

Migration, mobility and globaloney: metaphors and rhetoric in the sociology of globalization

ADRIAN FAVELL

John Urry, *Sociology beyond societies: mobilities for the twenty-first century*, New York and London: Routledge, 2000, 272 pages. ISBN 0-415-19088-6, \$75.00, £55.00 cloth, ISBN 0-415-19089-4, \$24.99, £17.99 paper.

Nikos Papastergiadis, *The turbulence of migration: globalization, deterritorialization and hybridity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000, 252 pages. ISBN 0-745-61430-2 \$62.95, £50.00 cloth, ISBN 0-7456-1431-0, \$29.95, £14.99 paper.

Stephen Castles and Alastair Davidson, *Citizenship and migration: globalization and the politics of belonging*, New York and London: Routledge and Palgrave, 258 pages. ISBN (US) 0-415-92713-7 \$85.00 cloth, 0-415-92714-5 \$22.99 paper. ISBN (UK) 0-333-64309-7 £45.00 cloth, 0-333-64310-0, £15.99 paper.

Just as the academic publishing world has gone crazy about globalization in recent years, so has the subject of international migration risen fast on everyone's radar. These two fashionable topics are of course intimately interlinked. International migration – with its well-rehearsed themes of growth in flows and visibility, of their unprecedented diversity and heterogeneity, and of the dramatic social change brought to western societies and hitherto stable nation states – is a central motif and illustration for theorists of globalization. This is so, even among those theorists unlikely to have ever heard of Ravenstein's laws, or to have ever picked up a copy of the OECD-SOPEMI report.¹ That our present-day 'age of migration' so easily becomes a vaguely defined rhetorical theme, should point us towards the real issue at stake in this explosion of interest. The crucial question here about theorists of globalization – as with all the various themes they use to illustrate its contemporary reality – is whether these authors find a way to generate and present empirical evidence about the novelty, scope and intensity relative to other periods and places of these urgently 'new' phenomena. Only then can it be assessed to what extent it is necessary to buy into what always seems to follow in their work: grandiose rhetoric preaching the end of

tried and tested conceptual frameworks or methods of social enquiry; and hurried exhortations to shelve the disciplinary canons of sociology, human geography or political science, in favour of a radical post-disciplinary form of theorizing.

Put this way, it is clear that a great deal of prominent writing on globalization is top heavy in theory, unable really to operationalize the vast empirical challenges to which such speculation leads. A more sceptical attitude, rather, should be taken in the face of the academic obsession with highlighting all that is 'new' and epoch-making in this everyday world of ours. The incentive structures of academic publishing generate an intense pressure for fads and sound bites no less than in any other media industry. What might thus be dubbed 'fast theory' has long dominated post-Giddensian social theory, in Britain at least. Globalization is but the latest in a long line of hooks on which to hang speculative debates about modernity, with new works by Giddens, Bauman, Beck and company following hard on the heels of their last round of works on postmodernity. Michael Mann, currently working on the third volume of his magnum opus *The Sources of Social Power* that will focus on the global networks of the twentieth century, has spoken amusingly of such social theoretical excesses as 'globaloney' (Mann 2000). One of the few works that is an exception to the rule is, he points out, *Global Transformations* by David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt and Jonathon Perraton (1999), an overview of globalization theories that structures its claims around the actual testing out of the propositions of the recent global theorists. Its strategy is historically to compare the supposedly 'new' and 'unprecedented' world of today with the global system of the late nineteenth century, when global interconnections of all kinds actually reached an intensity and scope comparable with, if not greater than, today's. Seen this way, the true epoch defining event is not the scale of globalization at the turn of this century, but the collapse of that extraordinarily free-moving world at the beginning of the last, the catastrophe famously recounted in Polanyi's (1944) classic *The Great Transformation*. Theorists, though, have their eye very much on the agenda-setting futures of the present, and are so often giddy with the perspective potentials of the new and the now. In a field dominated by such writing, specialist scholars of migration might then rightfully cast a sceptical eye at works on globalization, with their 'new' theories for this 'new' world, that pick up migration or cross-national mobility as a key element of their argument.

Social theories in motion

One such theorist is John Urry, whose latest work *Sociology Beyond Societies* offers a spectacularly ambitious, manifesto-like statement about the demise and rebirth of the discipline. Old sociology, he tells us, is dead in the face of the multiple new cross-national, cross-cultural flows and networks that characterize the global world of the twenty-first century: 'the diverse mobilities of peoples, objects, images, information and wastes; and ... the complex interdependencies between, and social consequences of, these diverse mobilities' (2000: 1). **Traditional sociology, he argues, has been trapped within a nation-state centred framework of discrete societies, that misleadingly pictures a world of stable and bounded national cultures and citizenries able to reproduce themselves endogenously and the social structures they are built up on.** Urry gets the initial problematic sociologists all now face exactly right. Behind his wonder-

fully chosen title, is an opening chapter that very accurately diagnoses why traditional sociology – both as an empirical activity, and as a canon of grand theorists – is challenged by the messy cross-national interconnections of the global. It is indeed true that some of the most famous sociology of the twentieth century simply read the sociology of the United States as *the* sociology of the modern world. Nobody this far would disagree. Sociology needs urgently to be taken beyond the nation-state-society: something reflected in the most recent major textbook for the subject, Robin Cohen and Paul Kennedy's *Global Sociology* (2000), which presciently takes this as its starting point.

The deeper question, most aptly discussed by Gösta Esping-Andersen in a recent special issue of the *British Journal of Sociology* on the future of the discipline, is how to respond to Urry's problematic in advanced research. Esping-Andersen, one of the few empiricist sociologists in a volume dominated by theorists, suggests the discipline should hang on to a realist, comparative empirical agenda, in which sociology continues to advance modestly by comparing the social patterns and structures of past societies with new or emergent forms of the present, and by constantly testing out its hypotheses across different comparative societal contexts. Urry's response was also sketched in the *BJS* special, and is here presented in its full form. The contrast could not be more stark. After its promising start, Urry proceeds to sweep away practically every recognizable feature of twentieth-century sociological thought. Social structures, theories of action, empirical methods, the notion of scientific concepts, the logic of presenting empirical hypothesis are all jettisoned in favour of a sprawling, metaphors-based cultural theory, that piles up recent discussions of scapes, cyberspaces, networks, chaos theory and time-space compression. The only concession to old-fashioned social democratic modernism is a touching faith in the relevance of left-wing social movement politics in the construction of new 'public spaces' of 'global citizenship'. For the rest, real people give way to flows, images and virtual connections, agency to the intersection of 'things' and 'desires'. As speculative theorizing, none of this is remotely new. Urry offers us a parade of the usual philosophical heroes – Heidegger, Derrida, Deleuze/Guattari, Rorty, Virilio – alongside a number of other social theorists to whom he owes a good deal: notably Zygmunt Bauman, David Harvey, Henri Lefebvre and Michael Billig. The work of Niklas Luhmann, meanwhile – who is surely the true substantive root of Urry's central themes – remains a shadowy presence. Imitating Giddens's already pretentious manifesto from the early 1970s (Giddens 1976), Urry presents his own 'new rules of sociological method'. These do a great disservice to the legacy of Durkheim. There is in fact no methodology as such defended here, just a compendium of ideas most often recounted in a blur of quotations and brief discussions of other people's ethnographic or case study work. As a manifesto of off-the-wall ideas, Urry's may delight some readers. But as a serious agenda for sociology, it is difficult to see much of it lasting any longer than some of the style magazines where many of these ideas first emerged. It is a relief to know that Castells's three volume *Information Age* – a genuinely visionary synthesis of empirical observation and data, for all its faults – has already staked out the territory at which Urry's work aims (Castells 1996/1997).

As any migration scholar knows, to assess really the extent or nature of movement, or indeed even *see* it sometimes, you have in fact to spend a lot of the time

studying things that stand still: the borders, institutions and territories of nation states; the sedimented 'home' cultures of people that do not move. Nothing stands still in Urry's world: his first 'rule' is 'to develop through appropriate metaphors a sociology that focuses upon movement, mobility and contingent ordering, rather than upon stasis, structuring and social order' (p. 18). Yet migration as a form of human experience is still the exception in the modern world, and it is a vast exaggeration to suggest otherwise. And even most mobilities are nothing new. What is most curious perhaps about his work is how he ignores the most substantial body of empirical work that might allow him to illustrate some of his speculative ideas. That is, the study of actual migration phenomena, or studies on the free mobility of capital, services and goods in a globalizing world. These are well-trodden fields, and one could quickly see how anthropological studies of transnational communities across the Pacific Rim, or legal-political studies of the implication of the EU's free movement regime, might have been marshalled to support his case. But all this is eschewed at an early point, in which he casually proposes to ignore the empirical study of migration in a chapter on 'travellings' (p. 50). Emergent transnational structures, such as the EU or the WTO are alluded to in passing, but with no recognition of how these very real institutions are beginning to stably structure many of the flows or forms of mobility that Urry idealizes. Similarly, it is forgotten that so much of this speculation would carry more weight if it were recognized that under the metaphors of movement, there are – presumably – real people with real experiences that trained sociologists might be able to investigate, or indeed even *talk* to. Urry's wanton destruction of empirical methodology here sets a very bad example to young researchers. Only with methodology can such speculative theory produce creative research. Indeed, in recently published work, a former student of Urry, Saolo Cwerner, puts into practice some of the ideas of multiple 'times' of migration sketched here in one chapter (Cwerner 2001). Yet in his well-constructed study of Brazilian migrants in London, it is immediately apparent how much of a sobering effect putting into practice some of the ideas has on uncontrolled theorizing.

Given his frequent compliments throughout to the cutting edge work of avant-garde human geographers such as Nigel Thrift or Doreen Massey, it is also surprising that Urry offers no real sense of how any of his ideas might be *located* in real places. Again, one consequence of this would be to underline that many of the globalizing phenomena blithely generalized about would in fact affect different contexts very differently, and that part of the task of the sociologist should be to show how and why this takes place. No extended discussion of any real places or contexts appear in the text, although on occasion he does rely on other studies that are based on case-study detail. For example, he cites at several points an interesting ethnographic work on Turks in Denmark by Diken, to support ideas about the transnational identity strategies of migrants in the West. This selective generalization, however, will always be misleading short of some kind of controlling comparison, which must determine whether it is something about Turks as transnational migrants or something specific about Denmark as a country of immigration that actually explains their behaviour (pp. 53, 140–1, 155). One suspects it is Denmark's peculiar combination of a strong sense of ethno-national identity, its recent history as a receiving country of immigration, and its strong but often exclusionary social democratic ethos, that is partly behind

these results. In Urry's global sociology, liberated from any need to test systematically any speculative metaphor, and where there are in fact no societies anywhere to compare or indeed any stable structuring groups or patterns left to aggregate, we will simply never know. This is, indeed, a general problem with all works on globalization. What do we compare global society with? Other planets? In the past, theories and knowledge about society have always advanced via the comparative control of more generalized theories. The parochial sociology produced by self-sufficient societies such as the USA of Talcott Parsons in the 1950s could frequently be invalidated by the intervention of a more systematic cross-national awareness. Nowadays, it might just be true that eating in MacDonaldis in Amsterdam, Rome, Moscow or Singapore is more or less the same experience, aside from the fact you can buy beer in one country or get Mozzarella in your burger in another. But step outside and become immersed in the still highly nationalized social and political complexity of any one of these local contexts and you will quickly become aware that globalization is in fact impacting very differentially on all of these places. As Esping-Andersen would say, we are going to need national-societies and cross-national comparisons if we are going to make any empirical sense at all of this brave new global society in which we are supposed now to be living.

Urry is surely right that the synthetical grand theories of the past – all those long, tedious discussions about structure and agency and so forth – are a blind alley. But the real future for sociology is surely still in the systematic construction of mid-range empirical theories, and the patient reassertion of the insights and methods of past classics. The sociological imagination here has been betrayed by the generation of social theorists who, like Urry, took the turn down a postmodern cul-de-sac. It is has been immensely depressing to watch these leading social theorists live out a kind of intellectual crisis with their disciplines. A basically naive infatuation with literary theory, and the clumsy appropriation of continental philosophy, offers no inspiration to future sociologists except the lazy excuse of textuality and deconstruction, and theory for theory's sake. If established figures want to write their manifestos they should focus on what it is sociology can do that other subjects cannot. The answer surely lies in its ability to explore systematically and test out – via recognizable social scientific strategies – the speculative ideas that come so easily to the humanities and cultural studies. Urry's book, however, is contemporary social theory at its fastest and loosest. There are many ideas in this book that properly embedded in empirical projects could form the seed of new research. But when are sociologists of globalization going to show how all this talk of mobility, hybridity, mediascapes, virtual reality, and so on can be brought back and some systematic evidence delivered for it? These points apply as much to those influenced by Giddens, Bauman, Beck and company, as Urry.

Turbulent theories

This indeed should also be the first question we ask of Nikos Papastergiadis's attractive volume. Papastergiadis is erudite and writes well, and this collection of essays sets out more specifically than Urry to draw the consequences of new critical theory and cultural studies for migration scholars and the study of multicultural societies. He works at the strikingly original intersection of international political

economy and cultural theory, although his grasp of the latter is stronger. Taken together, the various meditations on hybridity, deterritorialization and globalization add up to a comprehensive revision of the conceptual framework within which mainstream migration and ethnic studies takes place. Two of the most interesting chapters come early on, as Papastergiadis engages brightly with the limitations of traditional mechanistic migration theory, and the way concepts of movement and ways of counting migration are being confounded by the blurred complexity of new migrations. As would many less radical migration scholars, he points out the inadequacy of push–pull and structural theories, of distinctions between economic and forced migration, and of representations based on classic south–north flows. Yet, as many other writers have done in writing about the contemporary situation, he adopts the ‘age of migration’ metaphor without bothering to prove it. Held et al. (1999) in fact argue that the great migration of the late nineteenth century was just as intensive and extensive as anything in the post-war period, and probably bigger. Go back before the state control of the movement of populations was perfected at the end of the nineteenth century by emergent nation states – as recounted in John Torpey’s brilliant recent *The Invention of the Passport* (1999) – and the nomadism and the non-national identities of people in our ‘global’ age become less novel, albeit qualitatively different. Papastergiadis is, of course, merely guilty of the hype of newness that globaloney encourages. But it is characteristic of this style of book that its relentless pursuit of the new should cause it thus to fail to ask the really interesting counter-intuitive questions that ought to guide original research: for instance, about the amazing turbulence of migrations of the past. Think of the migration experience of the millions who set off for distant continents with no idea of what they would find, of a world in which brand new societies were built from scratch, and where even the closest of neighbours in Europe lived in cultural and linguistic ignorance of each other. And then compare this with our banal, effortless Microsoft and CNN mediated experience of the global today.

Papastergiadis is wrong in his claim that no migration theory is being developed today that fully grapples with the complexity of what he calls ‘processes of migration’. Empirical migration theory today is a lot more sophisticated and far reaching than he credits, particularly in the empirical explorations of the key role of social capital and migration networks in explaining new migration patterns, found in recent work by Massey et al. (1998) and Hammer et al. (1997). Of course, they offer empirical theories that are incomplete and only partially work for the range of cases they consider. But that is because they set out to be parsimonious, empirically-falsifiable hypotheses that seek to formulate workable but tentative generalizations from a baffling range of empirical data. They are, in short, social scientific theories. Papastergiadis, however, is much more at home with the speculative theorizing and conceptual wordplay of cultural theory, a deconstructive attitude that proliferates untestable propositions (‘complex’ is his favourite word). Like Urry, he endorses the deeply mistaken idea that doing social theory is in fact a search for new metaphors, in which sociologists should really read more literary theory, and content themselves with writing brilliant, but very brittle, essays of the kind presented here. Time and again, insightful reflection turns into rhetorical hyperbole, beyond the recall of any operationalizable study. At the end of chapter two, where many good points have

been made against the limitations of migration research to date, he concludes with a quite absurd but characteristic statement:

The patterns of migration that emerge from these contradictory aspirations are so multiple and of such a complex nature that it is now impossible to either generalize about the logic which determines its causes, or to map its flows according to the binary co-ordinates of departure and destination ... A current map of global migration would have to be as complex as all the migrant biographies (p. 50).

If that is the case, sociologists of migration, seeking to establish some modest unifying social patterns and structure across the always-unruly heterogeneity of everyday lived experience, really should just pack up and retire.

Papastergiadis's central organizing metaphor is the 'turbulence' of migration. As befits this aeronautical theme, it is a work that views actual migrants and migration phenomena from a stratospheric height. It is no small paradox that the most influential cultural theory of migration, diaspora and hybridity, that has always preached how much better it articulates migrant and oppressed 'voices' than mainstream work – the kind of work made most famous by Stuart Hall, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha or Paul Gilroy – always seems to inspire work tangled up in the most tangential obsessions with philosophy and continental theory. So it is with Papastergiadis, who details his admiration for these writers at great length, but offers up a work disappointingly limited by its lack of engagement with the real experience of migrants or the facts of everyday migration politics. The only material used to any effect are elite representations by migrant artists, and he is more comfortable with transatlantic multicultural philosophy than any 'located' versions of multiculturalism; of the sort found, say, on the streets of Birmingham, Brussels or Brisbane. For all its sparkling passages, the book is a long and tiresome read in its entirety. Key ideas could have been made a lot more economically. This is a pity, because there are good essays here, notably the opening two chapters on migration, and the two closing chapters, an excellent self-contained history of the idea of hybridity, and a summarizing conclusion. It is a book rich in ideas, but how much better it could have been with some discipline imposed we will never know.

The one and only empirical migration scholar Papastergiadis refers to at any length is Stephen Castles, and it is perhaps appropriate that, wearied from all this speculative theorizing, migration scholars might turn to him for some good sense and something tangible, amid all the moving feasts of social theory. His collaboration with the Australian philosopher Alastair Davidson is something rather different from his own well-known recent works, in that it is a book that seeks to work through the normative consequences of his analysis of the globalization of migration, spelling out a normative agenda only implicit in other works. Although a collaborative work, the authors specify fairly clearly their division of labour in the enterprise. Davidson's historical reconstruction of the idea of western citizenship retells ably its problematic projection onto a world of less stable nation states and emerging international institutional contexts. The central question here is the impact of the post-national on migrants no longer willing or able to integrate into national citizenship. This question

is very close to central themes explored in depth in recent work by Soysal, Joppke, Sassen, and Jacobson, among others (see Joppke 1998). *Citizenship and Migration* is thus a work that contents itself with restating the problem and synthesizing it for a new audience more familiar with globalization and development debates. The same problematic is sketched from a different angle by Castles, working through the extension of ethnic minority formations, and the formal acquisition of citizenship in the post-national age. In later chapters that echo Castles's path-breaking empirical work on migration in the Asia-Pacific, they trace through the impact on these same issues for other parts of the globe.

As with Cohen and Kennedy, this is a synthetic text, setting out to clarify the field rather than offer original research. In both of these texts, there is certain unease to be had in the openly normative structuring of their empirically-based arguments. Castles is a veteran Marxist political economist who embraced the normative wave of left-liberal citizenship theories of the 1980s and 1990s, and one sometimes misses the disaffected, analytical edge of a genuine Marxist explanation of the migration dynamics of global capitalism. The language of rights, justice and equality the book embraces can after all also be a convenient liberal wallpaper for a world that sociologists perhaps ought to be rewriting in other, less ideologically loaded, terms. Even allowing for this, one might wish for a language that was less state-centred and less focused on the political and institutional, as inevitably is all right-based citizenship talk. The most significant transnational migration theorists of the present day have in fact developed their ideas with insights from the sociology of economy, stressing how the spaces that have opened up for disadvantaged migrants of the world, owe more to disorganized market forces that escape institutionalization by states than post-national rights structures (for example, Portes et al. 1999). Castles and Davidson put their faith, rather, in emergent international state structures such as the UN and the EU, arguing that citizenship needs to be extended via the pragmatic separation of state and nation, and the international acceptance of a kind of *ius domicilii*. Familiar too from liberal citizenship theory, is the warming but over-used faith in social movements and INGOs as the salvation amidst global capitalist chaos. This sceptical note aside, the real value of this work is its forceful reminder that the study of international migration must not be limited to the western world. There is literally a world out there in Asia, Africa and elsewhere where post-national migration and its consequences are so much more spectacular, and where the negative effects of globalizing processes, in terms of growing inequality, insecurity and intercultural conflict, are so much more dramatic. The closing chapters hammer home a developmentalist plea with real urgency, offering all manner of dark warnings about the erosion of state authority and the rule of law around the globe. Concerns with multiculturalism, it is true, have so often been on the impact of this facet of globalization on western societies, and for all the globalization hype this too can be yet another brand of western-centric navel gazing.

Rescuing the sociological imagination

So what kind of research agenda is a sociology of globalization left with after reading these books? How can sociology beyond the nation-state-society be done? The authors here present two kinds of responses. One is the slide towards the eclectic,

interdisciplinary theorizing of the humanities, and the lure of cultural theory. The other allies itself closely with the political agenda pursued by liberal theorists of multicultural citizenship. The mission of sociology – notably its distinctiveness from other disciplines, which do not share its core explanatory or social scientific interests – is at risk in both. From an interdisciplinary point of view, these weaknesses can be seen as quite specific to the discipline. Human geography faces similar tensions, but this is a much more heterogeneous discipline, more able to transcend the epistemological limitations of thought centred in the nation–state–society as object of study. A rigorously empirical economic geography of the global is thriving today, as is urban geography that takes the city as the basic unit of analysis. Anthropologists seem to have absorbed some cultural theory, while distinguishing themselves by their strongly empirical ethnographic core. Economists and political scientists seem also to be reformulating their disciplines as the study of the international and global, in ways that do not undermine their core theories and methods. Sociology can, at its best, embrace elements of all of these disciplines – it is why it often produces some of the most widely known synthesizing theorists – but it does face massive problems in adapting its ailing empirical wing and its traditional objects of concern to the new challenge of the global. Yet, as Papastergiadis in a way suggests, it might take heart from the sub-field of migration studies. Migration research is inherently interdisciplinary, naturally empirical, and often manages to combine the precision of fine-pointed case studies and ethnography, with the methods of extensive quantitative research and mid-range comparative work. Recent years have seen more textual and discourse analysis methods used with success. With these dimensions of theory and empiricism combined, sociology practised within migration studies needs no new manifestos or rules of method.

The more general message here is that globalization theorists should not view migration and mobility as some kind of font of speculative metaphors from which to create new theories, but a very real phenomenon through which we can empirically operationalize the big questions of globalization. It is also a very well-developed field of research. To take one example, a recent study by Riccio (2000) of the everyday networks and strategies of young Senegalese in Italy provides all the sources one might need to explore the sort of big globalization questions that so often remain entrapped in fruitless social theoretical speculation: of the complexities of migration patterns, of the impact of the global political economy and global cultural diffusion, of the emergence of the post-national, and so on. In terms of the impact of migration on receiving countries, meanwhile, propositions about how globalization and migration have undermined the nation state will not really be put to the test until similarly grounded research is done. To answer this question, it will be necessary to take systematically the daily structures of everyday life in the old bounded world of the nation-state-society – one thinks of family structures, the structures of professions, social mobility or the life-cycle – and, via the empirical study of individuals whose lives have crossed boundaries, see how and where these structures are being transformed. So far, only their impact on national political structures has been examined in any great detail. There are literally hundreds of global theorists rhapsodizing about the power of transnational networks and forms of life. **But little is known, in truth, about how these emergent transnational patterns of living fit or**

disrupt the basically sedentary structures of the vast majority of the world's population who do not migrate and who do not live transnational lives. One suspects that the lived experience of these transnational pioneers to be immensely difficult and unsettling, often tragic; full of unpredictable social trajectories that clash with the perceptions and expectations of most people around them, the 'normal' life led within a nation-state community. What wonderful material this could provide for future sociologists wishing to do fine-grained, humanistic, empirical studies of the impact of globalization. And what a pity it is that there is so little trace of this kind of sociological imagination in these books.

*Adrian Favell is at the Department of Sociology,
University of California, Los Angeles.*

Note

1. E. G. Ravenstein presented two famous lectures called the Laws of Migration to the Royal Statistical Society in 1885 and 1889. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has set up a statistical service called SOPEMI, covering migration questions in its twenty-eight member states.

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Labor migration has steadily increased over the past decades. Yet, not all migration is international and some of the biggest challenges come from domestic migrant workers moving from the countryside to cities. Our Globalist Factsheet explores how migration affects not only the global economy but also issues ranging from social cohesion to security policy. How large is the global migrant population? As of 2004, roughly one in every 35 people is an international migrant. If they all lived in the same place, it would be the world's fifth-largest country. (International Organization for Migration) Keywords: globalization, migration, migrants, trade-union, labour, labour migration, policy, human rights, European Union, ethnic minority, discrimination, security, illegal, employment, convention, migratory policy, dialogue, responsibility. An on-line database on irregular migration in the European Union provides detailed estimates indicating that migrants in irregular situations number between 2.8 and 6 million, giving a range of 11 % to 23 % of total stocks. Migrants in irregular situations are even more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Despite the political rhetoric about illegal migration, some governments appear to tolerate irregular migration while they officially reinforce controls against "illegal" migrant workers. Pankaj Ghemawat is the author of Global 3.0: Global Prosperity and How to Achieve It, and he takes the stage to ask an important question: Just how global are we really? It's not a new question, of course. "Clearly, apocalyptically minded authors have overstated the case for globalization, says Ghemawat. The thing is: many of us seem to agree that the world is flat. "Even though I'm an economist, I find this a pretty large error," says Ghemawat drily.