The Self in a Globalizing World: a Study of Globalization and its Impact on Identity

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Abstract

Anthony Giddens' ideas on modernity and globalization show that globalization is modernity at the global level. The three characteristics of modernity: time-space separation, disembedding of social systems, and reflexivity have all been intensified in the last twenty years. Globalization is, on one hand, pulling different cultures together to form a global world; on the other hand, diversifying and fragmenting the social contexts of human activities. The modern individual struggles to adapt to the different social milieux he is involved in and finds it difficult to form a coherent identity.

Modern social systems provide more security; it also creates risks of high-consequence. Human life is threatened with a sense of meaninglessness. Giddens suggests, in order to liberate themselves, human individuals should take more responsibility to make decisions on their own lifestyles and on social issues. Education should aim to develop the individual's ability to make rational choices.

Resume

Les idées d'Anthony Giddens sur la modernité et la globalisation démontrent que la globalisation est la modernité au niveau global. Les trois caractéristiques de la modernité : la séparation temps/espace, le démantèlement des systèmes sociaux, et la réflexivité ont tous été intensifiés pendant les 20 dernières années. La globalisation, d'une part, rassemble plusieurs cultures ensemble formant un monde global; d'autre part, diversifie et fragmente les contextes sociaux des activités humaines. L'individu moderne s'efforce de s'adapter aux différents milieux sociaux auxquels il se mêle et trouve difficile de former une identité cohérente.

Les systèmes sociaux modernes procurent plus de sécurité; ils créent aussi des risques à conséquences graves. La vie est menacée d'un sens d'insignification. Pour se libérer, Giddens suggère que les individus doivent se responsabiliser encore plus en décidant de leurs propres styles de vie et questions sociales. L'éducation devrait viser le développement des aptitudes de l'individu à faire des choix rationnels.

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Introduction

In his book *To know as we are known*, educationalist Parker Palmer (1993) states that self and world are the great subjects of traditional humanistic education, and freedom and truth the great goals. Palmer believes education at its deepest reach gives people their sense of self and world. It is "a slow, subtle, nearly unconscious process of formation, like the way a moving stream shapes the rocks over the long passage of time" (P. 20). This beautiful description of education expresses an educational philosophy accepted by both eastern and western traditional cultures.

However, this image of education is being challenged in today's globalizing world. We live in a "runaway world," in which our sense of self is being reshaped and our concept of truth is no longer the same; and the gap between those who enjoy freedom and those who are deprived of it by poverty is rapidly widening (UNDP, 1999). What role does education play in this period of revolutionary transition? How does it explain, explicitly or implicitly, the runaway world and the self in it?

As a student of education, I found the nature of today's social changes and their impact on the individual to be an inescapable question to ponder in order to understand other educational issues. My studies in relevant areas all seem to point toward the purpose of education as stated by Thomas Merton (1979): "the purpose of education is to show a person how to define himself authentically and spontaneously in relation to his world"(p.3). How should education fulfill this purpose in a world that we can no longer grasp? At the moment I thought about how I define myself (see discussions in my first chapter), I realized what a confusion the modern world and modern lifestyle could cause to our sense of self.

As modern technology gives us—or some of us—more freedom to travel and communicate, it also changes our basic sense of time and space. The fact that we are no longer bound to one place also means we lose the place to which we feel attached and belong. It is true that machines free more workers from repetitive manual work; it is also true that daily life has never been so dependent on machines which are not always dependable. Feelings of anxiety, frustration, confusion and meaninglessness are many people's reality. Globalization, with all the

opportunities it provides, also globalizes the feeling of insecurity. In education, as commerce and media expose young generations to foreign cultures, parents and teachers who had grown up in more traditional cultures cannot automatically act as guides even in their own culture (Suarez-Orozco, 2001). These are the issues sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists and educationalists must deal with as we celebrate cultural diversities.

Scholars such as Erik Erikson (1950) had five decades ago warned us of identity problems caused by modernity. He pointed out that the industrial revolution, worldwide communication, standardization, centralization, and mechanization are factors that threaten the identities that human beings have inherited from primitive, agrarian, feudal, and patrician cultures. Today, as the degree of these processes has reached its historically highest level, attention to their impact on humanity has been raised accordingly. However, in my research for this topic, I found that thorough studies on this issue, both theoretical and empirical, are lacking. Some scholars provided an exhaustive list of examples of the dilemmas modern individuals face in daily life, others focused on how technology is changing our sense of reality. For my thesis,

I hoped to find a theoretically sound analysis based on a deep understanding of psychological, sociological and historical dimensions of this issue. The work of Anthony Giddens provides such an analysis. Trained both in psychology and sociology, he has been over the last decade studying how tradition and sense of identity are affected by modernity and high modernity—the globalization phase of modernity. In this thesis, I will base my discussions on Giddens' concepts of modernity, globalization and identity, introducing his way of approaching this topic.

I decided to study Giddens' theory for two reasons. First, I have gradually understood that globalization, a social process that is bringing profound changes to human society, should not be seen as simply a political agenda, economic prospect, or technological consequence of the past twenty years. I believe we cannot really understand globalization until we understand what has been happening since the industrialization of the 18th century. I therefore found Giddens' theory of globalization as high modernity inspiring, though his most recent work (Giddens, 2003) gives more emphasis to the revolutionary character of globalization than to its institutional links with modernity. The second reason for studying Giddens is

because of my interest in his structuration theory. With this theory, he tries to put an end to the "empire-building endeavors" of two sociological camps: the camp of functionalism and structuralism, and that of hermeneutics and various forms of interpretative sociologies (Giddens, 1984). To Giddens, although functionalism has taken biology as a guide to study the functioning of social structure whereas structuralism objects to this approach, the two have some notable similarities. Both functionalism and structuralism emphasize the pre-eminence of society as a whole over its individual parts. In contrast, hermeneutics and interpretative sociologies see action, meaning, and subjectivity as the foundation of social studies but give little consideration to social structure and its constraining qualities. As for the division between the two camps, Giddens argues that what is at issue is how the concepts of action, meaning and subjectivity should be specified and how they might relate to notions of structure and constraint. He thus claims that, "the basic domain of study of the social sciences, according to the theory of structuration, is neither the experience of the individual actor nor the existence of any form of societal totality, but social practices ordered across space and time (Giddens, 1984, p.2). I believe that only an eclectic

theory like this can overcome boundaries between different approaches of sociological studies to help us understand globalization at the institutional level as well as its impact on the self.

To discuss identity problems of our particular historical period, I will start my first chapter with discussing how I find it difficult to define my self. I do this not only because it is a convenient case study, but also because it was my own feeling of confusion that made me realize the significant meaning of this study. Moreover, I hope to use my own experience as a starting point to understand the others' sense of self in the world or worlds we all share now. To give my discussion a historical context, I will use the second chapter to introduce Anthony Giddens' concepts in the study of modernity. The third chapter provides a comparison between the institutional dimensions of modernity and globalization. By this comparison, I want to join the discussion on whether there is an alternative to the process of globalization. In chapter four, I will look at how modernity and globalization change the individual life and challenge our sense of identity. Finally, I will discuss this issue's implications in education.

Chapter one: The self in a shrinking world of different worlds

On a rainy morning in October 1999, I boarded an Air Canada plane at Shanghai airport and left China. It took me 15 hours to fly from Shanghai to Montreal, a long journey even in modern sense of time and space. But I did not feel I left behind the country I had lived in for 28 years. I called my parents as I transferred in Japan. I called them again and emailed my friends after I arrived in Montreal, telling them that I met a lot of Chinese here and I could buy Chinese food in Chinatown. They all told me that they did not feel I had gone far away and was speaking to them from the other side of the world.

Three years later, I still live a life not too different from my life in China. I speak Chinese at home and, with a satellite dish installed outside my apartment, I watch soap operas of Chinese TV channels; I read Chinese news from the Internet and Chinese papers bought in Chinatown. Thanks to the fierce competition among long-distance telephone service providers, I may frequently call my friends all over China. I read their emails in Chinese

and chat with them on Chinese websites. I live like any regular person in a Chinese city and feel Chinese.

However, living like a Chinese is only part of my life in Montreal. The other part involves different languages and different cultures. I studied journalism and education at English universities, learned French with teachers from France, and spent most of my time reading in English, chatting in English, and watching TV programs in French without fully understanding them. There are apparent advantages for people who speak different languages and have experiences in different cultures, for example the access to different job markets and the ease to travel from one country to another. There are also problems with this lifestyle, problems that are not always easy to be detected but more difficult to be solved. Ludwig Wittgenstein (1958) once argued that the limits of language mean the limits of one's world. In living my multi-faceted life, the change of language means the change of my world. This change is made more dramatic by the fact that the different worlds I live in are fundamentally different. Although the Chinese have become the biggest consumers of American fast food (Watson, 1997), and Europeans are drinking green tea to fight against cancer, the differences between Chinese and Western

mentalities can be traced back thousands years ago to the formation of Confucianism in China, at the same time that the works and views of Greek scientists, philosophers, and artists spread to the near east, Egypt and subsequently to Europe, but not China. The space between Canada and China can be crossed in 15 hours by airplane and in one second by clicking a mouse on the Internet, but the distance between the two civilizations seems to me often unbridgeable. Now the two different cultures exist side by side in my life. As I speak different languages, I find myself using different frames of reference and having a different sense of self. I feel like a fragmented person, unable to present my whole self in any of the worlds I am involved in.

Moreover, the different worlds I live in at the same time are not clearly separated. They mix up with one another to give me such a crowded feeling that I sometimes feel it is difficult to breathe. The moment I read from the Internet that the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) had taken many lives in south China, I emailed my friends there to inquire if they are safe; the next moment, I turned on the TV and learned that SARS had come to Toronto and taken two lives. Meanwhile, war in any corner of the world now seems to have an effect on my own life and my

feeling for life. As soldiers and ordinary people were bleeding and dying in Iraq, police and protestors fought on the streets of Montreal. The price of oil kept rising, and Air Canada began to lay off its staff. All these make it difficult to travel, but we have to move. I am moving to the United States, and at the same time my parents are moving to Canada. The family, the application documents, and money all frantically travel across the Pacific and across the border between Canada and the U. S. We sell and lend in one country, then buy and rent in another. In this process, we have to deal with different cultures, laws and customs. But we are not moving from one world into another. We are moving within a world with its frustrating formalities and bureaucracies.

Why do we move and complicate our own lives then? It is a question that involves studies in political science, economy, sociology and psychology. One suggestion is that, as the world of today provides us with all the conveniences, it also gives us the inevitable anxiety for the risks in it, particularly the risk caused by the free flow of capitals. By increasing mobility among different job markets, modern human beings hope to buy an insurance policy against the instability of their employment

(Hirschman, 1970). If mobility keeps increasing, however, we not only need to think about what will happen to the sovereignty of nation-states, but also to consider what is happening or has already happened to our traditional cultures, communities and our sense of self, as these factors are compounded in a globalized world.

The term *world* here can be explained by Edmund Husserl's concept of *lifeworld* (Husserl, 1981): the socially and linguistically defined world common to the members of a community of understanding. On one hand, this feeling of one's life being fragmented by different worlds can find a ready theory in psychology. Psychologists seem to agree that the presented self of an individual, even in the same culture, is always as *something*, never as whole or entire (Scheibe, 1995). William James is often quoted for saying "Properly speaking, a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their head" (James, 1890, p.294). On the other hand, the fragmentation of self is an arguably new phenomenon of human life, a phenomenon that is brought about by a variety of social, economic, cultural, technical, and political changes in our present world. That is, in an era of globalization, when capital flows more

freely, people travel more easily and frequently, and the exchange of images and information has broken the bounds of time and space, we are losing the unique frame of reference of our own tradition and are fully exposed to the complexity of the world. This gives us the freedom of forming our own identity but also confuses our sense of self. It is a problem that is both psychologically and historically relevant. As the world is quickly shrinking and different cultures are suddenly brought to an unprecedented proximity, we are hard put in trying to adjust to it. At this time, it is worth studying how modern life, by complicating the circumstances around the self, challenges some of our natural attitudes towards the continuity of time and space, and thus confuses our sense of self to a degree we never experienced before.

I believe the problem of self-identity cannot be explained by established issues such as immigrant assimilation or racial relationships, though the feeling of living in two worlds is also there. First, it is not a phenomenon limited to immigrants. My immigrant experience works as the most obvious reason that I am exposed to different cultures. Today, one does not need to move to another country to have this exposure. In the food we eat,

the clothes we buy, the TV programs we watch, in books, movies, even in the dangers that threaten us, we all feel the impact of a world that is becoming smaller. People in developing countries have a stronger feeling of this change, because popular western culture and its respective ideologies are being overwhelmingly poured into the less developed countries.

Second, racial issues such as the black-white relationship in America do engender a feeling of living in different worlds. Leanita McClain, for example, the talented black journalist who tragically killed herself for despair over racial bias, wrote about this feeling in 1980: "I have a foot in each world, but I cannot fool myself about either. I can see the transparent deceptions of some whites and the bitter hopelessness of some Blacks. I know how tenuous my grip on one way of life is, and how strangling the grip of the other way of life can be" (McClain, 1986, p.23). It seems to me she only lived in one world, the elite world dominated by white journalists. In this world, she felt she was rejected and pushed toward another world, the world of black people in which she did not have a place and did not identify with. If it were possible to neglect racial discrimination, McClain would

have probably felt comfortable in her world. Under the same conditions, however, my problem is still there. Two decades ago, McClain's world was divided into two by human discrimination; today, my worlds are brought together by new technology.

If we can shrug at this new problem just as we believe the pain of those craftsmen who lost their jobs to machines during industrialization as the necessary human price we paid for development, we are ignoring an important aspect of human wellbeing. In his book *Identity: Youth and Crisis,* psychologist Erik Erikson (1968) claims, "in the social jungle of human existence, there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity" (p.22). It is the nature of humanity to ask who we are as a species in the universe and as individuals in society. This is why our own past as individual memory and our history or mythologies as collective memory matter to us. They tell us who we are and where we are from. This human nature also explains why it bothers amnesia sufferers so much not being able to remember their identities. This is particularly because though some adults may tell themselves to enjoy the conveniences of globalization and put up with the sense of loss, it is not the case with children and adolescents. As

pointed out by Erikson (1968), cultural and historical change can be very traumatic to identity formation because it can break up the inner consistency of a child's hierarchy of expectations to what he is going to be when he grows older.

This thesis is not a psychological study on identity crisis ascribed to the age of adolescents and young adulthood. It is more a sociological study of how modernity, particularly globalization, is changing the life of individuals and causing crisis to their sense of self. Although adolescents may feel this crisis more acutely, it is not limited to this age group. It is becoming pervasive as each person's lifestyle is no longer sheltered by community and tradition, but exposed to the influence of different cultures. To understand this modern problem, I will in the following chapter introduce Giddens' concepts of modernity and high modernity.

Chapter two: modernity

The term *modernity* is used by sociologists to refer to the "modes of social life or organization" that emerged in seventeenth-century Europe and later influenced the whole of human society (Giddens, 1990, p, 1). Specifically, industrialization of two centuries ago destroyed the social forms that had dominated history for thousands of years and brought human society into the era of modernity. To Giddens, the modes of life in this era swept us away from all traditional types of social order in unprecedented fashion. First, they served to establish forms of social interconnection of global range; second, they changed some of the most intimate and personal features of our existence. He claims that modernity is a double-edged phenomenon because the development of modern social institutions and their worldwide spread have not only provided great opportunities for human beings to enjoy a secure and rewarding existence than any type of pre-modern system, but also created a world fraught of danger. He believes all the three founding fathers of sociology, Durkheim, Marx and Weber, failed to pay enough attention to

this dark side of modernity. Among them, Durkheim and Marx envisaged a better social system in the future; Weber, though he realized the cost of human creativity and autonomy, did not fully anticipate the extent of modernity's negative impact.

Giddens' approach towards modernity is based on his idea of historical discontinuity. He strongly disagrees with grand narratives that claim history to have an overall direction, governed by general dynamic principles. To him, deconstructing the story line of this narrative will free our understanding of modernity from the limits of evolutionary concepts. Therefore, he claims that modernity is not a continuity of traditional social orders. Three features separate modernity from the previous social forms: the pace of change in this era; the scope of change; and the intrinsic nature of modern institutions. Modernity not only brought social transformation with an extreme rapidity to every corner of the earth, it also produced social forms that were not found in prior historical periods, social forms such as the political system of nation-states. Moreover, Giddens tries to break away from the existing perspectives of classical sociology and provides his own concepts to study the sources of dynamism of modernity.

These concepts provide a useful theoretical framework for studies of the nature of modernity and its impact on human life. Here I will introduce the three concepts that Giddens uses to dissect modernity.

2.1 The separation of time and space

Time and space are the two most important concepts in Giddens' sociological theory. According to Giddens (1990), Talcott Parsons (1951) claims that the preeminent objective of sociology is to resolve the problem of order, and defines this problem as how to hold the social system together. Giddens disagrees with him, arguing that the problem of order should be how it comes about that social systems bind time and space. Based on this idea, he starts his analysis of modernity from the modern sense of time and space.

Giddens (1990) argues that modernity brought profound changes to human society, first of all, through separating time from space and space from place. In pre-modern cultures, the majority of the population looked to nature to demarcate time. The sense of time was linked to other social-spatial markers such as the location of the sun, the

changing of seasons, the growth of trees, or the activities of other people. The invention of the clock changed this with its mechanical way of time measurement. By its designation of "zones" of the day, the clock expresses a uniform dimension of "empty" time. Sense of time is thus independent from place and becomes an abstract notion. Meanwhile, worldwide calendars and standardization of time across regions homogenized the social organization of time. Thus, the sense of time is further separated from the sense of space.

Coordination of time as discussed above made it possible to control space and therefore separate space from place. Giddens defines place as a term that refers to the physical settings of social activity that has the notion of geographical situation. In pre-modern societies, the spatial dimension of social life was to people the place where they had their localized activities. Modernity generated the abstraction of space by fostering relations between locationally distant situations. Therefore, the locales are thoroughly penetrated by distant social relations; meanwhile they also shape distant social relations. Moreover, using universal maps to represent

geographical positions also made the notion of space "independent" from that of particular place.

To Giddens (1990), the separation of time and space is a precondition for the other dynamics of modernity. First, it is the prime condition of the processes of "disembedding," a term Giddens uses to refer to "the 'lifting out' of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space" (p. 21). The separation of time and space and their formation into standardized dimensions cut through social activity from its local contexts. Further, by coordination across time and space, changes can be made without restrains of local habits and practices. Second, it provides the "gearing mechanisms" for rationalized organization which is a distinctive feature of modern social life. Since time and space become abstract notions, modern organizations are able to connect the local and the global and in doing so affect the lives of millions of people. Third, it is also a basic condition of modern historicity. That is, the establishment of standardized dating system and of global mapping system made it possible to interrelate events of distant places that were previously separated. As this allows for critical

assessment of historical qualities of past events in a global range, a world-historical framework of action and experience is formed. For the above reasons, Giddens argues that the shifting alignments of time and space are of elementary importance for the nature of modernity. Giddens thus criticizes traditional sociological approaches in the study of social transition. He argues that concepts such as "differentiation" or "functional specialization" fail to address the issue of time-space separation, which he believes is the basic nature of modernity.

2.2 The disembedding of social systems

As noted earlier, the separation of time and space causes the disembedding of social systems, the "lifting out" of social relations from local contexts of interaction as well as their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space. Giddens distinguishes two types of disembedding mechanisms: *symbolic tokens* and *expert systems*.

Symbolic tokens are "the media of interchange which can be 'passed around' without regard to the specific characteristics of individuals or groups that handle them at any particular juncture" (1990, p. 23). Giddens analyses the function of money, a symbolic token, of lifting

transactions out of particular milieux of exchange and claims that in doing so money becomes a means of time-space distanciation. Expert systems are "systems of technical accomplishment or professional expertise that organize large areas of the material and social environments in which we live today" (1990, p. 27). Modern life, from what we eat and drink to the way we live and travel, is all organized around a basic trust toward the technical accomplishment or professional expertise. Although it is from our general experience that we know the systems should work as they are supposed to do, our trust is not based upon our full initiation into these systems, nor upon mastery of the expert knowledge we rely on. Therefore, it becomes a form of faith and is abstracted from our specific circumstances. Giddens argues that both types of disembedding mechanisms presume and also foster the separation of time and space.

2.3 The Reflexivity of modernity

As noted in the first chapter, Giddens tries to bridge the two camps of sociological studies—one of functionalism and structuralism and the other of hermeneutics interpretive sociologies—by proposing a group of new concepts and establishing the theory of

structuration. Reflexivity is to me the key term in this theory. Giddens(1990) uses it in both psychology and sociology, discussing individual reflexivity as well as social reflexivity. For individuals, reflexivity refers to the constant monitoring of action and its context, and is a defining characteristic of all human action. For society, especially modern society, reflexivity, "consists in the fact that social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices, thus constitutively altering their character" (p. 38).

This idea implies that it is this characteristic of modern society that gives modern social life and social studies their complexity. As Giddens argues, unlike in the physical world where more knowledge arguably brings greater control, the fact that human beings and human society reflexively apply new knowledge to their own way of existence prevent social science from producing a progressively more illuminating grasp of human institutions. Therefore, to Giddens, the theory that more knowledge about social life brings greater control over human fate is false. As he puts it, "The point is not that there is no stable social world to know, but that knowledge

of that world contributes to its unstable or mutable character" (Giddens, 1990, p. 44).

Giddens believes reflexivity is a significant characteristic of modernity and argues that only in modern society reflexivity is introduced into the very basis of system reproduction. But Giddens fails to give a convincing argument in his discussions on why it was not the case in pre-modern societies. He turns to the theory of time-space separation to argue that, with tradition as a mode to integrate the reflexive monitoring of action in pre-modern society, action and experiences were inserted within the continuity of past, present and future. Although he explains later that tradition is not static, his argument gives the impression that traditional cultures clearly separated the present from the past and the future, and their knowledge was stamped with the dates it was produced, whereas in modern society, knowledge belongs to the present. I think an idea Giddens gives earlier may better explain this question. That is to consider the different speed of producing knowledge and the speed of reflexively using new knowledge to social system reproduction. It is not that reflexivity takes on a different character in modern society, as suggested here by Giddens, but that it

takes on a much higher speed, and thus rolls social life away from the relative fixities of tradition.

To better understand modernity and how it is being globalized, I will in the next chapter introduce Giddens' idea on the institutional dimensions of modernity in which he discusses the relationship between industrialism, capitalism and modernity. Following the trace of his thinking, I will then introduce the institutional dimensions of globalization. By this, I want to show the historical pattern of the development from modernity to high modernity—globalized modernity. I believe seeing the continuity from modernity to globalization will help with the understanding of their discontinuity from traditional cultures.

Chapter three: From modernity to globalization

In chapter two, I introduced the three dynamics of modernity in Giddens' theory: the time-space separation, disembedding of social system, and the reflexive appropriation of knowledge. How are the modern institutions situated in relation to these dynamics? Again Giddens (1990) departs from the theoretical traditions of sociology in his idea of the major forces of modernity. According to him, Marxists believe the transforming force of modernity is capitalism, whereas Durkheim traced the nature of modern institutions to the impact of industrialism. For Weber, the term *rationalization* described factors such as capitalism, industrialism, bureaucracy, science and technology that work together to shape social life. Giddens, however, believes that modernity is "multidimensional" on the level of institutions. He proposes four dimensions of modernity: capitalism, industrialism, surveillance, and military power. Although he considers this approach to be different from that of Weber's position, I see more agreements than disagreements in the two. For example, they both consider capitalism and industrialism as the main factors of modernity. Besides these, bureaucracy to Weber is surveillance to Giddens, though surveillance has a broader

sense than bureaucracy. With these agreements, their approaches differ in that Weber sees science and technology as a major driving force of modernity whereas Giddens singles out military power. Below I will introduce how Giddens defines these dimensions.

3.1 The four institutional dimensions of modernity

3.1.1 Capitalism

Giddens is a sociologist who clearly defines the terms he uses, especially when these terms are commonly used but often not well understood. He defines *capitalism* as "a system of commodity production, centered upon the relation between private ownership of capital and propertyless wage labor, this relation forming the main axis of a class system" (Giddens, 1990, p. 55). Thus, a capitalist society has four specific institutional features. First, capitalist enterprises are by nature competitive and expansionist. Therefore, technological innovation in capitalist society tends to be constant and pervasive. Second, given the high rates of innovation in the economic sphere, the economy is "insulated" from other social arenas, particularly political institutions. Third, the preeminence of private ownership of investment constitutes the foundation of this insulation of policy and economy. Fourth, the autonomy of

state is conditioned by its reliance on capital accumulation. With the expansionist characteristic of capitalism, Giddens believes that economic life in capitalist society is only in a few respects confined to the boundaries of specific social systems. Capitalism from its early origins is international in scope.

3.1.2 Industrialism

Industrialism, says Giddens (1990), refers to the use of inanimate sources of material power in the production of goods, coupled to the central role of machinery in the production process. Industrialism in his definition should not be understood as production with heavy machines at its earliest stage; the notion also applies to high technology settings of its most recent development. Moreover, it affects not only the workplace but also all aspects of modern life such as transportation, communication, and domestic life. Industrialism, to Giddens, is the main axis of the interaction of human beings with nature in modernity. Modern industry, characterized by the combination of science and technology, has transformed the world of nature, and human beings now live in a "created environment" (Giddens, 1990, p.58).

3.1.3 Surveillance

Surveillance capacity is the third dimension that differentiates modernity from traditional civilizations. It is the capacity to supervise the activities of subject populations in the political sphere. Giddens argues that this supervision may be conducted in direct forms such as the use of prisons, schools or open workplaces as discussed by Foucault (1977); more likely, it is conducted by indirect means and is based upon the control of information. Surveillance is fundamental to all types of organization of modernity, particularly the nation-state, which has developed together with capitalism.

3.1.4 Military power

Military power, "control of the means of violence" (Giddens, 1990, p.58), is distinguished as the fourth dimension of modernity because only in modern society can ruling authorities secure a complete control of the means of violence within its territories. Military power in modern society is closely linked to industrialism in the organization of the military and their weaponry.

Giddens believes these four dimensions are closely interrelated with each other. He agrees with Marxist theory in its premise that the emergence of capitalism preceded the development of industrialism and provided much of the impetus to its emergence. Industrial production and the associated technological development make for more efficient and cheaper production processes. In these processes, labor power was a point of linkage between capitalism and industrialism, because capitalism commodified labor power and made it an abstract factor to be considered in the technological design of production.

As for the relations between surveillance, military power and capitalism, Giddens states that surveillance is fundamental to organizations associated with capitalism, particularly the nation-state whose development has been historically intertwined with that of capitalism. Military power in modern society becomes a "remote backup" to internal surveillance, and Giddens believes the armed forces for the most part point outwards toward the other states.

Stressing the connections between nation-state and capitalism, Giddens does not believe the nation-state can

be explained by the rise of capitalist enterprises. To him, "the nation-state system was forged by myriad contingent events from the loosely scattered order of post-feudal kingdoms and principalities whose existence distinguished Europe from centralized agrarian empires" (Giddens, 1990, p. 62). This argument may provide us with another way of thinking about issues of the nation-state in today's world: as capitalism is being globalized, is the border between nation-states going to disappear and is the role of national government ending? If capitalism is not an intrinsic factor in the formation of the nation-state system, then why does globalized capitalism necessarily lead to the ending of nation-states? To discuss these questions and the impact of globalization, I will first look at how globalization is defined and how Giddens theorizes its dimensions.

3.2 Globalization and its institutional dimensions

Globalization is one of the most puzzling words in today's discourse. Issues around it are being discussed in almost all academic disciplines, but it seems impossible to reach a general agreement on its impact on human society (Castells, 2002). Moreover, as the term is used interchangeably with more specific phrases such as "global

capitalism," "global market" and "neo-liberal policy" in the mass media as well as in academic literature, the more it is talked about, the more difficult it is to understand it. In this paper, I use the term globalization as an overarching description of a process in which human societies become more interdependent, economically, politically, socially and culturally.

There are different definitions of globalization in disciplines such as economics, politics, and sociology. As a sociologist, Giddens (1990) conceptualizes globalization as "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (p.64). However, this definition, coming from the idea of time-space separation, only tells us about globalization's impact on local happenings. To understand the nature of globalization and its constituents, I will turn to Giddens' idea of the dimensions of globalization.

Following his discussions on the four dimensions of modernity, Giddens considers that the four dimensions of globalization are: the world capitalist economy, Nation-state system, world military order, and international

division of labor. I will first introduce these four dimensions, and then analyze the connection between globalization and modernity by comparing their dimensions.

3.2.1 World capitalist economy

I have mentioned earlier the four features of capitalism in Giddens theory. One of these features is that the economy of capitalist societies is "insulated" from political institutions. Giddens argues that this feature allows the business corporations to carry out their activities across a wide scope at the global level, despite the various forms of economic regulation. As these transnational businesses gain great economic power, they are able to influence the political policies of the country in which they are based as well as abroad.

3.2.2 Nation-state system

With their great economic power and political influences, transnational businesses cannot, however, become the rivals of states. States still possess the military power and control the means of violence within their territory. Therefore, Giddens (1984) writes, "nation-states are the principle 'actors' within the global

political order, corporations are the dominant agents within the world economy" (p. 71).

3.2.3 World military order

The world military order of the U.S. versus the Soviet Union in Giddens' 1984 book is different from that of today. But the new world order seems to have verified his theory that war is a more worldwide phenomenon. States are forming military alliances; weaponry and military techniques flow from one state to another; and local conflicts become matters of global involvement.

3.2.4 Industrial division of labor

The fourth dimension of globalization is a global interdependence in the division of labor. By this, Giddens not only refers to division of human labor on a global level, but also to a worldwide distribution of production and diffusion of machine technologies. He thinks the global division of labor brings about the "deindustrialisation" of some developed countries and also the emergence of newly industrializing countries in the Third world. Among these changes, Giddens particularly emphasizes the transformation as effects of communication technologies. He argues that the new communication technologies create a fundamental

aspect of globalization which might be referred to as cultural globalization. With these technologies, today's media increased the reflexivity of human society by the pooling of knowledge and therefore changed every aspect of human life.

To see more clearly the dimensions of both modernity and globalization, I put them into the table below.

Table 1. Dimensions of modernity and that of globalization

Modernity	Globalization
Capitalism	*World capitalist economy*
Industrialism	*International division of labor*
Surveillance	*Nation-state system*
Military power	*World military order*

This table shows a parallel relationship between three pairs of dimensions: capitalism, industrialism, and military power become world phenomena in the era of globalization. The only exception is the power of supervision. Why does not Giddens suggest supra-national

forms of global surveillance such as "global administration", or "World government"? Giddens does not give a clear statement to this question, but he points out that the dialectical nature of globalization has a "push and pull" effect on the sovereignty of nation-states. On one hand, concerted action between countries diminishes the sovereignty of a particular nation; on the other hand, by combining the power of states, the influence of the nation-state system is increased. Moreover, the power of a global agency such as the United Nations is limited by the very fact that it is not territorial and has no significant access to the means of violence control. Its influence can be only strengthened by stronger nation-states. My own understanding is that by surveillance, Giddens refers to the supervision of activities within an autonomous territory in modern society; whereas nation-states in a globalized world not only supervise activities inside their authoritative territory, they are also political actors taking part in the administration of global affairs.

Looking at the above table, we may draw the conclusion that globalization is, by nature, modernity in its globalized phase. In this thesis, based on Giddens' theory of modernity and globalization, my argument is that

globalization is neither just an ideology promoted by global business nor a completely new phenomenon which will bring about the end of the era of nation-states. Instead, it is a continuous process that is driven by the human desire to explore and by the nature of capitalism to expand. This process can trace its root to industrialization as the latter provided it with the necessary technology, military power, and modern supervision that guaranteed its rapid expansion. The new technologies of information and communication brought us the latest stage of this process, characterized by freer flows of capital, goods, people, and information at a global scale.

3.3 Globalization's impact at the institutional level

In one of his speeches on globalization, Giddens (2003) divides the different views on globalization into two groups: the skeptics and the radicals. According to him, the radicals argue that globalization is not only real but also revolutionary. With the forming of a global market, nation-state borders will disappear and the nation-state era is over. On the other side, the skeptics believe that the notion of globalization is an ideology put about by neo-liberals who wish to dismantle welfare systems and

cut back on state expenditures. They argue that in the late 19th century, there was already a global economy with a great deal of global trade. It seems to me that Giddens, for the sake of a clear and strong argument in a short speech, divided a spectrum of opinions into two extreme categories. Though in reality it is not as simple as this, I want to start from arguing against these two positions to understand what globalization is not.

Giddens, though taking a stand with the radicals to claim that globalization is real and revolutionary, points out the problem of both sides. He criticizes that both the skeptics and the radicals make the mistake of seeing the phenomenon of globalization almost solely in economic terms. To him, "globalization is political, technological and cultural, as well as economic" (Giddens, 2003, p. 10). Agreeing with his comment, I find both the radicals and the skeptics too extreme in their understanding of globalization. Neo-liberalism, advocated by the radicals, advocates that globalization means the free flow of capital, goods, and services in a global market, and, since capital will regulate itself through the market, the social protection system of the nation-state will only hinder this free flow and should thus be dismantled. Exponents of this

idea, the transnational corporations and politicians who represent their interests call for a deregulated, internationalized economy. New Zealand, for example, has implemented the so-called "new right revolution" which is characterized by elimination of all subsidies, deregulation of the financial sector, tax cutting for corporations, and commercialization of government enterprises etc (Dobbin, 1993).

Though a powerful ideology, it is not the only dynamic of globalization. Scholars who believe global capitalism will dominate the process of globalization overlook the other dynamics of this process, particularly its political dimension. There is an increasing agreement on the idea that a global market demands global governance (UNDP 1999). Without strong supervision, capital will flow to wherever it finds low labor costs and lax regulation. As a consequence, humanity, equality, ecology, democracy and liberty will be sacrificed. I will elaborate this point later as I discuss globalization's affects on different countries.

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In fighting against the neoliberal agenda, the skeptics in their arguments, seem to me fail to hold a

secure position. Instead of seeing clearly what constitutes globalization and what should be resisted, they go too far in denying the historical and institutional foundation of globalization. For example, in *Reclaiming the Future*, J. Kelsey claims that globalization is a powerful ideal built on exaggeration and myth. Using *globalization* and *neoliberalism* interchangeably, Kelsey argues that neo-liberalism is the "Washington consensus" or "Washington view," and since consensus changes over time, she concludes, there is always an alternative to globalization (Kelsey, 1999, p. 33). This opinion is echoed by social scientists Don Kalb who says " the globalization concept was literally neo-liberalism writ large" (Kalb, 2000, p. 9). Kelsey's arguments for this position seem to conflict each other. On one hand, she sees the historical precedent of globalization in the early twentieth century although she disagrees with the idea that the historical pattern shows a sense of evolution; on the other hand, however, she equates globalization to the neoliberal ideal. Neoliberalism, as one of the factors that is shaping globalization, only became a dominant ideology since 1980s. Therefore, convinced by Kelsey's criticism of neoliberalism and her argument on globalization's disempowering effect on

people's lives, I disagree with the claim that globalization is only an ideological consensus.

To see it from Giddens' theory, the way to globalization has been paved since the beginning of modernity. Capitalism, the driving force of global economy, has an expansionist nature and was, at its early origin, international by scope. Time-space separation, disembedding of social systems and social reflexivity are the fundamental conditions of both modernity and globalization, and these social changes are arguably irreversible. That is, without the ideology of neoliberalism, the world is still a globalizing world.

In all these arguments, different understanding of the term globalization may cause problems. I agree with scholars such as Richard Falk (1999) and Ulrich Beck (2000) who suggest that it is necessary to distinguish *globalism* from *globalization*. According to Beck, globalism refers to the ideology of free-market neo-liberalism, whereas globalization refers to the real phenomenon of shrinking relative space. With the dramatic changes globalization brings about, it is dogmatic to equate globalization with

globalism and claim that globalization is only a policy consensus.

Summarizing the changes brought about by globalization, Giddens (2000) lists four trends. The first and, to him, the most important one is the intensification of global communications with its latest development of the Internet. This change makes it possible to have instantaneous communication from any corner of the world to any other. The second big change is the globalized knowledge economy, particularly the financial markets with their instantaneous transfer and enormous turnover. The third is the fall of Soviet communism in 1989 which ended the cold war. Finally, Giddens believes globalization refers to the global movement of gender equality. It changes the relationship between men and women and has profound effects on the family and emotional life not only in western countries but almost everywhere.

Although these changes happened in almost every part of the world, globalization has different effects on different countries and industries. For industrialized countries, the danger of loosing job opportunities to countries with cheaper labor is obvious. A bigger but less

obvious danger, as Robert Kuttner (1998) points out, is that global capitalism without global regulation will undermine the political project of domesticating capitalism's brutal power under democratic auspices. He argues that the nation-state in the post-war era has been successful at making raw capitalism socially bearable through policies of a mixed economy. In these policies, the nation-state pursued economic stabilization and steady growth through an active macro-economic policy. It thus regulated the self-destructive tendencies of markets, empowered trade union, and later created environmental standards. He contends that when a free global market allows capital to flow from the regulated market to where there is less regulation, it will be very hard for the advanced nations to supervise their banks, stock exchanges and capital markets, as well as their social standards. Therefore, a globalized market without global regulation will cost stability, security, opportunity, growth and democratic citizenship, not only in industrialized countries, but also in developing countries in a general "race-to-the-bottom." Kuttner (1998) believes that the political task of today is to "reinvent a mixed economy for a new era, and to figure out what kind of global economic context is compatible with a managed market economy at

home, and what kind of politics is necessary to support that project" (p. 157).

The picture in developing countries is more complicated. Since most of these nations are not completely integrated in the global market, how they will be affected, positively and negatively, is still unknown. On one hand, globalization is linked to liberalization and economic development. In China, for example, people are hoping free trade and free information may weaken the power of the central government and put an end to its autocratic style of government. In term of economy, foreign capital will marginalize local industries, but as some western consumers refuse to buy Nike sport shoes to protest against exploitation in developing countries, shoemakers in China are breathing a sigh of relief for their new job and the wages they may earn to support their families. Ironically, their situation is exactly as Giddens (2000) suggests, "it is better to be at risk to capitalism than to communism" (P.25). On the other hand, capitalism is not the real savior, especially in its unchecked form. The introduction of information technology, foreign capital, and consumer goods followed by ideologies and popular culture will threaten the local economy, national culture, and

ecological balance. Further, in the case of China, when the legal system is not complete enough to protect local labor, and trade unions only exist in name, economic growth reaches its targeted number with great costs to human rights.

It is well accepted that neither industrializing nor industrialized countries can remain completely independent from the global market. In this thesis, I take for granted that globalization is a reality, and I agree with Kuttner (1998) that a strong global government must be established and established soon. This government should be able to regulate global economy, reduce inequality in global level, protect the world environment, and effectively fight against global crime. Without this government, the world will be turned back to the chaotic stages of capitalism.

After introducing the dimensions of modernity and globalization in Giddens' theory, I have also discussed the impact of globalization on the institutional level. The impact reshape our community and change individual lives. For these changes, we may foresee them and to some extent resist their impact through economic, political and cultural activities. However, the changing world also

changes our sense of self, a change that we do not clearly see as it encroaches. When we feel it, we have no escape. Globalization has become, as Giddens (2003) puts it, "the way we now live" (p. 19). In the next chapter, I will continue to draw on the idea of scholars such as Giddens (1991), Beck (1998), and Suarez-Orozco (2001) to analyze how globalization is affecting our sense of identity.

Chapter four: modernity, globalization and identity

Giddens (2000) believes modernity is a risk culture. The post-traditional culture it created has fundamentally changed human life in that it reduces the overall riskiness of certain areas and modes of life, yet at the same time introduces new risks that are unknown to previous eras. The late modern world, the globalization phase of modernity, is, in Giddens' term, apocalyptic. Science and technology is being used to create weapons of mass destruction, and nature, as the result of human domination, has in a sense come to its end. Other high-consequence risks include ecological catastrophe, the collapse of global economic mechanisms, and the rise of totalitarian superstates. Meanwhile, as noted earlier, globalization is pushing the three characteristics of modernity—time-space distanciation, disembedding of social systems, and institutional reflexivity—to a global level and thus radicalizes these traits of modernity. These changes work together to transform the content and nature of day-to-day social life. Global social changes challenge individuals' sense of identity, and in forging their self-identities, individuals directly promote social influences that are global in their consequences and implications.

The effects of globalization on social life are like that of two opposite poles: it pushes and pulls towards different directions at the same time. This idea is expressed by several scholars in different ways. Giddens (2003) points out that globalization is not only a power that forges a global culture, it is also the reason for the revival of local cultural identities in different parts of the world. For him, the Scots who demanded more independence in U.K. and the separatist movement in Quebec are both examples of this localizing impact of globalization. This is to say, as globalization detraditionalises human society, it also triggers attempts to protect and reinvent tradition.

Marcelo Suarez-Orozco (2001) expresses the same idea from a different angle. He claims that globalization simultaneously creates homogeneity and difference. Global capitalism creates homogenization or "McDonaldization" of taste and meanwhile creates job markets that demand the same basic skills and competences. These standardized job requirements such as technical competences and habits of work are common in any global urban setting. Since work is about making the self and (re)making the world, Suarez-Orozco asks the question: Will globalization's power of

homogenizing obliterate other cultural differences? Meanwhile, he argues that globalization also generates differences. As it drives millions of ethnically and culturally different people to cross national borders and cultural boundaries, it shatters the old homogeneous communities and thus generates cosmopolitan environments where extremely complex new identity formations are taking place.

With these multiple impacts on the world we live, globalization is changing human life in many complicated ways. To use Giddens' expression, we now struggle to live in a runaway world, a world that is escaping our grasp. As Weiming Du states, "the advent of the global village as a virtual reality rather than an authentic home is by no means congenial to human flourishing" (Du, 1996, p.40). Globalization not only changes the world at its institutional level, but also disturbs the core of individual life—our sense of identity. What is the significance of a continuous sense of identity to the wellbeing of human life? How does social changes work to affect our emotional and cognitive world? To explore these questions, I will in the following text introduce Erik

Erikson's account of identity and Giddens' concepts of anxiety and ontological security.

4.1 Erikson's idea of identity and basic trust

Erikson (1968), whose works on identity have become the classical reading, describes identity as a process "located" in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture. This process takes place "on all levels of mental functioning, by which the individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives to be the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves and to a typology significant to them; while he judges their way of judging him in the light of how he perceives himself in comparison to them and to types that have become relevant to him" (p.22). In another work he says: "A sense of identity means a sense of being at one with oneself as one grows and develops; and it means, at the same time, a sense of affinity with a community's sense of being at one with its future as well as its history—or mythology" (Erikson, 1974, p.127).

As his reader begins to feel Erikson has given different definitions to identity, the renowned psychologist admitted that he had almost deliberately tried

out the term in many different connotations: "At one time it seemed to refer to a conscious sense of individual uniqueness, at another to an unconscious striving for a continuity of experience, and at a third, as a solidarity with a group's ideals" (Erikson, 1968, p.208). This summary shows the difficulty of defining identity. But we may learn from it what gives a person his sense of identity. It is the individual uniqueness, continuity of experience, and solidarity with a group's ideal. The individual uniqueness is the basis of a relatively stable self-conception. Each person regards himself as a separate entity with a unique body that he can control. He also has his own memories of the past and expectations for the future. He makes choices and may exercise some control over his life.

It is significant to understand that self-conception is reinforced by one's social relationships. As emphasized by Erikson (1968), to understand identity, we cannot separate personal growth and communal change. There is an active interplay between the two. One example of this relationship in Erikson's book is, as modern industry produced the "technological ethos" of a culture, the majority of people have accepted work as the criterion of worthwhileness and consolidated their identity needs around

their technical and occupational capacities. When technology free them from the drudgery of their jobs and give them more freedom of identity, they experience identity crisis (Erikson, 1968).

To Erikson, a gradually accruing sense of identity based on the experience of social health and cultural solidarity is the process of growing up. In this process, at the end of each major childhood crisis, a human being experiences a periodical balance which makes for a sense of humanity. It is a process in which we fight against infantile anxiety and fear but might never completely get rid of their influence. Erikson concludes that only an identity safely anchored in the "patrimony" of a cultural identity can produce a workable psychosocial equilibrium.

Although the process of identity formation is a continuous process of "increasing differentiation" in which an individual learns to understand the relation between the self and the world around it, a sense of identity is not achieved through an individual's unconditional adaptation to the demands of social change (Erikson, 1968). Instead, it is through adapting the roles of social processes to the

processes of one's ego, that human beings together keep the social process alive.

In this continuous process of identity formation, Erikson believes the most fundamental prerequisite of mental vitality is a sense of basic trust. The notion of basic trust was first proposed by Erikson and later became one of the basic ideas in human development studies. It is also an important concept in Giddens' writings on globalization and identity. By "trust" Erikson (1968) refers to an essential trustfulness of others as well as a fundamental sense of one's own trustworthiness" (p. 96). Basic trust, according to Erikson, is developed at the early stage of life when the human infant learns to rely upon the consistency and attention of its caretakers, in most cases, the mother. In this process, the individual develops a stable sense of identity and forms a continuing protective device against the existential anxieties of one's adult life.

Echoing Erikson, Giddens (1991) argues that basic trust rests on confidence in the reliability of persons, developed in the early experiences of the infant, and forms "the original nexus from which a combined emotive-cognitive

orientation towards others, the object-world, and self-identity, emerges" (p. 38). The meaning of basic trust to individuals, according to Giddens, is that it serves as sort of emotional inoculation against existential anxieties, a system of protection that allows the individual to sustain courage and hope in times of danger and threats in his future life. He calls basic trust a "protective cocoon" that all normal individuals carry around with them to screen off the potentially infinite possibilities of dangers and be able to get on with the affairs of day-to-day life.

4.2 Giddens' concept of identity, anxiety and ontological security

Based on Erikson's idea on identity, Giddens (1991) defines self-identity as "the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography" (p. 53). To be a human being is to know all the time what one is doing and why one is doing it. Reflexive awareness is, to Giddens, characteristic of all human beings, and is the specific condition of the massively developed institutional reflexivity. Giddens argues that a person's identity can be found neither in his behavior, nor in the reactions of others, but in "the capacity to keep a

particular narrative going. " This is to say, a person with a normal sense of self-identity, has a feeling of biological continuity which he is able to grasp reflexively and, to some degree, communicate to other people. Meanwhile, this person should have developed the "protective cocoon" (Giddens 1991) through childhood experience of trust relations.

With the protective cocoon developed at the early stage of one's life, the individual has a sense of "invulnerability " (Giddens, 1991), and this natural attitude helps him bracket out questions about the self and the world which have to be taken for granted in order to continue one's daily life. Giddens (1984) uses the phrase "ontological security" to describe this phenomenon. It refers to "the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action" (p. 92). He argues that ontological security, though has to do with "being," is an emotional phenomenon, rather than a cognitive one. It is based, not upon an individual's knowledge or rational thinking, but on the "basic trust" which is developed in one's childhood. Normal individuals, he agues, "receive a basic 'dosage' of trust

in early life that deadens or blunts these existential susceptibilities" (Giddens, 1984, p. 93).

Ontological security is also closely connected with routine. The infant's early experiences of its caretaker's predictability in following routines is very important to the sense of psychological security of the adult he later becomes. Giddens believes that if, for some reasons, the routines are shattered, anxieties come flooding in, and even the most firmly founded aspects of one's personality can be stripped away and altered. Trust, ontological security, and a feeling of the continuity of things and persons remain closely bound up with one another in the adult personality. When the basic trust and an overall security system are poorly developed, the individual is unable to maintain a sense of continuity of self-identity. This state of the emotions is anxiety. Therefore, anxiety is not related to particular risks or dangers. It is unconsciously organized state of fear and has its seeds in fear of separation from the prime caretaker of one's childhood.

Giddens believes self-identity is one of the four existential questions concerning the nature of human

existence. To be ontologically secure is to possess some "answers" to these questions, on the level of unconsciousness and practical consciousness, in order to go on with the natural process of daily life. To understand it in this way, the search for self-identity is not a form of narcissism. Instead, it is part of the nature of human existence, in which the individual constantly inquires about the meaning of life.

Since ontological security is the individual's confidence in the continuity of self-identity and the constancy of surrounding social and material environment, social context is an important factor in the individual's feeling of security or anxiety. Particularly when social environments are in transit, individuals experience existential anxiety. The individual of today is no doubt experiencing such a transit time and trying to find new answers for the existential questions concerning what it means to be a human. How has globalization changed the social contexts, and why do these changes challenge our "old" answers to these questions? Giddens believes that to understand human feelings of security and anxiety, we have to study not only trust, but also risk and danger. This is because "the notion of risk becomes central in a society

which is taking leave of the past, of traditional ways of doing things, and which is opening itself up to a problematic future" (Giddens, 1991, p. 111).

Giddens (1991) disagrees with the idea that high-modernity produces high risk. He argues that, on the level of the individual lifespan and in terms of life expectation and degree of freedom from serious disease, modern people live much more secure lives. However, he claims that institutionalized systems of risk in modern society create an atmosphere of risk: for everyone, from lay people to experts of specific fields, it is an ever-present exercise to think in terms of risk and risk assessment. No one can escape from this climate of risk.

Giddens (1990) compares the differences between the social contexts for trust and risk in pre-modern society and modern society. He lists four localized contexts of trust that predominated pre-modern cultures: Kinship relations, the local community as a place, religious cosmologies, and tradition as means of connecting present and future. In contrast, the contexts for trust in modern society include personal relationships such as friendship or sexual relationship, abstract systems as a means of

establishing relations across indefinite spans of time-space, and future-oriented, counter factual thought as a mode of connecting past and present. Meanwhile, threats in pre-modern society include dangers emanating from nature, human violence from marauding armies, local warlords etc., and risk of falling from religious grace or of malicious magic influence. In modern society, these threats are replaced by dangers emanating from the reflexivity of modernity, human violence from the industrialization of war, and the threat of personal meaninglessness deriving from the reflexivity of modernity as applied to the self.

These changes of the social contexts for trust and risk, according to Giddens, reshape the relationship between the self and the wider social environment in day-to-day life. They also change the relationship between the individual and others. In particular, with the development of abstract systems, social existence depends more on trust in impersonal principles and in anonymous others instead of kinship and local community. This impersonality of modern social life will inevitably lead to the quest for self-identity. When modernity is being globalized, the social contexts for trust and risk are at the global level and social life is further impersonalized. Living in this world

involves various tensions on the level of the self, and it is very difficult for the individual to keep a particular narrative going. The biography problem of modern life is well described in Ulrich Beck's analysis.

4.3 Ulrich Beck and the concept of globalization of biography

Ulrich Beck (1998) provides fifteen points to describe the individual life in a globalizing world. With these points he draws a picture of the massive changes the self is experiencing in today's society. Instead of introducing these points one by one, I will reorganize them into several groups to discuss how a globalizing world is changing our sense of identity.

First, Beck argues that modern individuals live with different versions of biographies. In a highly differentiated society, its functional systems become so complicated that individuals play different roles in different functional spheres. They wander between these functional worlds but are only partly and temporarily involved as students, consumers, voters, taxpayers, parents, drivers, etc. Meanwhile, since modern institutions have taken the place of binding traditions, individuals

live under standardized institutional guidelines, and the modern guidelines "compel the self-organization and self-thematisation of people's biographies" (Beck, 1998, p. 166). Therefore, Beck argues that in modern society, standard biographies become elective biographies, 'do-it-yourself' biographies, risk biographies, broken or broken-down biographies. The contradiction of modern biographies induces sense of insecurity and fear even in the middle layers of society.

Second, with institutional guidelines as mentioned above, individuals take more responsibilities for their own lives and bear alone the consequences of personal misfortunes and unanticipated events. Beck observes that the image of modern society is one in which individuals are active shapers of their own lives. This image is not only individual perception but has become a cultural mode. Beck believes that phenomena of social crisis such as structural unemployment are thus shifted as a burden of risk on the shoulders of individuals, and social problems can be directly turned into psychological problems of guilt feelings, anxieties, conflicts and neuroses.

Third, in a globally networked world, one's own life is a global life. Beck (1998) introduces the concept of the globalization of biography and states:

> In the global age, one's own life is no longer sedentary or tied to a particular place. It is a traveling life, both literally and metaphorically, a nomadic life, a life spent in cars, aeroplanes and trains, on the telephone or the internet, supported by the mass media, a transnational life stretching across frontiers. (p. 168).

The result of this phenomenon, according to Beck, is that whether voluntarily or compulsorily or both, people spread their lives out across separate worlds. He refers to the globalization of biography as place polygamy: people are wedded to several places at once. Further, this place-polygamous ways of living are also translated biographies. To continue their in-between lives, individuals have to constantly translate their biographies for themselves and for others.

Forth, living with various conflicting cultures and values in the post-traditional society, individuals have to

be constantly engaged in classifying, interpreting and integrating what is happening around them. Beck (1998) also has strong comments here:

> People are expected to live their lives with the most diverse and contradictory transnational and personal identities and risks. Individualization in this sense means detraditionalization, but also the opposite: a life lived in conflict between different cultures, the invention of hybrid traditions. (p. 169).

He particularly points out the difference between the new challenges of detraditionalization from those analyzed by Georg Simmel, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber in the early part of this century. For him, the main difference is that today people are not discharged from certainties of traditional culture and religion into the world of industrial society, but are transplanted from the national industrial societies of the first modernity into the transnational turmoil of world-risk society.

4.4 Dilemmas of the self

To see it from Beck's discussion, modern life creates enormous burdens for the integrity of the self. These

burdens are caused by a variety of conflicting forces that push and pull the society and the self to different directions. To better understand these factors, I will draw upon Giddens' idea of the dilemmas that individuals face in today's society. According to Giddens (1991), the self in today's world face four dilemmas: unification versus fragmentation, powerlessness versus appropriation, authority versus uncertainty, and personalized versus commodified experience.

4.4.1 Unification versus fragmentation

Giddens agrees with the idea that the diversifying of social contexts is one of the reasons for the difficulties of living in modern society. He points out that, in many modern settings, individuals are caught up in a variety of differing encounters and milieux, each of which may call for different forms of "appropriate" behavior. In their daily activities, individuals sensitively adjust the "presentation of self" in relation to whatever is demanded of a particular situation. This creates the feeling of a fragmented self. On the other hand, however, the diversifying social contexts also promote an integration of self. Giddens (1991) argues that a person may "make use of diversity in order to create a distinctive self-identity

which positively incorporates elements from different settings into a integrated narrative" (p. 190). According to Giddens, this dilemma has two forms of pathologies. One is the rigid traditionalist who constructs his identity around fixed commitments, and the other is the conformist who loses the original self in adapting to different contexts.

4.4.2 Powerlessness versus appropriation

The feeling of powerlessness is a widely agreed phenomenon of modern society. But Giddens doesn't believe modern individuals have less control over their lives than people in pre-modern society. With modern life characterized by time-space distanctiation and trust in abstract system, the situated individual looses some controls over social life, but on the other hand, he also gains some control that pre-modern people didn't have. Giddens argues that the feeling of powerlessness is a psychic phenomenon and relates to aims, projects or aspirations held by the individual. Meanwhile, the feeling of powerlessness will cause a "survival" mentality, with which the individual seeks active mastery of life. The pathologies of this dilemma are *engulfment* and *omnipotence*. The former refers to the feeling of completely loosing

one's autonomy of action, and the latter to a fantasy of dominance.

4.4.3 Authority versus uncertainty

Since tradition and religion become weakened in modern cultures, there are no determinant authorities in today's society. As usual, Giddens disagrees that pre-modern life had more certainty than today. Compared with the past, today's life is more predictable and less susceptible to threats and danger from nature. Meanwhile, although traditional authority and religions still exist and are even resurging, traditional authority becomes one of the authorities, authorities such as the "indefinite pluralism of expertise" that sometimes rival one another. The existence of pluralistic authorities makes modern individuals adopt the principle of doubt in making their judgments. This dilemma creates two forms of pathology. At one pole is the individual's giving up faculties of critical judgment and complete submission to a dominant authority; at the other pole is the individual who suffers from paranoia or a paralysis of will, immobilized by a tendency towards universal doubt.

4.4.4 *Personalized versus commodified experience*

As modernity provides a great diversity of choices for the construction of self-identity, one of its main dimensions, capitalism is also imposing standardizing effects on modern social life. It does it through commodification that not only standardizes the skill requirement of job markets but also standardizes consumption patterns. With powerful advertisements, commodification also corrupts the notion of lifestyle by equating it to the possession of desired goods and the pursuit of artificially framed styles of life. Giddens quotes Bauman (1989) as saying, "individual needs of personal autonomy, self-definition, authentic life or personal perfection are all translated into the need to possess, and consume, market-offered goods" (as cited in Giddens, 1991, p. 189). Meanwhile, different forms of media entertainment, by providing narratives, suggest models for the construction of narratives of the self. Giddens thus argues that the reflexive project of the self is in some part necessarily a struggle against commodified influences. With this dilemma, the form of pathology is narcissism. When the culture of consumerism promotes appearance as the prime standard of value, and self is often judged in terms of display, narcissistic traits will become prominent.

4.5 Is there a way out?

At the beginning of this thesis, I have introduced Giddens' definition of modernity as the modes of social life or organization that emerged with industrialization in eighteenth-century Europe. To look at it from the human sense of self, there is another starting point of modernity. That is when Rene Descartes, commonly regarded as the father of modern philosophy, made his famous claim: cogito ergo sum" —I think, therefore I am. From then on, the human individual psychologically left the Garden of Eden and started his lonely and daring journey of searching for the self. A sensitive individual finds himself constantly facing the existential questions: Who am I? Who am I going to be? Where do I belong? Why do I live? Without fixed answers provided by tradition and religion, there exists, underlying the dilemmas of modern life, to use Giddens' expression, the looming threat of personal meaninglessness.

In Giddens idea, modern social systems blunt human sensitivity to these existential questions and normally hold the feeling of meaningless at bay. It does this through the formation of what he calls "internally referential systems." With the pervasiveness of abstract

systems, modern society provides calculability to day-to-day life activities. Combined with basic trust, the calculability of the social contexts gives human beings the feeling of being able to control one's life circumstances. The feeling of mastery thus takes the place of moral strength as the source of security and sense of individual significance. However, the world that we feel we can master doesn't represent the whole range of life. There are the fateful moments of birth and death kept away in hospitals, the "deviants" held in prisons, the passion privatized, the yearning for return of tradition and religion, and the social movements that demand changes. When exposed to these "hidden" aspects of life, the modern individual tend to suffer from the desperate feeling of meaninglessness and individual insignificance (Giddens, 1991).

Are there ways to liberate modern individuals from this seemingly fatal situation? Giddens first introduces the idea of human *emancipation*. Emancipatory politics, according to Giddens, has three targets: it proposes to liberate individuals and groups from constraints that adversely affect their life chances; it involves efforts to remove the constraints of the past and adopt a transformative attitude towards the future; and it

advocates human society should overcome the illegitimate dominance of some individuals or groups by others. Giddens' criticism of emancipatory politics, in my understanding, is that the theory tells people to fight against exploitation, inequality and oppression, but fails to indicate what to fight for. Further, defining the three targets and arguing about their illegitimacy implies the adoption of moral values and judgment. There are thus relativity and uncertainty towards these targets. To Giddens, John Rawls' theory of justice "provides a case for justice as an organizing ambition of emancipation" (Giddens, 1991, p.213), but how individuals and groups in a just order will behave is left open.

Giddens (1991) then suggests the theory of *life politics*. Life politics "concerns political issues which flow from processes of self-actualization in post-traditional contexts, where globalizing influences intrude deeply into the reflexive project of the self, and conversely where processes of self-realization influence global strategies" (p. 214). Life politics is about increasing the individual's "reflexive awareness" to existential questions, questions that the institutions of modernity systematically dissolve. It also demands the

individual's internal strength to make life decisions, and to "remoralize" social life. As Giddens (1991) claims himself: life politics is a politics of life decisions, and "it is a politics of self-actualization in a reflexively ordered environment, where that reflexivity links self and body to systems of global scope" (p.214). With the political agenda of participating in debates on social issues such as the building of nuclear power stations, the first and foremost decision for the individual is to construct the narrative of self-identity. To do this, the individual must integrate information from a diversity of mediated experiences with local involvement; he also needs to connect future projects with past experiences in a reasonably coherent fashion; and he needs to shape, alter, and reflexively order the narrative of self-identity in relation to rapidly changing social circumstances.

Giddens' theory of life politics has clear social implications. Life politics is about asking, at both individual and collective levels, what rights and responsibilities human beings have over life, nature and the world. It calls for active participation in making decisions for one's own life and for social issues that affect individual life. Although life politics is a

political agenda, its implementation presupposes that a large proportion of individuals in society have the capability to reflexively look into what is happening in today's world. Unfortunately, Giddens does not continue to discuss how this capability of adopting freely chosen lifestyles could be increased. I will therefore, in the next chapter, draw on the philosophical ideas of Martha Nussbaum to look into this issue's implications in education.

Chapter five: making choices in a globalizing world and the role of education

Making choices among multiple options is a central feature of the structuring of self-identity. In an era of globalization, this is particularly important and difficult. The plurality of choices, according to Giddens (1991), derives from four influences of globalization. First, the conditions of globalization strip off the fixed guidelines established by tradition, and the individual may opt for alternatives. Second, the settings of modern social life are much more diverse and segmented. Lifestyle is attached to specific milieux of action. And because of the existence of multiple milieux and the different modes of action these milieux demand, lifestyle and activities tend to be fragmented for the individual. Third, under the condition of modernity, authorities are all subject to doubt and individuals often need to make decisions between rival claims of conflicting theories. Fourth, the media expose the modern individual to remote social settings and potential lifestyle choices. As a result, traditional connections based on physical situations are undermined, and mediated social situations construct new communalities and differences between old forms of social experiences.

Making free choices under these conditions takes not only the capabilities of independent reasoning but also the moral strength to make one's own decisions. Education is clearly the social institution that should take the responsibility to increase this capability and strength in individuals. Today's education is being profoundly influenced by globalization. Intensified modernization of the whole world is challenging not only the theories and forms of education, but also the basic idea of what education is and what its purposes are. In this thesis, I stand with the majority of teachers and scholars to believe that education is a continuous process of liberating intelligence for the improvement of human life. Through education, the individual learns to understand the self and the world to develop an integrated, cultured personality and becomes able to make social adjustments. During this process, the individual increases the ability to think independently and form the habit of being frank and genuine (Coe, Slutz, Eddy, 1929). With these fundamental purposes, education also works to prepare the individual for future occupations.

However, global competition is making this traditional idea of education sound idealistic and unrealistic. Facing

fierce global competition in economic power, technological development, and military forces, nation-states are seeing education as a high-stake field to gain advantages in global competition. Vocational training is gaining emphasis and humanities are being ignored. This is particularly happening in developing countries where economic growth is seen as a synonym of human wellbeing and large populations cause fierce job competition.

5.1 Globalization and education

Although globalization has different impact on education of different countries and different cultures, in general, it is changing education in three ways. First, education is seen as a large, state-run enterprise that is costly and inefficient (Myers, 1996). To cut costs and make education a more efficient business, neo-liberals call for the privatization of education and the introduction of "market" competition. Under this position, students are viewed as human capital and education as the market (Apple, 1998). Since raising the quality and productivity of human capital is vital to economic advantage (Brown & Lauder, 1996), education is closely linked to a country's business success in the global market. Second, in order to gain economic advantage in the global market and solve the

problem of unemployment, students are supposed to acquire employability skills in school. Proponents of Outcomes Based Education, for example, call for the teaching of skills such as verbal, quantitative, technical, strategic, social and evaluative (Jolliffe, 1996). Third, education itself, particularly higher education, becomes a commodity. Education is transformed into a commodity form for the purpose of commercial transactions (Noble, 2000). Education programs are designed as a product, packaged and sold accordingly.

These ideas are in danger of changing the basic notion of education. I want to argue that it is shortsighted to reduce education to a form of training for industries. The proponents of these policies either fail to realize the demand for human being's authenticity and maturity to live a healthy life in a globalized world, or simply ignore the long-term wellbeing of human society. I make this argument based on my own experience and understanding of the business model of education. From 1997 to 1999, I taught business communication at the Shenzhen Polytechnic in China. As a new college, the Shenzhen polytechnic was making an educational experiment, and tried to introduce a business model into its administration. That is, parents

pay high fees and are seen as customers of this business of education; teachers are paid according to how many courses and how many classes (40 students each) they teach. Students are the products and employers are the buyers. To compete in the job market, students must take standard tests and obtain as many certificates as they can. All the courses offered must be useful and practical. Rote learning is the most efficient way to pass the examinations. This practice was later used in China as a successful model of vocational education and copied by other schools. Years later when I sat in a McGill classroom watching a video program on schooling in Singapore where the same model was introduced, I realized that this reform is propelled by competition in the global market and has been implemented in a number of countries (Ashton, 1996).

From my observation as a lecturer in Shenzhen Polytechnic, the business model of education has two effects, one direct and one indirect. The direct result was that teachers, feeling like tape players of knowledge, were tired of teaching; and students, treated as memory machines, were tired of learning. The quality of both teaching and learning was very low. The indirect influence was that education was reduced to mass production of

graduates. At the age of 18 to 21, the critical time of growing up from teenagers to young adults, students were burdened with preparing themselves for industries and literally trapped into rote learning of textbooks. The three-year schooling not only hindered their intellectual and personal development, but also created a smoldering sense of frustration and a strong feeling of meaninglessness among them. Further, students gradually lost their ability of independent thinking, an ability that was not fully developed in their previous education. In the classroom, as the students were asked about their own thoughts on a certain issue, they looked at each other, hoping to have a collective answer or simply to be told what to think about.

Lack of independent and critical thinking might be partly due to Chinese culture which emphasizes respect for authorities, but the phenomenon of factory-like education is not limited to China. In the United Sates, for example, a country that is characterized by its tradition of individualism, psychologist Rollo May uses the example of the University of Berkeley to describe the "facelessness of education factory." Three decades ago, May (1979) has pointed out that mass education, mass communication, mass

technology, and other "mass" processes are inescapable phenomena of modern society. These mass processes form modern people's minds and emotions and undermine the self-image of individuals.

5.2 Making rational choices

What kind of education better prepares the individual for living in a globalized world, and how does education help the individual to make his own choices? To answer these questions, I will turn to philosopher Martha Nussbaum's discussion on how human beings make rational choices. In her essay "The Discernment of Perception: An Aristotelian Conception of Private and Public Rationality," Nussbaum presents Aristotle's answer: the discernment of correct choice rests with perception, which is "some sort of complex responsiveness to the salient features of one's concrete situation" (Nussbaum, 1992, p.55). Based on this conception, Nussbaum (1992) discusses the Aristotelian theory of rationality and explores its implications in different social contexts in a time when "the power of 'scientific' pictures of practical rationality affects almost every area of human social life" (p.55).

Nussbaum explains perception from three aspects. First, Aristotelianism believes that the constituents of choice situations are plural and noncommensurable values. In contrast to the theory that rational choice should be a science of measurement, Aristotle's choice picture is a quality-based selection among plural and heterogeneous goods, each being chosen for its own distinctive value. To the opposite suggestion that deliberation must be either quantitative or a mere shot in the dark, Nussbaum is adamant, "(Deliberation) is qualitative and not quantitative, (it is) rational just because it is qualitative, and based upon a grasp of the special nature of each of the items in question."

Second, since values are plural and noncommensurable, Aristotle objects to the theory that choice can be made in a system of general rules or principles, which can simplify the situation. He argues for "the priority of concrete situational judgments of a more informal and intuitive kind to any such system" (Nussbaum, 1992, p.66). Agreeing with Aristotle that general principles do play the role of guidance in some situations, Nussbaum concludes, "Perception is a progress of loving conversation between rules and concrete responses, general conceptions and

unique cases, in which the general articulates the particular and is in turn further articulated by it. "

Third, complete perception is in part constituted by emotion and imagination. Without emotive response, theorizing can impede vision, and overreaching intellect becomes a dangerous master. Knowledge will be "dragged around like a slave." According to Nussbaum (1992), Aristotle believes that choice can be described "either as desiderative deliberation or as deliberative desire" (p.78). To Aristotle, failure to make good ethical choice is not caused by passions but by an excess of theory and a deficiency in "passional" response.

As Nussbaum says, the three elements above form a coherent picture of practical choice, and articulate different aspects of one central idea: the notion of human being. It answers the question of how to be a human being. To be a human being is not to measure one's situation and make decisions following abstract rules, but to make choices by thinking and feeling. Nussbaum borrows a phrase from Henry James to describe the ideal Aristotelian agent: "fully aware and richly responsible." It describes a person who has true courage and sensitivity to face the anxiety

and feeling of loss brought by knowing this complex and contingent world. I believe this is also the meaning of reflexive awareness in Giddens' idea.

5.3 The role of education

Nussbaum (1992) claims that to have an Aristotelian society of democracy, questions about education should be the first and the most crucial questions. This is because education is seen as "modifying all of subsequent life and making it more humane"(p.103). So art, literature and other humanities should be the core of education. In her book *Cultivating Humanity*, Nussbaum points out that in our society, many people—administrators, parents, students—hold the idea that it is too costly to indulge in learning for the enrichment of life. To the growing interest in vocational education, Nussbaum comments: "they sell our democracy short, preventing it from becoming as inclusive and as reflective as it ought to be." For her, people who have never learned to use reason and imagination to enter a broader world of cultures, groups, and ideas are impoverished personally and politically, no matter how successful their vocational preparation is.

This is not to say that science education has no significance in the development of reasoning and imagination. The study of science originated from philosophic thinking, and it has been argued that not only scientific training provides the individual with the necessary knowledge about the world and self, but also the use of scientific methods to discipline the human mind to respect facts and seek for meanings behind facts. The argument is about why the value of education cannot be judged by economic outcomes, and why studies in the basic disciplines of science and humanities that are not economically productive in a short time should be maintained. It is because living in a globalizing world demands the ability to make rational choices, and no other institutions but education, in its real meaning, can take the full responsibility for the development of this ability.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have analyzed globalization and its impact on human society and sense of identity. As noted, globalization is a complex of changes that are reshaping the world and challenging human identity in multiple ways. It unifies different worlds and cultures to form one global world, but this world is diversified and fragmented. On one hand, the individual in the world of globalized modernity is exposed to distant cultures and connected to people living far away; on the other hand, he is estranged from his next-door neighbors by different choices of lifestyles.

Therefore, I want to go back to the question I raised at the beginning of this thesis: In an era of globalization, can we globalize our sense of identity? The obvious answer is no. According to Erikson, self-identity is a continuous process of differentiating from others. Globalization creates more diversified social contexts for the individual to make choices to form his own narrative and so construct his identity. In this sense, it is easier to be different in modern society.

The problem is that Erikson also suggests self-identity needs to be safely anchored in the patrimony of cultural identities. But globalization, to use Giddens' term, seems to disembed self-identity from traditional cultural identities. Self-identity, like a small boat, leaves the harbor of traditional cultures to start its journey in the ocean of a globalizing world. My argument is that individual identity will find new harbors, but not from traditional cultures based within nation-state borders. With the paradox of living in a post-traditional society in which traditions are being reinvented, self-identity may find anchors in newly invented traditions or new communities. These communities do not have to be linked to particular places, but can be global networks or virtual communities on the Internet. Commonalities of occupation, education, or hobbies may take the place of traditional, local communities to function as the anchor for self-identity.

In my research on this topic, I found that more and more scholars are paying attention to globalization's impact on self-identity and the implications it has for schooling. At this stage, good questions seem to be more important than quick answers. Suarez-Orozco, a leading

scholar of immigrant education, suggests that Erikson's idea of a single, coherent and continuous identity may not reflect the lived experiences of the children from multilingual and multicultural social contexts. He suggests research should be done on the construction and performance of multiple identities. I suggest that, in doing this research, attention should be paid to whether individuals who have multiple identities are free of the pathologic characteristics described by Giddens, and whether they have a deep feeling of spiritual homelessness. Meanwhile, questions can be asked about how narratives such as history, legend, and mythologies, in old or new forms, function in the construction of identities. Educational researchers may study how young people at different stages of development adapt the changes of social contexts to the processes of forming new sense of identities. Last but not least, appropriate methodologies for empirical research on this topic should also be widely discussed. One possibility is to study how children from social milieux that are affected by globalization to different degrees construct their narrative of identity. For example, through comparing the life stories of children living in isolated areas and those exposed to multiple cultures, researchers may hope to

gain a deeper understanding on the impact of globalization on human identity.

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