Globalization and Democratization in Asia

The construction of identity

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> An impressive cast of contributors plus a multi-layered conceptionalization of the changing interface between globalization dynamics, democratic developments and identity constructions.
>
> (Professor Samuel Kim, Columbia University)

Globalization is a defining feature of our times, covering everything from economic and political issues to the spread of Western culture. However, its status is controversial, with some viewing it as leading to greater development for all, and others as a threat to national cultures and democratic political life. This book shows how simplified such binary views are, and examines how various globalizing forces have affected Asian societies. It discusses the relationship between globalization, identity and democratic developments in Asia, both theoretically and empirically, and aims at understanding how economic, political and social forces interact and are mutually reinforced in Asian societies

All the chapters show the volatile nature of the relationship between the global and the local in Asia. Together they provide a picture of Asia characterized both by global flows of capital, information and people, and by localized contextual historical interpretations of such flows. It is at this nexus of the global and the local that identity, as social relations, becomes the missing link for understanding globalization and democratization in Asia. The book contains a range of in-depth case studies focusing on a variety of Asian countries, including China, India, Japan, Indonesia, South Korea, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia.

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Abbreviations

AAR	Association for Aid and Relief
ACFOD	Asian Cultural Forum on Development
AFC	Asian Financial Crisis
AMF	Asian Monetary Fund
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association for Southeast Asian Nations
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
EPCReN	Eurasia Political Culture Research Network
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRRI	International Rice Research Institute
ISA	International Security Act
KDB	Korean Democracy Barometer
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
MNC	Multinational Corporation
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIC	Newly Industrialized Country
NPO	Non-Profit Organization
OBC	Other Backward Caste
PRC	People's Republic of China
SAARC	South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise
TMD	Theatre Missile Defense
UMNO	United Malay National Organization
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Catarina Kinnvall and Kristina Jönsson, editors
Lund, October 2001

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Part I

Introduction

1 Analyzing the global–local nexus

Catarina Kinnvall

Globalization has become the all-inclusive, all-enveloping catchword of our times. An endless number of books and articles have been devoted to the subject, covering a number of issues from the EU, the IMF, and the role of the World Bank to endless speculations about the movement of capital, finance and multinational corporations. But it is not only economic factors that are associated with globalization. Migration, refugee flows and the so-called "brain drain" from the developing world is often described as a consequence of globalization, and so is the spread of Western (often American) "culture" in the forms of soap operas, music, fashions and similar trends. Newspaper columnists, economists and political analysts are, on the one hand, all apt to warn about being left behind as the global train is leaving, and the issue of catching up is on everybody's lips. On the other hand, we have a number of hesitant voices being heard, doubting the value of the term "globalization" and pointing to the negative effects of global and international forces, both between and within societies.

In academia, the debate on globalization has similarly taken many forms and scholars have focused on a number of issues. Depending on discipline, studies have been concentrated on aspects such as the future of national identities and cultures, the rethinking of ideas of modernity, religion and world history, the localization of the global and the transformation of state-centric assumptions in the social sciences in general. In its more popular version, globalization is often viewed as the path leading to greater development of all people (that is, toward a global market as conceived by contemporary neo-liberals), while others paint a bleak and threatening picture of globalization as the new hegemony of capital markets, the evil that is to destroy national cultures, reduce democratic political life, and make the state redundant. In this latter sense it is often seen as an unstoppable process which affects all areas of economic, political and social life, and is often associated with, or even viewed as identical to, "Americanization."[1]

This book shows how simplified such opposing views are for describing some very complex processes that are currently taking place around the

world. Asian societies, as in other parts of the world, have been affected by various globalizing forces. However, this has not happened in a consistent pattern or in a similar fashion, nor have these societies been purely helpless victims in the process. Globalization, as clarified below and illustrated in the following chapters, should be understood in relation to economic, political and social context, and must be conceptualized as a *relationship* between the global and the local. Hence local action has to be understood with reference to the meanings that the action has for the actors and for its audience—be it local or global (see Deutsch and Kinnvall 2001; Kinnvall forthcoming). Human action, as Giddens (1984, 1991) has argued, is rooted in intersubjective contexts of communication, in intersubjective practices and forms of life which have distinctive historical origins. What this means is that we cannot possibly explain the various outcomes of, for instance, the Asian Financial Crisis (AFC), for different societies, without investigating how local cultural and institutional patterns of behavior differed in relation to various global flows. Why, for example, did Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Singapore and India fare so much better in the crisis than South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia? Or how can we explain democratization in South Korea, Taiwan and Indonesia, while other societies such as China, Vietnam and Laos are still one-party states. Or why is it that India, Malaysia and Indonesia have experienced recurring clashes between different communities, while other multicultural societies such as Singapore and China have had few such communal conflicts (which is not to say that these societies have lacked other conflicts)?

These and many other issues are raised and dealt with in this volume. In doing this we bring together studies of East and Southeast Asia with those of South Asia, at the same time as we bridge the gap between studies of globalization and democratization. The latter is done by introducing the issue of identity as providing the missing link in much of this literature. Below I identify and explain how this is the case, by first discussing the issue of globalization—definitions, approaches and problems with the term. Second, I investigate its relationship to democracy, democratization and to the issue of civil society. And, finally I turn to the complex issues of identity and citizenship which, I argue, are necessary ingredients for the "glocalization" cake, providing both substance and symbolism to the theoretical and empirical debate. Each section is followed by a brief overview of the corresponding chapters as dealt with in Parts II, III and IV of the book. Part II of the book is thus concerned primarily with the phenomenon of globalization in Asia—its consequences and effects. Part III is more specifically interested in the relationship between globalization, democracy and civil society in Asia, while Part IV relates this debate to issues of identity, culture and citizenship in Asian societies. Part V, the conclusion, attempts finally to bring the various threads, ideas and questions together by revisiting the global–local nexus in Asia as dealt with in the various chapters.

Globalization and its effects: unification and fragmentation

Globalization is often discussed in terms of three processes: *scale*, *speed*, and *cognition*. The first, *scale*, involves a discussion of magnitude—the extent to which the number of economic, political, social and human linkages between societies are greater than at any previous time in history. The second, *speed*, has to do with how globalization is conceptualized in time and space—the argument here is that globalization is not a new phenomenon but involves a compression of time and space never previously experienced. The third, *cognition*, involves an increased awareness of the globe as a smaller place—that events elsewhere may have consequences for our everyday political, social and economic lives and may affect individuals' sense of being (Kinnvall 1995: 244ff.). In a general sense we understand globalization as a combination of these processes, i.e., not as something new but as a deepening of the extent to which relations transcending geographical borders are now possible; the increased speed with which such relations are now taking place; and the consequences of such intensification of relations on political, economic and social levels. Globalization thus involves the reduced significance of barriers such as borders, distances and states to global flows of both tangible and intangible factors such as goods, services, technology, people and ideas.

A number of such interrelated global flows can be identified (Manners 2000). Some such flows are mainly economic, such as the global flow of production, found in the increasingly mobile economic activities of multinational companies, and the global flow of finance through billions of dollars, euros and yen crossing the globe. Another set of flows is more directly political, as in geography, which is being changed and shaped as borders and boundaries of a physical and political nature are being crossed. Global flows concerning authority and governance also belong to this set, where demands for local autonomy compete with regional attempts to create supranational structures as the state's hold on sovereignty is questioned. Finally, we have global flows of a more social and human nature. Here the rapid diffusion of information and knowledge is both connected to and dependent on advances in technology which have facilitated communication. Global flows of people through migration, travel and tourism are closely connected to global flows of culture, understood in its broadest sense as historically transmitted (constructed and reconstructed) thoughts, values, and ideas which come embodied both in a symbolic and material form as well as in social practice (Kinnvall 1995). As discussed below, it is important to point out that most of these flows are spread unevenly and not in a one-way direction as is often assumed.

In relation to such flows, globalization is also discussed in terms of homogenization versus heterogenization (or unification versus fragmentation), and is here linked to discussions of modernization and development (see for example Robertson 1992; Featherstone 1995; Hall 1997). As mentioned earlier, the modernist, often neo-liberal, approach tends to view globalization as the solution and underdevelopment, backwardness and provincialism as the problems. Here, the main arguments in favor of globalization have to do with the pace of

economic and communicative transformations. The pace of economic transformation, it is argued, has created a new "world politics" as states are no longer able to control their economies. Electronic communications have altered previous relational structures as we live increasingly in a world where events in one location can be observed elsewhere. It is further argued that a new global cosmopolitan culture is emerging, a "global village,"[2] as the world is becoming more homogeneous and time and space are undermined by the speed of modern communications and media.

The so-called "anti-modernists," in comparison, often portray globalization as the problem and localization as the solution.[3] Globalization is only another term for Western colonialization and a buzzword to denote the latest phase of capitalism. The world economy is not global as there is no shift of finance and capital from the developed to the underdeveloped worlds; rather, trade, investment and financial flows are concentrated in Europe, North America and Japan. Also, it is argued, globalization is very uneven in its effects, and only a small minority of the world's population is actually directly affected. In a similar vein, critics of globalization argue that the forces that are being globalized are, conveniently, those found in the Western world and that non-Western values have no place within this process. Moreover, there are considerable losers within the globalization process and globalization may only allow for more efficient exploitation of less well-off nations in the name of liberal openness.

Both pictures give but a limited view of globalization as they fail to problematize culture and identity adequately and instead continue to see modernity as a universalizing hegemony originating in the West and then spreading around the globe. The tendency is to take for granted that global flows continue to be constituted as one-way traffic from the "West to the rest." Also, though the predominant flow of cultural discourse is from the West to the East and from North to South, this should not necessarily be understood as a form of domination. Finally, it is unclear that globalization is simply a process of homogenization since the processes of fragmentation and hybridity are equally strong (Barker 1999). In other words, it is not only American culture affecting the rest of the world, as often portrayed in mass media and, at times, also in academia. As eloquently demonstrated by Friedman in Chapter 4, Asian cultural practices have, for instance, become increasingly influential in many parts of the Western world. In addition, the fact that American products, such as Coke, McDonald's and American soap operas, are sold and shown in remote villages of Asia and Africa does not automatically result in the creation of a global cultural unit. As a matter of fact it is not uncommon that the inflow of such products are interpreted and given different meanings depending on local context (Ong 1999). As a number of postcolonial writers have suggested (see for example Spivak 1993; Bhaba 1990, 1996; Chatterjee 1993), what we see are various competing centers bringing about shifts in the global balance of power between state and nonstate actors that together forge new sets of interdependencies. The result is not the creation