

Globalization

Globalization involves the circulation of money, commodities, technology, data, and employment opportunities beyond national boundaries and across different cultures. Economically speaking, it refers to the reliance countries around the world have on each other, promoted by unconstrained trade (Fernando, 2023).

While people have long sought to settle, produce goods, and trade in distant lands when transportation and technology allowed, global integration saw its first major upsurge in the 19th century. On the heels of European colonialism and trade networks, innovations in transportation via railroads and steamships along with communication tools like the telegraph enabled closer economic ties between nations. However, this first wave of globalization crashed amidst the catastrophe of World War I, protectionist policies, the Great Depression, and World War II in the first half of the 20th century. After World War II, the United States promoted efforts to revive international trade and financial cooperation under negotiated terms, kicking off a second wave of globalization from the mid-20th century through today. Despite periodic economic declines and growing political debates, this second wave of global deepening global ties has continued into the 21st century, albeit uneasily at times.

World-System Theory - Disagree

World-system theory sees modern globalization as the geographic expansion and intensification of a capitalist world economy that originated in 16th century Western Europe. It views the world as an integrated capitalist system focused on endless capital accumulation. Countries play differentiated roles based on their position in the global hierarchy.

While this theory rightly highlights systemic inequality between the industrialized core and developing periphery, I believe it overlooks positive elements of economic integration. It also downplays the agency of non-Western states to shape globalization. The theory's Marxist assumptions seem too rigid and deterministic.

World Polity Theory - Agree

In contrast, world polity theory emphasizes the cultural and institutional dimensions of globalization. It sees a universalistic world culture emerging, containing shared models around statehood, human rights, environmentalism etc. These cultural models exert an independent influence over states and societies leading to global policy convergence.

I find this view more accurate in capturing the complexity of globalization. Beyond just economics, it recognizes soft power shaping developed and developing countries alike towards common ideals like democracy and social equality, even if implementation remains uneven. I also agree that global civil society actors like NGOs are spreading universal norms and pressuring policymakers. While economic and power differentials persist, a global consciousness is emerging through both formal institutions and social movements. This cultural dimension will only grow as globalization continues.

In conclusion, world polity theory better resonates with my perspective. It allows room for both structure and agency in how globalization unfolds across very different nations adopting common principles and facing shared risks. This cultural view of globalization seems more multidimensional compared to neat center-periphery economic models.

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