This chapter centers on the contemporary flow of people and goods, and technology and production, across national boundaries, in what is known as globalization. After reviewing some debates on the economic and cultural dimensions of globalization, attention turns to ethnic tourism as an important cultural phenomenon and its potential transformative effects at the local level. Globalization also entails a continuous flow of investments and production, and an ever-fighter integration between countries. The cultural effects of such transnational linkages are taken up in the third section, which focuses on how the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has spurred and intensified migration between Mexico and North America, and on cultural and gendered outcomes of the proliferation of maquiladora assembly and manufacturing plants. The chapter then turns to the relationship between global economic interests and deforestation. The controversies surrounding how some anthropologists represent Amazonian peoples, and how these representations may be endangering their livelihoods and resources, is the focus of the fifth section. Finally, this chapter provides a look into the lives of Hispanic/Latino domestic workers in the United States.

Globalization

Whereas fifty years ago most Latin American and Caribbean peoples lived in rural villages and earned a living by cultivating the land, today most live in urban areas and earn a living by engaging in a variety of nonagricultural, often "informal" occupations; whereas fifty years ago most had little knowledge and firsthand experience with cultural "others" (and their cultural messages) beyond their community, region, or country, that is not the case today when even the most "isolated," or "traditional," are likely to be intimately acquainted with worldwide events and come into direct contact with "Westerners" or other Latin Americans; despite the fact that Latin American and Caribbean economies have been embedded in one way or another in the world system for centuries, the transnational, global linkages of today are likely to have a far quicker and especially pronounced economic, cultural, and social impact than those of fifty years ago.

Globalization is one of the most popular and widely circulating terms today. It is also one of the most ill-defined and ambiguous social science concepts, partly because it overlaps with other, analogous ones. Hence, although the term appeared around 1960, among
scholars "there is no agreement as to whether it was with Magellan and Mercator, James Watt and Captain Cook, Nixon and Kissinger, or Thatcher and Reagan that globalization started or, to be more precise, that the narrative of globalization ought to begin" (Guillén 2001:237–238). Ina and Rosaldo’s volume (2002) provides a broad overview of issues and debates on globalization from the vantage point of anthropology.

Despite its ambiguity (or, perhaps, because of it) many agree that globalization is a wide-ranging economic and cultural process swiftly connecting in manifold and intricate ways (and in forms unimaginable to many just a few decades ago) peoples, cultures, and societies throughout the globe. Guillén states that “intuitively, globalization is a process fueled by, and resulting in, increasing cross-border flows of goods, services, money, people, information, and culture . . . a ‘compression’ of space and time, a shrinking of the world” (2001:236); Appadurai associates globalization with a “shifting world” and “deterritorialization” expressed in a “loosening of the bonds between people, wealth, and territories” (1991:192–193); Foster talks about a “global ecumene” marked by an “interconnectedness of cultures brought about by global flows of images, objects, and people” (1991:236); while for Kearney (1995:548), quoting Giddens (1990:64), we are witnessing “the intensification of world-wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.” Part of the difficulty of defining globalization more precisely is that global connections are hardly new (Wolf 1997 [1982]). Yet, there are probably no historic parallels analogous to the speed, intensity, and pervasiveness of connections that characterize contemporary globalization.

One broad meaning of globalization centers attention on it as an economic phenomenon. Yet, the term has become so entrenched in everyday parlance and academic writings, and so solidified in commonplace understandings of the world, that it is often viewed as a “natural” part and parcel of everyday life, camouflaging the fact that the changes alluded to previously are manifestations of the “global triumph of capitalism” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001:1). As an economic process, globalization is rooted in a fundamental transformation of the U.S. political economy in the early 1980s and the subsequent spread of what has been glossed as the “new economy” (Harms and Knapp 2003), the “emerging global factory” (Blum 1992), or the “rise of market economics” (Green 1995). The political-economic model is better known in Latin America and the Caribbean as neoliberalism—a model based on the belief that the (unregulated) market is a far better regulator of economic and social and cultural life than the state (Sanabria 1999).

Neoliberalism has two broad and related dimensions. The first is a retrenchment, or “retreat” (Gill 2000), of the state from the social sphere, an unraveling of the social contract between the state and its citizens. The effort to disengage the state and make it “leaner” and more “efficient” manifests itself in cutbacks in social spending, as in pensions, health, education, basic infrastructure, and transportation. In Latin America and the Caribbean, this effort has been paralleled by a sharp decline in state economic investments (such as agriculture, price supports, and subsidies) and the privatization of state enterprises, such as railroads, airlines, telecommunications, banks, and (formerly nationalized) oil and mining companies. For example, between December 1982 and April 1991, 75 percent of Mexico’s almost twelve hundred state-owned enterprises were privatized or “liquidated” (Moody 1995:101). The second major dimension of neoliberalism is that of creating conditions favoring above all the accumulation of capital and investment, and easing the flow of goods
and profits across national boundaries. Sharply restraining wage increases; undermining job security ("labor flexibility"); shedding tariffs and other restrictions to investment, imports, and exports; being able to extract natural resources (oil, lumber, minerals) relatively free of environmental regulations; being able to easily close down manufacturing plants and then resurrecting them elsewhere where resources are less expensive and/or labor costs are lower ("outsourcing"); and eroding environmental and labor laws are some ways this second objective is achieved.

Globalization is also a cultural process that has several dimensions (Appadurai 1996). The first is that different peoples throughout the world are acquiring greater (although not necessarily more accurate) understandings and knowledge of others through the widespread circulation of images, symbols, and messages. This ability rests on the emergence and spread of technological innovations, especially in communications. Today, vast numbers of Latin Americans can communicate with each other via telephone, or television or cable programming (see also Chapter 11); or, as is the case among indigenous peoples, share news and events, or build alliances with faraway others, via the Internet (Becker and Delgado-P. 1998; Delgado-P. 2002; see also Chapter 12). That Guaraní and Quechua speakers can use Microsoft operating systems and other software in their native languages points to the extraordinary communicative potential of globalization. Another important venue through which cultural communication is taking place is through travel, primarily by Asian, European, and North American tourists. A rather different form of transnational travel experience is the diaspora of Central American war refugees, explored in Chapter 12.

The second major hallmark of globalization as a cultural process is that it is profoundly asymmetric—it is pervaded and partially made possible by unequal power relations. Thus, some indigenous peoples may have access to the Internet, but the capacity to generate this and other technological innovations (and the ability to distribute them) are not in their hands. And although ever-greater numbers of North American, European, and Asian tourists travel to Latin America and come into contact with indigenous peoples, comparatively few of the latter ever set foot in North America, Europe, or Asia. What this also means is that the direction of the content of cultural messages, symbols, and images is largely unidirectional. As a result, scholars are increasingly questioning whether a homogenous "global culture" is in the making, erasing cultural boundaries and undermining local cultures and identities. The answer is of course difficult and complex, but at least in the Latin American and Caribbean context, evidence and cases studies presented in previous pages (such as the rise of indigenist movements discussed in Chapter 5), as well as in this and subsequent chapters suggest that such a global culture is very far on the horizon.

**Tourism, Crafts, and Cultural Authenticity**

One indicator of globalization is the vast increase in global travel, especially by European and North American, and increasingly Asian, tourists, which has swelled threefold in the past twenty years (Guillén 2001:239). This increase has been matched by the growing importance of tourism in many Latin American and Caribbean countries. One recent research thrust has been on the relationship between tourism, prostitution, and sex work, especially in the Caribbean (Brennan 2004; Kempadoo 2004).
Tourists leave in their wake—often unnoticed by themselves—profound and sometimes contradictory changes in local communities and landscapes. Tourism, especially in major resort areas with international hotel chains and fast-food franchises, sometimes upsets in landscapes not dissimilar from those in tourists’ home countries. Yet, other times tourism—especially undertaken by tourists wishing to experience “authentic” or “traditional” culture—invigorates local cultural traditions, or it leads to their reemergence or refashioning in novel contexts. This process, which often also spurs heightened pride in local or ethnic identity, is known as the invention of tradition (Hobsbawn 1983; Maddox 1993; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992). The anthropology of tourism focuses on these sorts of impacts and exchanges between tourists and those with whom they come across in their travels. (It is no coincidence that the emergence of this field of study dates to the early 1980s, or the onset of globalization.) Some of the major questions in this rapidly growing field include:

What are the dynamics and impacts of inter-cultural contact between tourists and locals? . . . How is culture represented in tourist settings, and how is it perceived? . . . How are cultural traditions changed or reinvented over time to match tourist expectations . . . and what can distinguish the genuine from the spurious? . . . How do indigenous societies change as they become integrated with the tourism market? (Stronza 2001:262)

In Search of the “Authentic” and the Timeless

Many tourists are increasingly seeking out the “authentic,” wishing to experience “the pristine, the natural, that which is as yet untouched by modernity” (Cohen 1988:374, quoted in Stronza 2001:265). This “modern” desire for the “traditional” or the “authentic”—which sharply contrasts with Latin American elites’ views of the “traditional” as an obstacle or barrier to modernity—is both being shaped by and having a profound impact on local cultures and communities where tourists’ expectations are being met. This process of cultural negotiation—which entails but is not limited to “playing up” to tourist expectations and desires—may have paradoxical outcomes, both changing and reviving values and traditions, including conceptions of self and national identity (Stronza 2001:271).

Because they embody and magnify a deep sense of timelessness, antiquity, and tradition, a principal tourist destination is archaeological sites. And few sites in South America rival the magnificence and sense of awe that tourists experience in Cusco, Peru, and its nearby ruins of Machu Picchu (see Chapter 3). Attracting half a million visitors yearly, tourism is the most important economic activity in Cusco, which has led to “selective re-creation and reconstruction of the past” (Silverman 2002:883)—especially the Inca past—by local government officials and elites, as well as by members of the popular classes. The attempt to convert Cusco into Peru’s cultural capital reflect efforts to make the past more meaningful for those in the present—including but not limited to tourists. Elsewhere, Kaplan (1993) has underscored the role of Mexican museums in projecting coherent national images for the tourist market.

The privileging of and playing up to the Inca past has taken many forms. The Cusco municipality is funding the excavation and restoration of Incan structures, and has changed the name of the city to Qosqo to more closely adhere to Quechua pronunciation. The city is
also referred to by honorific titles, such as “Imperial City,” “Millennial City,” or “Immortal Cusco” (Silverman 2002:885). And elite calls are made for more people to speak Quechua openly on the streets—despite the fact that speaking Quechua has historically been associated with “ignorant” and poverty-ridden “Indians.” This attempt at refashioning the past to convey a timeless, essentialized present/past for tourists has been quite random. For example, Inca artifacts and stone structures are often placed in other parts of the city far from where they were excavated, and an emblem of one of Cusco’s best hotels depicts coastal Nazca pottery—made one thousand years before the Incas.

Local people are involved in this selective process of historical reconstruction. For example, folkloric performances throughout the year take place in Cusco, and many local groups compete to participate in the Festival of Inti Raymi—the Inca winter solstice festival—turning it into one of the hottest tourist attractions. This selective reconstruction of the past can be contentious and reveal underlying tensions. The controversies surrounding the display of an “Inca flag” (most scholars believe that the Incas did not have such a flag), designed by a local engineer in 1971 and widely adopted by the Cusco municipality two years later, is an example:

... in 2000... officials realized that the invented “Inca flag”... is the same as the international gay community’s seven-colored rainbow emblem... Indeed, in El Comercio [a leading newspaper], on July 9, 2000, Cusco’s... mayor... complained that the Inca flag had been “usurped by the gay community” and needed to be replaced... [The lieutenant mayor... stated that replacement was imperative so as “to avoid the moral deterioration of Cusco society”... There were political ramifications as well... [The lieutenant mayor] worried that prestigious international guests were refusing to have their photographs taken in the municipality building next to the flag of Cusco for fear of being identified with the gay community. The Gay Movement of Lima... quickly publicized its offense that the official flag of Cusco would be changed to differentiate it from a gay symbol. (Silverman 2002:888–889)

Producing “Ethnic” Handicrafts

Tourists’ search for the “traditional,” their enormous purchasing power compared to those living in the communities and sites they visit, and their demand for and purchase of things “native,” “ethnic,” or “indigenous” to bring back home and display to others, often invigorate artisan-based craft and textile traditions (Nash 1993).

This has occurred in Panama, where highly decorated cloths called molas—“barely one hundred years old and clearly developed through contact with Europeans” (Sherzer 1994:902)—are the most distinctive trait of Kuna ethnic identity (Tice 2002). It was not until the 1960s and 1970s when Kuna began producing molas for sale. Although some molas are sold to tourists visiting Panama, most are sold to intermediaries who supply Europe, Japan, and the United States. Part of the impetus for producing molas for the international market stemmed from the growing number of visiting tourists and a decline in local income, but also because of the growing attention, visibility, and demand that molas garnered in international elite circles, such as museums and art galleries. And in a classic
but not surprising display of how commoditization can have unintended consequences, by
the late 1980s, molas "had become a well-recognized symbol of Panama" (Tice 2002:222).

Spurred by the growing tourist and ethnic market, analogous processes are occurring
elsewhere. Guatemala, for instance, has experienced a surge in artisan and textile produc-
tion. Ehlers documents the almost fortuitous circumstances that led to the creation of a
prosperous textile cooperative in San Antonio Palopó, a Mayan-speaking community in
highland Guatemala (1993). Textile weaving is, of course, a deeply rooted tradition in
Guatemala, as in most of Mesoamerica. Palopó was no exception, where women wov-
en using backstrap looms. But the emergence of commercial weaving geared mainly to
the tourist and ethnic market was set in motion by fortuitous circumstances and clever
forethought. First came a road that linked the community to the Lake Atitlán area, where
many tourists visited. Community members then decided to organize into a cooperative so they
could weave the cortes—traditional skirts—that they had often bought in a nearby town
and, perhaps, sell some to tourists. They then approached a Peace Corps volunteer in a
neighboring village, who moved to Palopó and provided technical and management assis-
tance, and recruited help from a master weaver, who taught community members how to
use foot looms. The bishop of the Catholic Church provided money to build a cooperative
building; local nuns furnished the foot looms; and the United States Agency for Inter-
national Development (USAID) and Oxfam offered supplies. Getting the first shipments of
cortes to ethnic and tourist shops in Guatemala City proved a challenge, but it was over-
come when the owner of a small business firm in nearby Panachel that exported to the
United States became interested in Palopó's cortes and agreed to purchase them on a con-
sistent basis. Guatemala's civil war during the 1980s—which virtually shut down the tourist
industry—barely affected the cooperative, for virtually all its weavings were destined for
the U.S. market. Less than ten years after the first community members thought of mass
producing cortes, weaving for export was a thriving business (Ehlers 1993).

Among the best known, successful, and affluent South American ethnic weavers are
the Otavaleños, named after the town and region of Otavalo in northern Ecuador. Otavaleños are well-known for their weaving tradition—ethnographical documents suggest
that they furnished high-quality textiles to the Inca state (Salomon 1981)—but they are
especially famous for their entrepreneurial ability to supply weavings for the North
American and European market by engaging in long-distance, transnational migration,
while also maintaining their distinctive sense of identity and community (Meisch 1998;
Culotta-Mansfeld 1999; see also Photo 10.1). This successful mix of the modern and tra-
ditional, the local and transnational, along with the production for the global market is one
of the most distinctive traits of Otavaleño society and culture:

Native peoples must have the cash and commodities of the marketplace to
reproduce the runa kawsay (native Andean life). To be sure, subsistence farm-
ing; livestock keeping; creating extensive, kin-based networks of mutual sup-
port; and other facets of indigenous production matter as much now . . . as they
ever have. Yet, such practices . . . must adapt to widespread and often disjointed
circulation of people and goods. Exporting Andean handicrafts, importing Italian
fedoras for men, shipping locally made sweaters to Colombia (goods made
according to U.S. Peace Corps designs), bringing English tweed cloth back
from Europe for women's skirts . . . departing for the summer tourist season in
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PHOTO 10.1 Otavalo Weavers, Ecuador.

Prague, returning for a child’s baptism are the large and small acts producing Otavalo’s social world. In all this flow, culture materializes itself not so much in fixed institutions and symbols but in rhythms of accumulation and consumption and in arrivals and departures. (Colloredo-Mansfeld 1999:5)

At any given moment, Otavaleño households have members and social networks in far-flung North American, European, and Asian locales selling their goods and, in so doing, reproducing their distinctive way of life. Otavaleños’ sense of community and identity is continuously forged by participating in key events—baptisms, weddings, and other rituals—that solidify a sense of identity and community. One of the most interesting aspects of Otavalo’s entrepreneurial ethnic culture is that already in the 1940s there were reports of Otavaleños selling their goods outside of Ecuador—which suggests that the emergence of the global “ethnic” market boosted, but did not create, the long-standing practice of contemporary far-flung commercial trading. Clearly, then, Otavaleño insertion into the contemporary global economy “does not signal the corruption of a more ‘authentic’ native Andean way of life. In fact, the absence of merchant Indians, long-distance exchange, and complex deals for ‘foreign goods’ represents a diminishing of indigenous society” (Colloredo-Mansfeld 1999:125).

Zorn (2004) has traced the fortunes of the Andean community of Taquile, a small island on the Peruvian side of Lake Titicaca, as it became progressively enmeshed with the global ethnic tourist market. Unlike Otavalo’s long historic trajectory of long-distance, commercially oriented weaving, tourism and the marketing of ethnic weavings in Taquile is relatively recent. Prior to the early 1970s, virtually all of Taquile’s weaving was destined for use and not sale. Thirty-five years ago, most households were primarily engaged in agriculture.
Like the Otavaleños, Taquileans actively embraced tourists and responded to their need to encounter (and purchase) the “authentic,” including the chumpi (Quechua, faja in Spanish), exquisitely designed woven belts, one of the most characteristic Taqilean weavings. And again like the Otavaleños, Taquileans maintained a strong emphasis on agriculture and variety of communal and social institutions. But, unlike the Otavaleños, Taquileans went far beyond merely expanding the household-based manufacture and marketing of textiles, for they channeled “the money earned from textile sales . . . to build community-based tourism businesses and services” (Zorn 2004:85).

Taquileans’ initial ventures into the tourist market were partly triggered by the active involvement of a Peace Corps volunteer, who took it upon himself to market some of the island’s weavings in Cusco during the early 1970s. These years coincided with an influx of tourists, and by 1981 Taquileans had founded a cooperative geared almost exclusively to those tourists. In a symbolically significant move, Taquileans called their cooperative “Manco Capac Taquilean Crafts Association,” after the first Inca monarch. They purchased boats to take tourists back and forth between their island and the Peruvian mainland, and founded restaurants and lodging houses for tourists wishing to stay overnight (Zorn 2004:85–91, 121–122).

Time-honored communal institutions have provided an organizational springboard enabling Taquileans to face up to the challenges of the tourist market. Taquileans have organized at least half a dozen different committees that have jurisdiction over some facet of the tourist sector (e.g., a committee on housing, one on food, and so forth). One of these committees applied for and received a grant from the Inter-American Foundation to purchase motors and boat parts necessary to transfer tourists to and from the island, and other grants have enabled community members to buy solar panels for their homes and restaurants. Taquileans have traveled to and performed “ethnic” dances in Washington, D.C., and have even built a museum that displays and sells local, “ethnic” handicrafts (some not actually from Taquile). And, in a classic (and recent) case of the invention of tradition, a “Festival Fair” emerged (Zorn 2004:117–125). Clearly, the spurring or reinvigoration of tradition has gone hand-in-hand with a global tourist market. In an example of the transnational connections that Taquileans and tourists have forged, Zorn recalls:

I received soon after September 11, 2001, from Juan Quispe, who had traveled by boat to an Internet café [on the Peruvian mainland] . . . an email: “Please we want to know that you are well. We cry and suffer because of so many disappeared people in New York and in Washington. Please tell us that you are well.” Because of tourism to their community, Juan and other Taquileans felt connected to people in the United States, through direct experiences not mediated either by Taquilean migration or through mass media. (2004:129)

**Transnational Production and Labor**

Globalization is about much more than the mere flow of people, images, or culture: it has much to do with the transnational, relatively unfettered flow of capital and investments, the
production and distribution of goods, and the relentless drive to increase profits (Harms and Knapp 2003). These imperatives, coupled with inexpensive labor and other lower costs in Third World countries, as well as technological innovations that make it relatively simple for manufacturing plants to shut down at one site and re-open at another, account for the increasing production of goods in countries such as in Mexico primarily for consumers in industrialized countries.

The global economy is also, and unquestionably, "profoundly gendered" (Mills 2003:42). Regardless of country, region, political system, or ethnic or cultural boundaries, transnational factories and agribusiness enterprises mass-producing goods for First World consumers (such as the author or readers of this textbook) are overwhelmingly staffed by young women and even girls. Indeed, young women and girl workers, toiling ten or fourteen hours a day with low pay, and no job security or health benefits, almost certainly assembled (in Malaysia) the Dell laptop with which I have written this book; assembled (in Mexico) my television set and DVD player; and sewed (in Guatemala and Honduras) the jeans and tank top that I wear at this very moment. In the Caribbean, so profound and widespread has been the incorporation of women into the formal (i.e., extra-domestic) workforce, and so important is their labor and income for their households, that to still think of the "male breadwinner" is a myth (Safa 1995).

The highly gendered distribution of global labor is buttressed and ideologically justified by a global ideology stressing the "natural" aptitude of women in assembly and light manufacturing plants, and that these young female workers are also far more submissive—or potentially far more docile—than their male counterparts. This seemingly "natural" manual dexterity and an equally "natural" submissiveness, coupled with labor costs that are a mere fraction of those in the United States, Europe, or Japan, drives the incessant search for female labor in Third World countries. This transnational "affirmation of the body" (Stoler 1995:115) is a key metaphor and ideological linchpin structuring the gendered segmentation of global labor, perhaps overshadowing ethnicity or race as crucial cultural manifestations of contemporary global capitalism. The search for inexpensive and docile (mostly female) workers also generates circuits of mobile transnational labor. Although migrant farm workers in the United States represent one example, another is that of the (often illegal) domestic workers providing services for (and hidden away in) the homes of the wealthy and influential in the United States (Mills 2003:45–46; for a more thorough discussion of Hispanic/Latina domestic workers, see the section "In the United States: Domestic Workers in the Midst of Affluence" later in this chapter).

The increasing participation of women in transnational production and service industries generates contradictory consequences for women and men. For example, although women are often wrenched away from family and home, transnational work provides them with more disposable income and sometimes a greater sense of autonomy, as is displayed in their ability to initiate courtship, or their decreased dependence on their male spouses. Yet, these same conditions often clash with entrenched gender roles and expectations at home. And males, often locked out of the labor market, and/or left behind, may experience "crises of masculinity" (Mills 2003:49–53). The following sections illustrate the role of class, ethnicity, and gender in underpinning transnational production.