

Assessing the Claim That We Live In a World of Globalisation

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Introduction

Globalisation refers to the process of interaction and integration among governments, people and corporations of different regions in the world (Baylis, Smith & Owens, 2017). Indeed, with the help of information and technology, the globalisation process is driven by international trade and investment. These interactions has impacts on culture, environment, economic growth, political systems and on the well-being of societies around the world (Baylis, Smith & Owens, 2017). However, this is not a new concept as people have been trading over great distances for centuries. Worth noting is that in the past few decades, the concept has intensified due to policy and technological developments, with the result being increased investment and cross-border trade and migration of people. This essay assesses the claim that we live in a globalised world. Specifically, the essay employs three major perspectives of globalisation and with this regard, use them to analyse the extent to which world we live in today is globalised. These perspectives are the hyperglobalists, the transformationalists and the sceptics (Held et al., 2000).

The hyperglobalist Perspective

This perspective holds that globalisation brings a new era where nation-states becomes irrelevant in the global economy. In other words, through the creation of international networks of trade, finance and production, globalisation denationalises economies (Held et al., 2000). A crucial part of this view is how capitalist system spreads its influence in all parts of the world, and the notion that the world is headed towards a period of global governance. For example, this view suggests that institutions such as World Bank and The World Trade Organization together with multinational companies will take over the traditional sovereignty nation-states (Held et al., 2000).

In the world today, this is evident in Ireland and Greece where the IMF intervenes in their economic affairs leading to corrosion of national self-determination.

This perspective also highlights the rise of global civil societies where NGOs such as Amnesty International and Greenpeace play a significant role in setting world politics agenda (Held et al., 2000). When it comes to culture, the hyperglobalists point out a rise in a global popular culture following increased penetration of cultures from one country to another (Held and McGrew, 2003). This penetration can be attributed to the growth in mass media (satellite television and internet) and cheaper travel, with events happening in one country becoming instantly accessible in all parts of the world. Here, the result is mass distribution of ideas, art, and music, which creates a borderless world with broken cultural barriers. It is worth noting that this perspective acknowledges that globalisation creates inequalities, but through expansion of capitalist markets, this will be solved over time (Milanovic, 2015).

Furthermore, this view is in line with the World Systems Theory which states that globalisation changes the structure of nations and eventually, a completely new structure with international division of labour is created. A good example is how large companies such as Toyota are gradually moving from their home countries to create factories in developing countries where there is abundance of cheap labour. Although it originated in Japan, the company (Toyota) has built over fifty factories overseas in more than twenty-six regions, including Bangladesh, Kenya, Malaysia, and Mexico. Therefore, the spread of multinational companies such as Toyota is proof of the interconnection present in the world today. In summary, from a hyperglobalist perspective, the world as we live in today is globalised to a significant extent, and this process is expected to continue in the future resulting in the end of nation-states and creation of a global age with global governance (Held et al., 2000).

The Transformationalist Perspective

This perspective suggests that although globalisation is occurring and resulting in many changes in the world, many things are still expected to remain the same. For instance, it suggests that nation-states will still retain enough power to determine how they behave in a global economy. Further, even when capitalist system continues to influence many countries across the globe, governments will retain their jurisdiction on taxation and economic policies (Giddens, 2009). As opposed to hyperglobalist perspective, transformationalists explain that nations will not be consumed by a global governance system, but instead, they will be forced to adapt an outward-looking position towards governance. They explain that nation-states will be forced to interact with international bodies, social movements and institutions on the global arena and that they will not lose their power (Giddens, 2009).

When it comes to culture, this perspective acknowledges that mass media, global migration, and telecommunications cause diffusion of cultural influences, but they believe the phenomenon is two-way (Giddens, 2009). Although western culture penetrates diverse regions of the world as evident in brands such as Coke and McDonalds, there also exists a counter flow of non-western culture. The counter-flow is evident in that foreign restaurants are built every day in different towns and cities across the globe. Furthermore, through the internet, dissemination of ideas has been made faster on an intercultural basis meaning that every region receives cultures from other areas in the world (Brandenburg & Wit, 2015). Therefore, rather than hyperglobalists' suggestion of cultural imperialism, the cultural exchange can be said to be a two-way dynamic. To this end, this perspective holds that we live in a world of globalisation and never before has the world been as globalised as it is now.

Another fact that proves we live in a world of globalisation is the spread of environmental problems that affect everyone such as global climate change and global warming. In fact, scientists show that there is little correlation between the pollution present in one country and the consequences it experiences. For instance, air pollution in Japan may also affect Russia. This example means that countries cannot find solutions to problems by themselves, but they need to be addressed on a global scale. This results in interdependence which is one of the main characteristics of globalisation hence act as proof that we actually live in a world of globalisation.

The Sceptical Perspective

This perspective argues that globalisation has been in existence for thousands of years and that the increase in social activities both locally and internationally does not mean that the world is changing as fast as it has been suggested. This perspective views globalisation in economic terms, but they dismiss the notion that the phenomenon is anything new. Similar to Karl Marx's proposition, sceptics consider that in the search for new markets, capitalism tends to be imperialist. This view also holds that globalisation is similar to western capital imperialism and that globalisation in the world today is only different from the past in terms of interaction between countries.

When it comes to culture, sceptics argue that cultures share ideas and they have always been mixed hence the current situation is nothing new. Therefore, with regards to the extent to which the world is globalised, this perspective explains that economic interdependence that has closely been linked to globalisation has been in existence for centuries. They tend to believe that the world is more regional than global, with countries within the same region trading among themselves, for instance, the European Union (Murray & Overton, 2014). Further, they point to

nations in the developing world and how they are struck by massive poverty as evidence that globalisation is not as much in the world of today.

Another argument raised by sceptics against globalisation in the world we live in today is the dissolution of nation-states. They explain that creation of a new order would be a problem since where a country is physically located determines the social and political conditions that exist in each nation-state. The dissolution of nation-states does not consider other key elements of society and could not be done without relocating everyone in the world to make a geographical arrangement of countries that is more manageable (Murray & Overton, 2014). Furthermore, they argue that merging of cultures is unrealistic and globalisation cannot cause lasting changes in contemporary society.

Sceptics feel that the internet, although a major facilitator of globalisation, does not have as much effect on globalisation as it seems to be. Specifically, they give the example of how the railroad that was supposed to connect Europe in the 19th century and how the telegraph was to overcome or minimize class and racial divisions in the USA. Here, they note that new technology brings with it a given set of expectations that are not reached overtime. They argue that the World Wide Web is just the same.

Conclusion

From the perspectives discussed above, the defining feature of globalisation seems to be the global capitalist system. The three perspectives have different notions, but they all seem to agree that a capitalist economy is a crucial element of globalisation. However, when it comes to politics, hyperglobalists state that the phenomenon of globalisation will result in an end of nation-states and a creation of a global system of governance. On the other hand, the transformationalists oppose this notion and claim that nation-states will always be in existence but they will need to

keep adapting to changes imposed by culture and increased capital flows. Sceptics also disagree with hyperglobalists and state that nation-states will always have the power to regulate economic affairs and impose taxes. In matters of culture, hyperglobalists explain that globalisation brings with it changes that work towards the achievement of a homogenous culture in the world. Transformationalists, on the other hand, state that globalisation will create a world with different cultures. Sceptics dismiss cultural integration and state that it is nothing new.

In assessing the extent to which today's world is globalised, the first two perspectives agree that the world is currently globalised than ever before, with increased connection attributable to the internet, mass media and quick communication. They believe that globalisation has affected every region in the world and this is likely to continue in the future. However, sceptics argue that the world we live in is not globalised, but rather it is just regionalised. In support of this claim, they list inequalities that exist between developed and developing countries.

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