
PROCESSES OF GLOBALIZATION AND THE DISCIPLINE OF GLOBAL STUDIES

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Introduction: Confusions in the Use of ‘Globalization’ and ‘Antiglobalization’

The terms ‘globalization’ and ‘antiglobalization’ are used in very diverse ways*. As a consequence, discussions of globalization processes can be confusing. On the one hand, some globalists and some antiglobalists view environmentalism and democracy positively. On the other hand, some globalists and some antiglobalists view capitalism and militarism negatively. Also, while some globalists and some antiglobalists present globalism as continuous with modernity, other globalists and antiglobalists contend it is a break from modernity.

Despite these differences in the use of basic terms, the time when significant attention to issues of globalism began can be identified historically. Basically, for about fifty years issues related to globalism have been receiving increased attention. Since the 1960s concepts of ‘ecology’, ‘ecological crises’, ‘global problems’, ‘globalization’, and ‘antiglobalization’ have become increasingly common in scientific and political discourse. Moreover, these discussions have in common an understanding that globalism is connected to how capitalism has impacted the entire planet economically and to threats to the environment and human rights.

I will provide two types of analysis in this essay. First, I will survey a variety of perspectives on globalism. Second, I will utilize the interdisciplinary field of Global Studies to provide a conceptual and normative framework for considering globalization.

1. Toward a Typology of Positions on Globalization

I want to provide a general typology for sorting the enormous number of approaches to globalism. Although this typology is not exhaustive, I think it captures the basic positions. In presenting four views, I will give some indication of a range of views within each. These four views are: (1) advocates of globalism who also generally present it as being humane or as capable of becoming humane, (2) critics of globalism who, whether they call themselves antiglobalists, generally favor a grassroots process working from below rather than an elitist globalism that is imposed from above, (3) scholars who, regardless of whether they support globalism, admit that the future of globalism is indeterminate, and (4) scholars who, regardless of whether they support globalism, support a disciplinary approach for understanding and assessing globalism.

A. The Humane Portrayal

Many capitalists support globalism and also maintain that globalism is humane. Many of the capitalist globalists support the free market economically and democracy

* A related version of the analysis I am providing here can be found in my prior essay: Gay, W. C. Understanding and Assessing Globalization: The Role of Global Studies // *Parceling the Globe: Philosophical Explorations in Globalization, Global Behavior, and Peace* / Ed. by D. Poe and E. Souffrant. – Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008. – P. 17–25.

politically. Regardless, they see prosperity, initially for some and perhaps eventually for the vast majority, as an outcome of global capitalism that is sympathetic to democratic political traditions. When they claim the West won the Cold War, they are assuming the global triumph of democracy and market economies.

The contention that globalism is humane should not be taken at face value. Tatiانا A. Alekseeva and I analyzed this claim in relation to the post-Soviet Russian Federation and concluded Russia capitalism has yet to achieve a humane or human face¹. I now wish to broaden this conclusion. Throughout most of its history, capitalism has lacked a human face, despite pressures on capitalist societies to provide some kind of social security or social safety net. Based on the history of capitalist societies, no obvious basis exists for claiming that globalized capitalism is likely to be any more humane than a variety of other economic systems. Nevertheless, despite my own skepticism regarding the humanistic characterization of globalism, I will cite a few of the advocates of this view.

In *Globalization and the Poor*, Jay R. Mandle connects globalization with the type of economic growth that is supposedly needed to alleviate poverty. Based on this claim, he contends globalization should be advanced. Nevertheless, he maintains, 'governments must adopt policies that address the needs of those who are victimized by the dislocations caused by the process'². He asserts that, given the supposed demise of socialism, the opposition has been unable to forge a consensus on such humane policies. As far as I can tell, he thinks the poor will simply always be with us.

Other writers are more emphatic in claiming that globalism will solve our social problems. In *Globalization in Question: The International Economy and the Possibilities of Governance* Paul Q. Hirst and Grahame Thompson suggest that nationally and internationally market economies can be controlled in ways that promote social goals³. John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge go even further in *A Future Perfect: The Essentials of Globalization*. In their defense of globalization, they admit globalism increases inequality, but they deny it results in a win/lose situation and one in which winners are predominant. They contend that even though some people are left behind many more are able to progress. Finally, they maintain globalism reduces the power of nation-states but concede nation-states remain the fundamental unit of modern politics⁴.

Peter L. Berger and Samuel P. Huntington connect this argument to advancing democracy and freedom in their edited collection *Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World*. Berger says he is searching for 'middle positions between endless relativization and reactive fanaticism'⁵. Finally, in *In Defense of Globalization* Jagdish N. Bhagwati takes this argument just about to its limit. He denies globalization needs a human face and claims, 'Globalization has a human face, but we can make that face yet more agreeable'⁶. As I turn to antiglobalists, I will note that they do not share these positive to enthusiastic assessments of the humanizing consequences of globalism.

¹ We make this argument in our co-authored book: Gay, W. C., Alekseeva, T. A. *Capitalism with a Human Face: The Quest For A Middle Road In Russian Politics*. – Lanham (Md.): Rowman & Littlefield, 1996. We also have two other co-edited books: *On the Eve of the 21st Century: Perspectives of Russian and American Philosophers*. – Lanham (Md.): Rowman & Littlefield, 1994 and *Democracy and the Quest for Justice: Russian and American Perspectives*. – Rodopi: Amsterdam, 2004.

² Mandle, J. R. *Globalization and the Poor*. – Cambridge (U.K.): Cambridge University Press, 2003. – P. 2.

³ Hirst, P. Q., Thompson, G. *Globalization in Question: The International Economy and the Possibilities of Governance*. – 2nd ed. – Cambridge (U. K.): Polity Press, 1999. – P. 1.

⁴ Micklethwait, J., Wooldridge, A. A. *Future Perfect: The Essentials of Globalization*. – N. Y.: Random House, 2000. – P. 335.

⁵ Berger, P. L., Huntington, S. P., eds. *Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World*. – N. Y.: Oxford University Press, 2002. – P. 16.

⁶ Bhagwati, J. N. *In Defense of Globalization*. – N. Y.: Oxford University Press, 2004. – P. x.

B. *The Grassroots Antiglobalist View*

Alexander V. Buzgalin and Jurii M. Pavlov observe in their essay ‘Antiglobalism’ that many antiglobalists do not use this term to describe their perspective and many also support a form of globalism from below⁷. Over the last decade these characteristics have become increasingly apparent. A very conspicuous form of resistance to globalism is seen in the large public demonstrations staged during international conferences and summits held by the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank in cities such as Seattle, Washington, D. C., Quebec, Prague, and Brussels.

Kevin Danaher and Roger Burbach give a typical treatment supporting the protests in Seattle against WTO in their book *Globalize This! The Battle Against the World Trade Organization and Corporate Rule*. They contend that the protests against WTO in Seattle in November 1999 were highly significant as tens of thousands of people protested having WTO make global rules that favor the interests of large corporations⁸. In a related work, Danaher and Burbach stress how the protestors want more attention to be paid to environmental and labor concerns. They maintain that these protests led to a total collapse in the talks. In contradistinction to globalists, these antiglobalists contend these public protests are ‘like a huge shot of adrenaline for the global democracy movement’⁹. They view the organizations associated with these protests as developing ways to run the global economy in a life-centered way—instead of in a money-centered way. In addition, they see a shift occurring away from elitist transnational unity toward grassroots transnational unity.

Among antiglobalist groups, some focus on specific problems. For example, some see globalism as posing particular problems for women or for developing countries. In *Women Resist Globalization*, Sheila Rowbotham and Stephanie Linkogle focus on movements, especially women’s movements, which stress employment needs and issues of rights and democracy for all persons¹⁰. In *The Future in the Balance: Chapters on Globalization and Resistance* Third World activist and scholar Walden F. Bello provides support for developing nations. He maintains that international financial institutions have created an economic crisis that is the result of ‘institutions that advocated free market economies based on the principles of liberalization, deregulation, and privatization’¹¹. He insists that achievement of justice and fairness requires a very different system.

Finally, in seeking a different system, some antiglobalists stress the need for more local structures. In *Beyond Globalization: Shaping a Sustainable Global Economy*, Hazel Henderson contends more local enterprises are needed that rely on a more holistic approach in order to break away from the current global market system¹².

C. *The View that The Future of Globalism is not Set*

Whatever attitudes we have toward globalism or antiglobalism, we need to be cautious about arguments from the extremes in the debate. Even some famous philosophers have fallen victim to overdrawing their arguments, as occurred in debates between Ber-

⁷ Buzgalin, A. V., Pavlov, J. M. Antiglobalism // *Global Studies Encyclopedia* / Ed. by I. I. Mazour, A. N. Chumakov, and W. C. Gay. – Moscow: Raduga, 2003. – P. 27–29.

⁸ Danaher, K., Burbach, R. *Globalize This! The Battle Against the World Trade Organization and Corporate Rule*. – Monroe (Me.): Common Courage Press, 2000. – P. 7.

⁹ *Ibid.* – P. 9.

¹⁰ Rowbotham, S., Likbogle, S. *Women Resist Globalization*. – N. Y.: Zed Books, 2001.

¹¹ Walden, B. F. *The Future in the Balance: Chapters on Globalization and Resistance* / Ed. by A. Mittal. – Oakland (Ca.): Food First Books, 2001.

¹² Henderson, H. *Beyond Globalization: Shaping a Sustainable Global Economy*. – West Hartford (Con.): Kumarian Press, 1999.

trand Russell and Sidney Hook in which Russell used the suspect premise that all would die in a nuclear exchange and Hook used the equally suspect premise that no freedom exists under communism¹³. Michael Pearson and I also noted the problem of extreme arguments when we cautioned against either denial of or resignation to the prospects for nuclear war¹⁴. In logical terms, historical possibilities are contingent events and have a probability greater than zero percent and less than one hundred percent; they are neither impossible nor certain. One is likewise arguing from the extremes when the outcomes of either globalism or antiglobalism are cast as already determined. Fortunately, among proponents and critics of globalism, some writers are careful to qualify their claims.

In the conclusion to his edited collection *Egalitarian Politics in the Age of Globalization*, Craig N. Murphy observes that the contributors to his volume remain agnostic regarding the Polanyian thesis of a double movement regarding globalization in which one simply assumes that each stage of rapid marketization in which the state retreats from regulating economic forces is followed by a more liberal and socially oriented stage in which egalitarian social movements have increasing success¹⁵.

Among antiglobalists Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello, and Brendan Smith address the results of efforts from below to redirect globalization in *Globalization from Below: The Power of Solidarity*. They argue that the final outcome is not now known. The possibilities include 'a war of all against all, world domination by a single superpower, a tyrannical alliance of global elites, global ecological catastrophe, or some combination thereof'¹⁶. So, what people decide to do can make a difference. Brecher, Costello, and Smith, while they know the outcome they favor, do not promise victory and admit that the final result may be even worse than our present situation.

These qualified arguments by globalists and antiglobalists have in common a view that since the outcome is not predetermined, human action is relevant. What we do can make a difference. This message is appropriate regardless of where one falls in political debates on how to assess globalization.

D. The Special Discipline Approach to Globalism

David M. Rasmussen noted more than thirty years ago that scholars should beyond the Kantian view of autonomous disciplines¹⁷. This need is especially relevant in trying to intellectually grasp and critically assess globalization. Nevertheless, some writers favor a certain discipline or set of disciplines for treating globalism.

One text that stresses a specific discipline for understanding globalization is *Globalization and its Critics: Perspectives from Political Economy*, edited by Randall D. Germain¹⁸. This book, prepared under the auspices of the Political Economy Research Centre (PERC) of the University of Sheffield, contends that the perspective of political economy provides the needed interdisciplinary standpoint for exploring the new issues posed

¹³ Gay, W. C. The Russell-Hook Debates of 1958: Arguments from the Extremes on Nuclear War and the Soviet Union // In the Interest of Peace: A Spectrum of Philosophical Perspectives / Ed. by K. H. Klein and J. C. Kunkel. – Wakefield (N. H.): Longwood Academic, 1990. – P. 79–95.

¹⁴ We make this point in a book surveying the literature on the nuclear arms race. See Gay, W. C., Pearson, M. The Nuclear Arms Race. – Chicago (Ill.): American Library Association, 1987. – P. 58–59.

¹⁵ Murphy, C. N., ed. *Egalitarian Politics in the Age of Globalization*. – Chippenham: Palgrave, 2002. – P. 211.

¹⁶ Brecher, J., Costello, T., Smith, B. *Globalization from Below: The Power of Solidarity*. – Cambridge (Mas.): South End Press, 2000. – P. XIV.

¹⁷ This point is made in the inaugural issue of *Cultural Hermeneutics*, a journal now published under the title of *Philosophy and Social Criticism*. See Rasmussen, D. M. Between Autonomy and Sociality // *Cultural Hermeneutics* 1:1 (April 1973). – P. 3–45.

¹⁸ Germain, R. D., ed. *Globalization and its Critics: Perspectives from Political Economy*. – London: Macmillan Press, 2000.

by globalism. Harold James provides a more narrow perspective and conclusion in *The End of Globalization: Lessons from the Great Depression*¹⁹. He maintains that globalism will collapse and the model for understanding it is found in the Great Depression.

While broad and even narrow economic analyses can be helpful, they alone cannot provide sufficient understanding. So, instead of turning to one discipline or to a rather restricted set of disciplines, I favor a broadly multi-disciplinary and value-oriented approach. I find such an approach in Global Studies, and, as a philosopher, I am especially pleased that throughout its history Global Studies has included philosophy as a key component. I turn now to providing my reasons for supporting the role of Global Studies in order to understand and assess globalism.

2. The Role of Philosophy in Global Studies

Historically, the field of Global Studies, while being multidisciplinary, is still closely connected with philosophy broadly understood. This connection, however, is more evident outside than within the United States. Perhaps even more surprising is the connection that Concerned Philosophers for Peace has had within international forums that have helped advance the field of Global Studies. Put briefly, Global Studies has gone through three stages. The first stage occurred in the 1960s when the world scholarly community began to study seriously the consequences of globalization. The second stage occurred in the 1970s and 1980s when, as a result of the Cold War, Global Studies was advanced separately in the West and in the Soviet Union. The third stage covers the last fifteen years, when, since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, a more integrated field of Global Studies has emerged. About forty years separate the emergence, on the one hand, of the first major institutions devoted to the study of globalization and subsequent work of groups like ‘The Club of Rome’ and, on the other hand, the publication of the first integrative and interdisciplinary international encyclopedia devoted to Global Studies²⁰. I will address briefly the Cold War division and the post-Cold War integration of Global Studies, and I will then address some important normative issues.

A. The Temporary East-West Bifurcation of Global Studies

The East-West political divisions during the Cold War led to an extended, but not permanent, bifurcation of the work done in Global Studies. Consequently, the post-Cold War unification of Global Studies has had to overcome differences in problems, methods, and vocabularies that characterized Global Studies in the Soviet Union and in the West during the Cold War. ‘Global Studies in the Soviet Union’ by Viktor A. Los²¹ and ‘Global Studies in the West’ by Anatoli I. Utkin²² are essays that accurately and succinctly present these differences. Given the very useful historical and conceptual overviews that they provide, I will not need to take the time here to summarize these differences in approach during the Cold War.

Instead, I will provide some remarks regarding my personal involvement and the involvement of Concerned Philosophers for Peace in the emergence of the third stage of Global Studies. The disintegration of the Soviet Union took most Sovietologists and other political analysts by surprise. In fact, especially during the 1980s and the nuclear buildup of the Reagan Administration, many people in the United States, the Soviet Union,

¹⁹ James, H. *The End of Globalization: Lessons from the Great Depression*. – Cambridge (Mas.): Harvard University Press, 2001.

²⁰ See the references in notes 7, 21–22, 24, and 27–31.

²¹ Los, V. A. *Global Studies in the Soviet Union // Global Studies Encyclopedia*. – P. 210–214.

²² Utkin, A. I. *Global Studies in the West // Global Studies Encyclopedia*. – P. 215–217.

and Europe, as well as elsewhere, feared the possibility that the United States and the Soviet Union would lapse into a nuclear war that might largely destroy both of these modern technologically advanced societies. Many grass roots and professional organizations emerged that sought to reduce the tensions between the superpowers.

One result of the glasnost introduced by Soviet Premier Mikhail S. Gorbachev was that more direct contact between American and Soviet philosophers became possible toward the end of the 1980s. The American group that organized an initial visit in 1988 was called 'SAVI' for Soviet and American Visits and Interaction. As Pierre Bourdieu has noted the names of organizations are often tied to historical periods or events; even more specifically, the name of a professional group often 'records a particular state of struggles and negotiations over the official designations'²³. Such was the case for SAVI and also for Concerned Philosophers for Peace. With the latter group the inception, the name, and the subsequent development occurred in response to the perceived threat of the Reagan nuclear buildup, although, while keeping the same name, this organization has continued to respond to developments within national and global militarism and has continued close ties with philosophers in the subsequent Russian Federation²⁴.

Several years after the formation of Concerned Philosophers for Peace and with the formation of SAVI, I was among the group of American philosophers who participated in meetings in Moscow that brought us face to face with Soviet colleagues in philosophy²⁵. While most of our meetings took place at the Institute of Philosophy in Moscow, one afternoon in August 1988 we visited the office of the Philosophical Society of the U.S.S.R. where we learned that Soviet philosophers regarded the two most pressing global problems to be war, especially the threat of nuclear war, and ecology, especially the problems of environmental degradation. This difference in assessment reflects very well the distinct paths being taken during the 1970s and 1980s in Western and Soviet Global Studies.

Philosophically, another measure of the attention of philosophers to global issues can be found in the programs of the World Congress of Philosophy, which meets every five years. Although globalization was addressed in a variety of panels at the 1988 meeting in Brighton, at the 1993 meeting in Moscow, and at the 1998 meeting in Boston, globalization was central to the 21st World Congress of Philosophy in Istanbul, Turkey. This congress met in August 2003 and focused on Philosophy Facing Global Problems²⁶. At the 21st World Congress of Philosophy, the Russian and English editions of *Global Studies Encyclopedia* were released. (At both the meeting in Boston and the meeting in Istanbul, the Russian Philosophical Society and Concerned Philosophers for Peace conducted joint sessions on these topics.)

B. Normative Components of Global Studies

Another writer who has addressed the connection of Global Studies to philosophy is Thomas C. Daffern²⁷. In addition to my also stressing this connection in this essay,

²³ Bourdieu, P. *Language and Symbolic Power* / Ed. J. B. Thompson, transl. by G. Raymond and M. Adamson. – Cambridge (Mas.): Harvard University Press, 1991. – P. 240.

²⁴ Gay, W. C. Concerned Philosophers for Peace (CPP) // *Global Studies Encyclopedia*. – P. 80–82. This essay provides a history of Concerned Philosophers for peace.

²⁵ Lee, S. The 1988 Moscow SAVI Conference: An American Report // *Concerned Philosophers For Peace Newsletter* 8: 2 (October 1988). – P. 5–6; and Petrovsky, H. The 1988 Moscow SAVI Conference: A Soviet Report // *Ibid.* – P. 5–6.

²⁶ Gay, W. C. With Russian Colleagues at the World Congress // *Concerned Philosophers For Peace Newsletter* 23: 1–2 (Spring – Fall 2003). – P. 16. This essay discusses joint programs of the Russian Philosophical Society and Concerned Philosophers for Peace at the World Congress of Philosophy.

²⁷ Daffern, T. C. *Global Studies and Philosophy* // *Global Studies Encyclopedia*. – P. 204–206.

I have elsewhere tried to show how the former Soviet-style Global Studies and World Order Studies in the West have key values in common²⁸. However, for a very good portrayal of the field and its value orientation, I find most helpful the essay on 'Global Studies' by Ivan I. Mazour and Alexander N. Chumakov²⁹. Also helpful are two essays by Chumakov on the classification of and criteria for global problems³⁰.

What issues are addressed by Global Studies? Mazour and Chumakov note that three main topics are addressed: (1) globalization processes, (2) the global problems generated by globalization processes, and (3) augmenting positive and reducing negative consequences of these processes for human beings and the biosphere³¹. The focus is on human rights and the environment and leads to anti-militarism since militarism violates both.

Global Studies seeks to address the root causes of global changes and the ensuing problems. Consequently, investigations go back to the history of the formation of modern civilization. Such investigations include both the degradation of the environment and the degradation of human beings themselves within world capitalist organization that currently describes itself as the free market.

Conclusion: The Future of Our Planet

In examining the views of several writers, I have observed that globalism and antiglobalism each have positive and negative components. Moreover, I have maintained that whether the future for our planet is bright or bleak will not be determined exclusively by whether we accelerate or decelerate the processes of globalization. I have stressed that the complexity of the issues demands a highly multidisciplinary and value-oriented approach toward sustaining the planetary eco-system and respecting the rights of human beings with it. On many levels, human beings, whatever they call themselves and their views, continue to threaten the environment and human life by means of military spending and especially wars. Regardless of where one stands in debates on regulating the global economy, to the degree that capitalism is unregulated it contributes to environmental degradation.

Documenting the damages of human activities on the environment and on human beings themselves and analyzing and extrapolating trends are complex multidisciplinary tasks that need to be open ended yet value centered. Over the last few years, I find myself increasingly more in agreement with the views I heard articulated in Moscow in August 1988. Military and environment threats pose the greatest danger whether we call ourselves globalists or antiglobalists³². Global Studies does not settle the political debates, but it does provide a post-Cold War perspective in which past East-West and continuing North-South differences can be set aside in the face of our global challenge to protect our basic human rights and the fragile eco-system upon which the continuation of all life on this planet depends.

²⁸ Gay, W. C. *Marxism and Global Values* // *Global Studies Encyclopedia*. – P. 337–339.

²⁹ Mazour, I. I., Chumakov, A. N. *Global Studies* // *Global Studies Encyclopedia*. – P. 200–203.

³⁰ Chumakov, A. N. *Global Problems, Classification of* // *Global Studies Encyclopedia*. – P. 184–187, and Chumakov, A. N. *Global Problems, Criteria of* // *Global Studies Encyclopedia*. – P. 187–190.

³¹ Mazour, I. I., Chumakov, A. N. *Global Studies* // *Global Studies Encyclopedia*. – P. 200.

³² Gay, W. C. *Environmental Issues, Pollution, and the Military* // *An Encyclopedia of War and Ethics* / Ed. by D. A. Wells. – Westport (Con.): Greenwood Publishers, 1996. – P. 132–135.