

# **Theoretical Study of Social Hybridity**

## **Possibilities for Social Change Theory in the Age of Globalisation**

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**Abstract** The purpose of this paper is to show the new directions for reconstruction of the concept of society made possible by another concept – that of hybridity. First we shall argue that in the era of globalisation, the conventional view perceiving society as a self-fulfilling entity is no longer valid. Next, we will critically review the spatial and temporal frameworks, which have served as the basis for the concept of society so far, basing our analysis on the recent theories of space and time. We shall then focus on the concept of hybridity, showing that it can serve as a pivot providing us with the clue for reconstruction of society making the latter valid again. Although ‘hybridity’ is a term predominantly used in cultural research, here we shall try to look at it from a sociological perspective. We shall demonstrate that ‘social hybridity’ presents a new way to see society as a complex entity made of various interactions both within and across borders. Lastly, in order to show how this theory can be applied in empirical research, we shall introduce the concept of ‘zones of interactivity’. We will show that the ‘social hybridity’ approach built around a core of the ‘zone’ concept makes it possible to resurrect ‘society’ helping us to see the present social change from a completely new perspective.

**Summary** 1 Globalisation and Difficulty of Conceptualisation of ‘Society’. – 2 Rethinking Time and Space. – 3 Social Hybridity. – 4 Zone-Based Theory of Social Change.

**Keywords** Globalisation. Social change. Society. Time. Space. Social hybridity. Zone.

### **1 Globalisation and Difficulty of Conceptualisation of ‘Society’**

Today, it is difficult to advance any theory of social change without mentioning the concept of globalisation. Here is why.



Steger and James (Steger, James 2015), in their work exploring the history of the concept of globalisation, show that, actually, the word globalisation first appeared as early as the 1930s. But it is only after the 1990s that its use saw a truly dramatic expansion. As Steger and James note, the concept “erupted in the 1990s with explosive energy in both public

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and academic discourses that sought to make sense of momentous social change”(Steger, James 2015, 3). It has often been mentioned that, partly due to the rapid fashion, in which the use of the concept spread, there is no sufficiently entrenched common understanding of what it actually stands for. A book by Held et al., published at the comparatively early stage of 1999 (Held et al. 1999), classified the discourse involving globalisation into three most prominent ideal types of theories. The most important point made is the confrontation between the hyperglobalists, who regard globalisation as a new era, in which people all over the world are yielding to the rules of the market on one hand, and the skeptics, who assert that globalisation is a mere ideological myth, exaggerating the trend that has been in progress from the nineteenth century, on the other. This confrontation shows that the question of whether globalisation itself is real has been one of the main points at issue in the theory of globalisation.

But, be it as it may, a little over twenty years have already passed since the time when the concept of globalisation first came into fashion, although the way people have construed globalisation has not remained unchanged during this period. As of 2017, a compact book with a generalised overview of globalisation by Steger has been revised three times since its initial publication in 2003, and there the question of whether the phenomenon of globalisation does, in fact, exist or not is no longer an issue. The theories advanced in the book are built on the assumption that globalisation is a fact – and, at the same time, an ideology. Steger focuses on the ideological dimension of globalisation and divides globalism into three ideal types (Steger 2017, 109-27). The first is ‘market globalism’, which pursues the principle of the free market, the second is ‘justice globalism’, which demands global solidarity and distributive justice, and the third is ‘religious globalism’, which strives to mobilise people across the globe to protect religious values. Rizvi and Lingard (2010, 22-43) look into the relationship between globalisation and education policies. They present three viewpoints helpful for understanding globalisation in a way similar to that of Steger, namely, of globalisation as an empirical fact, as an ideology, and as a change of social imagination including people’s identities and aspirations.

What we can gather from this recent research is that the word ‘globalisation’, having passed through a stage where it was used to represent the novelty of the reality experienced by people during recent times, is gradually and increasingly being registered within the humanities and social sciences as a concept useful for analysis of present-day social change.

The more globalisation establishes itself as one of the fundamental concepts within the humanities and social sciences, the more the already established fundamental concepts of the two spheres are required to undergo certain changes. The concept of social change is one of them. One can go even further, and say that the concept of social change is among

a number of concepts to have been impacted to an especially profound degree as a result of the rise of the concept of globalisation. Particularly at issue here is not only the concept of change, but also – and even more so – that of society, which so far has been the unit delimiting the range of that change. The reason for this is that the concept of globalisation today is dealing a series of devastating blows to the concept of society, which has up to now been the cornerstone for the theory of social change. “Globalisation has had a critical impact on the theory of social change because it leaves us with no choice but to reexamine ‘society’, that is, the very ground upon which the phenomenon of change is supposed to occur”. (Koto 2011, 78).

The difficulties experienced by the concept of society, due to globalisation, have been pointed out by many. One brief, but very insightful analysis, particularly worthy of mention, is that of Koto (Koto 2011, 84-100). As a sociologist, Koto argues that the difficulty, faced by the concept of society in the present age, springs from three habits of thought, namely: the standard of self-fulfillment, comparativism and the theory of endogenous development. The standard that has been used until recently to define the concept of society was the idea of self-fulfillment or self-sufficiency, which presumes that an entity, worthy of being called a ‘society’, needs to create all of the functions for its survival by itself, and not being dependent on other societies for supply of such functions. As long as it is defined based on this standard of self-fulfillment, a society is conceptualised as a unique individual entity, much like a biological species. What is used to confirm and finalise the individuality of each society is comparison. In it, we first establish certain variables common to all societies and then, by looking at the values of each variable in each society and their combinations, arrive at the distinctive features of each one. Just as a society is viewed as a set of inner variables, social change is perceived as originating from inner factors. Now, if endogenous development is chosen as a standard, exogenous development is perceived as an inferior type of social change. It should be noted that no such completely self-fulfilling society exists in reality. Nevertheless, a large body of research across the humanities and social sciences has been based on none other than this concept of society. And one upshot of the spread of the concept of globalisation is that the limits of conceptualising societies in this way have been amply demonstrated to us.

If we are to redevelop the theory of social change in this age of globalisation, we cannot do it without coming up with a new theory that would re-establish the concept of society. How are we to address this task? What new horizons will we find, regarding the issue of social change? The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate one way of answering these questions.

## 2 Rethinking Time and Space

Let us start by considering some recent discussions regarding perceptions of space and time. The difficulty faced by the concept of society, according to Koto, is closely associated with, firstly, the spatial perception of the concept which presupposes that a society is self-fulfilling and, secondly, its temporal aspect assuming that it develops endogenously. The recent attempts to revise these ideas regarding space and time shall surely prove useful for creating a new concept of society, fit for the age of globalisation.

Some clues for that purpose can be found in the works of the geographer Massey (2005) and the historian Hunt (2015). Both base their discussions on the globalisation theory that is most prominent today – one that holds globalisation to be an inescapable process, driven by economical, scientific, and technological powers – and has been present in a wide range of discourses, popular, political, and journalistic alike. This view of globalisation has been subjected to much critique to the purport that this discourse paints globalisation as if it were an inescapable law of nature, while in truth it is nothing more than an ideology masking a man-made attempt to mold the world in a certain way. Moreover, this ideologically promoted globalisation results in high inequality and has caused many problems, including the poverty and discontent of many.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, this kind of globalisation theory has been circulating as if it were the only option available, a tale that is supposed to tell it all. This trend has also had a large impact on geography and historical scholarship, causing all kinds of problems to the way these fields operate. And is why Massey and Hunt have been both trying to find a new footing for their respective disciplines, geography and history, in the age of globalisation. Their aim is to revise the perception of geographical space and historical time, re-molding them in ways befitting the present era.

Firstly, what Massey tries to unravel, regarding the concept of space, is the problem posed by our conventional habit of thought that defines space as absence of time. The concept of time is often used to stand for motions and flows, for changes in the ways things are produced, for all the dynamism intrinsically embedded in our world. The concept of space, on the other hand, has often been criticised for being a static category, one that snatches away all motion from the world and freezes it. This sort of conceptualisation of space has been particularly prominent in the understanding of modernity. When theorising modernity, people have stripped all movement from the world, based on this understanding of space as a demarcated and static entity, imagining societies and cultures as immovable and united wholes isolated from everything else. And these spaces,

1 Appadurai 2006 is an attempt to give an understanding of this point from a broad perspective.

or societies/cultures, were all interpreted as different stages of a unitary time - a time that is called 'evolution' or 'civilisation'. This development is known as the 'conquest of time by space', that is, the 'spatialisation of time'. What Massey argues is that an opposite conquest has also simultaneously occurred - the conquest of space by time. When spatial representations are all arranged in their respective places in just one available narrative, the diversity inherent in space is ignored and waved away as a mere diversity of stages within a singular time series.

The rise of the globalisation theory catalysed a tremendous interest in space. Instead of the conventional imaginary of bounded and static spaces, we have increasingly begun to share a new perception of a global space without boundaries, with free fluidity and interconnection inside it. But, according to Massey, the image of space created by globalisation is surprisingly not all that far removed from its counterpart in theories of modernity. Globalisation draws a picture of a unitary global space, which is, in fact, comprised of the same divided spaces. Furthermore, these spaces, incorporated into a solitary whole, are dealt with in the same way - their diversity is perceived as a diversity of stages along the inescapable advent of time, whose name is globalisation. The flows and interconnections that are born between spaces are imagined as transboundary flows and interconnections that traverse all static spaces in the same way. And, just as it was before, space here is still not envisaged as hosting diversity either. Globalisation theory sees space as heterogeneous, filled with coexisting others who, although contemporaries, differ from each other in terms of their place on the unitary timeline. It also fails to recognise the diversities and antagonisms, the future indeterminism and political possibilities that are the essential properties of space. According to Massey, the currently hegemonic globalisation theory is not at all spatial, in the sense that it ignores the contemporaneity of the mutually different narratives that comprise spaces - in fact, it is quite the contrary. "My argument is that this narrative of globalisation is not spatialised" (Massey 2005, 88). What Massey proposes to do is to prop up our social theories and political thinking with the spatial dimension - thus recognising the heterogeneity of the contemporaries - and to see the social as the relationships of co-construction that happen through negotiation between them.

Hunt, on the other hand, briefly looking back on the development of historical science over the years, attempts to find a metanarrative that would be more appropriate in the present age. Historical science underwent a substantial change of format between the latter half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, and that change was linked to a switch towards national narratives. Then, after the Second World War, history adopted metanarratives, such as Marxism, modernisation theory, *École des Annales*, and identity politics, all attempting to give overarching interpretations to macro-historical developments. But from

the 1960s, with the rise of a number of cultural theories – postcolonialism, cultural studies, structuralism, post-structuralism, postmodernism and the linguistic and cultural turns among them – a lot of historical work has been written with a focus on the cultural aspect. Historians who focused on the autonomy of culture demolished the former historical metanarrative trend that was based on such assumptions as that culture should be explained from the point of view of society or national-based teleological narratives. But the cultural-historical theory did not produce any metanarratives, which made it difficult for historical science to create overarching interpretations of macro-historical developments. It is in this context that the globalisation theory came to be influential among historians. By asserting anew the teleological metanarrative of inescapable economy-driven globalisation – the very narrative that the cultural theory was supposed to have destroyed – the globalisation theory is steering historical science towards research of macro-historical developments again.

Hunt gives some credit to the interest in macro-history in evidence in the present field of global history. At the same time, she is calling for great caution regarding the the global historiography's tendency of adopting a new teleological metanarrative of an inescapable, economy-driven globalisation. What Hunt, who expertly knows both the achievements and the limitations of cultural theory, is after is a non-teleological metanarrative that would induce interest in general historical development. To achieve that, Hunt attempts to reconsider self and society, which are the basic concepts of historiography, and what she arrives at is a possibility for metanarratives that are open to interdependence with other societies. One example she gives is that of a global history research created from a bottom-up perspective, focusing on specific products and networks of ethnic groups. A transboundary circulation of things and people may create a space of intermediary interactions or invent devices to support them. The development of this kind of interactions between societies exists in a reciprocal relationship with changes in people's tastes or choices. Interpreting changes in people and societies with non-teleological narratives that are open to interactions with other societies is, according to Hunt, the direction historians must take.

Let us now look these two discussions and try to see what suggestions for a new concept of society we can derive from them. Massey's attempt at a revision of the concept of space is in stark opposition to an understanding of space as a self-fulfilling entity – an understanding that has always been plaguing the concept of society. Massey's concept of space as heterogeneous, filled with coexisting others, who are contemporaries to each other, suggests that society should also be similarly imagined as a space of heterogeneity. In the same way, Hunt's revision of the historical science's metanarratives is in stark opposition to the narrative of endogenous development that has always been plaguing the concept of society.

Hunt's concept of time, as a non-teleological narrative, based on interactions with other societies, suggests that society should also be similarly imagined through interaction with other societies.<sup>2</sup>

Society, as a heterogeneous space, open to interactions with other societies, is the clue we get from the discussions of Massey and Hunt that could help us to rethink our concept of society.

### **3 Social Hybridity**

One attempt to revise the concept of society in a direction closely resembling the one that can be found in the work of Massey and Hunt has been made by the above-mentioned Koto (2006, 2011). The starting point of his discussion is not so much globalisation but, rather, the doubts he entertained regarding how to position the experience of modern Japan within the modernisation theory framework. This section mainly deals with the analysis of the revision of the concept of society by Koto by focusing on its relationship with the modernisation theory, but in Utsumi (2017), the starting point was the comparison with the anthropological hybridity theory. The two are complementary.

There are many variations of social changes, and the two probably most prominent methods of looking at them are the endogenous development theory and the exogenous development theory. The endogenous development theory explains social change by focusing on endogenous factors, while exogenous development theory searches for exogenous ones. The two theories do not perceive the two forms of social change as equal – they are ranked in terms of their value. Purely endogenous development is seen as the normal form of social change, while exogenous development, wherein the purity of a society is lost due to exogenous factors, is perceived as a more deviant form, inferior to endogenous change. This view that puts greater value on endogenous development has been cherished by sociologists for quite a long time.

Modernisation theory is a typical example of a theory stressing endogenous development. The theory became fashionable after the Second World War with its Cartesian plane of the North, South, East and West – the very basis for understanding societies in the twentieth century. This Cartesian plane had socialism and capitalism on the East-West horizontal axis, and the developed and the developing countries going North-South on the vertical axis: the idea was that any society can be placed somewhere on this coordinate system. The theory was highly influential in all kinds of social

<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, it is very interesting that Massey in her revision of space focuses on multidimensional time, while Hunt in her revision of time focuses on multidimensional space.

endeavours, from sciences and media to international politics. Built on the basis of this coordinate system, modernisation theory drew a model of human development/history towards modernity – the capitalist state – as the final destination, and theorised the process that takes us there. This theory, which was modelled on the process of modernisation in the West, paid great attention to the struggles between endogenous traditions of societies, on the one hand, and modernity, on the other. Modernisation theory flourished in Western countries and, especially, the US as a way of understanding the evolution of developing countries after decolonisation.

From this point of view, the modernisation of Japan is a typical case of exogenous development. And the reason is that modernisation in Japan, which has been going on since the Meiji period (1868-1912), was driven by contacts with modernity in Western Europe, that is, an external factor. This is why the modernisation of Japan has been perceived as a form deviating from endogenous modernisation (the pure type), and it has often been pointed out that the process here was delayed and distorted, due to the persistence of indigenous traditions.

This sort of view prevailed for a long time, but started to change – and drastically so – after the 1970s. First of all, the East-West axis began to lose its credibility. This was partly due to such forerunners as Bell, with his *The End of Ideology* (1960), and Parsons (1951), with the systems' convergence theory, but what really determined the end of this world view is postmodernism. Since the 1970s, centring on Western Europe, postmodernism took the world by storm as a word expressing the tide of social change. Postmodern theory is, as made clear by its very name, a critique of the modernisation theory. While modernisation theory regarded modernity as the final destination, postmodernism sees this same period as the time when modernity undergoes certain changes, or disappears, or as an era after modernity that leaves modernity behind. According to the postmodern theory, one of the main characteristics of the era that comes after modernity is pastiche, a conglomeration of many heterogeneous elements. With the rise of the postmodernism we have seen the former opposition between East and West in many spheres being substituted with the opposition of modern and postmodern.

As the analytic viability of the East/West axis deteriorated, the South/North classification began to rise in status. The dependency theory by Frank (1967) and the world system theory by Wallerstein (1974) are worthy of special mention, as both advanced perspectives that view the South and the North not separately, but as elements of the same global (economic) system. These theories also chose modernisation theory as the target of their criticism. The modernisation theory, which is a set of notions explaining endogenous development, asserted that the reason why developing countries cannot arrive at their final destination, modernity, is because of certain inner factors. The dependency theory and the world



system theory, on the other hand, postulated that the reason is actually an external variable - the permanent 'satellisation' or exploitation of the peripheral South by the central North. But, although the relationship between the North and the South has been reanalysed in a more sophisticated way, reality soon proved it wrong. The countries of the South, which used to be perceived as peripheral, began to pose an ever greater threat to the North, the centre, by the end of the twentieth century. The rise of the newly industrialising economies (or the newly industrialising countries) - the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), etc - all exemplify this new trend. And, as the South/North division started to lose its analytic power, what appeared to take its place was the concept of globalisation. The point of view presented by the globalisation theory focuses on external factors and global systems. In that sense, it is a successor to both the dependency theory and the world system theory, but it also differs from the two as it does not hold the distinction between the South and the North as - speaking in mathematical terms - a fixed point. Since the 1990s, we have seen the globalisation theory taking the world by storm, just as the postmodern theory did in its day - and replacing it.

Thus, with both coordinate axes - North/South and East/West - no longer viable, modernisation theory itself gradually lost its validity. And, following its invalidation, the positioning of the experience of Japan in the modern era has also started to change. Japanese modernisation, which was perceived negatively within the framework of modernisation theory, as heavily influenced by the vestiges of the premodern era, was positively evaluated within the postmodern theory, as precursory to the postmodern era; in the context of North-South intergradation, meanwhile, it was lauded as the forerunner of economic development.

The way Koto sees Japan's experience partly overlaps with these views and partly diverges from them. Firstly, he focuses on the assertions of postmodern theory to the effect that modernity is being transformed. He also admits that, in terms of the phenomena we are speaking about, there are aspects of postmodernism and the experience of Japan in the modern era that closely resemble each other. However, the mechanisms of the two are completely different. The concept of postmodernism was created on the basis of the experience of the West to express the process of autochthonous change of modernity on the temporal axis. What we can see in Japan's experience, on the other hand, is the process of change undergone by modernity, which had been produced in the West in the course of its migration across the non-Western space.

Contrary to the assumptions of the modernisation theory, the export of modernity to non-Western spaces is not a subordinate phenomenon. One of the most distinguishing features of Western modernity has been its high capacity to export itself to other cultures. The reason why modernity man-

aged to spread to every nook and corner of the world is because it could effectively function even beyond its native Western context, due to the fact that it could integrate itself into any kind of different conditions. If this capacity for self-dissemination is one of the essential qualities of modernity, the transformations that happen in the course of it are an essential trait as well. The dissemination of modernity to the non-Western world triggers reciprocal actions between it and native traditions. If we call the process of the intermixing of modernity and native traditions 'hybridisation', it can easily produce phenomena that are very similar to what is perceived as the distinctive feature of the postmodern era, that is, phenomena, such as the 和魂洋才 (*wakon yosai*, 'Japanese spirit and Western learning'), in evidence in modern-day Japan. In this way, modernity is not something constructed out of Western qualities only, and neither is it in any way complete. Modernity can evolve in two ways: through temporal and through spatial movement. As opposed to the former, which is called 'postmodernity', Koto proposes to call the latter 'hybrid modernity'. He asserts that the experience of Japan in the modern era is a typical example of hybrid modernity - a state brought about by the spatial movement of modernity.

Koto adds two more points to elucidate the process of hybridisation. One is that when modernity is ex/imported to another place, it is never ex/imported as is. Such movement of modernity is generated through the interaction between the place of origin and the place of destination. As a term to refer to the unit of modernity movement, Koto uses the word 'module' based on a concept formulated by Anderson (2006), defining it as a resource processing program, standardized as a basic unit of social institution. He sees module as a program that is capable of functioning in a great variety of social terrains (relatively independently from the context of its homeland) and of composing - at these social terrains - various social institutions (Koto 2011, 37). The modularisation of modernity is determined through the interaction between the place of origin, which standardises the original system, so that it becomes easier to transfer elsewhere, and the place of destination, which selects it in a form that makes it easier to adopt.

The second aspect of hybridisation is that, when modernity is ex/imported to another place, it never takes root as is, but only when it gets entwined with the various elements existing at its place of destination. During this process, modernity acquires a new meaning through binding with native traditions. In the same way, native traditions also undergo a transformation, as they bind with the modularised modernity. And, with both modernity and the native traditions getting restructured in an emergent way in the course of their interaction, modernity becomes capable of smoothly operating in a new context. This very process of the emergent restructuring of modernity and tradition is what Koto calls "hybridisation".

Koto links his theory of hybrid modernity to the globalisation theory, which has been gaining power since the 1990s. According to his view,

modernity is being exported all over the world and globalisation is the term coined to refer to this very process – only characterised by highly increased speed and scale. Globalisation is, thus, the process whereby hybrid modernity is promoted on a world-wide scale.

Now, if we are to analyse this process of globalisation, the current concept of society, established on the basis of self-fulfillment, is an unsuitable one, as I mentioned earlier. This is why Koto tries to revise the concept based on his theory of hybrid modernity. He does it from the viewpoint of social hybridity (heterogeneity). What Koto suggests by this concept is the diversity and unity of structure, which can be seen on two social levels. One is the multidimensionality and unity of individual societies, which are open to interaction with other societies. Societies are not self-fulfilling, they are open to multidimensional interactions with other societies, and hybridisation occurs through such interactions. A society is a result of the unification of diverse modernity and traditions, which are restructured in an emergent way by hybridisation. The second level is the multidimensionality and unity of society, transgressing the borders of individual societies. What creates such a society is multidimensional interactions, which stretch far, ranging over many societies. Based on these interactions that traverse two or more societies, we see the emergence of an entity that is more overarching, a society going across individual ones. If hybridisation is a temporal metaphor describing the contact and emergence of modernity and native traditions, we can say that hybridity is a spatial metaphor describing the multidimensionality and unity of society that makes hybridisation possible.

With his idea of social hybridity, Koto arrives at a new image of society, a society open to interactions with other societies, on the one hand, and constructed through such interactions that go across all societies, on the other. He suggests that to understand globalisation, we need to pay attention to these interactions, crucial in the creation of societies. Koto calls his theoretical stance 'macro-internationalism'.

His suggestions regarding the revision of the concept of society overlap with those of Massey and Hunt, as examined in the preceding section. The viewpoint presented by the concept of social hybridity deals with the problems posed by the ideas of self-fulfillment of societies and superiority of endogenous development. Simultaneously, it paves the way towards a recognition of transborder movements of people, things, information, capital, etc., as well as towards a recognition of hybridisation that occurs concurrently with this movement – recognition through connection between societies. Comparativism is still a viable method for the analysis of social hybridity, interactions, hybridisation, etc., but with this different concept of society, the resulting research is less likely to perceive a society as an endogenously developing self-fulfilling unit.

The viewpoint of social hybridity proposed by Koto gives us one possible direction for salvaging the theoretical viability of the concept of society.

## 4 Zone-Based Theory of Social Change

Based on the theoretical revision of the concept of society by Koto, we can conceptualise social change in the following way. Social change is a change of hybridisation, hybridity of society, and the forms of interactivity, predominantly triggered by the multidimensional interactions configuring society.

We can list several empirical studies that adduce concrete examples of this theoretical image,<sup>3</sup> and one of the most interesting is the special zone theory by the anthropologist Ong (2006).<sup>4</sup> Her focus is on neo-liberalism in Asian nations. Ong does not believe neo-liberalism to be a homogeneous political and economic environment, formed by global capitalism. She sees neo-liberalism as a logic that moves across all kinds of political spaces interacting with various governmental and economic environments of different localities. As the theory of neo-liberalism gets linked to all kinds of native political and economic spaces, we see an emergence of a diverse political and economic environment, which is by no means unitary. One mechanism for this kind of hybridisation, according to Ong, is the institution of 'zones'.

In the process of connecting with neo-liberal logic, countries in East and Southeast Asia established discontinuous spaces (zones) within their nation-states, states that can be authoritarian or socialistic, allowing, as an exception, neo-liberalism to inhabit these spaces – she calls it “neoliberalism as exception” (Ong 2006, 3). These zones can be labour zones, travel zones, zones of natural resources, production zones, zones of science and technology, free trade zones, investment zones, etc. They are differentiated from other zones by mechanisms of taxation, rights of workers, surveillance, citizenship, social welfare, and preferential treatment. Thereby, each special zone is placed within cross-border multidimensional interactions, attracting investments and business enterprises from overseas, inducing inflows of technologies and technical knowledge. By furnishing spaces on the state's own territory, adapted to welcome global capital, or reinforcing legal procedures and practices to support economic activities there, or playing the part of an intermediary or provider of infrastructure and cheap labour force for global capital, the state gains new justification for its existence. Ong calls this kind of flexible use of sovereignty “graduated sovereignty” (2006, 75).

3 As an example of such empirical research, Koto (2012) adduces a work by Weber entitled *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilisations*.

4 Koto got inspiration for his theory of hybrid modernity from Weber's phrase “universal significance and validity” (Koto 2011, 24-5). When Ong is looking for an approach to global phenomena, she brings up the same phrase by Weber (Collier, Ong 2005, 10-1). Ong et al. propose understanding Weber's term “universal” on two levels, and advance their approach to global phenomena based on the meaning of the word referring to an ability to get connected to all kinds of contexts. It is the same approach as that of Koto.

The special zones created in this way often become closely intertwined with the hierarchy related to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, etc., and are often accompanied by the reduction or suspension of the institution of citizenship. Moreover, they create risk-ignoring attitudes, new kinds of rights and life chances, and a sense of values that puts greater emphasis on industriousness, teamwork, and relationships in a way that makes it look as if it has always been a part of the state's traditions. And what makes the countries of East and Southeast Asia as they are today is these sorts of elements generated through hybridisation – united in a single entity. Furthermore, interactions happening via these special zones and extending across countries are creating imagined communities that go beyond the boundaries set by political confrontations or tensions.

Ong's assertions regarding special zones overlap to a considerable extent with the image of social hybridity and social change based on it, which have been proposed by Koto. Ong's empirical research is a useful example if we want to enliven the bones of Koto's theoretical research. We can actually go even further than that. If we agree to perceive her work as something larger than a mere description of an empirical case, we can elaborate on Ong's theory of special zones to make our image of social hybridity more suitable for practical use. Here is what I mean by this.

A special zone is in fact – just as its name suggests – literally a special zone. The concept of the special zone is very much present in today's Japan. But it is not limited to the phenomena of 'neo-liberalism as exception' in Asian nations and can be applied to other phenomena as well. For example, in the past, there have been places, such as enclaves for foreign residents, which, although they were not called 'special zones', still were very similar. In addition to such relatively clearly defined zones, cities, where interaction with other societies is relatively stronger than in rural areas, can be said to be qualitatively closer to special zones than villages. Conversely, some peripheral regions of Japan happen to be a part of cross-border interaction to a greater degree than some urban areas. This assertion holds true in locales other than Japan as well. For example, in the Central African Republic, the capital city of Bangui, with its numerous international organisations, bilateral and multilateral relations with other countries, NGOs, etc., is constantly interacting with the outer world and, thus, has more special-zone properties than other areas of the same country. Certain other areas in the Central African Republic may be engaged in a different kind of transborder interactions from those of Bangui, the capital.<sup>5</sup> Societies thus contain all kinds of different zones, but still function as a coherent whole. Moreover, transborder interactions connecting

<sup>5</sup> Arrangements of military forces in the Central African Republic since the war that has been going in the country since 2012 or various cross border diamond trade supply chains are good examples (Amnesty International 2015).

spaces with properties of special zones create regional societies that go beyond individual states-societies, such as Japan or the Central African Republic. Thus, in addition to literal 'special zones', we can perceive all kinds of spaces with all kinds of standards or scales as spaces that belong to both societies with borders and to cross-boundary societies.

Let us recap the arguments we have made so far. The concept of zones proves useful when we want to connect such theoretical images as social hybridity, and social change that occurs based on it, with empirical research. The most important point provided by the zone theory is that it makes us see the phenomena that belong to both societies with borders and to cross-boundary ones. These are spaces that are open to interactions on this side of the border and, at the same time, to cross-boundary interactions with other societies. Through the multidimensional interactions happening within the boundaries as well as across them, we have the movement of people, things, information, capital, etc., causing hybridisation. The various elements, newly created through hybridisation, get incorporated inside societies with borders and cross-boundary societies; they change the shape of societies' hybridity, the shape of interactions between societies, and the manner of hybridisation.

Koto focuses on the concept of module, singling it out to refer to the medium for interaction between societies, and when one focuses on modules only, discussion inevitably inclines towards the hybridity of culture. On the other hand, if we see zones as a medium serving as the intermediary for interactions between societies, it becomes easier to analyse the hybridity of culture generated through modules in connection with the hybridity of society and interactions between societies. The concept of zones thus makes it possible to approach the hybridity of both culture and society.

Now, if we are to approach the present era's social change that is called globalisation, on the basis of this concept of zones, what kind of subjects will we be faced with? Interaction between societies through zones is not a new phenomenon. Long before the concept of globalisation came into fashion, zonal interaction was one of the most important drivers of social change. Accordingly, if we wish to develop a globalisation theory based on this concept of zones, the most essential task will be to compare the forms of social change before and after the globalisation concept came into fashion. In other words, what we need to ascertain is what kinds of changes happened after the popularisation of the concept of globalisation: changes to the way zones exist, to how interactions between societies through zones – both cross-boundary interactions and interactions that do not cross the borders of the state, etc. – happen; changes to the shape of hybridisation through interactions between societies, to the process of incorporation into societies of various elements emerging as a result of hybridisation, and to the state of hybridity of societies including its zones. The first steps towards creating a new globalisation theory, based on the

concept of zones, shall entail an empirical analysis of such questions, and the establishment of a conceptual foundation.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, globalisation is not the only subject-matter for modern social change theory; in all likelihood, it is not even a subject of primary importance. However, it does seem that the impact of globalisation on social change theory is too significant to be neglected, insofar as it gives us an opportunity to review all kinds of issues, such as the possibilities or scope of social change theory – questions, which have hitherto often been discussed in different ways – from a completely new angle.

At the very least, the viewpoint that the concept of zones provides shall serve as one of the main pillars for the creation of a new theory of social change, other than the theory of globalisation that is in power in the world today.

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6 The researcher's interest shall determine what subject matter to look into on the basis of the zone concept. The Author is currently writing a paper with empirical research based on the concept that hopefully will serve as one example of what this perspective can achieve.

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