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## A Sociological Inquiry into Globalization

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NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

A Sociological Inquiry into Globalization

A Capstone Submitted to the

University Honors Program

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements of the Baccalaureate Degree

With Honors

Department Of

Sociology

BY

QUOCNAM TON

DeKalb, Illinois

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## ABSTRACT

Despite the broad understanding of globalization and its influences, this paper intends to fill the gaps on the scientific study of society, social patterns and interactions, and culture of everyday life as a result of globalization. This paper will discuss issues that arise during the phases of globalization and is observable in the advancement of technology, changes in economic relationships, influences on nation-states, regions/cities, and individuals. I will argue in this paper that globalization is society's number one influencer in shaping the world's social landscape.

## INTRODUCTION

Globalization is society's number one influencer. Through sociological inquiry into globalization, this paper will synthesize the ideas of the theorists to understand the further contemporary theorists' views of how globalization influences the social landscape. This work will also include critiques of previous works on globalization highlighting that additional research is needed to further understand globalization's process and its effect. We can observe societal changes in human history through the state of governance, economic models, technological advancements and crisis. These unique observable factors are indicators of how the processes of globalization influence societal changes and is an accurate observation that can explain the changes in ways society interacts in response to societal changes. Globalization is the process of making something known worldwide and is driven by the endless process of accumulating capital in order to reinvest and accumulate more capital. To understand globalization and its effects on the societal landscape, we must identify the structures and forces of globalization. The application of this research could be applied to different degrees of institutional changes in societal experiences from personal, local, regional, and global. The change in the social landscape by way of globalization extends far beyond where these changes initially take place.

## THE NETWORK

Manuel Castells' (2010) network concept helps understand the role of infrastructures in the different phases of globalization. A network is an arrangement of a group or system, of interconnected people or things, that operate to exchange information and further develop

professional capacities that expand the network in which they belong. One of the earliest networks described by Immanuel Wallerstein (2004) as a large geographical zone exhibiting division of labor resulting in significant internal exchanges of basic or essential goods as well as flows of capital and labor. By 'phases of globalization' I mean comparing the acceleration of globalization and the influence it has on society's relationships throughout history particularly the last half-century. Physical and non-physical networks in transport, technology, communication, and the combinations are interlinked forming a more complex network. Both the physical and non-physical networks should be analyzed together to understand the collaboration between the personal, local, regional, and global forces to address the challenges discussed in this paper.

John Rennie Short (2004) suggests the geographical locations of contributors in the network account for their roles in social stratification and uneven development across the globe during the phases of globalization. Infrastructure development and economic development are intertwined; for economic development to happen, an infrastructure to support it must exist. This relationship between infrastructure and economic development are active in the inclusion and exclusion process of globalization (Gottdiener et al. 2015). Businesses and organizations require resources for production and acquire them through a connection to networks sourcing supplies and talent to fulfill production input and output demands (Short 2004).

Sasskia Sassen's (1991) sociological inquiry into globalization focuses the global cities and the transnational migration emphasizing the spatial realities of globalization as a process that reconfigures the space and the place. This process, the force of globalization, is an endless

accumulation to sustain the institution's growth creates a concentration of people and resources that shape the region of the institution to fulfill production needs. Globalization simultaneously concentrates and disperse its influence across a wide array of social aspects. Sassen's perspective is supported by Mark Gottdiener et al. (2015) using the Post-Fordism analysis to explain this phase of de-industrialization and illustrates the importance of studying developed and developing countries to see the involved combinations of global, national, and local forces that may operate independently of the global economy.

In '*The Network Society*' Castells (2010) provides observations of society having advancements in social, technological, economic, and cultural transformations coming together forming a new society known as the Network Society. As a result, these observations become Castell's key features of globalization. The Network Society is the organizing and distribution of wealth and power using the network of interactions in communication and information technologies that distribute information and knowledge across society. These networks extend beyond the locality as these networks do not have borders and do not discriminate contributors, but the process of "contributing" either includes or excludes people via the inequalities from those networks (Castells 2010). Structural features of networks have exclusions built-in. Different networks have different sets of exclusions and inclusions. For example, Silicon Valley is known for their technological innovation, their network of engineers are far different from those who are from a journalism network, whereas Silicon Valley is the location for movers and shakers in the engineering network.



Contributors are the influences on the input of the economy between nations, regions, and localities. They include specialized services, low/high skilled labor, and other production/supportive roles that help maintain the relationships of the network.

An example could be demonstrated through Sassen's (2016) argument of inequality of income that is through increased connections. For instance, the fiber optic cable was made to replace the widely used coaxial cable to connect residents to the internet. The territorial installations required more education and specialized training to lay the lines. Consequently, consultants advised the corporation to reallocate resources in support of the new fiber optic technology by hiring new journeymen and outsourcing customer support call centers to the Philippines. The income of journeymen who laid and installed coaxial cables remained the same for their lack of skill and knowledge compared to the higher income of the new journeymen. The outsourcing of consultation advisors created more jobs while creating an unequal income outcome. The outsourced jobs are taken up by highly specialized consulting companies that assist in staffing laborers to lay the lines, technicians to install the cables, and call centers to service the local areas. This example is used to describe the power shift in operations in these big cities, and where the consolidation of income shows through the contributors of the network.

Short (2004) proposes that the largest cities are some of the most globalized, but not all cities are gateways for globalization. What separates the focus of Short cities and their connections or disconnections are the locations of command and control functions of the global economy. Command and control functions serve as a hub in the flows of goods, people and services and continuously attract talent and ideas (Sassen 1991). Short (2004) uses the lack of

connectivity to the *global network* of cities and offers an array of characteristics to what Short et al. refers to black holes and loose connections to illustrate a global urban hierarchy. Short defines black holes as large cities with a highly concentrated population that has minimal connections compared to other cities with a mild concentrated population with high connectivity to the network. The latter being rich than the prior, being the latter (black hole with loose connection) experience high levels of uneven development and are riddled by mismanagement and corruption at the national level (Gottdeiner 2015).

#### THE CONNECTION OF SPACES AND FLOWS

The *spaces* and *flows of globalization* are often discussed in various manners dependent on the sociologist. Castells (2010) and Sassen (2016) evaluates joint dominance of cities including New York, Tokyo, and London for an understanding for the spaces and flows in which globalization is evident in influencing our society. It is through Castells' (2010) idea of the advancement of technology that makes Sassen's (1991) idea of dispersal and new forms of centralization in select cities being centers of command and control of those spaces and flows.

Castells (2010) suggests that through globalization, power and capital now flow through the informational flows connecting and creating new forms of centralization across the globe. These new forms of centralization are emphasized by Sassen (1991) to make sense of urban systems and their global networks. The function of the select cities being centers of command and control becomes large and sophisticated, the headquarters begin to outsource their central functions to highly specialized service firm (Sassen 1991). Although organizations are located in places, their organizational logic is placeless and their production is purely dependent on the

space of flows (Castells 2010). The space of flows is a process that allows distant synchronous, allowing firms to have real-time interaction with their employees and advanced services.

Advancement of telecommunications and information technologies are essential components of Sassen's (1991) idea of capital and its accumulation becoming increasingly 'mobile' and is evident in the geographical relocation of business firms headquarters in response to core production process moving towards more advanced services (Wallerstein 2004). The new command and control centers are locations of consulting firms that offer advanced services through consultation include finance, insurance, real estate, consulting, legal services, advertising and design, marketing, public relations, and other places where the process and systems of a production could be innovated through the handling and generation of knowledge and information (Castells 2010)

Not to dismiss the importance of location, it has become increasingly important where firms decide to place their command and control centers. Castells emphasizes location is important because it increases the flexibility in strategies of firms' control on their operation to benefit from various supports of various governments to take advantage of lower costs, support infrastructure such as mass transportation, and access to more talent. Firms can now divvy up their organization by production processes while maintaining control from a single location (Sassen 1991).

#### *Connected Core and Periphery*

Immanuel Wallerstein's (2004) theory uses nation-states as a unit of analysis, highlighting the forces that hinder the progress of development comparing why and how

countries succeed and fail as a nation to develop, gain recognition of other states, or to advance their world economic standing. Wallerstein's analysis is primarily focused on the division of labor, referring to the roles that are occupied in the production process. There are different approaches to allocating tasks to specific individuals or groups (ex. Race, Gender, Social becomes Gendered Division of Labor, Racial Division of Labor, Social Division of Labor). The efficacy of the division of labor sequentially cemented the world economy into the Capitalist World-Economy that includes "institutions, the combinations of which accounts for its processes, and all of which are intertwined with each other" (p. 24). Globalization is the precursor of the current capitalistic system which could not exist without the framework the world-economy provides (Wallerstein 2004). An example is the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) introduced the core-periphery concept to explain the transition from the industrial society to capitalist society as a response to the global economy (Wallerstein 2004).

A 'core' achieves wealth through the exploitation of the disadvantaged 'periphery' that supplies low-cost labor, natural resources, environments for waste disposal, and markets for excess production (Wallerstein 2004). Wallerstein believes states are strong because they can form quasi-monopolies. The core-periphery model is referred as the '*Axial-Division of Labor*', allows powerful economic countries (the core) to trade with weaker countries (the peripheral) to move surplus-value flows from the periphery to the core.

The core production process is a product market controlled by a quasi-monopoly that eliminates competition. The peripheral production process is a product market where there are no controls of competition, allowing many sellers and the product market become very

competitive. This type of production related to low-wage labor, basic technology, and less information and knowledge-intensive forms of production.

An example of the core peripheral production process within a country could include Silicon Valley, California. Silicon Valley is a core area with a high concentration of technologically innovative businesses are located. Compared to Dekalb, Illinois where technology is less sophisticated and wages are low. An example of the core peripheral production process within a city includes Chicago's Downtown, represents a core area and the adjacent neighborhoods and neighborhoods in the outskirts are considered the peripheral.

First, I want to conceptualize what is happening in China to understand what can happen in the absence of economic controls and why. An entirely free market with no restrictions will decrease the level of profits and the interest of producers because the idea of endless accumulation would not exist (Wallerstein 2004). Producers prefer monopolies to increase the profit margin between the cost of production and the sales price.

Globalization makes it challenging to define core and periphery countries because of the broad distinctions, countries could possess both periphery and core production processes. China makes a great example to identify the influence of globalization and difficult distinctions. As the country occupies large land mass and is currently specializes in the periphery production process. China has a government that does not allow cities to skip the national and access the global network nor does China allow rural populations to pour into urban areas. China has gone through transformations lifting trade barriers to entry and increased global competition enticing core nations like the United States to export manufacturing processes that increased industrial production and firms in China. This relationship places China as a periphery country,

and they are trying to change their identity (Wallerstein 2004). To change their identity from periphery to core, China has created controls on competition to enforce quasi-monopolies via patents reserving the rights increasing the profit margins for the producers. Not only do patents increase profit margins, but they also become a burden on other global producers making the production process detrimental to smaller producers as the cost of infringements and enforcement are easily absorbed by the larger producers.

The allocation of tasks to specific areas now creates a Global Division of Labor to what is described by Sassen's (1991) the concept of global cities. The unequal exchange is a result of the core profiting from the peripheral through the axial-division of labor where the peripherals are dependent on the core (Wallerstein 2004). Sassen expands Wallerstein's history of capitalism (i.e., producing and integrating systems of uneven development in terms of economic and political power through the core-periphery relationship). By suggesting to evaluate the effects of globalization based on observable features of urban life throughout the world, Sassen concludes that increased mobility of labor, the emergence of global cities, and the evolving roles of the nation-state is a source of division of labor.

### *Income Makes It Possible*

Immanuel Wallerstein (2004) conceptualizes household income being the smallest unit of analysis to understand the capitalistic approach of globalization. Income is what makes the capitalist economy work. A household is defined as a group of people who pool their incomes together over a long period. Five types of income households receive and the first are wages, which are income from a job. The second type of income households receive is from subsistence activity, anything that could have been paid to do but done by self like cooking and cleaning. The third type of income households receive is petty commodity production, where households make something to sell to the market like selling homemade soaps and shampoo. The fourth type of income that households receive is rent. The fifth type of income households receive is the transfer of payments, which is any income the household receives for being a member for a particular group, similar to social security checks and tax refunds.

### *THE GLOBAL CITY AND COMMUNITY*

As cities are becoming increasingly integrated with the global networks, Saskia Sassen's (1991) emphasizes the flow of information and capital. It is imperative to understand firms in historical times cannot be equal to the firms we presently understand, as they are both contextually different (Marcuse 2016). Sassen (1991) agrees with Castells (2010) that the flows of information are no longer bound by national borders and systems of regulation. The dispersal of the firm's activities through direct foreign investments and affiliates still relies on central coordination and servicing from headquarters. An example given by Sassen is the financial flows may circle the globe, but the markets are located in the cities.

Sassen's (1991) command and control functions is a new trend that is taking over the space of flows as capital is becoming mobile, the new spatial manifestation of power and function dominates our society in the creation of the hierarchy between urban centers (Castells 2010). Sassen (2016) argues the production of the global economies require intermediation between both ends of the network and was made possible by the big mergers and acquisitions of firms (2004) and their concentration is what makes a city global.

Peter Marcuse (2016) critiques Sassen's work by suggesting there is a lack of research on the drivers shaping the cities. Corporations and governments are the real drivers of inequality. The global cities do not create command and control centers, instead it is the command and control centers that make up the global city (Marcuse 2016).

### *Features of a Global City*

There are three tendencies Sassen (2004) touches on when applying her analysis to illustrate Chicago as a global city that once hosted many manufacturing and agro-industrial businesses that helped fuel the urban economy. The first, from the 1960s to 1980s, Chicago started exhibiting Rust Belt characteristics such as declined industry, aging factories and a declining population (Sassen 2004). By then de-industrialization has taken a quarter of Chicago's factories and almost half of the manufacturing jobs further disconnecting the city and its region.

The second is the concentration of capital in the hands of the partners, owners, and professionals associated with managing the network. The areas of high concentration of state-of-the-art specialists provide advanced services to the global networks of alliances (Castells 2010) and partnerships that are continuous in strengthening their relationship (Sassen 2004).



The transformation of Chicago through de-industrialization has reallocated resources and reinvested in advance service centers such as Chicago's downtown where prominent specialized corporate consulting offices have set up shop to be the command and control centers of their global business (Sassen 2004).

The third is a growing marginalized population that is excluded from the advance service networks (Sassen 2004). The operations of the network can include and exclude actors based their ability to contribute to the goals of the network. Those who do not possess skills or services that help the goals of the network are excluded (Castells 2010). Sassen's (2016) idea of having intermediations to maintain the network has driven a demand for both high-level talent and low-wage workers.

#### *Human Capital*

Globalization has changed the relationship between contributors and managers of the network. The concentration of leading industries dictates the decentralization or the centralization of human, technical, and financial capital (Sassen 1991). The advancement of technology and innovation changes the processes of production, further changing the configuration of networks to adjust operations to meet the new demands of society suggests globalization can be studied through economic relationships (Castells 2010).

Ursula Huws (2006) supports Sassen (1991) in her observations on globalization through the structure of the population and their relationship to the increasing significance of command and control centers. An observation discussed if of human capital can either be footloose or fixed to specific regions or cities, as people are traveling farther than they did in the past,

further changing the identity of the workplace and workforce (Huws 2006). Huws (2006) uses a labor-work relationship analysis to identify how globalization has influenced society's relationship with work. With the emergence of the global economy as discussed in earlier parts of this paper, Huws (2006) discusses three different types of labor-relationships that are a result of globalization delocalizing cities and their regions.

The first relationship is being fixed, requiring individuals to be close to the site where work is performed. This includes businesses that are involved in 'making, mending, cleaning, moving physical goods or the delivery of personal services to people in real time and real space' (Huws 2006:36). An example of fixed labor includes restaurant workers, sweatshop workers, and postal delivery workers. The second relationship is footloose, where labor can be performed anywhere and does not require the laborers to be at the command and control centers to complete the function needed. An example is call centers that handle corporate customer service issues for the local bank branch you visit or *eWork* allowing computer users to receive remote services from an off-site technician helping them with software issues. The third is the fractured relationship that involves a combination of fixed and footloose features. An example of fractured work is a minerals futures manager who lives in Australia and stays up later to communicate with their resource exploration teams in Africa. They live in different time zones, but both are attuned to the time in which work can be executed and updates filed.

#### *Type of Population*

Ron Grossman's (2004) idea of globalization can be tracked by the characteristics of the city's population. Using Chicago, Grossman (2004) draws on Chicago's diverse population in his

analysis to the influence of globalization through the response to crises and the movement of people in the city's population. The core concept of Grossman is that global cities are global processes rather than a destination.

For Chicago, the city's neighborhood is shaped by its inhabitants and throughout decades of historical observations and analysis. Chicago has been a haven of the multicultural population starting with the urbanization when the city decided to import laborers from Europe to help build the great Windy City. Aside from the response to crises, the core concept is the migration of people from around the world pouring into Chicago is compared to the flow of information using networks. Just as during the Jim Crow era, African Americans used the railroad networks to distribute information of a better life in the north and to assist southern African Americans to travel north to seek refuge. After the Vietnam War, Vietnamese refugees occupied the 'Argyle' Uptown neighborhood. With the influx of multicultural migrants, their cultures follow and embed themselves in concentrated neighborhoods creating a small niche market and developing a new network within the global network where the local becomes global, and the global becomes the local (Robertson 1995).

Gross (2004) relates that the health of the city can be measured by the health of the largest population, the middle class. After the passage of the G.I Bill after WWII, more Americans went to school and removed the human supply of unskilled labor. The constant flow of migrants replenished the shortage of unskilled labor and never stayed long enough to reach an overpopulated point of uneven development that's mentioned and is contradicted by Mark Gottdiener et al. (2015) that will be later explained.

### *Movement of Population*

The population comprises the contributors and managers of the network in both core and peripheral countries. Gottdiener et al. (2015) suggest the rise of megacities, a feature of urbanization is a result of globalization. The global restructuring affects cities, national economic state intervention, and the trends of population growth and change. When cities expand and population booms during rapid urbanization, it becomes difficult for city authorities to provide a healthy welfare state managing the quality of life for their population. The difference in the rate of change in economic development and infrastructure development are active in the inclusion and exclusion process as by national policy, trade agreements, or by development.

Rapid urbanization affects the mass influx of population in two ways. Cities become overpopulated and do not offer enough housings to accommodate the new population. Second, is that the cities do not offer enough essential living services such as access to clean water and waste disposal (Gottdeiner et al. 2015). Within the core, the migrating population experiences social stratification in the global cities due to the inability to afford the basic living needs that push them to set up their dwellings on the outskirts of the city. Gottdeiner (2015) explored the coping mechanism of the newly arrived population, they begin an informal economy, creating a periphery at the core to achieve different types of income as mentioned earlier by Wallerstein (2004).

Some countries exclude populations from advancing their contributing status to the network by national policy. An example is China setting restraints on regions from migrating to other regions in an attempt to smooth the impact of uneven development (Gottdeiner et al.

2015). Exclusion through the enforcement of trade policies is evident in the post-Fordism analysis mentioned earlier in this paper. During the de-industrialization of key manufacturing cities such as Detroit decided to move their fixed labor manufacturing production to overseas factories, the regions' population had to cope by migrating towards other cities and regions in search of an economy that'll sustain their quality of life or creating temporary-to-permanent housing called slums (Gottdeiner et al. 2015).

### *Social movements*

The imbalance of development and exclusion from information flows causes those affected by the class structure, seek better qualities of life and are often migrating closer to the core or take part in urban social movements (Gottdeiner et al. 2015). In addition to the formation and the emergence of shantytowns and dealing with the uneven development, urban social movements to deal with political struggles that exist in the '*black holes*' such as corruption and mismanagement of resources.

### *Migration*

Short (2004) supports Gottdeiner et al. (2015) and Sassen (2016) by informing readers the power of cities by accessing the global and skipping the national. The powers of cities can accommodate international firms to take up space in exchange of favorable economic policies such as tax breaks, favorable environmental deregulations, and supportive infrastructures. The rising power of cities through the accommodations of international firms, from state intervention and at the cost of their population; further drive uneven development in the

region and contribute to the exclusion of the population. These international firms require skilled labor and talent to continue their operations and pushing those without the skills demanded by the firms to a coping state of society, the informal economy. Short (2004) supports Huws (2004) in highlighting the irony of the fixed, footloose, and fractured work analysis. The uneven development in trade policies affecting those that are relegated to the informal economy creating peripheries at the core where footloose labor is often performed by the most fixed individuals and vice-versa. Short (2004) take on measuring the influence of globalization by studying the connectivity of a city and comparing their outputs in production processes.

## CONCLUSION

From what I have explored in this paper, each theorist has a different approach to the influences of globalization on our social landscape. From my personal experience in brokering used plastics in Vietnam and the European Union, I will conclude an adaptation of how globalization being the number one influence in the social landscape.

Castells (2010) highlights the Network Society is a product of the advancement in communication and information technologies that changes the operation of the network and its integration into the global network. This changes how capital and labor flow through the space in which accumulation of both take place. The relationship between the production processes of the core and periphery eventually lead to exclusion and division.

Wallerstein (2004) believes the capitalistic economy through globalization, is the significant influence of our society. The endless accumulation of power and capital that is profit

driven and powered by personal and household goals of income through the labor of the core and periphery systems.

Gottdeiner et al. (2015) focus on globalization as rapid urbanization and the shift of responsibility that allows the local to skip the national and access the global network (Short 2004) can be seen across the globe especially in developing cities and de-industrializing cities. This again creates an exclusion and inclusion relationship with the addition of coping mechanisms to deal with globalization.

Sassen (1991, 2004, 2016) offers this adaption the increasing inequality that grows with the central locations of top-level financial, legal, accounting, managerial, and top-level functions known as command and control centers. These areas of advanced services are features of a global city that widen the inequality gap between the elite professionals, specialists, and the urban population of service and industrial workers. Sassen credits communication and internet technologies accelerate the increasing inequality.

All of these points mentioned have been evident when I was traveling abroad for work brokering used plastics. First, Vietnam is an emerging economy that is dominating Southeast Asia in terms of growth. The former agrarian and periphery country lifted trade barriers and are investing in core production processes. Vietnam's first stock exchange went up in 2000, and three main cities have undergone rapid urbanization, transforming the country immensely. The investment Vietnam has taken to develop their financialization to accumulate capital, and their use of technology has driven the demand for advanced services from foreign firms. Second, Vietnam is investing in infrastructure in hopes of smoothing out uneven development though they face many challenges such as corruption and political ideology (Gottdeiner et al. 2015).

Vietnam has been following China's footsteps in changing their national global process identity. Because many of the former agriculture lands and manufacturing warehouses are now corporate offices, call centers, and new transportation developments help connect the concentration of wealth and power in the downtown area also known as District 1 or the Financial District to the newly developed districts surrounding downtown while avoiding the creation of slums and facilitating foreign trade and investments.

Vietnam's government assists in the forming of a quasi-monopoly for used plastics importation and is reinforced through governmental intervention eliminating all competition in the country for the person I was working for. Vietnam permits one license to import used plastics with restrictions on the source of used plastics. The government restricts the used plastics from South Korea, Taiwan, and other neighboring countries. Some countries become included from entering Vietnam's used plastic market such as Japan in forms of transportation development projects connecting Rach Gia, the nation's main seaport to the former capital Ho Chi Minh City.

During my time in Vietnam, the cities are concrete examples of the division of class and the five types of income are acquired simultaneously. After the laborers were done with work on the docks, they would head home and start producing plastic shopping bags. They would look after their parents who receive monthly social security, and they receive petty income from running a sandwich cart. I conclude that globalization influences many facets of society including on how we manage power and capital through the flow of information and knowledge. Moreover, also through human migration, carrying cultures across the globe mixing with other cultures, globalization shapes the social landscape in ways we conduct business,



generate income, how we are included and excluded, and most importantly how the relationship we have at the personal, local, regional, and national level.

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