

What Do You Mean By “Cultural Globalization”?



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WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY “CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION”?

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A lot has been said about the benefits and evils of globalization, and a lot more will be said about it, no doubt. Perhaps my skepticism about its benefits has to do with my professional and intellectual background, and I fit in this sense with the general perception that we humanists are, for the most part, critical of globalization. Anyway, I will not here get into the litany of the negative effects that economic globalization has on natural ecosystems, local cultures, and native peoples. Instead, I will like to reflect, however briefly, on the intimate, structural role that culture plays at the core of current global processes.

What Does Globalization Really Mean?

Despite the current familiarity of the term and the opulent bibliography on the topic, which grows exponentially daily, there is a great deal of confusion about the meanings of globalization. Such confusion is understandable, given the contested status of a term that finds itself at the center of complex political struggles and ideological mystifications that pit globaliphilics and hyperglobalizers against globaliphobics and skeptics, not to mention the myriad of transformationalists or third way globalists all vying for control of a global imaginary that, according to German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk, serves as a sort of negative ideology for the cynical postmodern times in which we live. Why are there so many synonyms for *globalization* today? Is “transnational” equivalent to “international” or “multinational”? Is it adequate to speak of “global citizens,” “global democracy,” and “global humanism” the same way we speak of “global capitalism”? Is globalization a synonym for “postmodernity,” “New World Order,” “the information age,” “late capitalism,” a multiplicity of “scapes,” or the ultimate “Empire”?

Used and abused in any imaginable circumstance and lacking any precise definition, the term has become a cliché, a shibboleth that means everything and nothing; an empty and ubiquitous buzzword that fills the pages of newspapers, economic journals, and fashion magazines, but also academic papers and conferences. It is a trendy password that lets you in the “cool” circles of wine-and-cheese connoisseurs when dropped at the right time. A cliché, a shibboleth, a password, it has become, in that sense, truly a *zeitgeist*, a word that captures, for some people, the spirit of the time, and, for others, the dreams (or nightmares) of the times.

There is no question, therefore, that the term globalization is an *ideologeme*, an empty signifier at the center of overt (or covert) and ferocious ideological, epistemological and political struggles that could be filled with multiple, conflicting meanings, depending on who is speaking to whom, and in what circumstances. This is so because whoever is able to establish a consensual, accepted meaning of the term is able to shape a definite interpretation, a certain understanding of the economic, social, political, and cultural processes involved.

The question is: could the notion of globalization go beyond its ideological underpinnings? Could it be a truly hermeneutic category, a tool for knowledge? What does globalization name? Is it a synonym for globalism? And what about globality? Is globalization

truly global? We are all touched by globalization—in the clothes we wear, in the images we receive, in the information we handle—but whose lives are really global? What does it take and what does it mean to *be* global? Is global the corporate employee who lives aboard an airplane, or the illegal migrant worker who puts her life at risk dreaming of a better life? Is the consumer who buys a shirt in Columbus, or the woman who sews it in a *maquiladora* plant in El Salvador? Is the TV star whose image inundates millions of screens around the world, or the millions of viewers who adopt, consciously or not, the TV star's manners and looks?

There are Many Ways of Experiencing Globalization

Globalization is obviously lived and perceived differently according to the location of the individual. By location I mean, of course, the geographical location, but also the social status and the professional activity, the language or languages spoken, the ethnicity, the gender, and the age of the subject. Globalization cannot be experienced the same way in New York City as it is in the cornfields of Ohio, or in Dakar or in the Bolivian highlands; it cannot be experienced the same way by a Quechua artist living in Paris and by a Quechua peasant living in the Andes; it cannot be experienced the same way by a bilingual Latino student at Ohio State, fluent both in English and Spanish, and her grandmother back in some village in Oaxaca, fluent both in Spanish and Mixtec. All this is obvious. My point is that even though globalization pervades everything and touches everybody's life, directly or indirectly, the experience will be absolutely different depending on where the individual is positioned (socially, ethnically, and nationally) as the key to whether globalization's fruits are being enjoyed. It is clear that for many, particularly those who live in the central economies, the famous triad of the U.S., Western Europe, and Japan, globalization brings enriching experiences. But for many others, the vast majorities of people in the periphery of capitalism, it is just, in many cases, the possibility of getting a job for 50 cents an hour, barely beating the threshold of absolute poverty stated by the World Bank at \$1.08 a day, (a computation that disregards the actual costs of basic needs like food, which sometimes amount to four fifths of people's income in poorer countries) [Monbiot 2003].

Globalization: A New Regime of Capitalist Accumulation

Despite so many different ways of experiencing globalization, there must be a way to capture the economic, social, and cultural processes occurring at a global level. Moreover, what is new about globalization?

Globalization is one more instance in the constant, tortuous, and increasingly accelerated expansion of capitalism that inaugurated Western modernity. Therefore, it is misleading to affirm that it begins in the Greco-Roman antiquity, or in the expansion of the great world religions, or with the Arab trading routes in the 11th century, or with the Chinese commercial fleet in the 15th century. It is equally fallacious to reduce it to the opening of new markets and the expansion of world trade, as if it were a new form of mercantilism, or to establish its beginnings in the "Washington consensus," which formalized the directives for a "new economy" as if it were a synonym for neo-liberalism. I agree with Jan Nederveen Pieterse who posited that "neoliberalism does not exhaust the varieties of capitalism," but it is problematic to affirm that "capitalism does not exhaust globalization," thus leading to many forms of mystifications [Nederveen Pieterse 2004, 20].

Globalization is, first and foremost, a new regime of capitalist accumulation, or, in Manuel Castells' terminology, a new mode of development complemented by the neo-liberal mode of socio-political regulation, which differs from previous industrialization in that it lies primarily in the new information technologies, in the accumulation of data, and in the production of images, as well as the symbolic value embedded in products. This is due to dramatic shifts in the productivity of labor, from industrial manufactures to what has been called "immaterial labor," and in the productivity of consumption—from material goods to symbolic goods, from consumer society to the culture of consumerism. Consequently, transnational corporations focus their energies on public relations, lobbying, packaging, and advertising, in everything that contributes to the better positioning of their public image in the consumer market, while outsourcing the actual manufacture of products to contractors and subcontractors overseas.

It is also the last—and some would say the ultimate—time-space compression in the vertiginous and protracted history of modernity and capitalism, driven by the accumulative, expansive, and creative-destructive logic of capital, and ideologically reinforced by the belief in the inevitability and blessing of material progress. This logic explains the periodic time-space compressions brought about by the successive technological revolutions with which capitalism has tried to solve its periodic and endemic periods of recession. The corollary of reducing the time needed to move in space in order to accelerate and increment the rate of return has been the inevitable and ever-increasing shrinking of space, making distances shorter and the world smaller. As David Harvey notes, the historical reduction of the ratio between time and space amounts to the brutal colonization of space and objectification of time under the abstract logic of money and the commodity form. Since the extraordinary technological discoveries and territorial adventures of the 14th and 15th centuries, time has been money [1990, 266-7].

The Ultimate Time-Space Compression

The history of modernity—the modern history—has been thus regulated by cyclical and convulsive periods of retraction and expansion of capitalism, and by spasmodic technological revolutions that developed new regimes of accumulation, new modes of regulation, and new eco-cultural formations. That is why the history of modernity is the history of capital, the history of the colonization of territories and peoples, nature and societies, always in search of new markets and new raw materials, manpower and consumers, in pursuit of furthering the accumulation of economic and cultural capital. Mercantilism, which began subsuming the sphere of trade and exchange, stimulated the colonial enterprises from the 15th to the 18th centuries; industrialism, which took off at the middle of the 18th century with the first industrial revolution and reached maturity with the Fordist regime of accumulation at the beginning of the 20th, subsumed the sphere of production and labor, sponsoring the expansion of the imperial age (from 1815 to 1914 European colonial dominion that expanded from 35% to 85% of the known world) [Magdoff 1974, 893]. The crisis of Fordism and the Keynesian mode of regulation during the 1970s occurred when there were no more territories untouched by capitalism to incorporate, and when the Bretton Woods accords of 1944 (when the U.S. dollar was backed by a fixed amount of gold) were no longer tenable. Only then was the neocolonial system under U.S. hegemony called into question, in particular, for replacing the more flexible regime of production and accumulation for the neo-liberal mode of regulation—actually, of *deregulation*—still in place today. Moreover, this is *the* crucial distinction, many times blurred, between globalization and neo-liberalism. Upheld by the marriage of convenience of the more abstract forms of finance capital and

information technologies, this flexible regime of accumulation deepened and extended the global expansion of capital, subsuming all populations, all regions, and all forms of labor time *and* leisure time in the remotest corners of the world.

Here we are approaching the heart of our topic. Globalization involves such an extensive and intensive expansion of capital that it actually exceeds strict economic and political dimensions to include the cultural as well, which now acquires a leading role economically as well. We are in the midst of another space-time compression, of course, and entangled in an omnipresent, omnivorous totalization that keeps subsuming the more insignificant, intimate aspects of everyday life under the logic of the commodity form and the type of capital with the capacity to operate as a single unit in real time on a planetary scale, as Castells put it [1996, 92], that is, finance capital—the more abstract, speculative, and essentially unproductive form of capital. The development of new information and telecommunication technologies, the flexibilization of labor markets, and the segmentation of consumption, made possible the consolidation of a global economy under the undisputable dominance of the finance sector, unquestionably the more mobile and flexible form of capital, and of the culture industry, which specializes in the production of symbolic goods. This is the most formidable machinery of production humankind has ever seen, an economy of plenty and waste which, paradoxical as it may seem, feeds itself in the more extreme forms of poverty and the more obscene forms of destitution and marginalization. Nearly 1.3 billion people, or almost a quarter of the world's population, live on less than a dollar a day, and close to 1 billion people are malnourished, with an expectation of survival of 40 years of age. However, only one person in eight within the richest countries is affected by poverty, long-term unemployment, or some sort of deprivation [UNDP 1999, 22]. The latest figures released by the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that 2.7 million more people went into poverty in the past year in this country. Never, in the history of humankind, has there as been such an accumulation of wealth, but never has wealth been so unjustly distributed.

The Globalization of Poverty

Globalization involves a new international and global division of labor and consumption that implies, necessarily and structurally, the global reproduction of poverty. As Michel Chossudovsky notes, this phenomenon is not a mere side-effect or an eventually reparable social cost of yet another modernization, but another input on the supply side, since capital demands a constant supply of cheap labor and avid consumers. In a nutshell, the reproduction of poverty not only benefits those directly involved in the business of international aid and lending—from the oligarchies in the poor countries, to the technocrats and bureaucrats of international institutions, to the large banks and corporations that get the contracts—but also guarantees the availability of cheap labor needed for capital to maintain the rate of expansion, or, put differently, the reproduction of poverty becomes a symptom that demonstrates the good health of capitalism [Seabrook 1988, 15].

Unquestionably, this is related to the flexible regime of accumulation that characterizes this global economy, whose main requisites are: the availability of instantaneous, reliable, and confidential information and the free flow of capital and commodities, although not necessarily of people. In a society that prizes the value of mobility and the mobility of value, while capital and the people at the top are extremely mobile, exterritorial and free from constraints, the people at the bottom of the global distribution of labor remain locally tied to their assigned positions. In

a perverse and duplicitous way, what appears as globalization for some means simply localization for others [Bauman 1998, 2]. The question is: what is and where is the ultimate source of value in the global economy? Asked differently: where is wealth produced in the present world? Obviously, value is more prominently produced where there is a higher rate of profit, where the central economies are moved by the largest concentration of economic and cultural capital, where the most advanced technology and research are located, and where the more affluent consumer markets and skilled labor power are located. However, this question can be answered satisfactorily only if we take into account two factors. First, that being the economy of global scope, it has to be envisioned as a whole—a flexible system in which multiple interconnected parts are combined for the production, circulation, and consumption of material and symbolic goods. Second, that this regime of accumulation operates on distinctive platforms. One requires extracting the productivity of labor, in particular, the surplus value of cheap labor, from women, children, and people of color in the periphery, where most manufactures and material goods are presently produced; but also by controlling the net flows of capital from peripheral economies to central economies—either in the form of interests paid for external debt, royalties and dividends, or capital flight [Hoogvelt 1990, 88-9]. The other platform involves extracting the productivity of desires, which is done by inducing nonstop consumption and the culture of consumerism, particularly in the central economies and among the affluent sectors in peripheral economies. In other words, by means of a flexible regime of capital accumulation that combines the exploitation of material labor (the production of material goods, for the most part done in the *maquiladoras*, sweat shops, free trade areas, and other forms of enclave economy in the periphery), with the exploitation of immaterial labor (service and intellectual labor for the most part done in the centers), as well as the exploitation of consumption, in particular, the consumption of symbolic and other cultural goods (the consumer culture prevalent in the central societies that also includes the affluent strata in peripheral societies).

How did this happen? To begin, in the 1970s the fall of the rate of profit of the industrial sector in the central economies triggered the relocation of many manufacturing plants to the periphery, where salaries were cheaper, and eventual expansion could occur for industries related to services, information, telecommunications, and symbolic goods, spurred by a larger consumer demand and a higher rate of profit. This resulted in the advent of a “new economy” moved by finance capital and speculative investment, in which value is located in the control of information, the privatization of knowledge, and the cashing in of royalties. A “casino” economy in which the largest profits are made from fictitious capital (simultaneously driving money away from productive investments), and “securities,” a virtual form of future money, are used to make money [Hoogvelt 1990, 86-7]. Remember the burst of the bubble? Remember South East Asia, Russia, Mexico, Argentina? Remember Enron, WorldCom, Anderson and Company? These are not exceptions to the rule, nor isolated incidents, nor simply the good gone rotten; financial crises have become the logical consequence of the uncontrolled flow of capital. They show the system at work, a system, however, whose existence is only possible thanks to the exploitation of cheap labor and the transfer of capital that chokes many peripheral countries’ possibility of development. Under the vigilance and the interference in national decisions by the institutions of global economic governance, the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO, the snowball of external debt, the technological gap, and dependency on transnational banks have become mechanisms of political intervention that impose on developing nations the privatization of national assets. These institutions also dismantle developing nations’ security systems in complete disregard of local traditions, which includes the public provisioning of services by state institutions. They

also require the deregulation of capital and labor at the expense of these developing nations' already diminished national sovereignties [Finnegan 2003; Stiglitz 2002]. Finally, they end most subsidies and protectionist policies that benefit specific industries such as agriculture, which allows Europe and the U.S. to undermine the sustainability of local farming in many countries in the periphery. The hypocritical imposition of this double standard has been finally opposed by the G-22 (led by Brazil and representing 65% of the world population), which resisted the pressures of the rich countries and provoked the collapse of the WTO meeting in Cancun—even, perhaps, as Immanuel Wallerstein thinks, of the WTO itself [Wallerstein; Jaitra; Schvarz].

However, as I said before, this appropriation of the productivity of labor, particularly of cheap labor, is complemented by the appropriation of the productivity of desires, through the continuous expansion of consumer markets and the explosion of consumerism: the sustained creation, segmentation, and absorption of new consumer markets through the intensive colonization of leisure time and everyday life. The novelty of this new regime of accumulation has to do with the central, critical role that the production, distribution, and consumption of symbolic goods attain in the system: the highest level of coalescence of the economic, political, and cultural spheres.

What is the Role of Culture in Globalization?

There are two equally fallacious approaches concerning the role culture plays in global processes. The first one consists of defining globalization as a process in which goods and peoples, ideas and behaviors, technology and information are freely exchanged and disseminated between different cultures worldwide. From this perspective, which de-emphasizes the economic side of globalization (disconnecting culture from economics, politics, and power), it is then understood as another instance of cultural diffusion or hybridization, but this time of a global nature. The focus then is on globalization's positive consequences, including the promotion of racial tolerance, cross-cultural understanding, and social awareness toward difference [van der Staay 1998, 253]. But this approach also involves dangerously mystifying concepts such as viewing McDonald's as an agent "of intercultural hybridization" rather than of "cultural homogenization," wherein "globalization is the framework for the diversification and amplification of 'sources of the self,'" and that "[t]he articulation of modes of production follows a principle of hybridization" [Nederveen Pieterse 2004, 51 and 68]. In this sense, *cultural globalization*, understood as *the globalization of multiculturalism*, is equivalent to some sort of cosmopolitan humanism, which, by stressing the overall importance of cultural diversity, values and religions, citizenship and democracy, becomes a panacea to the violence of terrorism and the terror of violence [see, for instance, Gurtov 1988]. The most sophisticated version of cultural globalization is given by Malcolm Waters' theorem, which purports that while material exchanges localize and political exchanges internationalize, symbolic exchanges globalize. This allows Waters to assert that globalization embodies a historical crisis of capitalism and the nation-state that ends up in "a general expansion of the cultural arena at the expense of the economy and the polity." Magically detached from economics and politics, culture becomes the universal realm of individual freedom and post-materialist values [Waters 1995, 21].

The other approach consists of stating that cultural globalization, characterized by massive acculturation, worldwide homogenization, and ethnic annihilation, is an inevitable, though deplorable, side effect of the otherwise good economic globalization and its spin-offs—political modernization and global integration. This approach feeds two opposite positions: that

of neo-liberals and neo-imperial warmongers who believe that economic progress and modern institutions are worth the price of disposing of traditional and local cultures; and that of the liberals and third-positionists [Callinicos 2001] who see in local cultures and in ethnic diversity the alternative for globalization with a human face. The risk of this latter position is to end up condoning a humanist face-lift to the social Darwinism of the market economy. The Human Development Report of the United Nations published in 1990 opens with these words: "The real wealth of a nation is its people. In addition, the purpose of development for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. This simple but powerful truth is too often forgotten in the pursuit of material and financial wealth" [UNDP 1999, 1]. It then adds, "The challenge of globalization in the new century is not to stop the expansion of global markets. The challenge is to find the rules and institutions for stronger governance ... to preserve the advantages of global markets and competition, but also to provide enough space for human, community and environmental resources to ensure that globalization works for people—not just for profits" [UNDP 1999, 2].

What is the Role of "The Cultural" in Global Processes?

Usually the critique of globalization is focused on its most conspicuous cultural symptoms, while the less obvious though more critical, structural function of the cultural remains relatively obscured. Among the most prominent symptoms that stand out (some of which I cannot consider here for brevity's sake) is the tremendous impact on the environment and the annihilation of ethno-cultural ecosystems; the obscene privatization and monopolization of knowledge through the enforcement of the TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) agreement, which is nothing else than the legal, silent theft of centuries of humanity's knowledge by transnational corporations backed, politically and militarily, by the governments of the rich countries [Kawell 2002]; the multilayered outcomes of transnational diaspora, not only on the host countries but also on the national societies left behind; and the many forms of underground globalization, which apply neo-liberal policies to the letter, from drug trafficking to money laundering, from human trafficking to migrant's slavery, from black markets to informal employment, which in Latin America provides 85 of every 100 jobs [UNDP 1999, 37].

1. The Ideological Effect

One of the most obvious cultural symptoms is perhaps the pervasiveness of a neo-liberal ideology, which spreads the belief that the capitalist market economy is a natural fact of life driven by some meta-historical force beyond human agency, thus masking the political decision-making—and the military interventions—as well as the flexible regime of production and accumulation that drive globalization. This ideological effect makes many people mistake neo-liberalism for globalization, thus opposing neo-liberal policies, which are denounced as expressions of savage capitalism, while condoning the less obvious but structural premises of global capitalism. The main assumptions of neo-liberal fundamentalism, incorporated in *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, are that [see also Robbins 1999, 100-1]:

- Sustained economic growth is the path to human progress (“The lessons of history are clear: market economies ... are the best way to promote prosperity and reduce poverty” [The White House 2002, 17]).
- Commercial freedom is the fundamental right from which all other forms of freedom, social and individual, civil and political, stem (“The concept of ‘free trade’ arose as a moral principle even before it became a pillar of economics. If you can make something that others value, you should be able to sell it to them. If others make something that you value, you should be able to buy it. This is real freedom, the freedom for a person—or a nation—to make a living.” [The White House 2002, 18].)
- Free markets, unrestrained and unregulated, are efficient and natural creators and distributors of wealth and resources (“International flows of investment capital are needed to expand the productive potential ... These flows allow emerging markets and developing countries to make the investments that raise living standards and reduce poverty” [The White House 2002, 18]).
- Meanwhile, governments should reduce themselves to assure the free flow of capital, as privatization of state assets improves efficiency (“We will continue to work with the IMF to streamline the policy conditions for its lending and to focus its lending strategy on achieving economic growth through sound fiscal and monetary policy, exchange rate policy, and financial sector policy” [The White House 2002, 18]).
- Economic globalization, achieved by removing barriers to the free flow of money and commodities anywhere in the world, increases efficiency and creates jobs, lowers consumer prices and increases consumer choice, boosts economic growth and gives people more opportunities, including the opportunity to travel and migrate freely, and, finally, promotes political democracy, ethnic tolerance, and cultural diversity.

We have already discussed some of these issues, but what I found more striking in this set of beliefs is the implicit assumption that what is good for corporations is good for society; that what is good for certain countries is good for the whole world; that what is good for producers is good for consumers; that what is good for capitalism is good for humanity, under the tacit understanding that human well-being is tantamount to consumer spending. It is arguable whether competitive markets may be the best underwriter of efficiency, but it is undeniable that they fail to facilitate equity. “When the market goes too far in dominating social and political outcomes, the opportunities and rewards of globalization spread unequally and inequitably—concentrating power and wealth in a select group of people, nations and corporations, marginalizing others” [UNDP 1999, 2]. U.S. multinationals account for more than a quarter of U.S. GDP and the sales of multinationals exceed the GDP of many countries [UNDP 1999, 31-2]. In Latin America, the economy grew at a rate of 5% between 1950 and 1980, but it fell to 1% in the 1980s and to 3% in the 1990s; during the 1960s and 1970s per capita income rose 73%, but in the last two decades, with trade expanding under globalization, it rose less than 6%. Between 1947 and 1973 the real wage of U.S. workers rose 63%; since then, real wages have fallen 4% [Chiriboga 5; Finnegan 2003, 48].

This ideology that rewards individualism and penalizes solidarity, which promotes the hedonism of the present and obliterates both the memories of the past and the prevision for the future, works through the direct enmeshment of people's lives with the well-being of corporations and the stock market, done primarily by the dismantling of unions and other forms of solidarity networks substituted by a flexible job market, and by the privatization of social security institutions substituted by individual retirement accounts. This way everybody's fate is tied to the fate of capitalism. But it also works through what Peter Sloterdijk calls "cynical reason," which gives otherwise informed and intelligent people the alibi to believe in what they know is not true, despite the fact that it is *not* true, and *because* it is not true, thus freeing them to get inebriated in the enjoyment of consumption. What is lost from the picture is that culture is just a means for economic progress for capitalism. However, as the World Commission on Culture and Development has stated, "culture is not a means to material progress: it is the end aim of 'development' seen as the flourishing of human existence in all its forms and as a whole" [in Borofsky 1998, 72]. In other words, what is lost from the picture is the difference between "being better" and "being better off," between the pursuit of things and the pursuit of happiness.

2. The Centripetal/Centrifugal Dialectics of Spinning

Despite World Bank reports sustaining that absolute poverty fell from 29% to 23% of the world population between 1990 and 1999, and many economists who affirm global inequality is falling, there are many other economists and social scientists who sustain exactly the opposite [see Wade 2001; Monbiot 2003; Stiglitz 2002]. It is commonly understood that the interpretation of statistics depends on the gathering of information and the manipulation of data. Despite widespread hullabaloo about the respect for difference, the benefits of ethnic diversity, and the "feel good" aspect of multiculturalism, inequality and poverty are more severe today between countries and within countries, between rural and urban areas, between different ethnic groups and between men and women. Moreover, measuring poverty should account for dimensions other than just lack of income, but also include deprivation of education and health services, social exclusion, lack of employment, forms of discrimination, environmental degradation, personal insecurity, violation of human rights, lack of cultural expression, and the inability to make social and cultural choices [UNESCO 1998, 17]. The gap continues to widen between the elites of the world population that are globally integrated and the remaining majorities that remain locally excluded. The income ratio between the fifth of the world's population living in the richest countries and the fifth in the poorest has gone up from 30 to 1 in 1960, to 60 to 1 in 1990, to 74 to 1 in 1997. The fifth of the world population living in the richest countries consume 84% of the world's paper, 70% of the world's energy, 75% of its metals, 85% of its wood, and 60% of its food. They also enjoy 82% of the world trade and 68% of foreign direct investments. The world's 200 richest people more than doubled their net worth between 1994 and 1998 to more than \$1 trillion—an income equivalent to that of 41% of the world population. The personal assets of 385 billionaires exceed the annual income of 45% of the world population, and the assets of just three super-billionaires exceed the combined income of the least developed nations and their 600 million people [UNDP 1999, 3]. The peoples and countries that constitute the "Non-Integrating Gap" have been declared the geopolitical enemies by the national security strategists of the Bush administration and are to be incorporated, militarily if needed, into the global economics of empire [Finnegan 2003; see The White House 2002, and Barnett 2003].

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