GLOBALIZATION I

LIQUIDS, FLOWS, AND STRUCTURES

Globalization[1] is increasingly omnipresent. We are living in *a* – or even *the* – "global age" (Albrow 1996). Globalization is clearly a very important change; it can even be argued (Bauman 2003) that it is *the most important change in human history*.[2] This is reflected in many domains, but particularly in social relationships and social structures,[3] especially those that are widely dispersed geographically. "In the era of globalization . . . shared humanity face[s] *the most fateful* of the many fateful steps" it has made in its long history (Bauman 2003: 156, italics added).

The following is the definition of globalization[4] to be used in this book (note that all of the italicized terms will be discussed in this chapter):

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globalization is a transplanetary *process* or set of *processes* involving increasing *liquidity* and the growing multidirectional *flows* of people, objects, places and information as well as the *structures* they encounter and create that are *barriers* to, or *expedite*, those flows . . .[5]

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In contrast to many other definitions of globalization, this one does *not* assume that greater integration is an inevitable component of globalization. That is, globalization can bring with it greater integration (especially when things flow easily), but it can also serve to reduce the level of integration (when structures are erected that successfully block flows).

A term that is closely related to globalization is **transnationalism** (Morawska 2007), or "processes that interconnect individuals and social groups across specific geo-political borders" (Giulianotti and Robertson 2007b: 62). A related concept is **transnationality**, or "the rise of new communities and formation of new social identities and relations that cannot be defined through the traditional reference point of nation-states" (William Robinson 2007: 1199–201).

Globalization and transnationalism are often used interchangeably, but transnationalism is clearly a more delimited process than globalization. Transnationalism is limited to interconnections that cross geo-political borders, especially those associated with two, or more, nation-states.[6] An example is Mexican immigrants in the US sending remittances home to family members in Mexico. Globalization includes such connections, but is not restricted to them and encompasses a far wider range of transplanetary processes (e.g. direct relationships between people in many places in the world networking via the Internet).[7] Further, geo-political borders are only one of the barriers encountered, and often overcome, by globalization.[8] Some phenomena, labor unions for example, are better thought of as transnational than as global. That is, the relationship between labor unions in, for example, the US and Sweden is more important than are moves toward a global labor movement (see Chapter 16). Transnationalism is most often used in thinking about, and research on, immigrants who move from one country to another, but who continue to be involved in various ways with the country from which they came (Portes 2001b).

The case of baseball is useful in clarifying the distinction between globalization and transnationalism (Kelly 2007: 79–93). Baseball is a transnational sport because

Globalization: Transplanetary process(es) involving increasing liquidity and growing multidirectional flows as well as the structures they encounter and create.

Transnationalism: Processes that interconnect individuals and social groups across specific geo-political borders.

Transnationality: Rise of new communities and formation of new social identities and relations that cannot be defined as nation-states.

many of its fundamentals – techniques, strategies, etc. – and players have circulated across the borders of a small number of nations, especially Japan, Taiwan, Cuba, the Dominican Republic and, of course, the US. However, it is *not* global because it has not flowed on a transplanetary basis to a large portion of the world.

In contrast, soccer would be much more clearly a global sport because it exists in virtually every area of the world. For example, over 200 of the world's nations are members of a global organization, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). Another example of globalization in the realm of sports is the summer (and winter) Olympics sponsored by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in which about the same number of nations participate (for more on this see Chapter 9).

SOME OF THE BASICS

In spite of the focus in this book on globalization, there are many scholars who do not accept the idea that we live in a global age (see Chapter 2). Nevertheless, this book embraces, and operates from, a "globalist" perspective (Hirst and Thompson 1999) – globalization *is* a reality. In fact, globalization is of such great importance that the era in which we live should be labeled the "global age."

Debates about globalization are one of the reasons that there is undoubtedly no topic today more difficult to get one's head around, let alone to master, than globalization. However, of far greater importance are the sheer magnitude, diversity, and complexity of the process of globalization which involves almost everyone, everything, and every place and each in innumerable ways. (The concept of **globality** refers to the condition [in this case omnipresence] resulting from the process of globalization [Scholte 2004: 102–10].)

> **Globality**: Omnipresence of the process of globalization.

For example, this book is being written by an American; my editor and copy-editor are in England; the development editor is in Canada; reviewers are from four continents; the book is printed in Singapore and distributed by the publisher throughout much of the world; and you might be reading it today on a plane en route from Vladivostok to Shanghai. Further, if it follows the pattern of many of my other books, it may well be translated into Russian, Chinese, and many other languages. Amazon.com may make it one of its digital books that can be read via its wireless portable reading device, Kindle. This would make the book highly liquid since it would be possible for it to be downloaded anywhere in the world at any time.

Before proceeding to the next section, a note is needed on the use of **metaphors** (Brown 1989), which will occupy a prominent place in the ensuing discussion. A metaphor involves the use of one term to better help us understand another term. Thus in the next section, we will use the metaphor of a "solid" to describe epochs before the era of globalization.[9] Similarly, the global world will be described as being "liquid." The use of such metaphors is designed to give the reader a better and a more vivid sense of the global age and how it differs from prior epochs.

> **Metaphors**: Use of one term to help us better understand another.

FROM SOLIDS TO LIQUIDS (TO GASES)

SOLIDS

Prior to the current epoch of globalization (and as we will see, to most observers there *was* a previous global epoch [see Chapter 2], if not many previous epochs, of globalization), it could be argued that one of the things that characterized people, things, information, places, and much else was their greater **solidity**. That is, all of them tended to be hard or to harden (metaphorically, figuratively, not literally, of course) over time and therefore, among other things, to remain largely in place. As a result, people either did not go anywhere or they did not venture very far from where they were born and raised; their social relationships were restricted to those who were nearby. Much the same could be said of most objects (tools, food, and so on) which tended to be used where they were produced. The solidity of most material manifestations of information – stone tablets, newspapers, magazines, books, and so on – also made them at least somewhat difficult to move very far. Furthermore, since people didn't move very far, neither did information. Places were not only quite solid and immoveable, but they tended to confront solid natural (mountains, rivers, oceans) and humanly constructed (walls, gates) barriers that made it difficult for people and things to exit or to enter.

Above all, solidity describes a world in which barriers exist and are erected to prevent the free movement of all sorts of things. It was the nation-state that was most likely to create these "solid" barriers (for example, walls [e.g. the Great Wall of China; the wall between Israel and the West Bank], border gates and guards), and the state itself grew increasingly solid as it resisted change. For much of the twentieth century this was epitomized by the Soviet Union and its satellite states which sought to erect any number of barriers in order to keep all sorts of things out *and* in (especially a disaffected population). With the passage of time, the Soviet Union grew increasingly sclerotic. The best example of this solidity was the erection (beginning in 1961), and maintenance, of the Berlin Wall in order to keep East Berliners in and Western influences out. There was a more fluid relationship between East and West Berlin prior to the erection of the wall, but that fluidity was seen in the East as being disadvantageous, even dangerous. Once the Wall was erected, relations between West and East Berlin were virtually frozen in place – they solidified – and there was comparatively little movement of anything between them.

The Wall, to say nothing of East Germany and the Soviet Union, are long gone and with them many of the most extreme forms of solidity brought into existence by the Cold War. Nonetheless, solid structures remain – e.g., the nation-state and its border and customs controls – and there are ever-present calls for the creation of new, and new types, of solid structures. Thus, in many parts of Europe there are demands for more barriers to legal and illegal immigration. This has reached an extreme in the US with concern over illegal Mexican (and other Latin American) immigration leading to the erection of an enormous fence between the two countries. Thus, solidity is far from dead in the contemporary world. It is very often the case

Solidity: People, things, information, and places "harden" over time and therefore have limited mobility.

that demands for new forms of solidity are the result of increased fluidity. However, a strong case can, and will, be made that it is fluidity that is more characteristic of today's world, especially in terms of globalization.

Of course, people were *never* so solid that they were totally immobile or stuck completely in a given place (a few people were able to escape East Berlin in spite of the Wall and many will be able to enter the US illegally even when the fence on the Mexican border is completed), and this was especially true of the elite members of any society. Elites were (and are) better able to move about and that ability increased with advances in transportation technology. Commodities, especially those created for elites, also could almost always be moved and they, too, grew more moveable as technologies advanced. Information (because it was not solid, although it could be solidified in the form of, for example, a book) could always travel more easily than goods or people (it could be spread by word of mouth over great distances even if the originator of the information could not move very far; it moved even faster as more advanced communication technologies emerged [telegraph, telephone, the Internet]). And as other technologies developed (ships, automobiles, airplanes), people, especially those with the resources, were better able to leave places and get to others. They could even literally move places (or at least parts of them) as, for example, when in the early 1800s Lord Elgin dismantled parts of the Parthenon in Greece and transported them to London, where to this day they can be found in the British Museum.[10]

LIQUIDS AND GASES

However, at an increasing rate over the last few centuries, and especially in the last several decades, that which once seemed so solid has tended to "melt" and become increasingly *liquid*. Instead of thinking of people, objects, information, and places as being like solid blocks of ice, they need to be seen as tending, in recent years, to melt and as becoming increasingly liquid. It is, needless to say, far more difficult to move blocks of ice than the water that is produced when those blocks melt. Of course, to extend the metaphor, there continue to exist blocks of ice, even glaciers (although, even these are now literally melting), in the contemporary world that have not melted, at least completely. Solid material realities (people, cargo, newspapers) continue to exist, but because of a wide range of technological developments (in transportation, communication, the Internet, and so on) they can move across the globe far more readily.

Everywhere we turn, more things, including ourselves, are becoming increasingly liquefied. Furthermore, as the process continues, those liquids, as is the case in the natural world (e.g. ice to water to water vapor), tend to turn into *gases* of various types. Gases are lighter than liquids and therefore they move even more easily than as liquids. This is most easily seen literally in the case of the global flow of natural gas through lengthy pipelines. More metaphorically, much of the information now available virtually instantly around the world wafts through the air in the form of signals beamed off satellites. Such signals become news bulletins on our television screens or messages from our global positioning systems letting us know the best route to our destination.

It should be noted, once again, that all of the terms used above – solids, liquids, gases – are metaphors – little of the global world is literally a solid, a liquid, or a gas. They are metaphors designed to communicate a sense of fundamental changes taking place as the process of globalization proceeds.

Karl Marx opened the door to this kind of analysis (and to the use of such metaphors) when he famously argued that because of the nature of capitalism[11] as an economic system "everything solid melts into air." That is, many of the solid, material realities that preceded capitalism (e.g. the structures of feudalism) were "melted" by it and were transformed into liquids. To continue the imagery farther than Marx took it, they were ultimately transformed into gases that diffused in the atmosphere. However, while Marx was describing a largely destructive process, the point here is that the new liquids and gases that are being created are inherent parts of the new world and are radically transforming it. In the process, they are having *both* constructive and destructive effects (Schumpeter 1976).

Marx's insight of over a century-and-a-half ago was not only highly prescient, but is far truer today than in Marx's day. In fact, it is far truer than he could have ever imagined. Furthermore, that melting, much like one of the great problems in the global world today – the melting of the ice on and near the North and South poles as a result of global warming (see Chapter 12) – is not only likely to continue in the coming years, but to increase at an exponential rate. Indeed, the melting of the polar icecaps can be seen as another metaphor for the increasing fluidity associated with globalization, especially its problematic aspects. And, make no mistake, the increasing fluidity associated with globalization presents *both* great opportunities *and* great dangers.

Thus, the perspective on globalization presented here, following the work of Zygmunt Bauman (2000; 2003; 2005; 2006), is that it involves, above all else, increasing **liquidity** (Lakoff 2008: 277–300) (and **gaseousness**).[12] Several of Bauman's ideas on liquidity are highly relevant to the perspective on globalization employed here.

For example, liquid phenomena do not easily, or for long, hold their shape. Thus, the myriad liquid phenomena associated with globalization are hard-pressed to maintain any particular form and, even if they acquire a form, it is likely to change quite quickly.

Liquid phenomena fix neither space nor time. That which is liquid is, by definition, opposed to any kind of fixity, be it spatial or temporal. This means that the spatial and temporal aspects of globalization are in continuous flux. That which is liquid is forever ready to change whatever shape (space) it might take on momentarily. Time (however short) in a liquid world is more important than space. Perhaps the best example of this is global finance where little or nothing (dollars, gold) actually changes its place (at least immediately), but time is of the essence in that the symbolic representations of money move instantaneously and great profits can be made or lost in split-second decisions on financial transactions.

Liquid phenomena not only move easily, but once they are on the move they are difficult to stop. This is exemplified in many areas such as foreign trade, investment, and global financial transactions (Polillo and Guillen 2005: 1764–802), the globality of transactions and interactions (e.g., on Facebook, Twitter [Clive

Liquidity: Increasing ease of movement of people, things, information, and places in the global age.

Gaseousness: Hyper-mobility of people, things, information, and places in the global age.

Thompson 2008: 42ff.]) on the Internet, and the difficulty in halting the global flow of drugs, pornography, the activities of organized crime, and illegal immigrants.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, that which is liquid tends to melt whatever (especially solids) stands in its path. This is clearest in the case of the much discussed death, or at least decline,[13] of the nation-state and its borders in the era of increasing global flows (see Chapter 6). According to Cartier (2001: 269) the "forces of globalization have rendered many political boundaries more porous to flows of people, money, and things."

It is clear that if one wanted to use a single term to think about globalization today, liquidity would be at or near the top of the list. That is not to say that there are no solid structures in the world – after all, we still live in a modern world, even if it is late modernity, and modernity has long been associated with solidity. And it does not mean that there is not a constant interplay between liquidity and solidity with increases in that which is liquid (e.g., terrorist attacks launched against Israel from the West Bank during the Intifada) leading to counter-reactions involving the erection of new solid forms (e.g. that fence between Israel and the West Bank), but at the moment and for the foreseeable future, the momentum lies with increasing and proliferating global liquidity.

FLOWS

Closely related to the idea of liquidity, and integral to it, is another key concept in thinking about globalization, the idea of **flows** (Appadurai 1996); after all liquids flow easily, far more easily than solids. In fact, it is the concept of flows that is widely used in the literature on globalization[14] and it is the concept that will inform a good deal of the body of this book.[15]

Because so much of the world has "melted" or is in the process of "melting" and has become liquefied, globalization is increasingly characterized by great *flows* of increasingly liquid phenomena of all types, including people, objects, information, decisions, places, and so on.[16] For example, foods of all sorts increasingly flow around the world, including sushi globalized from its roots in Japan (Bestor 2005: 13–20), Chilean produce now ubiquitous in the US market (and elsewhere) (Goldfrank 2005: 42–53), Indian food in San Francisco (and throughout much of the world) (Mankekar 2005: 197–214), and so on. In many cases, the flows have become raging floods that are increasingly less likely to be impeded by, among others, place-based barriers of any kind, including the oceans, mountains, and especially the borders of nation-states. This was demonstrated once again in late 2008 in the spread of the American credit and financial crisis to Europe (and elsewhere): "In a global financial system, national borders are porous" (Landler 2008a: C1).

Looking at a very different kind of flow, many people in many parts of the world believe that they are being swamped by migrants, especially poor illegal migrants (Moses 2006). Whether or not these are actually floods, they have come to be seen in that way by many people, often aided by politicians and media personalities in many countries who have established their reputations by portraying them in that

Flows: Movement of people, things, information, and places due, in part, to the increasing porosity of global barriers.

way. The best-known examples are two opponents of illegal immigration – the French right-wing politician Jean-Marie Le Pen and the American TV newscaster, Lou Dobbs. Le Pen finished second in the 2002 presidential election in France by focusing on immigration problems and Dobbs devotes a good portion of his nightly "newscasts" on CNN (as well as his books) to the dangers posed by the "flood" of illegal immigrants.

Undoubtedly because of their immateriality, ideas, images, and information, both legal (blogs) and illegal (e.g. child pornography), flow (virtually) everywhere through interpersonal contact and the media, especially now via the Internet.[17] To take a specific example within the global circulation of ideas, "confidentiality" in the treatment of AIDS patients flowed to India (and elsewhere) because of the efforts of experts and their infrastructure. The arrival of this idea in India made it possible to better manage and treat AIDS patients who were more likely to seek out treatment because of assurances of confidentiality. Confidentiality was very important in this context because of the reticence of many Indians to discuss publicly such matters as sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS (Misra 2008: 433–67).

Decisions of all sorts flow around the world, as well as over time: "The effect of the [economic] decisions flowed, and would continue to flow, through every possible conduit. Some decisions would be reflected in products rolling off assembly lines, others in prices of securities, and still others in personal interactions. Each decision would cascade around the world and then forward through time" (Altman 2007: 255). At the moment, much of the world is in a deep recession and continues to be adversely affected by a wide array of bad economic decisions made in the previous decade or more, especially in the United States.

Even places can be said to be flowing around the world as, for example, immigrants re-create the places from which they came in new locales (e.g. Indian and Pakistani enclaves in London). Furthermore, places (e.g., airports, shopping malls) themselves have become increasingly like flows (for more on this and the transition from "spaces of places" to "spaces of flows" see Castells 1996).

Even with all of this increasing fluidity, much of what would have been considered the height of global liquidity only a few decades, or even years, ago now seems increasingly sludge-like. This is especially the case when we focus on the impact of the computer and the Internet on the global flow of all sorts of things. Thus, not long ago we might have been amazed by our ability to order a book from Amazon.com and receive it via an express package delivery system in as little as a day. That method, however, now seems to operate at a snail's pace compared to the ability to download that book in minutes on Amazon's Kindle system (a wireless reading device to which books and other reading matter can be downloaded).

TYPES OF FLOWS

Interconnected flows: Global flows that interconnect at various points and times.

It is worth differentiating among several different types of flows. One is **interconnected flows**. The fact is that global flows do not occur in isolation from one another; many different flows interconnect at various points and times. Take the example of the global sex industry (Farr 2005; 2007: 611–29). The sex industry requires the intersection of the flow of people who work in the industry (usually women) with

the flow of customers (e.g. sex tourists). Other flows that interconnect with the global sex industry involve money and drugs. Then there are the sexually transmitted diseases that are carried by the participants in that industry and from them branch off into many other disease flows throughout the world.

A very different example of interconnected flows is in the global fish industry. That industry is now dominated by the flows of huge industrial ships and the massive amount of frozen fish that they produce and which is distributed throughout the world. In addition, these huge industrial ships are putting many small fishers out of business and some are using their boats for other kinds of flows (e.g. transporting illegal immigrants from Africa to Europe) (LaFraniere 2008: A1, A10). Over-fishing by industrial ships has emptied the waters of fish and this has served to drive up their price. This has made the industry attractive to criminals and the result is an increase in the global flow of illegal fish (Rosenthal 2008b: A1–A6).

Then there are **multi-directional flows**. Globalization is not a one-way process as concepts like Westernization and Americanization (see Chapters 3 and 4) seem to imply (Marling 2006). While all sorts of things do flow out of the West and the United States to every part of the world, many more flow into the West and the US from everywhere (e.g., Japanese automobiles, Chinese T-shirts, iPhones manufactured in China, Russian sex workers, and so on). Furthermore, all sorts of things flow in every conceivable direction among all other points in the world.

> **Multi-directional flows**: All sorts of things flowing in every conceivable direction among many points in the world.

Still another layer of complexity is added when we recognize that transplanetary processes not only can complement one another (e.g. the meeting of flows of sex tourists and sex workers), but often also conflict with one another (and with much else). In fact, it is usually these **conflicting flows** that attract the greatest attention. This is most obvious in the case of the ongoing "war" between the United States (and its allies, especially Great Britain) and al-Qaeda. On the one hand, al-Qaeda is clearly trying to maintain, or to increase, its global influence and, undoubtedly, to find other ways of engaging in a range of terrorist activities. For its part, the US is involved in a wide variety of global processes designed to counter that threat, stymie al-Qaeda's ambitions, and ultimately and ideally to contain, if not destroy, it. This involves the US invasion of Iraq[18] and Afghanistan, the ongoing warfare there as well as the global flow of military personnel and equipment to those locales and others (e.g. Pakistan); innumerable intelligence efforts to uncover al-Qaeda plots, and counter-terrorism activities designed to find and kill its leaders (especially Osama bin-Laden), ongoing contact with intelligence agencies of other nations in order to share information on al-Qaeda intentions, and so on.

> **Conflicting flows**: Transplanetary processes that conflict with one another (and with much else).

Then there are **reverse flows**. In some cases, processes flowing in one direction act back on their source (and much else). This is what Ulrich Beck (1992) has called the *boomerang effect*. In Beck's work the boomerang effect takes the form of, for example, pollution that is "exported" to other parts of the world but then returns to affect the point of origin. So, for example, countries may insist that their factories be built with extremely high smokestacks so that the pollution reaches greater heights in the atmosphere and is thereby blown by prevailing winds into other countries and perhaps even around the globe (Ritzer 2008b: 342). While this seems to reduce pollution in the home country, the boomerang effect is manifest

> **Reverse flows**: Processes which, while flowing in one direction, act back on their source.

when prevailing winds change direction and the pollution is blown back to its source. In addition, nations that are the recipients of another nation's air pollution may find ways of returning the favor by building their own smokestacks even higher than their neighbors.

DOES GLOBALIZATION HOP RATHER THAN FLOW?

In spite of occasional conflicts, it can be comforting to conceive of globalization in terms of flows. That is, it seems to suggest a kind of global equality with all parts of the globe being penetrated, at least theoretically, by these flows to more or less the same degree. However, as we all know, the world is characterized by great inequality (see Chapters 14 and 15). Therefore, all flows do not go everywhere in the world and, even when they do, they affect various areas to varying degrees and in very different ways. Below we will discuss various barriers that affect the kinds of flows discussed above. However, it is also possible that the idea of flows communicates the wrong, or at least a distorted, sense of globalization and that another metaphor might be more appropriate, at least for some parts of the world.

This is exactly what James Ferguson suggests in his work on Africa. He argues, rather, that at least in the case of Africa (and this idea applies elsewhere, as well), globalization "hops" from place to place rather than flowing evenly through the entire continent:

> We have grown accustomed to a language of global "flows" in thinking about "globaliza-tion," but flow is a particularly poor metaphor for the point-to-point connectivity and networking of enclaves . . . as the contemporary African material shows so vividly, the "global" does not "flow," thereby connecting and watering contiguous spaces; *it hops instead*, efficiently connecting the enclaved points in the network while excluding (with equal efficiency) the spaces that lie between the points. (Ferguson 2006: 47, italics added)

The idea that globalization hops, rather than flows, at least in some parts of the world (such as Africa), implies that while some areas are strongly, often positively, affected by it, others are not.

This relates to the "enclaves" discussed by Ferguson. While some areas – enclaves in Africa (and elsewhere) – are deeply implicated in global processes, those processes simply hop over most other areas of that continent. Among those enclaves are the national parks that are such highly desirable destinations for well-heeled tourists from the North. (Note: throughout this book the terms "North" and "South" will be used to refer the two major parts of world – the highly developed North [especially the US and the EU] and the less developed South [especially Africa, South America, and some parts of Southeast Asia][19]). Highly desirable locales have been partitioned off so that Northern tourists can "hop" into them, experience a highly sanitized bit of Africa, and then hop out. In doing so, the areas may be cordoned off (perhaps with barbed wire) and patrolled by the military or private guards who may operate with "shoot-to-kill" orders if any "poachers" are found in the enclaves.

The problem is that many of the so-called "poachers" are, in fact, locals who have been excluded from areas that may be, for example, their traditional hunting grounds. The more general point here is that globalization hops into these enclaves (in the form of tourists and their money) but it jumps over most other areas in Africa, including those in which the "poachers" now live. Not only are the latter not helped by global flows, but they are adversely affected by the barriers that exclude them from areas that were once part of their domain.

This all points to a very different image of globalization than the one we are accustomed to:

> The "global" we see . . . in Africa has sharp, jagged edges; rich and dangerous traffic amid zones of generalized abjection; razor-wired enclaves next to abandoned hinterlands. It features entire countries with estimated life expectancies in the mid-thirties and dropping; warfare seemingly without end; and the steepest economic inequalities seen in human history to date. It is a global where capital flows are at once lightning fast and patchy and incomplete; where the globally networked enclave sits right beside the ungovernable humanitarian disaster zone. It is a global not of planetary communion, but of disconnection, segmentation and segregation – not a seamless world without borders, but a patchwork of discontinuous and hierarchically ranked spaces, whose edges are carefully delimited, guarded, and enforced. (Ferguson 2006: 48–9)

It may well be that we need to think of globalization both in terms of flows *and* in terms of processes that hop from place to place. As a general rule, globalization flows more easily through the developed world (although even there it flows around many areas dominated by the poor), whereas it bypasses many locales in the less developed world, or even skirts them completely. The metaphors of "flows" and "hops" obviously exist uncomfortably with one another; it is difficult to think of flows as hopping. Rather, to be consistent with the idea of flows, we need to think in terms of some of the "heavy structures" to be discussed shortly, that block those flows, especially in less developed parts of the world. That is, because of those barriers many positive flows are forced to bypass less developed areas.

HEAVY, LIGHT, WEIGHTLESS

There is another set of conceptual distinctions, or metaphors, that are useful in thinking about globalization. In addition to the change from solids to liquids (and then gases), we can also think in terms of change that involves movement from that which is *heavy* to that which is *light* (this is another distinction traceable to the work of Zygmunt Bauman) and most recently to that which is lighter than light, that which approaches being *weightless* (the gases mentioned above).

The original Gutenberg bible (mid-fifteenth-century Germany) was usually published in two volumes, ran to close to 1,400 pages, and was printed on very heavy paper or vellum. It was in every sense of the term a heavy tome (almost like the one you are now reading), difficult, because of its sheer weight and bulk, to transport. Fast forward to 2006 and a much lighter bound copy of the bible could easily be

purchased from Amazon.com and transported in days via express mail virtually anywhere in the world. By 2007 that bible had become weightless since it could be downloaded using the Kindle system.

More generally, it could be argued that both pre-industrial and industrial societies were quite "heavy," that is, characterized by that which is difficult to move. This applies both to those who labored in them (e.g., peasants, farmers, factory workers), where they labored (plots of land, farms, factories), and what they produced (crops, machines, books, automobiles). Because of their heaviness, workers tended to stay put and what they produced (and what was not consumed locally) could be moved, especially great distances, only with great effort and at great expense. Later advances, especially in technology, made goods, people, and places "lighter," easier to move. These included advances in both transportation and technology that made all sorts of industrial products smaller, lighter, and easier to transport (compare the mini-laptop computer of today to the room-size computer of the mid-twentieth century).

Karin Knorr Cetina (2005: 215) has written about what she calls "complex global microstructures," or "structures of connectivity and integration that are global in scope but microsociological in character." She has described financial markets (Knorr Cetina and Bruegger 2002: 905–50) in these terms and, more recently, global terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda. We will have more to say about these global microstructures (see Chapter 13), but the key point here is that while Knorr Cetina sees these global microstructures as having several characteristics, of primary importance is their "lightness" in comparison to "heavy" bureaucratic systems. Thus, unlike the armed forces of the United States, al-Qaeda is not a heavy bureaucratic structure, but rather a light "global microstructure." It is al-Qaeda's (as well as the Taliban's in Afghanistan) lightness that gives it many advantages over the extremely cumbersome US military, and the huge bureaucracy of which it is part, and helps account, at least so far, for the latter's inability to suppress al-Qaeda or to catch Osama bin-Laden.

It could be argued that we moved from the heavy to the light era in the past century or two. However, by about 1980, we can be said to have moved beyond both of those epochs. We are now in an era that is increasingly defined not just by lightness, but by something approaching weightlessness. That which is weightless, or nearly so, clearly moves far more easily (even globally) than that which is either heavy or light. The big changes here involved the arrival and expansion of cable and satellite television, satellite radio, cell phones, PDAs, and, most importantly, the personal computer and the advent of the Internet (and networking sites such as Twitter). It is with the personal computer and the Internet that globalization reaches new heights in terms of the flow of things and of social relationships in large part because they, and everything else, have approached weightlessness.

An excellent example of this can be found in the world of music. Vinyl records were quite heavy and the shift to cassettes and later CDs did not make music much lighter. However, the creation of advanced technologies such as iPods and cell phones allows us to carry around thousands of once very heavy albums in our pockets. We can carry that music with us anywhere in the world and we can exchange music over the Internet with people around the globe.

To take another example, in the past, if I needed to consult with a medical specialist in Switzerland, I would have had to fly there and take my x-rays and MRI images with me, or else had them snail-mailed. Now, both can be digitized and sent via the Internet; x-ray and MRI results have become weightless. My Swiss physician can view them on her computer screen. I don't even need to go to Switzerland at all (in a sense I have become weightless, as well). I (or my local physician) can confer with my Swiss physician by phone, e-mail, or a video hook-up (e.g. Skype) via the Internet. It is information, rather than things, that is increasingly important in the contemporary world. Information, especially when it is translated into digital, computerized codes (that's what happens to my x-rays and MRI images), is weightless and can be sent around the globe instantly.

Of course, there are still many heavy things in our increasingly weightless world. Factories, offices, buildings, large and cumbersome machines (including MRI machines), newspapers, hardback books, and even some people (made "heavy" by, for example, minority status, poverty, a lack of education) continue to exist. All, of course, are nevertheless being globalized to some degree in one way or another, but their weightiness makes that process more cumbersome and difficult for them. For example, the global parcel delivery systems (e.g. FedEx) have become very efficient, but they still need to transport a physical product over great distances. Clearly, that process is still quite weighty, in comparison to, say, the downloading of weightless movies from Netflix (a website that began by allowing members to receive heavier DVDs via snail-mail). In fact, of course, it is increasingly the case that that which is weightless (e.g. iTunes and downloadable music in general, downloadable movies, blogs) is destroying that which is comparatively heavy (e.g. the CD, the DVD, newspapers).

The ideas of increasing liquidity and weightlessness being employed here do not require that the world be "flat" or be considered as such (see Chapter 8) (Friedman 2005). Fluids can seep through all sorts of tall and wide structures and, in the case of a flood, those structures can even be washed away (as was the Berlin Wall, for example, and more metaphorically, the Iron Curtain), at least temporarily. Further, that which is weightless can waft over and between the tallest and widest structures. Thus, the world today is increasingly characterized by liquidity and weightlessness, but it is *not* necessarily any flatter than it ever was.[20] Those tall, wide structures continue to be important, especially in impeding (or attempting to), the movement of that which is solid and heavy. It is less clear how successful these structures will be in impeding that which is liquid, light, or weightless.

The most obvious of such structures are the borders (Crack 2007: 341–54; Rumford 2007a: 327–39) between nation-states and the fact that in recent years we have witnessed the strengthening (heightening, lengthening, etc.) of many of those borders. Similarly, the Chinese government has sought to restrict the access of its citizens to at least some aspects of the Internet that the government feels is dangerous to its continued rule. The electronic barrier that the government has constructed is known as the "Great Firewall" (French 2008: A1, A6). (A firewall is a barrier on the Internet; the idea of the "Great Firewall" plays off China's Great Wall.)

The huge "digital divide" in the world today (Drori and Jang 2003: 144–61), especially between North and South, is another example of a barrier. The relative

absence in the South of computers and the supporting infrastructure (telephone and broadband connections) needed for a computerized world creates an enormous barrier between the North and the South. In terms of computerization, the world may be increasingly flat (although certainly not totally flat) among and between the countries in the North, but it has many hills in the South and huge and seemingly insurmountable mountain ranges continue to separate the North from the South.

The history of the social world and social thought and research leads us to the conclusion that people, as well as their representatives in the areas in which they live, have always sought to erect structural barriers to protect and advance themselves, and to adversely affect others, and it seems highly likely that they will continue to do so. Thus, we may live in a more liquefied, more weightless, world, but we do *not* live in a flat world and are not likely to live in one any time soon, if ever. Even a successful capitalist, George Soros, acknowledges this, using yet another metaphor, in his analysis of **economic globalization** when he argues: "The global capitalist system has produced a very *uneven* playing field" (Soros 2000: xix, italics added).

Economic globalization: Growing economic linkages at the global level.

HEAVY STRUCTURES THAT EXPEDITE FLOWS

The liquefaction of the social world, as well as its increasing weightlessness, is only part of the story of globalization. As pointed out already, another major part is the fact that many heavy, material, objective structures continue to exist and to be created in the globalized world.[21] Some are holdovers from the pre-global world, but others are actually produced, intentionally or unintentionally, by global forces. In studying globalization we must look at *both* all of that which flows (or "wafts") with increasing ease, as well as all of the structures[22] that impede or block those flows (see below for more on these), as well as that serve to expedite and channel those flows. To put it another way, we must look at *both* that which is light and weightless as well as that which is solid and heavy and that greatly affects their flow in both a positive and a negative sense. This is in line with the view of Inda and Rosaldo (2008b: 29):

> we will examine the materiality of the global. This refers to the material practices – infrastructure, institutions, regulatory mechanisms, governmental strategies, and so forth – that both produce and preclude movement. The objective here is to suggest that global flows are patently structured and regulated, such that while certain objects and subjects are permitted to travel, others are not. Immobility and exclusion are thus as much a part of globalization as movement.

For example, there are various "routes" or "paths" that can be seen as structures that serve to both expedite flows along their length (see Figure 1.1 for major global transportation routes), as well as to limit flows that occur outside their confines.

• Intercontinental airlines generally fly a limited number of well-defined routes[23] (say between New Delhi and London) rather than flying whatever route the pilots wish and thereby greatly increasing the possibility of mid-air collisions (see Figure 1.2 for some of the major global airline routes).
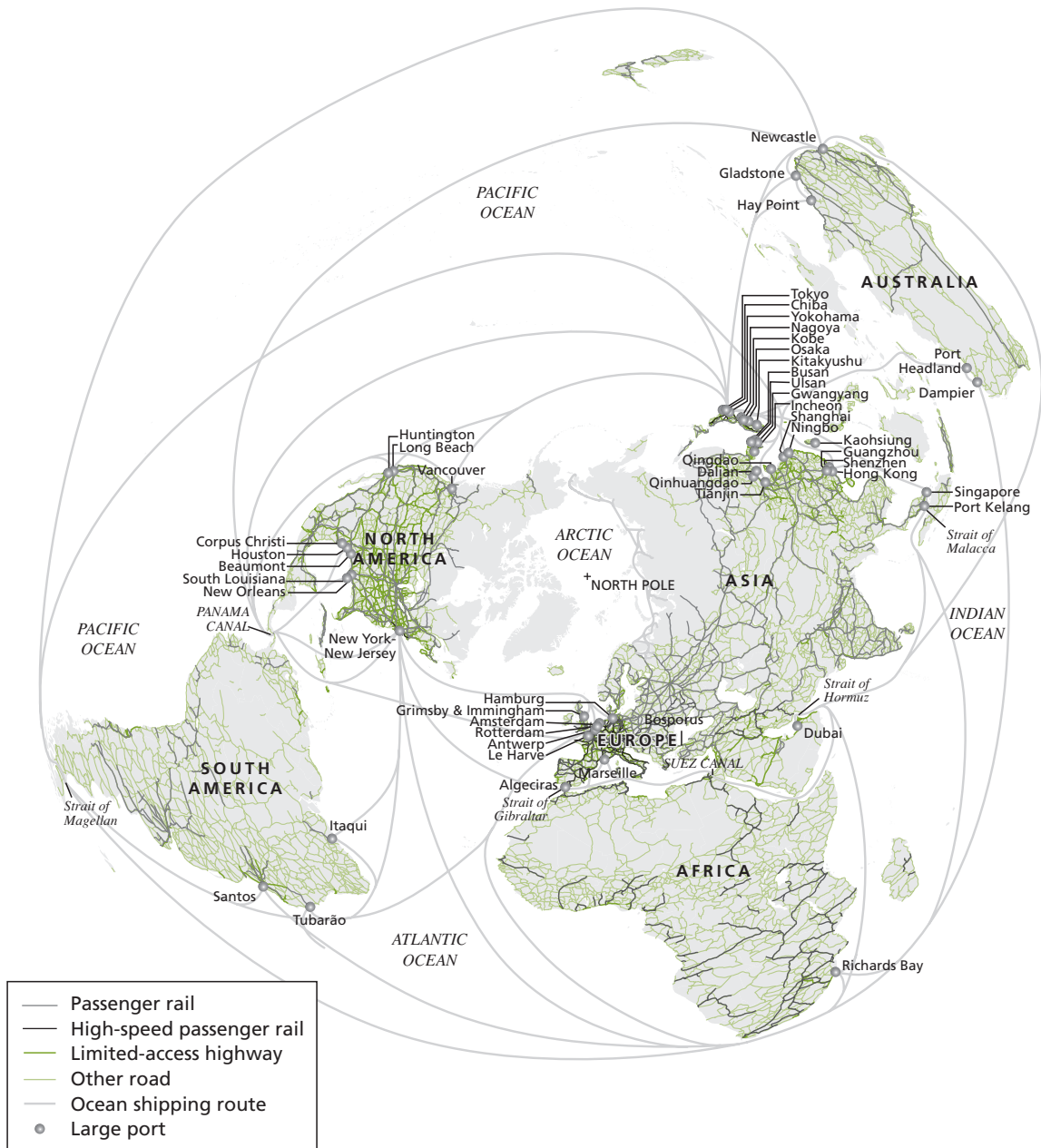
Figure 1.1 Transportation routes. Nearly all of the world's freight headed for international destinations is transported via ships in standardized containers. These sealed metal containers have dramatically altered the face of international freight transport. They are designed to be easily transferred from one mode of transport to another, for instance, from a ship to a train, thereby increasing efficiency and reducing cost. As with passenger airline traffic, maritime freight traffic is concentrated. The largest ten ports, led by Singapore, Rotterdam, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and South Louisiana, handle more than 50% of global freight traffic. By permission of National Geographic Society, *College Atlas of the World* (2007) H. J. de Blij and Roger M. Downs. The World, p. 59.
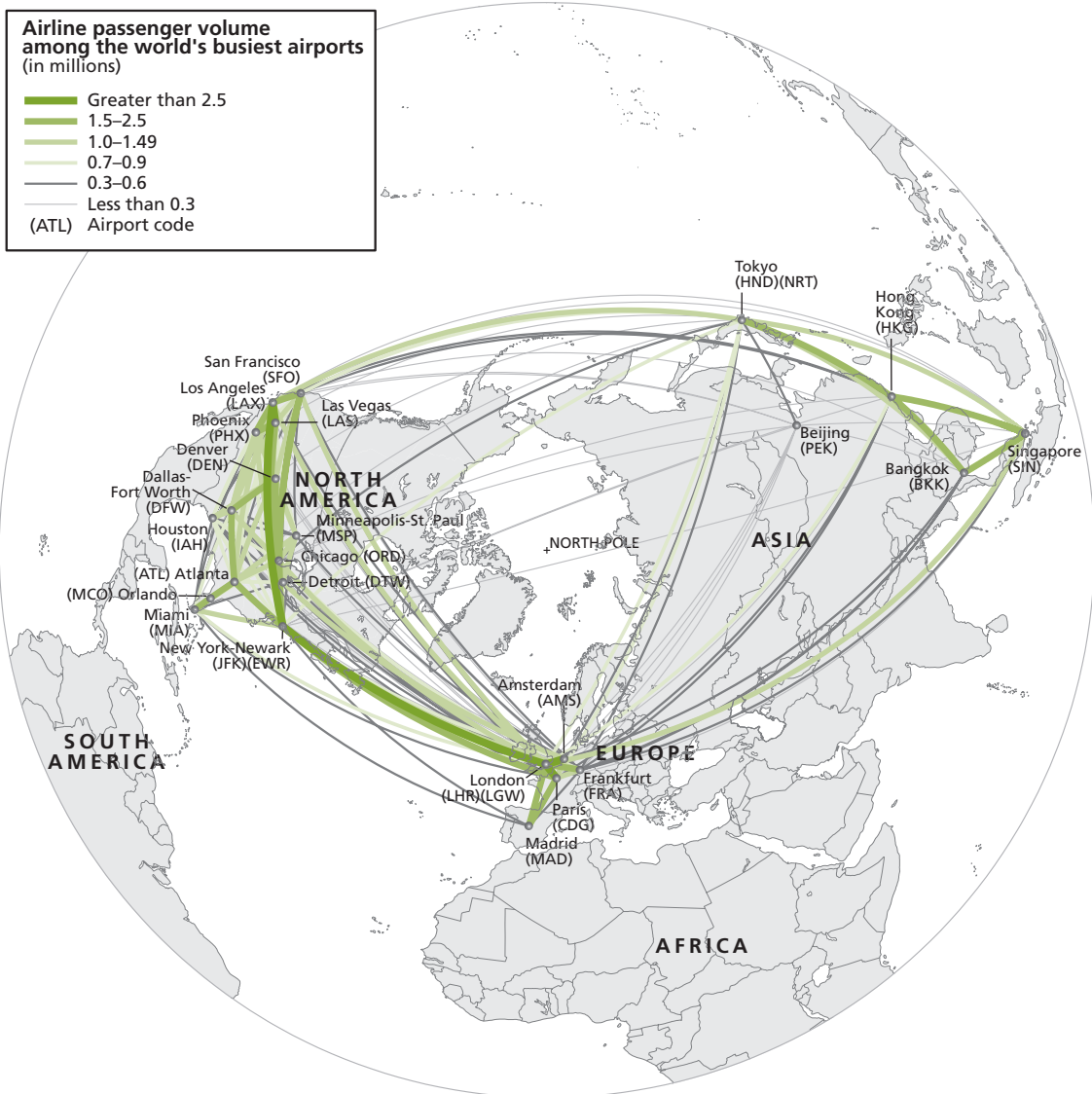
Figure 1.2 Airline passenger volume. Air travel, the dominant mode of international passenger transportation, was once limited to the wealthy and those traveling for business. With increased competition, lower fares, and a growing global economy, air travel has boomed over the last 30 years. It is expected to steadily increase over the next five years, particularly in China and other parts of Asia, despite economic instability in the airline industry and concerns over terrorism. Air traffic is concentrated in the Northern Hemisphere between Europe and North America, with increasing volume to East Asia. Nearly 600 million passengers pass through the doors of the world's ten busiest airports, led by Atlanta, Chicago, London, Tokyo, and Los Angeles. By permission of National Geographic Society, *College Atlas of the World* (2007) H. J. de Blij and Roger M. Downs. The World, p. 58.

- Illegal immigrants from Mexico have, at least until recently, generally followed a relatively small number of well-worn paths into the US. Indeed, they often need to pay smugglers large sums of money and the smugglers generally follow the routes that have worked for them (and others) in the past.
- Goods of all sorts are generally involved in rather well-defined "supply chains" (see Chapter 8 for a discussion of this concept) as they are exported from some countries and imported into others.
- Illegal products – e.g. counterfeit drugs – follow oft-trod paths en route from their point of manufacture (often China), through loosely controlled free-trade zones (e.g. in Dubai), through several intermediate countries, to their ultimate destination, often the US, where they are frequently obtained over the Internet (Bogdanich 2007: A1, A6).]

Then there are an increasing number of formal and informal "bridges" (Anner and Evans 2004: 34–47) which have been created throughout the globe that expedite the flow of all sorts of things. This idea applies perhaps best to the passage of people across borders legally through the process of migration (Sassen 2007b: 788–95). It is clear that in the not-too-distant past there were many structural barriers to the flow of people. There are even a few places in the world today where this remains true – e.g. between the US and Cuba. However, with the end of the Cold War, there are now many bridges for people (and products) to cross openly not only between the countries of the old East and West, but also among and between virtually every country and region of the world. However, illegal migrants are likely to need to be more covert in their movements. All sorts of illegal products are also less likely to move openly across such "bridges" where they would be highly visible to the authorities. Thus, there are also more hidden structures that permit movement of illegal people and products.

It is also the case that an increasing number of people, perhaps nearly everyone, is involved in, and affected by, global relations and flows and personally participate in global networks (Singh Grewal 2008) of one kind or another (networks of communication and information technology, interpersonal networks involving individuals and groups).[24] While global networks span the globe (e.g. cables under the oceans that permit transoceanic communication [Yuan 2006: A1]), or at least much of it, there are other types of networks including transnational (those that pass through the boundaries of nation-states [Portes 2001b: 181–93]), international (those that involve two or more nation-states), national (those that are bounded by the nation-state), and local (those that exist at the sub-national level) (Mann 2007: 472–96). Networks can expedite the flow of innumerable things, but they are perhaps best-suited to the flow of information (Connell and Crawford 2005: 5–26). People involved in networks can communicate all sorts of information to one another in various ways – telephone calls, snail mail, e-mail, blogs, social networking web sites, and so on. These networks have revolutionized and greatly expanded the global flow of information. As with all other structures, such networks can be blocked in various ways (e.g., the "Great Firewall").

All sorts of networks have been made possible by the Internet. The Internet can be seen as being of enormous importance in allowing information of various sorts

to flow in innumerable directions. One important example involves the formation of the networks that became and constitute the alter-globalization movement (see Chapter 16). It (as well as its various political actions, most notably the anti-WTO [World Trade Organization] protests in Seattle in 1999 [Smith 2001: 1–20]), like much else in the world today (e.g. Barack Obama's successful 2008 presidential campaign), was made possible by the Internet:

> By significantly enhancing the speed, flexibility, and global reach of information *flows*, allowing for communication at a distance in real time, digital *networks* provide the technological infrastructure for the emergence of contemporary network-based social forms . . . allowing communities to sustain interactions across vast distances. . . . Using the Internet as technological architecture, such movements operate at local, regional, and global levels. . . . (Juris 2008: 353–4)

Finally, it is not only individuals who are increasingly involved in networks. An increasing number of social structures (e.g. states, cities, law) and social institutions (the family, religion, sport) are interconnected[25] on a global basis and these, too, enable and enhance global flows. For example, the international banking system has an infrastructure that facilitates the global movement of funds among a network of banks. Included in that infrastructure are IBANs ([International Bank Account Numbers]), rules, norms, and procedures on how such money transfers are to occur, and a highly sophisticated technical language that allows those in the business to communicate with one another wherever they are in the world. Another example involves global (Sassen 1991) and world cities (Marcuse and van Kempen 2000) (see Chapter 14) that are increasingly interconnected with one another directly rather than through the nation-states in which they happen to exist. The financial markets of the world cities of New York, London, and Tokyo are tightly linked with the result that all sorts of financial products flow among them and at lightning speed. More generally, in this context, we can talk in terms of the "global economy's connectedness" (Altman 2007: 255). To take another example, there are (or were) seven local, interconnected AIDS INGOs (International Non-Governmental Organizations) and they played a key role in, among other things, improving the treatment of the disease in India (Misra 2008: 433–67). The Indian NGO (Non-Governmental Organization), like others, is, in turn, "operated in a globally and nationally situated web of governmental and extra governmental agencies" (Misra 2008: 441). Once again, however, barriers are erected to limit such interconnections (e.g. the unwillingness of at least some countries to acknowledge AIDS, or at least the full extent of the disease and of its consequences).

HEAVY STRUCTURES AS BARRIERS TO FLOWS

While there is no question that the world is increasingly characterized by greater liquidity, increased flows, as well as various structures that expedite those flows, we also need to recognize that there are limits and barriers to those flows. The world

is not just in process, there are also many material structures (trade agreements, regulatory agencies, borders, customs barriers, standards, and so on) in existence. As Inda and Rosaldo (2008b: 31) argue: "Material infrastructures do not only promote mobility. . . . They also hinder and block it." Any thoroughgoing account of globalization needs to look at *both* flows and structures and, in terms of the latter, the ways in which they *both* produce and enhance flows as well as alter and even block them. In other words, there is interplay between flows and structures, especially between flows and the structures that are created in an attempt to inhibit or to stop them.[26] As Shamir (2005: 197–217) puts it, globalization is an epoch of increased openness *and* "simultaneously an era of growing restrictions on movement." Borders, of course, are major points at which movement is blocked. There are many examples of this including the toughening of border controls in France (and elsewhere in Europe) because of growing hostility to refugees (Fassin 2008: 212–34).

There are challenges to the idea that all there is to globalization is flows and fluidity (Tsing 2000: 327–60). In examining global flows (some of which have been anticipated above), we also need to consider those agents who "carve" the channels through which things flow, those who alter those channels over time, national and regional units that create and battle over flows, and coalitions of claimants for control over channels.

A focus on the above kinds of agents and structures, rather than flows, promises a more critical orientation to globalization in terms of the structures themselves, as well as in terms of who creates the structures through which things flow as well as who does and does not control and profit from them.

The idea of flows is criticized for other reasons, as well. For example, there is a kind of timelessness to the idea of flows[27] and, as a result, it implies that they are likely to continue well into future and there is little or nothing that could be done to stop them. This implies that everyone – scientists and businesspeople who profit from flows, as well as those at the margins of those flows and perhaps even those hurt by them – are all swept up in the same processes.[28] The focus on flows tends to communicate a kind of enthusiasm for them and the erroneous idea that virtually everyone benefits from flows of all types.

Also important in this context is what has been called "awkward connections" (Inda and Rosaldo 2008b: 31). While the idea of global flows and fluids communicates a sense of total and uniform connectedness, we know that this is simply not the case and that in many places in the world, especially those that are less developed, there are awkward connections (e.g. being restricted to slow and unreliable dial-up connections on the Internet), as well as no connections at all (no Internet service of any kind). To take another example, while the investment banks of Wall Street (at least those that continue to exist in the wake of the "Great Recession"[29]) purport to be global, in fact they focus on the main markets (New York, London, and Tokyo) and have little more than token presences in many other places in the world (Ho 2008: 137–64). While the global world is increasingly interconnected, we cannot lose sight of the fact that there remain, and are likely to remain, many points of weak, awkward, or even absent interconnectedness.

A similar idea is "frictions," or the "awkward, unequal, unstable . . . interconnection across difference" (Lowenhaupt Tsing 2005: 4). The main idea is that the global flows that create interconnections do *not* move about smoothly; they do not move about without creating friction. Friction gets in the way of the smooth operation of global flows.[30] However, friction not only slows flows down, it can also serve to keep them moving and even speed them up. Highways can have this double-edged quality by both limiting where people and vehicles can go while at the same time making movement "easier and more efficient" (Lowenhaupt Tsing 2005: 6). More generally, "global connections [are] made, and muddied, in friction" (Lowenhaupt Tsing 2005: 272). The key point in this context is that flows themselves produce friction that can slow or even stop global flows: "without even trying friction gets in the way of the smooth operation of global power. Difference can disrupt, causing everyday malfunctions as well as unexpected cataclysms. Friction refuses the lie that global power operates as a well-oiled machine. Furthermore, difference sometimes inspires insurrection. Friction can be the fly in the elephant's nose" (Lowenhaupt Tsing 2005: 6). A prime example of this today is the many frictions being produced in many parts of the world by large numbers of legal and illegal immigrants (e.g. the millions of migrants from Zimbabwe who have fled to South Africa eliciting violent reactions from South Africans who feel threatened by, and resent, them) (*Economist* 2008: May 22).

As has already been mentioned, the most important and most obvious barriers to global flows are those constructed by nation-states. There are borders, gates, guards, passport controls, customs agents, health inspectors, and so on, in most countries in the world. (The great exception is the countries that are part of the European Union [EU] where barriers to movement among and between member countries have been greatly reduced, if not eliminated. The EU is a kind of structure that allows people and products to move much more freely and much more quickly. At the same time, it serves to reduce the need to use hidden channels since there is far less need to conceal what is moving among and between EU countries.) Although many people (illegal immigrants) and things (contraband goods) do get through those barriers, some of them are successfully blocked or impeded by the barriers. However, it is far more difficult to erect barriers against many newer phenomena, especially the non-material phenomena associated with cell phones and the Internet.

Specific examples of barriers created by the nation-state involve blocking economic transactions that it regards as not in the national interest. For example, in 2006 the US government blocked a deal in which a Dubai company was to purchase an American company involved in the business of running America's ports (*Economist* 2006: March 10). The government felt that such ownership would be a threat to national security since foreign nationals, perhaps enemies, could acquire information that would allow terrorists easy entrée to the ports. In another example, in early 2008 the US government blocked an effort by a Chinese company to purchase (in conjunction with an American private equity firm) an American company (3Com) that, among other things, manufactured software that prevents hacking into military computers (Weisman 2008: C1–C4).

However, many of the barriers created by nation-states that we assume are, or can be, successful do not in fact deal with the flows they are supposed to stem. It

remains to be seen whether the new fence between Mexico and the US can reduce the flow of illegal immigrants to the US. Similarly, it is not clear that the wall between Israel and the West Bank will stop the flow of terrorists into Israel if (when?) hostilities in the Middle East flare up yet again.

More generally, in a study of the confluence of legal and illegal global imports, Nordstrom found that the global flow of illegal goods is almost impossible to stop. For one thing, the illegal is often shipped with, or even part of, the legal so that stopping one means stopping the other. For another, the global economy would grind to a halt if there really were serious efforts to, for example, search all cargo entering every country in the world. Even holding "up one line of trucks, one train, one ship" ripples through the global supply chain (Nordstrom 2007: 196). Nordstrom estimates the "most sophisticated ports in the world can inspect a maximum of only 5 percent of the cargo passing through customs," but even inspecting that much cargo would tax any port and its authorities beyond the limit of its capacities. Global economic gridlock would occur if 5 percent of cargo was really inspected; a total global economic meltdown would occur if all cargo was inspected.

Furthermore, the nature of modern shipping, especially containerization, makes inspection much more difficult. It is impossible to really know what is in every container and it is possible to inspect only a token number of them. Many containers are intentionally or unintentionally mislabeled. Illegal contraband often travels with, and is difficult to separate from, that which is legal. Furthermore, what is legal and what is illegal is not always clear cut. For example, pharmaceuticals are shipped around the world, but which shipments are legal and which are not (i.e., may be counterfeit) may not be clear. In addition, there is no way of controlling ships when they leave harbor. When they are out to sea they can easily and surreptitiously meet up with other ships and offload illegal goods.

Nordstrom found that not only do illegal products flow freely across borders, but so do people. She traveled by freighter to and from the US and found that "security does not exist, in fact it cannot exist, in the world today" (Nordstrom 2007: 181). She boarded the freighter and left the US without anyone checking her or stamping her passport and her arrival in Europe was no different: "When I went ashore, I couldn't even find a person to tell me how to get out of port and into town. No customs, no immigration, no one to even ignore me" (2007: 187). On both sides of the Atlantic she moved freely among the containers, some of them open, stored onshore.

There are many different kinds of organizations that, while they may expedite flows for some, create all sorts of barriers for others. Nation-states are, in fact, one such organization and they (generally) work to the advantage of their own citizens (and their flows as well as the flows of things important to them) in many different ways while creating many roadblocks for those from other countries. For example, nation-states create protectionist (Reuveny and Thompson 2001: 229–49) tariff systems that help their own farms, corporations, and so on to succeed by making the products of their foreign competitors more expensive. That is, the tariffs help the flow of products from a nation-state's own farms and manufacturers while inhibiting the flow into the country from its foreign competition. Another example

is found in the two-tier system of passport control at international airports where natives usually pass through quickly and easily while foreigners often wait on long lines. Part of the reason for this difference is that there are generally fewer officials, at least proportionally, for visitors than natives and visitors are often asked far more questions before they are allowed to enter.

Corporate organizations, say a multinational corporation like Toyota, are devoted to optimizing the flow of their automobiles to all possible markets throughout the world. They also seek to compete with and out-perform other multi-national corporations in the automobile business. If they are successful, and Toyota has been extremely successful (it has supplanted General Motors as the world's largest auto-mobile manufacturer), the flow of automobiles from those corporations is greatly reduced, further advantaging Toyota.

Labor unions are also organizations devoted to the flow of some things while working against the flow of others (Bronfenbrenner 2007). Unions often oppose, for example, the flow of illegal immigrants because they are likely to work for lower pay and fewer (if any) benefits (e.g. health insurance) than indigenous, unionized workers. Similarly, they oppose the flow of goods produced in non-union shops in other countries (and their own) since the success of the latter would adversely affect the shops that are unionized and that, in turn, would hurt the union and its members.

While organizations of many types, including nation-states, corporations, and labor unions, serve as structures that can operate against global flows, the fact is that there are signs that many organizations are changing and are themselves becoming more fluid and increasingly open.

One of the roots of this change is open-sourcing and the Internet. The best-known example of open-sourcing is Linux, a free computer-operating system. Anyone in the world with the needed skills can make changes in, and contributions to, it. (The best-known operating systems are produced by Microsoft [Windows and now Vista]. They cost a great deal and are closed in that only those who work for the company can, at least legally, work on and modify them.) In recent years a traditional closed organization – IBM – has embraced not only the Linux system, but opened up more and more of its own operations to outside inputs. The Internet has a number of open systems associated with what is known as Web 2.0 (Beer and Burrows 2007). One example is the free online dictionary Wikipedia (or wikis more generally[31]) where again (virtually) anyone, anywhere in the world, can contribute to the definition of terms on it. The contrast here is the traditional (and costly) diction-aries (e.g. *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*) and encyclopedias written by selected experts (*Encyclopedia Britannica*) and closed to contributions from anyone else.

However, in spite of this new openness, most organizations and systems remain closed to various flows. This usually benefits (often economically) those in the system and disadvantages those outside the organization. Even with the new open systems, there are structural realities that help some and hinder others. For example, to con-tribute to Linux or Wikipedia one must have a computer, computer expertise, and access to the Internet (especially high-speed access). Clearly, those without economic advantages – in the lower classes in developed countries or who live in the less devel-oped countries of the South (i.e., those on the other side of the "digital divide")

– do not have any, many, or all, of those things. As a result, they are unable to contribute to them or to gain from them to the same degree as those in more privileged positions or areas.

SUBTLER STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

This brings us to a series of other structural barriers that also serve to contradict the idea of total global fluidity. These structures are less blatant, more subtle, than the kinds of structures discussed above, but in many ways more powerful and more important from a social point of view. Included here are a variety of structures that serve to differentiate and to subordinate on the basis of social class, *race*, ethnicity, gender (see Chapters 14 and 15), and *region of the world* (North–South). In fact, these phenomena tend to be interrelated. Thus in the disadvantaged South, one is more likely to find large numbers of poor people in the lower social classes, disadvantaged racial and ethnic minorities, and women who are discriminated against on the basis of gender (Moghadam 2007: 135–51). As a result, various efforts by the North to subordinate the South serve to further disadvantage people there in all of those categories. Furthermore, these categories overlap – a black female who is a member of the Ibo tribe in Africa is likely to be in a lower social class. (And there is a similar overlap among those who are advantaged – for example, white, upper-class, male Anglo-Saxons in Europe and North America.) Thus, the combination of these disadvantaged statuses ("intersectionality" [Hill Collins 2000]) has a disastrous effect on those with these disesteemed characteristics.

Those who occupy superordinate positions in these hierarchies tend to erect structures that halt or slow various flows. These restrictions are designed to work to their advantage and to the disadvantage of others. Good examples involve the operations of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO), and World Bank (see Chapter 7), which, for example, can serve to restrict flows of badly needed funds into Southern nations unless, for example, those nations engage in restructuring and austerity programs that are designed to slow down their economies (at least in the short run). Such austerity and restructuring programs often involve insistence that welfare programs be cut back or eliminated and the result is that the most disadvantaged members of Southern countries – racial and ethnic minorities, women, those in the lower classes – are hurt the most by these programs.

Those in superordinate positions also encourage certain kinds of flows that work to their advantage (and to the disadvantage of subordinates). For example, the so-called "brain drain" (Landler 2007a: A10) (see Chapter 11) is a global phenomenon and it most often takes the form of highly trained people leaving the South and moving to the North. Those in the North actively seek out skilled people in the South and expedite their movement to the North. At the other end of the spectrum, also encouraged, although less these days, is the movement of unskilled workers to the North to occupy poorly paid menial positions such as farm, or household, worker.

It is also the case that the prototypical Northern male upper-class white Anglo-Saxon Protestant has, in the contemporary world, acquired a great deal of fluidity

and "lightness" in the form of mobility, and thus is able to move about the globe quite readily and easily. In contrast, the Southern female, lower-class, black, Ibo is far less fluid, much "heavier," and therefore has far less capacity to move about the globe.

Zygmunt Bauman (1998: esp. Ch. 4) has illuminated this difference with his conceptual distinction between tourists and vagabonds (for an application of these ideas, see Chapter 11). The Northern prototype would be **tourists** who move about the world because they *want to* (and because they are "light"), whereas the Southern prototype would be ("heavy") **vagabonds** who, if they are able to move at all, are likely to do so because they are compelled to move (e.g. forced to migrate to escape poverty [and to find work], by war, because of discrimination, and the like). Moving about the world voluntarily as a tourist is a much more pleasant and rewarding experience than being forced to move about as a vagabond. Further complicating matters for vagabonds is the fact that they are often forced to move many different times. For example, illegal Mexican immigrants in the US (estimated at 11 million people) are often forced to change jobs and homes frequently, and may also be forced to return to Mexico, perhaps several times (Archibold 2008: A12). Tourists, on the other hand, are forced to do little if anything – they go just about where they want, when they please, and they stay pretty much as long as their visas (and pocketbooks) permit.

The vagabonds tend to be those who have one or more (and often all) of the disesteemed statuses mentioned above – they are more likely to be poor, black, a member of a maligned ethnic group, female, and from the South. The tourists, on the other hand, tend to be well-to-do, white, members of a high-status ethnic group, males, and from the North. Of course, there are many exceptions to this – there are tourists from the South and vagabonds from the North – but the general point about the relationship between esteemed/disesteemed characteristics and tourists/vagabonds holds up quite well.

While the advantages of those in the North over those in the South remain, the South has been increasingly successful, at least in some instances, at gaining advantages by better controlling flows into and out of that part of the world. For example, Middle Eastern oil used to be largely controlled by Northern corporations (e.g. Shell) which kept the price low and made sure that the more developed North was adequately supplied with comparatively inexpensive oil. This adversely affected oil-producing countries which did not get the price they deserved and furthermore a large proportion of the profits went to the Northern corporations and *not* the Middle Eastern countries from which the oil came. Now, of course, those countries (through OPEC, see Chapter 7) control the flow of oil and are profiting enormously from it.

In the end, then, globalization involves *flows* – of liquids, gases and so on – *and* a wide range of **structures** that not only expedite, but also impede, and even halt, those flows.

STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

Thus far we have conceptualized globalization using a number of very recent ideas – solids-liquids-flows, heavy-light-weightless. However, it is also the case that many

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Tourists: People who move about the world because they *want to*; because they are "light."

Vagabonds: Those likely to move because they are forced to.

Structures: Encompassing sets of processes that may either impede or block flows or serve to expedite and channel them.

of these newer ideas are closely related to classic ideas and, in fact, those classic ideas are also useful in illuminating globalization. One of the oldest pairs of ideas in the social sciences, and one that continues to inform them, is *structure* and *process*. (It is important to note that these structures and processes can take various forms – e.g. economic, political, religious, cultural, and so on.) These ideas were explicit in the work of some early social theorists (especially Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer), were important to other social thinkers over the years (e.g. Talcott Parsons, Norbert Elias), and continue to be of importance (Ritzer 2008b).

There was long a tendency among sociologists to focus on structure rather than process.[32] However, a focus on static structures began to lose favor in mid-twentieth-century social theory. One response was the development of theories that focused on process instead of structure. The best-known example of this is the "process sociology" of Norbert Elias (1939/1994). Other theories arose in the 1980s that sought to deal more adequately with *both* structure and change, most notably structuration theory associated with Anthony Giddens (1984) and Pierre Bourdieu (1977).

The ideas of structure and process relate well to globalization, as well as to the variety of more contemporary ideas discussed above. However, following Elias, in thinking about globalization, it is important that we privilege process over structure (just as we have privileged flows over barriers). Globalization is, above all else, a process, or better a very large number of interrelated processes. Thinking about globalization in terms of processes (the fluids, gases, flows, etc. discussed above) gives it the kind of dynamism that we all know it has and that offers profound insights into it and the ways in which it works.

Yet, we must not ignore the role of structures (e.g. nation-states, multi-national corporations) in globalization. First, it is often structures that generate globalization processes. Second, structures often emerge out of the process of globalization (e.g. the networks discussed above). Third, as the process of globalization proceeds, structures are often created or emerge to expedite globalization. And finally there are those structures that are created to slow, divert, or even stop the process of globalization.[33]

On the one hand, then, globalization is perhaps best defined by a variety of social processes, some of them new and some of them in existence for quite some time, albeit changed and perhaps accelerated in the contemporary era of globalization. These social processes (which can take a wide variety of forms – economic, political, cultural, religious, etc.) will occupy center stage throughout the following discussion of globalization.

However, it is also possible to identify and focus on important new structures (these, like social processes, can take a wide range of forms) that are an integral part of globalization.

ON THE INCREASING UBIQUITY OF GLOBAL FLOWS (AND PROCESSES) AND STRUCTURES

Globalization (especially global flows and structures) is increasingly ubiquitous (Boli and Petrova 2007: 103–24). Indeed, our everyday lives have been profoundly affected by this process.

Global flows and structures have become an inescapable part of our *everyday experience*. They are not just flows and structures that are "out there" affecting the world as a whole. It is not just the largest social structures and processes that are affected, but also the most personal and intimate parts of our everyday lives, even our consciousness (Robertson 1992). Furthermore, these flows and structures are not seen by most as being imposed on them against their wills, but rather they are seen as legitimate by most and are even sought out by them. As a result, they are more welcomed than they are seen and treated as unwelcome impositions. Of course, the disadvantaged in the world are the ones who are not likely to welcome global flows and structures. It is the case that one hears increasingly loud voices raised in the North, and especially in the South, against global flows and structures and the problems caused by them. This is true of the poor in the North (and their representatives) and especially of those who live in the global South (the President of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, is an especially vocal spokesperson for their perspective and grievances). Nevertheless, even the protests and opposition in the North and South add to the sense of the ubiquity of global flows and structures and their impact on daily life.

Global flows and structures are increasingly *taken-for-granted* aspects of the social world. That is, they no longer seem to most to be exotic phenomena or even open to question, doubt, or debate. This is quite remarkable since the ideas of global flows and structures, as well as globalization in general, have only been in general usage since about 1990. Global flows and structures no longer affect mainly societal elites; they have descended to the lowest reaches of society. That is not to say that the latter have benefited equally, or even at all, from the global flows and structures; they may even have been adversely affected by them, but they *have* been affected by them.

The above is, in effect, a more micro-perspective on global flows and structures. However, we must not forget the more macro-level aspects of the ubiquity of globalization. There is, for example, the globalization of *social entities*, or social structures, especially cultural and organizational forms including the state and the multinational corporation. Then there is the globalization of civil society (see Chapter 6), and of those social institutions (e.g. Intergovernmental Organizations [IGOs] and International Non-Governmental Organizations [INGOs]) that occupy a position between the state and the market and people in society. Finally, there is the globalization of the *transcendental*, including the planet (in terms of climate, hydrosphere, species migration, and diseases without borders), cosmologies (theories of everything), and religion (e.g. ecumenism, including the World Council of Churches).

THINKING ABOUT GLOBAL FLOWS AND STRUCTURES

Several concepts are useful for thinking about globalization in general, especially the global flows and processes of focal concern here (Held et al. 1999).

1. How *extensive* are the global flows, relations, networks, interconnections? Obviously, such phenomena have existed for centuries, if not millennia, but what

is unique today is how much *more* extensive they have become. They now cover a much greater portion of the globe, involve many more global processes, and will likely grow even more extensive in the future.

2. How *intensive* are the global flows, relations, networks, interconnections, and so on? While these phenomena may, in the past, have lacked much intensity and, as a result, been more epiphenomenal, they are now much more central and important. This is due, at least in part, to the increasingly frenzied activity associated with these processes, as well as to the similarly intense attention to, and concern about, them. For example, many people today are virtually addicted to such things as e-mail to friends throughout the world and to social networking web sites that include participants from around the globe.

3. What is the *velocity* of global flows, relations, networks, interconnections, and so on? It is not just their extensity and the intensity that matters, but also the speed at which they move. It is clear that globalization brings with it, and is characterized by, increasingly rapid movement of virtually everything. Velocity is closely related to many of the concepts discussed above (and thereby closely related to globalization) including liquidity, gaseousness, lightness, and weightlessness. Increases in any and all of these characteristics tend to lead to movement around the globe at greater and greater speed.

4. What is the *impact propensity* of global flows, relations, networks, interconnections, and so on? Again, while these processes may have had little likelihood of having a deep and widespread impact in the past, the increasing propensity to have such effects is characteristic of globalization. Think, for example, of the huge global impact of September 11th because of the fact that it was known about, and even viewed, simultaneously throughout much of the world.

This same set of ideas can – and should – also be used to think about the various structures that have emerged to both expedite and impede globalization:

1. How *extensive* are the structures that expedite and impede globalization? It is clear that the structures designed to expedite globalization (for example, export-processing zones, see Chapter 5) are far more extensive than they once were and it is likely that they will grow even more extensive in the future. Structures designed to impede globalization (e.g. tariffs, customs restrictions, border controls, etc.) are undergoing something of a renaissance today, especially in light of the Great Recession.

2. How *intensive* are the efforts to construct or destroy, expand, or contract structures that expedite and impede globalization? At the moment, for example, efforts to further lower tariff barriers globally seem to have lost intensity, whereas efforts to create new barriers (e.g. that fence between the US and Mexico) seem to be at a fever pitch.

3. What is the *velocity* of the efforts to construct structures that expedite and impede globalization? The construction of the US–Mexico fence, for example, is moving

along at a rapid pace and it is likely to be completed before the end of 2009 (Blumenthal 2000: 12).

4.   What is the *impact propensity* of the efforts to construct structures that expedite and impede globalization? Specifically, what is the impact of such structures on global flows, relations, networks, interconnections, and so on? In terms of that fence between the US and Mexico it is clearly hoped, at least by the American government, that illegal immigration from and through Mexico will be greatly reduced. However, some in the US question its potential impact. The mayor of a border town in Texas said: "You can go over, under and around a fence . . . and it [the fence] can't make an apprehension" (Blumenthal 2000: 12).

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Globalization is a transplanetary process or set of processes involving increasing liquidity and the growing multi-directional flows of people, objects, places, and information, as well as the structures they encounter and create that are barriers to, or expedite, those flows.

Although globalization and transnationalism are often used synonymously, the latter is a more limited process which refers largely to interconnections across two, or more, national borders. The sheer magnitude, diversity, and complexity of the process of globalization today leads to the conceptualization of the current era as the "global age." Globalization can be analyzed through conceptual metaphors such as solids, liquids, gases, flows, structures, heavy, light, and weightless.

Prior to the "global age," people, things, information, places, and objects tended to harden over time. Thus their common attribute was "solidity," the characteristic of being limited to one place. Solidity also refers to the persistence of barriers that prevented free movement of people, information, and objects in that era. Although solidity persists, it is "fluidity" that is more characteristic of the "global age."

Over the last few decades, that which once seemed solid has tended to "melt" and become increasingly mobile or "liquid." A range of technological developments in transportation and communication have enabled far greater global movement of what was previously solid. The difficulties posed by the fact that many things and people retain some solidity can now also be dealt with more readily.

As this process of increased mobility continues, liquids tend to turn into gases. This implies additional attributes of being light and a capacity to flow even faster and with greater ease. The flow of information in the global age closely approximates this characteristic of gaseousness. The new liquids and gases that are being created have both constructive as well as destructive effects.

Bauman's ideas on liquidity inform this book's orientation to globalization. Liquid phenomena do not easily, or for long, hold their shape. They are not fixed in either space or time. Most importantly, liquids tend to dissolve obstacles in their path.

A closely related concept is the idea of "flows." Globalization is increasingly characterized by flows of liquid phenomena including people, objects, decisions, information, and places. Many global flows are interconnected – they do not occur in isolation. Others might be multi-directional flows – all sorts of things flow in every conceivable direction among all points in the world. Conflicting flows add another layer of complexity to the analysis of global processes. Finally, reverse flows often have a boomerang effect. That is, they flow back to their source and often have a negative effect on it.

In spite of greater liquidity and ever-more flows of various types, the world is still characterized by great inequality. Flows do not necessarily go everywhere. Even when they do, they affect different places with varying degrees of intensity. Using another metaphor, it could be argued that globalization "hops" from one locale to another, rather than flowing evenly through all locales. While globalization flows more easily through the developed world, it bypasses many locales in the less developed world.

Globalization can also be analyzed through metaphors of heavy, light, and weightless. Historically, there has been movement from that which is heavy to that which is light and most recently to that which approaches weightlessness. Pre-industrial and industrial societies were "heavy," characterized by that which is difficult to move. Advances in transportation and technology made goods, people, and places lighter. We are currently in an era defined not only by lightness but also increasingly by weightlessness.

This does not imply that the world is flat. Some structures continue to be important in impeding the movement of that which is liquid, light, or weightless. Borders between nation-states and the "digital divide" are important examples of such barriers.

Other heavy structures expedite flows. "Routes" or "paths" serve to both expedite flows along their length as well as to limit flows that occur outside their confines. There are also formal or informal bridges that expedite flows. More concealed structures facilitate the illegal movement of people and products. An increasing number of people also participate in global networks, involving networks of communication and information technology, as well as interpersonal networks. Further, an increasing number of social structures (states, cities, law) and social institutions (the family, religion, sport) are interconnected through networks and thus enable global flows.

The idea of flows communicates the sense that virtually everyone benefits from them. Concepts such as awkward connections (points of weak or no connection) and frictions (difficult, unequal, and unstable connections) facilitate a more nuanced analysis showing that some benefit little from global flows.

Nation-states as well as other organizations such as corporations and labor unions may expedite flows for some while creating barriers for others. For instance, protectionist tariff systems aid the flow of products from a nation-state's own farms and manufacturers, while inhibiting similar flows from foreign competitors.

There also exist subtler structural barriers which are in many ways more powerful than the material structures such as national borders. These structures serve to

differentiate and subordinate on the basis of social class, race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, and region of the world. These phenomena often tend to be interrelated. Those who occupy superordinate positions in these hierarchies tend to erect structures in order to impede flows that are not beneficial to them. They also encourage flows that work to their advantage.

Globalization can also be conceptualized through structures and processes. This serves to highlight the dynamism of the globalization process as well as the interconnectedness between structures and processes. Global flows and structures have now become ubiquitous in everyday experience; they have come to be taken-for-granted. There has also been a generalization of global flows and structures, such that their impact spreads across all levels of society. Four directions of enquiry can be pursued in the analysis of structures and flows – extensiveness, intensiveness, velocity, and impact propensity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Examine the dual role of structures as barriers to, and facilitators of, global flows. Are subtler structural barriers more effective than material barriers?

2. What is the significance of networks in the current age of globalization? Is it possible for networks to act as deterrents or barriers to flows?

3. Do liquids dissolve structures blocking their path, or do they merely circumnavigate them?

4. Discuss the impact of increased liquidity and gaseousness on hierarchical social structures.

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NOTES ••

1 The French call this *mondialization*. See, for example, Ortiz (2006: 401–3). However, as is clear from his book's title, Jean-Luc Nancy (2007) distinguishes between mondialization, defined as the open creation of the world, and globalization which is seen as a more closed and integrated process.

2 Wolf (2005: ix) is slightly more circumscribed in his judgment saying that globalization "is the great event of our time."

3 The term "social" here and elsewhere in his book is used very broadly to encompass social process in various sectors – political, economic, social, etc.

4 It should be noted that while the concept of globalization, if not this particular definition, is now very familiar to all of us, it is actually of very recent vintage. Chanda (2007: 246) reviewed an electronic database that archives 8,000 sources throughout the world (newspapers, magazines, reports). He does not find a reference to globalization until 1979 and then only in an obscure European administrative document. By 1981 there are still only two mentions of the term globalization, but then such references take off reaching over 57,000 in 2001. Interestingly the number drops off after that, but it has begun to rise once again. It seems likely that the number of references to globalization will soon exceed that of the previous peak in 2001.

5 This definition requires several amplifications or clarifications. First, the idea that globalization is transplanetary is derived from Scholte (2005). Second, while globalization is transplanetary, little traverses the entire planet. The latter is the outer limit of globalization, but it is rarely approached. Third, the definition as a whole seems to imply a "grand narrative" of increasing globalization, but it is recognized that globalization occurred on a far more limited scale at earlier points in history (see Chapter 2) and that the changes described here are often uneven and that in some cases (e.g. in the case of immigrants, see below) there was greater liquidity, things flowed more easily, in earlier epochs. Fourth, it should be pointed out that *not* all of the phenomena mentioned in this definition are equally liquid or flow to the same degree. Clearly, communication is the most liquid and flows the most easily; places and people are far less liquid and their flow is much more limited. However, places are much more likely now than in the past to flow around the world as represented by the global presence of many fast food restaurants and other chains. In some senses, people (e.g. as immigrants) moved more easily in the late 19th and early 20th century when nation-states had far fewer restrictions on immigration than they do today (but those restrictions have increased greatly recently). However, *overall* people today are more liquid and flow more easily globally as, for example, tourists, business travelers, and the like, and even as immigrants, at least in some senses (e.g. the flow is much more multi-directional than it was in that earlier epoch). It is even more the case that social relationships are more liquid, and flow more easily, than they did in the past. Fifth, Tomlinson (2007: 352) offers a definition of globalization that has much of the flavor of the perspective being offered here: "complex, accelerating, integrating *process* of global connectivity . . . rapidly developing and ever-densening *network* of *interconnections* and interdependencies that characterize material, social, economic and cultural life in the modern world"; another definition emphasizing flows, interconnectedness and also barriers can be found in Yergin and Stanislaw (1998: 383).

6 Immigrants can be thought of as "transnational" when they are involved in a variety of relationships (e.g. social, economic, political) that cut across the nations of settlement and origin creating a new transnational field (Basch, Schiller, and Blanc-Szanton 1994.). While there are certainly many immigrants who fit into this category and their number is likely growing, there has been a tendency to overestimate their number and to conflate transmigrants and immigrants. Thus, Portes (2001a: 183) concludes: "It is more useful to conceptualize transnationalism as *one* form of economic, political and cultural adaptation that co-exists with other, more traditional forms [e.g. assimilation]." He usefully limits the idea of transnational activities to "those initiated and sustained by non-institutional actors, be they organized groups or networks of individuals across national borders. Many of these activities are informal, that is they take place outside the pale of state regulation and control. . . . they represent goal-oriented initiatives that require coordination across national borders by members of civil society. These activities are undertaken on their own behalf, rather than on behalf of the state or corporate bodies" (Portes 2001a: 186).

7 As globalization accelerates, ever greater portions of the planet will be encompassed by it.

8   Others include, for example, the oceans in terms of the development of the trans-Pacific cable.

9   For other metaphors applied to globalization, see Kornprobst et al. (2008).

10   This reflects the tensions that always exist in globalization since the Greeks resent this theft. This resentment has grown recently with the building of a new Acropolis Museum in Athens (part of it opened in 2008) which makes a point of highlighting the missing portions of the Parthenon.

11   As we will see, capitalism is very much implicated in globalization, but as we will also see throughout this book, there is much, much more to globalization than capitalism or economics more generally.

12   A similar point of view is offered by the popular journalist Thomas Friedman with his notion "fluid networks" which operate in a largely unimpeded manner across what he sees as an increasingly "flat world"; for more on Friedman's thinking, and a critique of the idea of a flat world, see Chapter 5.

13   For a rebuttal to this argument, see Weiss (1998).

14   In addition to "flow" Chanda (2007) uses terms like "flowing," "water," "ripples," and "waves" in discussing globalization. "Tracking Global Flows" is the title of Inda and Rosaldo's (2008b) Introduction to an anthology of work in anthropology on globalization, and flows is the organizing principle of that book. The five substantive sections of that book deal with the flow of capital, people, commodities, the media, and ideologies. Paul Gilroy (1993: 190) often uses images of ships and sea voyages in his discussion of global "flows." See also Ong (2006a: 499–505).

15   This is in line with one of the two approaches outlined by Martin, Metzger, and Pierre (2006: 499–521). That is, that which is truly global is not simply similar changes in many countries.

16   John Urry (2009, forthcoming) sees this as part of the fact that everything these days seems to be on the move and, as a result, we need a new "mobilities" theory to deal with that reality.

17   Although, as we will see, especially in Chapter 14, great global inequality, especially in this case the "digital divide," prevents large portions of the world from receiving many of these flows.

18   Although it is not likely, contrary to US propaganda, that al-Qaeda had much of a role, if any, in Iraq.

19   On the North–South distinction, see, for example, Arrighi, Silver, and Brewer (2007: 320–34); Persaud (2007: 891–6).

20   George Soros (2000: xix) argues, for example, that global capitalism has "produced a very uneven playing field."

21   For a similar point of view, see Shamir (2005: 197–217).

22   While this discussion will focus on structures, it is clear that structures are created, run, and staffed by human agents who direct their operations. This is in line with the general tendency in social theory to be concerned with the relationship between structure and agency. See Ritzer (2008b: 394–420).

23   In fact, such routes, "trade routes," have existed for centuries (e.g. the Silk Road of the thirteenth century) and continue to exist, although they have been greatly affected and modified by technological advances of all sorts. See Ciolek (2007: 1180–4).

24   Castells (2000); Holton (2007: 867–72); in fact, the idea of networks is so important to the study of globalization that there is even a journal called *Global Networks: A Journal of Transnational Affairs.*

25   One who emphasizes interconnections is Nayan Chanda in *Bound Together: How Traders, Preachers, Adventurers, and Warriors Shaped Globalization.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

26   Meyer and Geschiere (2003) also discuss the "dialectics of flow and closure," although their concerns are more microscopic than here in the sense that they are concerned with the closure of identity in the face of flows of people.

27   As the song from *Showboat* says, "Ol' Man River . . . He Keeps on Rollin' Along."

28   For a similar view, see Ho (2005: 68–96).

29   The global recession that began in late 2007 and rages into 2009, and likely beyond, will be called the "Great Recession" in various places throughout this book.

30   Lowenhaupt Tsing (2005: 6) addresses power here rather than flows.

31   Tapscott and Williams (2006); for a critique of this see Keen (2007).

32   For example, Talcott Parsons argued that we could not hope to understand process (and social change) until we understood structure. The dominant theoretical school in American sociology in the mid-twentieth-century – structural functionalism – was premised on the idea, clear in its name, that the focus should be on structures (as well as their functional relationship to one another). However, structural functionalism always had a theoretical competitor in the more process-oriented approach of symbolic interactionism (see Sandstorm and Kleinman [2001: 217–31]). One of the reasons that structural functionalism lost its dominant position was the fact that it never found a way to deal adequately with process (and change).

33   While we discuss structures and processes as distinct from one another here, we will later discuss (see Chapter 2) how structures can be seen as sets of processes related to other processes.