

PERSPECTIVES: AN OPEN INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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GLOBALIZATION

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Learning Objectives

- Define globalization and the 5 “scapes” that can be used to characterize global flows or exchanges.
- Explain the relationship between globalization and the creation of new “glocal” lifestyles and forms of consumption.
- Describe some of the ways people use agency to respond to globalization including syncretism and participation in alternative markets.
- Assess the relationship between globalization, neoliberalism, and neocolonialism.
- Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the intensification of globalization.
- Discuss the implications of globalization for anthropology.

It is Tuesday on campus as you enter the dining hall. The day’s hot lunch entrées include Caribbean jerk pork with mango salsa and a side of collard greens. The next station is offering made-to-order Asian stir-fry. At the sandwich counter, tuna salad, an all-American classic, is being served in a pita. Now, are these dishes authentic? That, of course, depends on how you define authenticity.¹ A similar question was asked at Oberlin College in December 2015 when a group of students claimed that adapt-

ing foreign cuisines constituted a form of social injustice.² Their claim, which raised a great deal of controversy, was that the cafeteria's appropriation and poor execution of ethnic dishes was disrespectful to the cultures from which those recipes were taken. Many people dismissed the students' concerns as either an overreaction or as an attempt to rephrase a perennial complaint (bad cafeteria food) in a politically loaded language of social justice likely to garner a response from the administration. Regardless of what one thinks about this case, it is revealing of how college campuses—as well as the larger societies in which they are situated—have changed over time. The fact that dishes like sushi and banh mi sandwiches are even available in an Ohio college cafeteria suggests that globalization has intensified. The fact that the students would be reflexive enough to question the ethical implications of appropriating foreign cuisine suggests that we are truly in a new era. But what, in fact, is globalization?

OVERVIEW AND EARLY GLOBALIZATION

Globalization is a word commonly used in public discourse, but it is often loosely defined in today's society (much like the word "culture" itself). First appearing in the English language in the 1940s, the term "globalization" is now commonplace and is used to discuss the circulation of goods, the fast and furious exchange of ideas, and the movement of people.³ Despite its common use, it seems that the many people using the term are often not defining it in the same way. Some treat globalization as simply an economic issue while others focus more on the social and political aspects. What is clear, however, is that globalization has influenced many different facets of contemporary social life. This actually makes globalization an ideal topic of study for anthropologists, who pride themselves on taking a holistic approach to culture (see the Development of Anthropological Ideas chapter). For our purposes, we adopt political scientist Manfred Steger's definition of globalization: "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa."⁴

It is challenging to determine precisely when globalization began. Although some people discuss globalization as if it was an entirely new process without historical antecedents, in truth its precursors have been going on for a very long time. In this chapter, we argue that the distinguishing feature of globalization in the contemporary era is the speed, rather than the scope, of global interactions. Early modern technological innovations hastened globalization.⁵ For instance, the invention of the wheel created a need for permanent roads that would facilitate transport of animal drawn carts. These wheeled vehicles increased people's mobility, which in turn facilitated the sharing of both goods and ideas. Even before the invention of the wheel, the creation of written communication systems allowed ideas to be shared between people in distant locations.

Certainly extensive empires have existed at various times throughout human history, including [Chinese dynasties](#) (the Han dynasty, 206 BCE-220 CE, for instance, reached the same size the Roman Empire achieved much later); the [Ottoman Empire](#), and the [Roman Empire](#). Most recently in world history, European colonial expansion into Africa, Asia and the Americas marked another landmark of globalization. As discussed in the Development of Anthropological Ideas chapter, *colonialism* refers to the political, social, economic, and cultural domination of a territory and its people by a foreign power for an extended period of time. Technically, colonialism can be practiced by any group that is powerful enough to subdue other groups—and this certainly would be an accurate term for Ottoman and Roman imperial expansion—but as a term, colonialism is typically associated with the actions of European countries starting in the 1500s and lasting through the 1900s. During this period, European colo-

nial powers divvied up “unclaimed” land with little regard for ethnic groups who already lived in those places, their political structures, belief systems, or lifeways. By 1914, European nations ruled more than 85 percent of the world, and it is not by accident that the image of the world most often seen on conventional maps continues to be very Eurocentric in its orientation ([see map](#)).

Colonialism in the Americas was the result of European conquest of newly “discovered” territories during the Age of Exploration. Columbus was likely not the first explorer to reach the Americas, but his “discovery” intensified Europeans’ desires to colonize this “new” territory. European leaders began expanding their spheres of influence in Europe before turning their attention to lands further afield; the successes they had in colonizing nearby lands, amplified by a growing demand for trade items found in “the Orient,” fueled their enthusiasm for exploration outside the region. The Catholic Church also supported this economically motivated mission, as it coincided with a weakening of their religious-stronghold in places like England, Germany, and France.

One of the most devastating features of the colonial period was the forced labor of both indigenous Americans and Africans who were enslaved and shipped off as chattel. Between 1525 and 1866, 12.5 million slaves were sent to the New World from Africa. Treated as chattel, only 10.7 million Africans survived until arriving in the Americas. The U.S. imported approximately 450,000 of these slaves. It is not by coincidence that the ethically irredeemable shipment of slaves to the Americas corresponded to massive shipments of goods to Europe and down the west coast of Africa. As far as the total scope of international flows, however, European colonialism pales in comparison to the scope of globalization that has transpired since the 1990s.

Contemporary globalization, at least in terms of economics, is perhaps best pinpointed as coinciding with the conclusion of World War II and the Bretton Woods Conference.⁶ The agreements made at the Bretton Woods Conference led to the creation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as well as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which later became the World Bank (WB). It also laid the groundwork for the World Trade Organization (WTO). Taken together, these three organizations have had a tremendous role in accelerating globalization and in shaping the lives of people in the developing world. The very idea of governing bodies like the United Nations, or regulatory institutions like the IMF and WB, that exist outside the confines of a specific nation-state—now widely referenced as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)—contributes to undermining local sovereignty.⁷ Although local, regional, and national identities and affiliations retain salience in the global era, their importance has shifted relative to the growing sense many people have of being citizens of the world.

THE ACCELERATION OF GLOBALIZATION

The 5 “Scapes” of Globalization

As we have already established, globalization refers to the increasing pace and scope of interconnections crisscrossing the globe. Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai has discussed this in terms of five specific “scapes” or flows: ethnoscaples, technoscaples, ideoscaples, financescaples, and mediascaples. Thinking of globalization in terms of the people, things, and ideas that flow across national boundaries is a productive framework for understanding the shifting social landscapes in which contemporary people are often embedded in their daily lives. Questions about where people migrate, their reasons for migration, the pace at which they travel, the ways their lives change as a result of their travels, and how their original communities change can all be addressed within this framework. Questions about goods

and ideas that travel without the accompaniment of human agents can also be answered using Appadurai's notion of scapes.

Ethnoscape refers to the flow of people across boundaries. While people such as labor migrants or refugees (see case study below) travel out of necessity or in search of better opportunities for themselves and their families, leisure travelers are also part of this scape. The World Tourism Organization, a specialized branch of the United Nations, argues that tourism is one of the fastest growing commercial sectors and that approximately one in eleven jobs is related to tourism in some way.⁸ Tourism typically puts people from developed parts of the world in contact with people in the developing world, which creates both opportunities and challenges for all involved. While there is the potential for tourists to be positively affected by their experiences with “the Other” while travelling, the tourism industry has also received its share of criticisms. Individuals from wealthier countries like the U.S., even if they are not wealthy themselves by the standards of the United States, are able to indulge in luxuries while traveling abroad in poorer nations like those found in the Caribbean. There is a fine line between a) tourists expecting service while on vacation and b) tourists treating local people like *servants*. This latter scenario exemplifies the unequal power relationships that develop in these kinds of situations, and such power relationships concern responsible social scientists.⁹

Technoscape refers to flows of technology. Apple's iPhone is just one example of how the movement of technologies across boundaries can radically affect day-to-day life for people all along the commodity chain. Sales records are surpassed with each release of a new iPhone, with lines of customers spilling out of Apple stores and snaking around the block. Demand for this new product drives a fast and furious pace of production. Workers who are struggling to keep up with demand are subjected to labor conditions most iPhone users would find abhorrent; some even commit [suicide as a result](#). The revenue associated with the production and export of technological goods is drastically altering the international distribution of wealth. As the pace of technological innovation increases, so does the flow of technology. This is not, of course, an entirely new phenomenon; earlier technologies have also drastically and irrevocably changed the human experience. For example, the large-scale production and distribution of the printing press throughout Europe (and beyond) dramatically changed the ways in which people thought of themselves—as members not only of local communities, but of national communities as well.¹⁰

Ideoscape refers to the flow of ideas. This can be small-scale, such as an individual posting her or his personal views on Facebook for public consumption, or it can be larger and more systematic. Missionaries provide a key example. Christian missionaries to the Amazon region made it their explicit goal to spread their religious doctrines. As the experiences of missionary-turned-anthropologist Daniel Everett show, however, local people do not necessarily interpret the ideas they are brought in the way missionaries expect.¹¹ In addition to the fact that all people have agency to accept, reject, or adapt the ideologies that are introduced to or imposed on them (see syncretism below). The structure of the language spoken by the Pirahã makes it difficult to provide direct translations of the gospel.¹²

Financescape refers to the flow of money across political borders. Like the other flows discussed by Appadurai, this phenomenon has been occurring for centuries. The Spanish, for example, conscripted indigenous laborers to mine the silver veins of the Potosí mines of Bolivia. The vast riches extracted from this region were used to pay Spain's debts in northern Europe. The pace of the global transfer of money has only accelerated and today transactions in the New York Stock Exchange, the Nikkei index, and other such finance hubs have nearly immediate effects on economies around the world.

Mediascape refers to the flow of media across borders. In earlier historic periods, it could take weeks or even months for entertainment and education content to travel from one location to another. From the telegraph to the telephone, and now the Internet (and myriad other digital communication technologies), media are far more easily and rapidly shared regardless of geographic borders. For example,

Brazilian telenovelas may provide entertainment on long-distance African bus trips, Bollywood films are shown in Canadian cinemas, and people from around the world regularly watch mega-events such as the World Cup and the Olympics from wherever they may live.

While the five scapes defined by Appadurai provide useful tools for thinking about these various forms of circulation, disentangling them in this way can also be misleading. Ultimately, the phenomena studied by most anthropologists will involve more than one of these scapes. Take clothing for instance. Kelsey Timmerman, an author whose undergraduate concentration was in anthropology, was inspired to find out more about the lives of the people who made his clothing.¹³ In a single day, he found, the average American might be wearing clothes made in Honduras, Bangladesh, Cambodia, and China. Something as seemingly simple as a T-shirt can actually involve all five of Appadurai's scapes. The transnational corporations responsible for the production of these shirts themselves are part of capitalism, an idea which has become part of the international ideoscape. The financescape is altered by a company in the U.S. contracting a production facility in another country where labor costs are cheaper. The equipment needed to create these T-shirts is purchased and delivered to the production facility, thus altering the technoscape. The ethnoscape is affected by individuals migrating from their homes in rural villages to city centers, often disrupting traditional residence patterns in the process. Finally, the mediascape is involved in the marketing of these T-shirts.

SELECTIVE IMPORTATION AND ADAPTATION

Glocalization

Globalization most certainly changes the landscape of contemporary social life (see our discussion of Appadurai above). Yet it would be a mistake to think of globalization as a state that emerges without human agency. In most cases, people make decisions regarding whether or not they want to adopt a new product or idea that has been made available to them via globalization. They also have the ability to determine the ways in which that product or idea will be used, including many far different from what was originally intended. A cast-off Boy Scout uniform, for example, may be adopted by a Maasai village leader as a symbol of his authority when dealing with Tanzanian government officials.¹⁴

First emerging in the late 1980s, the term **glocalization** refers to the adaptation of global ideas into locally palatable forms.¹⁵ In some instances, this may be done as a profit-generating scheme by transnational corporations. For example, McDonald's [offers vastly different menu items](#) in different countries. While a Big Mac may be the American favorite, when in India you might try a McAlloo Tikki (a breadcrumb-coated potato and pea patty), in Hong Kong [mixed veggies and egg mini twisty pasta](#) in a chicken broth for breakfast, in Thailand [corn pies](#) or [pineapple pies](#), or a [Steak Mince 'N' Cheese](#) pie in New Zealand. In other cases, people rather than corporations find innovative ways to adopt and adapt foreign ideas. The Zapotec of Oaxaca, Mexico, for example, have found a way to adapt globally available consumer goods to fit their longstanding cultural traditions. Traditionally, when a member of the community dies, that individual's relatives have an obligation to ease his or her passing to the afterlife. One part of this obligation is making an extraordinary number of tamales for the mourners who come to pay their respects at the home altar that has been erected for the deceased. These tamales are intended to be taken home and were once shared in traditional earthen containers. Rather than disrupting this tradition, the introduction of modern consumer goods like Tupperware has made the old tradition of sharing food easier.¹⁶ In this case, Zapotec culture is not threatened by the introduction of

foreign goods and ideas because the community incorporates new things into their pre-existing practices without completely trading old ideas for new ones. Practices like these provide evidence that fears about globalization leading to nothing but cultural homogenization may be exaggerations. Yet, other communities refuse these products precisely because they equate modernization and globalization with culture loss. For example, Nobel Peace Prize recipient Dr. Rigoberta Menchu recounts how adamantly the Maya elders where she was raised warned the youth away from consuming Coca-Cola or even using modern corn mills rather than the traditional mano and metate.¹⁷

Case Study: Both Global *and* Local –Salsa Dancing Around the World

While there are a variety of texts regarding the histories of salsa music and dancing, as it exists today the salsa scene is inseparable from the five flows of globalization described above.¹⁸ Take for instance the vast number of salsa “congresses” and festivals held worldwide throughout the year. People from near and far travel to these events as dance students, social participants, performers, and instructors (the *ethnoscape*). Travel to and from these events, often internationally, depends on modern transportation (the *technoscape*). What is being taught, shared, and communicated at these events is, primarily ideas about different dancing style and techniques (the *ideoscape*). In addition to the costs of gas/parking/airfare or the like, registration, hotel rooms, lessons, DJs/bands, and other services are all available because they are being paid for (the *financescape*). Finally, these events could not exist as they do today without online advertising (see Figure 1 for an example), workshop and performance schedules, and event registration, let alone video-clips of the featured teachers and performers (the *mediascape*). Indeed, the very fact that dancers can come from disparate locations and all successfully dance with each other—even in the absence of a common spoken language—testifies to the globalization involved in such dance forms today.¹⁹

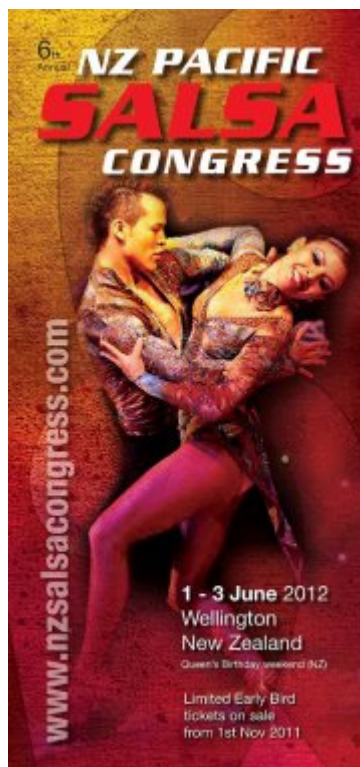


Figure 1: Advertisement for the New Zealand Salsa Congress, 2012.

The widely shared patterning of movement to music in this dance genre does not, however, negate the very real differences between local iterations. Featured in the very title of ethnomusicologist Sydney Hutchinson’s recent edited volume, *Salsa World: A Global Dance in Local Contexts*, real differences between local contexts, practices, and meanings are shown in chapters dedicated to the salsa scenes in New York, New

Jersey, Los Angeles, rural America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Colombia (Cali), Dominican Republic (Santo Domingo), France, Spain (Barcelona), and Japan.²⁰ Learning to dance at family gatherings is different from learning in a studio. Learning to dance to music that plays in every building on the street is different from learning in a setting with entirely different local instruments. Learning to dance is different when everyone comes from the same general socioeconomic and ethnic background compared to learning in extremely heterogeneous urban settings. This set of comparisons could continue for quite some time. The point is that even global forms take on local shapes.²¹

Lifestyle, Taste, and Conspicuous Consumption

While some aspects of globalization are best studied at the societal level, others are best examined at smaller scales such as the trends visible within specific socio-economic strata or even at the level of individual decision-making. The concept of “lifestyle” refers to the creative, reflexive, and sometimes even ironic ways in which individuals perform various social identities (see the Performance chapter in this volume). Sociologist David Chaney describes lifestyles as “characteristic modes of social engagement, or narratives of identity, in which the actions concerned can embed the metaphors at hand.”²² The lifestyles we live and portray, then, can be seen as reflexive projects (see the Fieldwork chapter for more information about reflexivity) in the sense that they display both to ourselves and to our audiences who we think we are, who we want to be, and who we want to be seen to be.

Chaney argues that people only feel the need to differentiate themselves when confronted with an array of available styles of living.²³ Societies organized via organic solidarity (versus mechanical) are predicated on different goods, skills, and tasks. Within this framework, the rise of a consumerist economy enables individuals to exhibit their identities through the purchase and conspicuous use of various goods.²⁴ Globalization has increased the variety of goods available for individuals to purchase—as well as people’s awareness of these products—thus expanding the range of identities that can be performed through their consumption habits (see the Gender and Sexuality chapter for more on performance of identity). In some situations, identity is an individual project, with conspicuous consumption used to display one’s sense of self. For example, a student who feels alienated by the conservative, “preppy,” students at her East Coast school can cultivate an alternative identity by growing dreadlocks, wearing Bob Marley T-shirts, and practicing djembe drumming, all of which are associated with the African diaspora outside the United States.

Critics have argued that a consequence of globalization is the homogenization of culture. Along similar lines, some have worried that the rapid expansion of the leisure market would decrease the diversity of cultural products (e.g. books, movies) consumed by the populace. The disappearance of small-scale shops and restaurants has certainly been an outcome of the rise of global conglomerates, but the homogenization of culture is not a foregone conclusion.²⁵ Globalization enables individuals in far-flung corners of the world to encounter new ideas, commodities, belief systems, and voluntary groups to which they might choose to belong. At times these are at the expense of existing options, but it is also important to acknowledge that people make choices and can select the options or opportunities that most resonate with them. The concept of lifestyle thus highlights the degree of decision-making available to individual actors who can pick and choose from global commodities, ideas, and activities. At the same time as individual choices are involved, the decisions made and the assemblages selected are far from random. Participating in a lifestyle implies knowledge about consumption; knowing how to distinguish between goods is a form of symbolic capital that further enhances the standing of the individual.²⁶

How much free will, freedom of choice, or autonomy an individual actually has is an age-old question far beyond the scope of this chapter, but in many cases a person’s consumption patterns are actually

a reflection of the social class in which she or he was raised—even when an individual thinks he or she is selectively adopting elements from global flows that fit with his or her unique identity. In other words, an individual’s “taste” is actually an outgrowth of his or her **habitus**, the embodied dispositions that arise from one’s enculturation in a specific social setting.²⁷ Habitus results in a feeling of ease within specific settings. For example, children who have been raised in upper-class homes are able to more seamlessly integrate into elite boarding schools than classmates on scholarships who might find norms of dining, dress, and overall comportment to be unfamiliar.²⁸ Habitus, the generative grammar for social action, generates tastes and, by extension, lifestyles.²⁹

Recall the vignette that opened this chapter. The fact that the students of this prestigious liberal arts college are in the position to critique the ethical implications of specific recipes suggests that their life experiences are far different from the roughly one in seven households (totaling 17.5 million households) in the United States with low or very low food security.³⁰ Inevitably then, what people choose to consume from global offerings—and the discourses they generate around those consumption choices—are often indicative of their social status. Once a commodity becomes part of these global flows, it is theoretically available to all people regardless of where they live. In actual practice, however, there are additional gatekeeping devices that ensure continued differentiation between social classes. Price will prevent many people from enjoying globally traded goods. While a Coca-Cola may seem commonplace to the average college student in the U.S., it is considered a luxury good in other parts of the world. Likewise, although Kobe steaks (which come from the Japanese *wagyu* cattle) are available in the U.S., it is a relatively small subgroup of Americans who would be able and willing to spend hundreds of dollars for a serving of meat. Having the knowledge necessary to discern between different goods and then utilize them according to socially prescribed norms is another mark of distinction between social classes, as anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu’s work on taste made clear.³¹

GLOBALIZATION IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Although some within the discipline argue that anthropologists should report objectively on the cultures and social phenomena they study, given the structure of the discourse surrounding globalization, it is increasingly difficult to avoid being pigeonholed as “pro” or “anti” globalization. In truth though, globalization has had both positive and negative impacts.

Advantages of the Intensification of Globalization

As optimists, we will start with the “glass-half-full” interpretation of globalization. Political Scientist Manfred Steger has argued that “humane forms of globalization” have the potential to help us deal with some of the most pressing issues of our time, like rectifying the staggering inequalities between rich and poor or promoting conservation.³² The mediascape has made people in the **Global North** increasingly aware of the social injustices happening in other parts of the world. In his book on the global garment industry, Kelsey Timmerman highlights the efforts undertaken by activists in the U.S., ranging from public demonstrations decrying the fur industry to boycotts of products produced in socially unsustainable ways.³³ While many of these efforts fall short of their intended outcome—and typically overlook the complexities of labor situations in the **Global South** where families often rely upon the labor of their children to make ends meet—such examples nonetheless underscore the connections people in

one location now feel with others (who they will likely never meet) through the commodity chains that link them.

Globalization has also facilitated the rise of solidarity movements that would not have been likely in an earlier era. To take a recent example, within hours of the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, individuals from different nations and walks of life had changed their Facebook profile pictures to include the image of the French flag. This movement was criticized because of its Eurocentrism; the victims of a bombing in Beirut just the day before received far less international support than did the French victims. Shortcomings aside, it still stands as a testament to how quickly solidarity movements can gain momentum thanks to technological innovations like social media.

Micro-loan programs and crowd-source fundraising are yet more ways in which individuals from disparate circumstances are becoming linked in the global era. Kiva, for example, is a microfinance organization that enables anyone with an Internet connection to make a small (\$25) donation to an individual or cooperative in various parts of the developing world. The projects for which individuals/groups are seeking funding are described on the Kiva website and donors choose one or more specific projects to support. The recipient must then repay the loan to Kiva with interest.

Crowd-source fundraising follows a similar principle, though without the requirement that money be paid back to the donors. One small-scale example involves funds gathered in this way for a faculty led applied visual research class in Dangriga, Belize in 2014. By generating a small pool of additional funding, 100 percent of the students' project fees could be dedicated to producing materials for local community partners (compared to other groups, who used some of these fees for student lunches or other items). As a result, the team was able to over-deliver on what had been promised to the community. The Sabal Cassava Farm (Belize's sole commercial cassava farm) had requested a new road sign as well as full-color marketing flyers. The Austin Rodriguez Drum Shop—a cultural resource center, and producer of traditional Garifuna drums—had wanted help updating their educational poster (see Figure 2a and 2b). For both groups the team was able to a) provide digital frames with all the research images (so that the local community partners had something “in hand” and could use as they wanted; b) use higher grade production materials, and c) start work on large-format, coffee-table style documents to be provided to each family *and* also copies to be donated to the local Gulisi Garifuna Museum.



Figure 2a: Original educational "poster" composed of photos, many water-damaged, attached to cardboard with layers of clear tape. Photograph by Jonathan S. Marion. All rights reserved.



Figure 2b: Updated 3'x4' poster, documenting the entire drum-making process, with matte lamination to protect from water damage. Photograph by Jonathan S. Marion. All rights reserved.

Advances in transportation technologies, combined with an increased awareness of humanitarian crises abroad (an awareness that is largely facilitated by advances in communication technologies) also create new ethnoscaples. Programs like the Peace Corps have a relatively long history of sending Westerners into foreign nations to assist with humanitarian efforts on a regular basis. Other volunteers are mobilized in times of crisis. Medical professionals may volunteer their services during a disease epidemic, flocking to the regions others are trying to flee. Engineers may volunteer their time to help rebuild cities in the wake of natural disasters. And even lay people without a specialized skill set may lend their energy to helping others in the aftermath of a disaster, or by collecting and/or donating goods to be used in various relief efforts. In 2010, a devastating, 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti, affecting an estimated three million people. Thanks to widespread coverage of the crisis, the international response was immediate and intense with more than twenty countries contributing resources and personnel to assist in the recovery efforts. Clearly, then, there are also benefits facilitated by globalization.

Disadvantages of the Intensification of Globalization

In the previous section, we concluded by noting how the intensification of globalization can bring benefits to people in times of crisis. Yet it bears remembering and reiterating that sometimes such crises are themselves brought about by globalization. The decimation of indigenous tribes in the Americas,

who had little to no resistance to the diseases carried by European explorers and settlers, is but one early example of this. Such changes to the world's ethnoscaapes may also be accompanied by changes to local health. As epidemic after epidemic wreaked havoc on the indigenous peoples of the Americas, death rates in some tribes reached as high as 95 percent. Addressing a current instance, the research program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFA) coordinated by the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, has called attention to the role of human-caused climate change in creating the current Syrian refugee crisis (see case study by Laurie King below).³⁴

Similarly, a current example of how globalization can spell disaster from a public health standpoint would be the concern in 2014 about infected airplane passengers bringing the Ebola virus from Africa to the U.S. In March 2014, the country of Guinea experienced an outbreak of the Ebola virus. From there, it spread into many countries in the western part of Africa. Medical professionals from the U.S. traveled to West Africa to assist with patient care. In October 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirmed that a man who traveled from Liberia to the U.S. while asymptomatic became ill several days after reaching the U.S. and eventually succumbed to the disease. Several health workers in the U.S. also became ill with the virus, but were successfully treated. In response to this outbreak, the CDC increased screening efforts at the major ports of entry to the U.S.³⁵ However, these precautions did not quell the fears of many Americans who heatedly debated the possibility of instituting travel bans to and from countries with confirmed cases of Ebola.

The debates about travel bans to and from West Africa were a reminder of the xenophobic attitudes held by many Americans even in this age of globalization. There are many reasons for this. Racial prejudice is still very much a reality in today's world (see the Race and Ethnicity chapter) as is prejudice against other religions, non-normative gender identity, the differently abled, and others. In some ways, these fears have been heightened by globalization rather than diminished. Especially after the global recession of 2008, some nation-states have become fearful for their economic security and have found it easy to use marginalized populations as scapegoats. While advances in communication technology have enabled social justice focused solidarity movements (as discussed above), unfortunately the same media have been used as a platform for hate-mongering by others. Social media enables those who had previously only been schoolyard bullies to broadcast their taunts further than ever before. Terrorists post videos of unspeakable violence online and individuals whose hateful attitudes might have been curbed through the informal sanctions of gossip and marginalization in a smaller-scale society can now find communities of like-minded bigots in online chat rooms. By foregrounding the importance of the hypothetical "average" person, populist politics has engaged in scapegoating of minority ethnic and religious groups. This has been most apparent in the successful campaigns for the British Brexit vote on June 23, 2016 and the election of Donald Trump as President in the United States.

A portmanteau of "British" and "exit," Brexit refers to the vote to leave the European Union. (Headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, the European Union is an economic and political union of 28 nation-states founded on November 1, 1993 in Maastricht, Netherlands.) Both this and the election of Donald Trump as the 45th president of the U.S. represent backlash against some of the inequities generated by globalization. At the world scale, the Global North continues to extract wealth from the Global South. More tellingly though is the widening wealth-gap even in "rich" countries. Without sufficient social protection, capitalism—a system wherein profit motivates political and economic decision making—has led to a situation in which the world's eight richest men (note the gendering) now control as much wealth as the bottom 50 percent of the entire world's population. In other words, eight men now have just as much money as 3.75 billion people combined and no nation in the world has a larger wealth-gap (the difference between those with the most and the least in a society) than the United States. So, while globalization has facilitated advantages for some, more and more people are being left behind.

Social scientists often use the term “re-entrenchment” to describe efforts people make to reassert their traditional values and ways of life. While this impulse is understandable, many of these people are susceptible to the rhetoric of scapegoating: being told some other group is at fault for the problems they are facing. This is the double-edged sword of globalization. Additionally, in some cases globalization is forced on already marginal populations in peripheral nations through institutions like the IMF and World Bank. In these instances, globalization facilitates and amplifies the reach and impact of **neoliberalism**, a multi-faceted political and economic philosophy that emphasizes privatization and unregulated markets (see below).

GLOBALIZATION AND NEOLIBERALISM

Latin America provides a good example of how the shift from colonialism to neoliberalism has been disseminated through and exacerbated by globalization. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Latin American colonies’ independence from Spain and Portugal was secure, but the relations of power that prevailed during the colonial period had largely been replicated with local elites controlling the means of production. During this period, citizens individually and collectively endeavored to establish a new national identity. Despite nominal commitments to democracy throughout the region, patron/client relationships functioned as the primary political mechanism. Internal divisions ran deep in many Latin American countries, with the supporters (or clients) of rival elites periodically drawn into violent contests for rule on behalf of their patrons. In the last decade of the 1800s and the first decade of the 1900s, people in Latin America began to question the right of the elites to rule, as well as the hidden costs of modernization. Peasant uprisings, like the one that took place at Canudos in Brazil in 1896, were evidence of the shifting political framework. People also saw the imperialistic tendencies of the U.S. as a negative force of modernization which they hoped to avoid. Together, this led to a situation in which people in Latin America sought a national identity that resonated with their sense of self.

During this same period there was a slight but significant change in the economic structure of the region. The economy was still based on exports of agriculture and natural resources like minerals, and the profits remained in the hands of the elite. What was new, however, was the introduction and modest growth of manufacturing in the cities, which created new job opportunities. Economic diversification led to a more complex class structure and an emerging middle class. Unfortunately, this period of relative prosperity and stability soon ended. Because of the plentiful natural resources and the captive labor source “available” for exploitation in Latin America, wealthy landowners were able to undersell their European competitors on agricultural products and provide “exotic” minerals. The privileged position of Latin American landowner compared to European farmers led to widespread poverty among farmers in Europe, which led to out-migration and political instability in Europe. As locally born Latin American peasants migrated from the countryside to the cities *and* the cities filled with European immigrants, the landowning elite began to lose control, or at least the kind of power they used to hold over the farmers who worked their land and had no other work options.

While city living provided certain opportunities, it also introduced new challenges. In the city, for instance, people rarely had access to land for subsistence agriculture. This made them far more vulnerable to economic fluctuations, and the vulnerability of city living necessitated the adoption of new political philosophies. Urban poverty and desperation created a climate in which many people found socialist philosophies appealing, starting as early as the 1920s in some places like Brazil. Initially, union leaders and European immigrants who spread socialist ideas among the urban poor were punished by the state

and often deported. Eventually such repressive tactics proved insufficient to curtail the swelling disruptions caused by strikes and related actions by the unions. Faced with a new political reality, the elite co-opted the public rhetoric of the urban masses. Realizing the need to cast themselves as allies to the urban workforce, the elites ushered in a period of modest reform with more protection for workers.

During this period, and as an extension of their work-related activism, the middle class also clamored for expansions of the social services provided by the state. Pressure from the middle class for more social services for citizens unfortunately played into growing xenophobia (fear of foreigners) resulting from the immigration of so many foreigners *and* faulty ideas about racial superiority communicated through a growing discourse of nationalism. In some places, the elites aligned with the middle classes if they saw it as politically advantageous. In other places, however, elites resisted incorporating the middle classes into the ruling structure and the elites' power ultimately was wrested away through military coups. While emerging leaders from the middle class continued relying on the export economic model, they directed a greater percentage of the profits back into social programs. Only after the stock market crash of the 1930s—and the resulting global recession—did those in power start to question the export model.

In the early part of the 1900s, Latin American countries largely supported free trade because they believed they had a competitive advantage. They believed that by producing the products their country/region was best suited to produce they would prosper on the world market. However, changing world circumstances meant that Latin American countries soon lost their advantage; average family size in industrialized countries began to decrease, lowering demand for Latin American commodities. When other countries with similar climates and topography began to grow the same crops, a global oversupply of agricultural products led to lower prices and worsened the decline of Latin America's financial status in the world market.

This economic downturn was amplified by the loss of British hegemony after World War II. Before the war, Great Britain and Latin America had enjoyed a stable exchange relationship with Latin America sending agricultural goods to Great Britain and the British sending manufactured goods to Latin America. As the U.S. rose in global power, Americans looked to Latin America as a new market for U.S. manufactured goods. In contrast to Great Britain though, the U.S. did not need to import Latin American agricultural goods because the U.S. produced enough of its own, production that was further protected by high import tariffs. Even if a consumer wanted to buy Latin American commodities, the commodities would be more expensive than domestic ones—even if actual costs were lower. Overall, Latin America sold its agricultural goods to Europe, including Great Britain, but Latin American exporters had to accept lower prices than ever before.

The United States' economic strategy toward Latin America was different than Great Britain's had been. For those commodities that could not be produced in the U.S., like bananas, U.S. companies went to Latin America so they could directly control the means of production. Although these commodities were grown and/or produced *in* Latin America, the profits were taken by foreign companies rather than local ones. This same process also happened with mining interests like tin and copper; U.S. companies purchased the mines in order to extract as much profit as possible. American companies were in a position to exploit the natural resources of these countries because the U.S. had the financial capital local communities lacked *and* the technological expertise needed to sustain these industries. This pattern curtailed the rate of economic growth throughout Latin America as well as in other regions where similar patterns developed.

The late 1920s through the 1950s saw many Latin American countries turning to nationalism—often through force—as both a cultural movement and an economic strategy. The middle classes were in a favor of curtailing the export economy that had been preferred by the elites, but did not have the

political clout to win elections. Indeed, their agenda was regularly blocked by the elites who used their influence (i.e. with their clients) to press their interests, especially in the rural areas. With time, however, middle class men increasingly came to occupy military officer positions and used their newfound authority to put nationalist leaders in the presidencies. Nationalists argued that an over-dependence on agriculture had led to Latin America's vulnerable position in the international economy and called for a build-up of industry. They hoped to start producing the goods that they had been importing from the U.S. and Europe. Their goal: industrial self-sufficiency.

The state was instrumental in this economic reorganization, both helping people buy local goods and discouraging them from buying foreign goods. Doing this was far from as easy as it may sound. The state imposed high duties on goods destined for the export market in order to entice producers to sell their goods at home. At the same time, the state imposed high tariffs on the imports they wanted to replace with local products. With time (and struggle) these measures had their intended effects, making the locally produced goods comparatively more affordable—and therefore appealing—to local consumers.

As already noted, developing factories required capital and technological expertise from abroad, which in turn made the goods produced much more expensive. To help people afford such expensive goods, the state printed more money, generating massive inflation. (In some places this inflation would eventually reach 2,000 percent!) The combination of chronic inflation with high foreign debt emerged as an enduring problem in Latin America and other parts of the Global South. Countries crippled by high inflation and debt have turned to international institutions like the IMF and WB for relief and while the intentions may be good, borrowing money from these global institutions always comes with strings attached. When a country accepts a loan from the IMF or the WB, for instance, they must agree to a number of conditions such as privatizing state enterprises (see the case study on Bolivia's water crisis, below) and cutting spending on social services like healthcare and education. Borrowing countries are also required to adopt a number of policies intended to encourage free trade, such as the reduction or elimination of tariffs on imported goods and subsidies for domestically produced goods. Policies are put into place to encourage foreign investment. Transnational corporations have now reached the point that many of them rival nations in terms of revenue. In fact, as of 2009, "forty-four of the world's hundred largest economies are corporations."³⁶ It is an understatement to note that the policies forced on countries by lenders are often disruptive—if not entirely destructive—of locally preferred lifeways and preferences. Although the IMF and WB measures are intended to spark economic growth, the populace often winds up suffering in the wake of these changes. Colonialism has given way to a neocolonialism in which economic force achieves what used to require military force with transnational corporations benefiting from the exploitation of poorer nations.

Case Study: Privatization and Bolivia's Water Crisis

In 2000, Bolivians in the city of Cochabamba took to the streets to protest the exploitative practices of a transnational company that had won the right to provide water services in the city.³⁷ Anti-globalization activists celebrated this victory of mostly poor mestizo and indigenous people over capitalist giants, but the situation on the ground today is more complicated.

Water is one of the most essential elements on this planet. So how is it that a foreign company was given the right to determine who would have access to Bolivian water supplies and what the water would cost? The answer serves to highlight the fact that many former colonies like Bolivia have existed in a perpetual state of subordination to global superpowers. When Bolivia was a colony, Spain claimed the silver and other precious commodities that could be extracted from Bolivia's landscape, but after Bolivia became independent structural adjustment policies mandated by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank paved the way for foreign companies to plunder the country's natural resources.

In other words, colonial style relationships have been replicated in a global system that forces impoverished countries to sell resources to satisfy creditors; "resource extraction is facilitated by debt relations."³⁸

Like many countries in the Global South, Bolivia is deep in debt. A failed program of social reforms, coupled with government corruption, was worsened by a severe drought affecting Bolivian agriculture. In order to pay its debts in the 1980s, Bolivia agreed to structural adjustments mandated by the conditions of the country's World Bank and International Monetary Fund loans. One of the mandates of these loans was privatization of state-run enterprises like the water system. Proponents of privatizing such resources argue that the efficiency associated with for-profit businesses will also serve to conserve precious natural resources. Some have gone so far as to suggest that increases in water prices would help customers better grasp the preciousness of water and thereby encourage conservation. Of course, if customers conserve water too much the company managing water delivery will fail to make a profit, thus initiating a dangerous cycle. When companies anticipate that they will not see a return on their investment in infrastructure, they simply refuse to extend services to certain areas of the community.

What made the privatization of water in Bolivia so disastrous for the people of urban areas like Cochabamba was the rapid population growth they experienced starting in the latter half of the twentieth century (growth that continues in the present). Population pressures layered on top of the scarcity of water in the Bolivian natural environment makes access to potable water a perennial concern. Migration to urban areas was hastened by many different factors including land reform, privatization of mines and resultant layoffs, and severe droughts. This influx of migrants put pressure on urban infrastructure. To make matters worse, climate change led to a decline in the amount of surface water available. In 2015, Lake Poopó, the second largest lake in Bolivia, went dry and researchers are [doubtful it will ever fully recover](#) (see Figure 3).³⁹



Figure 3: A fishing boat is stranded on the shrinking Lake Poopó, 2006.

In Cochabamba, organizing began in late 1999. Community members formed an organization called Coordinator for the Defense of Water and for Life, which was run using a direct form of democracy wherein everyone had an equal voice. This was empowering for peasants who were accustomed to being silenced and ignored in a centuries-old social hierarchy. This organization, in contrast, coordinated actions that cut across ethnic and class lines. As the situation came to a head, activists blockaded the roads in and out of the city and riot police were brought in from the capital. After several days of confrontations between the people and the military, local activists ousted the transnational company and reclaimed their water source.

Despite local's reclaiming control, however, they still lacked the infrastructure needed to effectively deliver what was once again "their" water. This forced them to look to international donors for assistance, which could recreate the very situation against which they so recently fought. Access to increasingly scarce water supplies is a growing problem. For example, plans to seize surface water from lakes creates conflicts with rural peasants who depend on these water sources for agricultural purposes. Unfortunately, such problems have emerged in many other places as well (such as throughout Africa and the Middle East), and are increasing in prevalence and severity amidst ongoing climate change. The question of whether or not water is a human right remains one that is heatedly debated by activists, CEOs, and others. (See [a discussion](#) of the position taken by Nestlé Chairman Peter Brabeck, who argues for the privatization of water, a position clearly at odds with the position taken by the United Nations General Assembly which, in 2010, recognized [water and sanitation as human rights](#).)

RESPONSES TO GLOBALIZATION

Cultures are dynamic and respond to changes in both the social and physical environments in which they are embedded. While culture provides a template for action, people are also active agents who

respond to challenges and opportunities in a variety of ways, some of which may be quite creative and novel. As such, it would be inaccurate to only see globalization as an impersonal force dictating the lives of people in their various localities. Rather, people regularly use a variety of strategies in responding to global forces. While a comprehensive catalog of these strategies is beyond the scope of this chapter, here we outline two key responses.

Syncretism

Syncretism refers to the combination of different beliefs—even those that are seemingly contradictory—into a new, harmonious whole. Though syncretism arises for a variety of reasons, in many cases it is as a response to globalization. In this section, we use the example of *Candomblé* as a way of demonstrating that syncretism is a form of agency used by people living under oppression.

Most often, anthropologists discuss syncretism within the context of religion. Anthropologists define religion as the cultural knowledge of the spiritual realm that humans use to cope with the ultimate problems of human existence (see the Religion chapter). *Candomblé* is an Afro-Brazilian spirit-possession religion, in which initiates serve as conduits between the human and supernatural realm. It is also an excellent example of a syncretic religion. The many gods in *Candomblé*, known as *orixás*, are personified: they all have personalities; experience the full range of human emotions like love, hatred, jealousy, and anger; and have individual histories that are known to practitioners. Each *orixá* is associated with a particular color, and practitioners of the religion often wear bead necklaces that correspond to the specific deity with whom they feel a connection (see Figure 4). Unlike Christianity (a monotheistic religion), *Candomblé* does not stress the duality of good and evil (or heaven and hell). Although on the surface these two religious traditions may seem very different, in actual practice, many adherents of *Candomblé* also identify as Christians, specifically Catholics. So how can this be?



Figure 4: Candomblé practitioners, Embu das Artes, Brazil, 2012.

Much like the *orixás*, Catholic saints are personified and have unique roles within the Catholic tradition. This feature of Catholicism—more so than any other major Christian denomination—facilitated a fairly seamless overlay with *orixá* worship. For example, *Iemanjá*, the *orixá* who rules over the seas and is associated with fertility, is syncretized with Our Lady of Conception. *Ogum*, whose domain is war and whose ritual implements are the sword and shield, is syncretized with Saint Anthony.

Just to be clear, syncretism is in no way unique to Brazil or the African Diaspora; it frequently occurs when one group is confronted with and influenced by another (and typically one with more power). The reason syncretism is particularly common within Latin American religious systems is due to 1) the tenacity with which African slaves clung to their traditional beliefs; 2) the fervor of the Spanish and Portuguese belief that slaves *should* receive instruction in Catholicism, and 3) the realities of colonial life in which religious instruction for slaves was haphazard at best. This created the perfect climate within which African slaves could hide their traditional religious practices in plain sight.

Syncretism serves as a response to globalization insofar as it mediates overlapping frameworks. It would be unnecessary if people lived in a world where boundaries were clearly defined with no ideo-

logical exchanges taking place across those boundaries (if such a world ever existed). Since that is far from the lived reality for most people though, syncretism often serves as what James C. Scott categorizes as a “weapon of the weak” – a concept referring to the ways in which marginalized peoples can resist without directly challenging their oppressors (which could incite retaliation).⁴⁰ Examples might include mocking the elite behind their backs, subtle subversion, sabotage, or participation in alternative economies that bypass the elite. In the classroom, it can be rolling one’s eyes behind the professor’s back, or thinking that you are “getting away with something” when texting in class. So too in the case of Candomblé. Syncretism allowed the slaves and their descendants, who continue the tradition today, to create a façade of compliance with mandated worship within the Catholic tradition, while still continuing to pay homage to their own beliefs—and thus perpetuate their own ethnic identity—behind closed doors.

Participation in Alternative Markets

As discussed earlier, structural adjustments mandated by international bodies like the IMF and WB have left farmers in developing nations particularly vulnerable to the whims of global markets. Within this framework, “fair trade” has emerged as a way for socially-conscious consumers to support small farmers and artisans who have been affected by these policies. To be certified as fair trade, vendors must agree to a “fair” price, which will be adjusted upwards if the world market price rises above the fair trade threshold. If the world market price drops, fair trade farmers still make a decent living, which allows them to continue farming rather than abandon their fields for wage labor. While admirable in its intent, and unassailably beneficial to many, anthropological research reminds us that every situation is complex and that there is never a “one size fits all” perfect solution.

As you read about in the Fieldwork chapter, and have seen demonstrated throughout this text, anthropologists focus on the lived experience of people closest to the phenomenon they are studying. In the case of fair trade, then, anthropologists focus primarily on the farmers or artisans (although an anthropologist could also study the consumers or people who import fair trade goods or facilitate their sale). Looked at from farmers’ perspectives, setting and maintaining fair wages for commodities like coffee or bananas ensures that farmers will not abandon farming when the world market prices drop. On the plus side, this helps ensure at least some stability for producers and consumers alike. One of the key features of fair trade is the social premium generated by fair trade contracts: the commitment that a certain percentage of the profit goes back into beneficial community projects such as education, infrastructure development, and healthcare. But, in order for this to be successful, it is the local community and not an outside entity (however well intentioned) that must get to decide how these premiums are used.

Although fair trade is very appealing, it bears remembering that not everyone benefits from fair trade in the same way. Individuals in leadership positions within fair trade cooperatives tend to have stronger relationships with the vendors than do average members, leading them to have more positive associations with the whole business of fair trade.⁴¹ Similarly, people with more cultural and social capital will have more access to the benefits of fair trade. A cacao farmer with whom Lauren works in Belize, for example, pointed out that farmers with less education will always be taken advantage of by predatory traders, which is why they need the assistance of a well-structured growers’ association when entering the free trade market. Also of concern is that in some communities fair trade disrupts traditional roles and relationships. For example in a Maya village in Guatemala, traditional gender roles were compromised, with men becoming even more dominant because their commodity (coffee) had a fair trade market whereas the women’s main commodity (weaving) did not.⁴²

In addition to the challenge of finding a market for one's goods, there are additional barriers to becoming involved in fair trade. For example, it used to be that farmers could sell relatively low quality coffee to fair trade organizations interested in social justice. Now, however, fair trade coffee must be of exceptional quality to compete with specialty coffees.⁴³ In and of itself this is not a bad thing, but remember that some of the elite coffee producers of today were once the low quality producers of old. In other words, the first generation of fair trade coffee farmers benefited from the many ways in which fair trade companies invested in their farms, their processing equipment, and their education in a way that newer participants cannot replicate. Indeed, once these initial farmers achieved a high quality coffee bean, there was less incentive for fair trade vendors to invest in new farms. Now that the bar has been set so high, it is much more difficult for new farmers to break into the fair trade market because they lack the equipment, experience, knowledge, and networks of farmers who have more longstanding relationships with fair trade companies.

Also worth noting are the many situations in which global standards conflict with local norms of decision making. To be labeled as fair trade within the European Union banana market, for example, bananas must be of an exceptionally high quality. Banana farms must conform to a number of other guidelines such as avoiding pesticides and creating a buffer zone between the banana trees and water sources. While this all may make sense in theory, it can be problematic in practice, such as in parts of the Caribbean where land is customarily passed from one generation to the next without being subdivided into individual parcels. In these cases, decisions about land use have to be made collectively. If some of the landowners want to farm according to fair trade guidelines but other individuals refuse to meet these globally mandated standards, the whole family is blocked from entering the fair trade market.⁴⁴

IMPLICATIONS FOR ANTHROPOLOGY

As has been argued throughout this text, culture is dynamic. So too is anthropology as the field of study dedicated to culture. Although many students of anthropology (let alone the public at large) may have romantic visions of the lone ethnographer immersing her or himself in the rich community life of a rural village in a remote land, this is not the reality for most anthropologists today. An increasing number of anthropologists find themselves working in applied settings (see the Seeing Like an Anthropologist chapter), but even many of the more strictly identified "academic" anthropologists—those employed at colleges and universities—have begun working in settings that might well be familiar to the average person. Now that anthropologists understand the importance of global flows of money, people, and ideas the importance of doing research everywhere that these issues play out—at home (wherever that may be) as much as abroad—is clear.

Urban Anthropology

Globalization has become a powerful buzzword in contemporary society and it would be difficult to find anyone who has not been affected by it in at least some small way. The widespread influence of globalization on daily life around the world—whether directly (such as through multinational businesses) or indirectly (such as via climate change)—raises a number of questions that anthropologists have begun to ask. For example, an anthropologist might investigate the effects of global policies on people in different regions of the world. Why is it that the monetary policies of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank typically result in rich countries getting richer and the poor countries get-

ting poorer? In her book *Beautiful Flowers of the Maquiladora* (1997), for example, Norma Iglesias Prieto gives an up-close portrait of the lives of Mexican women working in factories in the infamous border zone of Tijuana.⁴⁵ Although the working conditions in these factories are dangerous and the women are subjected to invasive scrutiny by male supervisors, many of the women profiled in the book nonetheless appreciate the little luxuries afforded by their work. Others value the opportunity to support their household or gain a small degree of financial independence from the male figures in their life. Unable to offer any artificially flat answer concerning whether globalization has been “good” or “bad” for such individuals, anthropologists focus on the lived experience of the people most affected by these global forces. What is it like to live in such environments? How has it changed over time? What have been the costs and benefits?

Especially amidst the overlapping flows of people and ideas, questions concerning mobility, transnationalism, and identity have all become increasingly important to the field of anthropology. Although some exceptions exist (see quinoa case study below), the general trend is for globalization to result in urbanization. With neoliberalism comes the loss of state-funded programs and jobs, the unsustainability of small farms, and the need for economic alternatives that are most commonly found in urban areas. While anthropologists have long studied cities and urban life, the concentration of populations in urban centers has added increasing importance to anthropologies of the city/metropolis in recent years.⁴⁶ Indeed, the term urban anthropology came into use to describe experiences of living in cities and the relationships of city life to broader social, political, and economic contexts including issues of globalization, poverty, and neoliberalism.⁴⁷ The heightened focus on the city in global context has also heightened awareness of and attention to issues of transnationalism: the understanding that people’s lives may be lived and/or significantly influenced by events that cross the geopolitical borders of nation states.⁴⁸

Case Study: Global Demand for Quinoa

When a group of people is afforded little status in a society, their food is often likewise denigrated.⁴⁹ Until recently, this held true for quinoa in Bolivian society, which was associated with indigenous peasants.⁵⁰ Mirroring “first world” patterns from the U.S. and Europe, city dwellers preferred foods like pasta and wheat-based products. Conspicuous consumption of these products provided them with an opportunity to showcase their “sophisticated” choices and tastes. Not surprisingly, there was little local demand for quinoa in Bolivian markets. Further undercutting the appeal of producing quinoa, the Bolivian government’s adoption of neoliberal policies eliminated the meager financial protections available to peasant farmers. If that was not bad enough, a significant drought in the early 1980s spelled disaster for many small farmers in the southern Altiplano region of Bolivia. As a result of these overlapping and amplifying obstacles, many people moved to 1) cities, like La Paz; 2) nearby countries, like Chile, and even 3) to Europe.

The situation faced by Bolivian peasants is not unique. More than half of the world’s people currently live in cities. This is the result of widespread urbanization that began at the end of World War II and stretched into the 1990s. As a result, many peasants lost access to their traditional modes of subsistence. Although migration to the city can provide benefits like access to education, infrastructure, and wage-labor, it can also result in a loss of identity and many peasants who migrate into cities are forced to subsist on the margins in substandard conditions, especially as they most often arrive without the social and cultural capital necessary to succeed in this new environment.

Fortuitously for indigenous Bolivians, the structural adjustments adopted by their government coincided with foreigners’ growing interest in organic and health foods. Although it is often assumed that rural peasants only produce food for their own subsistence and for very local markets, this is not always the case. In some situations, peasants may bypass local markets entirely and export their commodities to places where they have more cultural capital, and hence financial value (see discussion of taste above). In the 1970s, the introduction of tractors to the region enabled farmers to cultivate quinoa in the lowlands in addition to the hillside terraces they had previously favored. In the 1980s, cooperative groups of farmers were able to find buyers in the Global North who were willing to import quinoa. These cooperatives researched the best ways to expand production and invested in machines to make the process more efficient. Now, quinoa is such a valuable commodity that many of those individuals who had previously abandoned the region are now returning to the Altiplano. Yet this is not a simple success story, espe-

cially because there are serious issues associated with the re-peasantization of the Bolivian countryside and with the fact that a healthy local crop has been removed from many people's regular diets since it can be sold to the Global North.

Another serious issue raised by the reverse migration from the cities back to the Altiplano concerns environmental sustainability. It is easier to grow large quantities of quinoa in the flat lowlands than it is on the steep hillsides, but the lowland soil is much less conducive to its growth. The use of machinery has helped a great deal, but has also led to a decline in the use of llamas, which have a symbiotic relationship with quinoa. Farmers must now invest in fertilizer rather than using manure provided by their own animals. The global quinoa boom also raises questions about identity and communal decision-making. Conflict has arisen between families that stayed in the region and those that are returning from the cities. Pedro, a farmer who stayed in the region, says of the others "those people have returned – but as strangers."⁵¹ The two groups often clash in terms of what it means to respect the land and how money from this new cash crop should be used.

So has the international demand for quinoa been a good thing for rural Bolivian peasants? In some ways yes, but in other ways no.; on the whole, it may be too soon to know for sure.



Figure 5: Figure 5: Aymara couple Alicia and Julio harvest wheat on their land above Lake Titicaca in Southern Peru. Other subsistence crops they raised included quinoa, barley, and potatoes, but the global market pressures such subsistence farmers to grow more quinoa as a "cash" crop to capitalize on the world demand. Juli, Peru, 2005. Photo by Jerome W. Crowder. All rights reserved.

Changes in How—and “Where”—We Conduct Research

Globalization has changed not only what anthropologists research, but also how they approach those topics. Foregrounding the links between global processes and local settings, multi-sited ethnography examines specific topics and issues across different geographic field sites.⁵² Multi-sited ethnography may be conducted when the subject of one's study involve and/or impact multiple locations and can be best understood by accounting for those multiple geographic contexts. For example, in her study of yoga, *Positioning Yoga: Balancing Acts Across Cultures*, Sarah Strauss (2005) found that her study would be incomplete if she focused only on Indians studying yoga. To understand this transnational phenomenon, she recognized the importance of also focusing on non-Indian practitioners of yoga who had gone to study yoga in its homeland.⁵³ Work such as that of Swedish anthropologist Ulf Hannerz, who studies news media correspondents, highlights the ways that people can be on the move, creating a community of study that is both multi-sited and multilocal.⁵⁴ Further work has expanded on these models, highlighting various *translocal* fieldsites: “locations” that cannot be geographically defined. Such models include calls for an activity-based anthropology (where it is the activity itself that is the “site” of the culture and/or the basis of the community)⁵⁵ and digital anthropology (where the field site exists online).⁵⁶

Globalization in Application: The Syrian Situation Today (courtesy of Laurie King)

Syria today presents us with an apocalyptic landscape: major cities such as Homs have been reduced to rubble and anyone remaining there is starving. Since 2011, over 250,000 civilians have been killed by barrel bombs, shelling, internecine terrorist attacks, drone strikes, the use of chemical weapons, and Russian aerial assaults. Well-armed and well-funded Islamist militias control large swathes of the country and have, for all intents and purposes, erased the border between Syria and Iraq, thereby undoing the 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement that established the new nation-states of the modern Middle East after the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

The so-called Islamic State (IS/Da'esh) has destroyed world heritage sites such as Palmyra (Tadmur), ethnically cleansed non-Muslim towns, enslaved women, and flooded the global media with horrific images of beheadings, immolations, and mass executions. Aleppo, a city of stunning architectural beauty with a rich multi-cultural heritage, is now damaged beyond repair and largely uninhabitable as the result of fighting between IS, Syrian regime forces, and a diverse but largely Islamist Syrian opposition.

Farming in the Syrian countryside has come to a virtual halt. Since 2003, Syrian agriculture had been suffering from a prolonged drought, pushing many rural families into urban centers such as Damascus and Aleppo.⁵⁷ In 2015, the Svalbard Global Seed Vault (the "Doomsday Seed Vault") in Norway was accessed for the first time to obtain seeds needed for crops to feed the Syrian population.⁵⁸ Meanwhile, as any glance at the evening news demonstrates, millions of refugees continue to flow out of the country, mostly through the Syrian-Turkish border, before making dangerous trips in unsafe boats to Greece, hoping to get their families to Europe and away from the hell-scape that their country has become.

Five years ago, no scholar of Syrian society and politics could have predicted the dire conditions Syria now faces. Given the Assad regime's iron grip on all aspects of Syrian society since 1970, the dramatic transformations of the last five years were inconceivable at the beginning of 2011. The scapes and flows of globalization enumerated by Appadurai were largely absent from Syria over the last 40 years. The hardline Baathist regime of Hafez al-Assad, who came to power in 1970 through a bloodless coup, was profoundly insular and not open to the world – whether regionally or internationally – in the realms of finance and commerce. Never a major petroleum power, and not blessed with vast tracts of fertile land for farming, Syria's economy centered largely on industry and commerce.

Up until the mid-1980s, Syria had a highly centralized economy that eschewed private ownership of industry or services. With the end of the Cold War (during which Syria had been a client state of the USSR), and the ensuing dramatic shifts in regional power dynamics – most notably the 1991 Iraq war, which saw the rout of Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait and the diminution of the Iraqi Baathist regime's power—Syria emerged as a key regional player capable of leveraging concessions from other Arab states as well as the West. In exchange for joining the US-led coalition against Iraq, the United States and the international community raised no objections to Syria asserting direct and indirect control over its neighbor (and former mandatory province) Lebanon, where a series of interconnected civil, regional, and global wars had raged for fifteen years.

Syrian political and military control effectively put the Lebanese wars into a deep freeze between 1992 and 2005. While freedom of speech in Lebanon declined significantly under Syria's tutelage, an unregulated market economy flourished, centering on the massive post-war reconstruction boom. The Syrian economic elite—largely co-terminous with the regime—benefited significantly from business deals in Lebanon, while thousands of Syrian workers flooded into Lebanon to do construction work on the new city center and infrastructural repairs. The influx of money from Lebanon strengthened and entrenched the patron-client ties between the Syrian regime (whose members were also relatives by blood or marriage) and a growing class of wealthy businessmen, who owed their wealth to the regime. As Bassam Haddad notes, the insularity of and corruption within the regime and big business blurred the line between private and public domains, while sharpening class divisions within Syria.⁵⁹ Any attempts to foster political reform, economic transparency, and international commerce were viewed suspiciously by Syria's political, commercial, and military/intelligence elite.

In June 2000, Hafez Al-Assad died. His son Bashar, an ophthalmologist who had lived in London for many years, succeeded him. Local and international observers wondered if the new, foreign-educated young president would launch an era of economic reform and political decentralization. Bashar seemed keen to bring Syria into the Internet era, and his first years in power witnessed relatively free discussion of the need for economic and political reforms, heralded by the closing of the infamous Mezzeh prison, where many political prisoners had been tortured and killed. But power remained in the hands of the few in the upper reaches of the Baath party, some of whom did not know whether or not to trust Bashar, who lacked the steely reserve and unquestioned authority of his father.

Although Syria lacked the sort of material and financial capital enjoyed by its neighbors, such as the oil-rich Gulf states, it enjoyed the benefits of symbolic capital as the sole, front-line Arab nationalist state opposing Israel and resisting any normalization of ties with the Jewish state in the post-Cold war era, even as the Palestinian Liberation organization and Jordan joined Egypt in establishing peace treaties with Israel. In the hope that Syria would come into the fold, the United States did not make harsh demands on Syria for internal reforms or regional economic integration.

In February 2005, in the wake of growing Lebanese dissatisfaction with Syria's control of the country, Prime Minister Rafiq Al-Hariri and over a dozen of his colleagues were killed in a massive suicide bomb while traveling in a motorcade through downtown Beirut. (To this day, no one knows decisively who was behind the car bomb, though many suspect Syrian involvement.) Massive, largely peaceful, demonstrations erupted in Beirut immediately, and within a matter of weeks, Syria was forced to end its occupation of Lebanon and retreat.

While Syria had not experienced a significant flow of people and wealth in and out of its borders for years, media and technology flows were growing in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The flow of ideas and images from Tunisia and Egypt in the wake of the Arab Spring uprisings of 2010-11 heralded Syria's first sustained experience with the dynamics of globalization, described in this text by political scientist

Manfred Steger as: “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away, and vice versa.”⁶⁰

In February 2011, the regime lifted the ban on Facebook and YouTube following unprecedented street protests on January 26, the day after the Egyptian protests began. (Before this, Syrians contravened the ban through proxy servers.) Soon, Facebook groups were organizing and even calling for a “Day of Rage” and encouraging people to come out to the streets to protest against the regime. Nothing came of this, though. Despite garnering thousands of “likes,” no one seemed to be following the directives of the new Facebook pages.⁶¹

The Internet’s impact in the Arab world has built upon the phenomenon of satellite television, particularly that of Al-Jazeera, which opened up new spaces of discourse and debate about political and human rights issues in the Arab world, thereby undermining the legitimacy and validity of state-owned news programs and the power structures underpinning them. While Al Jazeera instilled a powerful reformist spirit, blogs were particularly crucial in advancing and fortifying Arab activism efforts.

Before blogs, there were chat rooms, listservs, and email communication, all of which enhanced and expanded a cyber world of public discourse in some Arab states, but not in Syria. Some Egyptian bloggers called the Internet and social media “our lungs. If they cut them off, we will suffocate.” As a result of Internet communications technology (ICT), social isolation in the Arab world began to give way to the formation of communities of conversation and debate, which ultimately evolved into social movements that took to the streets and made history in the real world. Our “networked society,” to use Manuel Castell’s phrase, connects us horizontally and allows us not only to communicate, but to self-communicate and self-create.⁶² We not only consume the news, we now evaluate, filter, and respond to the news. We not only read headlines, our networked actions and reactions to breaking news can ripple out across countries and continents and make headlines.

While Western media paid considerable attention to Egypt’s uprising, the Syrian uprisings were not as well covered. Perhaps this is because Egypt is part of the West’s cultural imaginary. (Hollywood movies such as *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and popular culture depictions of pyramids, pharaohs, and the Valley of the Kings are all evidence of this.) Syria, a tightly controlled authoritarian state, had not been a destination for Western tourists, scholars, film producers, or even journalists for decades, so its street protests and popular struggles did not loom large in Western media coverage. While every major American news agency covered the uprising in Tahrir Square in Cairo in real time, news of protests and civil society activism in Syria did not always reach the rest of the world.

It seems that the Syrian regime underestimated its ability to channel or harness public opinion by lifting the ban on social media. Vigils, protests, and marches, all initially peaceful, began to appear on Syria’s streets, drawing larger and larger crowds. The response of the regime, unaccustomed to public political expression, was quick and brutally repressive. Rather than scaring people into silence, the regime now confronted an armed opposition. Within just one year, social media protests had become street protests, which became street battles between pro- and anti-regime forces. Globalization, as experienced in Syria, has revealed the limits of an authoritarian regime’s ability to control and constrain social action in the age of social media.

Syria is now experiencing flows of people across borders. Syrians are escaping to Turkey, Europe, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq by the millions, creating the world’s worst refugee crisis. Meanwhile, drawn to the message of the Islamic State (IS), young men and women from across the Middle East and as far afield as Europe and North America are traveling to the IS controlled territories of eastern Syria and Western Iraq to join in a “global jihad.”

As the high-quality and gory video productions of IS demonstrate, technological and media resources, skills, and knowledge are flowing in and out of Syria’s borders. Financial flows in oil wealth are now in the hands of IS, and food resources are flowing into the country when possible from international non-governmental organizations such as Mercy Corps. Syria is an example of the disadvantages of globalization, as well as an illustration of how quickly one country’s crises can become global crises.

CONCLUSION

The term “globalization” is not simply a verbal shortcut for talking about contact, transmission, and transportation on the global scale. This chapter has shown that contact has existed across disparate locations throughout much of human history. As it is used and understood today, however, globalization is about much more than the total scope of contact; it references the speed and scale of such contact. Understood in this way, globalization is a modern phenomenon; it is not just how many places are connected, but in how many ways and with what frequency.

Where people once had to rely on horses or sail-driven ships to bring them to new locations, mass transportation (especially air travel) makes such commutes a part of many people’s daily lives, and someone who had never seen a TV one week might end up visiting Jakarta, Cairo, or Toronto the next. News, which might have raced ahead via carrier pigeons can now be transmitted in a virtual instant, and information once confined to physical libraries can now be accessed on the smart phones carried by

peoples around the world. Neither “good” nor “bad,” globalization is a fact of life today. Whether a business woman flies between international hubs on a weekly basis or a man tends his garden on a remote plateau, both of their lives may be equally influenced by how a specific crop is received on the world market. Providing both opportunities and constraints, globalization now serves as the background—if not the stage—for how life gets lived, on the ground, by us all.

Discussion Questions

1. In his research, Kelsey Timmerman discovered that the average American is wearing clothes made in many different countries. This demonstrates how everyday items can involve all five of Arjun Appadurai’s scapes. Choose another product that is part of your everyday life. How many scapes can you connect it to?
2. Globalization makes new forms of consumption possible, but the effects of globalization on an individual’s lifestyle vary based on many factors including socioeconomic status. In what ways is globalization experienced differently by people from wealthy countries compared to people in developing countries? How are producers of commodities like clothing or food affected differently by globalization than consumers?
3. In Latin America, globalization and neoliberalism have led to the development of policies, such as the privatization of the water supply, that reduce local control over important resources. In what ways is globalization a “double-edged” sword that brings both benefits and problems to developing countries?
4. Globalization presents the possibility of engaging in activity-based anthropology, where it is the activity itself that is the “site” studied, or digital anthropology, where the field site exists online. What kinds of activities or digital environments do you think would be interesting to study using this approach?

GLOSSARY

Commodity chain: the series of steps a food takes from location where it is produced to the store where it is sold to consumers.

Ethnoscape: the flow of people across boundaries.

Financescape: the flow of money across political borders.

Global North: refers to the wealthier countries of the world. The definition includes countries that are sometimes called “First World” or “Highly Developed Economies.”

Global South: refers to the poorest countries of the world. The definition includes countries that are sometimes called “Third World” or “Least Developed Economies.”

Glocalization: the adaptation of global ideas into locally palatable forms.

Habitus: the dispositions, attitudes, or preferences that are the learned basis for personal “taste” and lifestyles.

Ideoscape: the global flow of ideas.

Mediascape: the flow of media across borders.

Neoliberalism: the ideology of free-market capitalism emphasizing privatization and unregulated markets.

Syncretism: the combination of different beliefs, even those that are seemingly contradictory, into a new, harmonious whole.

Technoscape: the global flows of technology.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Dr. Lauren Miller Griffith is an assistant professor of anthropology at Texas Tech University. Her research agenda focuses on the intersections of performance, tourism, and education in Brazil, Belize, and the USA. Specifically, she focuses on the Afro-Brazilian martial art capoeira and how non-Brazilian practitioners use travel to Brazil, the art's homeland, to increase their legitimacy within this genre. Dr. Griffith's current interests include the links between tourism, cultural heritage, and sustainability in Belize. She is particularly interested in how indigenous communities decide whether or not to participate in the growing tourism industry and the long-term effects of these decisions.



Dr. Jonathan S. Marion is an associate professor in the Department of Anthropology and a member of the Gender Studies Steering Committee at the University of Arkansas, and the author of *Ballroom: Culture and Costume in Competitive Dance* (2008), *Visual Research: A Concise Introduction to Thinking Visually* (2013, with Jerome Crowder), and *Ballroom Dance and Glamour* (2014). Currently the President of the Society for Humanistic Anthropology, and a Past-president of the Society of Visual Anthropology, Dr. Marion's ongoing research explores the interrelationships between performance, embodiment, gender, and identity, as well as issues of visual research ethics, theory, and methodology.

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