

# ECONOMIC ANTHROPOLOGY

Sponsored by a Grant TÁMOP-4.1.2-08/2/A/KMR-2009-0041

Course Material Developed by Department of Economics,  
Faculty of Social Sciences, Eötvös Loránd University Budapest (ELTE)

Department of Economics, Eötvös Loránd University Budapest

Institute of Economics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Balassi Kiadó, Budapest



Authors: Tamás Dombos, Viola Zentai

Supervised by Viola Zentai

June 2011

## Week 12

# Crossborder economic practices, globalisation

## The concept of globalisation

- Logic of social processes that transgress borders of nation states
- Process ⇔ historical period
- Period:
  - 1970s-
  - economic deregulation
  - end of bipolar world order
  - development of communication technologies
- Science and journalism: “buzzword” ⇔
  - organises popular knowledge: it mobilises
  - organises scientific debates: it polarises

# Basic question of the literature on globalization

- Guillén (2001)
  - analysing 100 social scientific articles/ books
- Can we talk of globalization?
- Does it create convergence?
  - Do political and economic institutions become more similar in different societies?
  - Does it reduced economic inequalities between countries?
- Does it undermine authority of nation states?
- Is it different from modernity?
- Does it create a global culture?

## The cunning state

- Randeria (2003, 2007)
  - discourse on the “weakness of states” part of a political strategy
  - works in two directions:
    - policy decisions explained to local constituencies by reference to weakness vis-à-vis globalisation
    - policy decisions explained to international and market actors by reference to weakness vis-à-vis local actors
  - strategy to blur political responsibility
  - case study:
    - patenting Neem-tree and Basmati rice: indigenous tree/rice,



American chemical/  
food industry corporation  
wants to patent it

- selective representation of local interest groups in the international arena

## McDonald's in the world

- Watson (1997), Caldwell (2004)
  - spread of fast food restaurant identified with American culture in different parts of the world
  - ⇔ “McDonaldisation” (Ritzer 1993): homogenisation, “cultural imperialism”
  - how people use McDonald's restaurants
  - meanings radically different from American ones, mixes with local culture: “creolisation”, “hibridisation”
  - Moscow:
    - local beliefs about healthy food
    - “nash”: “ours” emphasising local origin of food
    - change: markedly foreign  
⇒ familiarly domestic



## Narratives of globalisation

- Kalb (1999): the time of metanarratives is not over
- Neoliberal theory
  - dismantling state regulation, economic growth

- political “awakening”, democratization
- Conversationalist theory
  - experiencing cultural difference
  - self-reflection and autonomy
- Hegemony theory
  - leading role of superpowers
  - international exploitation, increase of inequalities
- “Hard cultures” theory
  - the nation-state strikes back, strengthening of local fundamentalisms

## Methodological challenges

- Social sciences: statist paradigm
- Anthropology:
  - study of closed small communities, BUT
  - importance of links and external impacts is significant
- Responses:
  - anthropology of global institutions:
    - WTO, IMF, stock exchanges
  - study of flows:
    - commodity chains, transnational migration
  - multi-sited ethnography:
    - e.g.: Ministry for Foreign Development in Western state + African small village

## Global flows

- Appadurai (1996): global “-scapes”: space for flows crossing cultural borders
- “Ethnoscape”:

- movement of people, migration
- “Technoscape”:
  - movement technology and innovations
- “Financescapes”:
  - movement of financial capital
- “Mediascape”:
  - movement of information
- “Ideascape”:
  - movement of ideologies (both state and social movements)

## Time and space compression

- Harvey (1990)
- Understanding the postmodern condition: socio-cultural processes embedded in economic processes
- Fordist economy
  - ⇒ flexible accumulation
    - outsourcing, just-in-time, part time work
- Speed-up in turnover time and consumption: fashion, instantaneity, disposability
  - growth of “image industry”
- Cultural transformation:
  - ephemerality, uncertainty, collage becomes value

## Cosmopolitanism

- Hannerz (1990)
  - world culture: plurality, not uniformity
  - socialisation based on local culture ⇔ socialisation based on intercultural mobility

- mobility not enough, intellectual openness:
  - tourist, business traveller, migrant worker: not cosmopolitan
  - curiosity, depth in other culture needed
- cosmopolitan  $\approx$  intellectual
  - culture of critical discourse: self-reflexive, problematising, analytical
- later self-criticism: lack of political dimension (2005)
  - world government, citizenship, responsibility
- critique by Friedman (2002): cosmopolitanism is class dependent
  - masses: rootedness, ethnicisation

## Creolisation

- Drummond (1980), Hannerz (1987)
- Traditional anthropological approach to culture (locality – people – culture)  $\Leftrightarrow$  cultural blending as decisive process
- Creole:
  - linguistic metaphor: recognised language that developed from the combination of other languages
  - in colonial settings: Caribbean, Brazil, Indian Ocean
  - syncretic religions
- Against cultural essentialism: anthropology of change and interrelatedness

## Global and local

- "Glocalisation"
- Friedman (1990, 1995)
  - globalisation and localisation are not contradictory, two sides



- of the same coin
- example: *la sape*: Congolese consumer movement
- Wilk (1995)
  - “a global structure of common difference”
  - local cultural differences follow certain (global) dimensions:
    - valorising certain differences, devaluing others
  - example: beauty pageants in Belize
    - different ideals of beauty, clothes and exercises
    - structure of the event is the same

## References

Appadurai, Arjun (1996) *Modernity at Large: cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Caldwell, Melissa (2004) “Domesticating the French Fry. McDonald's and Consumerism in Moscow.” In *Journal of Consumer Culture*, Volume 4, Issue 1. 5-26.

Drummond, Lee. (1980) “The Cultural Continuum: A Theory of Intersystems.” In *Man*, Volume 15. 352–374.

Friedman, Jonathan (1990) “Being in the World: Globalization and Localization.” In Mike Featherstone (ed.) *Global Culture. Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*. London: Sage. 311–328.

Friedman, Jonathan (1995) “The Political Economy of Elegance: An African Cult of Beauty.” In *Consumption and Identity*. Chur: Harwood. 167–189.

Friedman, Jonathan (2002) “From roots to routes. Tropes for trippers.” In *Anthropological Theory*, Volume 2, Issue 1. 21–36.



Guillen, Mauro F. (2001) "Is globalization civilizing, destructive or feeble? A critique of five key debates in the social science literature." In *Annual Review of Sociology*, Volume 27. 235–60.

Hannerz, Ulf (1987) "The World in Creolisation." In *Africa*, Volume 57. 546–559.

Hannerz, Ulf (1990) "Cosmopolitanism and Locals in World Culture." In *Theory, Culture and Society*, Volume 7, Issue 2–3. 237–251.

Hannerz, Ulf (2005) "Two faces of cosmopolitanism: culture and politics." In *Statsvetenskaplig Tidskrift*, Volume 107, Issue 3. 199–213.

Randeria, Shalini (2003) "Cunning States and Unaccountable International Institutions: Legal Plurality, Social Movements and Rights of Local Communities to Common Property Resources European Journal of Sociology". In *European Journal of Sociology*, Volume 44. 27–60.

Randeria, Shalini (2007) "The State of Globalization. Legal Plurality, Overlapping Sovereignties and Ambiguous Alliances between Civil Society and the Cunning State in India." In *Theory, Culture & Society*, Volume 24, Issue 1. 1–33.

Ritzer, George (1993) *The McDonaldization of society: an investigation into the changing character of contemporary social life*. Newbury Park: Pine Forge.

Watson, James L. (1997) *Golden arches east: McDonald's in East Asia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Wilk, Richard (1995) "The Local and the Global in the Political Economy of Beauty: From Miss Belize to Miss World." In *Review of International Political Economy*, Volume 2, Issue 1. 117–134.