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# Global Culture: Consciousness and Connectivity

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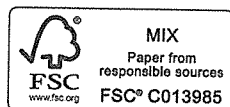
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## Chapter 9

# Global Culture in Motion

Peggy Levitt

Every September, music luminaries from around the world gather in New York City's Central Park for the Global Citizen Festival. Attended by a capacity crowd of over 60,000, the festival addresses a single, stubborn mission: the end of extreme poverty worldwide. It is an informal summit and a demonstration of public concern, designed to coincide with the opening of the United Nations General Assembly. Consciousness-raising is mixed with rock and roll by the likes of Elvis Costello, Stevie Wonder, and Alicia Keys. Concertgoers earn rather than buy their tickets, becoming concerned global citizens while accruing points online by completing a series of awareness building tasks.

Down the street on Madison Avenue, at the high-end luggage store, TUMI, this year's latest suitcase model is displayed side-by-side with a large sign, 'Global Citizen.' In this case, a simple purchase makes one a cosmopolitan. The old adage, 'you are what you eat,' should now read 'you are what you buy.'

These two examples speak to the central concerns of this chapter—the relationship between migrating people and migrating culture. In the contemporary world on the move, how does the movement of people contribute to and transform the movement of culture? How, in turn, does cultural circulation enable the movement of bodies and the social relations and processes that are unleashed as a result? This is a big question—too large to answer fully here. This essay contains selective thoughts that try to bring previously isolated strands of the discussion into conversation with each other.

One challenge making this task so difficult is that much work on global culture or cultural globalization asks questions at different levels, about different types of traveling ideas and institutions, and does not always link its findings to other sites and scales. Neo-institutionalists and World Polity Theorists, for example, assert the existence of global culture, but do not generally explain how these norms and institutional arrangements came into being or why they get used on the ground (or not) as they do.<sup>1</sup> Researchers studying how global cultural products actually

<sup>1</sup> For more recent work which discusses these questions more fully, see Barrie Axford, *Theories of Globalization*, Polity, 2013; G. Drori et al. eds., *Global Themes and Local Variations in Organization and Management: Perspectives on Glocalization*, Blackwell, 2014; and F. Lechner and J. Boli, *World Culture*, Blackwell, Oxford. Also see the special volume of *Poetics* 40.2 on Cultures of Circulation (published in Spring 2012) in which editors Melissa Aronczyk and Ailsa Craig and their collaborators ask how cultures

circulate and are appropriated frequently sidestep how these dynamics are shaped by and speak back to larger processes of cultural production and dissemination. They take the spaces of global cultural production as given, failing to recognize the interaction between their constantly changing layers and the networks of networks and specific sites in which cultural producers and consumers are embedded.

### Analytical Framing

Culture is context: the discourses, regimes and assumptions embedded in institutions, and the repertoires of meanings that are marshaled to respond to dilemmas and opportunities (Alexander and Smith, 2010). It makes certain actions possible by providing the building blocks with which to enact them, and by marking them as socially appropriate, while restricting others by rendering them unacceptable. Research on culture often assumes that it lives in contained spaces—be they communities, organizations, congregations, or nations—and that it is static and bounded. But in today's highly mobile world, culture is more likely a contingent clustering of diverse elements that is often on the move rather than a packageable, stable set of beliefs and practices rooted in a particular place. Ong calls this working within an 'analytics of assemblage' as opposed to an 'analytics of structure.' By that she means focusing 'on the emerging milieus over the stabilization of a new global order—not a fixed set of attributes with predetermined outcomes but as a logic of governing that migrates and is selectively taken up in diverse political contexts' (Ong, 2007, p. 3).

Moreover, we need to understand cultural circulation as taking place within social fields whose breadth and depth extend far beyond the boundaries of the nation-state—interlocking, multi-layered, unequal networks of individuals, institutions, and governance regimes that connect cultural producers and consumers to multiple people and places on the basis of multiple identities. Unfortunately, many of the ways we talk about cultural circulation are still plagued by methodological nationalism. We assume something that is hybridized was initially pure, or that ethnicity or nationality is the primary pathway through which people are incorporated into fields (Schiller and Meinhof, 2011).

Using a transnational gaze, or optic, brings these dynamics more clearly into view (Khagram and Levitt, 2007b). In contrast to traditional perspectives, which treat the transnational as belonging somewhere between the national and the global, this view starts somewhere different. What are assumed to be bounded and bordered social units or identities are actually understood to be transnationally constituted, embedded and influenced social arenas that interact with one another. The world consists of multiple sets of dynamically overlapping and interacting transnational social fields that create and shape seemingly bordered and bounded

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of circulation inform critical scholarship and relations between academic work and public engagement in globalized settings <http://ipk.nyu.edu/news/12-poetics-40-2-spring-2012>.

structures, actors, and processes. Assemblages come together and travel within these transnational spaces.

A transnational gaze begins with a world without borders, empirically examines the boundaries and borders that emerge at particular historical moments, and explores their relationship to unbounded arenas and processes. It does not take the appropriate spatial unit of analysis for granted, but interrogates the territorial breadth and scope of any social phenomena without prior assumptions. Nor does it privilege the global or the local, but tries to hold these layers of social experience, and all others in between, in dialogue with each other by paying close attention to how these multiple sites and layers interact with and inform one another.

Any study, therefore, whether of norms, practices, institutions, or policies would begin by ascertaining the level and intensity of connection to actors and institutions located at other sites and levels of the social field. It would not treat these dynamics as closed, isolated containers nested automatically in local, regional, or national scales, but see them instead as potential sites of clustering and convergence, which, once constituted, circulate and re-circulate, constantly changing as they move. The logical next question is to ask how these contingent clusters take shape, and what explains how they travel? Elsewhere, I proposed four conceptual hooks with which to answer these questions that I briefly summarize here (Levitt and Rajaram, 2013).

Individuals are the key *carriers* of culture in motion, but because they move for different amounts of time across varying distances, the encounter between what is moving and what is in place varies. Culture carried by the pilgrim, tourist, or temporary worker does not have the same impact as when it is carried by a permanent settler. Material objects, practices, policies, and institutions are also carriers of culture, as are saints, spirits and deities, their value and meaning changing as they move (Durand and Massey, 1995; Oleszkiewicz-Peralba, 2007; Lambek, 1993; Meyer and Moors, 2006; Hewelmeier and Krause, 2009).

How and why these concrete, imagined, and embodied cultural carriers circulate depends upon the geography and boundaries of the transnational social fields within which they travel. Some terrains are more settled than others. The social fields connecting Mexico and the United States or Germany and Turkey have relatively long and stable histories, while the economic uncertainty, civil unrest, or climactic disasters plaguing other social fields make them more difficult to navigate.

In addition, the geographies through which culture travels are not virgin territories. Places are transformed into spaces by their history, politics, and demography (LeFebvre, 1991; Knott, 2005). They are deeply rutted. Just as new eruptions of lava must find their way through crevices that previous eruptions laid down, so new cultural infusions must accommodate themselves to the twists and turns of existing terrains. The geographies of social fields are multi-layered and multi-scalar, influenced by discourses, regimes, and circuits of power that intersect, span, and jump its many levels. Neoliberalism and global economic restructuring disrupt the traditional nested hierarchies between the local, regional,

national, and global by distributing resources and power unevenly between cities and regions. As a result, institutions and circuits of power on seemingly lower scales can trump what are assumed to be their higher counterparts (Glick, Schiller and Caglar, 2009).

Many kinds of global cultural packages circulate through these spaces. How they are framed strongly influences their journey and use. Bob studied social movements among India's Dalits, who succeeded by abandoning their long-standing focus on caste-based discrimination in favor of a broader, internationally-accepted framing of discrimination based on 'work and descent' (Bob, 2005). The Ogoni in Nigeria and the Zapatistas in Chiapas succeeded because they deployed 'master frames' that their potential partners could understand. Anna Tsing (2005) described 'activist packages'—stories about environmental heroes, which detach from their original contexts as they travel and are reframed to attract different audiences.

Ong, Collier and their colleagues expand the focus beyond discourse to ideational and material packages of people, objects, technologies, laws and policies that circulate widely as assemblages (Ong and Collier, 2005). My own work on how social remittances affect the health sector in Gujarat, India revealed three types of assemblages used differently by providers and patients on the ground (Levitt and Rajaram, 2013; Levitt, 2001). The first was a *neo-liberal assemblage* that favored privatization or public-private partnerships and emphasized economic efficiency and the logic of the market over equity. A second, *welfare state assemblage*, still focused on curative rather than preventive care but emphasized the role of the state in providing for vulnerable populations. A third *integrated health assemblage* stressed the relationship between health and other aspects of development, favoring more public health oriented and preventive approaches provided by low-cost, low-tech, low-skilled providers. The neo-liberal assemblage 'reigned supreme,' however, because Western foundations and international organizations supported it so strongly, despite widespread reservations among some adopters about its appropriateness for the Indian context.

How global assemblages actually circulate and get used also depends on the institutional arrangements, normative regimes, and pathways they encounter as they travel. For analytical purposes, we might think of the layers of the social fields as discrete, but the boundaries between them can be quite porous, and they blend into each other. The most overarching is the global. In our study about how global ideas about women's rights actually get used by local activists, Sally Merry and I identified a range of global institutions and regimes that influenced appropriation (Levitt and Merry, 2009). International laws and practices, such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), constituted and spread these assemblages. The World Conferences on Women, convened by the United Nations; annual celebrations of International Women's Day; and international associations like the Association for Women's Rights in Development were sites where these assemblages took shape and were disseminated. Women's and Feminist studies

programs at universities around the world also drove assemblage production and consumption forward.

But national institutions and regimes strongly affect global cultural circulation as well. The gendering of national labor, health, and social welfare policies influence what is appropriated and what gets ignored (Yuval-Davis, 1997). In our project about global women's rights, elements of global assemblages combined with similar national policy frames and social movements to produce very different results on the ground. In China, they blended with social work ideologies; in Peru, with Liberation Theology; in India, with Gandhian thought and socialism; and in the United States, with LGBT and people of color activism. The global rights assemblage also connected to different organizational forms and technologies, including communal soup kitchens and Catholic base communities in Peru, the 'government's' Women's Federation and universities in China, the US battered women's movement, and caste and village *panchayats* in India.

In each case, NGOs and activists, connected to various networks of partners near and far, then drew selectively on different pieces of the circulating assemblages. Ideas about women's human rights and strategies for protecting women from violence adopted by elite women lawyers in China, for example, lead to the creation of a legal aid center that prosecuted a small number of 'model' or 'impact' cases designed to change policies. The same ideas adopted by a women's center in India committed to grassroots, Gandhian, and Marxist ideologies gave rise to a project that paid poor women to make kites printed with messages that warned against sex selection policies.

### Sites of Encounter

How can we better understand these 'sites of encounter' where traveling words, objects, and strategies from different contexts, with different meanings, come into contact with those already on the ground? Here again, there is no shortage of metaphors from different disciplines to capture aspects of these 'meetings.' Some scholars, primarily concerned with circulation and the transfer of state structures, management approaches, and policies, speak of glocalization (Featherstone et al., 1995), translation (Czarniawska and Sevon, 2005), and hybridization (Pieterse, 2003). Others talk of mimesis as a way to bring into focus the relationship between the imperial source, or the colonizer, and the impersonator who is being colonized, thereby bringing power centrally into these discussions (Ashcroft, 1998).

Pratt (1992) wrote of contact zones where multiple cultures bump up against and mix with each other. Ortiz (1995) wrote of transculturation—cultural encounters that resulted not in assimilation or deculturation, but in the production of something new. Tsing (2005) wrote of the 'frictional' encounters globalization engenders that produce conflict and movement, action and effect. According to Canclini (2001), globalization results in cultural 'deterritorialization,' or its uncoupling from the places where it is generated, and a 'reterritorialization' when it is relocalized, mixed,

and comes into contact with modern and postmodern discourse and practices. The end results are *tiempos y espacios mixtos e híbridos*, or new spatio-temporal hybrid configurations that transform culture and the public arena. In their work on circulating popular culture, Cohen and Sheringham (2013) found that incoming cultures are creolized and, in the process, they are 'nationalized, officialized or commercialized' and subject to mechanisms of 'destructive tolerance.' At the same time, the desire for authenticity and creativity makes actors draw on original (or imagined original) and emergent diasporic practices and identities—'diasporic echoes,' which influence circulation and appropriation anew.

Whatever the terminology, these encounters are multi-directional, involve multiple actors and scales of social experience, and take shape in particular places whose geopolitical position influences their impact. They do not originate from some pure idea, identity, or product that is then somehow compromised. We need to put aside false, unproductive binaries such as native versus foreigner, familiar versus strange, or national versus global. Instead, we need to see the world as multiple, overlapping yet uneven networks of power, resources, and goods within which cultural producers and consumers are differently positioned and therefore hybridize, transculturalize or mimic culture differently. Still, many questions remain. Why are some things appropriated while others are ignored? Why are some things discussed while others are silenced?

One broad set of factors that explains appropriation and vernacularization is the *social status of the carriers and the receivers*, be they individuals, organizations, or nations. 'Marginal' individuals or institutions are more likely to take risks because they care less about social norms (Rogers, 2003; Strang and Stroule, 1998; Wejnert, 2002). More powerful individuals and organizations are in a better position to pressure others to adopt innovations. Groups who want to be perceived as equal to their peers may also mimic their behavior (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Dobbin, Simmons and Garret, 2007; McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2001). They want to 'keep up with the Jones' whether the unit of comparison be a colleague, neighboring community, or comparable institution.

Ideas and practices acquired and applied in one setting can scale up to other levels of social organization, and scale out to other domains of practice. When people come to expect transparent budgeting in a health project, they may come to expect it in an education project (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2011). When they come to expect accountability from their local government, they may also come to expect it from its provincial and regional counterpart. Snow and Benford (2005) use the term 'diffusion' to describe information transfers along established relational lines, while 'brokerage' involves transfers linking two or more previously unconnected social sites, thus making shifts in scale more likely. When actors 'accommodate,' or frame claims and identities so they are more familiar and easy to understand and rally behind, more changes in scale are likely to occur.

Kaufman and Patterson (2005), for example, blame high status gatekeepers for keeping cricket on the margins of the North American sports scene. Mears (2011) emphasizes the importance of agents in hiring practices in the global fashion world.

Because they function in an environment of uncertainty, two different aesthetics guide the commercial and high-end fashion markets. Racial inclusiveness, sex appeal, and attainable beauty drive the former, while distinction, sexual unavailability, and rarified beauty reign supreme in the latter, which perpetuates the organization of femininity along race and class lines.

A cultural product's symbolic values, and what users signal about themselves and their social status by engaging with it, also influences circulation. Kaufman and Patterson (2005) also blame the failure of cricket in the United States and Canada on elites because they did not use it to draw symbolic boundaries between themselves and others while their peers in the rest of the British Empire did. Sylvanus' (2013) research is a fascinating account of how textiles' meaning and value change through their exchange. Wax fabrics were first produced in Indonesia in the nineteenth century, and then traveled to Europe, India, and Africa over established trade routes. Perfectly imitated copies, adjusted for quality and aesthetics to meet local tastes, eventually became part of African consumption structures and are now considered African. What became even more important than the fabric itself, however, is how it is used to position owners and wearers in relation to each other.

A second broad set of factors influencing circulation is the *difference between the objects or rituals in motion and those that are already in place*—not only how easy something is to package, communicate, and transmit, but also how different it is from what is currently being done. Some rituals and objects are clearly more portable than others, and some messages more readily applicable to new settings. Voting and campaigning are easy to replicate almost anywhere, while defining democratic practice is not nearly so straightforward. Boundaries can be high when adoption requires a major change, or they can be low when what comes to ground has a lot in common with what is already there. Boundaries can be thick, creating tight data packets that travel easily and efficiently, or they can be thin, creating leaky packages that move with greater difficulty because they are more likely to spill. Written traditions travel in packages that are literally bounded, while stories transmitted orally are more likely to change when they are translated and retold over time.

For example, television programming is said to travel easily when the media rituals featured in the series connect to wider belief structures and resonate with shared structures of meaning (Couldry, 2007, p. 248). Viewers in Canada adopted the program *Deal or no Deal* because its generic structure could be readily customized to feel national. Producers made it 'Canadian' by featuring Canadian contestants and stars, including Canadian-inspired prizes, and filling its sets with Canadian iconography. In contrast, Gutiérrez-Zuñiga (2013) found limits to the malleability of the Conchero-Azteca dance she studied. This popular Catholic tradition from Mexico could only be refashioned so far into a therapeutic act by new age seekers, despite its pretensions to universality and cosmopolitanism.

The outcome of the circulatory encounter also depends on the *presence of exogenous elements* that stimulate, enhance, or cancel out their effects. Certain



ideas and practices travel together in a kind of partnership, producing an interaction effect. Sometimes their relationship is parasitic: what is introduced piggybacks onto a host that it decimates as it travels. Other flows cancel each other out. Finally, other ideas and practices depend on each other symbiotically for survival (Levitt, 2012a). For instance, the idea that women can be political leaders is unlikely to take root if it does not circulate in tandem with the idea that women can work outside their homes.

The *frequency and strength of contact* between what circulates and what is in place also influences the nature of the encounter. Think of the allergy sufferer who rubs medicine onto her skin as opposed to the person who uses an inhaler. The drug's effect is greater when it is introduced directly into the bloodstream. Kuiper and colleagues' (2014) work on the global fashion industry not only highlights the importance of the intensity of contact, but also the *importance of position within the transnational cultural field*. They argue that the Dutch, Chinese, and US versions of *Vogue* magazine differed over how much healthy body types were featured because of each nation's different status. While the American media embraced the importance of healthy body types and went on to globally champion the cause, the Dutch and Chinese responses were far more lukewarm. In Dutch media, *Vogue* was portrayed as an outside force, which automatically limited its moral relevance. In China, *Vogue's* Health Initiative initially lacked relevance because this had not been a central issue in earlier public debates.

Similarly, Kiwan and Meinhof (2011) found stark differences in the ease with which musicians from Madagascar could circulate, as well as deep divisions over what it means to be a 'Malagasy musician.' Markovits and Hellerman (2001) argued that soccer only recently became popular in the United States because it was previously crowded out of the 'sports space' by football from above and baseball from below. American sports exceptionalism, they wrote, is part and parcel of American exceptionalism in general, including American hegemony and its legacy as the 'first new nation.' Meisch (2002), following the circulation of yarn, shows how Otavalan traders from Ecuador went from being spinners and weavers to become middlemen and even independent merchants through their integration in the world economy. When competition in the craft trade became too steep and borders too difficult to cross, music became their new form of transnational entrepreneurship (see also Kyle 2000).

The *characteristics of the pathways or channels* that culture traverses, whether real or mediated, also affect sites of encounter. How tightly structured these networks are, the hierarchies of control within them, and how much they overlap and intersect with each other strongly influences the ease, directness, and level of protection with which culture travels.

The Catholic Church is an archetypical example of a transnational religious network—a transnational religious corporation with its headquarters in the Vatican and its CEO, the Pope. When new migrants settle in new places, the network simply broadens and deepens, but in ways that maintain brand integrity. New parishes, or new congregations within them, cannot deviate too much from the

prescribed ways of doing things or the central script. Other migrating religions and traveling faiths,<sup>2</sup> be they Christian, Muslim, or Hindu, have similar hierarchical, centralized religious architectures (Levitt, 2007). In contrast, there are national religious networks that operate transnationally; they are based in a single country with clear national roots, but are structured, financed, and run transnationally. Still other religious groups are structured like flexible specialization models of economic production—horizontally managed, loosely coupled, changing sets of partnerships designed to respond quickly and easily to the shifting market. How formalized, protected, centrally controlled, and far-reaching each network is strongly influences the ease and rhythm with which things circulate within it.

Transnational cultural fields arise from and reinforce deep cultural structures, which also influence how cultural artifacts circulate (Levitt, 2012). Contemporary Hinduism, for example, travels primarily within a British post-colonial space. Its carriers, whether they move between Europe, the United States, the Caribbean, South Asia, or Africa, enact their religious lives against a common meta-cultural frame that is still influenced in subtle and not-so-subtle ways by British colonial assumptions about law, governance, and social cohesion. A common ethos and set of social dynamics characterizes life in South Asia, Trinidad, and East Africa, although it bumps up against very different local backdrops. Circulating religious elements and actors land in terrains that are similar but different, familiar yet strange. The BBC World Service created what Baumann and his colleagues (2011) called a 'diasporic contact zone' by uniting listeners in remote villages in Tanzania with their counterparts in London, evoking a sense of belonging each time they heard the opening notes of the overture to the news. The Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre (1959) used the term 'Lusotropicalism' to describe a comparable Portuguese colonial space characterized by what he argued was a more humane imperial footprint within which racial mixing was more accepted. Though many criticized his benevolent view of Portugal, the interconnected cultural space he described, although now reconstituted in new ways, still influences how ideas about race and human rights circulate within its ambit.

When cultural products circulate, they also create new social spaces. As the Anáhuaz-Aztlán dance circulated among migrants and non-migrants in Mexico and the United States, a community that was rooted in the old empire of Aztlán broadened into a seamless territory on both sides of the border. An 'electric chord' or 'placenta,' according to De la Torre and Gutiérrez Zúñiga (2012), connects people in Taos, New Mexico with their counterparts in Ixcateopan, although the religious practices they engage in and how they imagine the spiritual, racial and territorial nation to which they all belong differs significantly.

2 Migrant religions travel *within* the local ethnic confines of the migrant (and home) population, even as they re-territorialize and adapt to new contexts. Travelling faiths are religious movements with universal claims around which a religious community is formed—de-territorialized religions—which travel in order to proselytize (Wong and Levitt, 2014).

### Vernacularization

Moving from the site of encounter to actual use involves some kind of communication and translation—the actual work of hybridization, mimicry, or glocalization. Levitt and Merry's (2009) global women's rights project revealed three types of vernacularization. The first type relied on the imaginative space created by women's human rights rather than the discourse of rights itself. Staff did not talk about rights directly in their work, but used the momentum and power inherent in these global discourses to advance their cause. The second type vernacularized ideas. It stretched the boundary of issues taken up by women's groups by using the language of human rights to tackle new problems. In India, for example, staff linked English words to local narratives and symbols as a way to apply the human rights framework to the issue of sexuality rights. They appealed to the magic and allure of the West while stressing that these ideas also had deep Indian roots. The third type of vernacularization involved using the core concepts of women's human rights, articulating them in locally appropriate ways, and specifying pragmatic ways to put them into practice. Staff explicitly referenced women's human rights to encourage their clients to shift their understandings of self and then to put these into practice.

Vernacularization involves the disentangling of global universals so that they are applicable to a wide variety of ideas and technologies for communicating reforms and helping with problems. It is a fragmentary and dialogic process. Because they are differentially positioned geopolitically, localities differ significantly with respect to their exposure to global assemblages over time. As actors and organizations move across local, national, and international fields of power and meaning, they forge moral and instrumental strategies to promote their organizational goals given the constraints of funding, community support, and North/South power relations.

### Cultural Institutions and Policies

In this section, I shift away from my discussion of studying and explaining culture in motion to thinking about how and where culture provides the backdrop for creating successful diverse societies and communities that transcend national boundaries. First, I look at how cultural policy and institutions are used to drive globalization forward by creating global cities and then global citizens. Then I look at the cultures of knowledge production that shape if and how we see and talk about these dynamics.

At least some of the cultural products I describe get anointed in informal and formal global cultural canons—indexes or packages of objects, places, and ideas that come to be considered what all good global citizens should know. UNESCO's 1972 World Heritage Convention, which began as an exercise in shared responsibility for humanity's most prized sites, is now a sort of 'go-to'

list for the global cultural connoisseur (Rausch, 2013). The curriculum taught at International Baccalaureate programs, initially created to enable the children of transnational executives to move seamlessly between one international school and another, is also a statement about what the next globalized generation must master. The new branch campuses created by American and English universities, in partnership or not with their local hosts throughout the Gulf and Asia, are the college level version of the same exercise. Less formal, but also canonizers in their own right, are media outlets like Al Jazeera in English, CNN in Español, and the BBC World Service whose programming distinguishes the places and events that worldly people should be familiar with.

Of course, agreeing upon and disseminating any kind of 'sanctified knowledge package' is ridden with self-interest and unequal power. This is what Post-Colonial Studies and Critical Theory is all about. Some see cosmopolitanism as beyond redemption, precisely because the requisite grand tour only included European cultural production. National interests are always jockeying for their place. Because The World Heritage List is such a powerful catalyst for tourism, nation building, and economic development, the national interests behind the desire to be included on it often overshadow concerns about global patrimony (Baumann, 2014). At Education City in Qatar, where over eight US universities have established branch campuses, there is a seeming paradox between Qatarization, an employment policy that structurally favors citizens, and an American-style university system designed to create cosmopolitan 'global citizens' who embrace individualism, meritocracy, and multiculturalism. In fact, as Vora (2014) argues, Qatari non-liberal state policies and American liberal higher education have long been intertwined in ways that mutually benefit these seemingly opposing logics of governance and belonging.

Cities also use cultural policy to further globalization. Using Singapore as an example, Kong (2012) identified three ways culture has been deployed to promote urban development. In the early 1960s and 1970s, the newly independent city-state used arts and culture as nation-building tools. However, once the new nation was established, the government looked to arts and culture, first, to attract tourists, and later to attract the transnational capitalists who could drive economic development forward. In a recent twist, Singapore is using its 'cultural social policy' to convince citizens of the important role that art and culture play in their daily lives. For Singapore to be a truly global city, it not only needs a lively cultural scene, but also culturally literate residents who can participate actively in the global cultural world.

Numerous theorists highlight how cultural industries and cultural policies are harnessed as tools for 'regenerating' and 'renewing' cities like Singapore—or they critique the practical and intellectual consequences of city leaders' attempts to use art and culture in this way (Montgomery, 2005; Barnes et al., 2006; Bontje and Musterd, 2009; Evans, 2003; McGuigan, 2009; Peck, 2005). At the same time, local immigrant communities, and the cultural diversity and multiculturalism they bring with them, are also deployed in service of similar goals by attracting



tourists, driving economic development, and rebranding urban centers. In fact, Glick Schiller and Caglar (2009) argue that cultural diversity has become an important factor in the competitive struggle between cities. Immigrants can be marketable assets in the places where they settle, even enabling some cities to reposition themselves within the geopolitical hierarchy.

The extent to which cities can use diversity as a developmental tool depends upon their cultural endowments. Brettell (2005, p. 247) stresses the importance of a dominant set of values or an urban ethos in shaping immigrant incorporation. My colleagues and I call this the urban cultural armature: a combination of each city's (1) history and cultural geography, (2) urban self-presentation, (3) cultural responses to demography, and (4) prevailing ethos toward immigrants (Jaworsky et al., 2012). Nations are also endowed with cultural assets that strongly influence their location in the global cultural field (Bandelj and Werry, 2011).

Cities can fuel the multiculturalism that drives rescaling by attracting diverse businesses and people. They can also change what they do in response to more diverse communities they serve, thereby supplying some of the cultural building blocks needed to create successful diverse societies. Again, Singapore provides a good example. The government strategically used the museum sector to catapult the city to global economic prominence and create the kinds of citizens it believes the country needs to attain and sustain its position (Levitt, 2015).

## Conclusion

Circulation, as Lee and LiPuma (2002) argue, should be an object of sociological scrutiny that evolves in 'culturally' structured ways. We need better tools for explaining culture in motion and what happens at the sites of encounter where what is traveling comes into contact with what is already on the ground. Using a transnational optic and thinking of culture as assemblages brings into sharp focus what is often obscured by methodological nationalism and a view of culture as a static, rooted whole. Rather, producers and consumers of cultural goods, be they ideas, practice, institutions, or policies, are embedded in multiple, unequal networks of power and resources that constitute and are constituted by transnational social fields. Such a view (1) challenges false dichotomies such as pure/hybrid, native/stranger or national/global; (2) means that even the most seemingly local actor or institution is connected in multiple ways, with varying degrees of strength and impact, to actors and institutions far away; and (3) understands that these multiple, interlocking connections locate cultural producers and consumers very differently within the global geopolitical hierarchy, and strongly influence their ability to create, transform, or appropriate cultural assemblages.

A next step, but a road not often taken, is to study cultural circulation comparatively. This is a challenging task that, so far, is more aspirational than empirical. Again, there is no shortage of work examining how particular types of culture travel. Tsing and her colleagues looked at 'words in motion,' following the

histories of important and powerful words and phrases to understand how political cultures take shape within and beyond the nation (Tsing, 2005). Kearney and Besserer (2003) urged us to 'follow the tomato' as a way to better understand the transnational migration experience. The next step is to ask if all cultural artifacts circulate in a similar manner. What difference does it make when what is traveling is a note, word, icon, or institutional model? If we tried to bring these various studies of circulation together, what would we learn about how the characteristics of the cultural artifact, the networks, and the geopolitical backdrop against which things move add up? Here, I have only begun to lay the groundwork for this analytic task that I hope inspires and models productive ways forward.

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## Chapter 10

# China in the Process of Globalization: A Primarily Cultural Perspective

Wang Ning

Dramatic changes in world economy and politics have undoubtedly proved that China is one of the countries in the world which have benefited most from globalization. This has manifested itself with increasing clarity over time. People may well think that globalization makes the cultures of different countries or nations increasingly homogenous; but in recognizing this homogenizing tendency we should also note the other important factor that is—at least superficially—opposed to globalization namely: (cultural) localization. In fact, cultural diversity is more and more conspicuous in the present era. It could well be argued that this is especially true of China where Chinese traditions are so strong that everything is susceptible to being localized. It would be better to say that globalization in the Chinese context might well be called 'glocalization,' or global in the local.

Although in many places globalization is often viewed as synonymous with Westernization, or more specifically, Americanization, humanities scholars seem ideologically more ambivalent about Westernization—though arguably, less so about globalization. A much neglected aspect of globalization is the frantic search for ways of embracing modernity on cultural and political terms. Although modernity in the Chinese context is largely an 'imported' or 'translated' concept from the West, it has at the same time, with many indigenous elements, seriously undermined the myth of singular 'modernity,' paving the way for an alternative modernity or modernities with Chinese characteristics.

Thus, the globalization of culture also means prompting localization, or—as previously stated—'glocalization,' which in turn redefines and reconfigures this hidden 'empire' in a local context. The present chapter aims to let 'the outside world' know how China is moving closer to it by absorbing more and more foreign cultural elements, and nevertheless how Chinese culture still maintains its sense of uniqueness. Apart from discussing Chinese modernity as an alternative modernity, the chapter will also deal with the popularization of the Chinese language and the Chinese version of world literature which has certainly helped the remapping of the world language system and also pluralized the concept of world literature; with Chinese literature increasingly characterized by cosmopolitanism and transnationalism.