Jennifer L. Gibbs, Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach, Joo-Young Jung, Yong-Chan Kim, and Jack Linchuan Qiu

18 The Globalization of Everyday Life

Visions and Reality

Terms like information superhighway, Internet revolution, global village, and globalization have become buzzwords that liberally season the discourse of the media, corporate communications, advertising, political speeches, and everyday interpersonal conversations. As with past innovations in communication technology (the newspaper, the telegraph, television, the personal computer), the Internet is heralded by many as bringing about new freedoms, democracy, and increased opportunity to society at large. New communication technologies are regarded as driving forces of globalization, in that e-mail and the World Wide Web provide instantaneous access to information and communication with Internet-connected persons located anywhere in the world. The Internet is heralded by some as overcoming space and rendering physical place unimportant. Others worry that Internet connections are displacing local social contacts and traditional mass media (e.g., newspapers, radio, and television), thus reducing civic participation in social communities.

Despite such proclamations, we have very little grounded evidence about how the Internet and globalization are affecting people’s everyday lives. Globalization tends to be studied as a macro economic, political, or socio-demographic process taking shape in the relations within and between multinational corporations and governments, and in the migratory flows of large populations across traditional state borders. We feel it is important to include the largely unheard voices and experiences of everyday people of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the broader public debate on globalization and the Internet. What meaning does globalization have for everyday people? How does the phenomenon of globalization play out in their lived behavior?

A difficulty in grounded analyses of globalization is that the term does not have a consensual meaning. Globalization is defined broadly as the growing interconnectedness and interdependence of the world. Beyond
that, however, the term refers to many different and sometimes contradictory visions of how our world is changing and being reorganized. We do not seek to resolve this definitional dilemma. Rather, we examine whether globalization visions are part of the everyday person’s repertoire of understanding the changing world about her or him, and whether any of these are evidenced in the realities of everyday communication behavior. As Anthony Giddens observes, “globalisation isn’t only about what is ‘out there,’ remote and far away from the individual. It is an ‘in here’ phenomenon too, influencing intimate and personal aspects of our lives.”

In the Metamorphosis research project, which addresses communication technology and community in the twenty-first-century urban context, we have examined the visions and realities of globalization in the everyday lives of people living in seven diverse residential areas of Los Angeles.4 We focus upon communication behaviors as reflections of how people negotiate their changing worlds. We refer to these communication behaviors—the everyday conversations and stories that people, old and new media, and grassroots organizations create and disseminate—together with the resources that afford a conductive or constrained communication environment for the conduct of daily life, as communication infrastructures. These negotiations afford grounded insights into serendipity or why people usually surprise us in defying the proclamations of how new communication technologies will change our world, insights not available in macro studies of economic and political globalization. We assume people, individually and collectively, give sense to globalization, and in so doing, become both reactive and proactive participants in the process. This is part of the reason why the shape and consequences of the present communication revolution (i.e., change in the communication infrastructure) are no easier for people to grasp ahead of time than past communication revolutions were for the people going through them.5

We cannot reach firm judgments about where we are going, but we can make observations about how much change in the communication infrastructure has occurred at this point in time. How much is globalization eroding traditional lines dividing social interaction? Are people, for example, incorporating the Internet to do new things (e.g., break down ethnic and cultural barriers), or are they using it to do old things in new ways (maintain or extend family and friend relationships)? To what extent does the Internet really bring people in closer contact with the rest of the world? Is the communication opportunity structure of daily life changing more rapidly for some groups than others? Are there more than digital divides in access to the tools of the global era—are there profound inequalities in the breadth and depth of incorporation of these tools?

These are the major questions we address in this essay. In the first section, we explore the various symbolic meanings the term globalization has for culturally diverse groups of everyday people. This is followed by an examination of the extent to which people’s global visions are grounded in the realities of their everyday communication behavior.

VISIONS OF GLOBALIZATION

David Held and his colleagues observe, “Indeed, globalization is in danger of becoming, if it has not already become, the cliché of our times: the big idea which encompasses everything from global financial markets to the Internet but which delivers little substantive insight into the contemporary human condition.”6 One point of contention among scholarly visions is whether globalization involves a process of convergence, divergence, or both. From Bill Gates to George Soros, from Marshall McLuhan’s “global village” to Immanuel Wallerstein’s “world-system,” globalization is envisioned by convergence theorists as the emergence of a global market that transcends local economies,7 a power structure or even “transnational civil society” that supersedes nation-states,8 and a homogeneous global culture dominated by media conglomerates.9 Convergence theories characterize a large part of the literature, including a whole spectrum of arguments ranging from neo-liberal celebration of world unification10 to Neo-Marxist critiques of oppressive global capitalism.11 Other scholars are skeptical of globalization as a process of homogenization and regard divergence and fragmentation as the fundamental features of the contemporary world.12 Those who focus on divergence argue that, in addition to the digital divide of information haves and have-nots, Third World economies are increasingly marginalized and separated from the global market,13 and the resurgence of nationalism and religious fundamentalism leads to conflicts among civilizations rather than world integration.14 Still other theorists conceptualize globalization as an uneven process of both convergence and divergence, in which new patterns of global stratification arise and reinforce certain power hierarchies while undermining and reconfiguring other ones.15

We explored whether any of these scholarly visions resonated with everyday people who are connected to the Internet. These “high-digital” are most likely to be aware of and affected by globalization. We asked them (in
a mail survey) about the words they associated with the term globalization. Their responses were coded into several broader themes.

There was a great degree of similarity in the language used by diverse ethnic groups to describe globalization. High-digits in African American, Caucasian, Chinese-origin, Central American-origin, Korean-origin, and Mexican-origin groups associated the term globalization with the ideological themes that permeate public, scholarly, and commercial discourse. The main themes that emerged were classified into four major categories: utopian, dystopian, neutral, and meaningless/hype. Any one participant could make associations that fit into more than one category.

Utopian views of globalization associated it with a process of unification or breakdown of cultural, economic, or political borders that make the world smaller and bring people closer together. Common responses included “one world,” “inclusion,” “cohesiveness,” “instant communication,” and “worldwide expansion.” Other positive qualities were mentioned, such as “advance,” “opportunity,” “freedom,” “equality,” “weakening of dictatorship,” and “the opening of communist countries.” This vision echoes the neo-liberal celebration of globalization as bringing about world harmony and progress. This was by far the largest category of associations, with a total of 64 percent of the 136 respondents ascribing to this positive ideology. Positive visions were especially prevalent among the African American respondents (83 percent) and Central American respondents (74 percent).

The next most prevalent type of association, however, was dystopian (33 percent of respondents). Three major subthemes emerged: 1) digital or socioeconomic divide comments such as “increasing gap between rich and poor” and “less equality”; (2) corporate control through associations with multinationals, business, capitalism, and commerce; and (3) negative feelings such as fear, annoyance, and feeling overwhelmed or out-of-control. This vision taps into Neo-Marxist convergence discourse where globalization is a totalizing process that further exacerbates world inequalities and corporate control. This theme was strongest among the Caucasian respondents from South Pasadena (67 percent) and the Westside (38 percent).

The third category, neutral views (20 percent of respondents), contains responses that could not be easily classified as either positive or negative, but which still considered globalization a meaningful term. Comments in this category include references to the Internet and new technology, foreign languages, the importance of the English language, the environment, diversity, and standardization. These do not fit neatly into any of the ideological camps, partly due to the nonevaluative nature of the responses. These sorts of associations were most common among Chinese-origin respondents (41 percent).

Skeptics who consider the term globalization meaningless (13 percent) regarded it as a utopian “one world” notion that they rather cynically dismissed as merely political rhetoric or hype. This aversion regards the term globalization as not grounded in reality and was most common among the Korean-origin respondents (27 percent).

While these mail survey responses suggest the success of efforts to promote utopian visions of globalization, focus group discussions afforded more nuanced and ambivalent associations. The Chinese-origin focus group participants, for example, had ambivalent feelings about globalization. On the one hand they associated it with “unity, peace, trust”; on the other hand, it was thought to be the “Americanization of other cultures” and to entail “gaps between rich people and poor people.” This largely middle-class group also associated globalization rather neutrally with new technology tools, such as the Internet, fiber optics, digital cameras, cell phones, biotech, satellites, and pagers.

As with their mail survey responses, Korean-origin focus group participants tended to be the most skeptical of the term globalization. This is apparently due to their associations of the term with the political rhetoric of former president Young Sam Kim, who has been held responsible for leading South Korea into economic crisis. For this reason, they considered it an unattainable, utopian term. Nonetheless, some participants noted that the Internet had helped open communist countries such as China and potentially, in the future, might do so for North Korea.

The following quote reflects the skepticism among Korean-origin focus group participants.

I think globalization is impossible, as racism is not disappearing. It is an ideal concept. Each race has its own world.

Both the Mexican-origin and Central American-origin participants felt that globalization was generally positive. They saw it uniting humanity, generating open communication and a free flow of ideas, information, and trade, spreading democracy, and opening closed societies. They predicted widespread use of the Internet, but were also aware of the digital divide. There was a sense of solidarity in both groups that the Latino community should help each other out.

The Internet will become a tool to have humanity become more united, to be able to get along, to communicate and become closer. To have borders become blurred, countries are getting closer. (Central American–origin)
Globalization means that those who know computers and know English will be able to get ahead. My niece in El Salvador begs me to send her a computer. El Salvador wasn’t using bar codes on products, if Central America isn’t on bar codes, how can it be in the age of the Internet? (Central American—origin)

People in our communities need to learn about the Internet and that it exists. (Mexican—origin)

Although they gave the most positive spontaneous associations, African American participants were most negative when making more considered judgments in the focus group discussion. They were the most concerned about social inequalities and the political and economic implications of globalization, indicting globalization as exacerbating culture clashes and threatening their job security. They associated it negatively with ethnic conflict, increased immigration to the United States, and outsourcing of labor. This group was the most cynical about the utopian “one world” vision and did not buy into it.

Globalization is like the melting pot theory gone bad, the end result is going to be a catastrophe. Globalization, there are too many different views from different people, different cultures, and there are people that have had wars for hundreds of years, they’ve been warring, and you don’t just come in with that “global community” because there is a buck in it and say “stop all of this now.”

As we move forward in the technological era, can you imagine how many people will be locked out?

The Caucasian groups were ambivalent about globalization, concluding that the Internet was a double-edged sword. Coming from residential areas with the highest socioeconomic status, these participants evidenced a strong sense of self-efficacy and were optimistic, yet critical of globalization. South Pasadena residents felt they could participate effectively as citizens through appropriate e-mail communications, and some saw the Internet as a potential tool for revitalizing democracy. While they noted the global village and the breakdown of cultural boundaries as positive aspects of globalization, they also saw negative aspects, such as problems with hackers or pornography, or more macro consequences with regard to economic control and cultural imperialism. Westside participants also revealed ambivalence: on the one hand, they felt that global access to information and communication would expand horizons, spread democracy, open up communist countries, and keep politicians accountable; on the other, they feared that global technologies could be used to increase social and corporate control and they voiced ethical concerns about globalization.

... increases my availability to the world and the world’s intimate presence in my own life. (South Pasadena)

It’s one world, it’s not different continents. The world is everybody and we’re all part of the same universe. (Westside)

I think the Internet will function in whatever language people choose to express themselves. Coca-Cola, Disneyland, TV have already eliminated a lot of diversity, but it also allows me to compete with them. I cannot open a Disneyland in my backyard, but I can do it on the Internet for a couple thousand dollars. (South Pasadena, English is her third language, speaks eight languages)

I think globalization is really elitist. Only a few multinational corporations really know what is going on. . . . this idea of “one world” . . . if you get the wrong group in there, the wrong message, with people’s gullibility and short attention span, it could be very dangerous, we could be screwed if not enlightened . . . there is a tremendous amount of power in relatively few hands. (Westside teacher)

Our diverse groups of “high-digital” participants are well aware of both utopian and dystopian visions of globalization that appear in public, commercial, and academic discourse. While the meanings they associate with globalization differ, most groups expressed a mixture of positive and negative visions. The most prevalent vision assumes that globalization entails the unification of the world, racial harmony, social justice, and equality; however, some people (in all of the areas) uncritically buy into and celebrate this notion of global village, while others are skeptical (e.g., Koreans) or cynical (e.g., African Americans and Caucasians). More affluent old immigrants generally tend to be more critical of the possibilities and consequences of globalization than less affluent new immigrants from Central America, Mexico, and China. Interestingly, though, Caucasian critiques were more reflective of macro problems affecting society at large and ignored the digital divide issue. All ethnic minority groups, on the other hand, made comments reflecting an awareness of social inequalities in access to new technologies and suggesting desire for equality of participation in the global era by members of their communities. The question now is how well these visions of globalization correspond with everyday-life realities.

REALITIES OF EVERYDAY COMMUNICATION BEHAVIOR

We classified our study samples along lines of immigration generation into two main groups, old/established and new, according to whether the study sample consisted of predominantly first- and second-generation immigrants or immigrants of third generation or more.
Table 18.1  Immigration Generation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old/Established Immigrants</th>
<th>First or Second Generation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian/Protestant</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian/Jewish</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Immigrants</th>
<th>First or Second Generation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexican-origin</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central American-origin</td>
<td>96.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean-origin</td>
<td>98.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese-origins</td>
<td>95.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inspection of everyday-life communication behavior in a number of ways suggests that cultural globalization occurs by way of what Arjun Appadurai has called “ethnoscapes,” shifting landscapes of people due to immigration or other population movements, or diasporic spaces in which culturally displaced groups reconnect to their homeland through communication contacts via the Internet and traditional media, as well as through work and economic ties. These connections are global in the sense of disembedding or lifting cultural experience out of local spaces; however, they appear to follow the contours of ethnicity, rather than crossing such boundaries.

**Globalization of Cultural Identity**

Our particular conception of cultural globalization rests on the possibility that the contemporaneous emergence of NAFTA and Pacific Rim political economies as well as substantial immigration of people from countries in and near these political/economic sectors may afford a new and dynamic pattern of cultural attachment. Specifically, we wonder if new immigrants from NAFTA and Pacific Rim regions will depart from traditional patterns of progressive assimilation by maintaining closer cultural and social ties to the country of origin. This may be so because the existence of a political economy advantages immigrants from these areas (e.g., via career and business opportunities) in a way that was not the case prior to the emergence of NAFTA and Pacific Rim economic sectors. Thus the basic unit of cultural globalization would be a sustained co-identification (e.g., over three or more generations) with both the country of residence and the country of origin. These diasporic spaces or ethnoscapes may or may not extend to encompass larger cultural identities that are inclusive of other NAFTA or Pacific Rim countries.

While it will take generations to know if our hunch has merit, our study groups of new immigrants were chosen, in part, to lay the groundwork for an examination of the strength of ties between Mexican-origin, Central American-origin, Korean-origin, and Chinese-origin immigrants and their respective NAFTA and Pacific Rim home countries. Old immigrant study groups afford a base of comparison. Thus far our data indicate the existence of multiple identifications among old and especially new immigrant groups with both residential community and their country of origin, rather than evidence of the formation of larger regional communities among our sample groups. We interpret these findings as evidence of ethnoscapes connecting people around the world along ethnic lines.

We see the resilience of ethnicity reflected in a number of ways, through cultural identity and communication behavior. The countries of origin mentioned by each ethnic group largely represent cultures of the same ethnicity, for example, Western European countries for the Caucasian study groups, or Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong for the Chinese-origin group. Similarly, when respondents were asked to describe their cultural heritage, moderate numbers gave more than one cultural description of themselves, but these descriptions were, for the most part, not multiethnic. Although regional ethnic descriptions were given by some, country of origin descriptions seem to be more salient for new immigrants (e.g., Mexican, Korean, El Salvadorian, Chinese) than regional descriptions such as Hispanic or Asian. Old immigrants from Greater Crenshaw overwhelmingly classified themselves as African American, while Caucasian respondents described themselves as American and, to a lesser extent, Jewish or European. Perhaps the most striking finding was that, out of more than 1,800 respondents to a phone survey, a mere twelve of them claimed to be of more than one ethnicity (despite our efforts to encourage multiple responses to this question).

**Globalization of Everyday Behavior**

Our indicators of everyday communication behavior are based on survey responses from our new immigrant study groups only. We focus on new immigrants because we are particularly interested in their roles as possible constructors of new kinds of associations. We asked all new immigrant groups (1) whether they had business or work connections with their country of origin, (2) whether they sent money to people in their country of ori-
gin, and (3) whether they stayed on top of recent natural disasters in their home country.

Both class and cultural differences are evident with regard to work associations and money transfer. We find strong work associations with the Pacific Rim: 55 percent of the Chinese-origin group have work ties to Mainland China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan, while approximately twenty percent of the Korean-origin group have work connections with Korea. This may be attributed to class differences between the more affluent Chinese-origin group and the lower-middle-class Korean-origin group. Slightly less than 10 percent of the Mexican-origin and the Central American-origin respondents have work ties to their home countries, which may again be due to their relatively lower class status. These findings suggest evidence of cultural globalization in the sense of lifting cultural experience out of localities, although the work ties identified are specifically with the country of origin. The percents reporting any work connection are reported in Figure 18.1.

The trend observed in work connections is dramatically reversed when comparing the extent of money transfer among the new immigrant groups (see Figure 18.2). Approximately 80 percent of the Central American-origin, and more than half of the Mexican-origin study groups, report sending money to their country of origin. The Korean-origin and Chinese-origin groups report lower frequencies, 45 percent and 31 percent, respectively. These findings are consistent with our field observations of the study areas.

in that we observed many money-transfer businesses in the Latino study areas, but not in the Korean and Chinese study areas. These findings reflect the well-known pattern of many new immigrants from Mexico and Central America coming to Los Angeles for the purpose of earning money that they can send to their families in the home country. These financial ties are again suggestive of ethnic ties back to the country of origin.

Another means of building regional community by reconnecting with one’s country of origin is by staying on top of major news events that happen there. The level of concern with events such as natural disasters in one’s home country can be indicative of the strength of new immigrants’ attachment to these regions. We included questions in our phone survey about two relevant natural disasters that occurred just prior to data collection in the Central American and the Chinese study areas: Hurricane Mitch in Central America and the 1999 earthquake in Taiwan.

Nearly half (44 percent) the Central American respondents had family or friends in Central America who were involved in the Hurricane Mitch disaster. Of the 84 percent of Central Americans who followed news coverage of this event, the great majority (78 percent) did so by watching television (mainstream and Spanish-language channels). Only 13 percent of the Chinese-origin respondents had family or friends in Taiwan who were involved in the earthquake. Despite this small percentage, most (88 percent) followed the event through some form of media. Of these, 77 percent connected to television and 12 percent connected to the Internet. While

Figure 18.1 Work Connections with Country of Origin

![Bar chart](image1)

Figure 18.2 Respondents Sending Money to Persons in Country of Origin

![Bar chart](image2)
Central Americans connected to mainstream and Spanish-language media at the same rate, Chinese-origin respondents connected more to Chinese-language community media. These findings can be seen as reflective of mediascapes that disseminated local media events from their immediate context and enable these new immigrant groups to reconnect with their home culture—although once again, along strict ethnic lines.

**Globalization of Communication Behavior**

High-digital focus group participants provided us with information that we employed to map their identification with countries of the world, as well as their degree of communication contact with these countries. We asked them to list the names of countries that they identified with, and to tell us whether they had any communication with people living in those countries—through visits, phone, letter, e-mail/Internet, or fax. We then translated their responses into scores that reflected the total degree of contact with each country mentioned. These scores were then transformed into socioeconomic mapping algorithms that allowed us to visually examine intensity of contact on a world map, and to analyze statistically differences in scope and intensity (see Figures 18.3 and 18.4).

Overall, there are no substantial differences between the scope or intensity of contact between new and old immigrants. New immigrants mentioned a total of forty-three countries, and old immigrants mentioned forty countries with which they had some degree of contact. The actual countries with which they have the most contact closely mirror their countries of origin. New immigrants tend to have the most contact with NAFTA countries (the United States, Mexico, Central America) and some Pacific Rim countries (Korea, China, Taiwan, Thailand). Old immigrants, on the other hand, have the most contact with countries in Europe (the United Kingdom, Ireland, Spain, Germany, France, Finland) and the Middle East (Turkey, Saudi Arabia), as well as Liberia, the United States, and Canada. This suggests, once again, that globalization as indicated by the pattern of communication contacts follows along lines of shared ethnicity. Intraethnic communication patterns are clearly illustrated by the scores for the average degree of contact old and new immigrants have with their countries of origin (including the United States) versus other countries. A higher score indicates stronger intensity of contact. For old immigrants, the average contact score for their countries of origin (plus the United States) is 416.83, while the average score for contact with other countries is 80.09. For new immigrants, the average score for contact with their countries of origin (plus the United States) is 665.87, while their average contact score with other countries is 65.13.

These results suggest at least two conclusions. First, new immigrants understandably have stronger connections with their countries of origin, while old immigrants are more connected with the rest of the world. Second, the communication contact of both new and old immigrant groups is
largely confined to those of the same ethnicity. Thus the ethnoscapes of both new and old immigrants differ significantly and trace intraethnic communication patterns rather than being truly globally dispersed.

Further evidence of ethnoscapes is evident in responses from our high-digital concerning the five people with whom they communicate most often. A homophily effect is evident in that 77 percent to 93 percent of the high-digital communicate most with people of the same ethnicity. There is, however, a difference between new and old immigrants in the locations of these people: for Koreans, Chinese, and Central Americans, 37 percent, 34 percent, and 22 percent of their most frequent communication contacts, respectively, live outside the United States, while less than 5 percent of the most frequent communication contacts for the other four groups live outside the United States.

HOW GLOBAL ARE PEOPLE’S INTERNET CONNECTIONS?
As previously discussed, our focus groups revealed an awareness of the Internet’s globalizing potential to overcome cultural and geographical borders and unite people from different parts of the world. When asked whether they felt the Internet brought them in greater touch with the rest of the world, the initial reaction of focus group participants was that it did. However, when probed further on how they actually used the Internet, it turned out that their communication was primarily to maintain and extend social relationships with friends and relatives, rather than developing new social relationships online. New immigrants tended to have stronger contacts with their home countries by e-mailing people there or reading online newspapers to stay on top of news events in these countries, while old immigrants used the Internet to enhance communication with relatives and friends in different states, and a few who were temporarily living abroad. Thus, Internet communication tends to be limited to preexisting social relationships, rather than relationships originating from the Internet.

The main reason for the resistance to developing new online relationships seemed to be a high degree of skepticism and doubt as to their credibility. Concerns ranged from fear for personal safety to cynicism about the depth and intimacy of such social bonds. Virtually no one felt they belonged to any kind of virtual community online. Several people participated in interactive games with players from all over the world or had international e-mail correspondence with people they had never met in person; however, none of these relationships were regarded as meaningful “friendships” and were generally discounted.

[Online relationships are] not credible. People may cheat you. In Taiwan there was a woman who cheated lots of guys to mail her money by sending out beautiful pictures. But she was actually ugly and fat. (Chinese-origin)

I’m not sure you can make a friend on the Web. There is so much that goes into personal compatibility . . . You are going to wait and discuss personal stuff in person anyway, you are not going to do it in a letter or over the phone. (Caucasian)

Parents were particularly concerned about their children meeting undesirable people in chat rooms.

My daughter is very open and less reserved than my older son. She used the user name “Aphrodite.” One time she was saying she was twenty-five years old and I had to explain to her she was only eleven and must never do this. (Caucasian)

Interestingly, the tendencies mentioned earlier of respondents to communicate within the same ethnicity and for new immigrants to maintain ties with their countries of origin are once again evident with regard to patterns of Internet use. We examined the five Web sites visited most often by our adult high-digital participants. Among high-digital new immigrants, few access Web sites located in places other than the United States or their countries of origin. This phenomenon is particularly obvious among people of Korean and Chinese origins: 36 percent of Web sites mentioned by the Korean-origin participants are located in Korea and 24 percent mentioned by Chinese-origin respondents are based in Mainland China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan. However, none of the Korean-origin and Chinese-origin people listed any Web sites located any place other than the United States and their home country. Thus the much-heralded globalizing potential of the Internet, at least for now, seems problematic in so far as everyday life is concerned.

DO INTERNET CONNECTION PATTERNS CORRESPOND WITH PEOPLE’S GLOBAL VISIONS?
Our focus group discussions revealed that the Internet is not, for the most part, having a globalizing effect on everyday people’s communication patterns. Confirming this observation, we find that degree of Internet connectedness does not account for differences in people’s visions of globalization. The depth and breadth of people’s experience with the Internet do
not predict variations in their visions of globalization (utopian, dystopian, neutral, or meaningless). This suggests that people internalize global visions from exposure to traditional media and their interpersonal contacts, but not directly from their online experiences.

We also, however, asked high-digital participants to fill in a set of self-analyzing scales where they indicated the extent to which they saw themselves as "global." From these items we created a multidimensional index of global self-perception that included being multilingual, having culturally diverse friends, being technologically savvy, being a citizen of the world, and having "global thinking" skills. This "global self-perception index" is significantly correlated with Internet connectedness, especially among new immigrants. This means that, although high Internet connectors may have mixed feelings about globalization, the more strongly they are connected to the Internet, the more likely it is that they will attach the global label to themselves. These findings hold when controlling for age, education, and income.

INEQUALITIES IN INTERNET CONNECTEDNESS

A part of the everyday experience of the temporal and spatial dimensions of globalization comes by way of using new communication technologies. In this sense, people with broad access to and use of these technologies have a different experience of the everyday-life aspects of globalization than people lacking access. Concerns about inequality of access to new communication and information resources have been widespread. Most of these have focused upon a growing digital divide in computer and Internet access. Some researchers, however, challenge claims of increasing disparities in class and ethnic/racial characteristics of digital haves and have-nots. Norman Nie and Lutz Erbring, for example, largely dismiss such concerns and predict "everybody is going to be a (Internet) user soon." We examine this issue in detail elsewhere. For present purposes, suffice it to say that there are broad inequalities among our study groups. These go well beyond sheer access to computers and Internet connections. Inequality does not dissolve with sheer access; rather, it persists in the form of lower-quality Internet connections. Poor new immigrants who are Internet-connected, for example, evidence less breadth and depth of incorporation of the Internet into their everyday lives. In short, such connections are less likely to advance their and their families' struggles to move up the class ladder. This is further evidence against the "one unified world" global vision: rather than bringing people together in a single global village, the Internet may be perpetuating and even exacerbating divisions between ethnic groups through differences in access and the quality of Internet connections.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the prevalent "one world" vision of globalization held by our respondents does not appear to reflect the realities of their actual communication behavior. Some evidence of cultural globalization can be seen through the diasporic reconnection of new immigrants with their home country through work and money ties, staying on top of news, communication contact, and Internet use. However, these diasporic cultural communication ties take the shape of ethnoscape that remain largely ethnically bound. Thus we can conclude that although diasporic movements may be bringing diverse peoples closer together geographically, they are not really coming into greater communication contact with one another. While the world may be becoming increasingly interconnected in many ways and certain boundaries are breaking down, ethnicity remains a major dividing line between people. The Internet so far is not doing much to alter these engrained patterns of social interaction. Despite its globalizing potential, the Internet does not seem to be significantly altering the everyday person's worldview or reconstituting cultural and social practices. Interestingly enough, people with the broadest and deepest connections to the Internet are just as likely to hold positive as negative perceptions of globalization. Our findings suggest that the Internet is being incorporated into everyday life by people who proactively tailor its meaning and its utility to their everyday lives.

NOTES

4. A detailed description of the larger Metamorphosis Project research design is presented in the Metamorphosis Project Technical Report (May 2000). A documentary video is also available. We draw on a rich set of interrelated quantitative and qualitative databanks in our in-depth study of seven historically significant residential areas in Los Angeles: (1) Mexican-origin residents of East Los Angeles, (2) African American residents of Greater Crenshaw, (3) Korean-origin residents of
Greater Koreatown, (4) Chinese-origin residents of Greater Monterey Park, (5) Central American-origin residents of Pico Union, (6) Caucasian and dominantly Protestant residents of South Pasadena, and (7) Caucasian and dominantly Jewish residents of the Westside. This essay draws on data from a forty-three to forty-seven-minute telephone interview with approximately 250 randomly selected households in each area, focus groups with “high-digital” or Internet-connected telephone respondents, and a supplemental mail-out survey to cover a larger “high-digital” database.


16. There is a close correspondence between class and ethnicity in our study samples, such that the two Caucasian groups have significantly higher average income than the two Latino groups; the African American and two Asian groups fall somewhere in between. Although our focus groups had differing proportions of females, we find no evidence of gender differences in the global visions expressed.

17. Appadurai, “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy.”


20. Although such differences are not reflected in the average household incomes for these two groups, the actual total income for the Chinese-origin group is likely to be higher than reported due to the number of people holding stocks in China or Taiwan.

21. Respondents were allowed to choose multiple media to which they connected. For example, one person may have connected to both English and Chinese/Latino media.

22. Appadurai, “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy.”


About the Contributors

**Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach** is professor of communication and sociology, and director of the Communication Technology and Community Program at the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Southern California. She is the author, with Robert Baker, of *Violence and the Media*; with Melvin DeFleur, *Theories of Mass Communication*; and, with Milton Rokeach, *The Great American Values Test: Influencing Belief and Behavior through Television*; and co-editor, with Muriel Cantor, of *Media, Audience and Society* and, with Margaret Gatz and Michael Messner, *Paradoxes of Youth and Sport*.

**Sarah Banet-Weiser** is assistant professor at the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Southern California. She is the author of *The Most Beautiful Girl in the World: Beauty Pageants and National Identity* (1999), and has written on media, popular culture, and national identity. She is currently working on a book on the Nickelodeon cable network that explores the relationship between youth, media, and citizenship, entitled *The Kids-Only Zone: Nickelodeon, Youth, and Citizenship*.

**John Perry Barlow** co-founded and co-chairs the Electronic Frontier Foundation. He has written about the Internet for a broad array of publications, including *Communications of the ACM, Mondo 2000*, the *New York Times*, and *Time*. He has written for *Wired* magazine since it was founded, and has been a Berkman Fellow at Harvard Law School since 1998. He is also a former Wyoming rancher and Grateful Dead lyricist.


**Richard Chabran** is chair of the California Community Technology Policy Group and former director of the Center for Virtual Research at the