

more in tune with postmodern social theory.⁸³ As we have seen, modern theories like those of Marx and Weber are characterized by an emphasis on great overarching (and homogenizing) processes and changes (the spread of capitalism, rationalization), especially progressively increasing rationality (capitalism was viewed as a rational system by both Marx and Weber). Postmodern theory rejects a focus on such grand sweeping changes and processes, especially the ideas of increasing homogenization and rationalization (itself a major force in homogenization). Instead, postmodern thinkers focus much more on the local and its nonrational, irrational, non-homogenized characteristics. Such an orientation is in tune with the idea of glocalization, especially its emphasis on the local, diversity, hybridity, and at least partial independence from global processes. In conjunction with local realities, the globalization of so many commodities and ideas gives communities, groups, and individuals in many parts of the world an unprecedented capacity to fashion distinctive and ever-changing realities and identities. Rather than increasing penetration by capitalist firms and the states that support them, or by rationalized structures, this perspective sees a world of increasing diversity. Although all nations are likely to be affected by the spread of capitalism and rationalization, they are likely to integrate both with local realities to produce distinctively glocal phenomena.

Another key difference between modern and postmodern theories lies in the fact that the former tends to emphasize the idea of *explosion*, while the latter is closely tied to the notion of *implosion*. Thus, *globalization* fits with the idea of explosion, since there has been an explosive growth and global expansion of global forms. In contrast, *glocalization* fits better with the idea of implosion in the sense that the global mixes with the local, causing both to implode into one another and creating a unique mix of the two, the glocal.

Given very different theoretical associations, it should come as no surprise that globalization and glocalization offer very different images of the impact of transplanetary processes. After all, they tend to be aligned with the often antithetical principles of modern and postmodern social theory.

Application of Glocalization and Globalization

The ideas of glocalization and globalization can be used to analyze not only the cultural realm but also the economic, political, or institutional realms. Most generally, in the realm of *culture*, globalization can be seen as a form of transnational expansion of common codes and practices, whereas glocalization involves the interaction, the implosion, of many global and local cultural inputs to create a kind of "pastiche" (yet another postmodern term), or a blend, leading to a variety of cultural hybrids.

Theorists who focus on *economic* factors tend to emphasize their growing importance and homogenizing effect throughout the world and are therefore in tune with the idea of globalization. They generally see globalization as the spread of the neoliberal market economy throughout many different regions of the world. Joseph Stiglitz, a Nobel Prize-winning economist and former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, offered a stinging attack on the World Bank, the WTO, and especially the IMF for their roles in exacerbating, rather than resolving, global economic crises. Among other things, Stiglitz criticizes the IMF for its globalizing and homogenizing “one-size-fits-all” approach (this is closely related to rationalization, especially its commitment to increasing predictability) that imposes itself on various nations and fails to take into account national differences.⁸⁴ The IMF in particular, and globalization in general, have worked to the advantage of the wealthy nations, especially the United States (which effectively has veto power over IMF decisions), and to the detriment of poor nations; the gap between rich and poor has actually *increased* as a result of globalization. While the IMF is supposed to help poor countries by providing them with economic aid, Stiglitz shows that it is often the case that the reforms that the IMF insists that poor countries undertake to fix their economic problems often end up making them worse off economically.

While those who focus on economic issues tend to emphasize globalization, some glocalization is acknowledged to exist at the margins of the global economy. Examples include the commodification of local cultures and the existence of flexible specialization that permits the tailoring of many products to the needs of various local specifications. More generally, those who emphasize glocalization argue that the interaction of the global market with local markets leads to the creation of unique glocal markets that integrate the demands of the global market with the realities of the local market.

A *political-institutional* orientation also emphasizes globalization. I have already mentioned one example of a globalization perspective in the political domain (“world culture” or “world polity”) that focuses on the worldwide spread of models of the nation-state and the emergence of isomorphic forms of governance throughout the globe—in other words, the growth of a more or less single model of governance around the world.⁸⁵ The most important example of this is the global spread of a democratic political system. One of the most extreme views of globalization in the political realm is Benjamin Barber’s thinking on “McWorld,” or the growth of a single political⁸⁶ orientation that is increasingly pervasive throughout the world.

Interestingly, Barber also articulates, as an alternative perspective, the idea of “Jihad”—localized, ethnic, and reactionary political forces (including

“rogue states”) that involve a rejection of McWorld in the political realm. Jihad also tends to be associated with an intensification of nationalism and therefore is apt to lead to greater political heterogeneity throughout the world. The interaction of McWorld and Jihad at the local level may produce unique, glocal political formations that integrate elements of both the former (e.g., use of the Internet to attract supporters) and the latter (e.g., use of traditional ideas and rhetoric).⁸⁷

Derived from this is another important difference between these two perspectives: the tendency on the part of those associated with glocalization theory to value it positively⁸⁸ and to be critical of grobalization as well as those who emphasize it. This is traceable, in part, to the association between glocalization and postmodernism and the latter’s tendency to value positively the individual and the local over the totality—diversity over uniformity. This is also true of work in anthropology, for example, the essays in James Watson’s *Golden Arches East: McDonald’s in East Asia*.⁸⁹ These glocalized McDonald’s are depicted positively, and they are used not only to counter the idea of grobalization but also to be critical, explicitly and implicitly, of it.

By way of summary, Figure 1.1 offers a systematic contrast between the ideas of glocalization and grobalization.

While all of the aforementioned focuses on the differences between glocalization and grobalization, the fact is that this is largely a conceptual distinction that allows us to think more clearly about globalization. *In the real world, there is always a combination, an interaction, of glocal and grobal processes.* Anywhere one looks in the world, one sees *both* the glocal and the grobal. In fact, as this book proceeds, it will become clear that a major concern is with the relationship between, perhaps even the interpenetration of, the glocal and the grobal.

Grobalization: The Major Processes

While there are many different subprocesses that could be discussed under the heading of grobalization (imperialism, colonialism, and neocolonialism), we will focus on the ones I have already touched on earlier—capitalism, McDonaldization, and Americanization—this time as they relate more specifically to globalization. While it is clear that all of these processes are important, their relative significance and impact will vary (to the degree that they can be separated) on a case-by-case basis (nation involved, export considered, etc.). As we will see, it is no easy matter to distinguish clearly and unequivocally among these processes. For example, at a more concrete level, Disney is

Glocalization Theory
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Individuals and local g power to adapt, innova within a glocalized wor theory sees individuals important and creative
Social processes are r contingent. Globalizati variety of reactions—ra nationalist entrenchmer embrace—that feed ba grobalization, that prod
Commodities and the n key forces in cultural ch 20th and early 21st cen seen as (totally) coerciv providing material to be and group creation thro glocalized areas of the
Core concepts include t creolization, and hetero

Figure 1.1 Essential

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Capitalism

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continue to expand c
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