

Mobility and Globalization

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ABSTRACT

Mobility, viewed empirically as the movement of people, capital, technology, institutions, ideas, ideological systems, and knowledge, is the most visible face of globalization. Mobility is central to the process of globalization marking ageless continuity. Although some writers define the present phase (twentieth and twenty-first century) of globalization as the “age of migration,” historical human migration—both involuntary and voluntary—characterized earlier phases of history just as well. The so-called free movement of labor in the present phase of globalization hides forms of slavery and bonded labor that continue to characterize twenty-first-century globalization. An examination of the mobility of people in the first quarter of the twenty-first century will illustrate the seesaw-like tendency of a borderless and bordered world, which reveals the contradictions of globalization with implications for both mobilities of people and dissemination or mobility of scientific knowledge and technology. The present chapter takes an interdisciplinary perspective to examine the intersectionality of mobility and globalization.

KEYWORDS

globality, globalization, knowledge, migration, mobility

The link between mobility and globalization, two key concepts that straddle several social sciences, can be understood in several ways. Studies on both mobilities and globalization combine geographical, sociological, political-economic, and historical approaches. Terms such as *mobility* and *circularity* have been used with great frequency in the discussion of globalization and global history in recent times (Gänger, 2017). Titles such as *connected history* (Subrahmanyam, 1997, 2022), followed by *connected sociology* (Bhambra, 2014), have come into circulation in recent decades. *Connectivity*, *mobility*, and *globality* have become part of a conceptual

assemblage. A turn to mobility and the emergence of a mobility paradigm took place in the first decade of the twenty-first century (Sheller & Urry, 2006).

Both *globalization* and *mobility* are polysemous terms. The various approaches to globalization are narrowed into two. In one approach, often held by journalists, some economists, and politicians, globalization is viewed as a new label for neoliberal capitalism writ large. In this view, globalization is an enabler of the mobility of people, capital, and technology. Yet the process is not without contradictions. While the advocates of neoliberal globalization applaud the mobility of the professional classes, the mobility of the working class is a source of concern for them. They view unrestricted mobility of capital as a boon since it fuels globalization, but unrestricted mobility of labor might jeopardize political stability, giving rise to xenophobia (Steger, 2003: 118).

A broader, holistic, historically rooted sociological view of globalization views mobility of labor, capital, technology, ideas, religions, ideological systems, knowledge, lifestyles, and cultural products as a natural process that has come to be restricted or moderated by the rise of the states and the ideologies of extreme nationalism. In the present chapter, we adopt a sociological view of globalization and consider mobility in broader terms that include both artifacts and ideas, yet human mobility remains its central component.

Human mobility can be viewed in three broad phases. For millennia of foraging and pastoral living, human mobility was the norm, as life was unencumbered by the boundaries of states or functional equivalents of such organizations. Historically, migration has been the normal condition (Manning, 2005). People migrated in large numbers from Africa to the rest of the world. Asian migrants populated the Arctic and reached North America well before the continental drift. Since the end of pastoral society and with the advent of agricultural societies, people have been largely sedentary, but not immobile, as mobility was limited to seasonal or short-distance migration. With the advent of modernity triggered by industrialization, mobility has become commonplace. Mobility, in that sense, can be seen as a major marker of modernity. The “mobility hypothesis,” which was advanced by Wilber Zelinsky (1971) and supported by Charles Tilly (1978), argued that the imperatives of capitalism created mobile free labor through a process of proletarianization. The view that links population mobility to industrialization has come under critical examination (Hochstadt, 1989; Lucassen & Lucassen, 2009).

The debate, to some extent, hinges on the definition and scale of migration. The movement of people from one place to another is nothing new. Historically, there has been a natural flow of people, for example, during harvests, which would be regarded today as seasonal migration. Indeed, people moved from place to place, individually or as a group, for a better life. Emigration to the so-called New World, rural to urban migration, and the movement of soldiers and sailors predated industrialization (Lucassen & Lucassen, 2009). At least in theory, people could move more freely across geographical boundaries until the invention

of the passport and the monopolization of control of the means of movement by the state in the nineteenth century (Torpey, 2000). In Europe until World War I, the movement of people took place quite freely. During and after World War I, as mass travel expanded and borders became more rigorously guarded, the regulation and monitoring of human movement by the state became more determined (Torpey, 1998: 254). At the beginning of the twenty-first century, global citizens traveled a total of 23 billion kilometers; by 2050, that figure will have risen to 105 billion (Schafer & Victor, 2000: 171).

MOBILITY AND GLOBALITY

In the current global circumstances, mobility has become one of the central features of globality. Mobilities of technology, tools, and ideas have a long history. With revolutionary improvements in transportation and communication, a vast number of people around the world have become highly mobile. For certain classes of people, geographical constraints have lost significance, and societies and nation-states have become more permeable. While there is a class dimension to mobility, since only the middle class and upper classes can travel, a growing number of working-class people are also resorting to travel across national boundaries and within their respective societies in search of livelihoods. As such, mobility and migration have become synonymous.

The COVID-19 pandemic, by denting both globalization and mobility, unwittingly revealed the close relationship between the two. However, if globalization is defined in a sociological way, focusing on historical encounters among civilizations, societies, and cultures, mobility becomes a defining feature of globalization. Consider the definition of globalization by Roland Robertson (1992), for whom globalization entails that the world becomes a single place followed by a growing awareness of the shrinking of the world. In this process, mobility is both a cause and consequence of globalization. John Urry (2000), among others, reframed modern society as a mobile society, emphasizing the mobility of corporeal bodies, that is, people, but also a way of life, that is, ideas (Urry, 2002). Corporeal mobility, a distinctive feature of modern global society, was interrupted by immobility caused by the coronavirus pandemic in 2020–21. Even without a huge public health emergency, one cannot overlook the contradictions of the modern world (circa the second decade of the twenty-first century): the co-presence of mobility and the increasingly bordered and fenced nature of the world, which go hand in hand with the advancing march of globalization (Turner & Khondker, 2010).

Mobility, viewed empirically as the movement of people, capital, technology, institutions, ideas, ideological systems, and knowledge, is the most visible face of globalization. Mobility is not only central to the process of globalization, given its historical depth, but it also helps mark the differences in the various historical phases of globalization. Enhancing mobility has become a central feature of

contemporary globalization. At the end of the twentieth century, close to 2.6 billion people traveled by the world's airlines each year (Hobsbawm, 2007: 86). In 2019, a year before the outbreak of COVID-19, the International Civil Aviation Organization's preliminary compilation of annual global statistics put the total number of passengers carried on scheduled services at 4.5 billion (ICAO, 2019). Asia and the Pacific accounted for 34.7 percent of the traffic, while Europe and North America accounted for 26.8 percent and 22.2 percent of the traffic, respectively.

An increase in air travel is a good indicator of both intra- and international mobility. Businesspeople, workers, students, and people traveling back and forth to meet family members in different parts of the globe constitute most of the air passengers. The mobility of students has been an interesting trend in recent decades, especially since the economic reforms in China. An increase in the number of tourists is another aspect of enhanced mobility. In 1896, author Mark Twain landed in Bombay (now renamed Mumbai) and stayed at Watson's, Bombay's leading hotel at the time. His sojourn was part of his global travels that took him to Europe, India, and Australia (Twain, 1897). Tourism can be traced back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when it was a privilege limited to the nobles, when inns and hotels were being established in various European cities. As the Industrial Revolution unfolded, tourism proper began in the nineteenth century. The first travel agency, Thomas Cook & Son, dates back to the nineteenth century, offering excursions and holidays. Tourism flourished in the twentieth century with the expansion of railway lines, the advent of the automobile, and later planes. Being able to travel, particularly for nonwork reasons, was only available to a narrow elite and was itself a mark of status (Urry, 1990: 24). The frequency of foreign travel prompted Omhae to declare the idea of a "borderless world" (Ohmae, 1989). In 1988, nearly 90 percent of all Japanese honeymooners went abroad.

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) estimates that internationally, there were just 25 million tourist arrivals in 1950. Sixty-eight years later, this number has increased to 1.4 billion international arrivals per year. This is a fifty-six-fold increase. Europe accounts for over 51 percent of all the tourists in 2018 (Our World in Data, n.d.). Tourism and travel's direct contribution to GDP globally was approximately US\$9.1 trillion in 2019, which dropped to US\$4.7 trillion in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Statista, 2021).

The precursor of tourism is a pilgrimage where people motivated by religious belief undertook visits to holy sites at a regular interval. Pilgrimage provides continuity in the historicity of globalization. One of the world's largest religious gatherings is at Hajj, where about 2.5 million Muslim pilgrims took part in 2019 (Government of Saudi Arabia, 2019). The Kumbh Mela, considered the most populous pilgrimage, attracts tens of millions of Hindu devotees to dip in the Ganges, defying COVID-19 fears (Srinivas, 2021).

MOBILITY AS MIGRATION

Migration, which is simply the physical movement of people from one place to another, has become the most visible face of globalization today. One cannot ignore the fact that an increasing number of residents of almost every country today are foreign-born, revealing global mobility. Although some writers define the present phase (twentieth and twenty-first century) of globalization as the “age of migration” (Castles & Miller, 1993), historical human migration—both involuntary and voluntary—marked the salience of migration in earlier phases of history just as well. Pitrim Sorokin, a Harvard sociologist and an immigrant from what was then the Soviet Union, used the term *mobility* in the 1940s and differentiated between horizontal mobility, which implied migration, and vertical, or social mobility.

Although human migration is not new, one of the most interesting features of twenty-first-century globalization has been an increase in mobility, where more people tend to move more frequently from place to place. Mobile people include tourists, commuters, and migrants. We differentiate between migrants and other mobile people on the grounds that migrants live for a certain period in a destination country for work, education, or business or to join family members; are subject to the rules, regulations, and customs of the receiving country; and are required to make some degree of cultural accommodation. All modern societies allow free movement of citizens within their national borders and the national laws ensure that they enjoy the freedom to travel. An exception has been the *hukou* system in China, which was an attempt to regulate and restrict internal migration. In recent years, reforms have taken place in the *hukou* system to facilitate industrial production in the coastal cities of the South and Southeast (Zhao & Fu, 2010). Although the system was officially phased out in 2014, this practice is unlikely to be phased out anytime soon (Goodburn, 2014). In premodern Europe, there were restrictions on rural people’s ability to move into the cities without work. Vagabondage was a punishable offense in early modern Europe (Kamen, 1986; Perry, 2002).

Migration raises interesting issues about the relationship between market forces and the authority of the state. It is the classic law of supply and demand that dictates the movement of people across national boundaries. However, the state in the receiving countries, in aiding the market forces, usually complies with the dominant economic forces, but the state is responsible for its citizens. The sending states also play a role in sometimes promoting the interests of migrant workers by providing all kinds of assistance or blocking their movement if there are possibilities of workers falling into exploitative situations overseas.

Although there has been a significant increase in the migrant population in recent decades, earlier centuries saw greater mobility of people in terms of percentage of total population and degree of freedom—if not ease—of movement. The last decade of the twentieth century was declared the “age of migration” by

Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller (2003). Yet the nineteenth century allowed easier migration flows. In the euphoria of discussions on globalization, writers like Kenichi Ohmae (1989), a business thought leader, announced the coming of a “borderless world.” It is ironic that when celebratory remarks about the so-called borderless world were being made, walls were being erected in many parts of the world to restrict the movement of people. Contrary to popular perception, in the twentieth century, the world has become more bordered than at any other time in the past. We live in a state-centered world. The contradiction of globalization is best revealed in the free flow of capital and the restricted movement of labor.

The uneven forces of globalization have made the state more central. The relationship between globalization and the state has taken a new turn, making the state more powerful insofar as border control is concerned. The power of the state is often felt in its ability to control and regulate the movement of people, goods, technology, and intellectual property. In the discourses on globalization, several ways of conceptualizing the processes of globalization are available. One of the conceptualizations views globalization as a series of flows: flows of capital, technology, ideas, and population. This view is most relevant in the discussion of mobility. Since the emergence of state systems, migrants can be viewed as either internal or international. Most migrants in the present world are internal migrants, which reflects uneven development within the country, as international migration is rooted in uneven global development. Both internal and international migrants constitute close to one billion migrant workers in the world. Here, *migrant* is defined—minimally—as a person who lives in a place other than where she or he was born. In the world of nation-states, some people move within the country from rural to urban areas or from small towns to metropolitan cities in search of work, education, career enhancement, better living conditions, and so on. They constitute around 740 million people (UNDP, 2009, quoted in IOM, 2015).

The global estimate of international migrants stood around 286 million in 2022, which included 32.5 million refugees in mid-2022 (World Bank, 2022). Overall, the estimated number of international migrants has increased over the past five decades. One hundred ninety-one million people, or 3 percent of the world’s population, lived outside their country of birth in 2005, according to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The equivalent figure in 1960 amounted to 75 million people or 2.5 percent of the world population. Almost one in every ten people living in more developed regions is a migrant. The total estimated 281 million people living in countries other than their countries of birth in 2020 was 128 million more than in 1990 and over three times the estimated number in 1970 (IOM, 2022).

China accounts for the highest number of internal migrants in the world. According to the 2020 census, the floating, or migrant, population—defined as those without local household registration (*hukou*)—has increased to 376 million,

up from 155 million in 2010 (Chan, 2021). Uneven industrialization is the cause of both internal and international migration. In China, internal migration has health impacts, especially on young migrants aged 16–35 (Lu, Kandilov, & Zhu, 2020).

What is unique about migration in the age of globalization is that more and more people are moving to and from more and more countries, and their movements are closely documented and surveyed. Controversies over the undocumented movement of people are an affirmation of the importance of documentation and surveillance. Migration is the result of a complex set of social, economic, political, and cultural processes. There are several types of migration: voluntary, involuntary or forced, and economic or political. Often, a combination of factors drives people to migrate. While migrants exercise their volition in choosing to move, for refugees and internally displaced people, such choices do not exist. COVID-19 restricted the number of people on the move but did not fully restrict mobility. Displacement continued to occur and grow, with 1 in 95 people displaced at the end of 2020, up from 1 in 159 in 2010 (UNHCR, 2022).

CAUSES OF MIGRATION

John Maynard Keynes, the famous English economist, said that “migration is the first act against poverty.” According to a United Nations report, three D’s account for the majority of migration today: demography, development, and democracy. People tend to move out of so-called overpopulated countries to less populated countries, from less developed to more developed countries, and from authoritarian to democratic countries. Less populated but rich countries such as Canada and Australia remain popular destinations for migrants. While some migrants move permanently, the oil-rich Gulf countries remain destinations for temporary migrant workers. The United Arab Emirates has the highest proportion of temporary migrants, who constitute over 88 percent of the population.

According to Adam McKeown (2004), world migration reached new peaks in the 1920s, and the immigration restrictions of the 1920s were also part of a much longer trend of regulation, border control, and nationalism that had grown concurrently with migration since the middle of the nineteenth century. From 1846 to 1940, there were three main circuits of long-distance migration. During this century of migration, 55–58 million Europeans and 2.5 million from India, China, Japan, and Africa migrated or were taken to the Americas. During the same period, the other main destination was Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean Rim, and the South Pacific, where 48–52 million Chinese from China and Indians moved.

In the twentieth century, alongside forced involuntary migration caused by war, voluntary migration grew enormously. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, owing to a combination of factors such as relatively cheaper air travel, the expansion of job opportunities, falling birth rates in some countries, and the availability of surplus populations in other countries, more and more people were

becoming increasingly mobile. There are international migrants and refugees as well as internally displaced persons. The latter group is often a product of civil war or social unrest.

MIGRANT LABOR

Political-economic globalization can be traced back to the slave trade in the sixteenth century with the forced movement of African slave labor to the Caribbean and North American plantations. Such forced and exploitative labor transfers are still practiced in various parts of the world. Colonialism and the European land grab marginalized the poor of many colonies who were eventually driven by the economic necessity to become indentured laborers. In the nineteenth century, the migration of Europeans to various parts of the world created white-settler societies such as Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Here, the migration issue was connected with racism and the marginalization of various Indigenous communities. Many of those problems remain, especially around the status of aboriginal people and their relationship to the land (Turner & Khondker, 2010: 107).

Mobile people are extremely heterogeneous. They can be migrant workers, tourists, international students, or refugees. In addition to migrants and refugees, there were 48 million internally displaced persons in 2020 (UNHCR, 2021). One of the important trends in migration is an increase in South-South migration (Hujó & Piper, 2010; IOM, 2020). About 60 percent of all migrants are now found in the world's most prosperous countries and around 40 percent in the developing regions (GCIM, 2005). Migrants to industrially developed countries often seek permanent status and citizenship. Because of the high mobility of people across nations, many countries now accept dual citizenship. Professionals in certain specialized fields are very much in demand, and some countries offer incentives to attract these specialists. Indian software engineers can be seen in many different countries. Some countries, such as the Philippines, have taken a proactive attitude toward the export of labor or an out-migration strategy since the mid-1970s under President Ferdinand Marcos. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, Filipina women were employed as domestic workers in over 130 countries in the world (Parrenas, 2001: 1). It is estimated that there are eight million workers—both as domestic workers and in other trades—who are known as “overseas foreign workers” (OFW) from the Philippines who play a vital role in the economy of the country. The income they earn overseas helps sustain their families left behind in their homeland.

The World Bank estimates that worldwide remittances will reach \$689 billion in 2021, with remittances to the developing world reaching \$529 billion. India in 2021 again topped the list with the US\$87 billion (World Bank, 2021). The idea that mobility begets possibility (Giaveanu, 2020) is often realized with migrants if this process is properly administered. However, often, poorly administered and

laissez-faire migration leads to a new category of vulnerable people known as “irregular” or “undocumented workers.” Preying on their vulnerable existence and exploiting their ignorance, human traffickers lead people on uncertain journeys. According to the UN Refugee Agency, in 2021, 3,231 people died while trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea (UNHCR, 2022).

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SLAVERY

Some people choose to leave home in search of better jobs and security elsewhere, and such economic migration is often in response to the push and pull of the forces of globalization. They leave their home to avoid poverty and repression, while others are allured by the prospect of a better life in other places. Some people make choices on their own, but others are forced to migrate because of a host of factors ranging from economic deprivation to political repression to outright expulsions (or so-called compulsory repatriation). An extreme form of forced migration is human trafficking; children and women are often kidnapped, stolen, and sold into slavery.

Human trafficking has been identified as a new form of slavery in the present world, exposing some of the ill effects of uncontrolled globalization. The International Organization for Migration calls human trafficking the “most menacing form of irregular migration due to its ever-increasing scale and complexity, involving, as it does, arms, drugs, and prostitution.” In this shady world, precise figures are difficult to come by. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), there were 24.9 million victims of human trafficking around the world in 2016, of whom 10.9 million were women and 3.3 million were children. ILO also estimated there were 4.8 million sex-trafficking victims subjected to commercial sexual exploitation around the world in 2016. Ninety-nine percent of the victims were women, while 3.8 million were adults and 1 million were children (Ecker, 2022).

In the *Trafficking in Persons Report* published by the State Department of the U.S. government, “Trafficking in persons is a modern-day form of slavery, a new type of global slave trade.” Perpetrators prey on the most vulnerable among us, primarily women and children, for profit and gain. Female victims continue to be overrepresented in trafficking in persons. “In 2018, for every 10 victims detected globally, about five were adult women and two were girls. About one-third of the overall detected victims were children, both girls, and boys, while 20 percent were adult men” (UNODC, 2021: 31).

Slavery was officially abolished in 1833 in the British Empire, in 1865 in the United States by the Thirteenth Amendment, and in 1886 in Cuba, but the practice goes on in our society under a different name. Human trafficking is the twenty-first-century version of slavery. The extent of slavery in the contemporary world is extensively documented, for example, in the works of Kevin Bales (1999, 2005).

According to Bales, since its general abolition in the late nineteenth century, slavery has slipped easily into the shadow economy. Slavery may be defined as the complete control of a person for economic exploitation by violence or the threat of violence (Bales, 2000: 461). With slavery, the person becomes a mere commodity or thing.

According to another authority, "Slavery exists today on an unprecedented scale." In Africa, tens of thousands are chattel slaves, seized in war or tucked away for generations. Across Europe, Asia, and the Americas, traffickers have forced as many as two million into prostitution or labor. In South Asia, which has the highest concentration of slaves on the planet, nearly ten million languish in bondage, unable to leave their captors until they pay off their "debts" (Skinner, 2008: 64). Bales estimates that there are twenty-seven million slaves in the world today, of whom fifteen to twenty million are in India, Pakistan, and Nepal (Bales, 2005). The positive view of the free movement of labor in a global economy will not want to deal with these issues and will instead attempt to focus on the material improvement of people in a deregulated global economy, where people have in principle the freedom to cross borders at ease in a borderless world. In general terms, the science of economics does not deal effectively with black markets and criminal activity in the marketplace, concentrating instead on the formal market in which goods and services are transacted according to formal, public rules. Consequently, academic economics dealing with formal and legal exchanges does not normally include criminal activity, which may keep a large section of the community in employment and the gross domestic product. Slavery, trafficking, and the informal, undocumented movement of people often remain unnoticed and unaccounted for. These people remain permanently marginalized.

BRAIN DRAIN TO THE BRAIN IN CIRCULATION

In the 1970s, "brain drain" was a popular slogan, and it was often regarded as one cause of the poor economic performance of those countries that were exporting their most talented doctors, engineers, and scientists to the rich, developed countries. Indeed, many talented young men and women migrated from the periphery to the core of the world economy for better educational and career opportunities. Universities in rich countries, such as the United States, were magnets for attracting foreign-born talent. This process was reversed in the 1990s and in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The notion of "brain drain" was supplemented by "brain gain," and Analee Saxsenian (2005) introduced the concept of "brain in circulation." Countries such as India produced many talented men and women in various scientific and engineering fields, only to be absorbed by the sluggish Indian economy of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, which led to a serious outpouring of the Indian creative class to North America and elsewhere. In the 1990s and especially in the first decade of the twenty-first century, many such

talented Indians experienced in high-tech industries began to return to their own countries, which by then created conditions that would allow them to pursue their professional careers.

Brain drain remains a global problem from which the rich countries in the Global North benefit at the expense of the poor countries in the South. Reasons for brain drain are mostly economic: poor working conditions in the origin countries and the attraction of a better quality of personal and professional life in the destination countries. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, foreign-born people represented 10 percent of the workforce in OECD countries, a twofold increase since 1960 and a twofold increase since 1990. High-skill migration grew even faster, with a twofold increase during the 1990s alone (Alesina, Harnoss, & Rapoport, 2016: 102).

The idea that national borders have become more porous for the creative class was popularized by Richard Florida (2002). The footloose nature of the creative classes and the frequent movement of professionals have led some writers to develop the notion of “flexible citizenship” (Ong, 1999). Although Aihwa Ong developed the notion to describe the global flexibility of the Chinese business class, the phrase has become popular in the literature on global migration. While it may be the case for a small number of skilled professionals to move around at ease, often having more than one passport, for most working-class migrants, national boundaries remain a hard reality.

Some countries, such as Taiwan and Israel, have had effective incentive policies to reverse the outward trend of the migration of talented people. A reverse brain drain ensued. In the case of Taiwan, many Chinese from overseas—mainly from the United States—returned not only with swathes of cash, but many of them brought valuable scientific and technological knowledge with them, which assisted Taiwan’s remarkable economic development. India has also been successful in capitalizing on these trends, and many Indians with years of overseas experience are now returning to India. Several Indian professionals in the information and technology industries have left Silicon Valley to return to Bangalore, the Indian information hub. Many Indian professionals are now returning to Bangalore and other economic hothouses in India with rich experience in technology, education, and finance. This rapid economic growth has also given India a prominent international status. Following trade liberalization and the opening of the economy to investments from outside, China has received huge funds and expertise from overseas Chinese communities. To attract people of Chinese origin, China maintained an ethnicity-based in-migration policy. In the rush to capitalist development, this economic stimulus was timely and important. In India too, NRIs, which meant “nonresident Indians,” played an important role in India’s high-tech development.

Diasporic communities rarely sever their links with the country of their origin, although, in many instances, these links may stretch over several generations. The

close community bonds of the diasporic groups sometimes have unfavorable consequences. The radicalization of young people often takes place in the diasporic environment of alienation and strangeness. Modern technology has played an important role in maintaining links between families and communities in the world of the diaspora. Unlike the diasporic situation of the past, migrants maintain a close link with their home countries, thus rendering the meaning of “home” tenuous. Diasporic Islamic groups often display a heightened sense of religiosity bordering on radicalism. Research has shown how some diasporic communities come under the influence of radicalized religion, thereby becoming the source of religious extremism in their countries of origin (Kibria, 2008).

MOBILITY OF IDEAS, IDEOLOGIES, AND KNOWLEDGE

Historically, transnational intellectuals have been purveyors of ideas, ideologies, and knowledge. Scientific knowledge in the present phase of globalization tends to travel from the Global North to the Global South, whereas in the last phase of the first millennium mathematical, philosophical, and physiological science knowledge traveled from China, India, and the Middle East to the West. Ideologies such as Marxism evolved in the West and became a dominant force in the so-called East as intellectuals-turned-leaders from Lenin and Trotsky in the former USSR to Chou En-Lai of China and others were schooled in Marxist ideology in the capital cities of the West. Later Asian nationalist leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, their African counterparts such as Kwame Nkrumah and Jomo Kenyatta, and Ho Chi Minh of Vietnam were schooled in the ideas of nationalism, democracy, and socialism in the universities in Britain and France who, in turn, purveyed these ideas in their native countries. As the knowledge economy becomes the dominant mode of the global economy, globalization of knowledge becomes imperative. Universities have freely played a critical role in the dissemination of intellectual traditions, humanities, and social sciences. However, contradictions arise when it comes to sharing knowledge of sciences and technologies with immediate relevance to profit-making. Intellectual property laws have been designed to protect patent rights, but they can be an obstacle to knowledge sharing.

During the COVID-19 crisis of 2020–21, debates ensued when strong arguments were provided for and against relaxing intellectual property laws so that vaccines could become the global public good (Rake, 2021). The World Trade Organization on the one hand and South Africa and India on the other demanded relaxation of intellectual property laws for three years on humanitarian grounds so that vaccines could be produced during this time in multiple locations, especially in the vaccine-deficit part of the Global South, an effort that was opposed by the Big Pharma industries (Jecker & Aturie, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Globalization processes are intrinsically uneven in both their form and their effect. One of the challenges of the globalized world is that economy and politics are driven by divergent interests or logics. Modern economies require a flexible labor market in which workers can move rapidly and easily between different work sites depending on the local demand for labor inputs. Political imperatives and the state's need for sovereignty and security outweigh the economic needs for labor mobility. These controls inevitably involve greater negotiation and management of migration, and the result is the seesaw of labor mobility and immobility. Such contradictions are also present in the dilemma of free flow of scientific and technological knowledge dissemination and protection of information and copyrights via intellectual property laws. Setting aside such contradictions, mobility, as such—especially in knowledge, ideas, and technology—remains an intrinsic part and a defining feature of the global age, which is likely to be augmented by the AI and the new generative technology in years to come.

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