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ABSTRACT

The globalization of childhood revolves around the immersion of children into consumer capitalist culture. Children become adept cultural actors, grafting global goods and services onto their locally embedded lives. I argue that the integration of the global into the local – glocalization – is best understood diachronically in terms Appadurai's concept of global flows of culture and synchronically in terms of Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus and cultural capital and, specifically, how elements of global culture becoming central to distinction, class position and sense of self. Referring to data from an exploratory study of 11-12 year old Irish children, I argue that the children realise themselves as individuals and attain social position through mixing and matching global and local cultural forms of cultural capital.

Keywords: Consumer capitalism, global flows, field, habitus, cultural capital, self-realization.

Words: 6,828

Glocal children: The interpenetration of the global and local in an Irish village

Globalization is often conceived as an inevitable, unidirectional process through which global social, cultural and economic forces infiltrate, colonise and eventually destroy local culture (Peterson, 2005, Zelizer, 2002). Any local differences are seen as merely glosses to this underlying process (Bourdieu, 1998, 2003, Bryman, 2004, Ritzer, 2000, Tomlinson, 1991, Tsing, 2005, Wagnleitner, 1994, Wallerstein, 1990). However, others have argued that the local is never eliminated and that globalization is best conceived as a *glocalization* – literally a hybrid of *glo*bal and the *local* – that is the process by which global elements of culture become grafted onto local cultural life (Holton, 2005: 22-3, Robertson, 1995). This mixing of the global and the local is seen to take place in many different ways, through the market (adapting products to local demands), migration (foreign nationals having children with locals), the media (local versions of global programmes), the arts, food, music, sport and so forth. Glocalization, then, involves children, in their everyday life, mixing and matching global cultural elements with local ones (Langer, 2005, Nieuwenhuys, 2010, Peterson, 2005, Rizzini and Bush, 2002). Through this mixing and matching, children develop tastes, lifestyles and an individual sense of self.

The cultural legacy of nation-state construction and nationalism is that we are still inclined to think of children as growing up in discrete societies, learning different languages and embodying local and national habituses and practices. There is, however, increasing realization that children are being socialised into identities and practices that are as much global as local in origin. The question is how can we identify, describe and analyse this process, this mélange of the local, national and global. I argue that, theoretically, we need, following Appadurai, to

conceive of globalization as a long-term process of cultural change. However, we also need to develop a more synchronic, structural theory that reveals how global cultural elements become incorporated into the everyday lives of children, particularly in terms of class position and maintaining and developing a distinctive sense of self. I argue that this can be achieved using Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus, capital and distinction.**1** Finally, I apply this theoretical approach to the analysis of material that emerged from an exploratory study of essays about themselves and their everyday lives written by school children in an Irish village.

Global consumers

The analysis of the influence of globalisation on childhood often focuses on the immersion of children into a culture of consumer capitalism (Cook, 2004, Langer, 2002, Zelizer, 2002, Peterson, 2005). Children become socialised into a habitus in which their social position and sense of self is constituted through media, marketing and advertising. They become inserted into a habitus of product differentiation and choice, of being knowledgeable and informed about global music, games, sports and celebrities. Their world of family, community, religious and educational life becomes permeated by forms of communication and meaning that are based on the language, symbols and practices of the market. The informal, 'hidden' agenda of socialisation and education is that children learn to become autonomous individuals that learn to live with the constant stimulation of their appetites and desires and the restraining and balancing these within the context of making strategic consumer choices. The processes of individualisation and globalisation become deeply interwoven with the local and personal. These processes are often deemed to have definite outcomes. First, they are seen to threaten the bonds

of family and community, leading to fragmented, anomic lives in which children's intimate relations with significant others become objectified (Langer, 2005: 261). Children learn to relate to significant others and themselves as consumer objects. They become part of a world in which peer evaluation is based on 'goods, media characters and product knowledge'(Cook, 2004: 152). Second, the flow of media and marketing messages is seen to undermine and erode local and national culture: the skilled manipulation of marketers and advertisers make global media and entertainment products and services more exciting and attractive. Unless local and national culture is dressed up by marketing and advertising, they are in danger of being seen as dull and unattractive (Inglis, 2008: 138-44). Third, the stimulation of appetite and desire and the encouragement of self-expression and indulgence can be seen to undermine a culture of critical self-reflection together with participation in and commitment to commitment to civic, environmental and religious institutions(Langer, 2005, Larsson et al., 2010). Fourth, the flow of global ideas and practices, is deemed to promote a 'new individualism' in which children are expected to live dynamic, flexible, mobile, cosmopolitan lives which undermine local commitment and embeddedness (Elliot and Lemert, 2006, Elliot and Urry, 2010).

Global Flows

To understand how globalization influences the everyday lives of children in Ireland, and elsewhere, it is necessary to develop a long-term perspective and to conceptualise how Irish culture, which until the 1960s was predominantly insular, local, English-speaking and Catholic, became permeated by global cultural flows. We need to have a vision of different cultural seeds – different ways of seeing, being in and understanding the world – beginning to flow around

Ireland and becoming embodied in the lives of children. Appadurai (1996) has argued that there are five dimensions or '-scapes' to global cultural flows. The degree to which these flows become embedded varies across different societies and relates to the development of the state, other institutions, technological infra-structures and so forth, as well as, at the micro level, the personal circumstances and experiences of individuals (Appadurai, 1996: 33-7).

The first flow (ethnoscapes), involves the circulation of people in and out of a locality: those who go out for holidays or to learn, work or do business, and those who come in as tourists, immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers. As Appadurai points out (1990: 297) it is not just the physical movement, but it is the ever-increasing acceptance of the reality that we live in an age where people on constantly moving around the world to work, travel, holiday, visit friends and family. The second flow (technoscapes), revolves around the movement of technological goods and services. Children grow up in a world in which there is a constant flow new and better machines, along with knowledge of new and better ways of doing things. This flow of technology comes through people, the mass media and, increasingly the internet.

The third flow (financescapes) has to do with finance and pertains to the amount of money, goods, shares and services that move in, around and between societies. In Ireland, the flow of money in the form of direct foreign investment as well as international bank loans had a dramatic impact on the everyday lives and standard of living of Irish children. The fourth flow, 'mediascapes', is concerned with the reception and dissemination of knowledge, information and images of life produced through mass media companies which own film studios, television companies, newspapers, magazines and so forth. Increasingly Irish children see and understand themselves in terms of stories, reports, media personalities, media celebrities and sports stars. The final flow 'ideoscapes', has to do with the ideas and knowledge. While Appadurai (1996:

36) emphasizes ideas about freedom and rights and the images of the ‘good’ society that emerge from debate and discussion, I argue that this flow also includes ideas about what constitutes a ‘good life’ in terms of lifestyles and what Foucault (1984) referred to as ‘the care of the self’. The flow of global ideas and knowledge were central to Irish children moving from a culture of self-denial propagated by the Catholic Church, to one of self-indulgence propagated by the market and the media (Inglis, 2006).

Cultural fields and class position

Following Bourdieu, I argue that children internalize and reproduce social structures through their struggle for position, recognition and distinction. These structures become inculcated in the form of a flexible, dynamic, transposable ways of being in the world, or a habitus that orientates them towards the attainment of different material and symbolic forms of capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 97). Children engage within various cultural fields that include family, school, sport, religion, media and the market. Their engagement revolves around the embodiment of a habitus that is particular to each field. Being a member of their family, school, sports team, media audience and consumer, means adopting a particular habitus, the shared, taken-for-granted way of being that structures what they do and say. It becomes second-nature to them. It becomes part of the cultural air they breathe. What is of interest here, however, is the movement between the local fields of family and school and global fields of consumer capitalism.

However, Bourdieu insists that the engagement in each field involves a strategic struggle to attain position. This primarily involves embodying the habitus of the field which structures practices. The disposition and practices of children in each cultural field leads to the

accumulation of the specific forms of capital that are available in each field. In cultural fields, the predominant form of capital is cultural capital. For example, in the family children learn acquire language, knowledge and skills that are essential to their success in school and other cultural fields (Bourdieu, 1973, Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). However, children also struggle to attain social capital by creating and developing a network of friends and symbolic capital by attaining the honour and respect of parents, teachers, friends and neighbours. Thus, for example, children struggle within school to attain educational capital in the form of good grades, but also struggle to be well-liked and appreciated. While Bourdieu sees the struggle for capital as a form of strategic interested action which is not always or necessarily conscious or intentional; it always involves embodying the arbitrary but taken-for-granted cultural life into which people have been socialised (Bourdieu, 1985: 112-3). So children learn that being successful in school involves playing the educational game that is by playing the role of ‘good’ pupil, knowing, interpreting and adapting the rules, reacting to the plays made by teachers and other pupils, as part of their struggle to maintain and develop the capital accumulation, their social position in the school, and their overall class position. **2**

As well as, then, struggling for position within each of these fields, children also struggle for class position. Children maintain their class position by developing distinctive tastes and lifestyles which is attained through the material and symbolic appropriation of goods and practices (Bourdieu, 1984: 173). The social position of children is primarily structured by the volume and value (or quality) of the economic and cultural capital they have inherited. The economic and cultural wealth of their parents structures their participation in the market. The inherited cultural capital will orient children to specific social class tastes and preferences. For example, those who grew up with classical music will be more oriented towards learning a

classical instrument. They learn to play the game of consumer choice, how to recognise and talk about products and services and, in so doing, how to talk about themselves. Their tastes and lifestyles reproduce their social position and, in turn, their social identity and sense of self. It is this process of self-realisation through consumption which is central to individualisation and the demise of the dominance of religion, family and community.

There is another dimension to globalisation; the cultural goods and services that produce class position and sense of self have, increasingly, origins outside the local and the national.**3** One of the consequences of globalisation is the increase in the volume and value of global cultural capital in producing and reproducing class position and the decrease in the volume and value of local and national cultural capital. Local cultural difference is maintained when it is a valued source of cultural capital. Unless knowing, understanding and embodying local and national cultural remains an importance source of cultural capital and central to maintaining and developing class position, it will decrease in significance.

What needs to be investigated, then, in studying glocalization, is the balance between local and global cultural capital, how globally developed tastes and lifestyles are interwoven into local everyday life and the impact this has on the habitus of the children, the way they see and understand themselves and the world in which they live. In an attempt to bring some conceptual and empirical clarity to this debate, I looked at a village in Ireland and, in particular, at the lifestyles and practices of 11-12 year old children in their final year in primary school.**4** I wanted to investigate to what extent and in what ways the lives of Irish children had, through global cultural flows, become colonised by consumer capitalism or to what extent was family, school and everyday life in the village the cultural mainstay to which global cultural flows made only superficial difference (Cook, 2004, Langer, 2002)?

The Republic Ireland is a good place to examine these interactions (Holton, 2009, Inglis, 2008, Keohane and Kuhling, 2004, Kuhling and Keohane, 2007, Maher, 2009, Van der Bly, 2007). Until the 1990s, it was a comparatively homogeneous, insular society and culture in which ninety per cent of the population were white, English-speaking Catholics who had been born in the country. Throughout most of the twentieth century, Irish culture and society were dominated by the Catholic Church which regaled against consumerism, materialism and emphasized the importance of family and the virtues of humility, piety and self-denial (Inglis, 2006). The pervasiveness of Catholic habitus was strongly linked to the dominant position of the Church in the fields of health, social welfare and, in particular education. Over 90 per cent of primary schools in Ireland are still under the patronage of the Catholic Church (Clancy, 2007: 106). In many respects, it was socialisation within schools and families devoted to the Church which was central to creating and maintaining Irish difference (Inglis, 2008: 115-58).

Towards the end of the last century Ireland opened up to global cultural flows (Appadurai, 1996). During the 1990s, it experienced rapid economic growth. In 2002, it was designated as the most globalized country in the world (Kearney, 2003). Ireland had moved from being remote and insular to having one of the world's most open economies. Global investment and trade flowed in and out of Ireland more freely and rapidly. Ireland also scored highly on the use of modern technology, travel and communication outside Ireland, and involvement in global organisation and politics (Inglis, 2008: 16-17). Increased prosperity meant that children had increased access to global media and entertainment products and services which flowed freely into the country. The question, then, is whether the consumption and embodiment of these products and services are simply grafted onto strong local cultural roots, or whether they have the effect of contaminating the roots, undermining the traditional importance of family and

religion, and producing a new homogenised Western sense of self (Illouz and John, 2003, Inglis, 2008).

The Study

Ballivor is village in County Meath, about fifty miles from Dublin. During the 1990s it became a satellite suburb of Dublin. Between 1996 and 2006, the population expanded from just over 383 to 1,212. The local primary school felt the impact of this explosion in population. Quite quickly there was as many children born and reared in Dublin as there were from the village. As in all primary schools, the children spend half an hour each day learning religion: most of the preparation for receiving Catholic sacraments is done through the school. The children also spend up to an hour each day learning the Irish language: this is compulsory in all Irish primary schools.

The village was unusual as for nearly thirty years it was home to NEC, a Japanese multinational computer components factory. In its heyday, the factory employed over 500 people. It brought employment and prosperity to the area. However, the factory did little to change the culture of the village. There was nothing in the village that suggested any Japanese presence. Indeed, other than a small neon sign for Budweiser in the window of the local pub, there was no visible sign of cultural globalization.

In 2005, when Ireland was still experiencing rapid economic growth, I asked 28 children in their final year in the school to write a short essay for about 30 minutes on ‘My World’. I told them that this should be about themselves, and that it should be a short description of their everyday life and the world in which they live. When this was finished I asked them to complete

a short two page questionnaire which dealt mainly with their lifestyle and hobbies, their favorite television programs, films, games, magazines, sports, food and so forth, the people they admired, and which countries they had visited.**5**

The majority of the children's essays filled about three-quarters of a hand-written page. Even though the children were generally of the same age, the standard of the essays varied significantly. Some were very sophisticated, others were poorly written and organized and littered with grammatical and typographical errors. Nevertheless, they revealed the fluid, adaptable and dynamic way in which they local and the global interacted in their lives. It must be remembered that the essays were written for a stranger and were, then, a demonstration of their cultural capital and an identification of their positions in the local cultural fields. The responses to the questionnaires were less satisfactory and I have only used them for purposes of additional information.

The essays were transcribed as much as possible – some sections were illegible – leaving any misspellings or grammatical mistakes intact. Most of the children wrote about what they did each day or week; only a few made references to broader social, political and environmental issues. Generally, the lives of most children revolved around sport, entertainment, family and school life. However, what emerged from the essays was the centrality of village life and the way in which elements of global culture fused with local and national culture. As an example of this fusion, and of a complete essay, this is how one girl described her world:

> My name is Sarah. I like to horseride, play piano, swimming and tae kwan do. My favourite programms are Simpsons. My favourite food is curry, irish stew and spaghetti bolognese. My favourite thing to do on a Monday is to see my friends after the weekend.

> On Tuesday is Tae kwon do. On Wednesday I go shopping. On Thursday I do tae kwan do. On Friday I go to scouts. On Saturday I do horseriding and Sunday I so swimming and spend time with my family. Ballivor is a great village. My favourite football team is Manchester United.
>
> My favourite singer is 50 cent. I like to play football with my friends in the local GAA pitch. I have 1 brother called Michael. I have a pet dog called Buddy and a bird called Chirpy. My favourite DVD is A Cinderella.

The essay provides an insight into the habitus and cultural field in which Sarah operates. She has developed a lifestyle and sense of self that revolves around choices in sports, media and entertainment. It is the combination of these choices that define her cultural difference and class position. What distinguishes Sarah out is her piano playing and horse-riding. Her taken-for-granted world revolves engagement in local cultural practices which are interwoven with the consumption of global cultural products. The infusion of the global into the local is particularly evident in her choice of music, film, soccer team and her practice of *Tae Kwan Do*. She mixes this with playing football on the local GAA pitch: the *Gaelic Athletic Association* (GAA) is a national association that controls and regulates traditional Irish sports. The mixture of global and local was also reflected in the answer she gave to the question on people she admired in the questionnaire that she completed: Lance Armstrong, Mary McAleese (President of Ireland) and Celine Dion.

The ability to purchase these products is related to Sarah's social position with the class, school and local community. Although the children came from the same village and attended the same school, it was obvious from the essays, that there were strong divisions between levels of

economic and cultural capital. Only four of the twenty-eight students mentioned horse-riding as a sport. Even in a rural area in Ireland, it is an expensive recreation. Sarah had also travelled abroad. In her questionnaire she noted that she had been to Wales, Spain and Finland. And yet she is obviously deeply embedded in the local.

The way the global and the local became fused in the everyday lives and cultural tastes and preferences of the children is particularly evident in relation to food, sport, entertainment and travel. Much of this relates to the consumption of global goods and services which are part and parcel of accumulating global capital which not only positions them within the local cultural field but which is central to their cultivated identities and sense of self (Delaney 2010: 32).

Food:

Food has become a major indicator of the way global and local tastes and preferences become fused. Creolization, has its origins of the blending of African and European (especially Mediterranean) forms of cooking in the Southern United States. Developing global food tastes can also be seen as a form of embodied global cultural capital. However, there was little evidence of the creation of new dishes or recipes combing local and global foods. It was more about combining a local diet with food of different ethnic origins: there was regular mention of curry, spaghetti, pizza and burgers and chips, as well as more traditional Irish food such as soup and steaks. But there was little or no mention of Chinese, Thai or Japanese foods.

Eating global foods is also a matter of availability. As well as developing new tastes and preferences much depends on whether prepared fast-foods are available in the local supermarkets and the existence of cheap ethnic fast-food outlets and restaurants in the local area. However,

there was little evidence that the children were consciously adopting food tastes as part of a strategy of developing global cultural capital and reproducing or improving their social position. But it was part of their habitus. The impression is that they embodied global cultural capital but that it was not reflected upon, let alone a conscious, intentional strategy.

Sport:

Like most villages in rural Ireland, Ballivor is deeply embedded in the GAA and many of the children made reference to playing *gaelic* football and hurling. Playing and following traditional Irish sport is an important form of cultural capital. There were frequent references to the success of the local team and, from the way some members of the team were mentioned specifically, it was obvious that was an important dimension to position in the field of sport as well as overall class position. One girl mentioned the sport medals she had won.

However, as we saw with Sarah above, the acquisition of sport capital was also related to participating in and being knowledgeable and informed about global sport. As in the field of entertainment, distinction was obtained by through the choice of sport stars with which the children identified. The admiration of English soccer players was common, probably because of the coverage it receives in the Irish as well as English media (to which access is readily available).

It is important to put this fusion of local and global sports into historical context. Up until 1971, the GAA authorities banned members from playing and attending foreign games (effectively rugby, soccer and cricket) and this was enforced at school as well a club level. But sport has become a global cultural phenomenon and from the essays we get an insight into how

much it occupies the minds of these children. The number of children who mentioned playing soccer was quite small, particularly in comparison to the number who watched it on television, mentioned English soccer clubs as their favorite team, and English soccer players as among the people they most admired. But, again, it is the easy way in which the local mixes with the global which is most revealing. Of the 81 people who the children said they admired, 35 were from the world of sport and 17 were soccer players in the English Premier League.

Entertainment:

Perhaps the greatest mix between the local and the global is evident in the entertainment preferences and choices of the children. Television is a major dimension in the children's lives. Twenty-one children mentioned watching television in their essays. Most of what they watch comes from global sources. When they were asked in the questionnaire about their favorite television channels, 52 mentioned non-national channels compared to 24 who mentioned Irish channels. Of course, it must be remembered that there are effectively only four national channels compared to numerous global channels. Nevertheless, 12 of the children mentioned Sky television first. In their essays, nearly one third of the children voluntarily announced that they liked to watch *The Simpsons*. When asked in the questionnaire, 15 listed *The Simpsons* as one of their favorite programs with 10 mentioning it as their favorite program. Whatever the messages contained in *The Simpsons* it is safe to assume that they are being received fairly widely by young people in Ballivor. Indeed when it came to declaring their favorite programs, national or home-made programs hardly got mentioned. Only four national programs were listed compared to 78 non-national programs. Again it seems safe to say that the staple television diet of these

children were programs made in America and Britain, but that they seem to flip between television channels with the ease that they flip between watching television and going out and playing *gaelic* football and hurling. Computer games did not feature very strongly in the essays, only 5 mentioned playing them. However, in the questionnaire when asked to name two of their favorite games, 18 of the children mentioned computer games: the next most frequently mentioned was the board game *Monopoly* (8 times).

Although the Irish film industry has been very productive in recent years, and Irish films have developed an international reputation, there was an imbalance in the children's favorite films. The vast majority (54) mentioned Hollywood or British movies, while only 4 Irish films were mentioned. Similarly, in relation to singers and groups, 49 non-national ones were mentioned compared to only 3 national ones. But there was an unexpected similarity in the choice of favourite singers or groups: 11 of the children said *Emimem* was their favorite while 6 mentioned *50 cent*.

When it came to written material, none of the children mentioned reading books in their essays. However, in the questionnaires, of the 29 favorite magazines listed by the children, 25 were foreign. There was a division between girls and boys. Twelve of the 13 girls said they read a magazine, but only five of the 15 boys did so. While most of the boys mentioned sports magazines, the girls referred mainly to lifestyle and gossip ones. The division was less marked in terms of books: 11 of the 35 mentioned were Irish.

Position with the field of entertainment was also related to the choice of celebrity with whom the children identified. The alignment with certain celebrities was central to playing the entertainment game and to creating and maintaining a sense of distinction. What is not clear, and which needs to be investigated, is the extent to which the celebrities act as a form exemplary

prophets promoting and reinforcing the notion that the self that is primarily realized through consumption.

Travel:

As Appadurai identified, one of the main dimensions of globalization is the flow of people around the world. During the period when Ireland became identified as the most globalised society in the world, the proportion of non-Irish nationals in the country grew to 10 per cent. While there were no non-Irish nationals among the children I studied, there were a small number in the school children from Africa and Eastern Europe. This exposure to other cultures is an important dimension of globalization. However, foreign travel is also an important form of cultural capital. The children had been to fourteen different countries, all Western. The most frequently mentioned were England, Spain and France. But travel was directly linked to class position. While 11 of the children said they had been to at least 3 countries, there were seven children who not been outside Ireland and another seven who had only been abroad once.

The Glocal

The lifestyles, practices and habitus of these children can be understood in terms of shifting balances between the significance of local and global forms of cultural capital. The most important form of embodied local cultural capital is attachment to family and community. This is accumulated through sharing time and space, engaging in ritual interactions, developing knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the local, of people, events, history. Another

important source of local cultural capital is the GAA, embodied through playing *gaelic* games, following local teams and identifying with the national stars of the sport. Many of the children also referred to Irish pop stars. However, while they may be different, these local cultural products are not only presented and packaged to make them commercially attractive. In this way they become part of consumer culture, and enter into the global flow of culture.

What makes these Irish children the same children from the rest of the West is their consumption of global cultural products. Their position in the local cultural field, their sense of identity and distinction, is influenced by their accumulation of global cultural capital. For most of the children, the majority of the media, entertainment and sport products they preferred came through the global flow of culture and were mostly American or British. The extent to which many of them referred to similar products, suggests that they may be central to creating a sense of shared experience which is as much a part of identity, bonding and belonging as belonging to family, community and the local GAA.

There is strong evidence that the children are becoming the same as other Western children and part of an increasing homogeneous global culture. What made Irish children different in the past was the centrality of the Catholic Church in their lives. What emerged from their essays and questionnaires was the absence of religion. There was little or no mention of God, saying prayers or going to Mass. More significantly there was no evidence of the humility and piety that were previously so central to being a good Catholic. These children can be seen as secular liberals who wrote openly and frankly about their pursuit of pleasure. In this way, their habitus and sense of self has been structured more by global than local cultural forces.

As with Langer and Farrar's (2003) study of Australian children, there was little overt evidence of the importance of being Irish. There was little or no mention of traditional Irish

culture, particularly music. Similarly, although they spend up to five hours a week learning the Irish language, none of the children used or made reference to the language. It may well be that what made Irish people different – the sense of self that emerged from being symbolically dominated by the Catholic Church and the English for hundreds of years – is beginning to disappear.

Conclusion

The way the global and the local interconnect continues to be central to understanding the globalization of childhood. While there have been many important studies that shine a light on this interconnection, the task is to develop an appropriate theoretical framework and method of empirical investigation. I have argued that globalization is not a one-way process: it always involves glocalisation and, particularly, how the global becomes integrated into the local. This is a long-term process and I have suggested that, following Appadurai (1996), is best conceptualised in terms of the increasing penetration of global flows into local everyday life. However, Appadurai's model does not illuminate how the global becomes structurally embedded in the lives of children. This is where Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus and different forms of cultural capital are useful. Children can be seen as involved in a strategic struggle to maintain and develop distinction and class position through participation in different cultural fields. They become immersed in habitus of taste, choice, and lifestyle which becomes second-nature to them. They become skilled at using their inherited economic and cultural capital to make lifestyle choices and develop a distinctive sense of self. What has changed with globalization is the extent to which global consumer goods and services become increasingly significant in attaining

distinction and class position. What needs, then, to be empirically investigated is the extent to which this shift from local to global cultural capital takes place in different localities. I have suggested that a useful way of undertaking such an investigation, to reveal the habitus and cultural practices, is to get children to write about themselves.

While it is obvious that global entertainment products have penetrated into the everyday lives of the children in this study and that they have become central to their personal identities and sense of self, there is little evidence that this consumption dominates their everyday lives which revolve around family, school and the local community. Moreover, if as Giddens (1990: 20) argues, one of the characteristics of globalization is a disembedding or lifting out of social relations from local contexts and their immersion into global time and space, then there is little evidence that these children live global lives. However, one of the main findings would be that there is a seamless interconnection between the local and global cultural consumption with children being able to flit between one and the other. It could be argued that the way this consumption is grafted onto the everyday local lives of the children is evidence of hybridity.

There is, however, definite evidence that these children are becoming more like other children in the West. They are less influenced by Catholic and national cultural discourses and practices. There are few signs of the culture of piety, humility and self-denial that were central to the Irish Catholic habitus. Nor are there many signs of any identification with the Irish language or traditional Irish music. On the other hand, there is definite evidence of the children being socialised into a culture of self-realisation through consumption.

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Notes:

1. While Bourdieu (1998, 2003, Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1999, Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2001) wrote extensively about globalisation, he focused more on economic structures and, in

particular, American imperialism. Moreover, in his analysis, he did not make much use of his concepts of field, capitals and habitus.

2. Bourdieu regularly referred to the relation subjective world of individual actors and the objective world of history and space, that is between habitus and field, as developing ‘a feel for the game’ (Bourdieu, 1990: 66-68).

3. An indication of the cultural globalization is that in Bourdieu’s (1984) analysis of the class structure of French society, the cultural goods and services included in his study to identify class positions were almost all French.

4. The study contributes to the revelations about children’s beliefs, practices and lifestyles that emerged from the millennium *Write Now* project (O'Connor, 2008, O'Connor et al., 2004).

5. I recognize that researching children raises numerous methodological and ethical issues (Christensen and James, 2000, Mauthner, 1997, Morrow, 1999), but the permission of the school principal and the presence of their teacher did not significantly undermine obtaining valid and reliable data (Punch, 2002).