

## 1.4

# Economic aspects of globalization in the past material world

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### Introduction

Questions and deliberations concerning globalization are more than a hot topic of extended cross-disciplinary focus in academia; they also are central to long-simmering debates regarding policies and their implications that today often enter the public arena. For example, a quick perusal of broadly accessible media outlets from late 2013 and early 2014 reflects a suite of still unresolved but vibrant civic ponderings: ‘When did globalization start?’ (*The Economist* 2013), ‘The dark side of globalization: why Seattle’s 1999 protesters were right’ (Smith 2014), and ‘Have we reached the end of globalization?’ (CNN 2014). Yet can such issues really be evaluated judiciously without defining the critical elements of globalization, and then dissecting and assessing its historical scope? Given the broad temporal and spatial elements implied by the concept ‘globalization’, is it not most likely that the outcomes and effects of this multifaceted process would be highly variable across time and space? But through a diachronic and comparative examination of human connections over time, might we see some commonalities and learn relevant lessons?

This chapter aims to provide a multidisciplinary basis that contextualizes contemporary globalization by situating these modern processes in a deeper temporal context. The objective is not so much a broad-brush review of planetary history (McNeil 2008) but a discussion of the various ways that archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, and associated scholars have conceptualized macroscale networks and relations, and why an appreciation of this longer-term history can help us understand, evaluate, and provide comparative perspectives on these more contemporary developments. The remainder of this chapter proceeds first to define globalization in a manner that does not arbitrarily segregate the present from the past. Underpinned by its definition, the importance of the historical vantage on globalization becomes clear, and scholarly frames and debates concerning macroscale relations and processes are reviewed. The final section outlines questions, directions, and variables that could in part frame an explicitly cross-disciplinary agenda for unravelling the roots of globalization in the past material world and provide a firmer context in which to probe, measure, and assess the significance of recent changes in large-scale events and processes and their synergies with local and regional practices.

## Globalization: definition and conceptual implications

Globalization is a challenging concept to define, one that can be fashioned in a multitude of ways (Al-Rodhan and Stoudmann 2006). At its essence, it is the broadening, strengthening, and intensifying of global interconnectedness, a meaning that requires immediate refinement and elaboration (Faulconbridge and Beaverstock 2009: 331). Any specific perspective on globalization clearly refers to a process or, more precisely, a set of linked processes. The concept also involves, by definition, a clear engagement with (and sensitivity to) the temporal and the spatial, more precisely the ramifications and implications of compression in the relationship between time and space (Kearney 1995).

For the sake of clarity and explicitness, I adopt Al-Rodhan and Stoudmann's (2006: 5) broad definition of globalization as 'a process that encompasses the causes, course, and consequences of transnational and transcultural integration of human and non-human activities'. Yet also essential is Kearney's (1995: 548) recognition that 'globalization refers to . . . processes that take place within nations but also transcend them, such that attention limited to local processes, identities, and units of analysis yields incomplete understanding of the local'. These perspectives underpin an analytical frame that has important implications for how globalization is conceived and researched; they also define challenges for the study of deep history (through archaeology and associated fields) while drawing a connection between them (see also Chase-Dunn 2000; Hall *et al.* 2011).

For those whose prime focus is truly restricted to relatively recent networks and connections that span the entire globe, there are rapidly expanding volumes of evidence that the roots of the component links (as well as the modes and mechanisms of connection) extend deep into the past. Such historical links and complexities have contributed to the total absence of consensus regarding when and how the present pan-planetary network became systemically connected (e.g. Wallerstein 1974; Pomeranz 2000; Goldstone 2002; O'Rourke and Williamson 2002). Although there is no question that new transport and communication technologies have greatly compressed the relationship between space and time in recent decades (Wallerstein 2000), our understanding of contemporary globalization cannot be enhanced by arbitrarily walling it off from the past (e.g. Sherratt 1995: 5; Sluyter 2010). Globalization is not a process that has a clearly delineated beginning and end (Al-Rodhan and Stoudmann 2006: 3). Even today, there are peoples around the world who are barely or weakly tied in to global networks. We wonder how does this process begin, spread, intensify, end, and/or how is it resisted? And yet, history is awash with just such processes and their diverse, but still informative, outcomes (e.g. Carlson 2012).

The focus on such historical questions and debates opens key cross-disciplinary agendas that require vantages into the deeper past that only can be provided by historians, archaeologists, and other scholars who investigate these temporally distant realms. Yet at the same time, a concern with globalization (broadly defined) entails that researchers in the social and historical sciences engage with scale and spatial variation, concepts that too often have not been deftly handled by prior paradigmatic frames in these fields (e.g. Fletcher 1995; Blanton and Peregrine 1997; Bodley 2003).

From this perspective, and in accord with Immanuel Wallerstein (1974, 1976: 346) and many of those who have built upon his seminal works, global or world systems need not be strictly planetary or inclusive of the whole Earth. A limited focus on narrow time domains cannot answer questions concerning the roots of globalization or offer sufficient comparative context regarding how contemporary globalization differs from earlier macroscale networks. To provide such context, it is important to acknowledge that globalized 'worlds' may encompass

spatial domains smaller than the entire planet (e.g. Hodos 2010; Jennings 2011: 2–3). They are ‘inter-societal networks in which the interactions (e.g. trade, warfare, intermarriage, and flows of information) are important for the reproduction of the internal structures of the composite units and importantly affect changes which occur in these local structures’ (Hall and Chase-Dunn 1996: 12–13; see also Chase-Dunn and Hall 1993: 854–56). To set an agenda that endeavours to examine and compare these macroscale worlds, we must first look back conceptually in order to chart ways to move forward.

## Archaeological approaches to scale

Historically, a keen sensitivity to scale has not been an integral aspect of archaeological practice. During the early academic history of the discipline, culture history approaches dominated theoretically, regional-scale field procedures were mostly geared to find suitable sites to excavate, and concepts like the ‘type site’ held sway. In regard to spatial scale, archaeologists often excavated small sections of large sites and then extrapolated not merely to the site as a whole but frequently to characterizations of the entire culture or society (e.g. Haury 1982). Given the limited state of knowledge regarding the deep past in most regions at that time, perhaps there were few alternative ways for archaeological interpretation to proceed. Although the importance of broader-scale contacts through migration and diffusion were recognized (often depicted as arrows penetrating the orbs that represented cultural traditions), these modes of conveyance rarely were firmly underpinned by evidence, deeply dissected, or analysed in behavioral terms. The notion of self-contained, isolated communities retained appeal (Lesser 1961).

The advent and broadening application of settlement pattern approaches in archaeology during the mid-twentieth century (Parsons 1972; Kowalewski 2008) ushered in more regional-scale awareness in the discipline, which at mid-century coincided with the growing influence of developmentalist thought across the social sciences (Wallerstein 1976). The latter frame provided the foundation for early processual archaeology, with its focus on societies and regions (and their components) as the primary units of investigation and analysis (e.g. Binford 1965). This mid-century theoretical shift brought much more in-depth consideration to regional and intra-societal variation in the past, so that it became interpretively less valid to extrapolate blithely from a small sector of a single site or a handful of artefacts to an entire culture, region, or society. Yet at the same time, macroscale processes and phenomena generally were diminished in interpretive importance as societies and regions were envisioned as tightly bounded, and change was presumed to have had almost entirely local triggers (e.g. Sanderson 1991: 187; Webster 1994: 419). The assumption that societal change results principally from endogenous factors was shared broadly by theoretical frames as diverse as cultural ecology, neofunctionalism, and cultural materialism, among others.

By the last decades of the twentieth century, the increasing prominence of regional archaeological settlement pattern surveys in many regions (e.g. the Mediterranean: Renfrew 2003; the Americas and beyond: Sabloff and Ashmore 2001) in conjunction with the greater attention given to macroscale history (e.g. Braudel 1972; Wallerstein 1974; Wolf 1982) broadened the attention and awareness to supraregional processes in archaeological analysis and interpretation (e.g. Peregrine and Feinman 1996; Kardulias 1999; Kowalewski 2004; Balkansky 2006). For the most part, these efforts are explicitly multiscale in focus, and so they do not privilege the ‘macro’ at the expense of the ‘nano’. They do, however, endeavour to probe and understand the interplays and relations between the different levels of human interactivity from the domestic to the macroregional.

Many of the first explicit attempts to grapple systematically with macroscale phenomena in the deep past aimed to broaden the narrow confines of Wallerstein’s (1974) proposed frame,

which he outlined to probe the emergence of European capitalism. Modifications were proposed concerning the initial presumption that precious goods did not have systemic significance, the rigid notion that macroscale networks must have definable cores and peripheries, the assumption that broad-scale processes do not have significant impacts in worlds composed of smaller-scale polities, and the Eurocentric focus and timing of the original analysis (e.g. Schneider 1977; Kohl 1978; Blanton and Feinman 1984; Abu-Lughod 1989; Chase-Dunn and Hall 1993).

The subsequent debates and expansions of Wallerstein's seminal conceptual frame not only established a basis for comparative perspectives on macroscale relations, but provoked fruitful challenges to long-standing suppositions that all ancient or 'primitive' economies were qualitatively different from modern ones (e.g. Smith 2004; Feinman and Garraty 2010). Just as these once-fashionable categorical divisions are eroding with the accumulation of evidence, so too are the notions that draw artificial thresholds between the ever-narrowing sections of present and what came before (Blanton and Fargher 2008). While changes and differences over time are evident, and specific questions may always be examined from narrow temporal foci, broad issues concerning changes in human networks and socioeconomic connectivity are most effectively and comparatively addressed and contextualized from broad historical frames (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997).

An explicit multiscale vantage also provides prospective avenues to address the so-called 'micro-macro problem' (e.g. Schelling 1978; Hedström and Swedberg 1996), which to date remains largely unresolved in the context of archaeological theorizing that often experiences swings and debates between unfettered description and narrative at one pole and efforts to explain only commonalities (in lieu of diversity and variation) at the other. The ways out of this longstanding predicament require explicitly multiscale approaches that probe and account for human agency at smaller scales and then integrate and project those considerations into the empirical analysis at broader scales. At a more case-specific level, recent multiscale approaches to broad time-space analyses, freed from the presumed structures and conceptual rigidities of earlier frames, have made major contributions to our understanding of key episodes of historical variation and change (e.g. pre-Hispanic US Southwest: Mills *et al.* 2013; prehistoric Aegean: Parkinson and Galaty 2009; Postclassic Mesoamerica: Smith and Berdan 2003).

### The empirical case for a globalizing perspective on the past

There is no consensus concerning the chronological domain appropriate for the examination of globalization (Robinson 2007). For some investigators, reasonable time-depth is no more than decades, coincident with perceived rapid recent advances in technology of money transfer and communication (e.g. Sklair 1999). Other scholarly constituencies traditionally draw the threshold to around AD 1450–1500, timed with the shift in planetary wealth and power toward the West (e.g. Wallerstein 1974). A third suite of scholars with a greater appreciation of historical processes expands their analytical vantages by millennia, back to the advent of urbanization and early states (e.g. Frank and Gills 1992). For them, significant macroscale processes need be associated with the emergence of hierarchies and inequalities. All of these investigators share a view of non-urban societies as spatially localized, relatively static, and tightly bounded, with few significant linkages that extend beyond those limits. Whether in specific reference to Wallerstein's (1984) 'minisystems' or the bounded cultural units at the focus of cultural historical and traditional neoevolutionary approaches in anthropology, it is frequently further assumed that the societal limits of these entities were culturally, economically, and politically coterminous.

A fourth perspective adopts even longer-term temporal vantage (e.g. Chase-Dunn and Hall 1993, 1997; Chase-Dunn and Grimes 1995; Galaty 2011; Hall *et al.* 2011), recognizing that

the boundaries of human groupings were often more fluid and contested than often presumed (Wolf 1982; Lightfoot and Martinez 1995; Terrell *et al.* 1997; Burch 2005; Smith 2005, 2007), and that significant macroscale connections need not necessarily imply either hierarchical differentiation or economic inequality manifest through strict spatial demarcations between cores and peripheries (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1993, 1997; Galaty 2011: 10–11). In fact, key units in macroscale networks, past and present, may be smaller and less spatially delimited than nations or physiographic regions (Leach 1954; Bergesen and Lizardo 2004; Burch 2005). Empirically, the notion of small-scale, closed, human networks also is challenged by recent genetic and linguistic findings, which illustrate that significant interaction and regular movement across continental scales is fundamental to the human career (Tishkoff and Kidd 2004; Pagel *et al.* 2013). Contemporary expressions of human diversity rely much more heavily on descriptors, such as ‘clines’ and ‘networks’, rather than ‘races’, ‘isolates’, and ‘impermeable barriers’.

Long-distance trade connections that crossed cultural boundaries are well documented back to the Upper Paleolithic (Bar-Yosef 2002), with potential effects on human survival, well-being, and the mitigation of risks. Over human history a diverse range of non-local materials, beyond bulk items and staple goods, have been critical for the reproduction of social and power relations (e.g. Schneider 1977; Smith and Berdan 2003) in many different contexts. Ebbs and flows in long-distance economic networks have critically and repeatedly underpinned the emergence, resilience, and collapse of extant power structures as well as urban and market networks (e.g. Curtain 1984; Chadhuri 1985; Abu-Lughod 1989; Smith and Berdan 2003). The transformative impact of trade and exchange on sociopolitical relations, economic actions, and individual values and needs may be intense, and across history, participation in interregional networks has promoted major technological and structural transitions in society (Adams 1974: 244).

Even in preindustrial contexts, the suite of widely exchanged exotic goods was not restricted to rare preciosities that were narrowly confined to those of the highest status. In certain settings, bulk luxury goods (salt, cotton cloth, obsidian, and cacao in Mesoamerica: Blanton and Fargher 2012; salt in Mesoamerica: Kepecs 2003: 130) often were broadly distributed across status lines, even though costly. Such valued exotics, traded in quantity frequently, have served key roles in household reproduction, through rites including, but not limited to, feasts, weddings, and mortuary rituals (e.g. sugar in the European Industrial period: Mintz 1985; basic ornaments, certain pottery vessels, marine shells in Early Historic India: Smith 1999).

Although careers of research remain to be done to document to what degree and how broad-scale processes are refracted through local and regional structures and institutions in different global contexts, the increasing observations of cross-cultural synchronicities in the rises and falls of polities over space are a significant step. Such macroscale cycling has been noted in networks of middle-scale societies in the prehistoric US (Anderson 1994; Neitzel 1999) as well as for polities and networks at grander scales (East and West Asia: Chase-Dunn *et al.* 2000; Bronze Age Europe: Kristiansen 1998; ancient Mediterranean: Sherratt 1993; Postclassic Mesoamerica: Smith and Berdan 2003; Afroeurasia: Turchin and Hall 2003; Roman to Early Modern Europe: Turchin and Nefedov 2009). Of course, the specific regional and local consequences of these synchronous oscillations are expectedly neither uniform nor simple (e.g. Kowalewski 2000; Parkinson and Galaty 2007) and certainly can result in cultural divergences and/or the diffusion or transference of ideas and innovations (Hodos 2010). In different contexts, inter-societal interaction can result in both ‘spread effects’, the transference of information and wealth, as well as ‘backwash effects’, which leads to increasing differentiation and the precipitation of further underdevelopment (Myrdal 1971; Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997: 38–39). Furthermore, the flows of people, material, and information need not be unidirectional (Stein 2002). In all instances, documentation of spatial coincidences is only one key step, and the causal connections must be affirmed.

From a wide range of empirical and conceptual perspectives, it has become evident that human connectivity across broad spatial domains has a deep history and that these links seem often to have systemic properties, in the sense that their local and regional consequences can be significant, and that local and regional processes can ramify (in various ways) across broader scales (Hall *et al.* 2011: 264–65). Furthermore, while the modes, logistics, and intensities of these broad-scale linkages were unquestionably highly variable over time and space, it has repeatedly proven unsuccessful to draw hard-and-fast thresholds qualitatively demarcating precise dates when new logics and interconnections emerged. Even long-held notions regarding widespread price convergences and other economic properties in comparatively recent European market systems have been shown to extend deeper into the past with more time–space parallels than previously assumed (Keller and Shiue 2007; Rönnbäck 2009; Bateman 2011). Stark dichotomies drawn in regard to markets, economic behaviours, and more between current Western peoples and all others, which have framed academic debates for centuries, no longer rest on solid empirical ground (e.g. Lie 1997; McCloskey 1997; Goody 2006; Feinman and Garraty 2010). A slew of potential insights regarding the history of globalization are still to be gained from analytical frames that realize chronological depth, comparative contexts, and inter-disciplinary dialogues.

### Agendas to assess shifting human networks and globalization over time

Although the foundations of a systematic, and behaviourally focused, macroscale framework were introduced to archaeological practice through Wallerstein’s conceptual scheme, a generation of scholarship has greatly expanded the approach and hence widened its applicability (e.g. Chase–Dunn and Hall 1997). The historical investigation of globalizing processes must be explicitly multiscale, interweaving streams of change through the actions of different agents residing at dispersed locales. Furthermore, contemporary approaches should be less rigid regarding the nature of participating entities and agents, while accepting that meaningful transfers can include much more than staple goods and occur through diverse modes of intercultural transaction. In part, these theoretical expansions require the integration of more bottom-up conceptualization with the predominant top-down vantages adopted by most explicit world-systems approaches (Kowalewski 1996: 33).

Just as earlier archaeological initiatives to theorize at macro- and multiple scales were sustained and fostered by new methods and procedures, including systematic archaeological settlement pattern fieldwork, computerized technologies to handle big data, and new field mapping technologies (such as global positioning devices and laser transits), future investigations of globalization can build productively on new sourcing technologies that hold the potential to characterize quantitatively the long-distance movements of materials (Golitzko *et al.* 2012), as well as theoretical advances in the analysis of social networks (Mills *et al.* 2013) and new aerial technologies that bring new macroscale vantages to environmental contexts that are less open to pedestrian coverage (Chase *et al.* 2012). Archaeologists must continue to expand their diachronic settlement pattern analyses into ancient margins and frontiers (e.g. highland Oaxaca: Feinman and Nicholas 1999; Albania: Schon and Galaty 2006), while adapting these regional-scale procedures to areas not previously investigated (e.g. preindustrial Cambodia: Evans *et al.* 2007; Qin Dynasty, China: Feinman *et al.* 2010). Collectively, such efforts expand the corpus of potentially comparative settings as well as the tools and evidential pieces to employ in historical explorations of human connectivities, yet, at the same time, the broadening and refinement of the intellectual enterprise also is in order.

Geographers long have compared the use of formal and nodal approaches to define spatial units (Haggett 1966: 241–53). The former are defined by similarities or homogeneity in certain specified characteristics, while the latter reflect patterns of interaction. Based on conceptual as well as empirical grounds, archaeologists are now in a position to elevate consideration of the latter through the examination of actual flows of material and even people (e.g. Tiwanaku: Knudson *et al.* 2004; Spanish Florida: Stojanowski 2005). The formal/nodal distinction has never been an either/or proposition; juxtaposing these perspectives, however, not only provides a bottom-up vantage but lends itself to multiscale analyses in which individual participation in nested groupings from households to residential clusters, neighbourhoods, communities (all less encompassing than nations or societies) can be assessed quantitatively. Furthermore, the ability to measure actual flows and patterns of interaction permits the decoupling of future archaeological analyses from a tenet, long held since the days that culture area thought predominated (Wissler 1927), that the homogeneity of cultural characteristics adequately defines meaningful societal units.

The ability to chart network links and flows permits the examination of boundary variables (Blanton *et al.* 1993: 18; Blanton and Peregrine 1997: 6) that are critical to multiscale historical investigation, but rarely are ascertained empirically. Archaeologists are gaining the capacities to assess how and where the flows of material goods fall off, and how these volumes and patterns of flow shift across time (Brughmans 2013). Such examinations are crucial not only for defining the nature of units in macroscale networks, but also for evaluating the relative permeability at the margins of such aggregates. The relative openness and stability of political boundaries has been linked to the scale and complexity of polities (Oaxaca: Kowalewski *et al.* 1983) and the nature of the interactions between rival competitors (Aztec empire: Berdan 2003), but the control of flows across boundaries also can be a critical element that effects how power is funded and how political affiliations are organized (e.g. Levi 1988; Blanton and Fargher 2008: 254).

At the same time, the disentanglement of macroscale analysis from presuppositions regarding the existence and placement of cores, peripheries, and frontiers does not nullify that the processes of globalization generally are, and frequently have been, interwoven with inequalities of wealth, disparities in accumulation, imbalances of power, disparate demographic densities, and assessments of how these elements of macroscale networks shift over time (Kentor 2001). Rather than through assumption, these dimensions can now, at least for some regions, be measured, allowing shifting patterns of connectivity to be defined empirically. To look forward, such analyses can and should be employed to supplement ongoing smaller-scale studies that focus down on the outcomes of globalization, phenomena such as diaspora, inter-ethnic interaction, and transnationalism, to provide greater spatial context as well as comparative depth (e.g. networks: Collar 2013; world-systems analysis: Galaty 2011; trade systems: Oka and Kusimba 2008).

Pulsations in macroscale flows frequently have important local impacts, but such oscillations are not entirely unique to contemporary timescales (Chase-Dunn and Jorgenson 2003: 8). Just as the careful investigation of globalization demands consideration of multiple analytical scales, so too will it profit from wider and flexible temporal vantages. When examined from different chronological foci, some trends that at first appear linear, even inevitable, may reveal less regular patterns of change (e.g. Feinman 1998: 97–104).

### **Reframing globalization: a multiscale, deep time, and networked approach**

As noted at the start, the intellectual bounds of globalization research are defined in a multitude of ways. Many prefer only a narrow and purely planetary scope, with only opportunities for relatively brief (at least for an archaeologist) cross-temporal comparisons. Others focus mainly

at local scales, charting the effects of perceived external forces. In this [essay](#), I have advocated for a multiscale and deep time perspective on the long history of human connections and how those connections have synergistically reverberated at household, local, and regional scales. Furthermore, I have suggested that after a generation of scholarship, it is past time to look beyond Wallerstein's (1974, 1980) initial world-systems constructs and to recognize that the current toolbox of world-systems approaches, freed of many of the initial conceptual rigidities, has much to offer the investigation of the history of global connectivities. At the same time, sharpened techniques, especially network analyses and an array of technologies that allow flows to be measured, along with new streams of research that directly probe the complex relations between interaction and identity, provide new ways to amplify that paradigmatic toolkit and the questions that we endeavour to probe with it.

Such an agenda is undoubtedly ambitious. To tackle it requires not only the breaching of long-held barriers and building communication bridges between an array of academic disciplines, but also the crashing of generally more impermeable intellectual divides that have been impediments to holistic considerations of the present with the past, the recent West from the global rest, and so-called primitive versus modern economic systems. It requires the interweaving of institutions and structures with a consideration of agents (both subaltern and elite), and the examination of the material from alternative lenses of economic practice, power, and identity. Although the intellectual path that I prefer is clearly steep, the principal alternatives doom us to approaches that isolate the analysis of the contemporary era (from the rest of history) because of its presumed uniqueness. Yet, as McNeil (2008: 9) has recognized:

All ages are unique; each moment and every person is unique. So is each atom and sub-atomic particle for that matter. But continuities and commonalities also prevail, and recognizing them is what historians and scientists focus on when trying to understand the ever-changing world.

When addressing the broad public concerns as well as serious academic queries regarding recent globalization, its historical roots, and web of effects, will we not ultimately build a much stronger foundation if we adopt perspectives grounded in rich contexts, deep histories, and broad comparisons rather than paeans to the perceived exceptionality of our times?

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