

## Globalization compare 1990-2022

Differences between 1990 and 2020—geopolitical, geoeconomic and cultural—are staggering. How do leading themes of 1990s social science—such as globalization, convergence, modernity, nationalism—fare thirty years later? How was ‘culture’ embedded in 1990s political economy and what are interactions nowadays? This talk revisits a paper on Global Culture 1990-2020 in TCS, a wide angle on transformation of a kind that snapshot assessments lack. Let’s add these questions: How do the differences between hegemonic ascent during the 1990s and hegemonic decline since 2008 work out? If we factor in 2022, does expansive authoritarianism make a comeback? How do 1990s ‘culture wars’ compare with the 2010s and onward?

[Global Culture 1990, 2020, *Theory Culture and Society* 37, 7-8, 2020: 233-240, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276420958447>]

## Epoch changes & social science

|       | <i>Epoch turns</i>   | <i>Social science themes</i>  |
|-------|--|---|
| 1960s | Cold war, development, foreign aid<br>Decolonization, counterinsurgency  | Structural functionalism, Parsons<br>Modernization, Stages of Growth  |
| 1970s | Domino theory, Vietnam war, Che<br>Islam ally against communism, Green<br>Belt   | Dependency theory, neo-Marxism  |
| 1980s | US, UK neoliberal turn<br>Deregulation, financialization<br>Waning cold war, Trilateral Commission   | WST, Discourse analysis,<br>Orientalism<br>MNC, TNC<br>Culture spread (McD, ‘global<br>culture’)  |
| 1990s | Liberal democracy wins (Fukuyama)<br>Third way, Blair, Clinton, Schröder<br>Washington consensus: stagnation DCs<br>Clash of civilizations, Islam<br>(fundamentalism)<br>Pacific turn, rise Asian tigers, China<br>Asian crisis 1978 | Globalization, cultural turn<br>Poststructuralism, postmodernism<br>Flexible specialization, post<br>Fordism<br>Unipolarity, global capitalism, TCC |
| 2000s | Dot.com, Enron. Silicon Valley rise<br>9/11, Afghan war, Iraq war, WOT<br>UN SDG, BRICS, SCO 2003, rise<br>China, EM<br>Subprime, financial crisis 2008, G20<br>Security turn Russia 2003  | Multipolar globalization,<br>Modernities<br>Post-American world (Zakaria<br>2008)<br>Decline IMF, rise EMDC   |
| 2010s | China 2013 BRI, AIIB<br>Security turn Xinjiang, HK, surveillance<br>Brexit, Trump 2016, polarization,<br>populism<br>Paris Agreement 2015  | Culture war, populism<br>Return IMF, decline EMDC   |

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|-------|--|---|
| 2020s | Covid-19, Ukraine war, Nato expansion<br>Energy cost, inflation, energy squeeze, chips<br>Xi Jinping 20 <sup>th</sup> Congress<br>Atlantic states failing, GOP, Tories | The future is Asian<br>Geopolitics, ‘Fort Everywhere’ |
|-------|--|---|

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|---------------------|--|
| <b>1960-2000</b>    | Convergence: hegemonic centrism<br>Hence, holistic long-view social science  |
| <b>2000-present</b> | Divergence: multipolarity<br>Center cannot hold, fragmentation, populism, culture war:<br>Internal: inequality. Concentration of wealth and power. Siege mentality.<br>Social media. Hate media<br>External: Asia, China, emerging economies, shrinking share global GDP |

Point-counterpoint & alternation of convergence, divergence & combination

Convergence and divergence are both ‘total’ encompassing concepts with a binary divide.

Much US historical experience has been framed as binary and adversarial—colony v independence, unity v civil war, capitalism v communism, free market v central planning, democracy v authoritarianism, good guys v bad guys, liberals v conservatives, racism v anti-racism. Which has led to total concepts—system thinking, as in 19C European philosophy (world-system theory), liberalism and liberal democracy, and ‘empire’. This cognitive structure matches the two-party system of governance.

A binary logic yields homogenizing clusters; the components, strands and nuances on each end no longer matter. in the process, the clusters become a hiding place and a scam. All that matters is being on the ‘good’ side.

In the left turn in Latin American politics, Chile’s new president Gabriel Boric lost support within months because he introduced a radical new constitution; Peru’s new president rapidly lost support as well. In contrast, Petro in Colombia ‘has shown welcome pragmatism, negotiating multi-party support in Congress’ (Editorial 2022). Petro’s background includes a Marxist paramilitary and a popular Mayor of Bogota. Mayors, like Governors, do actual policy on the ground, far removed from ideology. This is a keynote; the issue is not ideology but sustainable growth: ‘Delivering that growth requires a well-educated workforce, stable rules for doing business, efficient courts and infrastructure fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century’ (Editorial). An observation along similar lines is ‘Boosting civic trust is essential to Latin American economic growth’ (Parrado 2022).

Compare this with Gramsci’s hegemony as moral lead and his view that a working-class lead would be not just for the working class but must establish cooperation also with factions of the bourgeoisie, which in Eurocommunism became ‘historical compromise’.

Moral hegemony still has a totalizing ideological ring but cooperation with bourgeois industrialists doesn't. Here the keynote, instead of a binary gulf, is cooperation and **combination**. Multiparty governance in much of Europe implies a spirit of combination; hence, the roundtable as a premise for social market economies, in contrast to the winner-takes-all approach in US politics, which is ideological rather than pragmatic.

Ideology and ideological gridlock in the US and UK, and pragmatic cooperation in west and Nordic Europe and much of Asia (Khanna 2018).

The three options that pertain to globalization and culture—convergence, divergence or differentialism, and hybridity (Nederveen Pieterse 2019)—don't apply in politics. Hybridity is random, doesn't have a purpose whereas in politics, mixing has or must have a purpose, hence, combination.

High inequality is the US and UK

In the UK, 'in 2018, the disposable incomes was the most unequal in high-income economies, after just the US' ... "Let them eat Brexit" is the ploy' (Wolf 2022).

Hegemons find ascent easier to deal with decline; ascent garners bipartisan support.

Long-term scholarly work with overarching paradigms is more frequent during periods of ascent (1960-2000) than during decline. Decline and its distractions foster small bore research. The setting of decline doesn't inspire large, panoramic vistas.

Keynotes of social science during hegemonic ascent either celebrate convergence (structural functionalism, modernization, McDonaldization), chart its long-term course (world-system theory) or ponders its limitations (neo-Marxism, orientalism, discourse analysis). During periods of decline social science becomes smaller, multicentric, more empirical and metric, less given to wide horizons—inward looking in declining zones and countries, outward looking in rising

Hypothesis:

**Hegemonic ascent**—wide, long views. In social science, large views, forward path; also in art

**Rome**, Orbis terrarium.

**Renaissance**, universalism Erasmus; 1500s RC, Reformation.

**Britain** 19C, progress, stages theory.

**US**, modernization, world-system theory; bipartisan support for cold war, MIC, wars, National Endowment for Democracy, binary ideologies (democracy v autocracy)

**Hegemonic decline**: disarray, division, factionalism; narrowing visions, Spengler, finding direction in a multicentric world, multipolar globalization: modernities, varieties of market economies; turf wars in shrinking field, culture wars, lose-lose; down to bunker nationalism; social science, small bore, bean counting  
Ottomans, Qing, Tsar, Habsburgs

**Multipolarity:** different patterns **in different centers**, even in different sectors, tech, chips, trade, investment  
Declining: Atlantic, sowing division; Russia; developing countries seeking IMF support  
Stagnating: China  
Rising: emerging economies, Asia, Pacific, Latin America  
Stable: EU, global view, GDPR; Northeast Asia

Ackerman, Elliot 2022 *The Fifth Act: America's End in Afghanistan*. New York, Penguin  
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Parrado, E. 2022 Boosting civic trust is essential to Latin American economic growth, Financial Times 8.1

Wolf, M. The UK economy is stagnant—and the reasons run deep, Financial Times 7.11.22