

# From International Relations to Alternative Globalisations

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*Despite some strenuous efforts, International Relations has struggled to escape the limitations of state centrism. Building on a transnational approach to globalisation - acknowledging that, of course, states and what can loosely (in my view ideologically) be termed national societies still exist but challenging their continuing influence and power - this paper seeks to show that the concept of transnational practices provides a better tool to analyze and explain the contemporary world than the concept of international relations.<sup>1</sup> Global studies in general are entering a new and more mature phase reflected in the fact that the idea of globalisation is common currency around the world. However, the concept is used in a bewildering variety of ways. My approach distinguishes three modes of globalisation in theory and practice, namely: generic globalisation, capitalist globalisation, and alternative globalisations. I argue that capitalist globalization undermines the emancipatory potential of generic globalisation. Some implications of this for international relations clearly follow.*

Globalisation, a rather annoying umbrella concept that broke into public consciousness in various guises in the later decades of the twentieth century, appears now to be behaving almost like a separate discipline within the social sciences. The concept has penetrated more or less all the recognized social sciences as well as the humanities that coexist around their fringes, notably the study of literature, architecture, art and music. While some nervous scholars see it as a threat to the substantive and methodological purity of their subjects and disciplines - the terms themselves are instructive - there is a growing general consensus in business, academia, politics and popular culture that we are now, in one way or another, in the era of globalisation. Nowhere is this more threatening than in the realm of International Relations (hereafter IR) both as a scholarly pursuit and as practical politics, for the obvious reason that stronger versions of the theory of globalisation critically undermine its very rationale, the

primacy of the national state. My argument is that the version of globalisation theory conceptualized as the transnational practices approach does indeed throw serious doubt on the intellectual coherence and methodological viability of IR as it is currently pursued.<sup>2</sup>

Globalisation as a scholarly concept clearly needs to be deconstructed. In order to do this I propose to distinguish three modes of globalisation in theory and practice - what may be termed the silent qualifiers of globalization - namely: generic, capitalist, and alternative globalisations. Capitalist globalisation is widely held to be failing to resolve two fundamental crises. These are the class polarization crisis - capitalist globalisation simultaneously enriches more people all over the world than ever before in human history, but cannot bring the poorest out of debilitating poverty in most societies, and those in the middle seem fated to suffer cyclical bouts of economic insecurity, and the crisis of ecological unsustainability - capitalist globalisation spreads industrial civilization all over a planet that cannot cope. In order to see this clearly I think it is necessary to have a critical concept of generic globalisation.

### **Generic Globalisation**

Globalisation in a generic sense, which is too often confused with its dominant actually existing type, capitalist globalisation, is defined here in terms of (i) the electronic revolution; (ii) postcolonialisms; (iii) the creation of transnational social spaces; and (iv) qualitatively new forms of cosmopolitanism. These four defining characteristics of generic globalisation, while parts of a structural whole, display distinct trajectories. An enormous amount of theory and research in recent decades has focused on the electronic revolution and postcolonialisms, but the idea of transnational social spaces is of relatively recent origin and opens up some new lines of theory and research. The last, new forms of cosmopolitanism, is in a different category. The idea of cosmopolitanism is ancient and had its most important modernist reincarnation in Kant's flawed proposal at the end of the eighteenth century for the achievement of perpetual peace through the construction of a cosmopolitan order. A growing literature suggests that any new framework for theorizing and researching globalisation requires systematic inquiry into the prospects for new forms of cosmopolitanism, one that genuinely transcends nationalism (See Vertovec & Cohen, 2002).

The electronic revolution, postcolonialisms, transnational social spaces, and cosmopolitanism offer tremendous emancipatory potential over a wide range of economic, political and social issues. However, as capitalism began to globalise in the second half of the twentieth century, the emancipatory potential of generic globalisation has been systematically undermined. This process can be fruitfully theorized and researched with the concept of transnational practices; practices that cross state

boundaries but do not necessarily originate with state agencies or actors. The concept of transnational practices is an attempt to make more concrete the central issues raised in the debate over globalisation: notably, the role of the state, the national economy, and local and global cultures.<sup>3</sup> Analytically, transnational practices operate in three spheres, the economic, the political, and the cultural-ideological. The whole is what I mean by the global system. The drivers of global capitalism have been the dominant forces in the global system at least since the middle of the twentieth century. Individuals, groups, institutions and even whole communities, local, national or transnational, can exist as they have always done outside the orbit of capitalist globalisation but this is becoming increasingly more difficult as it penetrates ever more widely and deeply. The building blocks of the theory of capitalist globalisation are the transnational corporation (TNC), the characteristic institutional form of economic transnational practices; a still-evolving transnational capitalist class in the political sphere; and, in the culture-ideology sphere, the culture-ideology of consumerism. The rationale that capitalism will provide for happiness, or at least satisfaction, on a global scale is fundamentally a claim that the culture-ideology of consumerism will make us happy. Happiness is used here in the sense of satisfaction of people's basic material and emotional needs, with the proviso that capitalist globalisation systematically blurs the difference between basic and false needs. Capitalist globalisers argue that the TNCs, owned and controlled by the transnational capitalist class, are the best means to achieve the satisfaction of all needs through the culture-ideology of consumerism.

This theoretical framework for the study of globalisation presents a series of challenges to IR as it is conventionally conceptualized.<sup>1</sup> I locate my own work within a Marx-inspired conception of globalisation. In *Sociology of the Global System* (first published in 1991) an explicit model of the global capitalism approach to globalisation was proposed and subsequently in *Globalization: Capitalism and its alternatives* (2002) this was expanded to include generic globalisation. The point of these models was to develop a concept of the global that involves more than the relations between states. Because the world is organized in terms of separate countries, the 'natural' approach to the global system is state-centrist - thus *Inter-national* Relations as academic and political institutions and practices - emphasizing the role of the state and giving the current system of nation-states prime importance in most hierarchies of explanation. While not ignoring the state, the idea of transnational practices offers in addition both an analytical tool and a method that helps us to put the state in its proper place when we do substantive research.

The concept of transnational practices is introduced to cope theoretically and empirically with questions that the conventional state-centrist versions of international society or the system of nation-states (which often pass for a global model) cannot deal with adequately or at all. For example, how do we cope with the obvious problem many theories (notably theories of imperialism or dependency or superpowers) raise when

they claim that one country exploits another? Does this mean that the poor in the USA exploit the rich in Brazil, the poor in the UK exploit the rich in Nigeria? Transnational practices direct attention, where appropriate, to transnational capitalists and their corporations, not to countries and their governments and to the culture-ideology of consumerism not nationalist ideologies. The research agenda for capitalist globalisation is concerned with how TNCs, the transnational capitalist class and the culture-ideology of consumerism operate systematically to transform the world in terms of the global capitalist project.

Politically, this is organized by the transnational capitalist class (TCC), comprising the following four fractions:

- Those who own and control major TNCs (corporate fraction)
- Globalising bureaucrats and politicians (state fraction)
- Globalising professionals (technical fraction)
- Merchants and media (consumerist fraction)

The concept of the transnational capitalist class implies that there is one central, transnational capitalist class that makes system-wide decisions, and that it connects with the TCC in each locality. The local affiliates of the TCC sees its mission as organizing the conditions under which its interests and the interests of the system (which usually, but not always, coincide) can be furthered within the context of particular countries, regions and communities. There is, thus, plenty of scope for research on the globalising features of this class, its fractions in particular localities and those who oppose it, notably globalising social movements and the international labour movement. The lack of success of trade unions in attempting to organize internationally, let alone globally, has led to a focus of attention on social movements such as feminism, environmentalism and various poor people's movements (See Smith, 2008).

The culture-ideology of consumerism is a critical reflection on the primarily state-centrist concepts of cultural and media imperialism, in so far as it narrows the focus of these very general ideas by prioritizing the exceptional place of consumption and consumerism in capitalist globalisation. The effect of the culture-ideology of consumerism is to increase the range of consumption expectations and aspirations without necessarily ensuring the income to buy. The theory of capitalist globalisation proposed here argues that capitalism is built on the false promise that a more direct integration of local communities with global capitalism will lead to a better life for everyone. This has certainly been the case for many (but by no means all) people in the countries of the capitalist core, but it remains to be seen whether everyone in the world can realistically expect ever to live like most of the population in the so-called First World. The extent to which economic and environmental constraints on the private

accumulation of capital challenge the global capitalist project in general, and its culture-ideology of consumerism in particular, is a central issue.

Generally, IR scholars (as well as some globalisation researchers from other disciplines themselves) treat globalisation as a long-standing feature of world history. The argument that we need to deconstruct the analytically feeble general concept of *globalisation* into generic, capitalist and alternative globalisations suggests a more precise chronology. The productive force of generic globalisation dates from the inception of the electronic revolution, around the 1960s, which transformed systems of production, distribution and exchange - capitalist globalization, in effect, creates a new mode of production. For all its global potential, IR seems unable to distinguish clearly between transnational and state-centrist levels of analyses, notably in the still central superpower framework often, but not of course always, based on rather naïve concepts of a single national interest which, I would argue, is rendered redundant by the transnational practices approach to globalisation. This debate, of course, has been raging fiercely in Marxist circles for over a century as scholars and/or participants in the class struggle agonized under the, often unbearable, theoretical and practical pressures of class and perceived national interest. Since the 1960s, the twin crises of class polarization and ecological unsustainability are at the focus of radical critiques of capitalist globalisation and also offer challenges to IR. In this sense of the term, it is difficult to see how IR can be adequately globalised. Having said that, it is only fair to acknowledge that some globalisation scholars appear to agree that there is nothing essentially new about globalisation. This is ironic due to the fact that without the stimulus of what has been termed the Gramscian turn in IR in recent decades, the more recent flowering of globalisation theory and research might have been far less fruitful.

How can a deeper understanding of the emancipatory potential of generic globalisation help us out of the impasse, represented at one level by the twin crises of capitalist globalisation and at another more prosaic level the problem of IR in the era of globalisation? The relationship between generic globalisation in the abstract and capitalist globalisation in the concrete is relatively straightforward. Under the conditions of capitalist globalisation the emancipatory potential of generic globalisation is expropriated by the TCC and, where possible, turned into opportunities for private profit. When the electronic revolution began to transform the technological base and global scope of the electronic mass media in the 1960s it was widely heralded as a tremendous tool for doing good, for bringing education and information cheaply and efficiently to the poorest and most underprivileged. Now, half a century later, while TV, the internet, mobile phones and the rest support enclaves of education and useful information, these are swamped by the culture-ideology of consumerism, driven by a transnational capitalist class revolving round the major transnational corporations, whose prime interest is in corporate profits with occasional nods in the direction of corporate

social responsibility (See Dinan and Miller, 2007). The electronic revolution is, of course, also transforming most of the material structure and infrastructure of the world, the ever-expanding cities which now accommodate more people than live in the countryside, means of transport within and to and from these cities, the construction of homes and what fills the homes of those who are able to afford them, the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the financial instruments (credit cards, bank loans, mortgages) that keep the system moving. The vast apparatus of retailing, marketing, advertising and mass media in general that ensures people continue buying and fuels an apparently insatiable appetite for debt - the other side of the consumerism coin - presents a crippling problem for the transnational capitalist class in the era of capitalist globalisation, of which the so-called sub-prime mortgage crisis is only the most recent manifestation. Driven by its shareholder driven profit growth imperative, big business becomes obsessed with short-term success in the stock market and drags smaller businesses along with it in a frenzy of consumerism.<sup>4</sup>

The electronic revolution provides a multitude of opportunities for the transnational capitalist class to present its case, and for its critics to challenge its discourse, practices and reach - the anti-capitalist position in its widest sense. Virtually all major corporations and their local affiliates have extensive websites that serve as both windows (no pun intended) for their wares, platforms for their business practices, and apologia when things go wrong. Industry associations of various types, many presenting themselves as independent experts and concealing their true provenance and funding, also flood cyberspace. Many (perhaps most) medium and small local businesses in the richer societies and in major cities all over the world also have a presence on the Internet. The business media - manifestations of newspaper, magazine and other specialist publications - have been marketing themselves in electronic form for some years.

However, capitalist globalisation, so utterly reliant on the electronic revolution, cannot prevent counter-hegemonic challenges on the Internet and related media. Despite the ever-present inducements of the culture-ideology of consumerism every time one logs on to the Internet, through on-screen advertising, stock market data and celebrity gossip, there is plenty of opportunity for those who wish to get past the primary consumerist gatekeepers to do so. For example, the 12 websites cited by Dinan and Miller (2007, p.302-303) give easy access to many thousands more, and we have now got to the stage that almost any claim that is made in the interests of global capital could in principle be challenged almost instantaneously by first-hand testimony broadcast globally via the internet. The possibility for mobilizing against corporate malpractice by this means is historically unprecedented.

The postcolonial - the second criterion of generic globalization - works in two main ways. In the first place, the happy coincidence (for the TCC) of the electronic revolution and formal political decolonialization in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean in the

decades after the Second World War created sites for offshore production and/or sourcing. These economic transnational practices, whereby corporations domiciled in one country relocate some or all of their activities to another country, profitably re-invent the traditional colonial practice of companies in the countries of the colonial powers extracting raw materials from their colonies, turning them into manufactured goods at home and exporting some back to the colonies. In this manner the emancipatory potential of postcolonialism in the economic sphere - namely the increasing capacity of former colonies to produce what is needed by their own populations and for export - is turned into a factor in the relentless drive for increased profitability under conditions of capitalist globalisation. The TCC narrative for postcolonialism is the increasing prosperity of what used to be called the Third World or the developing countries (now, more commonly, the global South) and the annual reports of major global corporations often feature glossy pictures of the benefits brought to poor people in poor countries by their products. There is no doubt that capitalist globalisation, often directly attributed to the transnational corporations and their affiliates and in some cases to Third World TNCs, has created more wealth for the already wealthy and enriched some new groups in former colonies. But what the TNCs in the Third World have singularly failed to do, despite the promises of capitalist globalisation and the gloss of corporate PR, is to provide the opportunities for large numbers of the poorest people to rise out of poverty in persistently poor communities. The crisis of class polarization refers to this triple effect of capitalist globalisation in former colonies: simultaneously enriching rapidly increasing minorities, failing to bring the poorest out of debilitating poverty, and cementing economic insecurity for those in the middle. There are, of course, other reasons for enrichment, poverty and insecurity. My point is that despite promises and institution-building for development - a concept increasingly replaced by globalisation in recent years - since the 1950s and increasing neo-liberal so-called free trade, the rich are getting richer and the poorest are still desperately poor while capitalist globalisation marches on triumphantly all over the world. The clarion calls of those who speak on behalf of the TCC ring hollow outside the enclaves of the rich in the postcolonial world despite the fact that these enclaves are more numerous.

The TCC has capitalized on what Edward Said famously labelled Orientalism, the capacity of Western thinkers, often with the help of indigenous intellectuals, to create worldviews for those in the Orient that inhibit their ability to throw off the mental shackles of colonialism. Corporate discourse as a globalising practice reproduces standards and values for the whole world that emanate from the heartlands of capitalist globalisation. As in the case of the 19<sup>th</sup> century 'knowledge' producers that Said implicates in the production and dissemination of Orientalism, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century northern occidental business experts join forces with their southern oriental counterparts (often trained in the same or related Business Schools and TNCs) to produce a global business,

largely consumerist, view of the world. Everywhere in the era of capitalist globalisation, the gaps between the richest and the poorest are widening at alarming rates.

The emancipatory potential of postcolonialisms is a highly contentious matter. Some argue that postcolonialism simply continues the project of colonialism and orientalism, largely through the efforts of scholars from the former colonies who have found lucrative and comfortable jobs in universities and other professional niches in the west, writing much but changing little, while others argue that by their efforts and exceptional sensibilities these scholars are transforming not only how the former colonies see themselves but how the former colonial powers see themselves. These disputes cannot be settled here, but the fact that they are taking place and are raising questions for globalisation theorists and researchers, does suggest at least some emancipatory potential (see, for example, the wide variety of positions in Krishnaswamy & Hawley 2008). What is undeniable is that those who have been conceptualized as 'the others' are fighting back on an unprecedented scale against capitalist globalisation at home and abroad, whether in defence of livelihoods under threat from TNCs in the rainforests, in neighbourhoods in Third and First World cities, along coasts, rivers and lakes - in short, wherever capitalist globalization destroys people's livelihoods without providing for alternative and sustainable ways of making a living.<sup>5</sup> As Rajagopal (2003) argues, an important part of this fight back is the insertion of a discourse of resistance into the system of international law that legitimates the corporate capture of the world's human and material resources. The TCC trumpets the successes of so-called development, of which there are some, but sees it as no part of its 'responsibility' to do much more.

The third criterion of generic globalization - the creation of transnational social spaces - may be viewed from above and below. A vivid illustration of the difference is the comparison of the World Economic Forum and the World Social Forum, and the different social movements they entail (Smith, 2008), though their respective transnational social spaces extend far beyond the original sources at Davos and Porto Alegre even, on occasion, overlapping via video conferencing. Again, the key here is the opportunities provided by the electronic revolution for relatively cheap and convenient transnational communication both in terms of moving people and information. The hallmark of the material transnational social space of capitalist globalisation was the invention of the shopping mall, with its ubiquitous chain stores and restaurants cleverly engendering intimations of modernity while taking advantage of any elements of indigenous and/or traditional cultural traits, including architectural design, that can turn a profit. This is sold by the ideologues of the TCC as 'modernity in traditional societies', opportunities to indulge in a globalising bourgeois life style for those who are rich as well as those who cannot really afford to do so. These are the spaces where the culture-ideology of consumerism and its lure of the good life, invariably at the expense of the good society, are made concrete.

The electronic revolution is also manifest in the ways that it facilitates the creation of transnational social space within which top-down legislation in the interests of those who control global capitalism moves freely, through the arcane statutes of international commercial law and the regulations of the World Trade Organization (WTO), membership of which is the sine qua non of admission to the club for the winners in the capitalist globalisation game. The hypocrisy of a system of international trade characterized, on the one hand, by massive EU and US government subsidies to agricultural producers and big food interests and on the other, by constant sermonizing by EU and US globalising politicians and officials to the rest of the world to the effect that the road to prosperity is inhibited by protectionism, is breathtaking. Indeed, it is one of the great triumphs of TCC propaganda that this hypocrisy has prevailed relatively unchallenged for so long. Capitalist globalisation has created a series of transnational social spaces in which the values and interests of those who control the system of international trade and investment literally and metaphorically bulldoze all those who try to resist them.

However, as always, the emancipatory potential of generic globalisation creates opportunities for those who wish to challenge the system from below. The transnational social spaces created by the anti-corporate social movements, brought into being by the information and communications opportunities provided by the world wide web and its accessories, provide a virtual reality that complements the day to day reality of standing up against corporate malpractice and those corporate practices that punish the underprivileged (Dinan & Miller, 2007).

The final characteristic of generic globalisation - qualitatively new forms of cosmopolitanism - is in a different category to the other three because of its historical genesis. The common theme that runs through all these ideas of cosmopolitanism is the difficult necessity of building a world in which people live at peace with one another, accepting differences without fear or hatred. Capitalist globalisation has, albeit indirectly, laid its claim to provide a basis for this, epitomized in the slogan (possibly thought up by a PR consultant) that no two countries with branches of McDonald's have ever gone to war. While war and violence have always been profitable for some fractions of capital, the argument that the culture-ideology of consumerism works best in a peaceful, if competitive environment, suggests that war and violence are not sustainable drivers of capitalist globalisation. Even in the problematic sphere of energy security, few if any global capitalists argued that invading Iraq was the most efficient means of ensuring oil supplies for the West. But the simple idea that doing business with other people is a good in itself conceals the reality of what doing business under the conditions of capitalist globalisation actually entails, namely exacerbating the twin crises of class polarization and ecological unsustainability. If it can be demonstrated that capitalist globalisation cannot resolve these crises but can only make them worse then the discourse of capitalist

globalisation has to be seen as part of the problem and not part of the solution. Further, as Leichenko and O'Brien (2007) convincingly argue, these two crises are often linked.

To talk of socialism these days invites scorn, pity and bemusement in varying measure. Certainly, the historical experience of actually existing (mostly so-called) socialisms and communisms has been mixed, to say the least. The emergence of generic globalisation and its concrete manifestation in capitalist globalisation since the middle of the twentieth century have undoubtedly forced us to rethink the tenets of all the variants of classical socialism and communism. We can identify fundamental differences between capitalist globalisation and socialist globalisation in the economic, political, and culture-ideology spheres. In the economic sphere, while capitalist globalisation (through the TNCs) prioritizes the accumulation of private profit, socialist globalisation would prioritize the creation of employment that is worthwhile both for individuals and for the community as a whole. In the political sphere, while capitalist globalisation (through the TCC) organizes society through parliamentary democracy based largely on states and national societies, socialist globalisation would seek to organize society through participatory forms of democracy. And in the culture-ideology sphere, while the value system of capitalist globalisation revolves round the culture-ideology of consumerism, the value system of socialist globalisation revolves around human rights and responsibilities. These three differences are structurally inter-connected.

The potential for the gradual elimination of the culture-ideology of consumerism and its replacement with a culture-ideology of human rights and responsibilities means, briefly, that instead of our possessions being the main focus of our cultures and the basis of our values, our lives should be lived with regard to a universally agreed system of human rights and the responsibilities to others that these rights entail. This does not imply that we should stop consuming. What it implies is that we should evaluate our consumption in terms of our rights and responsibilities and that this should become a series of interlocking and mutually supportive globalising transnational practices. By genuinely expanding the culture-ideology of human rights from the civil and political spheres, in which capitalist globalisation has often had a relatively positive influence, to the economic and social spheres, which represents a profound challenge to capitalist globalisation, we can begin to seriously tackle the crises of class polarization and ecological unsustainability (See Sklair 2009a).

How do we get from here to there? The present system of states and international society is clearly not adequate for the task. We must acknowledge that 'here' is not one place but many places and that these analytic places are themselves dynamic complexes of material realities and political opportunities. 'There' is also going to be many places. However, and this is the main and strong lesson that this argument hopes to deliver for the so-called anti-globalization movement: the contradictions of capitalist globalisation can only be resolved in the interests of the vast majority by grasping the

dynamics and opportunities of generic globalisation and mobilizing them to create the conditions for successful socialist globalisation. In my view this will involve a gradual withering away of the state, not the privatization of state functions that the TCC driving neo-liberal capitalist globalisation is currently engaged in but a multitude of networks of producer-consumer co-operatives, from the small and localized to the large and transnational, as the transition from the international system that we have now begins to occur.<sup>6</sup>

The creation of socialist globalisation will produce new forms of transnational practices. Transnational economic units will tend to be on a smaller and more sustainable scale than the major TNCs of today; transnational political practices will be driven by democratic coalitions of self-governing and co-operative communities, not the unaccountable, unelected and individualistic transnational capitalist class working through globalising politicians and bureaucrats in national political parties. And cultures and ideologies will reflect the finer qualities of human life not the desperate variety of the culture-ideology of consumerism. These sentiments might appear utopian, indeed they are, and other alternatives are also possible, but in the long term, muddling through with capitalist globalisation is not a viable option if the planet and all those who live on it are to survive.

The argument up to this point has been at the structural level, outlining the structures and institutions that would be necessary to make a transition from capitalist to alternative - whether called socialist or not - globalisations possible. While structures like democracy and legal regimes protecting the human rights of vulnerable people, however imperfect, make it more likely that the strong and the privileged as well as the weak and the under-privileged will tend to behave decently towards those they come into contact with, there are other more personal and intimate factors that make such outcomes even more likely. Prime amongst these are parenting practices, particularly the interactions between parents and children. Recent research strongly suggests important connections between the social relationships that parents form with new-born babies and the development of the infant brain which, in turn, relates to future emotional well being. It may be too early to claim the emergence of a neuroscience of socialist cosmopolitanism, but the evidence already exists to sustain the links between parental responses to the behaviour of babies and the development of the infant nervous system and the likelihood of suffering from or avoiding debilitating emotional problems in later life. Any transition from capitalism to a more equitable and sustainable world will require billions of people who are willing and able genuinely to trust their fellow human beings and the basis for such trust will need to be laid down in early childhood.<sup>6</sup>

Communities, cities, subnational regions, whole countries, multi-country unions and even transnational co-operative associations could all in principle try to make their own arrangements for checking and reversing class polarization and ecological

unsustainability and some have already started to do so, but this is clearly a very long-term project.<sup>7</sup> It is unlikely to occur in a world dominated by transnational corporations, run by the transnational capitalist class and inspired by the culture-ideology of consumerism. The focus of any new radical framework for globalisation theory and research - in contrast to a supine social science that limits its task to describing the status quo - is clearly to elaborate such alternatives within the context of genuinely democratic forms of globalisation. But we have little chance of successfully articulating such forms unless we understand what generic globalisation is and how capitalist globalisation really works. The state as it is now constituted and states as organised in terms of International Relations may not be the best frameworks for achieving the changes that are necessary, and it may be time to give concepts like transnational practices and generic globalisation more thought.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> This paper borrows from two of my previous publications, Sklair (2002; 2009b).
- <sup>2</sup> This brief discussion is not intended as a critique of the whole IR literature—a near impossible task—but a critique of the state-centrist and state primacy assumptions on which it is usually founded.
- <sup>3</sup> The increasing privatization of war and international conflict suggests that even this most intractable area of study in IR may also be becoming more vulnerable to theoretical and substantive challenges from globalization theory.
- <sup>4</sup> For an application of this theoretical framework to the present crisis see my interview with Jeb Sprague (Sprague, 2009). The main lesson I draw from the present crisis is that the need to start thinking seriously about alternative, non-capitalist, progressive forms of globalization is even more urgent than before.
- <sup>5</sup> As the BP-induced catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico shows, this is not restricted to Third World countries though it is instructive to compare the media and political attention paid to this with similar catastrophes off the coast of Nigeria and elsewhere.
- <sup>6</sup> Carmona (2004) discusses how the Cuban model of state resistance to neo-liberal globalization, despite adopting many of its methods and practices, may be one way beyond this impasse.
- <sup>7</sup> For an encouraging survey of research in this field, see Gerhardt (2004).
- <sup>8</sup> See, for one example among others, the transition in community movements that are springing up all over the world.

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