CALL FOR PAPERS: ‘OPERATIONS OF THE GLOBAL: EXPLORATIONS OF CONNECTIVITY’


How to Think Global Operations and Global Connectivity?
Globality is a product both of global imaginaries and global operations. However, the operative dimension of the global has been neglected in recent debates. Analyses of representations of the global, global structures and norms have only marginally touched upon the operative logics which produce and govern the global. But what is the relationship between such global operations and the representations of the global? What kinds of operations ensure global connectivity? These questions are crucial for understanding processes of globalization as recent debates in social theory suggest. Instead of defining globality as an all-encompassing logic, these debates have shifted towards conceptualizing the global as various modes of articulating and controlling flows, networks and fragmented spaces.

Rethinking the Network: Different Modes of Connectivity
The aim of this special issue is to shed light on dis/similar operations and forms of connectivity, such as imitation, contagion, migration and modes of controlling connectivity by infrastructures and logistics. Central questions to be discussed include: How do various global operations differ in density, speed and diffusion? How should one describe and theorize the materiality of these connective links? Are there tipping points that reconfigure, put into question or heighten the intensity of globality? We particularly welcome papers that explore operations of the global along one or more of the following lines:

Contagion and Epidemiology: Popular discourses are often quicker in formulating new social logics than established social or political theories. For example, contagion and epidemics are classic notions that describe global logics, where globality is seen as an effect of dynamics of imitation, of processes of imitation which have become uncontrollable. Drawing on physiology and epidemiology, social theorists and cultural critics have problematized such ungovernable processes of contagion. These discussions commenced in the late nineteenth century, simultaneously with the great media revolution of telegraphy, and they resurface in different versions even today. The special issue invites papers that explore ideas of global connectivity, which are, implicitly or explicitly, thematized in discourses on social and cultural contagion (e.g. fashions, finance and contagious norms).

Infrastructure and Logistics: Globality depends on material and organizational strata that make trans-spatial operations possible. Global operations do not simply flow by themselves, but rely on ‘socio-logistics’: they have to be sorted, classified, re-assembled and stored (for example, ports, cities and camps function as territorial nodal points in a global infrastructure). Logistics
organize and produce a global space. Modes of control such as tracking and targeting function as connectors and inhibitors – they are not simply used for moving objects in commodity chains but also for controlling and governing flows of people (e.g. tourists and migrants). Civic, financial or digital infrastructures emerge as new sites of resistance that aim at the critical connections and their sorting function. The special issue invites papers that address these ruptures by asking how they might help us identifying emerging forms of global (dis-)connectivity.

Iteration and Translation: The global is produced in processes of reiteration and translation. Objects, people and texts are made to circulate and transpose interpretative frames. Instead of understanding the global as a mere diffusion of standardized norms and meanings, it becomes important to show how the latter are altered by moving things, people and symbols. Each movement can be seen as a repetition, reproducing and rearticulating the context of its use. For example, the production of global law is tied to myriads of iterations and to specific arenas of legal contestation. The universal validity of legal norms, far from being a mere given, is produced in particularized chains of operations. Similarly, cultural and religious codes travel with iconic images and objects. They become part of interactions and group formations that charge those traveling objects with new intensities and reach. The special issue invites papers that examine these and similar processes.

Theorizing Global Operations: Finally, the special issue is interested in bringing together different theories for thinking the production of global connectivity. Possible perspectives may include approaches that disassemble the social into autopoietic operations and obligatory passage points (Niklas Luhmann, Bruno Latour). Some strands of poststructuralist approaches offer valuable tools for thinking about the material aspects of these connections. Emphasizing global operations and their connectivity may even point to an ‘operative turn’ of the analytics of social ‘dispositifs’ (Michel Foucault), ‘assemblages’ (Gilles Deleuze) and ‘technologies of affect’ (Brian Massumi). The special issue invites papers that discuss the analytical potentials of these and other theories for understanding operations of globalization.

Submission guidelines
Deadline for submissions is September 1st 2011. Papers must be in English. See www.distinktion.dk for details about style and form. Please send papers to distinktion@ps.au.dk. Publication is based on a double-blind peer-review process. The editors are happy to receive inquiries by email.

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