

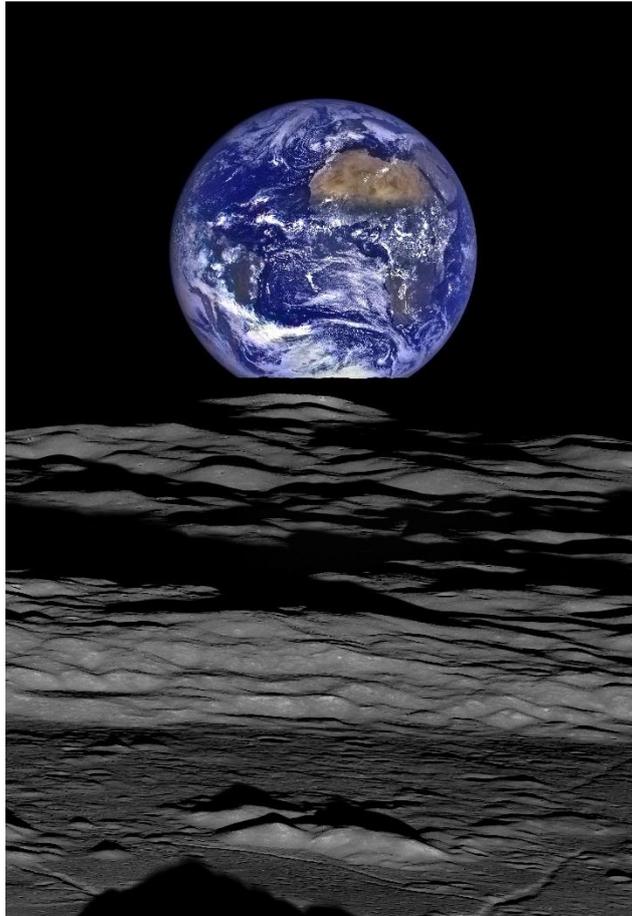


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## Call for publication



### ***The Craft of the Social Scientist in the Global Arena***

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*"At the moment, we might be just like young deaf children, watching the theatre performance of everyday life unfolding before us, without having the sign to express the observations we make and instead angrily and fearfully watching the curtains fall over a triumph of ambiguity"*

Martha C. E. Van der Bly, "Globalization: a triumph of ambiguity", *Current sociology*, 53 6, 2005 pp 875-893, p. 890-891

## Aim and scope

The significance of global interconnectedness as an important component for 21st-century social sciences has been broadly recognized in the vast literature originated by the *Global studies* (Featherstone, 1990; Castells, 1996; Beck, 1999; Albrow, 1997; Held et al., 1999) and that has emerged at the beginning of 1990s. The emergent and abundant nature of the Global studies can be seen in the proliferation of expressions that designate it: transnational approaches, world history, connected history, civilizational approaches, cosmopolitanism, world culture, cultural globalization etc. After forty years as part of the global academic vocabulary, the attempts to understand the increasingly interconnected realities in which human beings live have produced millions of pages of both theoretical and empirical research and countless is the number of books, readers, handbooks, companions, special issues, papers devoted to the high number of topics related to globalization.

According to the most commonly accepted definitions, globalization is envisioned as the widening, intensifying, accelerating and growing impact of world-wide interconnectedness (Held *et al.*, 1999). The 'empirical condition' associated with globalization is 'a complex connectivity evident everywhere in the world today' (Tomlinson, 1999: 32). We no longer inhabit, if we ever did, a world of separate national communities living side-by-side.

We live in a world of “overlapping communities of fate” where the trajectories of all countries are deeply enmeshed with each other (Held, 2010: 240). Globalization is linking people together across borders more than in the past and confront them with cultural, ethnical differences (Appadurai, 1996). The call to recognize the power and scope of interconnectedness appears as a leitmotiv throughout research on globalization, in particular when studies choose to highlight the structural importance of information flows and networks of activities (Castells, 2001), the unprecedented expansion of financial capitalism, the dizzying increase in the number of economic and financial transactions (Arrighi, 1994; Sassen 1998; Milanovic, 2019), the widespread dissemination of cultural ideas and products beyond national borders (Hannerz, 1990; Appadurai, 1996; Jenkins et al. , 2013; Cicchelli and Octobre, 2018), and record-breaking migratory flows and new forms of global mobilities (Kellerman, 2006; 2020; Urry, 2000).

Despite the numerous criticisms it has attracted, globalization remains one of the most complex (Cole, 2003), ambiguous (Van der Bly, 2005) and controversial (Held and McGrew, 2007) topics of research in the history of social science (Caillé and Dufoix, 2013). In 1996, Jan Aart Scholte identified globalization as a buzzword, and its extensive use in international sociology has finally come to quell some of the endless debates engaged in by sociologists in previous decades. As stated by Montserrat Guibernau, while introducing a David Held’s long interview on the matter (2001), globalization may be seen as « a fashionable concept in the social sciences and a catch-phrase for journalists and politicians of every stripe ». Globalization has since been likened to a prism “in which major disputes over the collective human condition are now refracted: questions of capitalism, inequality, power, development, ecology, culture, gender, identity, population, all come back in a landscape where “globalization did it”” (Pieterse, 2009: 7). For instance, and to linger only on the nature of global capitalism, social polarization has been strengthened by the economic crises, the spread of neo-liberal ideas and economic policies that have led to the dismantling of the welfare state in many countries. In current globalizing capitalism, capital accumulates through ever-expanding processes marketization and financialization, and through new networks of trade routes, knowledge and property rights that connect the world while reinforcing its inequalities between and within countries. Growing inequalities led to the identification of marginal places or peripheral sites, especially in the Global South, a term used as « a metaphor for human suffering caused by capitalism and colonialism on the global level, as well as for the resistance that seeks to overcome or minimise such suffering» (Santos 2011: 39). Globalization poses a vast social challenge: large-scale transnational processes provide those who are mobile and educated with a great amount of opportunities for empowerment, but can also generate frustrations and forms of disillusionment among those who are not (Sassen, 2014). Those who perceive themselves as ‘losers’ in the global economic competition, either because they are excluded from wealth distribution and/or feel that they are ethnically, culturally, or religiously discriminated against, are often tempted by identitarian or sovereigntist closure as a fallback position (Langman, 2020) or may join international organizations (NGOs, alter-globalist trends, international indigenous people’s organizations etc.) permitting the reinforcement of local resistance movements, or the internationalization of indigenous struggles for e.g.

In all of these cases, globalization is seen as primarily responsible for reshaping contemporary societies and this means that it consistently reconfigures the sociologists' object of enquiry – hitherto conceived as the institution of national society" (Roudometof, 2005: 114). While an overwhelming number of studies have been conducted in the field of global studies, our goal here is to understand the methodological dimensions of the consequences, for social and political scientists – sociologists, anthropologists, human geographers, linguists –, to address the Global and its consequences linked to epistemological considerations.

The empirical question is one of the most pressing and compelling ones since it addresses the very issue of 'how' globalization(s) work(s) and its impact on the craft of the Social scientists in terms of methodological and theoretical tools. Where and when is the global to be observed? What are the indicators of globalization and how to approach these processes? How to measure global flows? What are the relevant scales of observation? How is it possible to integrate various levels of analysis as the Global North/South relations or Eastern/Western divides and a discussion of glocal phenomena? What might constitute (a) global fieldwork(s)? What kind of data (macro and/or micro) should be mobilized? How to better situate social scientist's positionality in the global economy of knowledge? These are the questions that our edited collection would like to address.

Very different between them, carried out by authors who may be opposed to each other, both conceptually and methodologically, the research that refers to a global approach would like to contribute to proposing a perspective capable of understanding how national societies – but also local communities at the level of a village for example – are more than ever in the grip of phenomena that cross their geographical borders. As the fundamental questions underpinning the global turn are whether social issues can still be contained within the territorial borders of the nation-state, and how to capture the internal transformations of contemporary societies (according to the paradoxal dynamics of integration/fragmentation, inclusion/exclusion, dispersion/concentration of economic, institutional, political and social realities) (Cicchelli, 2018), the interest in global topics should prompt the development of new methods or the refinement of older and classical ones. Putting the emphasis on this aspect of rethinking and/or innovate would allow to understand what these methods (being either qualitative or quantitative) entail according to different disciplines that deals with the globalization and its outcomes and how to imagine new avenues of research by the cross-pollination between disciplines. Although very visible in public debates, globalization is first of all identified by its economic character, whereas it is also the greatest interconnection between contemporary societies with the consequence of a greater circulation of individuals, ideas, knowledge, modes, norms, values and imaginations. This multidimensional circulation is of direct interest to the Social Sciences because of its interwoven and multidisciplinary nature, and forces researchers to abandon the simplistic and deterministic approaches (Cotesta, 2012).

This book aims also to present and discuss multi-scalar, multi-level and multi-sited methods commonly used to study the Global or its impacts. It will focus either on comparative objects that have major economic and cultural impacts or on issues, knowledge and goods

that are left at the margin of globalization. Like the large field of research that is Global studies, these approaches are by definition multidisciplinary and simultaneously involve researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds and geographical areas. The book intends to discuss various possible approaches among which cosmopolitan sociology, connected history, world history, in light with the challenges posed, on one hand, by globalization and, on the other, the need of situated standpoints and knowledges claimed by feminist, postcolonial, decolonial, or post-western approaches for the last 30 years (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis, 2002; Santos 2007; Mignolo 2000).

To date, we are considering at least 3 parts in the book but more thematic entries could be added depending on the proposition we receive.

#### Example of grounded cosmopolitanism as a lifestyle of the global condition

Contemporary cosmopolitanism is no longer just the transcendental utopian dream cherished by Stoic philosophers, Christian clerics, and intellectuals in the Republic of Letters, nor is it a lifestyle reserved for the most educated and international social classes, who are able to experience a number of shared worlds thanks to their refined artistic and literary taste preferences, their mastery of European and vehicular languages, and their penchant for formative travel experiences (Beck, 2006). Cosmopolitanism must now be seen as a concrete lifestyle that countless individuals can achieve through a plethora of points of contact with cultural difference, offered by global capital flows, as well as the circulation of norms, aspirations, imaginaries, products, services (especially in the media and cultural sphere), and persons (Cicchelli, 2020; Octobre, 2020). We endeavor to address a consistent operationalization of this perspective by exploring what a framework as cosmopolitan sociology would entail. As the cosmopolitan perspective has become widely popular in sociological literature and has known an upsurge of interest over the last two decades (Skrbis and Woodward, 2013), it is consequently worthwhile to consider in which way and to what extent cosmopolitanism is a heuristic perspective for generating specific empirical studies. Authors have showed there is some credence to the view that the cosmopolitan sociology helps us to understand how individuals relate to globality and its outcomes through the socialization processes in post/trans-national contexts. Assessing cosmopolitan sociology as a grounded approach requires a clear sense of what it means in order: a) to see what are the best ways of achieving its ends and operationalize it; b) to distinguish analytically cosmopolitanism from an overlapping concept such as universalism; c) to displace the aloof, globetrotting bourgeois image of cosmopolitanism and move toward an ordinary, banal, everyday cosmopolitanism. We know that the social sciences have experienced a successive linguistic turn (Rorty, 1967), a cultural turn (Jameson, 1998; Bonnell and Hunt, 1999), a material turn (Bennett and Joyce, 2010), and finally a global turn (Caillé and Dufoix, 2013). What might a cosmopolitan turn (Beck, 2006; Beck and Grande, 2010; Delanty, 2018 [2012]) imply for the theoretical imagination and for methodological creativity?

## Example of comparison

Comparisons in social sciences are obviously inevitable. As we know, the importance and utility of comparative research are as old as the discipline itself. Whereas new units of analysis emerge, such as the global, the macro-regional, and the transnational, the cross-national or cross-societal studies are still a very useful and necessary method. Classic comparison, however, has problems to grasp the cultural diversity within societies, and scholars are increasingly aware that other tools are necessary to size what is particular to a human group and what is shared between communities. While there is growing diversity within societies, there is also an increasing similarity across groups and societies. This dual process makes comparative sociology more difficult and complex. Global and transnational processes impact on the way in which comparison can be made. Implicitly, and especially in the case of international comparisons, there is a general tendency to assume that to establish an accurate comparability between societies, institutions, processes observed, social phenomena are supposed to be culturally homogenous, relatively stable and nationally or locally determined in each of the countries or regions compared. Globalization is an extensive set of changes regarding the ways in which societies interact. The current globalization process widens horizons more than ever before. Nations are no longer bound to take on national projects, but instead participate in global flows of capital, goods and people. Recent worldwide changes imply the development and advancement of existing methods in order to understand increasingly transnational and global levels of social reality. There is some credence in the view that broader transnational processes – within which nation-states are enmeshed and to which they contribute – impact on the way in which comparison can be made. This section welcomes papers dealing with the new challenges for comparative methods posed by globalization. Special attention should be made to the comparison of different societies at different levels (macro and micro, or top down and bottom up, of: a) the impact of globalization itself on comparative methodologies; b) the global-local relation: which comparative method are most adequate to analyze the ways in which the local and the global are intertwined and embedded in each other in the contemporary world?; c) culture: how to do comparative research on the global spread, indigenization, hybridization of cultural products?; d) politics and identity: how to do comparative research on for example the globally institutionalized construction of identity and imaginary?; e) economy: which methods are appropriate to account for the still alive cross-societal differences in globalizing capitalism?; f) indices and indicators of globalization: which are the best tools in order to measure the impact of globalization processes on different states, regions, cities, people, etc.

## Example of the spread of supralocal/supranational imaginaries

This section welcomes empirical and theoretical papers that seek to address the multiple ways in which ordinary actors engage in activities and/or construct identifications that surpass the territorial borders or symbolic boundaries of local/regional/national groups through all kinds of personal mobilities and/or cultural consumption. We seek contributions that address the scalar complexity of contemporary human action: the compound aspects of daily life that are both locally situated and tied to global flows of people, products and ideas in a variety of different ways (Levitt, 2001; 2002). It has been argued that the contemporary world society is increasingly governed through soft power (Nye, 2004), which works by making actors perceive and experience the world similarly. Art and popular culture are very important, because

people's views and sentiments are often moved by fiction, music and other forms of art. The global diffusion of popular culture is interesting as an example of the formation and reproduction of world culture, or what has been called aesthetic cosmopolitanism (Papastergiadis, 2012). At the same time, this global spread of culture and imaginaries engages interestingly with glocalization (Robertson, 1992), indigenization (Appadurai, 2006), hybridization (Pieterse, 2009). Hence, we would also welcome papers that deal with the global spread and localization of goods, knowledges, languages or popular cultural products, such as music, films, television series, reality TV formats and address methodological issues at the same time.

These are examples of questions that could be addressed, but they do not constitute an exclusive list.