

# Appadurai Discussion Questions and Topics

Bill Gregory

- 1) Appadurai: go! (perspectives and opinions of the article- clarify any confusions before delving into the bulk of the work and get brain running)

confusing  
 about globalization  
 no points  
 candy!  
 transnationalism

- 2) According to Appadurai, is a global culture emerging? Why?

Yes - flows between his 5 "scapes"

- there's no grounding of community / no roots - "imagined communities"
- many cultures to choose from b/c of media, technology
- cultures still indigenize what's coming in - make their own interpretation which doesn't mean the same thing (Mexicans ≠ hot dogs)
- although Americanization takes place, groups interpret these values/objects differently

- 3) Explain what he refers to as "imagination." What is the significance of this imagination?

social practice

- \* key social concept of globalization
- no base for an ethnic group so you can choose your own imagined culture
- allows ppl to see themselves in different cultural contexts outside of their own <sup>due to</sup> mass migration: media
- transnationalism

- 4) Does he believe in individual agency? Explain.

- a result of "imagination" - must have individual agency to consider oneself in a different role or cultural context

→ does Appadurai think this is a good thing? Yes.

- ppl can avoid homogenization / have choices
- but mass media gives a biased view b/c it is controlled: not completely objective - so is this a true choice?

pg. 49  
synthesize

- 5) Appadurai discusses "scapes," what are they and why are they important?

Ethnoscapescapes • Technoscapescapes • Financescapescapes • Mediascapescapes • Ideoscapescapes

↓  
 landscape of ppl who constitute shifting world - tourists, immigrants, refugees  
 ↓  
 global configuration of technology - new move across previous boundaries  
 ↓  
 disposition of global capital - currency markets, stock exchanges, megamonies  
 ↓  
 electronic capabilities to produce into mass media  
 ↓  
 ideologies, political images

interactions btwn economy, culture, politics - building blocks of "imagined" worlds

relate to each other but operate independently as well

may at times contradict each other - created b/c there were no current interpretations that were complex enough

shouldn't separate ourselves from others - new from old

disjuncture - things out of context / reconfiguration  
 but ppl still imagine themselves as one

ways to begin to understand current disjuncture

6) What is deterritorialization?

physical movement of ppl

because of mass media & social imagination/individual agency  
ppl are still able to remain connected & participate  
in the same culture

7) Is Appadurai an idealist or a materialist? COMBO

idealist - "imagined" communities & landscapes

idea of finance & technology

exchange of cultures not actual material things

materialist in part? production & consumption  
economics

8) Does he advocate a particularistic or holistic perspective? COMBO

wants to push away from holistic view

big generalizations with a broad framework

but does look at the particular & examples

9) Of Appadurai's ideas and principles, what do you think has and will have the most significant impact on anthropology?

framework of the Scapes - useful & accommodating

sense of interconnectedness (disjunctures) yet chaos at the same time

hetero- and homogenization → due to globalization some societies blend together but others resist & try to retain their culture

(Megan thinks its a conspiracy about Disney)  
Figment

10) What are your opinions of the reading?

Some good points but jumbled in (possibly made up) big words  
does good job of taking on big & confusing topic

p.50 "one man's imagined community is another man's political prison"

p.49 "if your present is their future and their future is their past..."

we can selectively draw on the past - there's no linear cultural projection

born in India  
went to  
Brandeis