Globalization of Japan:
Its Implications for the Globalization Model

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I. Introduction

Traveling in Southeast Asia and Europe, as well as living in the United States, one is impressed anew through personal experiences with the Japanese presence in these parts of the world. When we "see Japan" thus throughout the world, be it automobiles, appliances, electronic gadgets, office equipment, cameras, mangas, animation films, karaoke, or sushi bars, we are compelled to think through what this Japanese presence means. "Globalization" immediately come to mind, and fortunately by now we have a plethora of globalization theories (Appadurai, Featherstone, Hannerz, etc.), and we need not re-invent the theory in order to comprehend Japan's global presence. So it seems.

But, is it? This is the question I wish to address in this paper.

II. Reterritorialization

In globalization discourse one hears about such terms as "borderlessness," "deterritorialization," and "reterritorialization." They refer to, or imply, obsolescence of the classic definition of "nation-state," in which a state is a nation and a nation is a state. That is, there is an assumption that a politically sovereign state consists of a group of people making up one nationality, or one ethnic group and that an ethnic group comprises one politically sovereign state. Such an entity no longer exists on the face of this earth, if it ever did.

Part of the reason for this is that within each sovereign state there are many ethnic groups. An ethnically homogeneous state, that is, has deterritorialized and reterritorialized to contain multiple ethnic groups. But, it also has allowed members of a state to leave its borders, and yet, remain part of the nation. (Befu and Stalker 1996)

Take, for example, Waikiki, Hawaii, a tourist Mecca for the Japanese. For most of the Japanese heading for Waikiki, there is no need to learn to speak a word of English. They are likely to be traveling in a group organized by a Japanese travel agency. All flights leaving Japan for Hawaii are staffed with Japanese speaking attendants. Once in Honolulu, local Japanese travel agents are

waiting to escort, the tourists in a bus to a Waikiki hotel, whose staff include ,Japanese speakers. Most restaurants and gift shops in Waikiki employ Japanese speakers to attend to the needs of Japanese customers. On any one day, Waikiki is infested with thousands of Japanese. The beach is filled virtually with all Japanese: Non-Japanese tourists are a small minority.

What has happened here is that Japan's conventional borders surrounding the Japanese archipelago have not so much disappeared as receded to the Waikiki beach. And the United States surrendered its cultural boundaries. This is, in short, deterritorialization followed by reterritorialization: Waikiki is now veritable part of reterritorialized Japan, socioculturally speaking, regardless of the boundaries in political sense.

Now, a crucially important point here is that if this is a globalization process, then it does not lead to or result in homogenization, contrary to claims made in received globalization theories. How are we to understand this sort of process in the context of globalization theory? This is a form of transnational culture in the sense that Japanese tourists bring their culture to Waikiki, which has now become a permanent fixture of the Honolulu scene. But it is a far cry from the concept of "transnational culture" spoken of in globalization theory in which say Coca Cola is consumed throughout the world not so much by expat Americans as by local populations. Is transnationalized Japanese culture in Waikiki not part of globalization process? It genuinely is.

But there has not been sufficient, attention paid to this sort of phenomena to try to understand it in globalization theory. I will show that there are many other kinds of transnationalized Japan in the world. I submit that received globalization theory has not paid sufficient attention to on-the-ground, serious ethnographic cases reported by professional anthropologists but relied basically on what I call "New York Times (or National Geographic) ethnography," i.e., the kinds of ethnographic snippets one can glean by reading the New York Times or the National Geographic. My contention is that one cannot, build a serious theory of globalization based only or primarily on such anecdotal evidence.

III. Specific Globalization the case of Japan

What this example of "Waikiki Japan" shows is the need to make a conceptual distinction between what I call "general globalization" and "specific globalization." This distinction, as indicated above, arises out of ethnographically anchored thinking on globalization.[1]

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1 Readers may be reminded of the distinction made between general and specific cultural evolution by Sahlins (1960).

Globalization process, empirically speaking, originates from "centers," which in old-fashioned thinking were thought to be located in the West, or in the United States. But, now we know better. Centers can be located anywhere, and of late, more and more of them are in Asia. In the following let us see Japan as a center of globalization.

Briefly, I divide Japan's globalization phenomena into four categories, fully acknowledging complex relationship among them, rather than seeing them as totally unrelated phenomena.

The first is "human dispersal." In the past, 140 years Japanese have migrated into many parts of the world. Earlier, as is well known, they went to North and South America, and their migration there continued into the 1970s — well into the post war period — as a means of helping to solve Japan's population problem when Japan was still suffering from the postwar pang of hunger. By now their numbers, including their descendants making up the second, third, fourth, fifth and even the sixth generations, total more than a million.

Less in the consciousness of the Japanese, or anyone else, are the unknown numbers of those who went to Micronesia, northeast Asia (China, Korea), and southeast Asia before the war and have stayed behind or were stranded there. (The so-called Japanese orphans in China are well publicized exceptions; but Japanese in other parts of the world and their descendants are well nigh forgotten.) To be added to the above are the Japanese who were taken to Siberia by the Soviet army after the war and stayed there.

From the 1960s on, as Japanese multinationals began to move abroad, Japanese businessmen and their families began to disperse throughout the world, along with those who set up businesses, such as travel agencies, to cater to the needs of these expats. Then there are scholars and students who go abroad on a relatively short term basis. Another category of short-term sojourners consists of tourists who go to all parts of the world in millions, though mostly only for a week or two. Not to be forgotten are those — mostly women — who leave Japan permanently in international marriage. Finally, a new type of emigrants who leave Japan on more or less long term basis, without, a definite plan to return to Japan, is increasing in number.

The second type of Japan's globalization phenomena consists of organizational transplant. The most evident are of course the Japanese multinationals which now dot the globe, most heavily concentrated in east and southeast Asia and North America, and secondarily in Western Europe. Much research has been conducted on the nature and process of their adaptation to the local scene, socially as well as culturally. No need to review the rich literature on this subject in the context of this paper.

As Japanese disperse, organization and culture tend to go with them especially when their numbers grow. In cities like Hong Kong, Bangkok, Singapore, Los Angeles, Düsselldorf, London, Paris, and many others, thousands and sometimes tens of thousands of Japanese have formed a community, manifesting characteristic Japanese social structure. In national capitals, the Japanese embassy (or the consul general in a lesser city) is the focal point of the organization, with overseas outposts of major Japanese business firms forming its nucleus.

In these cities, the resident Japanese constitute a veritable community, in which use of the local language can be dispensed with in most situations. There are grocery stores with Japanese-speaking clerks, books stores specializing in Japanese books, travel agencies which will answer a telephone call in Japanese with the assumption that the caller is Japanese. Children attend Japanese schools and associate with Japanese friends. Mothers and wives also associate with each other in a very delicate and complicated network of hierarchical relationship reflecting the hierarchy of their husbands' companies.

The third category of Japan's globalization has to do with diffusion of material and non-material culture. Quintessential among cultural artifacts are manufactured products, for which Japan has become a synonym for excellence, such as automobiles and electronic goods.

Of late the Japan Foundation and other organizations in Japan have been "exporting" Japan's fine arts, such as performing arts, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, etc. But, probably the most popular among them are items of Japan's mass culture, such as the karaoke, manga, animation movie, and television programs (such as O-Shin).

Not to be forgotten in this category are the numerous religious groups which are spreading their teaching and memberships abroad. Some have spread with Japanese emigrants who moved to North and South America. Others have spread to locations without Japanese and their descendants, such as Tenrikyo in Singapore, Sokagakkai in North America and Europe, or Aum Shinrikyo in Soviet Russia. Also Japanese sports, notably judo, have seen worldwide acceptance.

The fourth and last category to be considered in connection with Japan's globalization is the imagining of Japan by those around the world as well as by expat Japanese living abroad.

What I emphasize here is that for each of these phenomena of Japan's globalization we have detailed ethnographic reports. And for globalization of other countries as well, such as the United States or Germany, it is of course possible to compile similar ethnographic data. Contents of such data, however, would be different from case to case. This is the important point. That is, the question of

(1) what cultural products are distributed and (2) where will vary from case to case. Distribution of Japanese electronic goods, for example, is heavily concentrated in east and southeast Asia as well as in the United States. Trade restrictions and other factors have made their presence in Europe relatively light. On the other hand, American popular music has a wide distribution unseen for Japanese popular music.

An anthropological theory of globalization then must take serious consideration of these ethnographies of *specific globalization*. Without it, the theory would be hardly anthropological. That is, if anthropology is to claim distinct contribution to globalization theory, the theory must be grounded in ethnography.

Globalization theory offered so far, however, have paid little attention to ethnographic specifics of globalization. It has somehow assumed the phenomenon to be worldwide, using the methodology of the "New York Times ethnography" and the "National Geographic ethnography," and discussed it in terms of a sum total of ethnographies, irrespective of where the center is. I have termed this globalization *general globalization*, in contrast to *specific globalization*.

General globalization, then, may be construed as a compounding of specific globalization from all centers. But such a general globalization theory assumes the globalization process to be substantively the same from one center to another, or that differences among them are not important for the construction of a general globalization theory. I submit that this is not true.

Compare, for example, Japan's globalization with that of the United States. The latter carries the legacy of the second world war, in which the United States was the major player and victor, whereas Japan was the vanquished. The US assumed the military and geopolitical, as well as economic leadership in the postwar era. The nature of US globalization is without a doubt heavily colored by this postwar role. In the postwar period, Japan has never been able to flex its military muscle as a way of extorting trade or political advantage, or use economic favor to extract political compliance as US has been able to do.

In addition, this US globalization has been to a great extent aided by the use of English as a global language. Again, history is essential in understanding this. English as a global language owes to the British empire, which saw no sunset. The British empire spread English language throughout its colonies, and made it indispensable for communication within the empire, and even within a colony. The extensiveness of the empire and the huge (primary and secondary) English speaking populations thus created set the stage for the American globalization, which was able to take advantage of English as the lingua franca in the former British empire for furtherance of its interests, and use it as the base on

which to build its global economic empire. The strength of American military and geopolitical prowess in the immediate postwar period allowed English to continue to be used as the language of communication wherever Americans interfaced with others. Standing in the position of military, political and economic power, Americans have been able to make others go through the hardship of learning a foreign language (English), rather than forcing themselves to learn a difficult foreign language. Widespread use of English led to the next stage in the use of this language. Namely, now it is used as the language of communication par excellence whenever speakers of two or more non-English languages encounter, whether they be Japanese and Koreans, Chinese and Mexicans, or Russians and Swedes. As a result, use of English as a global language has a snowballing effect, and can be expected to accelerate with time.

By now, a pedagogical infrastructure is solidly in place for English language to be taught as a secondary language. That is, English instruction is incorporated in curriculum in most countries, more often than not as a or the required foreign language at secondary or even at primary level. And competent teachers of English are locally available in most countries.[2]

An added advantage of the use of English as a global language for Americans is that almost every American — excluding the few whose native tongue is not English for whatever reason — is a potential player of a direct role in American globalization. He or she need not have the potential to learn a foreign language and need not master one in order to join the ranks of corporate expats, for example, whereas a Japanese who is incompetent in English, no matter how savvy in business, is not likely to be in the global scene. This means that the US can count on roughly two hundred million candidates — nearly its total population — for a global role, whereas only a small fraction of Japan's one hundred twenty million have the potential to play a global role.

During the second world war, Japanese government may have had the ambition to spread its language throughout "the Grater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" and to use it ultimately as the lingua franca of the "Co-Prosperity Sphere." If Japan in fact did have such an ambition, it did not materialize. And for certain, at present Japanese does not, and even in the 21st century it is not likely to function as a global language of communication among non-Japanese, or even as a lingua franca between Japanese and non-Japanese in diplomatic or business relations.

While there is growing interest in and even demand for learning Japanese around the world, most countries lack the pedagogical infrastructure to provide

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2 The former Soviet bloc countries still do not have this pedagogical infrastructure, and have to rely on US Peace Corp to teach English at this time.

necessary instructions. Japanese is not a required foreign language, and qualified teachers are not available. These countries rely on the Japanese government (JICA, Japan Foundation) or Japanese NGOs to provide instructional resources, including language teachers, their salaries, texts and other materials and equipment. Thus, since language is at the foundation of cultural understanding, Japan is making a heavy investment in language instruction in order to enhance its appreciation around the world. The thought that such an appreciation ultimately leads to Japan's economic expansion is only thinly disguised in this endeavour. In other words, whereas globalization of English language has its own momentum, globalization of Japanese is largely dependent on the efforts initiated in Japan. Herein lies a crucial difference between the two countires in their respective globalization processes.

Thus US globalization has taken a very different process than Japan's. Not to appreciate such historical specificities and instead to see globalization in purely synchronic terms deprives us from understanding all dimensions of globalization. General globalization disguises varied processes of globalization. This is not to say the concept has no merit, but to call attention to the need to pay attention to specific as well as to general globalization.

IV. General Globalization

One way of understanding general globalization, as I said above, is to consider it a sum total of all specific globalization. In this sense, general globalization contains Japanese globalization, US globalization, etc. It manifests descriptive elements, such as Coca Cola, Sony, and Mercedes Benz.

Another way of comprehending general globalization is to regard it at another level of abstraction — as a nomological model in which no proper name appears. It consists of generalized processes of movement of people, such as refugees, workers, and expats, or transfer of funds from one financial center to another, or development of worldwide communication network. In this process, it matters not whether refugees are Vietnamese or Hutus, whether guest workers are Turkish going to Germany or Mexicans coming to US, whether the financial center is New York or Hong Kong, whether the funds transferred are US dollars or Japanese yen, whether the internet provider is British Telecom or AT & T, whether a cyberspace originates in Germany or in France. It is in this sense, I believe, that Appadurai (1990, 1996) offers his concepts of ethnoscape, ideoscape, mediascape, and finanscape, which describe distribution of ideas, media network, etc. in the global landscape.

It is globalization in this sense which is supposedly discussed by most of

the globalization theorists, such as Robertson (1990), Featherstone (1990), Hannerz (1992), et al. But the important conceptual point to be made here is that these theorists do not make clear distinction between specific and general globalization in the way I spelled out here, or in any other way. Instead, in their discussion, the two seem to be constantly conflated. As a manner of speaking, for example, they refer to "Coca Colonization" and "McDonaldization" as metaphor for general globalization process. Taco Bell and Domino Pizza are constant examples of globalization, but Japanese examples are seldom cited. Globalization seems to be conflated with Westernization, although theorists generally refuse to acknowledge this conflation. And it is this refusal which lead them to simply reify the Western ethnography of (specific) globalization to the level of general globalization, assuming one is the same as the other.

Such conflation leads, for example, Appadurai to say the following with regard to his ideoscape, presumably a concept in general globalization. According to Appadurai, ideoscapes are "concatenations of images, but they are often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of states and the counterideologies of movements explicitly oriented to capturing state power or a piece of it. These ideoscapes are composed of elements of the Enlightenment worldview, which consists of a chain of ideas, terms, and images, including freedom, welfare, rights, sovereignty, representation, and the master term democracy...." (Appadurai 1996:36) Clearly, in Appadurai's mind, the Enlightenment ideology is the only substance worthy of his ideoscape, even though in abstract ideoscapes are merely "concatenations of images," and have nothing whatsoever to do with Enlightenment. How about Islam as an ideoscape? Does it not qualify as "concatenations of images" which are "directly political and have to do with the ideologies of states?" I wonder why Islam or Buddhism is not worthy of being an ideoscape in Appadurai's thinking.

V. Globalization Processes

(1) Through Value Added.

Why is Coca Cola so popular in the world? Of course there are many answers to such a seemingly simple but indeed complex question. Capitalization, distribution system, franchise system, advertisement, and many other factors are involved. Here I would like to offer an hypothesis not in exclusion of others, obviously, but as an additional explanation for understanding why a drink that tastes so much like medication to so many people around the world is so popular.

US is no question a center for globalization in consumer culture, among others. It has gained a hegemonic status in consumer culture. That is US as

such has a value as a name cherished by the mass. When another item of US consumer culture is added for globalization, the item acquires this value attached to any US-made consumer item. In short, a cultural item gains widespread acceptance to the extent it is backed by a globally dominant culture.

In order for this acceptance of the value added to take place, of course, there must be subjective willingness to accept the value of the center. Without this self-colonization process, centers of globalization would not function as centers.

(2) Through anonymity

Japanese animation films represent the opposite process. Japanese animation is watched on television throughout east and southeast Asia and Europe. But most children who watch these films are not aware that Japan is the center from which it emanates. In this case, anonymization, or deculturation process has taken place whereby their cultural origin is concealed or forgotten. The item has become culturally borderless and stateless. By losing its cultural identity, it is able to move anywhere.

VI. Centers and Peripheries

Without the notion of center and its counterpart, periphery, globalization as a concept floats in the air and loses places to go to. Globalization is a movement, if nothing else, and implies direction of movement. It implies flow of information from one node to another. Directionality is essential in globalization. This directionality implies center and periphery. Much of the present-day globalization is initiated by a capitalism in which capital moves internationally from one location to another. But this global movement may be power, privilege, cultural values, and anything else deemed to have value by those beyond the boundary of a given nation.

This movement is a complex one, not simply from one center to many peripheries. Because of the complexity of the movement, some theorists have abandoned the idea prematurely. Let us closely examine the concept of center-periphery. First, centers vary functionally. A financial center may not be a political center, and the latter need not be an artistic center, etc. Secondly, even within a given function, say finance, there are many centers. In past we used to speak of the Wall Street as the synonym for the world's financial center. This notion needs to be relativized now to include such other financial centers as Zurich, London, Tokyo, and Hong Kong. Something similar may be said about jazz, which used to be quintessentially American black. By now it has become so relativized that centers of jazz music exists practically in all continents. The

same may be said of judo, in which Olympic champions are no longer necessarily Japanese. More importantly international rules of judo are not all made in Japan or by the Japanese.

We also should be aware that as a logical consequence of the above a periphery to a center in a certain functional sense may be a center in a different functional sense. And of course, there are many tiers of centers and peripheries, such that a periphery of a center can serve as a center for peripheries further down the tiers. This is one sense in which a position, a node, is relativized in globalization. Thus Hong Kong may be a financial center in relation to continental hinterlands in China; but it looks to Japan or Paris as fashion center. Thus what is generally called a global center is a loose terminology for a country or a metropole which in balance tends to serve as a center in various functions more than as a periphery.

Moreover, every node — center and periphery — is potentially connected with every other, especially in this day and age of cyberspace and netscape. Tendency may be acknowledged for a heavier volume of flow of information from one node to another than between another set of nodes. But many nodes are connected to many other in a multilateral fashion. This is relativization of nodes, compared with seeing, say one node having an exclusive relation with another node, which is the mode in which old-fashioned theorists used to think of center-periphery relations in globalization. Unable to think in this multilateral fashion while reality does not cooperate with their simplistic model, they decreed the center-periphery concept useless in theorizing on globalization. On the contrary, the utility of center-periphery idea lies in its complexity.

Regionalism, such as European Union or the Association of South East Asian Nations, if we are to comprehend in terms of globalization, represents an intermediate tier in globalization. Such a regional organization may be a stage toward a global community, or it may be a reaction against global forces encroaching on regional space, such as in the case of the ill-fated and short-lived United Arab Republic. Formation of Non-Aligned Nations in the early days of the Cold War also is a species of an intermediate level organization, though not a regionalized one.

At every node, information is processed and altered — culturally adjusted and modified — such that it is more palatable to the local population. This processing of course is not always successful, and the information may be rejected. Han Kyung Koo (1997) argues that the Western knowledge which ultimately came to Korea was first processed in Japan, and that the Western knowledge which was Asianized by Japan came to Korea in a form more acceptable to Koreans.

VII. Conclusion

In this short paper I tried to make two major points. One is the need to make a distinction between *specific* and *general* globalization, which Western theorists of globalization have overlooked or ignored so far, not being able to see that Western globalization is not ipso facto general globalization, but is instead a species of specific globalization, just like Japan's globalization. Admission of this fact is the first step toward constructing a true general theory of globalization.

Secondly, I have tried to resuscitate the notion of center-periphery in globalization theory as one admitting much complexity and therefore allowing dynamic relationship between and among modes of globalization. Through identification of nodes out of which, more than into which, information flows recognition of these nodes as centers, and acknowledgment of modifications of flows of information from one node to another in a given direction do we understand the process of globalization.

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