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Urban development in the global periphery: The consequences of economic and ideological globalization

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Abstract. Globalization has two elements: economic globalization refers to the integration of global markets, while ideological globalization refers to the political ideas that underlie the spread of markets, trade, and democracy. Economic globalization is limited in its reach in the developing world: some cities have done well; some, despite not being globalized, have regional importance; and large regions and numerous cities have been bypassed. Ideological globalization, on the other hand, is far more widespread from an intellectual and a policy perspective. The tenets of ideological globalization are likely to work further to the relative detriment of the cities/regions in the global periphery. This is a "cumulative causation" argument that raises questions about the development prospects of peripheral regions.

JEL Classification: F01, H7, Z1

1. Introduction

What are the consequences of globalization for urban development in cities in the global periphery? This is a question of some significance, not only in academic terms, but also to begin to understand the emerging global map of welfare distribution and the policies that may be devised to address these consequences. In order to move toward some answers it is necessary to unpack three of the key terms – globalization, urban development, and periphery – and then analyze how the former influences the latter. The key themes I develop in this paper relate to the unevenness of globalization in international and intra-national terms which has created a large number of peripheral cities and regions, the relatively wider spread of the ideologies of globalization, and their implications at the local level. I suggest that economic globalization is only part of the appropriate framework for understanding urban development issues in a broad theoretical sense. A fuller understanding needs to incorporate ideological globalization – or the ideas on markets, trade, democracy, and governance that underlie economic globalization – which may be of more consequence than economic globalization itself for cities and regions in the periphery. This is significant because while economic globalization has created groups of cities with varying degrees of integration in the global economy, ideological globalization reinforces these divergent trends, working to the detriment of peripheral cities and regions.

The paper is presented in four parts. First, I elaborate on the idea of the periphery and show the extent to which economic globalization is associated with increasing regional polarization. Next, I briefly discuss the diversity of intellectual approaches to globalization and argue that from a policy perspective there is significant congruence. Third, I show why urban development policies in the periphery must be growth-oriented. Finally, I discuss three important tenets of ideological globalization and show how these principles lead to further marginalization of cities that are already on the margins.

2. The periphery of the global economy

Geographers are well aware that "periphery" or margin is a relative term. In any given system of places it is possible to identify places that are most developed along some agreed upon dimension, say average income; this is the core. In such a system there are places that are much less advanced (the periphery or the margin), and places that are at intermediate levels of development (the transitional regions). This is a well-known framework that has been applied to several geographical scales: at the sub-national regional level such as States or provinces in large countries like the U.S., China, and India; at the inter-national regional level such as Europe or southeast Asia; and at the global level. That is, the periphery is constituted not in absolute space but in relative space. Hence, it is possible to construct global hierarchies of cities (global city-world city-national center-regional center-local center) or regions.

This is an old problem in regional studies and in development studies. The core-periphery problem was identified early by Myrdal (1957) and Hirschman (1958) at the intra-national scale. Myrdal was particularly pessimistic about the development prospects of lagging regions as a result of what he called "cumulative causation", a process in which advanced, industrial, metropolitan regions continue to attract capital and skilled labor away from lagging regions. This results in "backwash" or the scouring away of lagging regions while the advanced regions continue to grow more rapidly. The core-periphery problem has been identified at the international scale by dependency theorists such as Baran (1957) and Frank (1967) who argue that the international core (First World metropolitan regions, or the metropole) grows by keeping the peripheral regions (especially in Latin America) poor and dependent on unequal trade with the core. In other words, the periphery is not new.

It is possible to argue the global periphery is constructed in two steps. First is the marginalization of many countries from global flows of capital and technology. Second is the marginalization of regions within these and other countries where there is little new capital investment. Let us consider the international dimension first and ask: is globalization associated with increased peripheralization? That is, have the gaps between leading and lagging regions (at different geographical scales) grown wider in the last two decades, and are there more regions now that are peripheral?

2.1. The international scale

At the international scale the answer is a resounding yes. Let us look at the evidence. Lant Pritchett (1997, 3), looking at income growth in developed and developing countries from 1870 on, says that "(D)ivergence in relative productivity levels and living standards is the dominant feature of modern economic history". He and other economic historians such as Jeffrey Williamson (1997) point out that the world's economies can be divided into two clubs – high income and low income – and economic globalization leads to convergence within clubs and divergence between clubs. Milanovic's (2002) calculations of world inequality over the past two decades shows that inequality at a global level is increasing, and at a Gini coefficient of around 0.68 it is the highest it has ever been and higher than in any single nation.

Now consider some recent data on summary indicators of global integration. Two points are highlighted in data from the World Development Indicators (World Bank 2001, Table 6.1) on two crucial indicators – trade in goods, and gross FDI – measured at two points in time (1989 and 1999) covering the decade of economic globalization's full flowering.

First, economic globalization, whether measured by trade or capital flows, is primarily a First World phenomenon; and just as significant, this is increasingly true. In 1989 trade in goods accounted for over 28% of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) GDP in the high-income economies; by 1999 it accounted for over 37%. The corresponding numbers for the low-income economies was 7.2 and 7.8%. In 1999 trade in goods and services were worth $10,589 billion in the high-income countries, $1,231 billion in East Asia and the Pacific, $772 billion in Latin America, and only $187 billion in Sub-Saharan Africa and $173 billion in South Asia (World Bank 2001). Similarly, FDI as a percentage of GDP is far more important in high-income economies than in low income ones. As with trade in goods this difference is increasing – from 15 fold to 25 fold in the ten-year period. "Fifteen emerging market economies, mainly in East Asia, Latin America, and Europe, accounted for 83% of all net long-term private capital flows to developing countries in 1997" (World Bank 2001, 317).

Second, there is great variation in the significance of trade among developing nations. In several countries, notably in Africa, trade in goods has actually declined, whereas the greatest gains have generally been seen in the Latin American economies. In China, India, and Brazil, vast countries with large economies, trade in goods accounts for small proportions of their economies (8% in China, 3.6% in India). In general, trade is seen to be most significant in the relatively small, open economies (South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, and perhaps as a result of NAFTA, Mexico). Remember that these trade figures include exports *and* imports, which, of course, include oil. The FDI data are similar to the trade data: general decline in Africa (where in every country other than Nigeria and Zambia, gross FDI accounts for less than 1% of GDP), some increase in Asia (also where the vast majority of countries have FDI at less than 1% of GDP), and significant increases in Latin America. Except in Latin America, FDI generally accounts for a miniscule proportion of the GDP. As a result, in almost all developing nations the domestic economy continues to be overwhelmingly important, and capital and migration streams flow more in response to domestic economic compulsions and conditions rather than international ones.

2.2. The sub-national scale

At the sub-national interregional scale too there is mounting evidence that divergence in development levels is the norm (see Fedorov 2002 on Russia; Fan 1995, Gustafsson and Shi 2002, Kanbur and Zhang 2003 on China; Chakravorty 2000 and Ghosh et al. 1998 on India; Akita and Lukman 1995; Aswicahyono et al. 1996 and Sjoholm 2000 on Indonesia; Ahuja et al. 1997 and Daniere 1996 on Thailand, etc.). For instance, in Russia Fedorov (2002) finds that the Gini of regional income inequality rose from 0.106 in 1990 to 0.287 in 1999; the Wolfson index of polarization increased from 0.099 to 0.403 over the same period. Looking only at rural inequality between counties Gustafsson and Shi (2002, 179) found that "most of the income inequality in rural China in 1995 was found to be spatial and the uneven development of mean income across counties stood for most… of the rapid increase in income inequality". In Thailand, Ahuja et al. write (1997, 42): "The urban or rural location of residence explains 17–18% of the [income] inequality in 1975, and the region of residence explains 14–15% (and) the explanatory power of both variables increases substantially over time: in 1992 the location of residence explains 28–29% of the inequality and the region of residence explains between 25–27% ... this suggests that the spatial dimension of inequality is gaining importance in Thailand." Chakravorty's (2000) analysis of new industrial investment in India finds strong evidence of intra-regional convergence and interregional divergence.

There is general agreement in this literature that leading regions are the prime recipients of new productive investment; as a result growth is concentrated in a few places while stagnation, even regression, is widespread. One of the interesting findings is that society-wide inequality changes (in Russia, China, India, Thailand) are driven by regional income differences; that is, interregional inequality is the driving force behind income inequality changes. However, the pre-global urban hierarchies appear to be susceptible to change. Rapid growth can be seen all across the city class size spectrum, just as the absence of growth and even decline are present among all size classes – that is, urban size is not related to growth or decline. The cities most likely to be bypassed by globalization are in inland or land-locked regions. Coastal locations are as privileged now as during the colonization period, though simple coastal location is no guarantee of success.[1]

3. Globalization or globalizations?

It is clear that economic globalization has bypassed many countries and cities, perhaps the vast majority of the low income developing nations. Does this mean that there are large parts of the globe that are untouched by globalization? The answer to this question must begin with the recognition of a clear distinction between two contrasting overarching views of globalization. One

[1] It must be noted that there is also a significant literature on interregional convergence (see Sala-i-Martín, 1996). Much of the evidence comes from the developed world (the U.S., the European Union, Australia), with some scattered support from developing nations (see Cardenas and Ponton 1996 on Colombia).

school of thought sees globalization as a homogenizing process, an economic and cultural assault led by the American juggernauts of Cocacolonization and McDonaldization. Some academics (such as Behrman and Rondinelli 1992) have gone so far as to suggest that in order to succeed in the global economy there are certain universal "cultural imperatives" that cities must follow. The opposite view is that globalization promotes, more than anything else, difference and plurality – of culture and values, of taste, of political formations, of identity – and at the same time generates resistance that is empowering and liberating (see Robertson 1992; Hall and Hubbard 1998).[2] This dichotomous view of globalization is reflected in popular accounts such as *Jihad vs. McWorld* (Barber 1995) and *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (Friedmann 1999), and in academic discourse in terms of the global and the local, and the ungainly term of choice, "globalization" (see Grant and Short 2002).

I suggest that it is not necessary to resolve these contrasting views of globalization in order to agree that from a *policy* perspective there is significant convergence. Economic globalization is driven by an ideology that was perhaps best enunciated in the tenets of the Washington Consensus, or its kinder, gentler cousin: Universal Convergence (Williamson 1990, 2000). As far as urban development is concerned, this ideological apparatus includes support for markets and trade, democracy and decentralization, and "good governance" based on inclusion, transparency, and social justice. These ideological elements of globalization are far more pervasive than economic globalization, which, as shown before, has barely touched large parts of the developing world. However, as also shown before, this is not the only ideology that has coinage in the global south; the ideology of identity and identity politics may be more persuasive to more people in the developing world than is the ideology of markets, democracy, and good governance. The critical question before us is this: which matters more for urban development in the periphery, the ideology of markets or the ideology of identity and resistance? Given the overwhelming evidence on policy reform – more than one hundred countries have instituted market-oriented structural reforms (Chossudovsky 1997), bilateral and multilateral assistance is almost invariably tied to the opening of markets, decentralization, etc. – it is clear that urban development policy, at the national and local levels, is guided by the ideology of markets.

4. The significance of economic growth for urban development

Before we analyze the impacts of ideological globalization on cities in the periphery, let us establish that the primary goal of all cities is to generate economic growth. If we agree that there is a global hierarchy of cities (from global city to local center), and that the periphery is constituted at several geographical scales, it is necessary to identify the common characteristics of core regions that differ from peripheral regions at different geographical scales. Perhaps the simplest measure is population growth; in the core city regions they are high (3% and above per year) as a result of heavy net

[2] In fact, the anti-globalization protests are themselves seen to be part of globalization (Sen 2002), and can be interpreted to suggest that the U.S. is the most anti-global nation (Robertson 2002).

in-migration; the peripheral cities may also be experiencing population growth, but usually at rates less than national/regional urban growth rates, perhaps at rates even below the rate of natural increase (2% and below). It is clear that one of the primary tasks of urban development institutions in both classes of cities is *growth management*: to provide shelter, services, and work for the thousands of new people who permanently join the city every day. Simultaneously, urban development institutions must also focus on *investment attraction*: to bring work to the city, so that people come and bring dynamic.

It is not clear that these two objectives are different from a policy perspective. A city that manages to keep its traffic flowing smoothly, keeps crime down, collects garbage regularly, and is able to provide adequate housing (whether through public sector projects or by establishing institutions that facilitate real estate markets) is a successful city – one that manages growth well, and by doing so attracts new growth opportunities. It is important to remember that urban size is by itself not a hindrance to effective management or growth attraction. New York, Los Angeles, and London are giant metropolitan areas; yet few suggest that they have been too successful in attracting growth and henceforth should focus only on growth management. In other words, the separation of growth management from growth attraction is a false dichotomy. Virtually all cities in the developing world have growing populations that have to be managed and provided with urban services, whether or not they are growing economically, whether or not they are cities in core regions. All cities in the developing world need to attract investment and generate economic growth as by definition they have a "growth deficit" and the only way to move out of a low-income trap is through economic growth. The bottom line is that every developing nation city seeks economic growth; if this were possible without population growth many cities would choose that option. Indeed, if growth was well distributed, not only between cities in an urban system, but also between urban and rural areas, then growth management would be a minor issue.

5. Ideology and its negative consequences for the periphery

As shown earlier, urban economic growth during globalization is very uneven, in some cases as a result of global flows of capital, often as a result of local political economic conditions. It is these conditions of local political economy that the forces or tenets of ideological globalization seek to influence. Three of these tenets are most important: First, trade and markets are good: cities are natural locations of trade; therefore trade must be encouraged. Markets allocate resources efficiently; hence cities must become more market-oriented. Second, decentralization is also good, it encourages local decision-making and democratic processes; hence governments must decentralize money and power to local bodies (municipalities). Third, good governance (e.g., just, inclusive and transparent government) can cushion the shocks of openness and it can tackle the serious problems of poverty and inequality while making cities more attractive for investment. It follows that good governance should be the goal of local governing bodies. On the surface these are laudable principles indeed. But consider their implications for cities in the periphery.

First, consider the emphasis on trade and markets. In order to trade, a city must produce something that others (cities) want – whether it is plastics or metals or information or entertainment, i.e., there must be some exportable good or service that can be sold at some market (a global market if possible, at least a national or regional market). The problem of the peripheral cities is essentially this: they receive little new productive investment, therefore they cannot competitively produce for global markets, and often the regional markets are so impoverished that they cannot absorb new products with new built-in technologies. These cities are very far down in the value chains of manufacturing, i.e., the value added per unit of labor or capital is very low (Kaplinski 2001). Not only are these cities absent from global systems of production and exchange, but if by some unusual circumstance some of these cities were to become part of global trade in manufactures (say in footwear), the value added would be too low to move these cities out of the periphery.[3] This is at a time when the core cities continue to strengthen their global trading links and keep moving up the value chain. It seems inevitable that opening markets and relying on global trade will increase productivity and incomes in the core cities relative to peripheral cities.

Second, consider decentralization. Decentralization calls for devolution of revenue and authority to local government bodies, which then increasingly become responsible for local services and planning. In theory, this would have the advantage of increased democratization and public participation and curb the influence of large cities and other traditional centers of authority. In practice, however, decentralization creates a new set of problems, which work once again to the detriment of the peripheral cities and regions. In order for decentralization to be effective it is necessary to have supportive institutions and human capital at the local level. Such institutions and human capital are not readily available in even most of the largest cities of the developing world (where formal urban planning as opposed to urban public works or services began as late as the 1960s). Urban planners are not available, urban planning schools do not exist (and where they do exist they tend to be technocratic institutions), and infrastructure finance institutions are virtually unheard of. In such situations what kind of municipal planning and development can small and medium sized cities undertake? What happens and is likely to happen (see the case of Bolivia in Kohl 2002, or China in Kanbur and Zhang 2003) is that the larger cities, despite having to share resources, are better able to take advantage of decentralization and devolution as a result of a freer hand in local decision-making and revenue generation (see World Bank 2000, Tables D4 and D5, on large city advantages in terms of size of local government and revenues raised by it.) It is possible to identify a few exceptions to this statement (in Brazil, China, and India for instance), to identify specific medium-sized cities that have done well in terms of economic growth, but in most cases their successes have arisen from locational advantages and, in rare cases, inspired leadership. In the general case, decentralization leads to

[3] Consider a city like Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh or Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh (both in India). Even by India's limited globalization successes these cities are completely off the radar of investors. Other than their existing trading links (Kanpur, for example, is significant producer of finished leather goods) what new links can they forge and how?

further marginalization of the already disadvantaged, nowhere more so than in the small and medium -sized cities in inland regions.

Finally, consider the principle of good governance. According to the World Bank (2000, 10): "Good governance implies inclusion and representation of all groups in the urban society – and accountability, integrity, and transparency of government actions – in defining and pursuing shared goals." Nothing could be more desirable than these objectives; the question is, how can these objectives be achieved? Fundamentally, good governance hinges on the workings of urban politics. This is a big issue that has occupied political scientists and sociologists working in developed and developing nation contexts. I do not intend to offer any quick summary of that literature here, nor do I intend to fully explore the scope of urban politics in the developing world today. My intent is to raise a few questions on the globalization-urban politics relationship, focusing on two issues: inequality and identity.

It is commonplace now to assume that globalization has led to increases in urban income inequality. However, there is considerable confusion and misinformation on this issue. There is clear evidence of increasing regional inequality in many parts of the world (as suggested in an earlier section in this paper), just as there is some evidence of increasing social or national inequality. But there is practically no evidence on increasing urban inequality in the developing world,[4] not to mention the fact that inequality data for individual cities do not exist. Also consider two facts: First, income distribution patterns are more or less immune to change (in either direction) barring revolution or significant social transition, second, income inequality is notoriously susceptible to mis-measurement (because of poor survey designs and under-reporting by the rich and over-reporting by the poor) and heavily dependent on definitions (of income, income receiving unit, etc.); as a result, income distribution data are rarely comparable over time.

The mechanism via which the inequality increase is expected to have taken place is the technological shift and higher productivity (and resulting higher income) of those sections of the population that are directly involved in global production and/or trade (software and export sector workers). For the sake of argument let us assume that this is possible. In the global core cities the numbers of such workers are so large that even if urban inequality increases, the welfare gains may outweigh the costs of higher inequality. In regional core cities the numbers of such workers are likely to be small enough to make no difference in inequality (for example, in all of India, a well-known technology leader, the number of software sector workers is estimated to be less than 500,000). In the peripheral cities, by definition there are few such high productivity workers. Had there been large numbers of high productivity workers in these cities they may not have remained peripheral. Therefore, urban inequality levels in peripheral regions are unlikely to have changed significantly as a result of globalization. It is possible that some fluctuation may have taken place a result of recessions or poor crop outputs (i.e., related to some temporary phenomenon rather than a structural shift). Therefore, urban inequality is in general not a pressing issue in urban development. Poverty is, and urban welfare policy and urban governance should attempt to

[4] Even in China, a well known case of increasing regional and national inequality, urban inequality levels remain at very low levels – between 16 and 20.

address poverty directly rather than attempt to tinker with the distribution pattern. In particular, raising the bogey of inequality in the peripheral cities may do more harm than good.

The issue of identity-based politics is more urgent. In multi-ethnic societies the ethnic composition of cities tends to change quite rapidly as a result of growth. New migrants from different ethnic groups move there for work; this changes the composition of the population and may result in political struggles over control of state resources. In some scenarios these struggles sporadically flare up into ethnic violence (e.g., India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Nigeria, Kenya), and in worse scenarios they result in all-out civil war (in several nations of Africa).[5] Also, in the cities that are not growing, the perceived absence of opportunity and relative ethnic homogeneity leads to parochial regional politics – identity-based politics which morphs into ethnic nationalism, tribalism, separatism, and violence. It is necessary to recognize that one of the ideological counterpoints to economic globalization is identity politics. It is possible for corporate theorists to declare the end of the nation state, and to promote the birth of a neo-utopian "true global marketplace" (Ohmae 1995). But when the GNP of China was $317 while that of Shenzen in China was $5,695 (Ohmae's data; current numbers would be different, but the reliability of Chinese data is so notorious that it is perhaps better to leave the point in very general: vast interurban and interregional income disparities) is it irrational to expect parochialism and jingoism under the banner of that other global invention of the nineteenth century – nationalism?

I do not mean to suggest that the principles of "good governance" necessarily work against the prospects of the peripheral cities and regions. Indeed, urban violence is very much in evidence in many regional core cities too (Mumbai, Ahmadabad, Jakarta). What is worrisome is the possibility of rejection of good governance principles, along with a rejection of globalization in the peripheral cities. In these relatively static, growth-deprived places there are few internal challenges spurred by inter-ethnic competition. Instead we tend to see the continuation of power oligarchies and entrenched interests, which often coalesce into regional ethnic identity politics. Governance takes a backseat to regional mobilization, and in the eyes of investors, foreign and domestic alike, these cities appear to be anachronisms. It is not the nation-state *per se* that appears tired, old, and outdated (as many have suggested, see Rohlen 2002), but the state in the peripheral cities and regions that appears tired, old, and unable to keep up with the dynamic core cities.

6. Conclusions: Urban development in the global periphery

I have argued here that economic globalization has a clear regional dimension – entire regions are either incorporated within global flows or they are almost entirely left out. Hence, the appropriate scale of analysis of marginalization may not be the city but the sub-national region. I have also suggested that the true significance of globalization for urban/regional development may lie in

[5] The emerging scholarship on the links between high inequality levels and low growth rates (mediated through inefficient redistributive policies) is of particular relevance here (see Alesina and Rodrik 1994 for an overview).

the globalization of ideas rather than trade. Ideas about the value of markets and trade, the need for political reform through democracy and decentralization, and good governance based on social justice and inclusion, have far greater policy significance and social impact. These ideas, when translated into policies, have effects at urban, regional and national scales. It is possible that the implementation of these ideas creates some real development paradoxes for peripheral cities and regions. I have shown how these ideas can lead to further relative declines in already lagging places. The most pertinent issue in urban development then arises from these paradoxes: if markets, trade, democracy, decentralization, and good governance are all desirable entities, how can they be used to improve absolute and relative welfare conditions in peripheral and marginalized cities and regions? Albert Hirschman's words on the ''tunnel effect'' now have renewed urgency.

> One might conclude that the tunnel effect will always come into being as, within each social class, those who are not advancing empathize initially with those who are. But this need not happen if each class is composed of ethnic or religious groups that are differentially involved in the growth process… If, in segmented societies, economic advance becomes identified with one particular ethnic or language group or with members of one particular religion or region, then those who are left out or behind are unlikely to experience the tunnel effect: they will be convinced almost from the start of the process that the advancing group is achieving an unfair exploitative advantage over them. (Hirschman 1973, 49)

The challenge now is to find equitable regional solutions within a market framework. A return to the nationalist model of old appears to be out of the question for a number of reasons. But the tension between market orientation and regional divergence has to be mitigated to some degree, or else the benefits of efficient markets may be washed away in bloody conflict at worst, or debilitating distributional struggles at best. It is necessary to renew thinking about approaches that take into account the political economy of peripheral regions.

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