

## **The modern world system: globalization and its discontents**

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- **Globalization:** the increasing interconnectedness of people, places, and activities around the globe
  - as in the global distribution of information by radio, television, and internet
  - as in the global distribution of consumer goods, the global network of production, shipping, sales, banking, etc. to produce, deliver, and pay for them
  - as in increasing contact and interaction between people of different cultures due to air travel, telephones, foreign wars, etc.
  - some people define globalization as the homogenization of culture that supposedly results from this
    - but others (including me) feel it is better to use the term for only the interconnectedness, and not to include in the term an assumption about what the results of the interconnectedness may be
  - while globalization is usually seen as a late 20<sup>th</sup>-century and 21<sup>st</sup> century process, in fact it has been building up for a long time
    - starting with the age of European imperialism and colonialism in the mid 1700's on?
    - starting with earlier sea trade to India and Asia, and Columbus's discovery of the New World in 1492?
    - starting with the expansion of the Roman Empire -- or earlier empires, back to Egypt, Babylon, or even before?
- Overall point about globalization, colonial and imperial history, etc.:
  - these create some of the context for most or all societies and cultures today
  - recall that anthropology is holistic, and sees culture as an interconnected system
    - with globalization, it is necessary to expand one's view to a global scale in order to see the entire picture
      - to include all of the holistic pattern
      - to include the whole system (or all of the systems)
- example: you can't understand culture and society in Iraq, Afghanistan, Latin America, the Philippines, etc. without understanding their histories of being colonized and exploited by foreign powers
  - and their relationships to global political and economic systems
  - for example, about half of Afghanistan's gross national product is from heroin produced from opium poppies
    - growing, harvesting, and selling the opium (or not doing so) is a huge factor in many Afghans' lives, their social organization, politics, economics, beliefs...
    - an industry introduced and nurtured by the British in the 19<sup>th</sup> century for sale to China
    - which exists and is lucrative today because of drug policies in other, distant countries
    - which has complicated relationships to Muslim morality, ideas about foreigners, etc...
- example: the prevalence of Internet cafes in Peru, as I discussed in a previous class
  - it is only intelligible in the context of a global trend towards neoliberal economic and political policy

- which affected the World Bank's demands on Peru to sell off nationalized industries
- which led to excess workers being fired with balloon payments
  - just big enough to buy a bunch of computers
- just when the Internet was taking off around the world
- this is an explanation in terms of system (one of Middleton's three approaches), considering the globalized world as a system, of which Peruvian Internet café owners are part
- The **Modern World System**: Wallerstein
  - World system: a model of how modern world economic and political relations developed and operates, proposed by Immanuel Wallerstein
    - Includes the entire world known at the time
    - Like Europe, its colonies, and the surrounding societies
  - A powerful **core** society exploits a dominated **periphery** of other societies
  - The periphery provides raw resources and cheap labor
  - The core
    - extracts these resources, converts them to finished goods, and sells them back to the periphery
    - uses political/economic methods (taxes, import duties, licensed monopolies, etc.) to ensure that it benefits
    - uses military force to keep its political/economic position
  - but does this classic model correctly portray the modern globalized world?
- Example of globalization: "How Sushi Went Global"
  - how does this case exemplify globalization?
  - where is the "core" and where is the "periphery" in this case?
  - consider the example suggested in class of the diamond trade
    - largely mined in central and southern Africa; also some from Canada, Australia, India, and elsewhere
    - largely concentrated in a few diamond trade centers, especially New York, London, and Antwerp
    - resold, cut, resold, distributed, made into jewelry, and resold around the world...
    - where is the core or cores in this case?
  - does the World Systems model, which was not a bad way of viewing the world in, say, 1750 or 1900, fit our world today?
- Another example of globalization, in many ways: The Kayapo Resistance
  - what are the Kayapo like?
  - why does the article include all that stuff in the beginning about their use of the forest and how it relates to their concept of the world, themselves, establishing individual gendered identities, etc.?
    - this is typical anthropological description
    - giving an anthropologically-oriented explanation of why the forest is so important to them
      - more so that "they are used to making their living from it"
  - aspects of the story that require or involve globalization

- development of the Amazonian forest, logging for an international market, building a dam to power distant industry and cities
- involvement of World Bank in the dam financing
- coordination and response by indigenous Kayapo and diverse foreign interests in animals, birds, plants, global ecology, as well as anthropology
- role of national and international media, popular opinion, political pressure in resolving the situation