

THE MANY FACETS OF GLOBALIZATION

What Is Globalization?

Images that the term “globalization” evokes tend to obscure its meaning. For critics in developing countries, globalization means environmental degradation, exploitation of developing countries by multinational corporations and loss of domestic sovereignty. For its advocates, it means progress, development, faster growth, alleviation of poverty and more productive lives. If the discourse of globalization is to go beyond the “half-full-or-half-empty” conceptualization, reason dictates that there has to be a way of systematically approaching the subject. It is futile to make this concept fit in a box, yet this augurs well for a need to describe the breadth and depth of the understanding of the globalization discourse to discover patterns of thinking among groups that address this issue.

There are several ways of answering the question, “What is globalization?” although, there are dangers in emphasizing certain “angles” of globalization. While defining usually sheds light on the subject, equally interesting to note are the details that are unsaid or omitted intentionally or inadvertently in the process. To look at globalization in the light of economic determinism is to underestimate the role of ideology in the said phenomenon. While Ohmae contends that globalization is “an ideological assertion” and thinks little of it as an inevitable economic phenomenon, Faulks looks at it as a “set of global risks” which change the way that states govern if they are willing to seize the opportunity to create alternative forms of governance. Held and McGraw view globalization as an “historical process which transforms the spatial organization of social relations and transactions, generating transcontinental or inter-regional networks of interaction and the exercise of power.

A better understanding and analysis of globalization requires a greater grasp of the concept. Having a greater grasp of the concept necessitates its dissection or analysis. For instance, Shaw started with a definition of the term “global”. Firstly, he said that “global” can be understood denotatively as “belonging to the globe”. Secondly, it can also be understood as the “quality involved in the worldwide stretching of social relations”. Thirdly, it refers to the “development of a common consciousness of human society on a world scale.”

What do selected civil society groupings in the Philippines say about globalization? The characteristics of these civil society groups are

discussed in the introductory chapter. As expected, the interviewed respondents look at globalization from varying perspectives.

At a glance, it is interesting to note that the words that the interviewed respondents use to describe their understanding of globalization can be classified under categories that evoke images of *movement*; point to a *process*; connote a *tool, reaction or offensive* and others.

Movement as a category includes descriptions and definitions of globalization that create illusions of motion, passage or direction. This movement can further be broken down into more specific categories: 1) consolidating movement is one that evokes an image of centralizing action and of people coming together; 2) centrifugal movement connotes an image of decentralization and invokes feelings of disunity and disagreement 3) unidirectional movement represents a “push” toward or flow in one direction 4) movement in stages indicates an evolution toward a more developed though not necessarily positive state, while; 5) a shift is a movement that manifests a change in orientation. The following list will show the descriptions and definitions of the interviewed respondents as they fit under the category of *movement*.

1. Consolidating

q **Integration of culture**

- q A system
- q Internationalization of:
 - production
 - labor
- q Economic interdependence
- q Solidarity of civil society groups
- q Stronger international links
- q Global integration of economies
- q The systemic interrelationships of international trade and industry
- q Interchange between nations
- q The shrinking world

2. Centrifugal/Outward

- q Marginalization
- q Politics between the powerful and the marginalized countries
- q Systematic extraction of raw materials from the third world
- q Abolition of union
- q Curtailment of worker's rights and welfare

3. Unidirectional

- q Accelerated push of global capitalism
- q A one-way thing
- q The direction of the world

4. Stages

- q Latest twist of imperialism
- q Stage of monopoly capitalism
- q Re-colonization

5. Shift

- q A policy shift

Some definitions or descriptions of globalization also indicate the notion of a *process*. As to the kind of *process*, globalization has been perceived as:

- q Economic
- q Historical
- q Political
- q Natural
- q Evolving
- q Cyclical
- q Global integration

There are some descriptions and understanding of globalization that can be classified under the category of *tool*. This classification includes definitions of globalization that evoke an image of an “instrument” or “apparatus”. Examples are:

- q Mouthpiece of industrialized countries
- q Instrument of imperialism
 - A socio-political and economic plan
 - An instrument of imperialism
 - A GATT-WTO phenomenon

Other ways by which these definitions given by the interviewed respondents may be classified evoke images of a *reaction* which means a subsequent outcome, or an *offensive* or aggression and *others* that include simply defining “globalization as a “concept” or a “fad”:

Reaction

- q A reaction that came in three paradigms
- q A reaction to Reaganomics

- q A response of imperialist countries
- Offensive**
- q Economic offensive
- q Political offensive
- q Globalizing offensive
- Others**
- q A fad
- q A trend
- q A re-packaged concept
- q An ecological footprint

ways by which definitions of globalization can be classified are numerous. The foregoing classification applies to the data that were gathered and were available. The subsequent discussion deals with a more detailed conceptualization of globalization of various civil society organizations in the Philippines.