The Dialectics of Globalisation

Henri Vogt
Senior Researcher
The Finnish Institute of International Affairs
henri.vogt@upi-fiia.fi

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Introduction

One of the central objectives of the ever-expanding entrepreneurship of globalisation literature has been to formulate a single, concise definition of the phenomenon of globalisation. Needless to say, this has usually proved a hugely difficult task, if not an impossible one. The strategy of the ensuing pages will therefore be somewhat different. I will start off with an explicit idea of the multiplicity of 'globalisation', that is, from the assumption (or fact) that globalisation covers such a wide range of different issues, attitudes, processes, policies, destinies, and people perceive it in so many different ways that any simple definition of it is doomed to be virtually useless. There is, in other words, no need to bring all these different features and views under a single totalising explication. By contrast, the best way to conceptualise the notion is to do it with the help of all those definitional problems, controversies, disputes and even paradoxes that it seems to entail – that is, with an explicit vagueness of the notion in mind, a vagueness that also implies a great deal of dynamism and continuous change.[1]

In the following I will take up, in a rather sketchy and even metaphorical manner, as many as ten this kind of controversies or problems; they all come up more or less regularly as people – scholars, politicians, journalists, lay men and women – try to make sense of the notion of globalisation. These controversies are partially overlapping, interdependent in a number of ways, and their internal logic and relative importance vary a great deal. It is also possible to group them – the way this has been done in the list below is only one possibility. What is

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[1] The attempt to perceive the notion of globalisation and particularly the globalisation debate in terms of its inherent controversies is, of course, no unique endeavour. For example according to Held et al. (1999, 10; cf. Touraine 2001), five major sources of contention have characterised this debate, namely "conceptualization, causation, periodization, impacts, and the trajectories of globalization". These categories are undoubtedly right and relevant as such and even partly reminiscent to the ones presented on the following pages. But what appears problematic to me is that Held et al. try to find a 'solution' to these controversies. They in other words seek to construct a clearly defined variable named 'globalisation' – a variable caused by certain factors and having certain consequences – and

important, however, is that all these problems can be formulated in a dichotomous manner, as dichotomous pairs. The 'dialectics of globalisation' then simply emerges from the need to enter into a dialogue between *both* ends or extremes within these pairs; both ends are relevant aspects of globalisation, and we should look for syntheses between them. The paramount aim of this short presentation is to show that thinking in terms of this kind of dialectics may provide us with a useful analytical tool for understanding the peculiarities of globalisation.

Problems of the 'location' of globalisation:

1) the problem of economics vs. politics and socio-cultural changes

2) the problem of timing

3) the spatial problem

Moral and political problems:

4) the moral problem

5) the problem of power

6) the controversy between order and anarchy

Controversies of identity:

7) the controversy between the particular and the universal

8) the vagueness between the national and the international

9) the controversy between a fragmented and a global identity

10) disappearance versus transformation of the Other.

Before we turn into these ten controversies and to the picture they create of globalisation, three points need to be mentioned. Firstly, we should bear in mind the distinction between internationalisation and globalisation. It seems that

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thereby risk losing the multi-sidedness of the phenomenon from sight.

the latter truly became the order of the day with the collapse of the Soviet system; until then the word that was usually used to describe certain wide processes was no doubt internalisation. One possible explanation for this is that globalisation in many senses implies a world of freedom, a freedom for certain processes to float freely, a world without true enemies. Interestingly, this may have changed again after the events of September 11th, 2001. We should possibly return to the use of the word internationalisation, as the world – the dominating part of the world – has again found a real enemy for itself. Instead of the free-floating era of globalisation we may again have entered a world with clear friends and foes and much less space for any kind of free-floating.

Secondly, the distinction between a phenomenon called 'globalisation' and the concept of 'globalisation' is a delicate issue indeed, and it is possibly not entirely clear in the following analysis either. However, globalisation can be seen and explored from so many angles that its designation is always at least to a certain extent a matter of naming. We simply decide or assume that a phenomenon belongs to 'globalisation', and thereby attach the label 'globalisation' to that phenomenon. The question of the difference between the concept and the phenomenon thus becomes irrelevant.

Thirdly, and closely related to the previous point, I will not make a distinction between globalisation as a result and as a cause. Again, the nature of this phenomenon is so complex that this kind of a distinction would appear utterly senseless. Globalisation is a state of affairs, and perhaps therefore a result of something, but since this state of affairs continuously changes, it is also a cause. The processes of globalisation produce globalisation.

Problems of the 'location' of globalisation

The first point in our list is in many senses the most elementary one. The question simply reads: should we reduce the use of the notion of globalisation to the sphere of economics only, that is, to the processes of production, consumption and flows of people, goods, and capital, or should we use the term to depict various changes in the spheres of politics, culture and social life as well? This author's view is clear at this point: a basic assumption of these pages is that any attempt to confine the phenomenon of globalisation to just one single societal sphere, i.e. to the economy, is doomed to fail. What is important is that this may even be dangerous: many problems of today's world may be results of far too many people's efforts to see the economy as an independent sphere of life, a sphere with its own independent laws and rules. These people may thus have failed to see the imminent – and often vital – connections between different areas of life.[2]

The self-evident alternative to this oversimplified distinction between the economy and politics/ social life/ culture is to try to identify and characterise various processes that seem to have an increasingly global coverage; this may also offer us a way to find such distinctions, or dialectical pairs, that truly are relevant for understanding the present world. An excellent attempt in this respect is that of Ilkka Heiskanen, a Finnish political scientist, who in a 1998 article recorded as many as 32 central global processes. He grouped these into the following seven categories: "the general trends of globalisation"[3], "the

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[2] It is worth noting that as regards many of the nine remaining points the graveness of these problems or controversies may depend on the extent to which we emphasise the economic aspects of globalisation.

[3] Heiskanen names eight this kind of general trends of globalisation:

1) eruption of the state-system thinking, based on military-political calculations, and the emergence of ideas of global governance

2) the disappearance of state-centred geopolitics, and the emergence of sectorial geopolitics, i.e. competition between trans-national economic areas or between mega-cities

3) globalisation of the economy

4) intensification and marketisation of research and information production

changes of the basic economic and social structures", "the changes of organisation and information structures", "the changes of basic political structures", "the changes of morals and social norms", "the information-centredness and 'semiotisation' of society", and finally "the changes of political participation". On the basis of this long list of processes he then concluded that globalisation seems to be determined by four main areas (or 'arrowheads', as he himself calls them) and the changes in them, namely *production, consumption, information* and *identity*. What is important here is that the arrowhead of 'identity' seems logically rather different from the other three. One could in fact see identity as a pair of, or opponent to, each of the pools of consumption, information and production. Moreover, these three latter 'pools' are intimately connected to the realm of the economy, whereas the relationship between identity and the economy is much more indirect. In this respect, we could even ask whether the ultimate controversy – or axis – of globalisation is that between economy and identity? But the question is not of a either/or-type relationship: the different phenomena of globalisation usually contain *both* economic *and* identity-related consequences or aspects.

The second problem of our list is that of timing. The question is, in other words, *when* the phenomenon of globalisation actually emerged. There seems to be two main strains of argumentation. It is possible to understand globalisation as a completely *new* phenomenon that truly came into being in the advent of the 1990s with the collapse of the bi-polar world-order and the revolution of information technology. Or, alternatively, one can perceive globalisation as a continuation of the ideologies of imperialism and capitalism – maybe also modernity – and its basic logic would thus be age-old; possibly it has only become more intense recently.

5) the acceleration of the second revolution of communication; global network society
6) the neo-liberalisation of public and supra-national economies
7) the 'fogging' of the traditional global differences of development; even the most developed areas inhabit groups of the excluded

The proponents of both of these views can easily find empirical data to support their argumentation. As one pays attention to such factors as the freedom of trade and the freedom of movement, the world may not have been much *less* globalised before the First World War than it is today; in some respects the world economy even appeared more open at that time than at the moment. On the other hand, when one takes a look at the statistics of international capital flows, there is no doubt that we have been witnesses to an unprecedented expansion during the past ten or fifteen years. Globalisation seems to both a new and an old phenomenon, and it is very difficult indeed to depict what makes the "new" different from the "old".

The examples above seem to indicate that the problem of timing would primarily refer to the economic aspects of globalisation. It is by no means impossible to relate this problem to social aspects as well, though. If we think of, say, identities in Eastern Europe before the latter of half of 19th century, it is obvious that people's identities were not determined by the existence of a specific nation, but they had very flexible identities, identities that they could change as was suitable for them – often in a rather opportunistic manner one could assume. In this respect of course, the idea of the multiplicity of the individual's identities, one often-mentioned characteristic of the global era, is certainly not a new phenomenon.

The third dispute, one closely related to the temporal one, is the question of the true globality of globalisation: For whom in geographical (or spatial) terms globalisation is an issue, or a real fact of life? Some claim that globalisation basically touches the whole globe and most of its people – no one can escape the networks of global society. Others argue that globalisation is just a West-centric and elitist way of picturing, explicating and, above all, justifying the emergence of the new global economy beyond any democratic control, and to the extent it influences the life of people from outside the West, this influence

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8) the global organisation of criminality and terrorism and industrial spionage

means only alienation and domination. 'Globalisation' is thus only a rhetorical strategy to maintain the West's hegemony over the world; it might often be wiser to talk about 'regionalisation' of the West instead of globalisation. Moreover, especially in the case of Africa we might be advised to talk about de-globalisation rather than globalisation as the continent seems to become more and more side-lined from the flows of global capital.

Modifications of this basic problematic can easily be found in globalisation literature. In a recent volume, Martin Shaw (2000) discusses what he calls the global Western State, which includes most of Northern America and Europe – hardly for example Turkey – and the Asian tigers to a certain extent, along with a great number of more or less global institutions usually controlled by these same states. For Shaw it is precisely the emergence of this Western State (a state that will gradually assume an ever more global character) that defines globalisation. But Shaw does not take up, in any explicit manner, the principal challenge that the materialisation of this State seems to pose to the rest of the world, namely what one could call the problem of exclusion vs. inclusion: the aim of global governance should be to build such democratic mechanisms that no one and no region would be forced to lie outside this global state, but they would have the possibility to enter and exit it whenever they so wish. Peripheries would be peripheries only as a result of their own free will.

It is possible to make other kinds of spatial distinctions that are highly relevant from the perspective of today's globalisation discourses. In many countries, globalisation actualises in terms of an urban/rural cleavage: city dwellers seem to be part of a globalised world, whereas the rural population tries to continue living the same way as they always have. Globalisation in this respect also means increased *Ungleichzeitigkeit*, non-synchronicity, between different geographical loci – a temporal concept with a spatial connotation. Dieter Senghaas (1998), in turn, has depicted basically the same phenomenon with the concept of *inkohärent Globalisierung,* the incoherence of development

within different cultural spheres. What is noteworthy is that it is this distinction, the cleavage itself, that here defines globalisation: because of the non-globalisation of the rural population, city-dwellers can appear global.

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Before turning to the next group of problems, it is worth noting that in many definitions of globalisation it is the temporal and spatial aspects that actually define the whole concept (globalisation is of course a spatial term in itself). Such notions as 'accelerating interdependence', 'action at distance', 'the velocity of global flows', and 'time/space compression' (Bauman 1998) are widely used as scholars have tried to capture the most essential features of globalisation.[4] All these concepts are certainly good compressions of some aspects of globalisation, but in one sense they are still rather limited: they are insensitive to the distinction between form and content. More precisely, they only seem to refer to the changes of form, whereas the possible changes of content tend to remain beyond their reach. Indeed, are the ingredients of a text message somehow different from the ingredients of a traditional letter, and to what extent can this difference be described in terms of time and space? But perhaps this is where the primary problem of the notion of globalisation lies: it is so all-encompassing that it can only refer to various forms, not to the contents of those forms.

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[4] A good example of this pattern is also the definition of globalisation given by Held et al. in their *Global Tranformations*: "Globalization may be thought of initially as the widening, deepening, and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life, from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual." Cf. footnote 1.

Moral and political problems

The fourth problem on our list, the *'moral'* or normative implications of globalisation, has probably been the most conspicuous one in recent years. All those spectacular events that the world has witnessed in the past three or four years, in Seattle, Prague, Gothenburg and Genoa, have been based on a moral discussion about the blessings or damages of globalisation; the cleavage between such globalisation-critical movements as ATTAC and the proponents of neo-liberal economic policies has epitomised this dilemma. Globalisation is thus seen either as a negative process – it destroys local cultures and delivers the world's resources very unequally; the rich become richer and the poor poorer. Or, according to the alternative line of argumentation, globalisation creates a positive horizon of possibilities and, at least in the long run, truly increases human welfare, interaction and mutual understanding – at the end of the day, improves the quality of life for each and everyone. One can in other words wonder whether globalisation is a restrictive and repressive process, or whether its essence is that it empowers people with new opportunities.

This moral dispute around the notion of globalisation is of course partially dependent on the fact that the premises of the discussion vary. As regards the premise of time, whereas some claim that *in the long run* most people, if not all, will benefit from globalisation, others say that *at the moment* this is definitely not the case. Another central problem is that it is virtually impossible to know whether our standpoints should be based on absolute or relative 'facts'. In relative terms, that is, in relation to the rich of the world, the poor may indeed be poorer than ever, but in absolute terms this conclusion is much more questionable. Finally, it is often impossible to gauge in any exact manner the individual's pain (or joy?) when she is forced to move to another city or even country, because production in the old *Heimat* seems to have become unprofitable. A traditional cost-benefit analysis, in other words, often

becomes utterly senseless as both measurable economic values and immeasurable immaterial values are involved; on a global scale this contradiction between 'pure' economic calculations and immaterial values seems particularly acute. All in all, it is indeed difficult to see how any true consensus could be found in the discussion about the blessings and pains of globalisation.

The fifth problem, closely related to the moral dilemma, is that of power. The question is who actually governs or determines developments on the global level, or whether anyone can control them in the first place – does globalisation have faces or is it an anonymous process?[5] Globalisation has thus been described either as a very deliberate project, a project that certain forces of society, above all the mythical 'market forces', actively and consciously promote. Moreover, as these forces are also those who benefit from globalisation, it is in their interest to make the project as total and complete as possible. Alternatively, globalisation has been depicted as a *reactive* course of development, as something inevitable and even deterministic, an invisible hand, something that we seemingly cannot resist even though we probably should.

Needless to say, both these arguments are often repeated in contemporary political rhetoric. Politicians claim that they can either do nothing because of the stream of globalisation is unstoppable, or that their possibilities to influence are highly limited, because this or that would be against the will of the market forces. What is important, however, is that both these arguments seem to liberate politicians from any responsibility; globalisation becomes just a comfortable excuse. In this respect, the problem of power is inseparable from political responsibility.

The problem of power also leads us to the questions of global democracy or, more precisely, to the conspicuous deficit or absence of it. Whatever

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[5] Evidently, the problem of power is closely related to the question of causation in the sense Held et al. talk about it.

decisions are being made in order to contain various global processes, they are often made without any democratic control or with very limited amount of it. Multinational companies and international financial institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation are usually mentioned as cases in point, but the democratic deficit of even the European Union can hardly be denied. As a result of this, one can argue, it has been possible for these institutions to pursue their policy without sufficient sensitivity to various local cultures and attitudes, a policy that has been primarily informed by the interests of the countries that finance these institutions.

The critics of this democracy deficit face an enormous dilemma, however – a dilemma that they seldom seem to consider, and a dilemma that can be derived from the paradoxical nature of the notion of democracy itself. On the one hand, democracy requires utter heterogeneity. It demands respect for the rights of the individual, and it should be adjustable to local cultures and traditions – there can be no universal model of democracy. On the other hand, democracy also calls for utter homogeneity: cultural differences should not play a role, everyone must follow the same rules, everyone has only one vote, and above all everyone must respect other people's equal rights. In modern democratic (nation-)states this simultaneous demand for heterogeneity and homogeneity has been successfully resolved. People reckon the simultaneous difference and similarity of their fellow citizens. Democracy has therefore been able to assume its 'deep', almost self-evident, nature; it has in fact become a mode of life rather than a politico-technical idea. In a global context, however, finding a successful compromise between heterogeneity and homogeneity seems virtually impossible – and maybe it is not even desirable if it would lead to fewer forms of life on the planet.

It thus seems that in the foreseeable future global democracy cannot refer to much more than global-level decision-making mechanisms (perhaps

combined with some sort of mechanisms for local participation), by way of which more and more people could participate in the making of those decisions that directly concern them. Enhancing global democratic decision-making is, indeed, one of the great challenges of this young century.

The sixth point here is again closely related to the previous one. It is the question whether we should actually understand globalisation as a process that brings about more order to the world, or whether it simply causes new kind of anarchy and disorder on our planet. Once again presenting evidence in support of both of these views seems fairly easy. On the one hand, we can contend that the new world-wide webs that have emerged, say, between states, between trans-national organisations, between NGOs, and between all of them, create a highly regulated, orderly world – a true new world order. On the other hand, it has become more and more difficult to identify different causal connections on the globe, to know what causes what, and who is responsible for what; all our deeds seem to be determined by so many factors that we have no chance to take them all into account. By the same token, a single terrorist act can create much more anarchy, or disorder if you wish, today than anything one could possibly imagine in any previous era.

An interesting notion for depicting this latter state of affairs is that of *integral accident* (Virilio 1998). It refers to the fact that many (sad) events seem to have a cumulative capacity in today's world, that is, what is basically a small-scale accident can cause huge damage world-wide. An anthrax letter, real or fake, or a computer virus are prime examples of such integral accidents. Another concept – by now almost a classical one in social science – that might be useful in this context is that of 'risk society' (Beck). Globalisation produces ever new, and ever more serious, risks in societies, and any attempts to govern these, to build mechanisms of global governance, tend to be insufficient. It indeed seems that we have created a hugely regulated world where possibilities of anarchy and chaos have become much more real than they were ever before.

It is worth bearing in mind, however, that we can perceive the notion of anarchy (and therefore that of order as well) in many different ways. Alexander Wendt (2000, Ch. 6), for example, makes a distinction between three types of anarchy between states. The first of these, the Hobbesian type, implies that states are primarily each others' enemies; the destruction of other states is the ultimate goal of any state. The basic idea of the second type, the Lockean one, is that states are rivalries, but in spite of their rivalry they share certain common rules, above all the sovereignty of other states. The third, the Kantian type, perceives states as each others' friends, which implies that states, as a matter of principle, always seek to solve their conflicts by peaceful means.

What is important here is that in the global era, the postulates of these different types of anarchy transform. In the face of the global problems, anarchy based on friendship seems to become ever more important – a form of anarchy based on compromises even though states still seek to maximise their profits and positions. At the same time, however, the events of world politics suggest that anarchy based on enmity between entire cultural spheres is about to become a more and more relevant future horizon. In this respect, instead of the distinction between anarchy and order, it might be more informative to understand the world through the controversy between the anarchy of enmity and the anarchy of friendship. This somewhat sceptical conclusion needs to be attenuated with a positive note, however: the extent to which our world displays features of friendly anarchy is often a matter of politics, of people's conscious choices, of their willingness to perceive the world in a certain way – and to act according to that perception.

Controversies of identity

The 'all-encompassing' controversy between the particular and the universal is the seventh point in our list (cf. Robertson 1992, Introduction). It simply refers to the fact that globalisation is a 'vertical' phenomenon, that is, it takes place at basically all social levels. The biggest processes are accompanied by changes at the uttermost local level, even at the level of the individual, and vice versa. As Zygmunt Bauman (1998, 2) writes, "[w]hat appears as globalization for some, means localization for others." What is important is that sometimes, or often perhaps, the local and the global prove mutually incompatible. One could argue, for example, that the rules of utilitarianism are now set more and more globally, and as result of this, the local is ever more often sacrificed. A farmer in the north is likely to suffer – at least in the short term – as world trade in agricultural goods becomes more liberalised. On the other hand, one could also argue that due to the new forms of information technology and the ever-increasing influence of the media, a lay individual may have much more power – to what extent this power is or can be democratic is a very tricky question – than he or she had in any previous era. José Bove's fight against McDonalds in France is a good case in point. An individual's particular fight can be universal in nature.

Possible the most illuminating example of this controversy between the local and the global is the clash between the ideal of multiculturalism and the paradigm of universal human rights – a clash that has in many respects dominated the stage of world politics in recent years, and a clash that has often led to double standards of morality as politicians (of the West) sometimes emphasise the latter, sometimes the former idea depending on what is suitable for themselves at a given moment. It is indeed no easy task to find a solution or compromise to this controversy between the total cultural relativism promoted by steadfast multiculturalists and the claim for the universality, and absolute

character, of human rights advocated by many a prominent politician today. However, both of these views may be seen to have a common reference point, or even a common ontological basis: both seem to be based on the idea of Otherness, on the Dissimilarity of other people, either on the affirmation of this ontological assumption or on its control through the notion of human rights (Cf. Badiou 2001). From this perspective, then, one imaginable solution to the clash between multiculturalism and human rightism would be to replace the idea of Dissimilarity with that of Similarity, with the assumption that human beings all over the world are essentially the Same. Would it be possible, for example, to reformulate international law by making the assumption of human similarity its point of departure?

The eight point of our list is again closely related to the previous one. The main argument is that the distinction between the categories of 'the international' and 'the national' has become ever more vague and even useless. It seems that what was previously purely 'national' is now at least to a certain extent 'international', and the existence of truly sovereign nation-states has thus become questionable – or then we just have to redefine the notion of sovereignty. In reality, of course, the situation is much more complicated than this. The all-embracing international, and often Anglo-American-minded, culture in which people all over the world increasingly live, the MTV-McDonalds-Nokia-culture, has led to the emergence of counterbalancing factors. Above all, it has generated a need to adhere to certain national values, and thereby their re-codification; identification with national institutions may have significantly decreased in recent decades, but identification with national symbols, flags, royal families, and anthems, has actually increased. It may even have become more acceptable to think 'nationalistically': a few years ago one could hardly have imagined to see a sea of waving German flags in a sports event. Moreover, the fact that primarily as a result of the disappearance of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, there are simply much more nation-states now

than fifteen years ago also testifies against the argument of the decline of the nation-state. All in all, it seems that globalisation denotes *both* 'internationalism' *and* 'nationalism'.[6]

It is worth noting, self-evident as it may be, that the controversy between the national and the international also involves a dimension of power, that is, what we are facing today is the potential disappearance of the power of the nation-state. This is naturally a hugely complicated issue, but suffice it to note there that the question is hardly of a 'disappearance' but rather of a reconstitution of the state's and its authority. Indeed, as one often hears, the state has lost a great part of its power, but it definitely has not lost its influence. This more subtle form of power may, however, prove rather problematic from the point of view of democracy. There is the risk – or maybe already a reality – that the emergence of new transnational or supranational political arenas alongside with the old national ones, will actually undermine the individual's will to act politically, to be a *homo politicus.* If people lose their interest and trust in the national *res publica* while it seems to have become powerless and meaningless, but fail to redirect their energy to other political levels, what happens to democracy then?

The ninth point, the discrepancy between a fragmented multiple identity and the possible emergence of a true cosmopolitan or global identity, brings us ever closer to the micro level of social life, even though we could also see this as another modification of the particular vs. universal debate discussed above. What is also interesting is that this issue may bring to the fore two, instead of just one, meta-concepts: we can also comprehend it by way of a distinction between post-modernism and globalisation[7]. As is well known, according to the

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[6] Shaw: "We can identify three main reasons why sovereignity is now seen as more problematic. First, states have increasingly 'pooled' their sovereignity. [interstate institutions][..] Second, individual states' jurisdictions are increasingly understood extraterritorially as well as territorially. [] Third, []juridical sovereignity, constitutionally and legally defined, is often seen to have diverged from the substance of power relations." (pp.185-6)

[7] It is often argued that globalisation has in a sense swallowed post-modernism, but in this author's

premises of post-modernism, we – people in the 'rich' world – have assumed very flexible, fragmented, multiple, protean identities, indeed identities that lack all other stability but the lack of stability. Globalisation, in contrast, raises the question of the possible emergence of something whole, something stable, something permanent. It now seems achievable to develop a profound sense of belonging to the same small planet, to the same small humanity; in the end we all share the same risks and hopes.

As regards the sources of this global identity, two points may be worth mentioning. First of all, it has become ever more possible, and often imperative, to be globally reflective. Through new information technologies, and the Internet in particular, we are easily online-connected to almost any part of the world. We can base our reflections and decisions on information acquired through all these new channels. Second, a step further from the idea of global reflectivity, a sense of global responsibility may be becoming ever stronger. Whatever we consume in our kitchen tables is ever more often chosen with some sort of global – or perhaps glocal[8] – perspective in mind. The recent globalisation-critical demonstrations that we alluded to earlier are another example of this. What is important, however, is that this global responsibility is based on the individual's free will: there is no global authority that could set the norms for our action on the global scale. Maybe this is also the primary feature of the global identity: it is based on no other authority but the limited natural resources of the globe. It is worth remembering, though, that speculation of this kind of identity may be nothing more than a form of global hubris, a result of an ungrounded belief in our ability to 'know' what is going on in different parts of the world. In the global era it is possible to live in an illusion of having the entire globe under one's feet.

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view these two phenomena or processes have their own distinctive logics as well.
[8] Glocal = global + local.

The final, tenth point of the changing role of the Other refers to what is possibly the most elementary aspect of identity politics. The two somewhat controversial arguments are that, first, within the Western world, or the Western state in Martin Shaw's terms, there does not seem to be any negative – and immediate – Other left for a great number of people. This is, of course, primarily a cultural phenomenon: we – again a West-centric 'we' – are now all members of a more or less similar culture that, universal and all-encompassing as it is, is not based on constructions of some kind of negative Otherness (not at least before September 11th). What we have left, then, are only cultural differences within the same cultural logic; the international/western culture has melted most other cultures into itself, made them part of itself. Even in the sphere of politics one can talk about the disappearance, or at least diminishing role, of the Other. In Europe, the integration process seems to have made the Germans and French, the age-old rivalries, the closest of friends.

The counter argument is that due to global migration, due to the ever-increasing amount of foreign-born people in the Western world, the Other may actually have become much closer to us than it was before. The Other may have become our neighbour – the real clash of civilizations may take place in the suburbs of big European and American cities.

The issue may be even more complicated than this, though. An example from Finland may be illuminating in this respect. Jorma Anttila (1996) has argued that in the traditional, pre-global Finland, people's identity primarily emerged from within the community; it was in relation to their own culture that people developed their identities; even the traditional Russian Other was too far away or it was simply ousted. In the global era, however, as Finland has become more and more open to influences from outside, people seem to form their identity to a much greater extent than earlier in relation to a great number of outside Others. Some of these Others are positive mirrors, such as 'Europe', or negative ones, as the members of the Russian mafia. Indeed, what the global

world is witnessing is the simultaneous disappearance and multiplication of the Other.

Concluding remarks

As has been pointed out earlier, as we think of the ten dichotomies cursorily described above, we should take into account both the extreme attitudes or views that create them in order to understand the complexity of the phenomenon of globalisation. In other words, globalisation is both good and bad, both new and old, both universal and particular, both international and national, it touches and does not touch each and everyone, and it creates both order and anarchy. Indeed, 'both–and' is the pronoun of the global era, not 'either–or'. Through these various controversies and their affirmation by way of the idea of 'both-and', through a dialectical method in the classical sense of the term, globalisation assumes or can assume its true meaning. Globalisation itself is the ultimate synthesis.

It is also noteworthy that the picture we have drawn is one of change rather than continuity; the world of the era of globalisation is certainly somehow different from all previous eras. Change in itself, however, is a tricky concept – to refer to one classical distinction, it can be either revolutionary or preserving. But as we think of the above-explicated problems and controversies, affirm them, and accept that we cannot really know what aspect of globalisation we should emphasise in a given situation, the nature of the change that we are witnessing becomes irrelevant. It does not, in other words, matter whether we are talking about a revolutionary change or changes that seem to preserve the structures of the past. In fact, we could even argue that whatever change globalisation brings about, it is both revolutionary and preserving. This is what

the dialectics of globalisation is all about: revolution requires preservation, change requires non-change.

This also implies that we need to bear in mind that change is always relative, and we should not overemphasise it. Much of what is typical for human societies basically remains constant throughout centuries, irrespective of the changes around. The era of globalisation is not an exception in this respect. For example, the information revolution that we have heard so much about lately may only be a revolution of means. The nature, the true content of information has hardly changed; and it is still very much a matter of one's ability to communicate with other people – in a human manner – that determines the real usefulness of any piece of information.

Let me finish this article with an anecdote. The Finnish term for controversy is *ristiriita*, a coinage of the words *risti*, 'cross' and *riita*, 'quarrel'. The term thus has a clear religious connotation. It seems to me that in the context of globalisation debates *ristiriita* is a particularly appropriate term. Globalisation – the interpretations of it and meanings we assign to it – has become one of the prime sources of political contention in today's world, a problem that raises a great deal of emotions and passions, to the extent that the notion seems to have assumed a religious undertone. The missionaries of the present wander to anti-globalisation demonstrations to every corner of the world. The entire world is their holy place.

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