WELCOME to FLC 301/SOC 393-F  
September 16, 2003

Theories of Globalization

At the end of this session, you should be able to understand

- Beck's categorization of globalization theories and its dimensions
- Origins, forms, and types of globalization: economic, political, technological
- Pro's and con's & contradictions of globalization
- The effects of globalization according to Beck
  - "Globalization without work"/Increasing job insecurity and inequality
  - Global capitalism destroys the link between economy/jobs, welfare state & democracy
- What influences opinions about globalization
- Open questions related to globalization

Beck's Categorization of Globalization Theories

- Logic: dominant vs. complex/contradictory = Wallerstein, Rosenau, Gilpin, Held, Robertson, Giddens, and Appadurai vs. Alibrow, Featherstone, Lash, Urry, Bauman, and Beck ("risk society")
- Dimensions: Economic, social, cultural, political, techno-scientific, environment
- Consequences: more homogenous vs. more complex/contradictory ("glocalization"). Examples: global wealth—local poverty; capitalism without work

Origins, Forms, and Types of Globalization (descriptive)

Globalization is a historical process of the last few hundred years involving the expansion of:

1. Market capitalism
2. Western individualist ideologies (freedom, democracy, rule of law...)
3. Constant discoveries/inventions/new technologies

- G. is the widening, deepening, and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness & dependency. It creates global flows of goods-services-capital-people-diseases-ideas-customs-values. Examples: oil, weapons, drugs, Coca Cola, world music, movies, refugees, AID/SARS….
- G. is a social and political process involving various actors and institutions such as TNC’s, UN, NGO’s, IMF, U.S. Gvt, etc. that shape ‘worldviews’, opinions, identities, cultures through military conquest, trade, cultural penetration, dissemination of ideas, fashions, values....
- G. is geographically uneven. It has centers ("Global cities") & empty spaces (underdeveloped countries/regions)

Technological Globalization: Time-Space Convergence

- Transportation & Travel: cars, shipping, railroad, air …
- Communication & Information: telegraph, telephone, fax, email, web, satellite, cable, laser, fiber-optic…
- Destructive Technologies: weapons of mass destruction, missiles, landmines, terrorist “technologies”…
Environmental Globalization
- Global climate change (air, water, soil):
  - Greenhouse gases /global warming (Kyoto Protocols), acid rain, ozone hole...
- Global pollution and waste
- Genetic engineering and its effects on humans, animals, plants
- Sustainable alternatives: conservation, reduction, awareness, protest….

Political Globalization
- Multi-national organizations: United Nations
- Multi-lateral agencies: IMF, World Bank
- International regulatory bodies: WTO
- International judicial organizations: ICC
- Trans-national agreements: NAFTA
- Multi-national political unions: EU
- Multi-national military structures: NATO
- Non-Governmental Orgs (Greenpeace)
- Transnational Corporations (McDonald, GM)
- Global Protest Movements (anti-War, Seattle)

Contradictions of globalization
- 1. Societies become more similar AND different at the same time. They use same concepts (justice, freedom, democracy, entertainment culture) but apply and interpret them differently
- 2. Old traditions disappear and are replaced by new hybrid/creolized ones (music, fashion, cuisine, identities, transnational biographies)
- 3. Universal standards and reference system develops (human rights, gender equality, minority protection etc)
- 4. Balance of power is unequal. Some voices are heard, other ignored. Media desinform, politicians manipulate, states attempt to hegemonize others
- 5. Globalization triggers renaissance/rediscovery of local traditions at risk of ethnocentrism/fundamentalism
- 6. Global culture is authentic to the extent that it is appropriated by people for their own cultural purposes and meanings

Is Globalization Good (+) or Bad (-)?
- + Political: weakens authoritarian governments b/c of external information flow
- - Political: Unwanted external influence, difficult to keep out, such as illegal drugs, music, pop culture
- + Economic: Jobs, capital, more consumer choices, spread of medical technology….
- - Economic: Exploitative, benefits a few, increasing gap of inequality between rich and poor
- + Cultural: Exposure to other cultures, hybridization
- - Cultural imperialism, English language dominance, loss of local traditions, destruction of moral values

Arguments of Globalization Critics
- G. and its effects are historically NOT new: already existing in the 19th century and prior
- G. is NOT universal: large territories & populations are still excluded from positive or
negative effects of G.

- G. is UNI-DIRECTIONAL: spreading from North/West to South & East
- G. is hegemonic, imperialistic, undemocratic, unfair…
- Costs and benefits of G. are UNEVENLY and UNEQUALLY distributed; it benefits only a few and damages global goods, such as the environment, technological advancements
- G. comes with DISINTEGRATIVE tendencies: wars, terrorism, ethnic conflicts, religious fundamentalism, global protest movements

Who is right? What influences opinions about globalization?

Evaluation of globalization phenomenon, such as trade, pollution, AIDS, human rights, hegemonic tendencies, etc. depends on individual perspective and how narrow one defines self-interest as well as the meaning of local, regional, national or global “interest.” Opinion about globalization is influenced by a person’s/a group’s

- religion (fatalism/fundamentalism/optimism…)
- ethics (the normative question of what is considered “good” and “bad”)
- ideological position (Right-Left)
- humanitarian perspective (empathy with others, solidarity)
- risk assessment, such as the survival chance of the socio- and bio-sphere (sustainability, “ecological footprint”)

Open Questions about Globalization

- What are the causes and effects of globalization on individual, local, national & global socio/bio-sphere?
- What are the links, interdependencies, adverse effects, and cycles of G? Examples see handout 9/11/03): Poverty ➔ disease ➔ migration ➔ economic collapse ➔ ethnic conflicts/wars ➔ human rights violations ➔ terrorism ➔ counter-terrorism ➔ destruction ➔ more poverty….
- What are possible remedies?
  (a) education/awareness/global protest movements… ???
  (b) development aid/investment/trade…??
  (c) UN resolutions/sanctions/humanitarian interventions/regime change…???