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Mapping the Global Condition: Globalization as the Central Concept

Roland Robertson

> Nothing will be done anymore, without the whole world meddling in it.
>
> Paul Valéry (quoted in Lesourne, 1986: 103)

> We are on the road from the evening-glow of European philosophy to the dawn of world philosophy.
>
> Karl Jaspers (1957: 83–4)

> Insofar as [present realities] have brought us a global present without a common past [they] threaten to render all traditions and all particular past histories irrelevant.
>
> Hannah Arendt (1957: 541)

> The transformation of the medieval into the modern can be depicted in at least two different ways. In one sense it represents the trend towards the consolidation and strengthening of the territorial state . . . In another sense it represents a reordering in the priority of international and domestic realms. In the medieval period the world, or transnational, environment was primary, the domestic secondary.
>
> Richard Rosencrance (1986: 77)

My primary interest in this discussion is with the analytical and empirical aspects of *globalization*. On the other hand, I want to raise some general questions about social theory. As far as the main issue is concerned, I set out the grounds for systematic analysis and interpretation of globalization since the mid-eighteenth century — indicating the major phases of globalization in recent world history and exploring some of the more salient aspects of the contemporary global circumstance from an analytical point of view. On the general-theoretical front I suggest that much of social theory is both a product of and an implicit reaction to — as opposed to a direct engagement with — the globalization process.

Thus I emphasize the need to redirect theory and research toward explicit recognition of globalization. While there *is* rapidly growing interest in that topic, much of it is expressed very diffusely and there

is considerable danger that 'globalization' will become an intellectual 'play zone' — a site for the expression of residual social-theoretical interests, interpretive indulgence, or the display of world-ideological preferences. In any case I think that we must take very seriously Immanuel Wallerstein's (1987: 309) contention that 'world-systems' analysis is not a theory about the world. It is a protest against the ways in which social scientific enquiry was structured for all of us at its inception in the middle of the nineteenth century.' Even though I do not subscribe to world-system theory in the conventional sense of the term, primarily because of its economism (Robertson and Lechner, 1985) and am not pessimistic about the possibility of our being able to accomplish significant theoretical work vis-à-vis the world-as-a-whole, I consider it to be of the utmost importance for us to realize fully that much of the conventional sociology which has developed since the first quarter of the twentieth century has been held in thrall by the virtually global institutionalization of the idea of the culturally cohesive and sequestered national society during the main phase of 'classical' sociology (Robertson, 1990a). Ironically, the global aspect of that phenomenon has received relatively little attention (Meyer, 1980).

Globalization and the Structuration of the World

The present discussion is a continuation of my previous efforts to theorize the topic of globalization, a task made all the more difficult by the recent and continuing events in China, the USSR and Europe which have disrupted virtually all of the conventional views concerning world order. At the same time those events and the circumstances which they have created make the analytical effort all the more urgent. We have entered a phase of what appears to us in 1990 as great global uncertainty — so much so that the very idea of uncertainty promises to become globally institutionalized. Or, to put it in a very different way, there is an eerie relationship between the ideas of postmodernism and postmodernity and the day-by-day geopolitical 'earthquakes' which we (the virtually *global we*) have recently experienced.

We need to enlarge our conception of 'world politics' in such a way as to facilitate systematic discussion of the relationship between politics in the relatively narrow sense and the broad questions of 'meaning' which can only be grasped by wide-ranging, empirically sensitive interpretations of the global-human condition as a whole.

Specifically, I argue that what is often called world politics has in the twentieth century hinged considerably upon the issue of the response to modernity, aspects of which were politically and internationally thematized as the standard of 'civilization' (Gong, 1984) during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries in particular reference to the inclusion of non-European (mainly Asian) societies in Eurocentric 'international society' (Bull and Watson, 1984).

Communism and 'democratic capitalism' have constituted alternative forms of acceptance of modernity (Parsons, 1964) — although some would now argue that the recent and dramatic ebbing of Communism can in part be attributed to its 'attempt to preserve the integrity of the premodern system' (Parsons, 1967: 484–5) by invoking 'socialism' as the central of a series of largely 'covert gestures of reconciliation . . . toward both the past and the future' (Parsons, 1967: 484).[1] On the other hand, fascism and neo-fascism have, in spite of their original claims as to the establishment of *new* societal and international 'orders' (as was explicitly the case with the primary Axis powers of the Second World War, Germany and Japan), been directly interested in *transcending or resolving* the problems of modernity. The world politics of the global debate about modernity have rarely been considered of relevance to the latter and yet it is clear that, for example, the 'the sense of the past of the major belligerents in World War I reveals a striking contrast between the temporalities of the nations of each alliance system and underlying causes of resentment and misunderstanding' (Kern, 1983: 277), with the nations whose leaders considered them to be relatively deprived — most notably Germany and Japan — being particularly concerned to confront the problem of modernity in political and military terms.[2] It may well be that the Cold War which developed after the defeat of big-power fascism constituted an interruption and a partial freezing of the world-cultural politics of modernity and that now with the possible ending of the Cold War those politics will be resumed in a situation of much greater global complexity — in the interrelated contexts of more intense globalization, the discourse of postmodernity and 'the ethnic revival' (Smith, 1981), which itself may well be considered *as an aspect of* the contemporary phase of globalization (Lechner, 1984).

Any attempt to theorize the general field of globalization must lay the grounds for relatively patterned discussion of the politics of the global-human condition, by attempting to indicate the structure of any viable discourse about the shape and 'meaning' of the

world-as-a-whole. I regard this as an urgent matter partly because much of the contemporary discussion about the global scene is being conducted by interpreters operating under the umbrella of 'cultural studies' with exceedingly little attention to the issue of global complexity and structural contingency, except for frequently invoked cliches about 'late capitalism' and/or the salience of 'the multinational corporation'. This is not at all to say that the economic factor is unimportant, nor certainly that the textual (or 'power-knowledge') aspect of the 'world system' is of minor significance. Rather, I am insisting that both the economics and the culture of the global scene should be analytically connected to the general structual and actional features of the global system.

I maintain that what has come to be called globalization is, in spite of differing conceptions of that theme, best understood as indicating the problem of *the form* in terms of which the world becomes 'united', but by no means integrated in naive functionalist mode (Robertson and Chirico, 1985). Globalization as a topic is, in other words, a conceptual entry to the problem of world order in the most general sense — but, nevertheless, an entry which has no cognitive purchase without considerable discussion of historical and comparative matters. It is, moreover, a phenomenon which clearly requires what is conventionally called interdisciplinary treatment. Traditionally the general field of the study of the world as a whole has been approached via the discipline of international relations (or, more diffusely, international studies). That discipline (sometimes regarded as a subdiscipline of 'political science) was consolidated during particular phases of the overall globalization process and is now being reconstituted in reference to developments in other disciplinary areas, including the humanities (Der Derian and Shapiro, 1989). Indeed, the first concentrated thrust into the study of the world as a whole on the part of sociologists, during the 1960s (discussed in Nettl and Robertson, 1968), was undertaken mainly in terms of the idea of *the sociology of international relations*. And there can be little doubt that to this day the majority of social scientists think of 'extra-societal' matters in terms of 'international relations' (including variants thereof, such as transnational relations, non-governmental relations, supranational relations, world politics and so on). Nonetheless that tendency is breaking down in conjunction with considerable questioning of what Michael Mann (1986) calls the unitary conception of society. While there have been attempts to carve-out a new discipline for the study of the world as a whole,

including the long-historical making of the contemporary 'world system' (e.g. Bergesen, 1980), my own position is that it is not so much that we need a new discipline in order to study the world as a whole but rather that social theory in the broadest sense — namely as a perspective which stretches across the social sciences and humanities (Giddens and Turner, 1987: 1) and even the natural sciences — should be refocused and expanded so as to make concern with 'the world' a central hermeneutic, and in such a way as to constrain empirical and comparative-historical research in the same direction.

Undoubtedly there *have* been various attempts in the history of social theory to move along such lines but the very structure of the globalization process has inhibited such efforts from taking-off into a full-fledged research program (Robertson, 1990a) — most notably during the crucial take-off period of globalization itself, namely 1880–1925. In so far as that has indeed been the case then we are led to the position that exerting ourselves to develop *global* social theory is not 'merely' an exercise demanded by the transparency of the processes rendering the contemporary world as a whole as a single place (Robertson, 1987a, 1989) but also that our labors in that regard are crucial to the empirical understanding of the bases upon which the matrix of contemporary disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity rests. There has been an enormous amount of talk in recent years about self-reflexiveness, the critical-theoretic posture, and the like; but ironically much of that talk has been about as far removed from discussion of the real world — in the *two*-fold sense of quotidian contemporary realities *and* the concrete global circumstance — as it could be. In other words much of fashionable social theory has favored the abstract and, from a simplistic global perspective, 'the local' to the great neglect of the global and civilizational contours and bases of western social theory itself. (As will be seen, the distinction between the global and the local is becoming very complex and problematic — to such an extent that we should now speak in such terms as the global institutionalization of the life-world and the localization of globality.)

During the second half of the 1980s 'globalization' (and its problematic variant, 'internationalization') became a commonly used term in intellectual, business, media and other circles — in the process acquiring a number of meanings, with varying degrees of precision. This has been a source of frustration — but not necessarily a cause for surprise or alarm — to those of us who had sought

earlier in the decade to establish a relatively strict definition of globalization as part of an attempt to come to terms systematically with major aspects of contemporary 'meaning and change' (Robertson, 1978). Nevertheless a stream of analysis and research *has* been developed around the general idea, if not always the actual concept, of globalization. And it is my intention here to take stock of some of the most pressing issues in this area — not so much by surveying and evaluating different approaches to the making of the contemporary world-system, world society, global ecumene, or whatever one chooses to call the late-twentieth century world-as-a-whole; but rather by considering some relatively neglected analytical and historical themes.

I deal with globalization as a relatively recent phenomenon. In fact I argue that it is intimately related to modernity and modernization, as well as to postmodernity and 'postmodernization' (in so far as the latter pair of motifs have any analytical purchase). Let it be emphatically clear, however, that in attempting to justify that proposal I am by no means suggesting that work within the frame of the globalization paradigm should be limited to the relatively recent past. All that I am maintaining is that the concept of globalization per se should be applied to a particular series of developments concerning *the concrete structuration of the world as a whole*. The term 'structuration' has been calculatedly chosen. Although I will shortly consider some aspects of Anthony Giddens's venture into 'the global scene', I cannot address in this paper the general problems which arise from the concept of structuration (Cohen, 1989). I will say only that if the notion of structuration is to be of assistance to us analytically in the decades ahead it has to be moved out of its quasi-philosophical context, its confinement within the canonical discourses about subjectivity-and-objectivity, individual-and-society, voluntarism and determinism and so on (Archer, 1988). It has to be made directly relevant to *the world* in which we live. It has to contribute to the understanding of how the global system has been and continues to be *made*. It has to be focused upon the production and reproduction of 'the world' as the most salient applies to the cultural-agency problematic which Margaret Archer (1988) has recently theorized.

Human history has been replete with ideas concerning the physical structure, the geography, the cosmic location, and the spiritual and/or the secular significance of the world (Wagar, 1971);

movements and organizations concerned with the patterning and/or the unification of the world-as-a-whole have intermittently appeared for at least the last two thousand years; ideas about the relationship between the universal and the particular have been central to all of the major civilizations; and so on. Even something like what has recently been called 'the global-local nexus' (or the 'local-global nexus') was thematized as long ago as the second century BC when Polybius, in his *Universal History*, wrote in reference to the rise of the Roman empire: 'Formerly the things which happened in the world had no connection among themselves . . . But since then all events are united in a common bundle' (Kohn, 1971: 121).[3] However, the crucial considerations are that it has not been until relatively recent times that it has been realistically thought that 'humanity is rapidly becoming, physically speaking, a single society' (Hobhouse, 1906: 331), nor is it until quite recently that considerable numbers of people living on various parts of the planet have spoken and acted in direct reference to the problem of the 'organization' of the entire, heliocentric world. It is upon this heavily contested problem of the concrete patterning of the world — including resistance to globality — that I seek to center the concept and the discourse of globalization.

The world-as-a-whole could, in theory, have become the reality which it now is in ways and along trajectories other than those which have actually obtained (Lechner, 1989). The world could, in principle, have been rendered as a 'singular system' (Moore, 1966) via the imperial hegemony of a single nation or a 'grand alliance' between two or more dynasties or nations; the victory of 'the universal proletariat'; the global triumph of a particular form of organized religion; the crystallization of 'the world spirit'; the yielding of nationalism to the ideal of 'free trade'; the success of the world-federalist movement; the world-wide triumph of a trading company; or in yet other ways. Some of these have held sway at certain moments in world history. Indeed, in coming to terms analytically with the contemporary circumstance we have to acknowledge that some such possibilities are as old as world history in any meaningful sense of that phrase and have, in fact, greatly contributed to the existence of the globalized world of the late twentieth century. Moreover, much of world history can be fruitfully considered as sequences of 'miniglobalization', in the sense that, for example, historic empire formation involved the unification of previously sequestered territories and social entities. There

have also been shifts in the opposite direction, as was the case with the deunification of medieval Europe — although the rise of the territorial state also promoted imperialism and thus conceptions of the world-as-a-whole.

Nonetheless, when all is said and done no single possibility has — or so I claim — been more continuously prevalent than another. There may have been periods in world history when one such possibility was more of a 'globalizing force' than others — and that must certainly be a crucial aspect of the discussion of globalization in the long-historical mode — but we have not as a world-people moved into the present global-human circumstance along one or even a small cluster of these particular trajectories. And yet in the present climate of 'globality' there is a strong temptation for some to insist that the single world of our day can be accounted for in terms of one particular process or factor — such as 'westernization', 'imperialism' or, in the dynamic sense, 'civilization'. Indeed, as I argue elsewhere (Robertson, 1990b) the problem of globality is very likely to become a basis of major ideological and analytical cleavages of the twenty-first century.[4]

While I certainly do not subscribe to the view that social theorists should at all costs attempt to be neutral about these and other matters, I am certainly committed to the argument that one's moral stance should be *realistic* — that one should have no vested interest in the attempt to map this or any other area of the human condition. More precisely, I argue that systematic comprehension of the macrostructuration of world order is essential to the viability of any form of contemporary theory and that such comprehension must involve analytical separation of the factors which have facilitated the shift towards a single world — e.g. the spread of capitalism, western imperialism and the development of a global media system — from the *general and global* agency-structure (and/or culture) theme. While the empirical relationship between the two sets of issues is of great importance (and, of course, complex) conflation of them leads us into all sorts of difficulties and inhibits our ability to come to terms with *the basic and shifting terms* of the contemporary world order.

Thus we must return to the question of *the actual* form of recent and contemporary moves in the direction of global interdependence and global consciousness. In posing the basic question in this way we immediately confront the critical issue as to the period during which the move towards the world as a singular system became more or less

inexorable. If we think of the history of the world as consisting for a very long time in *the objectiveness* of a variety of different civilizations existing in varying degrees of separation from each other, our main task now is to consider the ways in which the world 'moved' from being merely 'in-itself' to the problem or the possibility of its being 'for itself'. However, before coming directly to that vital issue I must attend briefly to some basic analytical matters. This I do via the recent statement of Giddens (1987: 255–93) on 'Nation-states in the Global State System'.

Giddens makes much of the point that 'the development of the sovereignty of the modern state from its beginnings depends upon a reflexively monitored set of relations between states' (Giddens, 1987: 263). More specifically, he argues that the period of treaty making following the First World War 'was effectively the first point at which a reflexively monitored system of nation-states came to exist globally' (Giddens, 1987: 256). I fully concur with both the emphasis upon the importance of the post-First World War period and Giddens's claim that 'if a new and formidably threatening pattern of war was established at this time, so was a new pattern of peace' (Giddens, 1987: 256). More generally, Giddens's argument that the development of the modern state has been guided by increasingly global norms concerning its sovereignty is, if not original, of great importance. However, he tends to conflate the issue of the homogenization of the state (in Hegel's sense) — what Giddens calls 'the universal scope of the nation-state' (Giddens, 1987: 264) — and the issue of relationships between states.

My argument is that it is important to make a distinction between, on the one hand, the diffusion of expectations concerning the external legitimacy and mode of operation of the state and, on the other, the development of regulative norms concerning the relationships between states; while readily acknowledging that the issue of the powers and limits of the state has indeed been *empirically* linked to the structuring of the relationships between states and, moreover, that it constitutes a crucial axis of globalization. James Der Derian (1989) has recently drawn attention to an important aspect of that theme by indicating the proximity of the formal Declaration of the Rights of Man that sovereignty resides in the nation to Jeremy Bentham's declaration in the same year of 1789 that there was a need for a new word — namely, 'international' — which would 'express, in a more significant way, the branch of law which goes

commonly under the name of the *law of nations*' (Bentham, 1948:326).

Thus while undoubtedly the two issues upon which I have been dwelling via Giddens's analysis have been and remain closely inter-dependent, it is crucial to keep them analytically apart in order that we may fully appreciate variations in the nature of the empirical connections between them. In sum, the problem of contingency arising from state sovereignty and the development of relational connections between sovereign units is not the same as the issue of the crystallization and diffusion of conceptions of national statehood (Smith, 1979). Nor is it the same as the development and spread of conceptions of the shape and meaning of 'international society' (Gong, 1984). The second set of matters is on a different 'level' than that addressed by Giddens.

My primary reason for emphasizing this matter is that it provides an immediate entry to what I consider to be the most pressing general problem in the contemporary discussion of globalization. Giddens's analysis is a good example of an attempt to move toward the global circumstance via the conventional concerns of socio-logical theory. While readily conceding that it is his specific concern to talk about the modern nation-state and the internal and external violence with which its development has been bound-up, the fact remains that in spite of all of his talk about global matters at the end of his analysis, Giddens is restricted precisely by his having to center 'the current world system' (Giddens, 1987: 276–7; emphasis added). Even though he eventually separates, in analytical terms, the nation-state system (with the ambiguity which I have indicated) as the political aspect of the world system from the 'global information system' (as relating to 'symbolic orders/modes of discourse'); the 'world-capitalist economy' (as the economic dimension of the world system); and the 'world military order' (as concerning 'law/modes of sanc-tion') — along lines reminiscent of approaches of the 1960s (Nettl and Robertson, 1968) and, ironically, of a general Parsonian, func-tional-imperative approach — Giddens ends-up with a 'map' of what he reluctantly calls the world system, which is centered upon his conflated characterization of the rise of the modern state system.

'Mapping' the world social-scientifically is, of course, a common procedure, it having crystallized during the 1960s with the diffusion of perceptions concerning the existence of the Third World, on the one hand, and polarized First (liberal-capitalist) and Second

(industrializing-communist) Worlds, on the other. Ever since that period — the beginning of the current phase of contemporary, late twentieth-century globalization — there has proliferated a large number of different and, indeed, conflicting ideological and/or 'scientific' maps of the world system of national societies — so much so that it is reasonable to say that the discourse of mapping is a vital ingredient of global-political culture, one which fuses geography (as in the use of North–South and East–West termi-nology) with political, economic, cultural and other forms of place-ment of nations on the global-international map. Much of this overall effort has resulted in significant work — as, for example, in Johan Galtung's *The True Worlds* (1980) and Peter Worsley's (1984) lengthy discussion of the cultures of 'the three worlds'. Indeed, the kind of work which has strongly reminded us of the major cleavages and discontinuities in the world-as-a-whole is a significant antidote to those who now speak blithely in 'global village' terms of a single world. Nonetheless there can be no denying that the world is much more singular than it was as recently as, say, the 1950s. Thus the crucial question remains as to the basic form or structure in terms of which that shift has occurred. That that form has been *imposed* upon certain areas of the world is, of course, a crucial issue — but until the matter of form (more elaborately, structuration) is adequately thematized our ability to comprehend the dynamics of the world-as-a-whole will be severely limited.

A Minimal Phase Model of Globalization

What I am offering here is what I call and advocate as a necessarily minimal model of globalization. This model does not make grand assertions about primary factors, major mechanisms, and so on. Rather, it indicates the major constraining tendencies which have been operating in relatively recent history as far as world order and the compression of the world in our time are concerned.

As I have indicated, one of the most pressing tasks in that regard is to confront the issue of the undoubted salience of the unitary nation state — more diffusely, the national society — since about the mid-eighteenth century and at the same time to acknowledge its historical uniqueness, indeed its abnormality (McNeil, 1986). The homogenous nation state — homogenous here in the sense of a culturally-homogenized, administered citizenry (Anderson, 1983) — is thus a construction of a particular form of life. That we are ourselves have been increasingly subject to its constraints does not

mean that for analytical purposes it has to be accepted as *the* departure point for analyzing and understanding the world. Thus I have argued not merely that national societies should be regarded as constituting *but one* general reference point for the analysis of the global-human circumstance, but that we have to recognize even more than we do now that the prevalence of the national society in the twentieth century is *an aspect of globalization* (Robertson, 1989) — that the diffusion of *the idea of* the national society as a form of institutionalized societalism (Lechner, 1989) was central to the accelerated globalization which began to occur just over one-hundred years ago. I have also argued more specifically (Robertson, 1987a, 1989, 1990b) that the two other major components of globalization have been, in addition to national societies and the system of international relations, conceptions of *individuals* and of *humankind*. It is in terms of the shifting relationships between and the 'upgrading' of these reference points that globalization has occurred in recent centuries.

With such considerations in mind I now propose — in unavoidably skeletal terms — that the temporal-historical path to the present circumstance of a very high degree of *global density and complexity* can be delineated as follows:

Phase I — *the germinal phase*, lasting in Europe from the early fifteenth until the mid-eighteenth century. Incipient growth of national communities and downplaying of the medieval 'transnational' system. Accentuation of concepts of the individual and of ideas about humanity. Heliocentric theory of the world and beginning of modern geography; spread of Gregorian calendar.

Phase II — *the incipient phase*, lasting — mainly in Europe — from the mid-eighteenth century until the 1870s. Sharp shift towards the idea of the homogenous, unitary state; crystallization of conceptions of formalized international relations, of standardized citizenly individuals and a more concrete conception of humankind. Sharp increases in conventions and agencies concerned with international and transnational regulation and communication. Beginning of problem of 'admission' of non-European societies to 'international society'. Thematization of nationalism–internationalism issue.

Phase III — *the take-off phase*, lasting from the 1870s until the mid-1920s. Increasingly global conceptions as to the 'correct outline' of an 'acceptable' national society; thematization of ideas

concerning national and personal identities; inclusion of some non-European societies in 'international society'; international formalization and attempted implementation of ideas about humanity. Very sharp increase in number and speed of global forms of communication. Rise of ecumenical movement. Development of global competitions — e.g. Olympics, Nobel Prizes. Implementation of World Time and near-global adoption of Gregorian calendar. First *World* war. League of Nations.

Phase IV — *the struggle-for-hegemony phase*, lasting from the early 1920s until the mid-1960s. Disputes and wars about the fragile terms of the globalization process established by the end of the take-off period. Globewide international conflicts concerning forms of life. Nature of and prospects for humanity sharply focused by Holocaust and atomic bomb. United Nations.

Phase V — *the uncertainty phase*, beginning in the 1960s and displaying crisis tendencies in the early 1990s. Inclusion of Third World and heightening of global consciousness in late 1960s. Moon landing. Accentuation of 'post-materialist' values. End of Cold War and spread of nuclear weapons. Number of global institutions and movements greatly increases. Societies increasingly face problems of multiculturality and polyethnicity. Conceptions of individuals rendered more complex by gender, ethnic and racial considerations. Civil rights. International system more fluid — end of bipolarity. Concern with humankind as a species-community greatly enhanced. Interest in world civil society and world citizenship. Consolidation of global media system.

As I have said, this is a necessarily skeletal sketch, with much detailed and more rigorous discussion of the shifting relationships between and the relative autonomization of each of the four major components to be added. Clearly, one of the most important empirical questions has to do with the extent to which the form of globalization which was set firmly in motion during the period 1880–1925 will 'hold' in the coming decades. In more theoretical vein, much more needs to be done so as to demonstrate the ways in which the selective responses of relevant collective actors — most particularly societies — to globalization play a crucial part in the making of the world-as-a-whole (Robertson, 1987b).[5] Different forms and degrees of societal participation in the globalization process make a crucial difference to its precise form. In any case, my main point is that there is a general autonomy and 'logic' to the

globalization process — which operates in *relative* independence of strictly societal and other more conventionally studied sociocultural processes.[6] The global system is not an outcome of processes of basically intra-societal origin (contra Luhmann, 1982) or even of the development of the inter-state system. Its making has been much more complex and culturally rich than that.

Notes

1. It is of more than passing interest to note that in speaking of communism as a radical branch of one of the 'the great "reform" movements of postmedieval Western history' — namely, socialism — 'Talcott Parsons said in 1964 that 'it seems a safe prediction that communism will, from its own internal dynamics, evolve in the direction of the restoration — or where it has yet not existed, the institution — of political democracy' (Parsons, 1964: 396–7). On the other hand, Parsons insisted that the *internationalism* of communism had made a crucial contribution to world order.

2. Ronald Inglehart (1990: 33) observes in the course of his empirical analysis of culture in advanced industrial societies 'that the publics of the three major Axis powers, Germany, Japan, and Italy, all tend to be underachievers in life satisfaction. The traumatic discrediting of their social and political systems that accompanied their defeat in World War II may have left a legacy of cynicism that their subsequent social change and economic success has still not entirely erased.'

3. I owe the precise phrases 'local-global nexus' and 'global-local nexus' to Chadwick Alger.

4. I argue specifically in this connection that images of world order are central to global culture as responses to globality (Robertson, 1990b).

5. I discuss the growing significance of globe-oriented movements in Robertson (1989, 1990b).

6. I argue also (Robertson, forthcoming) that at a higher level of generality globalization can be analyzed in terms of the global institutionalization of the relationship between the universal and the particular (see also Robertson, 1987a, 1989). In a manner which differs from the position of Albert Bergesen (see his piece in this volume of *TCS*), I try to turn world-systems theory 'on its head' by emphasizing *culture* and the *agency* aspect of the making of the global system.

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Culture as the Ideological Battleground of the Modern World-System

Immanuel Wallerstein

It is not our human nature that is universal, but our capacity to create cultural realities, and then to act in terms of them. (Mintz, 1988: 14)

I

Culture is probably the broadest concept of all those used in the historical social sciences. It embraces a very large range of connotations, and thereby it is the cause perhaps of the most difficulty. There is, however, one fundamental confusion in our usage which I shall address.

On the one hand, one of the basic building stones of social science's view of the world, most explicitly emphasized by the anthropologists, is the conviction that, while all persons share some traits with all others, all persons also share other traits with only some others, and all persons have still other traits which they share with no one else. That is to say, the basic model is that each person may be described in three ways: the universal characteristics of the species, the sets of characteristics that define that person as a member of a series of groups, that person's idiosyncratic characteristics. When we talk of traits which are neither universal nor idiosyncratic we often use the term 'culture' to describe the collection of such traits, or of such behaviors, or of such values, or of such beliefs. In short, in this usage, each 'group' has its specific 'culture'. To be sure, each individual is a member of many groups, and indeed of groups of very different kinds — groups classified by gender, by race, by language, by class, by nationality, etc. Therefore, each person participates in many 'cultures'.

In this usage, culture is a way of summarizing the ways in which