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A New Decade of the Global Age, 1996-2006

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Abstract: The need for a theoretical exploration of the widely shared sense of a new epoch in the early 1990s prompted the author's *The Global Age* (1996). This is a review of that thesis in the light of events over the last decade, a test of time for its continuing validity. A main original proposition was that globalization rhetoric was a fundamentally misplaced attempt to assimilate the new globality of our time to an old modern historiography. That rhetoric persisted in the Third Way but was challenged by Seattle in 1999 and 9/11, 2001. Those events have highlighted contingencies that are global, felt to be dangerously close to being beyond control, prompting responses that are decentred and networked through individuals and multiple agencies of state and civil society. A new orientation to global issues, most prominently represented by the Millennium Development Goals, has emerged as a characteristic feature of our age.

Keywords: civil society, clash of civilizations, epochal theory, global age, globality, global issues, Millennium Development Goals

Writing the History of our own Time

(1) In the early 1990s, as the Soviet system disintegrated and the three worlds of the post World War II era collapsed into one world, in political and corporate rhetoric this was the triumph not just of America and its allies, but of modern capitalism. This new world order was global and globalization was the driver of change. The self-assuredness of this narrative of change contrasted sharply with the dominant intellectual climate in the West that questioned both the assumption of an advancing modernity and the very possibility of a shared world outlook. The contradiction between this postmodern mood and the triumphalist assertion of globalization as the latest stage in Western modernity spurred some to rethink the way we write of our own time as a period in history.

(2) The adoption of the globe as the symbol for one world and the use of global terminology in public discourse extended back into the 1940s and far beyond economic relations and still await an authoritative account. But for the historian it was already symptomatic of deep seated epochal change, of a rupture not just with an earlier epoch but with the old modern temporal rank ordering of cultures that saw some as “advanced” and others as “undeveloped,” an ideological outlook that Wolf Schäfer (1994) termed “contemporary non-contemporaneity” (*gleichzeitige Ungleichzeitigkeit*). He argued the new epoch was global in which all cultures shared and was one of the group of historians around Bruce Mazlish (1993) who declared “global history” to be a new field distinct from older “world history.”

(3) Global history represents a challenge to social scientists also because their accounts of contemporary transformations are so often premised on an implicit account of the relentless march of modernization, with globalization as its latest manifestation. They therefore perpetuate an older historiography even as they document unprecedented new threats to the human species. Even an old style world historian Arnold Toynbee (1948) had no doubts about the epochal significance of atomic weapons; yet after him Jürgen Habermas (1989 [1962]: 235), the social scientist, saw “the potential for self-annihilation on a global scale” as only adding emphasis to Kant’s call for a “cosmopolitan order.” Toynbee could envisage a postmodern time, Habermas only the incomplete modern project.

(4) The purpose behind my *The Global Age* (1996) independent of, but consistent with Mazlish’s and Schäfer’s call for global history, was to free social scientists from the historical outlook of an old modernity that framed so many of their concepts and impeded them from recognising the true novelty of our own time. I deconstructed “globalization” and envisaged the end of what others have called “methodological nationalism” by recognizing the delinkage of state, society, economy and culture. But all of this only makes sense if the hypothesis of the global age still stands up to inspection. It is open to the test of time. This is why for the reissue of the book in Germany the editor of the series in which it appears, Ulrich Beck, requested a new chapter covering the last ten years. What follows here is an English version (slightly amended) of that chapter and of part of a new preface for the German volume.

(5) When I wrote *The Global Age*, unknown to me, others were coming to similar formulations. Schäfer (1995) at the State University of New York submitted an essay, “The Global Ages” to the *New York Times*, in response to a general invitation to write a characterization of our time, with some striking anticipations of my position. Tae Chang Kim (1993) of the Institute for the Integrated Study of Future Generations in Kyoto had written a chapter entitled, “Toward a New Theory of Value for the Global Age.” And in 1989 Erwin Laszlo of the United Nations University alluded to the Global Age in his *Inner Limits of Mankind*. Indeed at the same time as I submitted my manuscript to the publisher, Michael Geyer and Charles Bright (1995) wrote a journal article entitled “World History in a Global Age” that spoke of the new condition of globality that we have arrived at, seeing it as the outcome of long processes of globalization. These authors, writing independently of each other, adopt the same formulation, because it is the way our time talks to us. It is, in Voltaire’s (1926 [1751]) formulation, *l’esprit du temps*, “the spirit of the age,” the *Zeitgeist*.

(6) The great German historian, Friedrich Meinecke (1959: 102) remarked on the seeming paradox that the age of reason framed itself in terms of “spirit,” a kind of ineffable, non-rational presence around us. More important, the civility of the eighteenth century *philosophes* extended to finding the specific “spirit” of other periods and civilizations. In following Montaigne they were developing the cosmopolis of the sixteenth century rather than the technical rationality that later came to dominate the idea of modernity (Toulmin 1990: x, 198). One recent biographer (Pearson 2005: 396) points out that Voltaire’s resistance to the idea of system shows how fundamentally mistaken it is to see the Enlightenment as the forerunner of the Holocaust. The cosmopolitanism of our own time, to which this book is one contribution, is also in no continuous line with the past. It arises wherever cultures find a common humanity in the other. Reason itself surfaces in diverse times and places, for instance among the early Indian Buddhists, as Amartya Sen (2005: 15) informs us. Unreason, the descent into violence, can happen at any time.

(7) The present does not always emerge as an easy transition from the past. Globality hit the world as a series of shocks, in the unwanted outcomes of human activities, in the revealed dangers of the forces of nature. In that respect it has undermined faith in modernity as the route to progress and control of the world. Telling the story of our time as one of progressive globalization effectively seeks to perpetuate the old modern story. *The Global Age* denies the validity of that narrative. It finds that there is no inherent direction in globalization processes (Albrow 1996: 75-96) — weaponry is globalized, so are peace efforts; markets are globalized, so are regulations. The crucial changes in our world are not best expressed as trends but as turning points, or even in the popular expression, tipping points.

(8) Since 1996 the polymorphous nature of globalization processes has achieved widespread recognition, especially since the protests against the World Trade Organization talks in Seattle in 1999 when the language of the globe was recovered from economic globalization. For a brief moment even the Clinton presidency withdrew from wholehearted trumpeting of globalization and adopted a more sober “global age” language. Since then the Bush presidency has favoured the narrative of a “clash of civilizations” and the “global war on terror.” What becomes even clearer over the decade is that the global age is characterized by the globality of issues affecting humankind as a whole. They point to a different action frame of reference from globalization, where the stress is on a process that moves in one direction, which interested parties can steer to their advantage or ignore at their peril. Globality on the other hand highlights a collective condition where an adequate response is a change of consciousness, a different political direction, new institutions, new science, and new ethics. This has been the burden of my sociological contributions elsewhere (Albrow 1997a, 1997b, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2007). In this global age, modernity has to be a case of instruments rather than a panacea. It must cede centrality to globality now if it is to serve the generations that we want to follow us. We certainly need the triumphs of technical modernity; we need reason arising out of diversity even more.

The History Makers

*We don't have to swim against the currents of the world.
The momentum of history is on our side.*
President Clinton, December 8, 2000

(9) The sweep of history that took us from Hiroshima in 1945 to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 we termed a period of transition (see Albrow 1996: 75-96). It began and ended with references to “a new world order” but the language and imagery of the globe eventually eclipsed other ways of referring to the common condition and prospects of humankind. Global threat, global promise, woven together, became the story of the 1990s employed by the leaders of public opinion to persuade the world that globalization is both history and fate. The early political uses of globalization stories in the Clinton/Gore presidential campaign of 1992 (ibid. 72) became the dominant account of our time later in the decade. This was largely the result of the way a political genius refashioned the globalization story to suit American interests. When, as the Modern Age was emerging in the early seventeenth century, Bishop Bossuet (1887 [1681]) sought to persuade the French prince that universal history was worth studying, he told him it was not for the common people but only for rulers to read (Albrow 1996: 11). Four centuries later, the world’s rulers have turned to writing history for the education of the masses. [1] Commanding the grand narrative of the present has become a major tool of government and Clinton became its outstanding exponent. [2]

(10) Clinton’s conviction that history was on his side was what used to be called “Whig,” where every past event led necessarily to the present, and the enlightened historian would show us the only way into the future. It demanded close collaboration with the social sciences, since they aimed to uncover the driving forces of change. The public history writers of today are still historicists in Karl Popper’s sense (Popper 1957; Albrow 1996: 97-100). They quarry the social sciences for data, trends and theories and then craft a story that appears to compel certain policy choices. Commanding the direction of history has enormous persuasive appeal. Recognizing that he had allowed himself to be sidetracked at the beginning of his first presidential term, Clinton returned for his second term eager for an underlying big idea. He found a congenial ally in the new British Prime Minister, Tony Blair. In a key meeting at Blair’s country residence on November 2, 1997, the two leaders and their teams converged on a centre-left programme, the Third Way, where globalization became the linking storyline for new policies in a new world (Blumenthal 2003: 308).

(11) As it happens the crafting of the American version of globalization owed quite a lot to British influence, and arose in the context of some years of extensive exchanges between the American New Democrats and British New Labour. In terms of policy ideas, such as moving people from welfare dependency to work, tax credits, or urban renewal the flow was very much from the US to the UK because the Americans had a four year lead in practice. The British contribution was to the theory of the Third Way and its grounding in globalization. The team Blair assembled for his discussions with Clinton included Anthony Giddens, Director of the London School of Economics. [3] His *Beyond Left and Right* (1994) built on his earlier work on globalization (Giddens 1990; Albrow 1996: 98-9) and helped to persuade Americans that European radical theory could acknowledge the triumph of capitalism and help justify the centrist turn in their own politics that Clinton had initiated. It became another prop to the second term theme of bridge building across the Atlantic. Giddens adopted

the American usage of *The Third Way* (1998) to help create a shared progressive leftist outlook and “to transcend both old style social democracy and neo-liberalism” (ibid. 26), not just in the English speaking countries but also more widely into the early years of the new Millennium. [4]

(12) In January 1998, the White House assembled a “thinkers’ dinner,” one of a series the President hosted, this time with a focus on globalization. He opened it by declaring “I have to be able to tell the story of America in a progressive way” (Blumenthal 2003: 315; Kettle 1998:2-3). The brainstorming that followed underpinned his announcement “we have found the third way” in his State of the Union speech later that month and “we have moved into an information age, a global economy, a truly new world” (ibid. 377). [5] The speech managed to combine a globalization storyline with a litany of domestic achievements and a commitment to strengthening the social security system for the twenty first century (Waldman 2000: 216). It “reinvented” government (Osborne and Gaebler 1993), but it also projected a proactive global role, an extension of American power. Famously for Clinton there was no longer any division between foreign and domestic policies. This was the country that had won the Cold War and was built on the idea of creating the future. If globalization was the way, America had to lead the rest of the world along the path.

(13) Both the Clinton and Blair versions of globalization perpetuated the Reagan/Thatcher free market verities but sought to soften the harsher nostrums like “there is no alternative” and “there is no such thing as society” with a concern for social justice. But the results of a Third Way approach to globalization depend on the global economic and strategic position of the country concerned. For Britain, throughout the Blair premiership, globalization justified programmes of domestic reform but also, at a more subliminal level, replaced nostalgia for lost empire with a sense of national mission on global issues. “Global Britain” therefore became an effective repositioning of a medium sized country to take advantage of global trends. For the United States, globalization was a question of reasserting control over its own and the globe’s future.

(14) For a brief period leading up to and around the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, there was a remarkable willingness on the part of heads of Western governments to subscribe to this overall perspective. After a meeting in Berlin on June 14, four heads of government reported: “We all embrace the potential of globalization. In fact our shared political conversation symbolized political globalization.” [6] They looked to address the consequences of economic globalization, widen the benefits, strengthen civil society and create “a new international social compact.” They also anticipated strengthening European institutions as the European Union moved toward welcoming ten new members. It was a passing dream that a progressive alliance of world leaders had discovered the direction of history and could lead their peoples along its path. But those who attempt to direct history are among its first victims. While globalization processes are everywhere, the fate of the global age will not be determined by globalization or even by those who claim to be on its side. Addressing the conditions, contingencies and risks of the new globality is far more important for those who seek to safeguard a human future on this planet.

Global America

*In thee America, the soul, its destinies,
Thou globe of globes! thou wonder nebulous!*
Walt Whitman 1881 [7]

(15) If only good intentions were sufficient! Events following the Millennium have shown the fragility of the progressive consensus. Unilateral neo-conservatism replaced multilateralism as United States government policy, and, since the United States and its allies invaded Iraq in March 2003, worldwide hostility to America has become the norm. But the ease with which George W. Bush dropped globalization rhetoric from the beginning of his administration in 2001 should have made it apparent to all, and not just to the sceptical minority, that the subsisting power relations in the world are more important in shaping world events than the language the American President of the time employs. For Third Way writers globalization was an overall transformation, but one where economic and technological processes were the drivers of change. American business interests were not dismayed! Leftist intellectuals and Wall Street were in effect providing complementary versions of the way the world was going and Clinton exploited this to full advantage in finding a rhetoric and policy direction that bridged domestic divides and served American interests abroad.

(16) Opinion leaders like Thomas Friedman (1999: 7-8) of the *New York Times* were favoured by, and in tune with, the administration in writing of globalization as an “era,” “the overarching international system,” a “dynamic ongoing process” with “a driving idea” (“free market capitalism”), “defining technologies,” especially computerization and the Internet, and “its own dominant culture ... largely, though not entirely, the spread of Americanization.” His main complaint was that the US was not giving the process sufficient direction. The reason for supporting the multilateral institutions was “they make it possible for the United States to advance its interests without putting American lives or treasure on the line” (ibid. 374). Friedman’s formulations were gifts for the critics of American policies. This was a program for world domination. Globalization came increasingly to be equated with neoliberal economic policy, often called “the Washington consensus” after its intellectual and power centre. Global corporate strategies enjoyed reinforcement from an aggressive approach by the multilateral institutions, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, to governments that resisted privatization and opposed reductions of state expenditure.

(17) Clinton oversold the globalization story and critics of the United States have taken full advantage, but in doing so they have oversimplified the dilemmas that a liberal US President faces and misread American history. In the first place the globe as theme long predates the Third Way version of globalization. Clinton’s favourite poet, Walt Whitman (Folsom 2005), celebrator of American identity, rising above the carnage of a civil war between American states, proclaimed the global nature of the American experience, declaring America “the globe of globes” (Whitman 1993: 383). [8] When the President asserted in his first inaugural address that there was no real distinction between the foreign and domestic this

was no recent insight inspired by new technology and global markets, it was the authentic voice of an American style universalism, called on “to lead the world we did so much to make” (Clinton 2004: 477).

(18) Of course, Marx and Marxists had for generations declared that the capitalist system could only survive by continually expanding to cover the globe. And they rightly saw America as the vanguard of capitalism. The irony is that eventually Wall Street agreed with the Marxists once the United States declared victory in the Cold War. But an inability to distinguish the globe from America, or to distinguish national and global interest is ultimately disabling, even for the most powerful nation. It results in a failure to appreciate the autonomy of global processes, of all the many contradictions in globalization where for instance Hollywood may express a global media culture rather than the mores of small town communities. It also depreciates a long American tradition of promoting internationalist viewpoints in associations like the World Affairs Council and in public education where global issues have long been included in social studies, a required curriculum component regarded as essential to citizenship education. [9] This was work that contributed effectively to a global perspective in the United Nations as, for instance in a 1981 UNESCO handbook on social science teaching calling for enhanced involvement in global society by stressing habitation of the Earth, membership of a common species and worldwide interdependence. [10]

(19) The electoral credibility of a global issues platform in the US had long been undermined by the fate of the Carter presidency, with its failure to handle Iran and the Beirut hostage crisis, and it is unlikely that Clinton could have campaigned on those issues without foregrounding economic and technological globalization and connecting with the triumphalism of the post Cold War world. But as we shall see when difficulties arose for the globalization agenda it remained possible for Clinton to fall back on global issues as a rhetorical prop, as he needed to by the end of his Presidency. The adoption of globalization as the ruling idea set the terms of debate with opponents of the Clinton administration, but it could not end the opposition from both ends of the left/right political spectrum. Domestically it came from the right, objecting in particular to open door policies on immigration, to multiculturalism and affirmative action for minorities. From overseas it came from those who saw free trade as expansion of American hegemony and a reckless exploitation of people and resources.

Beyond Globalization Pathos

*It is the victory of a new idea, chanted in the streets of Seattle:
the world is not for sale.
Le Monde, December 6, 1999*

(20) “End of ideology” policies domestically meant governments softening the impact of globalization, but that only highlighted the weakness of any countervailing power internationally to redress economic forces. It was this sense of global injustice that prompted the first demonstration against the World Economic Forum at Davos in 1999. This most prestigious

gathering of the world's capitalist leaders was an ideal setting for capturing media attention. Experience of the media coverage on that occasion encouraged the demonstration organisers to mount something much more ambitious later in the year. From November 30 to December 3, 1999, there was a scheduled ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization at Seattle on the western seaboard of the United States at which 134 countries were due to be represented. But not only government officials were gathering. The World Federalists of Canada (1999) estimated hundreds of thousands of protestors would converge on Seattle in a "growing civil society backlash against an undemocratic process of economic globalization." Between 30,000 and 50,000 protestors choked the streets of Seattle, the US representative, Charlene Barchefsky, found herself barricaded in her room, the police responded to demonstrations with force, and the proceedings were called off before agreement on an agenda for resumption of negotiations.

(21) President Clinton allowed for some substance in the protestors' case, an astonishing concession some deemed irresponsible, [11] given that the protest groups came together under the general banner of the "anti-globalization movement." This appeared to rock the whole intellectual edifice on which his second term had come to be based and as a way of placating opponents of globalization. Advocating environmental standards and workers' basic rights angered the governments of developing countries who foresaw their products excluded from first world markets. It looked like globalization only when it suited the US. There were various interpretations of the American stance. Some suggested it was to soften American labour unions' opposition to normalizing trade relations with China, others to bring them behind Vice President Gore's forthcoming campaign for the Presidency. In fact, Clinton's Third Way globalization was always able to accommodate global labour or environmental standards when domestic politics required it. If acceding to labour's demands appeared to raise standards and improve workers' rights in developing countries then this was an added bonus. Although this was not the pure neoliberal globalization Wall Street had come to love, it was still congruent with the interests of a "global America."

(22) However, the result in the rest of the world was that opposition to American power and rejection of economic globalization came to mean the same thing. Seattle was a turning point in the new global politics, the first concerted challenge to the self-proclaimed U.S. leadership of the globe, and from that point onwards all leadership meetings, whether of the multilateral institutions or of the G8, attracted demonstrations and vociferous public debate in the media. The backlash against globalization, noted already by the OECD (1997: 11) in its trumpeting of a "new global age," produced new political alliances and sundered old ones. Farmers and labour unions in the West could make common cause with environmental and human rights activists but be opposed by developing countries' producers and governments. The US and the EU disagreed on agricultural and food safety issues. Large corporations and indigenous peoples could agree on rights to fish. Such alliances were often ridiculed. But Seattle signalled the crystallization of the new global political force field. Power struggles and coalition building empty ideology of content more than any call to end ideology. Globalization and anti-globalization had become little more than logos. From an American point of view Seattle had done its damage. The US had lost control of the global discourse and could no longer confine its narrative to promoting an economic globalization

agenda. Many older global themes thus returned to prominence.

(23) Prior to the fall of the Soviet Union, “globalization” equated with a potential “one world” order (see Modelski 1972), an emerging worldwide interconnectedness and conversation of local voices contributing to a peaceful resolution of the Cold War. [12] The American triumph and the “new world order” resulted in a contested global discourse expressed most effectively in the opposition of “globalization from below” to “globalization from above” (Brecher et al. 1993). Falk’s (1993) advocacy of the contribution of global citizens and global civil society towards the remaking of a “one-world-community,” was the clearest conceptualization of an alternative frame for a global society. To American exasperation the United Nations maintained a distant stance towards economic globalization throughout the 1990s. *States of Disarray* was a report for the Copenhagen Summit on World Development that in effect attributed most of the world’s problems to economic globalization, speaking of the “catastrophic consequences” of the belief that “once economic fundamentals are corrected, social issues will resolve themselves” (UNRISD 1995: 8). In a section entitled “The Global Era” it attacked the structural adjustment policies of the multilateral economic institutions, pointing to the social disruption they caused and the consequent quest for identity. It called for the regulation of transnational corporations, reform of global institutions and attention to global citizenship.

(24) The American account of globalization was under attack from all sides and at the very end of his Presidency, after Gore’s failed bid to succeed him, Clinton adopted an alternative approach to presenting America to the world. In a speech at the University of Nebraska entitled “A Foreign Policy for the Global Age” he emphasized the importance of alliances, allowing “Europeans to take the lead in Europe,” “Asians in Asia and the Africans in Africa,” highlighted terrorism as a security threat and advocated ethanol fuel to combat global warming. [13] Finally he declared open trade was fine but “we have to build a global economy with a global face.” This was not an agenda led by economic globalization but by global issues under the overarching idea of a global age. Global issues and the global age were indeed the suppressed elements of global discourse in Clinton’s second term. [14] They never secured the prominence of globalization. Global issues were essentially within the State Department remit and it was the Treasury that took the lead in promoting globalization. [15] The global age was an old framing device in the Democrats’ rhetorical repertoire, but returning in those last moments of a Presidency it sounded like a retirement message. [16]

The Clash of Civilizations

Civilizations are not static conditions of societies but dynamic movements of an evolutionary kind.

Arnold Toynbee [17]

(25) In the Cold War there had been three parties, first and second worlds competing for the allegiance of a third. The new world order effectively

became a single political field of forces with the United States government and its supporters as the main agents of capitalist hegemony on the one hand, and on the other an extraordinarily diverse aggregate of opponents, countries, parties, religious and ethnic groups, unions and associations of all kinds. This was in many respects an empire, and writers from both right and left called it such. When George W. Bush became President in 2001, the new rhetoric was the language of democracy, human rights and family values, a modest role for the United States, but also denigration both of the United Nations and the multilateral institutions through which the Clinton administration had sought to influence global trends.

(26) The polarization of global politics extended then to ignoring or abrogating international agreements and to the dismantling of institutions that might be effective in representing global interests as anything different from American. This was all the easier to achieve after September 11, 2001 (9/11) when opposition appeared as a naked challenge to power and patriotism rather than the assertion of an alternative ideology. There would be little point in seeking to persuade suicide bombers (aiming to emulate the destruction of the World Trade Center) to work through the United Nations. Dropping the globalization narrative at first left something of a vacuum in the US government storyline. 9/11 however activated an account which was already influential in conservative circles. Samuel Huntington's (1996) *The Clash of Civilizations* subsumes the identity politics and value conflicts of our time under deep seated, irremediable differences on values between different civilizations, the most important being the West, Islam, India, and China. These for Huntington are the "ultimate human tribes, and the clash of civilizations is tribal conflict on a global scale" (ibid. 207). Subsequent events have provided dramatic support for Huntington's thesis. 9/11, the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, bombings in Bali, Madrid and London, and the Israeli/Hezbollah conflict in Lebanon contribute to civilizational rhetoric from all sides. In his speech in the US in August 2006 British Prime Minister Tony Blair, addressing the Lebanon conflict spoke of a crescent of terror contending with the values of civilization.

(27) Huntington's thesis takes full account of the reconfiguration of international politics in a post-Westphalian world. It also makes a crucial distinction that is consistent with the Global Age thesis, namely that modernity as such is not to be equated with Western civilization. He argues that the West emerged in the eight and ninth centuries AD, drawing on classical civilization and Christianity with a strong emphasis on rule of law, associational pluralism, representative bodies and individualism. Modernization, however, was a product of the growth of scientific and technical knowledge, involving industrialization and urbanization. As such it could be the property of any civilization. Non-Western cultures could reject the West and accept modernity and that to a large extent is what has happened in Japan, China, Saudi Arabia and Iran. In a trenchant assertion Huntington finds, "In fundamental ways, the world is becoming more modern and less Western" (ibid. 78). This is the conservative argument that makes sense of the Bush claim to modesty.

(28) These distinctions serve Huntington well in rejecting models of the contemporary world that stipulate a one world harmony, a rich versus poor global split, a world of nation-states, or global anarchy. None of these comes close to the civilizational model in helping to analyze contemporary armed conflicts. Huntington is emphatic that the West's appeal to the

values of a universal civilization only resonates with the rest of the world as an imperialist imposition of Western values. There is, in his view, no universal civilization, and while he allows for a distinct global culture that supplements or supplants the old civilizations (ibid. 57) he finds it confined to an intellectual, official and business elite. For him the central elements of a culture or civilization are religion and language. With language he finds English only an inter-cultural medium, possibly giving way to Mandarin in the distant future, and no religion has a prospect of its adherents amounting to more than 30 per cent of the world's population. This account of civilizational clash is a direct rejection of the idea that the world in a global frame is converging on a homogeneous single civilization. [18] Huntington is not a historicist, but he is an essentialist. He made a pre-emptive strike against the inevitabilism of so much globalization thinking in the following decade and recognized the relative decline of the nation-state without lapsing into an "end of history" refrain. However his new players on the global stage happen to have very old identities. History continues, but the new titans are the West, Islam, China, and India.

(29) Events since 1996 bear out one of Huntington's most prescient remarks, namely that "the central problem in the relations between the West and the rest is ... the discordance between the West's — particularly America's — efforts to promote a universal Western culture and its declining ability to do so" (ibid. 183). Clinton's globalization swept aside all the reservations Huntington expressed on equating modernity with the West, and the values of the West with universal values. After the non-event of the Millennium, where an intended celebration of the unity of humankind extolled global village technology instead, the destruction of life and property in 9/11, conveyed by the same media, transfixed several billion viewers, making a global spectacle of violence, ending any possible illusion that a new era of peace had begun. This was the event of greatest epochal significance in this ten year episode of the global age. No event could demonstrate more clearly that there is no inherent direction in globalization.

(30) If the main conflict in our time is between what Barber (1992) termed two axial principles, tribalism and globalism, there is no predetermined outcome. But that formulation suggests a zero sum outcome to a conflict between two irremediably opposed parties and limits the open possibilities of the present. It invites us to revisit the meaning of living in the global age. The Clintonian use of globalization thinking in promoting American policy provoked a backlash that retrospectively appeared to confirm Huntington's analysis. The New Democratic Icarus aspired to the globe only to fall back into a sea of civilizational troubles. Huntington's civilizational realism then looks much more contemporary. If it draws the wrong conclusions, and this writer believes it does, then the mistakes are not simple, but profound. They relate to the fundamentals of writing history for our own time, the theme of *The Global Age*, to which the last ten years must make us return.

Reasserting Epochal Theory

Every history is the same to one who wishes merely to remember facts.
Voltaire [19]

(31) Applying the “test of time” (Albrow 1996: 114-118) to Voltaire’s “spirit of the age,” employing it for our own time, we can appreciate the enduring validity of the idea that an epoch is a singular configuration of its people’s experience and preoccupations. But what Voltaire called the spirit of the age is not uniform or all-embracing in its scope. We still search for principles that reach across cultures and times and the deeper the thinker, the greater is the struggle for that extended understanding. Marx, for instance, made repeated fresh starts in his analysis of capitalism because of his concern for the application of abstract concepts across epochs. [20] Conversely, while some concepts cross epochs and cultures, however dominant they may be at a particular time, they do not eliminate all competing concepts. Voltaire accorded primacy to reason as the spirit of his age, but that provided Herder and the Romantic Movement with the justification for exalting the uniqueness of other times and cultures. Epochs sustain contradictions. Max Weber traced the mechanistic rationality of systems and projects back to a capitalistic spirit promoted by the very clerical dogmatism Voltaire hated.

(32) The dominance that technological modernity asserted came to be a distinguishing motif of the Modern Age, but it was only one of many. Compare, for instance, social hierarchies, classes and causal explanation with networks, identities and narratives. The first set associates with modernity, the second would once have been called postmodern, but *The Global Age* has explained why global is the better description. [21] Epochal shift works on many dimensions. Features from previous ages may continue, as survivals, or traditions, or be recovered from obscurity. Rescuing it from suppression by positivistic modernity we can find that the “spirit of the age” has its narrative uses. Some features of course approach universality. Indeed we can best appreciate the contribution of the Enlightenment by demodernizing it, lifting it out of its association with modernity. The eighteenth century thinkers realised that reason was a universal human attribute. Their cosmopolitanism speaks across times and cultures and should not to be understood as merely a reflex of Western imperialism. [22]

(33) Yet epochs are not based in principles, however exalted and compelling they may be (Albrow 1996: 101-104). It was by exception that there was an epoch, the Modern Age, which sought to base itself in a guiding principle of rationality. By contrast, globality is not a principle; it is a condition of our environment and an ethos, penetrating our consciousness partly as a threat, partly as a sense of common destiny. This inspires many to affirm principles, and indeed they bind us to common purposes, but they belong to many ages and cultures and are not specific to our time. Moreover they will not in themselves be sufficient to safeguard a human future, the abiding concern at the end of this decade in our time. As well as principles crossing boundaries there are also commonalities of the human condition. Violence, both revolutionary and mundane can always destroy ideals, even, perhaps especially, when it is designed to serve them. In respect of its potential for violence, the global age is turning out to be no different from any era that came before it, anywhere in the world. When war and violence predominate in our concerns then all ages are equal. The obliteration of relics like the Buddhas of Afghanistan or the sacking of the Baghdad museum, nihilistic destruction of human heritage effectively erases the past, but also denies a common human future.

(34) The distinctive character of the age is not what determines its fate. As Max Weber (1922) pointed out, the rationality of modernity only highlighted and intensified the conflicts between ultimately irrational value positions. In no sphere of life was rationalization a recipe for peace and yet, as a true representative of his age, he could envisage nothing beyond progressive rationalization. And effectively the nuclear explosions of 1945 were only the culmination of the modern age's self-destruction through an orgy of violence. For decades, in the period I have called the transition, we have lived in a state of post-traumatic shock, where we no longer recall the traumatic event. 9/11 has reconnected us with the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and with the Holocaust. Though in comparison with them it was miniscule in destructiveness, media amplification has produced a much more extensive worldwide impact. For Zygmunt Bauman (1989), the horrors of the Second World War represent the nadir of modernity, of a purely technical rationality. Nuclear bombs were dropped to secure a victory, and the Holocaust sought to exterminate an imagined enemy with the rationality of modern industrialism. 9/11 operates with other objectives. Al Qaeda aims to reclaim the world from America and dedicate it to Allah. Yet it too applies the same technical rationality in a new media space, and it involves a ruthlessness that means once again it may no longer be mere miscalculation that leads to a nuclear attack.

(35) In the modern age wars were fought between nation-states. Today a global power structure mainly pits alliances of national armies against non-state actors (Kaldor 1999), yet to frame this in terms of a clash of civilizations is to risk bringing about what the vast majority, including Huntington, wish to avoid. We amplify distrust if the West claims reason, democracy and personal freedoms as Western inventions and properties. If we can only imagine the global as a marketplace rather than a common human discourse we damage our ability to agree on common interests. If we define our main concern in the global age as the defence of one civilization against others then we shall lose, perhaps for ever, the chance to secure the collective conditions for continued human existence on this planet. The final globality of our time is the association of the globe with our fate as a species. The circumnavigation of the globe in the sixteenth century endowed the future with a golden orb, an imperial vision. For us, it is the endangered planet.

(36) In that context the clash of civilizations, the struggle for identity, tribalism, appear atavistic, living in the past with blind disregard for present imperatives. In fact that is precisely the driving force to which theorists of contemporary ethnic and cultural conflicts persistently refer. The dislocations and stresses arising out of economic globalization are met by summoning up older sources of self assertion and respect. The desperate cycles of attack and counter-attack and the descent into the dark reciprocity of violence tend to push global issues confronting humankind off the agenda. Since 1989 we have been living the global age in a state of constant disconnect, between a sense of common danger, of unprecedented challenge to humankind as a whole, and a relentless drive from the West to safeguard its political and economic domination, regardless even of that collective fate. Our time therefore has shared experience, but no coherent view. Peoples are united in antagonisms, locked into technologies that magnify inequalities and destroy environments. If we cannot rise above these conflicts we shall succumb to them. We have to struggle to secure our future, and in that sense the

outcome of the global age is as open as any other, just the consequences of failing are so much direr. If we write the history of our own time as we would write it for past ages we may improve the chances of future generations to read it.

Global Issues and Challenges

*The Spirit helps me — from all doubting freed,
Thus write I: in the beginning was the Deed.
Goethe, Faust, Part 1*

(37) People with very different values can cooperate when there is a common challenge. The American experience actually shows this was so. The original settlers were not held together by the values they brought with them, but the demands of working together to build a new society in a threatening environment. In our case our own activities in aggregate endanger our collective existence. We have become our own environment, humankind has become global. In world risk society (Beck 2000) both the clash of civilizations and the globalization frames of analysis stand in the way of an adequate understanding of the choices we can make. Clash of civilizations thinking underwrites hostile or defensive relations with others and diminishes the chances of a common approach to problems that affect all. The reflexive modernity (Beck et al.) our time requires is open as an equal possibility for each of the great historic civilizations. They don't need to clash and although the strategic considerations of the Pentagon and other defence departments may make it appropriate to work on such scenarios far more effort should be spent on alternative frames of analysis. Increased knowledge of the risks we run and adapting our behaviour accordingly is an open option to any civilization or culture, tribe or individual. As Amartya Sen (2006) argues, identity does not determine the choices we make.

(38) When governments treat modernization as a forced response to globalization then they are at risk of closing down policy options they should consider. Effectively globalization discourse suggests forced choices: be for or against a process you cannot control, when the orientation to global issues should be one of correcting a situation one has helped to create. Nuclear proliferation and climate change require coordinated policy responses, so do poverty, disease and terror. These are global issues but they can be addressed both through aggregate and collective changes of behaviour. Recycling waste by individuals and investing in alternative energy research by governments are equally useful responses but in sum they are still inadequate.

(39) The globalization frame of reference, a focus on crossing boundaries, the conquest of distance, the global market and the global village distracts attention from global issues like climate change or the proliferation of nuclear weapons. This is reflected institutionally in Western governments where Treasuries promote globalization and look to competitive advantage. Professional networks tend to reinforce these tendencies. Linked with defence considerations they effectively reproduce Eisenhower's military/industrial complex against which he warned the

world. Under globalized conditions foreign affairs and interior departments should drive the stronger public policy partnerships. It is global issues that render the foreign/domestic divide obsolete, and not economic or technological globalization, where it is important for each country to develop a response appropriate to its history, demographics and values.

(40) Considerations of this kind have led Jean-Francois Rischard, (2002) former Vice President of the World Bank for Europe, to tell us to forget globalization and concentrate on twenty urgent global problems that include our failure to regulate the global economy, but much more. He lists six “planetary” problems of an environmental nature, including climate change, six concerning peace and social justice like preventing terrorism or eliminating the digital divide, and another eight that require global rules, including for taxation and migration. Although he believes there is enormous effort geared to solve these problems, working through a wide variety of agencies, it is still insufficient. Indeed we are coming dangerously near to equating global with unmanageable. Clinton’s confidence that progressive politics could take charge of globalization for the betterment of the human condition seems long past. Now the agencies that direct their attention to global issues appear simultaneously disempowered by the globality of the challenges. For that reason, Rischard advocates new Global Issues Networks to monitor, name and shame.

(41) The position of Al Gore, the candidate for the US presidency in 2000, declared defeated with a majority of the popular vote, is symptomatic of the present time. Having campaigned on climate change from the beginning of his career, vindicated by accumulating scientific evidence, he still is unable to envisage running again for the Presidency of the one country that could be an effective global leader. As the crisis deepens, so does the gap between words and capability. The problem now is that the White House has painted itself into a corner with the rhetoric of a war on terror that has no end, and therefore precludes planning for a world in peace. In these circumstances we have to rely on shaping those immediate judgements, in getting them to respond to a groundswell of opinion. For the rest of the world should not regard United States policy as set for all time. The White House war rhetoric only limits its current options; the country’s borders and minds are open and American opinion is sensitive to global issues as never before.

(42) The human response to the conditions of globality is not predetermined. We have to craft it out of the resources at our disposal. Some of the intellectual tools will be from earlier times, not least our understanding of what it is to meet the challenge of our own time. We have modern antecedents who also struggled with the meaning of epochal change. Even as the Second World War raged, some of the best minds focussed on the reconstruction of the world in an eventual peace (Nurser 2005). But the institutions that have to deal with the current crisis have developed piecemeal out of the 1945 settlement that was based on assumptions about nation-state sovereignty that no longer correspond to the new global conditions. The universalistic aspirations of that time relied on states not just as guarantors but as the agents of peace and human rights, even as they infringed them and made war.

(43) Remarkably, the United Nations has become much more than the

sum of its parts, but mainly because it has responded to voices representing other than national interests. There is change, but it is manifestly insufficient, and one reason among others is that the intellectual frame for meeting the challenges of the global age is inadequate. *The Global Age* was meant as a contribution to one feature of reshaping that frame, namely escaping from a forced choice between modernity and postmodernity, and recognizing fully what the global age means, living under conditions of globality, being faced with issues that concern the fate of humankind. There are other related intellectual issues, but they are only adjuncts to the most important question of all, "What should we do?" Given its importance we are obliged to act before we can complete our understanding of them. Even if we cannot agree on the purpose of life we ought to try at least to do everything to allow a life for future generations.

Agency and Structure in the Global Age

(44) Global issues are now a concern for a vast interconnected web of agencies and institutions, with overlapping agendas, from the United Nations down to the local community concerned with waste collection. It has been called "multicentric governance," the main aspect of an overall process of political globalization (Held 2004: 73-88). [23] But like all globalizations it is chaotic and open in respect of its future, and, being political, is the focus of conflict. None of the institutions of global governance escape criticism. The United Nations has been under intense bombardment from American conservatives, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank from anti-globalizers. This is the politics of global society reflecting its distinctive cleavages and inequalities. The Marxist prediction of the polarization of old industrial society between workers and capitalists was invalidated by the rise of the middle classes. They continue to grow in global society. They have acquired the cosmopolitan outlooks that previously had been the preserve of aristocrats and the wealthy. They, and their children, are now the backbone of what has become global civil society, engaged in a new kind of class struggle.

(45) The idea of civil society that originated in Europe in the eighteenth century was very much tied to the political economy of the emerging nation-state. The rights guaranteed to the citizen included free expression, association and movement, the exercise of which expanded with growing wealth and education. Now social globalization creates a social space where technology supports social relations at any distance. Civil society that from the beginning crossed state boundaries outstrips state institutions in flexibility, inventiveness and open debate and is the main hope for all who would democratize global institutions. But civil society has to engage in struggle to overcome three main and interconnected obstacles to achieving its aims. The first is the tension between tribal, national or civilizational values on the one hand and cosmopolitan values on the other. The cadres who staff global institutions and corporations tend to form a deracinated cosmopolitan elite not best placed to resolve value conflicts in communities they have left behind. "Global community" is the solution many advocate, prominent among them being Amitai Etzioni (2004) who regards the construction of a basic common set of values through moral dialogue as the main task for global governance.

(46) The second obstacle is related to the first. Both global institutions and civil society agencies suffer a legitimation deficit. Activists are self-appointed advocates of values that may not be widely shared. Legitimacy is only achieved where a defined set of people agree on procedures and succeed in settling differences. Given that the set of people in global society is potentially the world's population, David Held (2004) takes a cosmopolitan stance in advocating a program for global social democracy, emphasizing rights and a multi-level citizenship, a "new global covenant" that will reconcile economic globalization with the demands of social integration and social justice.

(47) The third obstacle is the division of rich and poor, individuals and countries. This is the old issue of social injustice in Western societies translated to a global plane. This tends to generate the broadest coalition, because, as in national societies, issues of poverty, health, education, and human rights are interlinked. However without a common political community or legitimate institutions violence is an ever present threat impeding the attempt to introduce the communitarian or institutional reforms that Etzioni and Held advocate. Civil society itself becomes embroiled in violence, even to the point of negating its own basis in civility. [24] Creating a peaceful global society fit for future generations is the aim of all who would reform global governance. Civil society promotes reform, but is also effective before reform, especially in active engagement with economic globalization. Over the last three decades in successive phases it has exercised a formative influence on global public policy.

(48) In the pre-Seattle period NGOs played an important role in United Nations conferences. It was a joint initiative that resulted in the UN Conference on Environment and Development, the Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro in 1992, attended by 108 heads of state, attracting a parallel NGO forum with 2400 representatives of civil society organizations. All the major conferences since have featured similar levels of civil society participation. The processes set in train then culminated in an unprecedented convergence of agencies around the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agreed upon in New York at the Millennium summit by 147 heads of state in September 2000. Growing concern about the impact of economic globalization had prompted the Social Summit in Copenhagen in 1995, for which the UNRISD report (1995) provided a highly charged background. In parallel, but separately, in one of the citadels of globalizing rich nations, the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in particular its Development Assistance Committee was working on goals for social development, environmental sustainability and the policy challenges of globalization. Just how separately is clear from its report *The World in 2020: Towards a New Global Age* (1997) that failed to mention the UNRISD report and ignored the work of the Copenhagen summit. Yet by 2000 with the follow-up to Copenhagen in Geneva there had been a convergence of two very different outlooks.

(49) The agreement on the MDGs represented a momentary bridging of the gap between the economic and business ideology of Western capitalism and the preoccupations of civil society, aided by and in concert with the United Nations. They are a new focus for summits between world leaders, such as the G8 (see Bradford and Linn 2007: 8). As such they are a defining event of the global age. Goal-oriented action to meet challenges, coordinated between nations with civil society support, offers a very

different model of human endeavour from the old modern project of world mastery in the name of progress. In the Cardoso report, *We the Peoples* (UN 2004), on the future of UN civil society relations, business and civil society organizations are treated as partners in a Global Compact to create a more effective United Nations. [25] This offer of cooption into existing institutions, a kind of global corporatism, for many negates the inherent independence of civil society, is too reminiscent of stakeholder democracy ideas of the 1990s and indeed of Third Way thinking (Falk 2006: 17). The global apotheosis of coopted civil society came indeed with the meeting of the G8 in Gleneagles, Scotland in June 2005, hosted by Tony Blair, where the Make Poverty History campaign, initiated by NGOs, culminated in a demonstration orchestrated by rock stars Bob Geldof and Bono, long associated with global political leaders, in support of their efforts to combat world poverty. The global media coverage of the associated rock concert guaranteed only minor attention to groups outside the campaign frame, but many were active elsewhere.

(50) Since 2001, in parallel with the new global corporatism, a very different type of social globalization has developed. Coinciding with the beginning of the George W. Bush presidency and the Davos World Economic Forum, the first World Social Forum took place in Porto Alegre in Brazil from January 25 to 30, 2001, with 4700 registered participants debating alternatives to neoliberalism and the case for civil society and democracy. Since then, social forums have come to be a standard format for oppositional gatherings locally, regionally and nationally and a World Social Forum has been held every year returning to Porto Alegre in 2005 with 155,000 registered participants (Glasius and Timms 2006). The forums are an open space for a discourse that reflects and responds to shifts in global power constellations. Indeed with the Bush administration jettisoning globalization as a policy theme the Forums could reclaim the globe as focus. The language of the global opposition has changed accordingly, from anti-globalization to alternative globalization to alter-global movement in five years. Global civil society (Kaldor 2003) has become an acceptable terminology for all, opponents and supporters alike. Seeking influence without cooption, the dynamic of the social forums is always to move away from institutions even as they are approached by them. In that spirit they celebrate diversity, embracing movement rather than organization (Pleyers 2004).

(51) Global social space now offers immense scope for alternative forms of organizing around global issues. Rischard (2002) for instance advocates a global network for each issue. However, debates around community or institution, movement or organization impact little on practices of citizens, individually and in cooperation, responding rationally to protecting the environment, rejecting violence, reducing hunger, opposing nuclear weaponry. Innumerable individuals and agencies of all kinds take their own steps, implementing personal and local schemes, urging global replication. Whether it is Bill and Melinda Gates funding AIDs programmes in Africa, or a Welsh chapel in Cardiff building a clinic in Lesotho, these are self-legitimizing acts in Beck's terms (2005: 17). They ask no permissions, they assume state consent. Neither institution building nor value consensus is the priority, but rather a continual search for partners and strategies that will achieve the desired results.

(52) These acts are not beyond ethical considerations. This is performative global citizenship (Albrow 1996: 177) appealing to others to behave

likewise, with an implicit message that if they were to do the same then the ends that all share would be achieved. Pragmatic universalism is the principle underpinning the burgeoning of global civil society, working not for the benefit of members, but to bring about a better, safer, sustainable world. Will it succeed? The answer is, we don't know, and the shape of the world order that results is still in the making. What it does do is to reassert human purpose in a world where the loss of the modern faith in progress left a vacuum that postmodernity would not and could not fill. In the global age the purpose of life remains an unsolved question, but the challenge to the existence of the human species requires us to act before we find the answer.

Notes

Copyright Martin Albrow 2007. This is an adapted version of a new preface and an additional chapter written for a second German edition of *The Global Age*, published as *Das Globale Zeitalter* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2007).

[1] In recent years, the social sciences have shared a rising interest in the importance of narrative in shaping both individual lives and organizations. That interest could extend usefully to the way narrative in public life equally shapes the social sciences. For instance, Clinton's slogan for his second term campaign in 1996 was "bridge to the twenty-first century." The American Sociological Association's annual meeting the following year was entitled "Bridges for Sociology."

[2] Clinton's speech writer (Waldman 2000: 166) recounts how he mocked his own obsession with his place in history by joking about his "Posterity War Room." The American president's "bully pulpit" depends on a professional production team for shaping public opinion, delivering message events, sound bites and applause lines. But it was Clinton himself who edited, amended and redrafted line after line of his speeches. The one who commands a craft can afford some self-mockery. (British Prime Minister Tony Blair also famously talked about the "hand of history on his shoulder," but there are few jokes in Church of England sermons).

[3] For the full delegations from both countries, see Blumenthal (2003: 307).

[4] In *Beyond Left and Right* (1994:68) Giddens had been sceptical about "third way" terminology referring to a version of market socialism based on Swedish experience: "There is no Third Way of this sort, and with this realization the history of socialism as the avant-garde of political theory comes to a close."

[5] It was a powerful statement but for the Democrats and for the world the tragedy was that the public agenda was about to be set by the personal

frailties of the American President, rather than by his speeches. Kenneth Starr, federal prosecutor charged with investigating allegations against the President, convened a Grand Jury on the very morning of the Address. An American Presidency promoting globalization in the event was to prove less of a threat to the rest of the world than one riding to power on the back of moral indignation.

[6] Tony Blair, Wim Kok, Goran Persson and Gerhard Schröder, “The New Left Takes on the World,” *Washington Post*, Sept 6, 2000, p. A19.

[7] From “Thou Mother with Thy Equal Brood,” in Whitman (1993: 383).

[8] Indeed “America” has always been a much grander idea than the “United States,” a term reserved more often than not for distrusted national government. For Whitman (1993), America is also “not merely a nation but a teeming nation of nations” (op. cit. 286), “isolated, but embodying all” (ibid. 296), “the new empire grander than any before” (ibid. 207), “the genius of the modern ... clearing the ground for broad humanity, the true America” (ibid. 177). In the global age countries aim to “go global,” meaning variously open their boundaries, project themselves globally, or address global issues. A country like the United States that already equates itself with the globe finds it difficult to view those countries as not following its lead. Gert Schmidt (2006: 12.2) expresses this in another way when he distinguishes countries that are global actors from the United States as “the only integrated global nation.”

[9] The American National Council of Social Studies devoted its 38th Yearbook to *International Dimensions of Social Studies* (Becker and Mehlinger 1968). Lee F. Anderson’s paper (1968) in the same volume spoke of the “growing globalization of economic and military independence.” This is the earliest use of “globalization” I have seen. There were many ventures in global studies, especially in junior school curricula in the 70s and 80s long before it was accepted in university programs. The 47th Yearbook (Remy et al. 1975: 1) *International Learning and International Education in a Global Age* began: “We are currently experiencing the globalization of the human condition.” It expanded also on “global system” (ibid. 50) and “global society” (ibid. 63).

[10] Howard Mehlinger (1981) had been an editor of the National Council volume before editing the UNESCO handbook. It included the phrase, “In a global age where worldwide interdependence makes itself felt in the daily lives of most human beings, individuals must learn how they might exercise some measure of control and influence over the public affairs of global society” (ibid. 360). Wolf Schäfer (2006: 6) points to an early global age usage by the English historian Geoffrey Barraclough (1962: 99).

[11] The London *Financial Times* (December 6, 1999) wrote in an Editorial, “Many things came together to produce this calamity: the irresponsibility of Bill Clinton...”

[12] In the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin wall, with the impending collapse of the Soviet system, the International Sociological Association’s publication of the Madrid world conference volume *Globalization, Knowledge and Society* (Albrow and King 1990) served to underpin the overall conference theme of “sociology for one world; unity and diversity.”

There was no special place here for economics or technology and no privileged place for the United States.

[13] “A Foreign Policy for the Global Age.” Address to the University of Nebraska, December 8, 2000, Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, Washington DC. About the same time, Samuel Berger (2000), Clinton’s National Security Adviser, signals a similar shift of emphasis attributing Clinton with seeing the pervasive force of globalization before others, but stressing that the positive developments in the world have taken place because of policy choices, not as inevitable outcomes of globalization. Those choices have to be for alliances of democratic partners and institutions open to all who observe clear standards attuned to a globalized world, the principles that will guide American leadership in the global age.

[14] Giddens (1998) employs “Into the Global Age” as a concluding chapter title, advancing especially ideas of the cosmopolitan nation, but does not elaborate on the title’s meaning. Recently (2007: 9), he has made explicit use of the Global Age as a framing device, calling it a “state of affairs” as opposed to globalization which is “a complex set of processes.” It is a necessary prelude to according “global Europe” a voice in world affairs.

[15] In one confidential interview, I asked a former State Department senior official how much internal debate there had been about globalization. “None,” he replied, “it doesn’t mean anything.”

[16] *The Washington Post* of March 14, 1984, under the headline, “Robb at West Berlin meeting” reported how Virginia Governor Charles S. Robb had flown to West Berlin to take part in a three day conference on “Federalism in a Global Age” in West Berlin. Sponsored by the Aspen Institute of Humanistic Studies, it featured the eleven Minister Presidents of West German states and six other American state governors. Robb, in the same year, was a key person in forming, and subsequently becoming chair of the Democratic Leadership Council, that became the powerhouse behind his friend Bill Clinton’s rise to the Presidency.

[17] Toynbee (1939-61, vol 1: 176).

[18] Huntington cites sociology and Roland Robertson (1992: 129-137) approvingly for recognizing the exacerbated self-consciousness of ethnic, societal and civilizational identity in a globalized world (op cit: 68). He also deals summarily with the view that global economic integration will reduce conflict — it never has done so in the past (ibid. 67).

[19] Voltaire (1751/1926: 1).

[20] “Labour” for instance appears as a universal concept, applicable in all times and places, yet only in his own time, and as he said in the most modern society, the United States, had labour in the abstract, where individuals were interchangeable and anyone turned their hand to anything, become a reality (Marx 1973: 104).

[21] For a more extensive examination of contrasting features of modernity and globality, see Albrow (1999).

[22] See Clement Hawes (1997: 122) for a careful dissection of the “minimalist universalism” of Voltaire’s contemporary, Samuel Johnson, “heir to the Enlightenment emancipatory potential.”

[23] This use of “governance” is much broader than in “corporate governance” referring to accountability and reporting standards that govern corporations. It actually includes the agencies and their work and is more equivalent to “government” in national settings. I prefer “global state” (Albrow 1996: 174) and as Martin Shaw (2000) develops the idea. There is of course much to do in governance in the restricted sense for global state agencies and institutions.

[24] For a recent examination of the violence in relation to civil society, see Kaldor et al. (2007).

[25] Cardoso, former President of Brazil, has taken part in international Third Way meetings.

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