efforts were made to establish an international economic order, guarded by the IMF, World Bank and the GATT. He makes a distinction between international and global economic order. The former is largely governed by nation states, whereas the latter is ruled by global institutions. The collapse of the Soviet Union, technological change and the information revolution contributed to a progressive integration of the world economy in the 1990s. While Shroff regards technology as a prime mover in this development he sees the freedom of market as the most important motor of globalisation and regards both as much more important than conscious decisions of governments. He consequently regards globalisation as a force by itself, which is difficult to regulate and control. The scope of globalisation, however, is still limited to the markets for products and some services. The labour market, in contrast, is still prevented by state interventions from becoming globalised. These interventions – usually in the form of immigration restrictions – mostly come from the desire of the rich countries to preserve their standard of living. Hence, Shroff – using some arguments of dependency theory – accuses the western countries of inhibiting the process of globalisation.

India is benefiting already from a decade of liberalisation, says Shroff, for as competition expands, the efficiency gains increase. This has led to corporate growth, modernisation and consumer satisfaction. He counters the arguments of the so called Bombay group, which complains about the increasing influence of multinationals in India, with the remark that once a foreign company has gained entry to the Indian market, it no longer remains foreign. However, he also concedes that due to Indian fiscal policy, domestic enterprises have disadvantages that ought to be removed. In order to make globalisation beneficial for Indian enterprises, the government should not take measures to counter the free flow of foreign direct investments, but it must give “breathing space” for the domestic industry. Shroff also admits that globalisation has negative effects but he relativises them with the following comparison: “it is true that when one opens the window one gets fresh air as well as insects and [sic] mosquitoes. The answer is not to shut the window, but maybe to put a screen or install an insect repellent.” At the national level such a screen should be introduced in order to alleviate poverty – something India has grappled with since independence. While Shroff cautions too optimistic ideas with the statement that we have to live with a certain degree of inequality, he states too that without growth poverty cannot be alleviated and that without a certain degree of literacy no economy has been able to attain sustained high growth. Hence, he expects from the government to invest in literacy programs while giving enterprises a wider berth for their activities. Regarding the (unequal) global distribution of world income he accuses the rich countries of blocking the freer flow of capital and labour (with protectionist laws and subsidies of their own economies), which

would enable poor countries to balance inequalities. For the future Shroff envisages a shift from internationalism, based on government policies, to globalisation which should end in a global order, in which nation states “do not negotiate with each other with a perspective of maximising national gains and yielding the minimum of their freedom of action”.

Shroff's statements, however, did not remain unchallenged long, even by people who essentially share the idea that globalisation is primarily taking place in the economic realm and that India can mostly benefit from it. Kurien (1999), who answers directly to Shroff's article, states that economy is not exclusively taking place on the national or international macro level but also on the level of the household. Therefore, ‘impersonal forces’ operating the market are a myth that – according to Kurien – many economists accept and propagate. In contrast, he says, “the market is only the *institution* that facilitates the act of exchange [emphasis in the original]” and can therefore not be impersonal. And drawing from this argument Kurien asks, whether the interferences of governments should be more harmful for markets than covert manipulations by other units (i.e. TNCs). Nevertheless, he agrees with Shroff that such interferences with the market are detrimental to globalisation and the economic development and well-being of people in India.

Contra globalisation

As probably in most countries in India there are many who distrust globalisation or openly accuse it of causing harm to the domestic economy and to the majority of the population. There are different reasons and motivations of the opponents of globalisation (respectively the developments they associate with it). Most, but not all, claim that *outside pressure* from global institutions such as WTO, IMF or World Bank but also from TNCs causes the social shield that India has erected to break down, leaving vulnerable parts of the society unprotected. The economist Ashok Mitra (1998 in Omvedt, 2000: 180) calls globalisation a tool of neo-colonialism with the aim to keep developing countries in the current state of (under)development. Structural adjustments programmes (SAPs) are in his view a tool of the World Bank to achieve this goal. These arguments are in line with concepts of the dependencia theory that was developed in the early 1970s. The difference to the situation today is that it is not only industrialised nation states that keep developing countries in an under-developed state causing instability and poverty, but the afore mentioned global institutions.

A consequence of this outside pressure is seen in the *downfall of the nation* state, that brought and guaranteed freedom after independence and now ceases to protect its citizens from external constraints. Vandana Shiva (2001) claims that the sudden withdrawal of the state (that has the constitutional duty to feed people) causes starvation again like it happened in Bengal and Orissa in 1942 and like it is starting to happen in many places in Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh today. Due to the WTO demands to liberalise the Indian economy, the state cut subsidies for farmers. The farmers' production costs increased and caused food prices to raise. Consequently, the entitlements to food sank for many people and the vulnerability (see

Sen, 1981; 1993) to starvation generally increased. Moreover, the government encouraged export production, which caused peasants to shift from growing staples to produce cash crops (i.e. coffee, rubber, copra, shrimp¹) for the international market. Subsequently, the production of staples went down and their prices increased. And because import restrictions were removed, subsidised cheap foreign staples were imported with which the local peasants cannot compete². According to Shiva and others the global market, which is dominated by TNCs and WTO rules, drives the Indian agricultural sector into a downward spiral from which it cannot recover quickly.

Besides economical reasons Indian “anti-globalists” bring forward *cultural aspects* of globalisation which they find problematic. There is the overall fear of a general homogenisation of culture towards a “McDonaldised” individualistic, commercial and capitalist competition culture which is detrimental to Indian tradition. Within this discourse there are two religious-political threads noteworthy: the position of the *Hindu nationalists* and the *Dalit perspective* (Omvedt, 2000: 183-195). The Hindu nationalists fear a cultural deterioration through the liberal views of sexual behaviour and gender relations that come to Indian households via western TV broadcasts, which they regard as dangerous for Hindu tradition as Islam. For the economy they invoke ‘*swadesh*’, which means “from the own country” and was the theme of the Indian anti-colonialism movement at the beginning of the 20th century. India should, therefore, concentrate on its own forces and further internal liberalisation (i.e. removal of bureaucratic obstacles, production zones etc.), but only *selective* external liberalisation in order to protect domestic production (Omvedt, 2000: 180).

The Dalit³ movement, however, just proposes the opposite (according to Omvedt, 2000). They want external liberalisation, but only selective internal liberalisation. The reason against full internal liberalisation is their fear that quotas for Dalits in the educational system and the government will be abolished and that they will be discriminated more than before. The reason for their support of the WTO position of external liberalisation can also be regarded as political. Their argument is that those who work in a liberalised economy (i.e. the Dalits), benefit, whereas those who do not work (i.e. the Brahmins, who profit from the caste system) will lose.

There are various reasons for people and groups to be against what they perceive as globalisation, however, the most prominent ones regard the agricultural sector as well as cultural phenomena.

¹ The aquaculture of shrimp has, furthermore, alarming consequences for the environment of coastal areas (Ajiki & et al., 1996; Backhaus, 1997; 1998).

² These arguments are countered by advocates of liberalisation (see for example Joshi in Omvedt, 2000: 190). They claim that the nation state exploited the Indian agricultural sector by trade restrictions, zonal cultivation restrictions and export bans and thus stifled any efforts to be competitive. Joshi, therefore, argues that with liberalisation the Indian agricultural sector can blossom and even save the Indian economy.

³ In the Indian caste system Dalits are the untouchables. The Dalit movement fights against the discrimination of the Dalits in the Indian society.

Intermediate positions

Not all people and groups take a clear position in favour for or against globalisation, there are also intermediate positions that want to use the advantages of the process without giving all up to liberalisation and opt for “adjusted globalisation”. Nobel price laureate Amartya Sen is probably the most prominent advocate of this position. He thinks that globalisation essentially is a good force and if it is supported adequately by national policies (i.e. with investments into the health, educational sector as well as with a land reform) it will be beneficial for India. According to this position politics should not retreat and leave all to market forces, but likewise not everything that is associated with globalisation and liberalisation should be rejected.

The Indian debate in the light of the scientific discourse

If we look at how supporters and opponents of globalisation argue regarding the theoretical aspects outlined in the first chapters (see figure 2 as a reminder), we get the following picture. Shroff, but also Kurien emphasise the importance of the economy and markets (and market strategies) that have to be regulated in a new, liberal way. Thus, they touch upon categories 1, 2 and 4 of the Group of Lisbon. Moreover, Shroff regards technology (category 3) as the prime mover of the globalisation development. The position of the supporters of globalisation within the discourse is clearly on the side of optimism. However, they acknowledge negative aspects, but they do not attribute them to globalisation but to fragmenting forces such as the interference of the nation state. Therefore, they also perceive the homogenising consequences of globalisation as positive. The universalism-relativism debate remains almost untouched, except for Shroff's statement that foreign companies that invest and operate in India are no longer foreign.

While he acknowledges a certain difference of foreign and local companies, he does not perceive it as an insurmountable obstacle; in contrast “foreign” becomes quite quickly local. Regarding the global-local discourse thread Shroff remains conspicuously on the global macro-level of markets and political structures, which is in line with system theory, because it is more concerned with structures than with individual communication. Although Shroff does not mention world system theory, the form of his arguments – but not necessarily their content – fits it. Here, Kurien diverges from Shroff, when he points out that economy and markets are not exclusively taking place on the macro level and that they are not impersonal forces, but institutions or rules made by people and used by people. While he agrees with Shroff regarding his optimistic view of globalisation he does not share his theoretical structural or systemic view. Rather he sees the individual actor in the centre of the globalisation processes, which is in line with action theory or structuration theory that regards globalisation as consequence of modernity.

Figure 2: Categories of globalisation according to the Group of Lisbon

Categories	Issues
1. Globalisation of finance and capital holdings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transactions on the capital market • direct Foreign Investments • mergers and acquisitions • growth of TNCs
2. Globalisation of markets and market strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standardization of production and procedures • outsourcing of parts of productions • greater flexibility of production • increasing job insecurity
3. Globalisation of technology, knowledge and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information is better available • increasing competitiveness • quicker changes
4. New possibilities of regulation and steering political and economic processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing power of TNCs • decreasing influence of nation states • proliferation of neo-liberalism • increasing importance of supranational organisations (i.e. WTO, UN, World Bank, IMF etc.)
5. Political coalescence of the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing regional and international integration (e.g. UN, EU)
6. Consumer behaviour and life styles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural messages are spreading • increasing importance and power of media • lifestyles are not based locally anymore
7. Globalisation of perception and consciousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perceptions of a homogenising world • fragmentations as opposition to universalisation

Those, who argue against globalisation also mention markets and market strategies (category 2) as important processes. However, the same importance is attributed to the political coalescence of the world (category 5), which is regarded as causing nation states to withdraw from regulating markets (category 4) and to cultural aspects referring to changing perceptions and consciousness (category 7), which the supporters of globalisation do not mention. Another difference to the former is that critics focus on individuals or groups of individuals and local perspectives. They perceive globalisation as a homogenisation process threatening culture and local production. However, interestingly the Hindu nationalists and the Dalits use both homogenising (i.e. abolishment of bureaucratic obstacles for Indian enterprises) and fragmenting arguments (i.e. invocation of ‘*swadesh*’) for their proposals for India’s future (i.e. liberalisation of the domestic market and selective liberalisation of the international market forces in India and vice versa). It is not clear whether they use world society or action theory as background for their thoughts. However, there is a tendency for the latter, because they do not accuse the government per se, but certain decision makers, even if they are not explicitly named.

Conclusion

All the examples that were used to depict (some aspects of) the Indian discourse equalled economic liberalisation with globalisation. Other categories are mentioned as well, but they seem to have less importance. Global and local aspects are always seen as opposing each other, e.g. the global is either seen as freeing the local from bureaucratic restrictions or as constraining and streamlining it with western liberal concepts. Likewise homogenisation is regarded as the opposite of fragmentation, which is either seen as the only way to prosperity or as threat to the particular and traditional. The universalism-relativism debate is almost not mentioned. System theory as well as action theory is used by both parties, therefore, we cannot attribute one theory to the supporters and the other to sceptics of globalisation. However, none of the texts analysed displayed much reflexivity. The influence of one group or organisation is mostly seen one-dimensional and regarded either as positive or negative. Also within the newer trends it is said to try to use the positive processes of globalisation and to avoid the negative ones. It is not mentioned that one process can have different consequences of which not all are necessarily intended.

This paper first gave a short overview about the dimensions and categories which are influenced by the process. Second, globalisation was regarded as a discourse which is not aimed at one single goal, but which is very diverse and also has threads that oppose each other and which therefore cannot solely be seen as a unifying or homogenising force. Third, the juxtaposition of world society, which is based on system theory and structuration theory, showed that we can look at the globalisation discourse with different theoretical concepts, which influences our perception of the consequences of globalisation processes. Fourth, the example of some of the Indian discourse threads showed that globalisation is mostly regarded as an outside force and that opinions about whether it is beneficial to India or not diverge considerably from each other.

Fifth and last, the paper aims at the heightening of the readers' awareness regarding their own actions and those of others. Since we are all part of the globalisation process, we all contribute to it in one way or the other – mostly it is the unintended consequences of our (every day) actions that have consequences – either as constraint or option – for people who live spatially and temporally distanced from us. In our view reflexivity is the most fruitful way to look at globalisation, because it allows an accurate analysis of actions that lead to specific outcomes.

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