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Geographical perspectives on mapping globalisation

An introduction to the *JEG* Special Issue 'Mapping globalisation: geographical perspectives on international trade and investment'

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1. Introduction: mapping economic globalisation

Economic globalisation, by its very nature, demands serious attention from economic geographers. The processes that have, over the last few decades, led to dramatic increases in the intensity and extensity of international economic inter-dependence and integration are inherently and unavoidably spatial in character. Any international economic relationship – be it associated with trade, investment, finance, labour, or technology – is a reflection of, and partly constituted by, spatial difference. Hence in this special issue we coin the metaphor 'mapping globalisation' to highlight what we see as a pressing need for globalisation studies that analyse the phenomenon from theoretically and empirically rigorous *geographical* perspectives. We suggest that the four papers that follow this introduction are exemplars of the critical geographical research to which we allude. In speaking to an audience of both geographers and economists, we hope that this special issue will showcase the importance of exploring the complex and uneven geographies of economic globalisation, and indicate some ways in which such research can usefully proceed.

We would argue that the first step towards undertaking effective mappings of globalisation is to be explicit about how the phenomenon is being conceptualised and delineated. We are thus in strong agreement with Dicken et al. (1997, p.158) when they state that 'definitions are not mere semantic peccadilloes; they remain crucial not least because they caution against the kind of caricaturing of globalisation which has become all too common'. The tendency in the media and certain political and academic circles to simply label any kind of 'international' economic relation as indicative of globalisation quite simply destroys its usefulness as an analytical category. In other words, we simply have to be clear about what we mean by 'economic globalisation' and how it relates to, and contrasts with, other forms and processes of international economic restructuring. This is of course not a new argument – although we would argue it is still not made forcefully enough – and there is now a wealth of critical literature that can help in formulating effective and usable definitions of globalising processes. What we discern from this literature to be the most effective characterisation of economic globalisation can be summarised by the following set of inter-related assertions. This conceptual mapping of economic globalisation places us unequivocally

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in Held et al.'s (1999) 'transformationist' segment of the literature that sees globalisation as an ongoing transformative process, rather than either an unattainable end-state of universal interconnection (the sceptics), or an inexorable global force that will inevitably eradicate local differences and put paid to the nation state (the hyperglobalists).

(i) Economic globalisation is constituted by a set of processes that are increasing in extensity and intensity, but are not even approaching any kind of homogenised end state of universal global interconnection. Thus as a concept it represents a *qualitative* change in the nature of the global system, rather than an epochal shift to a global mode of organisation (Dicken, 1998; Held et al., 1999).

(ii) Economic globalisation is best represented as a relative increase in the functional integration of economic activity across national borders (i.e. characterised by complex interdependencies) and is therefore distinctive from simple internationalisation. Transnational corporations are playing a *relatively* more important, but by no means hegemonic, role in these processes that are uneven both across and within economic sectors (Dicken et al., 1997; Dicken, 1998).

(iii) Economic globalisation is not spatially homogenising, but instead depends upon, and contributes to, uneven geographic development at different scales. The spatial-economic pattern that results can perhaps be best described as a mosaic of interconnected national and subnational clusters of activities (Amin and Thrift, 1992). Different territories are integrated into the global system to greater or lesser extents, and some are currently excluded almost entirely (Dicken, 1998; Hoogvelt, 1997).

(iv) Economic globalisation is both leading to, and partly constituted by, a mutating of the role of the nation-state, which is not declining appreciably in importance. However, there has been a degree of 'hollowing-out' of functions to both supra-national and sub-national organisations (Boyer and Drache, 1996; Swyngedouw, 1997; Glassman, 1998; McGrew, 1998; Mittelman, 2000).

(v) Economic globalisation is however resulting in a reworking or 'relativising' of the different scales of economic activity (Jessop, 1999; Dicken et al., 2001). Two scales in particular have seen a *relative* rise in importance as a result. (1) The global city-region is argued by many to be an increasingly important scale for the co-ordination, regulation, and promotion of economic activity (Storper, 1997; Scott, 1998, 2001). (2) The three triadic regions – North America, Western Europe, and Japan/East Asia – are also becoming clearly visible, although more perhaps as scales of political and corporate integration rather than cohesive trade/FDI blocs (Mirza, 1998; Poon et al., 2001; Yeung et al., 2001).

(vi) Economic globalisation is as much a neoliberal discourse as a set of material processes. The two domains interact in complex but often mutually reinforcing ways. For example, certain neoliberal discourses 'naturalise' processes of globalisation, thereby constructing notions of economic space that lead to a deferral of political options to the global scale (Kelly, 1997, 1999; Marcuse, 1997; Robertson and Khondker, 1998).

(vii) Economic globalisation is not some kind of immutable inevitability, but a set of processes that is socially constructed, and therefore can be encouraged or resisted by actors/institutions at various scales (Cox, 1997; Kelly, 1999; Webber, 2000). Hence globalisation is a set of complex and conflicting tendencies, the outcomes of which often cannot be predicted *a priori* (Dicken et al., 1997; Yeung, 1998, 2000).

(viii) Economic globalisation is not significantly eroding the importance of national business systems, understood as distinctive configurations of institutionalised economic activities. Rather than being replaced or eroded by globalisation tendencies, national business systems are experiencing highly variable processes of reconfiguration as they are integrated at the international scale in a highly uneven manner (Doremus et al., 1998; Whitley, 1999; Yeung, 2000).

(ix) Economic globalisation is constituted and reflected by qualitative changes in nature of the organisation of economic activity, often associated with a rise in business networking, in particular through intra-firm (exploiting core competencies) and inter-firm networks (equity and non-equity arrangements such as subcontracting, strategic alliances, etc.) (Ruigrok and Van Tulder, 1995; Dicken, 1998; Held et al., 1999).

It goes without saying, of course, that a wide variety of theoretical and conceptual approaches can, and have been applied to the study of economic globalisation. In the subsequent three sections of this paper we introduce and offer preliminary evaluations of three broad schools of analysis that we believe are broadly consistent with our interpretation of economic globalisation and offer potential for *explaining* its uneven geographies, namely international political economy, commodity chains, and network approaches. The four papers that then follow all use variants of these approaches to explore in detail particular facets of globalisation. While we would generally tend to favour a network approach towards globalisation, we do not want to suggest that one framework is superior to the others. Rather, we hope to demonstrate that the differences between the theoretical frameworks are really a matter of emphasis, and their appropriateness can only really be judged in relation to the particular topic to which they are applied. The differing emphases of the three theoretical approaches are perhaps best thought of in terms of a simple spectrum running from those that emphasise the structures that constitute the global economy, to frameworks which focus more on the agency of the particular groups that in effect 'construct' economic globalisation. Thus, at the risk of caricaturing the schools of thought we are considering, we propose that international political economy can be seen as the most 'structural' interpretation of globalising processes, while variants of the network approach – actor network theory being particularly in vogue at the moment – clearly prioritise the agency that lies behind the formation of complex international networks. We see work that focuses on commodity chains or production systems more generally as falling in between the other two approaches on this notional structure-agency scale.

2. Regulating globalisation and international political economy

Three theoretical traditions in international political economy (IPE) are particularly concerned with how the global economy, and globalisation for that matter, are regulated and governed: neo-realism, neo-liberalism, and neo-Marxism (Gilpin, 1987; Smith et al., 1999). First, neo-realism emphasises the hegemonic stability of the nation state in the global economy. Its main theoretical focus is on the balance of power among competing nation states. Globalisation is viewed as an outcome of the internationalisation of state authority and control, for example the Americanisation of the global economy. Second, neo-liberalism de-emphasises the role of the nation state and instead focuses on the self-regulating power of market forces and individuals. In this variant of IPE, globalisation is conceptualised as the inevitable outcome of global competition among firms that seek self-interested goals of profit maximisation. The principles of free trade and comparative advantage are essential features of neoliberal economic policies that may be reluctantly pursed by nation states today. Third, neo-Marxism views the global economy as a capitalist system and national economies are invariably linked to each other's expansion. Globalisation is seen as a paradox of capitalist expansion that eventually leads to its own collapse due to over-accumulation, excessive exploitation, and decreasing profits. The nation state is seen as a supporter of capital's globalisation by providing essential services and support functions. Just as capital expands into every corner of the global economy, the nation state is also internationalising itself to serve the interests of capital (Picciotto, 1991).

While these three variants of IPE have been rigorously used to explain the complex interactions between globalisation processes and nation states, economic geographers have made contributions to this theoretical literature mainly via introducing the twin concepts of *geographical scales* and *uneven development* (see also Taylor et al., 2001). How then does the concept of geographical scale make a difference to our structural interpretation of the global economy? It is clear that none of the three variants of IPE has taken into account how global processes can be entangled with processes operating simultaneously at other geographical scales. For example, the globalisation of economic activities can be simply conceptualised as the celebration of neoliberalism and the death of the nation state on a global scale. This neoliberal interpretation of globalisation, however, clearly misses a key point – the multi-scalar nature of globalisation.

While it is true that few nation states today are able to unilaterally impose inward-looking protectionist economic policies to confront globalisation processes, it is certainly too premature to declare the death of these nation states. For globalisation is authored by nation states themselves in the first place through such processes as marketisation, deregulation, and liberalisation. Many nation states are also actively constructing a new global governance system via such international organisations as the IMF and the World Bank. What then is really happening to the governance of globalisation processes is that the nation state has relegated its regulatory power and authority either up-scale or down-scale. By up-scale, we mean the nation state is increasingly dependent on regional and global governance by supra-national institutions. The formation and consolidation of the European Union is perhaps the best example. By down-scale, we mean the emergence of local and regional governments in many advanced industrialised economies that increasingly take on the role of market regulation and growth promotion (see also MacKinnon and Phelps, 2001). In short, the political economy of globalisation processes must be embedded in explicit understandings of how these processes are regulated and governed at various geographical scales.

On the other hand, uneven development remains as the single most visible structural outcome of globalisation processes. Radical geographers had been studying uneven development well before globalisation entered into the keywords of the social sciences during the 1990s (e.g. Harvey, 1982; Smith, 1984; Jenkins, 1987). Although most of these geographical studies have adopted a Marxian analysis of developmental outcomes, one needs not be a Marxist to appreciate the uneven outcomes of globalisation processes. This unevenness can indeed occur at two levels: structural and geographical. First, globalisation impacts differently in different sectors and industries even in the same country and/or region. While global restructuring tends to favour high tech industries, it has serious repercussions for such labour-intensive industries as textiles and clothing. This uneven impact is best evidenced in Webber and Weller's paper on the Australian textiles, clothing and footwear producers. Based on fine time-series data, they have meticulously shown that despite the nation state's well-intended policy of trade liberalisation to stimulate growth, producers in Australia have had little control of their own fate and have suffered a major decline. This is because the structure of their industries is organised in such a way that upstream designer-label producers and downstream global buyers exercise branding and marketing control. Employment in these industries has become seriously threatened.

Second, global restructuring can produce geographically uneven impact on producers and/or countries specialising in different stages of the same production chain. This phenomenon is attributed by geographers to the uneven power relations underlying most global production chains such that some segments of these chains have disproportionately greater power and control over other segments (see Dicken, 1995; Dicken et al., 2001). Very often, it is the developing countries that end up as losers and the developed countries as winners (Kapstein, 2000). Even within the developed countries, however, some regions suffer more than others from global economic restructuring (see Amin and Thrift, 1994). Uneven development therefore poses a significant conceptual challenge to economic studies of globalisation. We cannot assume that globalisation, in its unregulated and self-enforcing form, can automatically 'trickle down' benefits to all recipient countries. The underlying power relations in specific sectors, industries, and countries, largely determine who emerge as losers or winners.

The theoretical significance of this argument is well illustrated in Fold's paper on the uneven impact of economic restructuring occurring in the European chocolate industry on cocoa production in West Africa. Coupled with the adoption of neoliberal economic policies and the dismantling of state marketing boards in major African cocoa producing countries, organisational restructuring in Europe has contributed to the possible marginalisation of premium cocoa bean producers in Africa. In Fold's words, these African producers may be relegated to nothing more than 'suppliers of raw materials for processed goods determined for the sweet tongues of the North – for good or worse' (p.406). But then, without these global production chains, how will disparate parts of the global economy be connected to facilitate globalisation? What are the social and ethical issues embedded in understanding these relational structures of the global economy? We now turn to these issues.

3. Connecting globalisation and global supply chains

Whereas geographical perspectives on globalisation based on IPE approaches have unravelled the role of geographical scales and uneven development in determining the structural outcomes of regulating globalisation, these perspectives are relatively silent on *how* globalisation operates across national boundaries as a complex jigsaw of interlocking processes and *how* these processes are organised in space. Instead of focusing on the underlying power relations of the global economy as in IPE approaches, another group of economic geographers have attempted to take on a *relational* position in understanding how such disparate contributors to globalisation as global corporations, local subcontractors, consumers, and state institutions are connected together via organisational devices known as production chains (see Dicken et al., 2001). The intellectual origins of the 'chain' approach to globalisation can be traced back to the work on 'value chains' by Michael Porter (1980, 1990) and 'global commodity chains' by Gary Gereffi (Gereffi and Korzeniewicz, 1994; Gereffi and Hamilton, 1996; Gereffi, 1999).

As a strategic management guru, Porter takes an industry-specific approach to his value chain analysis that is particularly concerned with the co-ordination and configuration of value chain activities within a global industry. The value chain links stages of transformation of initial inputs into final outputs. It includes primary activities (e.g. production, marketing, delivery, and services) and support activities (e.g. merchandising, technology, human resources, and overall infrastructure). Value activity is any activity along the value chain performed by the firm (e.g. fabrication). Value activities are linked together in the value chain through linkages so that the 'firm is more than the sum of its activities' (Porter, 1990, p.41). The value system is a set or network of value chains constructed by individual firms for competing within a particular industry (e.g. supplier-firm-buyer value chains).

To Porter, globalisation represents the global expansion of value chain activities spearheaded by the need of large corporations to meet global competition head on. What is interestingly geographical in his value chain analysis is the idea of configuration that is simply a matter of exploiting geography. The purpose of configuration is to select 'the location in the world *where* each activity in the value chain is performed, including in how many places' (Porter, 1986, p.23; emphasis added). It varies from concentrated to dispersed value activities. Porter's framework, however, suffers from being too static and descriptive. His value chain approach does not allow for dynamic changes induced by forces coming from within and outside the existing value chains. Its descriptive nature also fails to take in account complex power relations embedded in these value chains.

To a certain extent, these two shortcomings of the value chain approach are apparently overcome in Gereffi's global commodity chains (GCC) approach, which is supposedly analytically sensitive to historical change, distinguishes cyclical patterns from new trends, and captures both the spatial features of these transformations across the global economy and the relationships that link these processes together (cf. Whitley, 1996; Raikes et al., 2000; Dicken et al., 2001). There are two types of GCCs: buyer-driven and producer-driven chains. In buyer-driven GCCs, large retailers and brand-named merchandisers and trading companies play a pivotal role in setting up decentralised production networks in a variety of exporting countries, typically in developing countries. These GCCs are often found in labour-intensive, consumer goods industries in which offshore subcontractors produce for global buyers under original equipment manufacturing (OEM) arrangements. In producer-driven GCCs, however, global corporations play a central role in controlling the production systems in capital and technology-intensive industries.

Buyer-driven GCCs have recently seemed to capture the imaginations of economic geographers for at least two reasons. First, unequal power relations seem to be embedded in the ways that buyer-driven GCCs are spatially organised. A geographical perspective on GCCs helps us to understand why certain firms in some localities are co-opted into global production systems and how this participation in global competition has powerful imperatives that in turn shape the reorganisation and restructuring of these firms and the industries in which they are embedded. In Fold's paper, we have already seen how West African cocoa producers are reluctantly losing their quality premium because of ongoing restructuring of their key buyers in the European chocolate industry.

Second, exploring the complexities of power relations in buyer-driven GCCs allows geographers to develop a fuller understanding of social and ethical issues embedded in the performance of these chains. These innately political issues are vital to economic geographers endeavouring to visualise and work towards a world with less inequality and human and environmental exploitation. For example, how might geographical knowledge of the organisation of GCCs inform us about working conditions and trade practices in various countries that depend on global buyers from advanced industrialised economies? In her highly stimulating paper on British retailer-driven GCCs, Hughes questions these ethical issues in the context of a specific institutional initiative (the Ethical Trading Initiative) that purports to transform the nature of global supply chain organisation to become more responsible and just towards their stakeholders – global corporations, local subcontractors, workers, trade unions, NGOs, and government institutions. She argues that more policy attention should be paid to how these organisational transformations are worked out at various sites of production where unjust and exploitative practices are most likely to be found.

Taken together, geographical studies of global production/supply chains have contributed towards a better understanding of how the globalising world works through complex interrelationships among actors locked into pre-existing organisational and spatial frameworks. Their contributions are clearly important, with many skilfully combining both structural interpretations of the global economy and actor-oriented understandings of how global processes operate. Without these geographical understandings, we may still be able to appreciate the *organisational* dimension of globalisation (as in the management literature), but we will be far from comprehending *where* globalisation is heading and how it is reshaping the life of real people in the global web of *places*. It can still be argued, however, that these perspectives on mapping globalisation have underprivileged the diverse range of actors that actually construct globalisation. In other words, there appears to be a useful role for a bottom-up 'network' approach to globalisation through which we interrogate globalisation tendencies from the perspectives of actors themselves.

4. Constructing globalisation through networks

Economic networks can be interpreted on a number of different levels. Traditionally, network analysis has involved the mapping, often in quite sophisticated and quantitative ways, of the topological characteristics of social relationships. In the 1990s, the network came to be understood in the business and regional development literatures as a distinct form of governance associated with various 'new' co-operative organisational forms that stood in contrast to systems based purely on markets or hierarchies (Powell, 1990; Cooke and Morgan 1993). While the former approach can be criticised as overly descriptive and somewhat technique-driven, and the latter for over-emphasising the newness and distinctiveness of network structures, more sophisticated analyses are now emerging that cast networks as a powerful *methodology* for grappling with the complexities of the global economy. Here networks are assumed to be generic social processes rather than a particular form of industrial organisation. The potential of such an approach is, for example, evidenced by the work of economic geographers (e.g. Yeung, 1994; Coe, 2000; Dicken et al., 2001), actor network theorists working in variety of disciplines including geography (e.g. Thrift, 1996; Murdoch, 1999) and leading 'transnational' anthropologists (e.g. Ong, 1999; Smith, 2001).

For Dicken et al. (2001), a progressive network methodology should be based on identifying three key features of networks. Firstly, the key actors within the networks must be identified. By tracing the range of organisations and institutions enrolled in particular webs of relations, network approaches can potentially highlight the multiplicity of agents involved in globalisation (Olds, 2001; Smith, 2001). This enables us to move away from studies of globalisation that seemingly prioritise one or two organisational forms – often firms and industrial sectors – to a methodology that recognises the full breath of institutions that constitute the global economy through their complex inter-relations, whether they be, for example, individuals, states, labour groups, global regulatory bodies, or NGO's. From actor-network theory we can also draw the insight that a wide range of non-human intermediaries also constitute globalisation, for example, transport facilities, telecommunications links, traded goods, or consultancy reports. This, then, is an approach that accords agency to a wide variety of agents and forms. As Whatmore and Thorne (1997, p.288) assert, 'one of the more serious consequences of orthodox accounts of globalisation . . . has been the eradication of social agency and struggle from the compass of analysis by presenting global reach as a systemic and logical, rather than a partial and contested, process'.

Secondly, the social relations that actually constitute the network form must be uncovered as networks themselves become the basic unit of analysis for understanding the global economy, rather than firms, sectors, or nations. In such a view, networks are viewed relationally as processes of interaction that are empirically visible in different contexts. What we tend to read off at the macro-level as 'globalisation' is thus in effect the aggregation of multiple, criss-crossing network connections (Hannerz, 1996). Mapping globalisation therefore requires a more explicit focus on *what* is actually being transferred or translated through transnational networks, whether it be capital, technologies, goods, people, or knowledges of many kinds. For Smith (2001), this focus on actors and flows forms the basis of an analysis of globalisation 'from below' which stands in stark contrast to more 'top down', structural interpretations.

Thirdly, a network methodology must reveal the structural outcome(s) of the network relations. This is a key step towards avoiding the criticism that network approaches fail to account for the emergence of powerful structural conditions that may heavily condition particular network forms or perhaps preclude their formation entirely. The key here is to attempt to collapse the structure/network dichotomy by considering how structures emerge from networks: in this sense, networks can be thought of as relational and structural forms simultaneously (Dicken et al., 2001). This is a similar argument to that made about transnationalism by Ong (1999; see also Ong and Nonini, 1997), who argues that transnationalism is not a series of unstructured flows, but constructed through tensions between movement and social orders – the two network constituents described above. Regimes such as the state, family, and firm shape and direct transnational network relations, at the same time giving structure to their patterning. However, if a network methodology is to truly engage with the structural analyses evidenced, for example, in international political economy, an adequate conceptualisation of power becomes imperative. Differential power relations exist between the various actors involved in networks, and this power becomes apparent when it is exercised by certain parties and affects the position of others (Allen, 1997). However, Dicken et al. (2001) make the trenchant observation that a conceptualisation of power must go beyond a depiction of power as diffusing, capillary-like, through networks, to encompass the structural power that resides beyond traceable network links. This is the power that may shape the abilities of actors to create, join or disengage from particular networks.

What, then, is particularly geographical about a network approach? Quite simply, all networks are geographically situated practices, and as such they have an inherent and unavoidable territoriality. The geographical variations between different localities and spaces are an integral and fundamental part of the networks that connect them. Territories and networks are thus mutually embedded in each other. Conceptually, networks help reduce the tendency of privileging any particular scale of analysis by transcending individual scales, such as the global, national, or regional. With a network approach, scales effectively collapse into network links of varying lengths and importance (Murdoch, 1995). From this viewpoint, globalisation reflects recent growth in the levels of 'long' (i.e. international) functionally integrated networks. An important corollary of the spatial situatedness of networks is that they will also have particular temporalities, i.e. networks are time and space specific. While many accounts of globalisation debate the relative strength of processes over the last 200 years (e.g. Hirst and Thompson, 1996; Held et al., 1999), research needs to be more sensitive to the precise timeframes over which networks develop between certain actors in certain localities, and the particular events or developments which may trigger an intensification of such links (Pred and Watts, 1992). A network methodology, then, recognises the need to be sensitive to, 'the geographies and histories of specific places and people' (Mitchell and Olds, 2000, 217) in studies of economic globalisation.

'Economic' networks are not just situated practices, moreover they are situated *socio-cultural* practices, and in this way a network approach again helps to collapse the structure/agency and economy/culture dichotomies (Thrift, 2000). The cultural logics of corporate investment and state action in Asia Pacific countries, for example, will differ from those in Europe. The effects of globalisation processes may be seen as a threat in the latter region, whereas in Asia transnational networks have long been an integral part of shaping identities, state strategies, and cultural practices (Ong, 1999). In such a view, political economy and cultural analysis are inseparable, and therefore we need to embed theories of agency and practice within, not outside of or against, political-economic forces. Therefore, studies of economic globalisation must place the flows and processes they consider in cultural context (Appadurai, 1990; Mitchell, 1995; Ong, 1999; Olds, 2001; Smith, 2001). Such a recognition is clearly tied to conceptual debates in economic sociology and socio-economics pointing to the interconnectedness of structures and relations of capital, power, culture, and organisation (Granovetter, 1985; Zukin and DiMaggio, 1990).

Constructing economic globalisation is not easy. It is about the painstaking initiation, formation, and maintenance of social relationships between groups of variously powerful actors and intermediaries in different (and often distant) locations. A grounded, bottom-up perspective on the networks of globalisation can be invaluable in foregrounding the agents involved in these processes, and their often conflicting and contradictory motivations for that involvement. Such a view is nicely illustrated by Le Heron et al.'s fascinating study of networking – i.e. the process of network building – in New Zealand's dairy and sheepmeat industries. Moving beyond networks as purely analytical devices, their paper explores the potential for using networking frameworks for *policy intervention* to facilitate supply chain realignment in the New Zealand segments of global food chains. By revealing what they term the 'many layers of economic and institutional context', the authors are able to show how major actors both inside and outside the food chains are endeavouring to shape the dynamics of change and thereby refashion the structure, organisation and territoriality of network forms.

5. Positioning economic geographers in globalisation studies: towards a future research agenda

Now that we have a better appreciation of the geographical specificity of globalisation, it is perhaps time to move beyond the simplistic notion of globalisation as merely a set of end-state or 'placeless' phenomena. There are many geographical questions that should inform future research on economic globalisation: we would highlight four here. First, we need more balanced, empirical assessments of globalisation processes. At both research and policy levels, it is really not helpful just to embrace globalisation wholeheartedly or to condemn it unreservedly. We understand from previous studies that the Janus face of globalisation may simultaneously benefit as well as harm localities. It is imperative for future researchers to continue to evaluate the uneven geographical outcomes of globalisation processes in order to arrive at better-informed development policies.

Second, while there is a wealth of 'top-down' studies of globalisation, particularly those measuring the extent of globalisation via specific economic indicators, there is clearly room for further 'bottom-up' studies of globalisation that take a more agency-oriented approach. We certainly need to continue to understand and critique the strategies of global corporations and international organisations. Equally important, however, is the pressing need – both intellectual and social – to appreciate how globalisation is contested at various scales by social actors such as cocoa farmers in West Africa and automobile component suppliers in Germany, whether at the level of the individual household decision, the workplace or the international mobilisation of labour unions.

Thirdly, we need to think creatively about the new kinds of spaces that are being created by globalisation. For example, Ong (1999) talks in concrete terms about areas of 'graduated sovereignty' – such as export processing zones – where being connected to global networks is predicated upon the existence of customised regulatory and disciplinary regimes. At a more abstract level, Smith (2001) describes the emergence of 'translocalities' within major cities, spaces that are relatively more connected into transnational networks than 'local' relations within the urban area. Relational, network-based views of space will need to be developed to conceptualise how globalisation is carving out new kinds of regulatory and lived spaces.

Finally, future researchers need globally co-ordinated research that is well executed locally. In other words, globalisation research requires the construction of international networks that parallel, overlie and criss-cross the very global networks we are concerned to investigate. Only through such cross-national/regional efforts can we improve our chances of coming to terms with globalisation as a complex set of phenomena that are increasingly impinging upon everyday lives in most, if not all, parts of the world.

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