

# Globalisation and Transnational Sexualities

**Julienne Corboz**

**Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS)**



This document is licensed under a Creative Commons License

## Introduction

The literature in the field of critical sexuality studies published between the years 2000 and 2006 reveals an increasing preoccupation with the theme of globalisation. Although major topics of interest vary according to the authors in question and their disciplinary backgrounds, definitions of contemporary globalisation invariably refer to the rapidly increasing movement of people (through migration, tourism and trafficking), capital, information, and ideologies around the world. Sexuality can no longer be analysed or understood without taking into account the effects of these global flows. They are deeply implicated in any analysis of HIV/AIDS (Altman 2001; Binnie 2004; Schoepf 2001), the social, cultural, economic and political regulation of sexuality (Altman 2001; Altman 2004; Kim-Puri 2005), prostitution and sex trafficking (Long 2004; Parker et al. 2004; Piper 2005), space, place and queer mobility (Binnie 2004; Collins 2005; Puar 2001; Puar 2002), and citizenship and sexual rights discourses (Bell and Binnie 2000; Bell and Binnie 2004; Binnie 2004; Corrêa and Parker 2004; Parker et al. 2004; Plummer 2003; Stychin 2001). These broader themes, however, are associated with various complex issues that cannot be understood through the lens of globalisation alone and must be explored in their own right and reviewed separately. In this review, we will focus on the most popular theme encountered in the critical sexuality literature: the role that globalisation has played in the construction of sexual identities.

The literature we reviewed was predominantly concerned with determining how to explore the creation of new sexual subjectivities without recreating simplistic binaries such as global/local, imported/indigenous, modern/tradition, and sameness/difference.

In relation to empirical subject matter, it is interesting to note that the literature almost exclusively analysed queer or non-heterosexual subjects. There were only two exceptions to this, and both these works focused on heterosexual (particularly women's) sexual practices and identities in non-Western contexts. The rest of the literature explored non-heterosexual people and can be broadly separated into two empirical categories: the construction of non-Western sexual identities given the spread of 'global gay' culture and identity, and the sexual identities of non-Western diaspora living in Western contexts.

### **Homogenisation, Hybridisation and Transnational Identities**

The literature on the globalisation of sexual identities is largely concerned with examining the extent to which identities, everywhere, are becoming the same or different through global social, cultural and economic flows. A homogenisation approach argues that all cultures and ideas are inevitably becoming 'modern' and 'global' through a process of neo-colonialism or westernisation in which the 'West' elides the 'rest'. In contrast, a hybridisation argument highlights the complex interplay between local and global forces, and the consequent production of heterogeneous identities.

Most of the literature reviewed rejected the notion that sexual identities are being totally homogenised through globalisation. Nevertheless, we found varying degrees to which scholars chose to emphasise global or local forces. For instance, Donham (2002: 423) 'traces the global in the local' in the construction of new, post-apartheid sexual identities in South Africa. Although he points out that gay male identities are far from homogeneously westernised, he does emphasise the West as underwriting the possibility for South African agency in regards to the construction of modern sexual identities. Altman (2001) also emphasises the global; however, he stresses that globalisation does not necessarily lead to local difference, or global sameness, as much as the redistribution of difference. Thus, 'members of particular groups have more in common across national and continental boundaries than they do with others in their own geographically defined societies' (p. 87).

In contrast, Jackson (2004) highlights cultural difference and the importance of the local, and argues that assumptions that the West's economic and political power necessarily leads to cultural and discursive domination of non-Western people are mistaken. Jackson (2000; 2004) traces an historical genealogy of Thai identities and argues that although the presence of contemporary Western discourses associated with sexual identity in Thailand is undeniable, these discourses have been selectively appropriated and absorbed into pre-existing, local understandings of gender and sexuality. In another locally centralised study, Boellstorff (2004) shows that gay men in Indonesia report a bond with non-Indonesian LGBT organisations and communities, but that gay identity cannot be seen simply as a 'globalised version' of the West (p. 194). This is evidenced by the construction of a local gay 'language' (gay Bahasa) that is derived from Indonesian.

While hybridisation arguments appear to be more popular in the literature, a central question arises: how can one explore the globalisation of sexual identities and culture without reproducing various pervasive binaries such as global versus local, modernity versus tradition or, in Puar's (2001: 1061) words, 'imported versus indigenous'? Blackwood (2005) points out that the global/local binary is linked to, and reproduces, a conception of the West as the source of modern, liberated gay and lesbian identities while non-Western countries are seen to remain within the clutches of indigenous tradition and thus backwardness (see also Grewal and Kaplan 2001).

There are a variety of ways in which scholars have tried to transcend these simplistic binaries. Several authors (e.g. Boellstorff and Leap 2004; Peña 2004) draw from the concept of 'transculturation' in order to describe the multiple ways in which culture and identity can be configured as a result of the meeting of global and local forces. According to Peña (2004, citing Ortiz 1995), the term transculturation is particularly useful for studying immigrants and diaspora, and incorporates three distinct processes: acculturation, deculturation, and neoculturation. Acculturation refers to 'the acquisition of the dominant culture', while deculturation refers to 'the loss of the culture of the home country' (Peña 2004: 236). Neoculturation refers to 'the creation of a new culture that maintains elements of the two meeting cultures but is in the end quite different from both' (p. 236). According to Peña, the strength of the concept of transculturation lies in its ability to recognise that the sexual culture and identity of

immigrants is not straightforwardly produced through the adoption of the dominant culture but, rather, that the dominant culture (e.g. the USA) is itself changed and shaped by the presence of immigrants.

A more popular way of deconstructing binaries associated with global and local processes is through the use of the term 'transnational' (Blackwood 2005; Collins 2005; Grewal and Kaplan 2001; Manalansan 2003; Puar 2001). According to Grewal and Kaplan (2001), the value of this term is in its ability to highlight the complexities of both the global and the local (Grewal and Kaplan 2001) or, according to Blackwood (2005: 221, citing Grewal and Kaplan 1994), how '...the "global" and "local" thoroughly infiltrate each other'. Grewal and Kaplan (2001) suggest that the term transnational destabilises assumptions that the global is oppressive and the local resistant against and subversive of the homogenising tendencies of global forces. Rather than frame the global and local through a domination/resistance framework, Grewal and Kaplan (2001: 671) advocate an approach that is sensitive to how 'power structures, asymmetries, and inequalities become the conditions of possibility of new subjects'. They point out that the global and the local are not oppositional and thus mutually exclusive and, further, one may play a significant role in constituting the other.

Nevertheless, Blackwood proposes that the concept of 'transnational queerness' still privileges Western gay and lesbian human rights discourses and activist movements that presuppose a common, unified queer, gay or lesbian identity. Thus, the term transnational cannot truly escape the binaries that scholars wish to avoid. Blackwood (2005: 222-223) thus proposes a focus on 'cultural location'; what then becomes important is to explore how particular subjects in particular localities appropriate and negotiate global, regional and local 'circuits of knowledge' in order to construct their sexual identities.

Boellstorff (2005: 5) also moves away from globalisation binaries, and away from metaphors that 'imply prior unities and originary points of dispersion'. Instead, he uses the metaphor of 'dubbing culture', derived from the practice of dubbing film and television (e.g. dubbing a film from the USA into Bahasa Indonesia).

In dubbing culture, two elements are held together in productive tension without the expectation that they will resolve into one – just as it is known from the outset that the speaker’s lips will never be in synch with the spoken word in a dubbed film (p. 5).

According to Boellstorff (2005: 58), the concept of dubbing culture is useful because it allows one to acknowledge structures of power while simultaneously recognising that ‘domination’ does not necessarily lead to ‘determination’. Nevertheless, Boellstorff points out that although ‘Indonesians dub Western sexual subject positions...they cannot compose any script they please; their bricolage remains shaped by a discourse originating in the West and filtered through a nationalistic lens’ (p. 85).

It certainly appears difficult to establish an analytical or theoretical approach that completely avoids reductionism to the problematic binaries associated with globalisation and transnational sexual identities. Nevertheless, one point that emerges strongly from the literature is that our understandings of the diversity or homogeneity of these identities cannot be divorced from the process of globalisation itself. Boellstorff (2005) and Boellstorff and Leap (2004) make the point that any study of the globalisation of sexual identities should avoid reproducing reductionist binaries such as homogenisation/heterogeneity or sameness/difference by acknowledging that our definitions and understandings of what is the same and what is different are themselves shaped by globalisation.

### **Heterosexual Identities**

Only two articles included in our review focused on heterosexual identities and subjectivities. Both articles examine how traditional gender relations and (heterosexual) sexuality are being transformed through globalisation in two non-Western contexts (Morocco and Vietnam), particularly for women. These studies highlight the resulting contradictions and tensions that have emerged between local sexual values, beliefs and practices, and global flows that have spread images of alternative sexual practices and identities to non-Western contexts.

According to Obermeyer (2000), in Morocco, Islamic doctrines that include positive and permissive discourses on sexuality (within heterosexual marriage) are contradictory to inegalitarian gender discourses that privilege men's sexuality over women's sexuality. These contradictions within traditional Moroccan culture, however, have begun to change as a result of transnational media images of a 'global youth culture' (p: 245), which communicate alternative ways of enacting romantic and sexual relationships. Although these global flows have led to certain demographic changes, such as a rise in women's ages when marrying, the importance of marriage remains strong and thus creates tensions, particularly for young women, between the growing desire for sexual expression and expectations of pre-marital virginity.

Rydstrøm (2006) also describes how lived experiences and meanings of sexuality have changed, particularly for women, since the introduction of the *doi moi* policy in Vietnam. According to Rydstrøm (2006), Confucian ideology dictates that while Vietnamese men are able to practice polygamy, women should maintain their virginity until marriage and should avoid 'immoral' practices such as abortion and adultery. The introduction of the *doi moi* policy, aimed at maintaining socialist values while simultaneously giving Vietnam access to the global world, has led to a variety of tensions between local expressions of sexuality and what some Vietnamese have come to know as 'social evils'. According to State sponsored ideologies, these 'social evils', which include premarital sex, prostitution and pornography, are linked to the 'dangerous', 'immoral', and 'dirty' forces of the West, and must be controlled in order to preserve Vietnamese culture and society. According to Rydstrøm, 'social evils' are believed to be more of a problem in urban centres than in rural contexts. Indeed, in rural areas, young women predominantly still locate sexuality within moral discourses that dictate expectations about women's proper conduct. Nevertheless, a tension still exists between women's curiosity about sexual relationships and their fear of social exclusion and demoralisation.

The literature on heterosexual identities highlights the various contradictions and tensions that can arise when the local and global penetrate one another, especially when both carry competing discourses on sexuality. Further, particularly in the case of Rydstrøm's research in Vietnam, for many women there appears to be a tension

between the desire for global imagery of sexuality, and simultaneously a rejection of the perceived imperialism of, and 'contamination' from, the West.

### **Non-Western, Non-Heterosexual Identities**

Interestingly, the literature on non-Western, non-heterosexual identities is predominantly concerned with questioning the relationship between gender and sexuality, or exploring sexuality through the lens of gender. Several of these studies question the assumption that globalisation and modernity have led to a privileging of sexuality over gender in non-Western contexts, as is believed to have occurred in the Western model of homosexuality.

According to Jackson (2000), the explosion of Thai *phet* categories (translated as 'eroticised genders') has not straight forwardly occurred as a result of westernisation. Further, he questions whether *phet* can be referred to as sexualities at all and instead argues for a system in which gender and sexuality are closely intertwined. For example, even though Thai people have adopted the Western term *gay*, they have elaborated their *phet* categories to *gay king* (sexually insertive) or *gay queen* (sexually receptive) in order to 'reflect the persistent dominance of gender oppositions' (Jackson 2000: 413). Further, according to Jackson (2004), other English words have been rejected (e.g. the word lesbian has been rejected in lieu of the terms *tom* and *dee*), or completely ignored (e.g. *trans* categories such as transgender or transvestite have been ignored, while the Thai term *kathoey* remains in use). Thus, the Thai adoption of Western non-heterosexual categories has been both selective and innovative.

Jackson (2000) positions his empirical findings within an ongoing split between queer theory and feminist theory.

The theoretical split between gender and sexuality, which is now institutionalised in the disciplinary divide between feminism/women's studies and gay/queer studies, means that Western analysts are poorly equipped to understand gender/sex transformations at the global level (p. 418).

Jackson (2000) is particularly critical of queer theory, which he argues has not effectively come to terms with the issue of gender and is thus not well equipped to

deal with non-Western sexualities. He thus proposes that a union between feminist and queer theory would provide a more adequate framework through which to explore the sexualities of non-Western people.

Blackwood (2005) does not critique the queer/feminist divide; however, much like Jackson, she highlights the relationship between gender and sexuality in her work on non-heterosexual women's identities in Padang, Indonesia. According to Blackwood, *lesbi* identity is not framed around a particular form of sexuality but, rather, around normative gender roles whereby *tombois* and their girlfriends see the former as men. Nevertheless, she highlights how understandings of *lesbi* identity shift according to place, with *lesbi* in Jakarta tending to reject gender binaries more than those in Padang. Rejecting the tradition/modern dichotomy, Blackwood argues that *lesbi* subjectivities in Padang cannot be understood as premodern or backward, in contrast to supposedly modern queer, gay or lesbian identities. Rather, she argues that *lesbi* subjectivities are in fact a product of modern processes occurring in Indonesia at both national and transnational levels, by which both the Indonesian state and regional Islamic discourses define and interpret sexuality through normative gender roles.

Boellstorff's (2005) work on the relationship between the nation state and *gay* and *lesbi* subjectivities in Indonesia reveals similar conclusions.

...*gay* and *lesbi* are founded on rhetorics of national belonging based upon the figure of the heterosexual nuclear family – paradoxical as that may seem from the vantage point of Western homosexualities (p. 7).

Further, Boellstorff confirms that *lesbi* subject positions are structured around a gendered divide through which *tombois* identify as masculine, or as having 'the soul of a man' (p. 519). In contrast, even though *gay* men in Indonesia articulate their subjectivities according to masculinity and femininity, they also articulate their erotic desire as 'desire for the same' (p. 92). Boellstorff suggests that sexuality, far from having 'an independent cultural logic', exists 'at the intersection of multiple discourses', which are linked to gender, class, religion, race and ethnicity (p. 9). Nevertheless, although he acknowledges that in Indonesia gender and sexuality are deeply linked, he embraces an analytical distinction between gender and sexuality on both theoretical and political grounds.

While Jackson (2000), Blackwood (2005) and Boellstorff (2005) all, to varying degrees, highlight the persistence of normative gender oppositions in framing sexual identities in some transnational contexts, Donham (2002) suggests that shifts in gay identity that coincided with the decline of apartheid in South Africa have increasingly favoured the salience of sexuality over gender. According to Donham (2002), during the 1960s and 1970s apartheid years, male-male sexuality among black men in Soweto, South Africa, was interpreted through a sex/gender paradigm whereby effeminate boys and men who had sex with other men were believed to be either women or some kind of mixed, third sex. This sex/gender paradigm, however, began to change as a result of the decline of apartheid. According to Donham (2002), by the 1990s, a sexuality paradigm became more prominent whereby male-male sexuality was seen to occur between two *men*, both of whom could be categorised as *gay*. Donham (2002) suggests that a key factor in this shift in paradigm was the role of transnational anti-apartheid movements in South Africa's liberation whereby these movements became linked to international gay and lesbian social movements, alerting black South Africans to a global queer or gay community.<sup>1</sup>

Babb (2003) does not question the empirical split between sexuality and gender when exploring homosexualities in Nicaragua but, rather, reminds us of the need to take gender into account in any exploration of sexuality. According to Babb (2003) although the Nicaraguan Revolution led to an explosion of gender and class discourses of equality and human rights, particularly for women, these discourses were still very much in line with a heteronormative model of the family that, among other things, excluded gay and lesbian people. Nevertheless, the Sandinista era provided a political context in which gay and lesbian activist groups could begin to expand. During the 1990s, in the post-Sandinista neoliberal era, these activist collectives became more active and gained strength, partly in response to the introduction of oppressive state laws that banned non-heteronormative sexual behaviour. However, the success of the gay and lesbian rights movement in Nicaragua

---

<sup>1</sup> Donham (2002) ends his ethnographic piece by outlining various limitations of using Foucault's theoretical work when exploring the construction of transnational sexualities in South Africa. However, as Jackson (2000) points out, in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1*, Foucault explicitly stated that his work on sexuality was not meant to extend beyond the West. We further explore these issues in our literature review on critical theory.

has been highly gendered and, according to Babb (2003), gay men have benefited more than lesbians from the neoliberal turn.

The literature clearly points to the importance of keeping gender in mind when exploring non-heterosexual identities in non-Western contexts. In a variety of cross-cultural contexts, sexual identities and subjectivities have been, and continue to be, framed by heteronormative gender roles and categories. Despite the undeniable influence of Western culture on existing non-Western sexual identities and subjectivities, the literature suggests that globalisation has not necessarily led to the spread of a sexuality-centred Western model of homosexuality. However, this may not be true of all non-Western contexts.

### **Queer Diasporas**

Globalisation has led to transformations in identities and subjectivities via the movement of people, culture and ideologies from Western to non-Western countries. However, the movement of people to the West, primarily through migration, has also played a role in the construction of new, hybrid sexual identities. The literature on diasporic, non-heterosexual groups living in the USA is an important contribution to transnational studies as it calls attention to the problematic assumption that queer diasporas necessarily assimilate a global gay identity rooted in the West. Further, this literature questions the very existence of a global gay culture given the hybridity found within Western nations and the exclusion of sexual minorities based on gender, class, ethnicity and race.

Manalansan (2000, 2003), a key scholar on diasporic gay identity and culture, has published extensively on Filipino gay men living in New York City. In particular, Manalansan (2003) explores how Filipino gay men negotiate *bakla*, a Tagalog term that describes non-hetero-normative sexual subject positions, and American gay identities, by border crossing between these particular forms of subjectivity.<sup>2</sup> He does this through an analysis of performance that includes Filipino men's everyday life

---

<sup>2</sup> According to Manalansan (2003), *bakla* is socially constructed around the concept of transformation and the manipulation of possible scripts, particularly those that involve gender crossing. Indeed, the *bakla* evokes strong imagery of 'the male body with a female heart' (p. 53).

experiences and participation in various rituals. For instance, Manalansan uses the example of language to illustrate how Filipino gay men ‘resist total assimilation’ through speaking *Swardspeak*: a ‘...vernacular language or code used by Filipino gay men in the Philippines and in the diaspora’ (46-47). According to Manalansan, speaking ‘Swardspeak is a crucial marker of “being bakla”’ (p. 47), and fosters a sense of inclusion and cosmopolitanism amidst broader exclusion from the host country, based on class, racial, ethnic and economic difference.

Another way in which Manalansan (2000) highlights the hybridity of Filipino gay men’s sexual identities, and their shifting subject positions, is through the analysis of ritual. For instance, he describes the reproduction of the *Santacruzán* (a Filipino Catholic celebration that has its roots in Spanish colonisation) in August 1992 by a Filipino gay and lesbian organisation in New York City.<sup>3</sup> The ritual in question was staged as a fashion show rather than a street procession, and included traditional characters as well as new characters, most of whom were represented by cross-dressing gay men and lesbians.

[The]...combination of secular/profane and religious imagery as well as the combination of Filipino and American gay/mainstream icons provided an arena where symbols from the two countries were contested, dismantled, and reassembled in a dazzling series of cross-contestatory statements (192).

Importantly, Manalansan notes that the *Santacruzán* celebration he witnessed did not just reflect the meeting of two historical realities (i.e. of the meeting of Filipino culture with American culture) but, rather, was representative of Filipino colonial and postcolonial experiences that involved (respectively) Spain and the USA. Although Manalansan does not explicitly state it, his ethnography implies that globalisation is not a new phenomenon and that any conception of hybridised identities must acknowledge a long history of global flows between nations.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> The ritual consists of a street procession involving a variety of characters associated with Queen Helena’s (Emperor Constantine’s mother) search for Christ’s cross.

<sup>4</sup> Boellstorff (2004: 185) makes this point in relation to Indonesia, stating that transformation in Indonesia through globalisation did not start with the colonising forces of the Dutch, but rather dates back centuries, ‘from religions like Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, and Hinduism to nationalism and capitalism’.

Manalansan's work critiques a variety of problematic binaries associated with globalisation studies and literature on diasporic identities, particularly the modernity/tradition binary. He concludes that rather than Filipino gay men straightforwardly and passively assimilating to a supposed modern, American and mainstream gay identity, these men are in fact formulating alternative paths to modernity by recovering and enacting the *bakla*. Further, Manalansan argues that his gay Filipino informants' subject positions are intricately shaped by race, class and gender, all of which play a highly significant role in their access to, and sense of belonging to, the gay community and to the broader community. These multiple subject positions, however, are not unique to Filipino gay men living in New York City. Indeed, the assumption of a global gay culture or identity masks the incredible diversity found among non-heterosexual or transgender people. Manalansan states, '...it has increasingly become apparent that even the gayest global spaces such as New York City are rife with cultural fissures and divides between various queer communities' (2003: viii).

Peña (2004) also questions the uniformity of a supposed global gay culture emanating from the USA through her analysis of the blending of English and Spanish languages, and the construction of transnational identities among first and second generation Cuban gay men living in Miami. For instance, Peña notes that even when Cuban men use the English term 'gay', they often imbue it with Cuban understandings of sex, gender, and sexuality. Further, the continued use of Cuban gay slang and the transmission of this language from Cuban born men to second generation Cubans illustrates the continuity of hybrid identities and culture. Peña also refers to a form of hybridised Spanish and English which produces a particular gay language and culture, and that marks insider status for those bilingual gay men who use it. Peña does not treat Cuban diasporic gay identities as simply constructed through the hybridisation of Cuban and American culture. Indeed, she points out that in a multilingual context characterised by massive immigration from Latin America and the Caribbean, it is impossible to see U.S. culture as unchanging or unaffected by cultural flows from non-Western countries: that is, U.S. culture is itself hybridised. Peña's work points to a pervasive tendency in globalisation literature: the false assumption that identities are constructed through hegemonic, unidirectional cultural flows that spread only from the West.

Clearly, gay diasporas living in the USA do not straightforwardly assimilate the culture of the host country, nor do they passively take on a homogeneous Western gay identity. For instance, language (whether the creation of new hybrid languages, or the continuation of already existing gay vernaculars) arises as an important means of resisting assimilation and of marking insider status. It is also important to note that the diversity found in gay diasporas who have migrated from non-Western places cannot be disconnected from transformations in local culture and identity. Culture and identities in the West have been and continue to be influenced by flows from non-Western countries. Thus, a global gay identity cannot be conceived of as simply originating from, and persisting as a result of, Western cultural domination. American culture, the supposed root of a global gay identity, is itself hybridised and constantly transforming. Further, there is a danger of essentialising and Americanising ‘the West’ and masking potential differences between other Western nations such as France, Germany, Australia and Canada (c.f. Leap and Boellstorff 2004).

The concept of a homogeneous Western, global gay identity also obscures potential differences *within* Western nations themselves; in particular, differences based on subject positions that are invariably shaped by class, gender, race and ethnicity. Indeed, the literature on queer diasporas in the USA calls into question assumptions about subjects’ inclusion in a global gay culture and begs the question of who this global identity is available to. Indeed, Manalansan (2003) notes that the image of the global queer is a white American image. Similarly, Peña (2004) warns that ‘We must be careful not to equate English (gay or otherwise) and U.S. gay cultures with liberation, egalitarianism, or freedom without also questioning about how these languages and cultures are experienced by non-English speaking, non-Anglo homosexual men’ (p. 246).

### **Conclusion**

The literature on the globalisation of transnational sexualities largely problematises the notion of homogeneous sexual identities being created by the West and exported to non-Western contexts. One of the primary ways in which it does this is by deconstructing problematic binaries such as global/local, modernity/tradition and

imported/indigenous, which imply, among other things, that a global gay identity is liberating, while non-Western constructions of sexual identity are repressive and backward. These binaries also reproduce the notion of the global and the local as oppositional and thus independent from one another, or of the local as passively assimilating global forces. Although the influence of Western culture and identities on non-Western people is undeniable, the literature strongly suggests that the global and the local penetrate one another in highly specific ways according to particular historical and cultural contexts. This penetration may lead to a variety of tensions and contradictions, as is evident in the literature on heterosexual subjectivities, particularly among women. Nevertheless, rather than passively assimilating global forces, it appears that people living in non-Western countries, or as queer diasporas in Western countries, have been both selective and innovative in their appropriation of Western sexual cultures and identities. Further, it is clear that in some places local understandings of sexuality endure despite massive global flows. One key example is the persistence of heteronormative gender roles in framing understandings of sexuality in some contexts.

A major theme that runs throughout the literature on sexuality and globalisation is the dual nature of globalisation that can liberate and be productive for some, while creating inequalities and destruction for others based on gender, class and ethnic difference (Altman 2001; Altman 2004; Babb 2003; Gamson and Moon 2004; Manalansan 2003). As Altman (2001: 64) notes, 'the interconnectedness of the world is both a threat and an opportunity'. Indeed, Altman (2004) states that although globalisation has led to a multiplicity of identities, it has also led to a deepening of inequality. For instance, he outlines several ways in which sexuality is being regulated and surveilled, providing, on the one hand, new forms of sexual freedom and liberation and, on the other, the disintegration of traditional institutions such as the family. He also notes that although economic development may lead to upward mobility and the empowerment of women, particularly those belonging to the middle class, it simultaneously leads to an increase in economic inequality and the expansion of poverty, women being particularly vulnerable. 'Globalisation is leading to new forms of inequality, as people differ radically in the opportunities they have to benefit from rapid change' (Altman 2004: 65).

While the literature is predominantly focused on examining the hybridisation of transnational sexualities given the spread of global gay culture and identity, the results of empirical research cast some doubt on the very existence of a global gay identity. Globalisation is not a new phenomenon: many nations and cultures have a long history of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial contact with one another, and have thus become hybridised as a result of these global flows. For instance, U.S. culture is already hybridised and continues to transform as a result of globalisation, calling into question any possibility of a unified global gay identity that is rooted in Western culture and that makes the world over in its own image. Further, if one could speak of 'a global gay identity', who might be included or excluded from appropriating such an identity? The West is not an objective unitary fact and, further, the images of Western homosexual subjectivities appear to be produced through 'hegemonic representations of the Western self rather than its subjugated traditions' (Gupta 1998: 36, quoted in Boellstorff 2005: 9). Finally, the literature also alerts us to the fact that our questions about modernity and tradition, homogeneity and hybridity, and sameness and difference, are perpetually reshaped by global forces and, thus, cannot be extricated from globalisation itself.

## Bibliography

- Altman, D. 2001. *Global Sex*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Altman, D. 2004. 'Sexuality and Globalization'. *Sexuality Research & Social Policy* 1(1): 63-68.
- Babb, F. 2003. 'Out in Nicaragua: Local and Transnational Desires after the Revolution'. *Cultural Anthropology* 18(3): 304-328.
- Bell, D. and Binnie, J. 2000. *The Sexual Citizen: Queer Politics and Beyond*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Bell, D. and Binnie, J. 2004. 'Authenticating queer space: citizenship, urbanism and governance'. *Urban Studies* 41(9): 1807-1820.
- Binnie, J. 2004. *The Globalization of Sexuality*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE publications.
- Blackwood, E. 2005. 'Transnational Sexualities in One Place: Indonesian Readings'. *Gender and Society* 19(2): 221-242.
- Boellstorff, T. 2004. "'Authentic of Course!": Gay Language in Indonesia and Cultures of Belonging'. In W. Leap and T. Boellstorff (eds.) *Speaking in Queer Tongues: Globalization and Gay Language*, pp. 181-201. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Boellstorff, T. and Leap, W. 2004. 'Introduction: Globalization and "New" Articulations of Same-Sex Desire'. In W. Leap and T. Boellstorff (eds.) *Speaking in Queer Tongues: Globalization and Gay Language*, pp. 1-21. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Boellstorff, T. 2005. *The Gay Archipelago: Sexuality and Nation in Indonesia*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Collins, D. 2005. 'Identity, Mobility, and Urban Place-making: Exploring Gay Life in Manila'. *Gender and Society* 19(2): 180-198.
- Corrêa, S. and Parker, R. 2004. 'Sexuality, Human Rights, and Demographic Thinking: Connections and Disjunctions in a Changing World'. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy* 1(1): 15-38.
- Donham, D. 2002. 'Freeing South Africa: The "Modernization" of Male-Male Sexuality in Soweto'. In J.X. Inda and R. Rosaldo (eds) *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader*, pp. 410-427. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Gamson, J. and Moon, D. 2004. 'The sociology of sexualities: Queer and beyond'. *Annual Review of Sociology* 30: 47-64.

Grewal, I. and Kaplan, C. 2001. 'Global identities - Theorizing transnational studies of sexuality'. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian & Gay Studies* 7(4): 663-679.

Jackson, P. A. 2000. 'An explosion of Thai identities: global queering and re-imagining queer theory'. *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 2(4): 405-424.

Jackson, P. A. 2004. 'Gay Adaptation, *Tom-Dee* Resistance, and *Kathoey* Indifference: Thailand's Gender/Sex Minorities and the Episodic Allure of Queer English'. In W. Leap and T. Boellstorff (eds.) *Speaking in Queer Tongues: Globalization and Gay Language*, pp. 202-230. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Kim-Puri, H. J. 2005. 'Conceptualizing gender-sexuality-state-nation - An introduction'. *Gender & Society* 19(2): 137-159.

Leap, W. and Boellstorff, T. (eds.) 2004. *Speaking in Queer Tongues: Globalization and Gay Language*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Long, L. D. 2004. 'Anthropological perspectives on the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation'. *International Migration* 42(1): 5-31.

Manalansan, M. F. 2000. 'Diasporic Deviants/Divas: How Filipino Gay Transmigrants "Play with the World"'. In C. Patton and B. Sanchez-Eppler (eds.) *Queer Diasporas*, pp. 183-203. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Manalansan, M. F. 2003. *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Obermeyer, C. M. 2000. 'Sexuality in Morocco: Changing Context and Contested Domain'. *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 2(3): 239-254.

Parker, R., di Mauro, D. et al. 2004. 'Global transformations and intimate relations in the 21st century: social science research on sexuality and the emergence of sexual health and sexual rights frameworks'. *Annual Review of Sex Research* 15: 362-98.

Peña, S. 2004. '*Pájaration* and Transculturation: Language and Meaning in Miami's Cuban American Gay Worlds'. In W. Leap and T. Boellstorff (eds.) *Speaking in Queer Tongues: Globalization and Gay Language*, pp. 231-250. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Piper, N. 2005. 'A Problem by a Different Name? A Review of Research on Trafficking in South-East Asia and Oceania'. *International Migration* 43(1/2): 203-233.

Plummer, K. 2003. *Intimate Citizenship: Private Decisions and Public Dialogues*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press.

Puar, J. K. 2001. 'Global circuits: Transnational sexualities and Trinidad'. *Signs* 26(4): 1039-1065.

Puar, J. K. 2002. 'Circuits of Queer Mobility: Tourism, Travel and Globalization'. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian & Gay Studies* 8(1-2): 101-137.

Rydstrøm, H. 2006. 'Sexual Desires and "Social Evils": Young Women in Rural Vietnam'. *Gender, Place and Culture* 13(3): 283-301.

Schoepf, B. G. 2001. 'International AIDS Research in Anthropology: Taking a Critical Perspective on the Crisis'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30: 335-361

Stychin, C. F. 2001. 'Sexual Citizenship in the European Union'. *Citizenship Studies* 5(3): 285 - 301.