



The Impact of Globalization on Cities

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ARTICLE INFO:

Article history:

Received 08 April 2018
Accepted 23 April 2018
Available online 12 October
2018

Keywords:

Cities;
Globalization;
Global City;
Environmental Values.

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ABSTRACT

A lot of cities nowadays are changing substantially due to the influence of globalization. The most significant impact of globalization is in cities, because the cities are becoming the rulers of the countries. In this process, a variety of urban developments on different platforms are awaiting cities. These developments are discussed on different dimensions. Here, the globalization process and the effects this process has on the understanding of city management, urban space and urban law are tried to be revealed. In sum, the effects of globalization on cities and the concept of world cities are forming. In the context of problems of globalization, the effects of globalization on economic, cultural, social, spatial and environmental values and understanding of management are examined. It was established that globalization also includes the increased movement of people, products, ideas, images, lifestyles, policies and capital and that it affects cities through local and global dynamics which in turn causes macro-urban and micro-urban changes. Conclusions were made that globalization tends to affect a lot of spatial, economic and social patterns which in turn affects cities but does not result in the same spatial patterns.

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY URBAN AFFAIRS (2019), 3(2), 108-113.
Doi:[10.25034/ijcua.2018.4707](https://doi.org/10.25034/ijcua.2018.4707)

www.ijcua.com

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Introduction

Globalization is one of the most dominating topics around the world and covers a lot of aspects which range from economics, politics, religion to social elements. The extent to which globalization has been influencing economic and social elements has been so significant that researchers like Brenner (1999) and Healey et al., (1997) consider it a global phenomenon just like its name implies.

Globalization consists of a lot of aspects and elements. Some of them tend to interfere and contrast with each other and therefore its meaning is always subject to a lot of different

definitions. Globalization can be defined as the continued increase in the movement of commodities, capital, images, identities and people through a global space (Jessop, 1998). A study by Amin and Thrift (1994), considers that globalization is not limited to the movement of physical things such as products and people but can also extends to include intangible things such as ideas. Thus, we can re-define globalization as the increased

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movement of lifestyles, policies, principles, ideologies, commodities and people through a global space. From this definition, we can note that globalization has a greater extent as it has been influencing a lot of aspects, most of them being social aspects such as lifestyles, culture, and images.

It is also important to note that the increase in globalization has been caused by two important things and these are technological and media developments. A lot of new and innovative technologies are now being introduced almost on an annual basis and they affect the way people communicate or share ideas (Taşan-Kok & Van Weesep, 2007). In addition, the growth and development of social media channels now play an important role in people's lives as they cause huge changes in people's tastes and preferences.

Irrespective of the causes of globalization, there are a lot of ideas which consider globalization to pose huge effects on the society. For instance, an idea given by Ritzer (2003) showed that globalization has huge effects on social aspects, values, norms and beliefs as well as activities and processes that help to identify characters of people. With regards to this aspect, it can thus be noted that globalization tends to affect the way people stay. This can be supported by ideas obtained from a study by Jessop and Sum (2000), which highlighted that there is now a huge shift in the way people are staying especially those in the cities as a result of globalization. This idea shows that there is a strong connection between globalization patterns and cities in terms of structure, style, designs or development. This is because changes in lifestyles, culture, tastes and preferences resulting from globalization tend to affect the way cities are designed and developed. This idea can simply be expressed and extended to the cities that are being urbanized.

Meanwhile, efforts to study the impact of globalization will not be complete unless more effort is devoted to studying how it affects cities. This is also because of ideas which have been given that showed globalization does not only affect economic elements but also causes a change in culture, lifestyle, opinions, beliefs, ideas, tastes and preferences (Johnston et al., 2003). Hence, we can expect that people's perception towards modern western architectural building designs to change as well as their desire to stay in the cities. More so, it was noted that there is a change in the way cities are being managed as a result of an influx of new ideas through globalization. With

all these ideas in mind, we can see that there is a greater need to examine the effects of globalization on cities. This paper, therefore, seeks to examine the effects of globalization on cities.

The Concept of Globalization and Urban Geography

As noted from the above explanations, globalization has a strong influence on urban geography and effort was once placed by the Urban Regional Research Centre Utrecht to examine the effects and scope of globalization (Jessop & Sum, 2000). The findings showed that ideas about globalization have been limited in terms of scope and that both its effects and scope are diverse and affect a lot of things such as urban development. This was further supported by ideas established in a study by of Tuna Taşan-Kok which highlighted that the effects of globalization are not homogenized and have a lot of effects on spatial patterns on the periphery of both developed and developing economies (Healey, et al., 1997). This, however, led to two important questions being raised, that is,

- What is globalization?
- How does globalization affect local specialties such as cities?

From these two questions, additional information and ideas were obtained which showed that globalization itself is always changing and that it poses effects on economic activities in cities. Hence, it can be questioned from these ideas;

- Whether globalization affects spatial, economic and social patterns?
- If all the places that are experiencing globalization have the same spatial, economic and social patterns?
- To what extent can we regard spatial changes in cities as globalization?
- Whether certain urban changes can be linked to globalization or not and if so how?

Observations were made that all globalizing cities are increasingly becoming similar (Hubbard & Hall, 1998). Whether the new city features are more important than the old age city features or not, it all depends on how people are viewing the newly globalized cities. Some of these aspects were narrowly covered and outlined in the Journal of Housing and the Built Environment in which it is highlighted that there is a relationship that exists between urban systems, local development and globalization (Bryson, et al., 1999). As a result, globalization was presumed as causing positive changes in urban systems and local development.

However, the extent to which globalization affects local urban systems and local development tend to differ with the way and

manner to which global and local aspects of globalization are being handled or

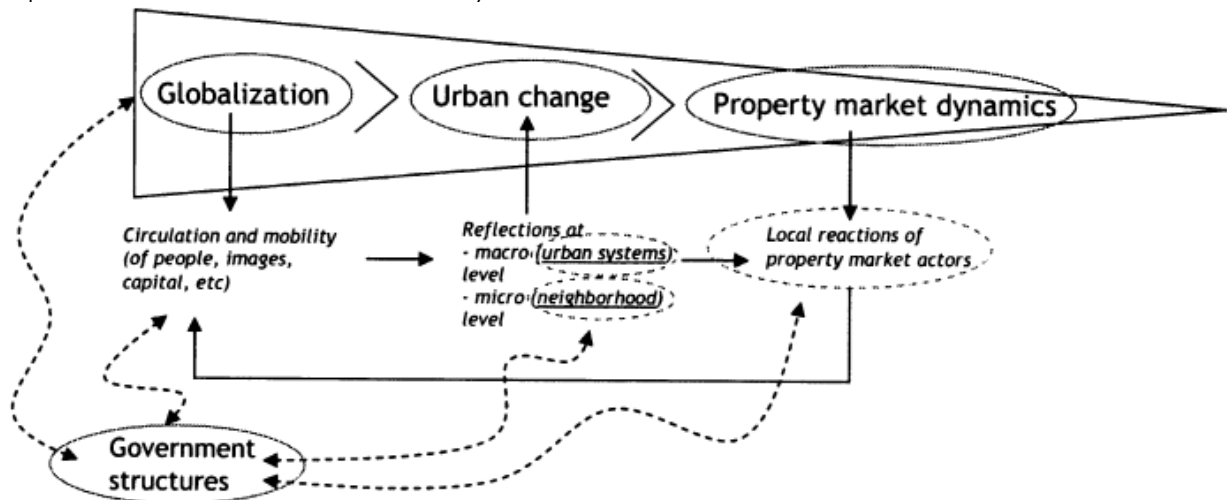


Figure 1. Conceptual aspects of globalization, urban change and property market dynamics

approached. This implies that globalization has its own different global effects and the way in which the local environment or people respond to globalization also influences urban systems and local developments going to change. Which implies that the greater the level and extent to which the global economy is globalizing will also have a significant influence on how other cities will be affected or will globalize. On the other hand, the more responsive the local people are to globalization, the greater the level of changes that will be seen in terms of urban systems and local development. As a result, this paper can, therefore, raise the following questions;

- What is really globalization and how does it affect cities?
- How do local and global forces contribute to urban change?
- To what extent do global processes affect neighborhood development?
- Why do cities that are part of regional systems still dependent on other cities when globalization can make them less dependent?
- How changes in global capital movements affect the real estate and property sector and in turn cause changes in cities?
- How can urban management be modeled to account or cater for the globalization of cities?

The above questions can somehow be grouped into four elements and the obtained elements are illustrated in a diagrammatical form as shown in figure 1. It can be noted that the effects of globalization will initially commence on a global scale then extend to the lower level. They also see changes starting

from the urban systems rising to affect the urban systems which in turn affect cities at the neighborhood level. It is at the neighborhood level that we find property market dynamics.

The figure above reflects globalization is a multi-faceted element which affects a lot of aspects. As noted, it affects the mobility and circulation of capital, images, products and people and this, in turn, causes urban change as it begins to reflect the micro-urban change and macro-urban change. There are also changes in governmental structures that occur as a result of globalization. Once governmental structures begin to change, urban changes both macro and micro, as well as changes in property market dynamics will be inevitable. Changes in property market dynamics usually cause a change in reaction by property market actors.

There are however ideas which go against some of the implications made by figure 1 and such ideas also agree that globalization tends to affects a lot of spatial, economic and social patterns, but they tend to disagree on the idea that globalization does not result in the same spatial patterns.

Efforts to examine how globalization affects cities can also be analyzed using the interaction of local and global dynamics as shown in figure 2.

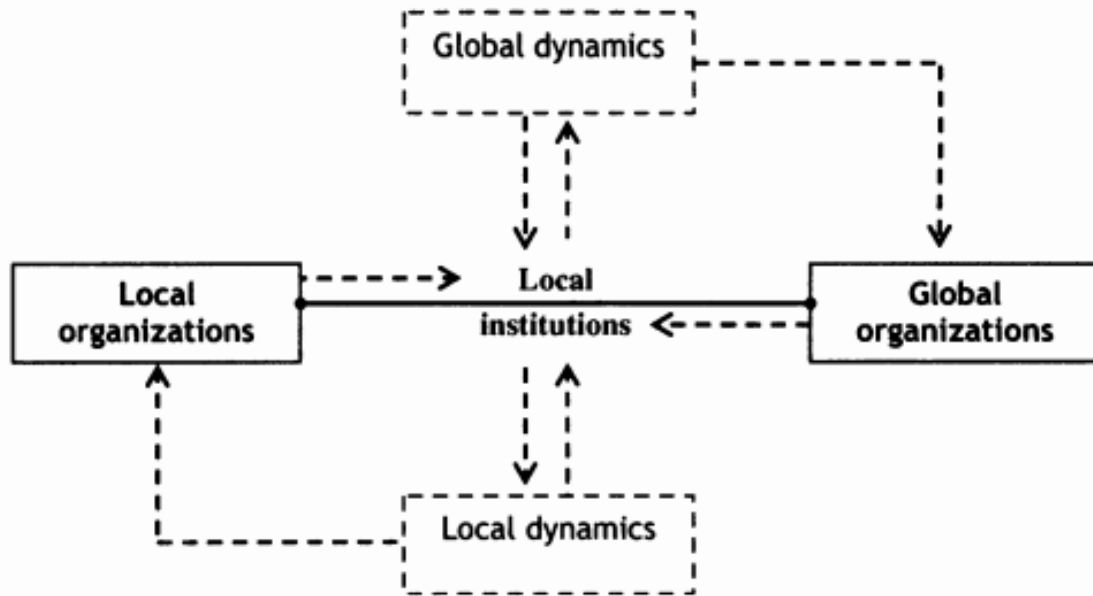


Figure 2. The influence of the interaction between local and global dynamics of globalization on cities. Source: Taşan-Kok and Van weep (2007). Global-local interaction and its impact on cities.

Figure 2 denotes that both local and global dynamics interact to cause changes in local institutions. The same applies to local and global organizations, they all pose effects on local institutions and it is through changes in local institutions that changes in cities will begin to take place.

What is being globalized?

Different ideas can also be given on what is being globalized. There are studies which show that globalization does not globalize anything (Jessop & Sum, 2000; Johnston et al., 2003). Yet, on the other hand, it can be noted that globalization affects almost anything be it retailing or consumption (Jessop, 1998). This can be supported by ideas established by Ritzer (2003) which suggests that globalization has initiated almost similar patterns of consumption with an increase in the creation of non-places. As a result, there is an increase in the number of entertainment centers, office parks, shopping centers that are being created as a result of globalization. However, the ability of other people in other cities to follow the same patterns does not mean that a standard or measurement or an idea that the effects of globalization are the same but rather serve as an inspiration for spatial development. Though cities may also take or assume the same architectural style, design, scale and function, it still remains the same that globalization is not causing the same effects across the globe or on cities (Johnston et al., 2003).

Urban change: Global and Local Forces

Global forces tend to have an impact on urban areas and such impacts are due to the following reasons;

Economic globalization causes cities to look more beautiful as capital funds are moved from one nation to the other especially from advanced cities to urban areas that may possibly be lacking in terms of development (Ritzer, 2003).

Increases in global competitiveness which is causing cities to seek new regulatory frameworks so as to provide support to non-market, neo-liberal and entrepreneurial market regimes (Taşan-Kok & Van Weese, 2007).

Cities are a form or representation of a legal system and their administrators tend to adopt social, political, economic, and local conditions. This is because urban development tends to assume of following certain patterns and hence making it difficult to have a model of a globalized city (Taşan-Kok & Van Weese, 2007).

Cities are always in competition for international funds and efforts to lure more funds than other cities will be reflected on how they react and position developmental activities so as to gain a competitive advantage over other cities (Jessop, 1998).

However, globalization is said to increase the subjugation of localities (cities or regions) to global forces (Amin & Thrift, 1994).

Urban Systems within The Global Network of Cities

When it comes to the idea of globalization, considerations can be made that cities can benefit positively from globalization. This is because cities can attain better positions in the world by boosting the competitive edge. This is also as a result of the idea that economic, political and social strategies adopted and implemented by urban governance do not only cause a change in economic performance but also result in additional economic development (Ritzer, 2003). Efforts to ensure that cities remain competitive require that cities possess sound and effective decision makers, organizations and actors. This is because the main emphasis is to get more global capital. As a result, municipal authorities will engage in activities that will see cities being developed especially to levels and standards where they can; lure more global funds (Taşan-Kok & Van Weese, 2007). Such can also be a reflection of the effects of globalization which may also cause cities to become a global network of each other.

Globalization and property markets

It is also important to note that there exists a relationship between globalization and property markets. This can be illustrated using ideas given by Ritzer (2003), which contend that globalization results in globalized cities which have features of cities as being financial centers and huge bearing of an urban economy. Such is possible when barriers that limit capital movement have been removed hence creating a new urban space and place for consuming, servicing, producing, working and dwelling. More investors who are in need of potential investment vehicles often turn to the property market for investment (Taşan-Kok & Van Weese, 2007). Such can have a huge impact on cities especially when investors from globalized nations begin to plough more funds into cities that are not globalized and developed.

Conclusions

Based on the established ideas conclusions can, therefore, be made that globalization tends to affect cities and its effects on cities is in a number of different forms. This follows ideas which have also been given which showed that globalization does not only affect economic elements but also causes a change in culture, lifestyle, opinions, beliefs, ideas, tastes and preferences. Conclusions can also be made that globalization tends to affect a

lot of spatial, economic and social patterns which in turn affect cities. Conclusions can also be made that though globalization affects cities, it, however, does not result in the same spatial patterns. Conclusions can be made in respect of the established questions that;

Globalization is the continued increased in the movement of people, products, ideas, images, lifestyles, policies and capital and that it affects cities through local and global dynamics which in turn causes macro-urban and micro-urban changes.

Changes in local and global forces contribute to urban change through the effects they pose on local institutions which in turn causes macro and micro urban changes.

Cities that are part of regional systems can still be dependent on other cities when globalization can make them less dependent because they are part of a network of cities which relies on other cities for products, services, ideas etc.

Changes in global capital movements affect the real estate and property sector and in turn, cause changes in cities as investors will be looking for investment vehicles which they can use to make investments. The notable investment vehicle being the property market.

Policy implications

There is greater need to take advantage of globalization especially in terms of people, products, ideas, culture and capital to positively design and develop cities in a way that will enhance people's standard of living and quality of lifestyle.

Domestic or local planning authorities and architects are strongly encouraged to adopt international standards in the day so as to come with developments and designs that are of international standard and quality.

Cities or urban administrators must have good management of public resources so that they be entrusted with huge global capital funds.

Better management of cities is needed so as to put an effective use of funds towards the development of cities.

Acknowledgements

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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