Globalization and the Consequences for Old Age

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It is paradoxical that war and old age are the largest budgetary items for industrial nations. What is even stranger is that when it comes to economics, we get our polarities reversed. Socially because of violence, destruction and slaughter of populations, war is negative. Yet, economically war is positive since conflict stimulates the military industrial complex. Socially age is positive simply because age is life itself. However, when it comes to economics, age gets mixed up with demographic ideologies and turns problematic. Why should the longevity miracle of the 20th century turn catastrophic in the 21st century? Why should adding nearly 3 decades to the lives of most people turn out to be not so good?

Is age the problem? Or, is age a proxy for other issues? With age as such an important demographic indicator, what is it that it is telling us? On the surface, date of birth and location of birth would seem to tell us very little. However, when used to describe a population, age can tell us a lot about that society, especially the economy. Economics are very important in reducing and distributing risk. Age-linked difficulties are not equally experienced within a population. To what extent are risks to be shared or to be faced individually? How this question is resolved is one of the reasons why societies were invented. Although the risks are considerably different, both the young and the old are the most at risk in a population. The young are challenged by frailties due to immaturity. The old are confronted by difficulties associated with senescence. How to resolve questions of integration and support of older adults are central concerns of gerontology.

Risk resolution and interdependency are major dilemmas for large scaled urban societies. At issue is how to integrate large numbers of people who are most likely culturally different and who do not know each other. Markets are devices to promote exchange between individuals who have insufficient knowledge to trust one another. States provide the necessary legal and financial structures to enforce continued exchange and resolve disputes. With increased scale and political centralization, interconnected markets became the integrating institution.

By the end of the 18^{th} century capitalism had transformed the division of labor into a dominant institution in a commercializing society. European nations became modern. Individuals organized their life courses around a rationalized labor force which made age increasingly important. Two new life stages emerged: childhood and old age. Reasons for the increased salience of age are entitlements: education for children and pensions/health benefits for the old. Pensions, savings and various forms of insurance are social devices to reduce the risks of old age poverty. Once out of the labor force, older adults potentially lose access to consumer markets and their linkages to a community. Here-in lies the essence of the problem of old age.

Labor forces are not static entities. They must be responsive to the needs of the corporations that organize them and the directions of the economy. Economies have shifted from manufacturing to service. Markets have become globalized. Jobs are out-sourced to markets where labor is cheaper. Adam Smith (1776), in the early days of capitalism, attributed the wealth of *a nation* to the formalized division of labor. By the end of the 20^{th} century, the globalized division of labor is the wealth of *nations* and the multinational corporations that coordinate the labor and other markets. Thus, the problems of a secure old age are no longer a local issue, but are global issues (Hyde and Higgs 2016; Phillipson 2006; Powell 2014; Walker 2005).

Are aging populations problematic? Most Americans do not see an older populace as a cause for concern. After all, older people rarely engage in violent behavior or criminal activity.

Some seniors are quite wealthy "greedy geezers" enjoying an active and successful retirement of leisure. Still, an economically aging population presents challenges. First, longevity results in more people who retire and become dependent on younger people who remain in the labor force. For nations with pay as you go public pensions (in the U. S., Social Security) the tax burden increases for younger workers thus creating the possibility of societal intergenerational conflict. Secondly, with declining fertility nations face a future with fewer workers and fewer young consumers who have different consumption patterns than older consumers. Thirdly, retirees, if they have been able to invest in private pension plans, cash in on their contracts. Consequently there is less capital for these funds to invest (Vincent 2006). As a result, the apocalypse projected for an aging population is only a dimmer prospect for continued economic growth. In the rest of this chapter we turn our attention to issues of globalization and how they impact older adults.

1. Globalization and a transformed world.
2. Globalization and inequality.
3. Globalization and increased the risks for older people.
4. Globalization and the agenda of gerontology.

Globalization and a Transformed World

Within anthropology and other social sciences globalization has become *the* major phenomena, process and context for understanding the communities we study. Globalization is both old and new. What makes globalization appear to be novel is that, since 1970, something quite profound happened which changed the lives of many people (Giddens 2003). The world has become a more complex and interdependent place ~~in which~~ to live. The political and economic roots of globalization emerged in the 15th century with the maritime empires of

Europe. Colonies were established in the Americas, Africa and in Asia. Manufactured goods and raw materials including human beings became objects of exchange in global markets. Politically states, by the 18th century were transformed into nation states which are different than the more traditional or archaic political entities which preceded them. Nation states coevolved with capitalism by creating the legal and financial institutions to accommodate and foster these emergent enterprises. As a result, nation states became major building blocks of the global economy (Wallerstein 1989, 2016; Shannon 2018). Their main role is: 1) to provide for an integrated division of labor; 2) to guarantee the flow of money, goods, and people; and, 3) to facilitate economic integration.

How did we become globalized? Most of the decisions that create new world orders are made at the conclusion of major wars. Following WWII, the international economic foundations for the present order was finalized in the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference creating the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The political foundations emerged in the creation of the United Nations. However, by 1970 the post WWII prosperity faced a crisis. The trigger was a decline in wages resulting in less purchasing power for manufactured goods. To partially resolve this crisis, ~~then~~ President Nixon revoked the part of the Bretton Woods Agreement ~~which~~ that anchored the world's currency to the U.S. Dollar linked to gold. When the linkage was disassembled, the value of money became free floating with the net result that the supply of money increased. To further stimulate profits, firms positioned themselves by creating a flexible labor force ~~and one to~~ which they were not committed to on a long term basis. The declining profits and the increased supply of money along with the flexible labor force resulted in all the things we associate with globalization. This includes: off shore production; export production zones; out sourcing of work including international contracts; decrease in unionized labor; an increase in low paying jobs; a dramatic increase in transnational migration; and the restructuring of the welfare state. At the root of the changes of the past 40 years are political and economic arrangements opening borders through trade agreements. Tax laws were altered to promote offshore production to encourage business and job creation by eliminating tariffs.

The net result is a globalized world. Most obvious are the stretching and deepening of social relations across national borders. People increasingly found that everyday activities were being influenced by events that happen at great distances (Smith 2001; Smith and Eade 2008). Social scientists noticed that phrases such as "globalized," " transnational," "translocal," "delocalized," "deterritoralized" and, the "global village" crept into our vocabulary.

Globalization has brought with it consequences that are both good and bad for the social worlds in which we live. In a very real sense the cultural space everyone occupies is local. Globally the spread of a common economic form and communication technology increased cultural homogeneity. Social life in cities seems to have lost its territorial roots. With increases in corporate power, the sovereignty of nation states is threatened. Globalized production has increased wealth and the availability of consumer goods. At the same time globalization has dramatically increased labor force competition which in turn has dramatically increased inequality and social polarization around the world.

Globalization and Inequality

Inequality is nearly a universal feature of social life for both humans and non-humans who live in groups. Inequality is most commonly used as an effective control of the behavior of others. Most directly because of differentials in power, a chain of command is established. Social positions are defined. Competition is controlled and violence reduced. Inequality structures cooperation within a division of labor to increase productivity. Some individuals work harder and at the direction of others. Inequality is used to create wealth which in turn creates disparities in material accumulation and security. At the same time wealth goes a long way in reducing risk.

Because inequality is so widespread, is equality unusual? No, equality is a familiar counter current to inequality primarily to prevent abuses of power and exploitation that comes with hierarchy. Equality is a democratic ideal embracing values of freedom of choice, individualism and self-actualization. As a political and economic counter current, equality is difficult to maintain. Yet, for social solidarity, it is very important to keep disparities in check. If disparities in wealth and power become too great, those who feel the social world unjust may resort to violence (riots, terrorism, revolution or civil war) to correct the situation. In simple societies equality is enforced through leveling mechanisms. Negative gossip or complaint discourse used by the *Ju' hoansi* of Botswana (See Rosenberg in this volume) is a good example. In more complex societies a redistributive economy works to reduce wealth disparities.

Throughout the 20th century the most profound consequence of globalization has been the marked increase in inequality. The causes of this extreme lopsidedness in the distribution of wealth, is quite varied, but lies within the structure of capitalism. Capitalism reduces risk through wealth creation. However, to gain in wealth individuals must take risks. Generally, with greater risks one potentially can see higher return (if things work out). Risks are taken within a market framework. Markets rarely produce equality. To make profits capital needs uneven exchange. Exchange values almost always are more than use values (the cost of production or the cost of energy to provide a service). Without regulation capital will eventually result in extreme inequality with a very few monopolizing all wealth. Wealth has a tendency to attract more wealth because risks that do not work out are absorbed by those that have been successful. States create and regulate the financial structures (banks, money etc.) that make capitalism possible. Through taxation and redistribution policy wealth will flow in ways that can reduce or increase inequality (Piketty 2014). Beyond the nation state there is very little to regulate, ~~and~~ tax and to redistribute wealth. As a result inequality increases globally.

Individuals reduce their material risks in a labor market. Like all markets, jobs are not equal in terms of wages and opportunity. There are good, well-paying jobs (knowledge workers) and then there are menial (manual labor) jobs. Globalization has only increased this and the associated economic and social stratification. A poignant example is the comparison of the wages of a CEO of a major corporation with those of ordinary workers in the same corporation. It can take the ordinary worker more than a year to earn the same wage the CEO earns in a day. Labor market dualism has resulted in a declining standard of living, especially as there is a reduction of opportunities for those without education (Hudson 2007). This, combined with changes in welfare systems shifting to privatization and workfare, has resulted in depressed wages.

Globalization and Risks in Old Age

Capitalism, in reducing risk through wealth creation, works for those who create the wealth. Since not everyone participates equally in wealth creation, risks are not equally reduced. Global capitalism has transformed the economic world in a way that works to increase risks for older people. Risks of growing old are promoted by changes in labor force participation (retirement); altered family structure; and, life courses which are individuated

Risk and retirement: Old age is primarily a problem of a formalized industrial division of labor. Workers no longer work within the framework of family management, but shift to a highly specialized, but flexible work force organized by corporations. Work is commodified or waged. Work also is rationalized with specific schedules as to time and location where work is to take place. Age and gender shape how labor is recruited. Furthermore age is used to exclude workers. The very young are restricted in their entrance to work by child labor laws and by educational requirements which are usually state mandated to increase and standardize work related skills. Older workers are excluded by encouragement to retire. Explicitly, ~~age is defined by eligibility thresholds for entitlements such as pensions~~eligibility thresholds for entitlements such as pensions define age. Both younger and older workers are seen as a residual flexible labor force. In times of labor shortages they may be mobilized and in economic downturns and high unemployment they may be excluded. Thus a simple demographic fact, year of birth, takes on ~~entirely~~ different cultural meanings defining new life stages. Old age becomes chronologically bounded which becomes problematical for those who live long enough.

A central problem of old age is how to provide resources for those who are excluded from wage labor.~~?~~ For older workers the financing of retirement has remained a chronic problem. Solutions are variable but center around schemes to defer wages to be used once retired. These include investment using surplus income, personal savings and publicly supported pensions through taxation. Without adequate income to defer wages and investments, older adults are at risk of impoverishment. With increased longevity the span of time needing to be financed has increased from far less than a decade in the early 20th century, to three or more decades by the 21st century. A compounding difficulty involves social integration. With the labor market constituting a major axis of connecting workers to a society and through wages to interdependency with a wide variety of commodity and service markets, excluded workers are at risk of marginalization (Phillipson 2007).

Globalization has directly impacted the financing of retirement. The growth in jobs during the 1990s was in the service industry and in minimum wage jobs. The net effect of unregulated global markets has been an escalation of inequality and poverty. The World Bank estimates that over 70 percent of the world's older population relies on either their own labor or that of their family to support themselves in old age (HelpAge International 2004). Most of these older adults reside in developing nations and are aging without social protection (de Lange 2009). With the reduction of wages, many workers find themselves barely getting by with several jobs and facing a wage/time compression which makes it nearly impossible to do the work of kinship: – care giving. Making matters worse, since the 1980's, pension plans have shifted from "defined benefit" plans where corporations defer wages and manage wealth for their employees to "defined contribution" plans where employees take responsibility for wealth management. The net result has not been positive. For instance, 40 percent of the Baby Boomer generation has less than $10,000 in retirement savings. (Croker and Dychtwald 2007; Mermin, Johnson and Murphy 2007). With lower wages that means less income to defer. Also with high demands in the here and now (for major consumption needs) people are likely to borrow against the future, leaving even less in the future. In fact the savings rate in the United States is the lowest it has been since the Great Depression.

Changing Families and Risks in Old Age: The most profound change around the world in the past two centuries has been in the family. Work and productivity are no longer managed by families,~~ thus~~ changing the function and reducing the power of domestic units. The effects of the Demographic Transition have created families where there are fewer children and much smaller kindreds (Kumar 2012). With greater longevity, families are having longer shared lives at the end of the life course. This combined with reduced fertility has resulted in greater generational separation and marked age differentiation within a family unit. With the decrease in intergenerational economic interdependency, the meaning of kinship has changed. Kinship is not ~~the~~ descent and marriage defined in the law or what you see in genealogy software. At the beginning of the 21st century descent and marriage have been replaced with a diversity of forms, and an emphasis on individualism rather than relatives (Bjornerg and Kollind 2005). The implication is that descent groups, as flexible as they are, may entirely evaporate.

Individuated Life Courses: Social life is a delicate balance between individual self-interests and those which promote the greater good. Often they are the same and are virtually indistinguishable. Under these ~~circumstances~~circumstances, social integration is strong with ~~the reasons for being social very~~ obvious reasons for being social. The reciprocity involved in everyday life works to promote solidarity as does the redistributive efforts of a polity to increase wealth and security. Markets on the other hand are notorious individuating influences. One enters a market as an individual and competitively transacts whatever it is one must negotiate. Indeed, a common image of a market is one of rugged individuals struggling for economic survival. In this competition, dynamic equilibria are reached on costs such as price or wages. In these equilibria markets work through the famous "invisible hand" which produces solidarity based on competition. In keeping competition from getting out of hand, rules are in place to make sure obligations are met and the system does not become destructive.

Lives organized around the formalized division of labor are socially individuated. Workers are hired as individuals for the skills they can provide to do the necessary work required by their job. Workers are paid as individuals. Workers are taxed as individuals. Life courses are loosely institutionalized by work. An institutionalized life course is staged into a period of preparation, a period of labor, and, a period of reaping the fruits of one's labor. Institutionalized does not mean lock-stepped. Quite to the contrary, because of specialization, the diversity of occupations makes for incredible variety in the way lives unfold. In fact, a very promising feature of this specialization is that choice and the potential of individual development is nearly infinite. A person can become whatever they want to be with adequate preparation and opportunity. The very American value of freedom is hinged on the individualized rights of citizenship to work and to create wealth and security (life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness).

Individual choice, freedom and security are all positive values anchored in independence. Lives are established through independence of income and independence of residence. Although positive, independency and individualism have raised questions concerning how these very values present difficulties in old age (Clark and Anderson, 1967). Children enculturated as competitive rugged individuals face compromises as the abilities to compete are challenged. Independence negatively impacts the interdependence and dependency and a host of other issues. Individuation of risk means risk is not shared and resolved by a larger community. One faces risk alone.

Globalization and the Agenda of Gerontology

Gerontology developed around the issue of the welfare of and quality of life of older adults. By the middle of the 20th century it became apparent that increased longevity as well as increased wealth was a mixed blessing of modernization (Cowgill and Holms 1974). Longevity and wealth increased the social spaces and possibilities for a good old age. At the same time, risks remained and eventually increased. With more life to be lived, we should embrace old age as a positive life stage. Gerontology emerged as a social movement and as a scientific discipline with a mission to reduce the risks of old age. Specifically these are the health risks and risks of poverty which are traditionally associated with old age. Two distinct perspectives for the abatement of risk have emerged: 1) Successful Aging and, 2) Critical Gerontology. Although similar in intent, the starting points of these two perspectives are markedly different. Successful ageing is anchored in the individual (See Lamb 2014, 2017 and in this volume) and his/her welfare while critical gerontology begins with the social origins of problematic aging.

Successful Aging: A major attraction of the perspective of successful aging is that of a positive image. Successful aging grew as a counter to the negativism in the early formulations of the then controversial disengagement theory. Although successful aging is a major cornerstone of gerontology, a stumbling block is that success is nearly impossible to define. Success is a cultural construct anchored in the contexts in which people live their lives and as expected will change over time as individuals experience their own aging. The goal of this perspective is to retain and expand the cultural spaces for active older adults. The strategy is to encourage individual responsibility for planning for old age combined with adjustment of institutions relevant to old age. Individuals as responsible for their own lives are advised to get a good life and to keep it as long as possible.

Critical Gerontology: From a social perspective the major benefit of being social is the absorption of risk into a greater whole. However, in neutralizing some risks, other risks are created. Intensification of production reduced the risk of food insecurity. An unintended consequence is inequality. It works for the majority, but not at all well for others. The effects of inequality are only deepened in old age. These outcomes are not products of individual choice. On the contrary they are brought about by blocked opportunities anchored in characteristics not of an individual's choosing. Clearly race, gender, class and ethnicity can be disadvantageous in a market structured by competition. For old age life-long inequalities in income and health care result in disparities in the financing of retirement and in health status (Katz and Calasanti 2015).

Socially, individual risks are reduced through the preservation of state supported pensions and health care. A longer term strategy is the reduction of income and health disparities earlier in the life course through tax policy and the redistributive economy for the benefit of all citizens.

Citizenship is not a new idea, but one that has changed remarkably with the advent of global capitalism. Citizenship defines who belongs to a social entity and what are the rights and duties of membership. With global capitalism, citizens are workers, taxpayers and consumers. Membership in a nation state, however, involves far more. Humans create societies for a number of reasons, but mostly for the management of risks: food security; material security; access to mates; public safety; and security in old age. Nation states are social and political units organizing and regulating the economy within which citizens and communities structure their lives and recreate those lives through time.

Since the 1980's the prevailing political and economic theory has favored reduction of the state in citizen's lives (Polivka and Longino 2006). Citizens are expected to organize their own lives as individuals. They are pretty much on their own as they exercise their freedoms to find their creativity and opportunities in the labor market and other markets which integrate the nation state. With lives being individualized and self-created, risks are also individuated. In a world dominated by individuation society seems to have evaporated.

Where has society gone? It has gone to individuation with all the positives of self-fulfillment. If dreams are not actualized, then one resolves the hazards all alone.

Where has society gone? It has gone to pluralism and differences separating individuals into marginalized and sometimes divisive categories. Redistributive economies are the primary mechanisms have for states to manage risks. The redistributive economy is a moral economy to promote the good of all citizens. If the disadvantaged are "not one of us" why should they be helped? Social boundaries based on racism, sexism, ageism, ethnic differences, class, and any other –ism, render categories of people “undeserving” who are further marginalized and excluded.

Where has society gone? It has gone to politics. States operate within a system of laws which are continually under negotiation and change. States negotiate with citizens and their representatives over budgetary allocation of the redistributive wealth in determining who gets what and when. Old age stands next to oil (energy companies), pigs (agriculture), the military industrial complex and a near infinity of other industrial complexes representing corporate interests.

Where has society gone? It has gone everywhere and is still among us. It is ever changing, transforming itself and is being transformed as humans create the social world and spaces which shape their existence. Globalization has had a direct impact way humans in the 21st century work and consume as capitalism expands into the dominant economic system.

Globalization is not a recent novelty. Ever since smaller scaled societies became politically centralized, economic expansion, colonization, and domination has been a prominent feature of social evolution wherever humans live. Some of these were quite impressive and large such as the empires of Rome and the Inca. Global capitalism is similar to archaic empires in terms of economic and political domination, but is quite different in the organization of labor, production and consumption. Citizens no longer are positioned in a hierarchy of fealty to landed gentry. Instead most citizens are “free” to seek employment and wealth in the labor market.

At the beginning of this chapter we claimed that the problem of old age and the integration of older adults into a social whole are products of the division of labor of capitalist societies and increasingly of global capitalism. Gerontology has addressed this issue in various ways. Initially retirement was seen as “the roleless role.” Disengagement theory (Cumming and Henry 1961) proposed a normal healthy mutual withdrawal between~~of~~ older individuals and society prior to death. This idea was soundly rejected, and replaced with activity theory and eventually successful aging. Gerontology worked for major legislation to expand the redistributive economy to insure continuing engagement of older adults in their communities.

What lies ahead on the political agenda for old age? The major questions are the familiar questions of old age that have been around since the 19th century and even earlier. All involve security and predictability of old age. Underlying our political action are deeper issues that frame the continuing debate. These have to do with citizenship. Transnational immigration both legal and illegal has rendered citizenship ~~to be~~ more complicated than place of birth and a certificate to prove time and location. A deeper question is: What are citizens for? On the flip side: What are nations for? Clearly citizens as members of a political and economic entity have obligations to the state including working and taking care of themselves, paying taxes on wealth generated, and consumption of goods and services produced. States in turn have reciprocal obligations for citizens. States organize the economy by providing the necessary infrastructure and the mechanisms of exchange and enforcing laws and regulations to make it work. Citizens, from the view of the nation comprise the division of labor and are both the generators and the consumers of the wealth of the nation. Thus the state grants the right to participate in the labor force; to pay taxes; and, to consume.

With labor an integral part of the economic well-being of a nation, the question is how does the state share the risks when its citizens are vulnerable? Or does the state let citizens take their own risks and solve their own problems? Obvious vulnerabilities are when a citizen is not in the labor force (children or older adults) or for some reason unemployable (disabled or old or the economy is in recession). What are the likely mechanisms which would provide support to at-risk citizens? Economically, the mechanisms of exchange forming the infrastructure of cultural spaces for all members of a society including older adults are: markets, redistribution and, reciprocity. Our question is, is there anything than needs fixing that can be politically rectified?

Markets: Markets are clearly the main mechanism of integration. A real genius of capitalism is that everything is commodified and can be exchanged. Through exchange, wealth is created, especially when markets are expanding. Expanding markets mean more wealth which should work to the advantage of most citizens. Markets, indeed, have expanded to meet the needs of older people. Health care has expanded in the 20th century, as has specialized housing and communities for older citizens including assisted living and retirement communities. Where there is opportunity, the market will follow. Since the 1980's a prevailing ideology is that markets can solve most of our problems. The principal argument is that wealth creation and its benefits will "trickle down" to even the most impoverished. Markets are attractive mechanisms because they can expand. But to the contrary, in their flexibility, they can also contract and wealth vanishes. Markets are inherently unstable.

Redistribution: Unlike markets, redistribution of wealth by a state is comparatively stable. States are among the wealthiest entities creating wealth through taxation. This wealth gets redistributed to citizens in a wide variety of ways including the management of services, subsidizing and stimulating markets, and direct cash transfers. The redistributive taxation system is the part of the economy which supports the aging enterprise and what is sometimes referred to as the moral economy – that which that works for the good of society and its citizens (Minkler and Estes 1999; Estes and Phillipson 2002; Polivka 2014). In the United States it is Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, Older Americans Act, NIA etc. that shapes the resource base for the support of the old (Estes 1979). All have been under attack; especially in the proposed revisions to Social Security and Medicare (see Polivka this volume). If the attack continues on these pillars, our foundations get shakier

Globalization has impacted the ability of states to redistribute revenue. States are often not the wealthiest entities as compared to some transnational corporations. Taxation is difficult internationally. Corporations can locate in countries where tax policies are more favorable. Also polities negotiate tax forgiveness in order to attract industry and jobs. Thus there is less revenue to redistribute and there are no redistributive mechanisms internationally. Regardless of remarkable growth in many developing countries we have not yet seen the development of a moral economy. Within developing nations the financing of globalization, often through the debt on loans from the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund, can severely limit ~~the redistributive economy of poorer countries in the name of progress~~their redistributive economy. There is little left to invest in a moral economy. From the perspective of the 21st century it is quite apparent that security in old age cannot be left up to families and voluntary social services. Also, schemes to privatize and individualize pensions do not seem like a good approach, since the result is underfunding. Somehow old age and its financing have to be built into a broad moral economy of nation states that work with capitalism and its infrastructure.

Generalized reciprocity of the domestic economy: This part of the economy is "under the radar." It is clearly non-market. From the perspective of a family, labor markets are where members work to gain the resources with which to forage. Consumption is hunting and gathering the goods and services necessary or desired in everyday life. Generalized reciprocity guides the work that runs the daily routines of home. No formal accounting is needed since the people involved live together and exchange takes place over long periods~~ of time as needed~~. Domestic work is the work of raising children and caring for kin. When work of kinship gets transferred to a market, it gets formalized and medicalized. Family is not immune from the effects of globalization. Although kinship would appear to be enduring, family organization has responded to the demands of a globalized labor force ~~(Bengston & Lowenstein 2003, Cole and Durham 2007)~~ in ways that increase risk for older kin (Bengston & Lowenstein 2003, Cole and Durham 2007).

Globalization has destabilized the institutions which structured the world as it once was. Population exploded, the labor force globalized, markets expanded and became the mechanism integrating nations and the globe. Ever since humans figured out how to intensify production the world is always being destabilized. When we look into the future all we can forecast is change. Undoubtedly some things will improve; others deteriorate and not everyone will be impacted equally. Most of our predictive models attract attention because they are negative. Catastrophic futures are utilized to mobilize political support for a vision of the future. The major concern of globalization and aging populations is growing inequality and poverty. Transformations in the division of labor have contributed to increasing the gap between the wealthy and the poor. The rationalization of labor has also created old age as a distinct life stage. Without poverty old age is less problematic. With longevity and improved health, for the young old, this new life stage is not a bad deal. Retirement is a partial disengagement from the role of citizen. Freedom from work enables one to just be; to exist. One can pursue activities that one was once too busy, too exhausted, or too bored to engage in when one worked. This is the life stage of a good (successful) old age that Gerontology champions. To achieve this for a majority of older adults, the economic infrastructure found in markets, the domestic economy and especially state redistribution are necessary.

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