



# GLOBAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION

Newsletter #12  
March 2014

## Issue Highlights

- GSA 2014 Registration Page
- Update: GSA Keynotes
- 'Theories of Globalization' Roundtable
- Global Things Workshop

## 2014 GSA Annual Conference

**'Cultural Encounters and Global Connectivity'**  
Thursday 26th - Saturday 28th June 2014

The GSA is looking forward to welcoming participants to York St. John University for the annual GSA conference. The registration page has now gone live and can be accessed through the link provided below.

Early registration is encouraged.

Full details of the conference including the call for papers can be found at the [GSA Annual Conference Page](#)

*The deadline for submission of abstracts is **30 April 2014**. Please send to conference organizer Maria Rovisco at [m.rovisco@googlemail.com](mailto:m.rovisco@googlemail.com)*

[Register for the conference](#)



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**Global Studies Association**  
Annual Conference 2014  
*Cultural Encounters and Global Connectivity*


 York St John University  
 Thursday 26th-Saturday 28th June 2014  
 Keynote speakers: Robert J. Holton; Alan Rice;  
 Roland Robertson  
<http://globalstudiesassoc.wordpress.com>



## Update: 2014 GSA Annual Conference Keynote Speakers



Alan Rice is Professor at University of Central Lancashire. He has published widely in the fields of African American Studies, Transatlantic Cultural Studies and Ethnic Studies. His book *Creating Memorials, Building Identities: The Politics of Memory in the Black Atlantic* was published in 2010.



Roland Robertson is Professor Emeritus at the Universities of Aberdeen and Pittsburgh. As a pioneer of globalisation research he is author of several significant works, including a recent volume (with Sophie Krossa) *European Cosmopolitanism in Question*.



Robert J. Holton is Fellow Emeritus at Trinity College, Dublin. He is author of numerous peer-reviewed publications and influential books, including most recently *Global Finance*.

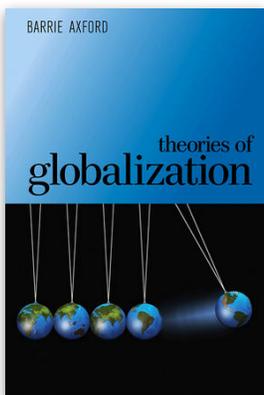
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## 'Theories of Globalization' Roundtable

*Organized by the Global Studies Association (GSA) and the Centre for Global Politics, Economy and Society (GPES), Oxford Brookes University*

The workshop, which took place on Tuesday February 18 at Oxford Brookes University, brought together a panel of leading academics of globalization to discuss Barrie Axford's recently published book *Theories of Globalization* (Polity, 2013). The workshop was chaired by Chris Rumford (Royal Holloway, University of London) and the panel was made up of Darren O'Byrne (University of Roehampton), David Inglis (Exeter University) and Ray Kiely (Queen Mary, University of London). The audience was made up of members of the GSA, GPES and graduate students at Oxford Brookes.

Panelists reflected on the book's contribution to global studies and research on the global. A recurrent theme was the extent to which globalization scholarship has yet to fully embrace the promise of global theory as a game changer in how the world is understood and knowledge about it accrued. In this regard *Theories of Globalization* was seen as providing a very welcome forensic critique of existing scholarship and some important, if tantalizing, pointers to how a theory of the global can embrace interdisciplinarity and multidimensionality when describing and explaining new worlds.



Each panelist applauded the book's scholarship and its contribution to a more theoretically refined global scholarship. All agreed that a book with this scope and ambition would always suffer from the "not invented here" kind of critique, that focuses on omissions and alternatives rather than the work itself, and from charges that such-and-such a theme or topic ought to have been included. As such their reviews of the book picked up on different facets of the analysis and highlighted a number of interesting issues about coverage and whether and how these might be addressed in subsequent editions.



*Darren O'Byrne* noted that what is particularly striking about Axford's efforts is that they demonstrate a respect for the complexity of globalization theory. It is no easy task to start from a position of such complexity and translate that into a clear and understandable text. Global change is clearly not one-dimensional or one-directional. Multiple processes occur at multiple levels. They co-exist and sometimes collide. They are both happening and not-happening at the same time. From the standpoint of organizing a work of exposition and critique this makes for a daunting task.

O'Byrne stated that Axford presents us with a framework for mapping theories of globalization that distinguishes (for analytical but not empirical purposes) between five core *logics* (his term) of globalization. Axford does not seem to be attempting to 'compare and contrast' these five logics (in the way that one can compare and contrast hyper-globalizers, transformationalists and sceptics, or long-term and short-term theorists, or Marxists and non-Marxists). This is an understandable strategy, given his concern with the complexity of global change. Axford's five dimensions of globalization – spatial, cultural, historical, political, economic – are akin to Bourdieu's 'fields', each driven by its own logic, disagreements over which produce the rich theoretical debates captured in these chapters. Finally, O'Byrne pointed to the absence of any real engagement with the gendered dimensions of globalization.- an omission acknowledged by the author. He suggested that perhaps this is an unfortunate reflection of the state of globalization theory, rather than a deliberate omission from an author obviously sensitive to such dynamics.

*David Inglis* also pointed to the danger of adopting a "not invented here" mentality to any critique of this book. He extolled the virtues of the book for teaching and research purposes. In particular the book was not neglectful of the need for a historical dimension in all studies of globalization to balance the overweening presentism of much early theory and empirical research. At the same time he suggested that, in any future edition, Axford might afford more attention to the ways in which classical theory and classical thinkers have much more to say about contemporary forms of globalization than is often credited. He posed the question "what makes good globalization theory?" and how should that inform the making of intellectually challenging and socially useful global studies?

*Ray Kiely* applauded a hugely impressive critique of a wide range of literature from across the disciplines – Political Science, IR, Sociology, Cultural Studies, geography, Political economy. This is testimony to the notion that Globalisation studies is at its best when it is interdisciplinary and he agreed that Axford does an excellent job discussing global issues across and between these disciplines. He also suggested that the work needs to be seen, in part at least, as an extended response to Rosenberg's post-mortem. Rosenberg argued that globalisation theory was guilty of circular reasoning, so that a set of processes called globalisation (global governance, migration capital flows etc) were explained by something called globalisation – thus conflating description with explanation. like Axford, Kiely think Rosenberg lumps too much diverse work into the globalisation mix and overstates the issue of causality. Taking up Axford's approbation of complexity theory as a relatively uncontaminated way of thinking about globalization, Kiely offered some support for that view, but expressed the reservation that complexity theory might be stuck at the level of appearances, with the result that anti-reductionism simply becomes non-explanation and/or description. All of which reintroduces Rosenberg's strictures about globalization theory.

*Barrie Axford* thanked the panellists for their considered and supportive comments. He acknowledged the challenge and the difficulties of writing "a" book about the vagaries of globalization theory and reiterated his hopes that the approach adopted does 3 things.



First, it identifies the strengths and weaknesses of global scholarship; second, it highlights similarities and differences in approach to what are often the same puzzles as these appear in scholarship out of various intellectual traditions; third, it points to a jobbing interdisciplinarity in some areas of research and theorizing and thus, fourth, goes some way to demarcate a social science of globality that has always implied the absence of boundaries, but needs a scholarship that is dedicated to the same ends. He noted the qualifiers offered by the panellists and promised to bear these in mind when (if) a second edition is on the cards.

The rest of the session was taken up with a lively Q+A session led by the audience in which issues as diverse as the treatment of colonialism in globalization theory, the continued Euro-centrism of many accounts and the still powerful grip of disciplinary traditions and concerns were rehearsed.

- Thanks to *Barrie Axford* for this report

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## GSA Interview with Barrie Axford (online)

*“Globality and the idea of global systemness embraces the totality of global flows, networks, interactions and connections and triggers a shift in the organization of human affairs and in ways of thinking about social relations and enacting them. It probably goes without saying that the social science of globality thus envisaged plays fast and loose with disciplinary canons and notions such as discrete levels of analysis.” - [GSA Interview with Barrie Axford](#)*



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## The ‘Global Things’ Workshop



The *Global Things Project* will be hosting its first workshop on Thursday April 10th at Royal Holloway, Bedford Square, London. The workshop will include keynote speakers Sophie Woodward (University of Manchester) and Rupa Huq (Kingston University).

There is no charge for this event, but you are encouraged to contact Professor Chris Rumford at [chris.rumford@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:chris.rumford@rhul.ac.uk) to assist with planning.

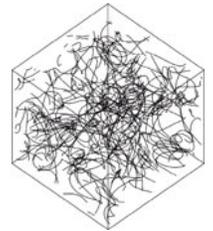
The programme and full details of the event can be found at: [Global Things Workshop Page](#)



The Journal of Critical Globalisation Studies is a fully peer-reviewed, open-access, academic journal that invites contributors to challenge dominant ideas of globalisation. The journal seeks to bring cutting edge theoretical and critical reflection to bear on dominant and/or mainstream debates within the study of globalisation.

Editorial team: Nathan Coombs, Amin Samman, Angus Cameron and Chris Clarke

The forthcoming issue of the Journal of Critical Globalisation Studies on Modelling Worlds: The Politics of Simulation will be the journal's most ambitious special issue to date. We aim to be the first interdisciplinary journal to examine politically the repercussions of models and computer simulations, and will be launching the issue at a panel hosted by the JCGS at the International Studies Association annual conference in Toronto, 29 March 2014



<http://criticalglobalisation.com>



GLOBAL STUDIES  
ASSOCIATION

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The Global Studies Association (GSA) is a multi-disciplinary scholarly association set up in order to address the vast social, political and economic transformations of global scope which are impacting upon the world today. The GSA provides a forum for scholars to collaborate and explore shared responses to such phenomenon, particularly in the context of globalisation. The commitment to multidisciplinary and to the global context make the GSA unique in its aims and scope and thus offering its members invaluable contacts and connections. In addition, the thematic approach of the GSA allows interests which are not easily accommodated in single disciplinary associations to be fully recognised and encouraged. Thus individuals who share a common commitment to enhancing understanding of global life can find an intellectual home by working with others in the GSA.

[www.globalstudiesassoc.wordpress.com](http://www.globalstudiesassoc.wordpress.com)

*Newsletter edited by: Alistair Brisbane*