



# Jus Corpus Law Journal

Open Access Law Journal – Copyright © 2022 – ISSN 2582-7820  
Editor-in-Chief – Prof. (Dr.) Rhishikesh Dave; Publisher – Ayush Pandey

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## Globalization in the 21st Century: A shift from Westernization to Asianization

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*Received* 26 March 2022; *Accepted* 15 April 2022; *Published* 19 April 2022

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*The 19<sup>th</sup>-century world was increasingly influenced by Europe, particularly Britain and France as they went on to spread their empire across the globe, aside from other European powers like Spain, Dutch, Portugal, and others. Then came the 20<sup>th</sup> century and we observed the decline of Britain and France as world superpowers and the rise of Germany, America, and the Soviet Union. Even until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this western influence had been prominent across the globe. However, this decade we can again notice the rise of Asian states in the international arena. Globalization if we consider it to be going global in its truest sense also implies that the de-westernization of the world is happening and possibly the Asianization has already begun. This research paper aims to explore and explain Asianization by using the reshaping of the center-periphery model and explain how it can be concluded that a shift from Westernization toward Asianization is already happening through globalization. The research approach taken for this paper will be qualitative and based on the review of available pieces of literature on the related subjects and topics.*

**Keywords:** *globalization, westernization, center periphery model, asianization.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Looking at the middle to late 19<sup>th</sup> century we have experienced colonization across the world by European powers like the United Kingdom, France, Portugal, Spain, and others<sup>1</sup>. Most of them had started sea voyaging and exploration around the globe during the 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century in search of alternative sea routes and countries mainly for purpose of trade and commerce.<sup>2</sup> However, in this process, many new lands were discovered mainly inhabited by the aborigines whom these explorers regarded as barbarians, and tried to civilize them by the imposition of the European customs and laws. The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century experienced full-fledged Europeanization with Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and others attempting to expand their colonies across the globe. By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the world already experienced two world wars<sup>3</sup>, rapid decolonization of the Afro-Asian states<sup>4</sup>, and the beginning of American and Soviet influence as these became the nuclear state and tried to outpace each other in the race of exerting global dominance<sup>5</sup>. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the disintegration of the Soviet Union<sup>6</sup>, the rise of American hegemony<sup>7</sup>, and the advent of digital communication<sup>8</sup> and multiple international trade agreements<sup>9</sup> the world experienced Americanized globalization. However, in the present 21<sup>st</sup> century, we have started noticing the rise of Asian nations like China, India, and South Korea, thereby making a global impact.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles E. Nowell, 'Western Colonialism' (*Britannica*, 9 December 2020)

<<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Western-colonialism>> accessed 16 November 2021

<sup>2</sup> Jean Brown Mitchell, 'European Exploration' (*Britannica*, 29 October 2020)

<<https://www.britannica.com/topic/European-exploration>> accessed 16 November 2021

<sup>3</sup> John Graham Royde-Smith, 'World War I' (*Britannica*, 1 March 2022)

<<https://www.britannica.com/event/World-War-I>> accessed 16 November 2021; John Graham Royde-Smith, 'World War II' (*Britannica*, 28 February 2022) <<https://www.britannica.com/event/World-War-II>> accessed 16 November 2021

<sup>4</sup> 'Decolonization of Asia and Africa, 1945-1960' (*Office of The Historian*)

<<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/asia-and-africa>> accessed 16 November 2021

<sup>5</sup> 'Cold War' (*Britannica*, 1 March 2022) <<https://www.britannica.com/event/Cold-War>> accessed 16 November 2021

<sup>6</sup> 'Collapse Of the Soviet Union' (*Britannica*, 11 August 2021) <<https://www.britannica.com/event/the-collapse-of-the-soviet-union>> accessed 16 November 2021

<sup>7</sup> Joseph S. Nye, 'The Rise and Fall Of American Hegemony From Wilson To Trump' (2019) 95 (1) *International Affairs*, 63-80

<sup>8</sup> Martin Mühleisen, 'The Long and Short Of The Digital Revolution' (*Inter Press Service*, 26 June 2018)

<<http://www.ipsnews.net/2018/06/long-short-digital-revolution/>> accessed 16 November 2021

<sup>9</sup> Douglas A. Irwin, 'International Trade Agreements' (*Econlib*)

<<https://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/InternationalTradeAgreements.html>> accessed 16 November 2021

Hence the world has entered Globalization 4.0<sup>10</sup>. According to the report by McKinsey Global Institute<sup>11</sup>, Asia may generate more than 50% of the global GDP and account for nearly 40% of global consumption. This shows the extent of shifting of the global center of gravity toward Asia. Presently, Asia holds an increasing global share of trade, capital, people, knowledge, transport, culture, and resources. The region presently accounts for approximately 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of global trade in goods, from a quarter a decade back. In a similar timespan, its share of global flyers has increased to 40% from 37%, and its share of capital flows has increased to 23% from 13%. Those flows have resulted in the growth of Asian cities. The region holds 21 of the world's 30 largest, and four of the ten most visited cities, and some of Asia's lesser-known cities are presently also on investors' radar. According to Mashiro Kawai, the arrival of the Asian Century may not necessarily mean that Asia will have a political, military, institutional, or soft-power dominance across the globe but merely have a global economic influence. The 21<sup>st</sup>-century world may be multipolar where transitional powers of the Western actors like the US and European countries and new rising powers like China, India, Japan, and other emerging actors may have a collective impact on the global economic and political matters.<sup>12</sup>

This brief introduction is necessary for us so that we can understand the concept of globalization and the center-periphery model. In this research, we will first conceptualize globalization, then the center-periphery model, and after that using the reshaping of the center-periphery analytic we will try to explain why the world is experiencing a shift towards Asianization from Westernization because of globalization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## GLOBALIZATION

*The word Globalization* is usually used for describing the growing interdependence among the economies, cultures, and populations, across the globe by increased cross-border trade in

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<sup>10</sup> Klaus Schwab, 'Globalization 4.0 - What Does It Mean?' (*World Economic Forum*, 5 November 2018) <<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/11/globalization-4-what-does-it-mean-how-it-will-benefit-everyone/>> accessed 18 November 2021

<sup>11</sup> 'Asia's Future Is Now' (*McKinsey & Company*, 14 July 2019) <<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/asia-pacific/asias-future-is-now>> accessed 18 November 2021

<sup>12</sup> Masahiro Kawai, 'Will The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Be An Asian Century?: A Global Perspective' (*Ideas*) <<https://ideas.repec.org/p/eri/dpaper/1702e.html>> accessed 18 November 2021

goods and services, technology, and flows of investment, people, and information. Nations developed economic partnerships for facilitating these movements across. The term 'globalization, however, gained notoriety after the Cold War in the late 1990s, with the shaping of modern lifestyle through cooperative arrangements.<sup>13</sup> As defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), globalization is 'the increased interconnectedness and interdependence of peoples and countries. Generally, globalization is understood to include two interconnected ingredients: the opening of international borders to increasingly fast flows of commodities, finance, people, and ideas; and the changes in institutions and policies at national and international levels facilitating or promoting those flows'<sup>14</sup>. The effects of globalization are complex, politically charged, and wide-ranging. In resemblance to other major technological advances, globalization brings societal benefits but at the same time harms certain groups. Therefore, assessing the relative costs and benefits can mitigate the problems while retaining the wider payoffs.<sup>15</sup>

## MULTIPLE ASPECTS OF GLOBALIZATION

Globalization has greatly impacted trade developments and financial exchanges, and this results in a common misconception that globalization is an economic and financial phenomenon. However, considering it as solely an economic and financial phenomenon or describing it through only one aspect would be a gross injustice to its multi-faceted nature as it is much more than the mere flowing of commodities or capital. For appreciating globalization at its best, it is necessary to view some of its multiple aspects. **Considering its economic aspect** is related to the development of transnational trade systems between corporations or NGOs; its financial aspects can be linked with the emergence of a global financial system with international economic and monetary exchanges; its cultural aspect is concerned with the

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<sup>13</sup> Melina Kolb, 'What Is Globalization?: And How Has the Global Economy Shaped the United States?' (*Peterson Institute for International Economics*, 29 October 2018) <<https://www.piie.com/microsites/globalization/what-is-globalization#:~:text=Globalization%20is%20the%20word%20used,investment%2C%20people%2C%20and%20information>> accessed 18 November 2021

<sup>14</sup> 'What Is Globalization? Examples, Definition, Benefits And Effects' (*Youmatter*) <<https://youmatter.world/en/definition/definitions-globalization-definition-benefits-effects-examples/>> accessed 18 November 2021

<sup>15</sup> Melina Kolb (n 13)

cultural interpenetration which means adopting beliefs, principles, and customs belonging to other nations, thereby losing their unique culture to a unique, globalized supra-culture. Westernization and Asianization can be explained from this aspect; the development and increasing influence of international bodies like UNO and WHO represents the governmental action happening at an international level. This is concerned with the political nature of globalization; the sociological perspective of globalization involves the movement of information almost in real-time, coupled with the interconnection and interdependence of events and their impacts. People also move all the time thereby mixing and integrating different societies; through globalization, millions of people are now interconnected in the digital space through multiple social media platforms.

This is the technological aspect of globalization; because of globalization, there is constant change in new organizations and hierarchies of different regions around the world. Also, the easier movement has become possible due to cheaper and reduced rates of transportation and flying.<sup>16</sup> Thus, it can be readily concluded that globalization is not a single aspect phenomenon but a multi-faceted one. Now we will try to appreciate the Center periphery model and explain how globalization has led to the reshaping of the center-periphery structure.

### **CENTER-PERIPHERY MODEL**

The center-periphery or core-periphery model is a spatial metaphor describing and endeavoring to explain the structural relationship prevalent between the advanced or metropolitan 'center' and a lesser developed 'periphery', either within a certain country or more precisely between capitalist and developing societies. According to the center-periphery theory, underdevelopment does not result from tradition but is a part of the quintessential process necessary for the development of capitalism in the central capitalist countries and its subsisting reproduction on a global scale. This theory assumes some capitalist countries at the core with a relatively high organic composition of capital and wage levels, where market forces determine the economy. Contrarily, in peripheral countries, the capital is of low organic composition and wage levels fail to meet the cost of reproduction of labor. Indeed, the non-

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<sup>16</sup>What Is Globalization? Examples, Definition, Benefits And Effects (n 14)

capitalist economies may subsidize the labor force's cost of reproduction, especially through rural subsistence production. In the same way, non-market forces like kinship or patron-client may largely impact the relations of the peripheral economies. This model thus suggests that the global economy is characterized by a structured relationship existing between economic centers which extract an economic surplus from the subordinate peripheral countries by using military, political, and trade power. According to the proponents of this, the apparent notion that capitalism is developing traditional and backward societies through locating enterprises in underdeveloped regions clandestine the structural relationship which develops and prospers capital develops by exploiting non-capitalist/peripheral economies.<sup>17</sup>

### **A SHIFT IN CENTER-PERIPHERY STRUCTURE**

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that the center-periphery theory is just abstract imagery of the relationship existing between the developed capitalist countries that are the hub of all economic development while relying upon the resources and exploiting the peripheral, non-capitalistic countries. Now upon considering and connecting this theory with globalization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, also known as Globalization 4.0 we can view it from two aspects. On one hand, we can readily discard this theory, since what we consider to be the 'center' capitalist, developed, and wealthy economies today may change with time and turn into peripheral countries. As we have observed repeatedly that the economic, political, and financial power of any country may change with time. The 19<sup>th</sup>-century superpowers Britain and France had lost their influence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century following two global wars only to ally with the new big brother the United States. Contrarily, from another perspective, we may consider that this center-periphery theory holds good anachronistically and the only thing that happens is the restructuring of the imagery. In simpler words, by repositioning the central countries to the peripheral zone and peripheral countries to the central, restructuring is taking place. Therefore, going with the second approach appears more convincing instead of discarding the center-periphery theory altogether. Because every approach, theory, ideology,

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<sup>17</sup> 'Centre-Periphery Model' (*Encyclopedia.com*, 28 March 2022) <<https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/centre-periphery-model>> accessed 18 November 2021

proposition, and belief may receive some amount of criticism over time. Now that does not mean we readily discard every approach, theory, ideology, proposition, or belief just because they are facing blows of criticism. Therefore, going by the fact that a restructuring of the center-periphery is happening and shall continue in the future can be regarded as a plausible explanation for the shift from Westernization to Asianization in the wake of globalization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## CONCLUSION

We had begun this paper by stating how the world for a long time starting from the 15<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> century had been exposed to the influence and impacts of the Western States venturing out for the riches and treasures of the Oriental states and search for alternative sea routes for trade and commercial purpose. Then dazzled and embezzled by the riches and treasures of these oriental states while finding the divided mindset and lifestyle of the orientalist the Western powers decided to fish in the troubled water and exploit the wealth of these oriental nations and become affluent. Gradually, the westernization of the world began, and it continued until the 21<sup>st</sup> century. According to the center-periphery model, most of these developed western states became the economically developed 'centers' while the Afro-Asian states became the peripheral ones. However, from the beginning of this decade, the tides have started to change as Asian nations like China, India, Singapore, Japan, etc. are becoming the hub of global economic development and prosperity. China has already become the second-largest economic and military power and has already surpassed many Western nations including the United States. Similarly, India is also booming and is expected to surpass both US and China soon. According to many economic and financial experts, although Asia may not have political or military influence across the globe it is well capable of exerting economic and financial influence. If we look at it by using the center-periphery analytic, undoubtedly restructuring of the center-periphery model is occurring. With new states being included in the 'center' if not the former ones shifting to the 'periphery'. At this point, we can either discard this theory concluding that it is abstract and outdated or we may look at it from a new aspect and accept

its restructuring. In my opinion, however, as I already argued the second approach is more justifiable.