Globalization, Citizenship and Subjectivity: Theoritical Assumptions and Empirical Understanding in Nepalese Context

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Abstract

This article attempts to show the relationship between theoretical assumptions and empirical understanding of globalization, citizenship and subjectivity. These three issues are not only interrelated each other but also controversial phenomenon in contemporary world. On the one hand, due to omnipresent nature of globalization, notions of citizenship and human subjectivity have been changing dramatically. On the other hand, citizenship derives from the existence of a community of people, a polity embedded in a geographically bounded nation state recognized by other nations and with boundaries and laws upheld, if necessary, by force. However, both globalization and citizenship are equally shaping and reconstructing the human subjectivity differently. Therefore, the main objective of the article is to explore the relationship among globalization, citizenship and subjectivity with theoretical assumptions and empirical understanding in Nepalese context. For this, in the first part of the article presents theoretical assumptions of globalization, citizenship and subjectivity followed by four Nepalese cases. More specifically, four individuals share their empirical understanding on how globalization has been shaping their human subjectivity in their own words. Finally, the article concludes that due to the globalization, human subjectivity and citizenship both also became globalizing because self and subject itself as fluid and socially constructed in globalized world.

Introduction

Globalization, citizenship and subjectivity are interrelated and controversial phenomenon in contemporary world. On the one hand, due to omnipresent nature of globalization, notions of citizenship and human subjectivity have been changing dramatically. On the other hand, citizenship derives from the existence of a community of people, a polity embedded in a geographically bounded nation state recognized by other nations and with boundaries and laws upheld, if necessary, by force. Both globalization and citizenship are equally shaping and reconstructing the human subjectivity differently. Therefore, the article presents the relationship between globalization, citizenship and subjectivity with theoritical assumptions and empirical understanding in Nepalese context. For this, in the first part of

the article presents theoretical assumptions of globalization, citizenship and subjectivity followed by four Nepalese cases. In this section, four individuals share their empirical understanding on how globalization has been shaping their human subjectivity in their own words. Finally, the article concludes that due to the globalization, human subjectivity and citizenship both also became globalizing because self and subject itself as fluid and socially constructed in globalized world.

Globalization, Glocal and Global Culture

Globalization is increasingly omnipresent and we are living in the era of globalization. In the broadest sense, globalization means expansion of social relations across borders. The concept has, in a surprisingly short period of time, become a key entity in social science. A term that is closely related to globalization is transnationalism or "processes that interconnect individuals and social groups across specific geo-political borders" (Giulianotti and Robertson 2007: 62). A related concept is transnationality or "the rise of new communities and formation of new social identities and relations that cannot be defined through the traditional reference point of nation-states" (Robinson 2007: 1199–201).

Therefore, globalization has emerged as one of the most widely discussed and hotly debated perspectives in contemporary social theory. Sociology, in general, is attempting to come to terms with globalization as the world-historic context of events on the eve of the 21st century. The core of globalization, theoretically conceived, comprises two interwoven processes: (1) the near culmination of a centuries-long process of the spread of capitalist production around the world and its displacement of all pre-capitalist relations ("modernization"); and (2) the transition in recent decades from the linkage of nations via commodity exchange and capital flows in an integrated international market, in which different modes of production were "articulated" within broader social formations, to the globalization of the process of production itself (Robinsion 1998).

According to Douglas Kellner (2002), the key to understanding globalization is theorizing it as at once a product of technological revolution and the global restructuring of capitalism in which economic, technological, political, and cultural features are intertwined. Therefore, we need to understand globalization from different aspects. For this, Ritzer and Malone (2000) classify theories of globalization on the basis of their emphasis on cultural, economic, political/institutional factors, on the one hand, and whether they stress homogeneity or heterogeneity, on the other.

Cultural theorists of globalization emphasize that culture can lead either to a trend toward common codes and practices (homogeneity) or to a situation in which many cultures interact to create a kind of variety of hybrids (heterogeneity). The trend toward homogeneity is often associated with cultural imperialism. There are many varieties of cultural imperialism, including associating it with American culture (Smith 1990), the West (Giddens 1990), or core countries (Hannerz 1990), Robertson (2001) "glocal", Garcia Canclini (1995), and others talk specifically about hybrids; and Friedman (1994) describe "global culture".

Theorists who emphasize economic factors tend to focus on homogeneity (Harvey 1989; Wallerstein 1974). They generally see globalization as the spread of the market economy throughout the world. While those who focus on economic issues tend to emphasize homogeneity, most acknowledge that some differentiation (heterogeneity) exists at the margins of the global economy.

Similarly, political/institutional orientation either emphasizes homogeneity or heterogeneity. Meyer et al. (1997), for example, focus on the nation-state, more specifically, the existence of worldwide models of the state and the emergence of isomorphic forms of governance. Hobsbawm (1997) and Appadurai (1996) see transnational institutions and organizations greatly diminishing the power of both the nation-state and other, more local social structures to make a difference in people's lives. This is the phenomenon that Barber (1995) has termed "McWorld," the antithesis of which is "Jihad"—localized, ethnic, and reactionary political forces (including "rogue states") that involve an intensification of nationalism and lead to greater heterogeneity (Barber 1995; Appadurai 1996).

In critical social theory, globalization involves both capitalist markets and sets of social relations and flows of commodities, capital, technology, ideas, forms of culture, and people across national boundaries via a global networked society (see Held et al. 1999). This increase has made the relationship of citizen and the nation state more complex.

Citizenship and Threat of Globalization

Generally, a citizen is a member of a political community who enjoys the rights and assumes the duties of membership. This broad definition demands to understand, first, the main dimensions of citizenship (legal, political, identity) and how they are instantiated in very different ways within the three dominant models: the republican, communitarian and the liberal. Second, how are we to understand the relation between citizenship and nationality under conditions of pluralism? And finally, we discuss the challenges which globalization poses to theories of citizenship.

The concept of citizenship is composed of three main elements or dimensions. The first is citizenship as legal status, defined by civil, political and social rights. Here, the citizen is the legal person free to act according to the law and having the right to claim the law's protection. It need not mean that the citizen takes part in the law's formulation, nor does it require that rights be uniform between citizens. The second considers citizens specifically as political agents, actively participating in a society's political institutions. The third refers to citizenship as membership in a political community that furnishes a distinct source of identity (Kymlicka and Norman 2000).

According to Mrshall (1950) citizenship is constitutively expressed when the elements of civil, political and social rights are realized. The conception of civil rights, Marshall points out, is fundamentally individualistic, in the sense that it has to do with personal rights - though in the nineteenth century the question of group rights also became involved in it, especially in connection with the claims of Trade Unions to the right of collective

bargaining. Political rights, on the other hand, though they are rights of individuals, have an essentially collective character: they have been extended from class to class, and from sex to sex, by a gradual process which has converted them by stages from privileges into universal rights of citizenship. Social rights are, again, largely personal; but coming as an addition to democratic political rights already won, they are claimed at once for all persons and not by a gradual extension of privileges to wider and wider groups.

Marshall argues that the development of civil, political, and social citizenship as an evolutionary sequence. Civil citizenship came first and consolidated the rule of law and equality before the law. Its rights are those "necessary to individual freedom—liberty of the person, freedom of thought, speech and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts and the right to justice,". Similarly, political citizenship progresses in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Political rights caught up with civil rights by means of more reforms. The right to vote came to working people and to women. Finally, social citizenship encompasses a "whole range" of rights, from "a modicum of welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in society" (Marhsll 1950).

There are mainly three types of modern political theories about citizenship: (1) liberalism, (2) communitarianism, and (3) republicanism. Liberalism puts a strong emphasis on the individual, and most rights involve liberties that adhere to each and every person. Likewise, communitarianism emphasizes the community (or the society or the nation), whose primary concern is with the cohesive and just functioning of society. Republican theories in both their conservative and radical variants put emphasis on both individual and group rights and emphasize the role of conflict and contest in the expansion or construction of such rights.

According to Isin and Turner (2002), the evolution of citizenship theory will be equally complex, but we conclude with three issues that strike us as urgent. The first is the obvious problem of the historical connection between citizenship, nationalism and the nation-state. 'Citizenship' is historically and etymologically connected to the city and then to the state. The citizen was originally a person who, by living in the city, participated in a process of cultivation or civilization. Secondly, in modern times citizenship has often been an important component of social movements to expand social rights. The third issue concerns the place of citizenship in the dynamic relationships between region, state, and global society in the modern world. The notion that there could be a 'citizen of the world' has long been part of the utopian imaginary of the citizenship tradition. As the process of globalization produces multiple diasporas, we can expect increasingly complex relationships between homeland and host societies that will make the traditional idea of national citizenship problematic (Isin and Turner 2002: 6-9).

In this way, globalization threats the notion of citizenship and both globalization and citizenship shaping, constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing the human subjectivity.

Social Construction of Subjectivity

Subjectivity is the self-conscious perspective of the person or subject, i.e., the quality of a subject's perspectives, beliefs, feelings, experience and desires (Solomon 2005:900). Subjectivity is used to describe judgments about truth or reality—biased by perceptions, experiences, expectations, personal or cultural understanding, and/or their influences. It is not only a process of individualization but also process of socialization. There is a huge debate in social science as micro versus macro, agency versus structure and local versus global on how human subjectivity is constructed. To better understanding the self and subjectivity from sociological lens is to integrate both the interactionist and postmodern themes centering upon three organizing concepts: the power, the reflexivity, and the social constructionism (Callero 2003).

According to Foucault, human history has been revolving around through which human beings are treated as subjects. The transferring of human as mere subjects is due to the power relations existing in a given territory, and the powerful entity that subjugates it in multiple ways is the state. Through various measures it divides human as sacred and profane, sick and healthy, wise and corrupt, literate and illiterate, etc. This kind of generalization of human in a wholesome manner undermines the subjectivity that the individual truly possess (Foucault 1982). He emphasizes that human subject is controlled by power, that power makes us what we are. He identified three modes of objectification through which human beings are transformed into subjects: modes of inquiry, dividing practices and the way human turns himself as a subject.

The reflexive process refers to the uniquely human capacity to become an object to one's self, to be both subject and object that regulates the acting, agentic organism. Reflexivity emphasizes that humans have a sophisticated system of signs and gestures that enable and constrain perception, reflection, and action. For symbolic interactionists, the self is first and foremost a reflexive process of social interaction. Reflexivity is not a biological given but rather emerges from the social experience.

According to the concepts of the social constructionism, the self is both a social product and a social force. The level of self-meanings, self-image, and self-concept, where the historical, cultural, and political particulars of identity are exposed, the self continues to prosper as an important conceptual tool. As Callero concludes, the self or subjectivity is socially and historically constructed.

Empirical Understanding: Four Cases of Nepal

In the context of Nepal, it has been globalizing in a true sense since 1950s, when Nepal opened itself to the world after the Rana period (Fisher 2011). During this period generally and later 20 years particularly, impact of globalization was most intense in economic, social, political and cultural sector. Therefore, to assess the globalization, citizenship and subjectivity in Nepalese context, here I present four different individual's understanding as cases about how globalization has been shaping their thought and personal

life in their own words. First, M. Maharjan, who himself claimed a global citizen, is from Kirtipur and a PhD Scholar of Anthropology. Second, S. Magar is freelancer Journalist and researcher originally from 'Jhumlabang' a remote village of Rukum district and she claimed a member of 'global family'. Third, A. Paudel is a student of anthropology and is working on elderly people's issues. She is also a member of migrated family from Hill to Terai in Nepal. Finally, U. Ghising is also a student of sociology and a member of transnational business family. These all four beautiful stories represent the perception of globalization, citizenship and subjectivity in contemporary Nepalese context.

Case 1: M. Maharjan, a Global Citizen

I would like to call myself a global citizen, although I have not traveled abroad. The effects of globalization such as the spread of technology and transportation have transformed many aspects of my life. Global mass media and the World Wide Web have affected my employment and music culture.

Whereas the invention of airplanes has made citizens of wealthier nations international travelers, the spread of mass media technology has made people the world over, including the poor countries, global audience. Now I do not need to travel to Africa to see the wild beasts; I can see them through the National Geographic or Animal Planet. Likewise, the transportation of goods around the world has changed me to a global consumer and a global producer: my mobile is designed in Europe and assembled in China, and its parts come, I am told, from Korea; while the organic produce grown in my field reaches Arab countries to be consumed there. And the effects are not limited to travel; they can be seen in what we listen and see. News from any corner of the world now reaches to my ears instantly through radio and TV, and more international news than national or local fill my ears.

Employment is another sector where the effects of globalization, both good and bad, can be felt. I feel proud that my salary comes from the U.S. (I have never exploited my fellow citizens in their work!) because I work for the US companies while sitting at my computer. I have read someone suggesting university graduates of the U.S. to find work in China, as the demand of English language there has grown much along with its industrialization. However, this internationalization of employment, with growth and expansion of multinational and global companies, has taken its toll on the economies of developing countries: cheap labor hired by the rich nations is resulting in "brain drain" from developing countries.

The cultural life also has come under the grip of globalization, and this is always at the expense of local culture, ritual, and religion. For example, young people everywhere are influenced immensely by the Western music like pop, metal, and jazz. People return to local, ethnic music only when one is dissatisfied or fed up with the Western music culture and when they realize that their own identity is in danger. The hegemonic power of the mass media culture has been termed "monoculture" by sociologists.

All these effects are presently being mediated by the introduction of the World Wide Web. While with the e-commerce people can buy and sell whatever they want through the

Internet, they can also listen to and watch any news or music or get any information from the Internet in an instant. Moreover, more and more people are employed in online jobs, where virtually anyone having the rights skills can do the job from anywhere in the world provided that he or she has the Internet connection. Therefore, whether to our liking or not, the arms of globalization are embracing everyone in the world, sometimes as an instrument of capitalist exploitation under the guise of pursuit of common humanity.

Case 2: S. Magar, a Member of Global Family

Last year, I was having tea with my friends when one of them pointed out that my family could be called 'a global family'.

I could understand why she might have come to such conclusion. I am from Jhumlawang, Morawang, Rukum district, Lumbini Province of Nepal. While I was born in the village, I had most of my schooling in Kathmandu. I earned my Master's in South Asian Studies (International Relations) from Pondicherry University, India.

Now I will explain why my family was claimed to be a 'global family.' I have three biological brothers and one adopted all elders. All of them are in different parts of the world. Eldest one is in USA with his wife for more than a decade now. They are employed there and are supporting the family, financially. The middle brother is in UK; he is doing his PhD in sustainable development. At the same time, he is active as the International Co-ordinator for Jhumlawang Village Foundation (JVF-Nepal), which is a community project to make our village a model village in our area. Third brother is in Australia with his wife, who is studying under the scholarship from Australian Government. He is himself an architect and working in different sites to gain experience which he hopes to be able to use in the village project of building model village. My adopted brother is working in Saudi Arab as a migrant worker. His family, wife, and four children are in village staying with our parents. Sometimes I wonder, if I had another brother, chances are that he would be in Africa and my family would have covered almost all the continents of the world.

This is how scattered my family is. I don't have a memory of having all of my family members together, ever. When one brother used to be in the village home, other used to be somewhere else and when another used to be there, someone else will always be out of home, for many reasons: work, study, etc. So, this is where my family fits the tag 'a global family'. A global family in an era of globalization. A family which is directly and indirectly affected by the global economy, global culture and so on.

Due to globalization—shrinking of time and space, blurring of borders, domino effects, interdependence, and global consciousness—not only my life but whole family life has changed drastically. Science and technology development has helped us to keep in touch with each other. Once a while we are able to speak with almost everyone within minute difference no matter where we are.

However, there are moments when I am totally confused. The idea of 'where I truly belong' hits me. Where can I survive and where I cannot make me think and at times it's so

blurred to find ones stable root. When the identity politics is at rise where does my identity lie? Can the global conscience be enough for my identity? These things leave me with total alienation at times while other times I find myself one of the ingredients in the melting pot. It's very hard to define myself here, very hard to pin-point just like how difficult is to pin point globalization's presence. Where it is and how it is affecting in our little lives is difficult to put a finger on but we can feel its presence, here and everywhere and this also becomes the reason for questioning my roots and where I belong.

Case 3: A. Paudel, a Member of Migrated Family

I was born in Kapilvastu district in Terai area of Nepal. My parents migrated from Arghakhachi, a hill area to Kapilvastu, one year before my birth. They migrated in search of better options for livelihood other than agriculture. After reaching at Kapilvastu, my father started to work for a shop where the parts of vehicles, buses, etc. then after some years of working as employee for other shops, he started his own shop on the same business. Then my family migrated to Butwal which was previously called as "But wall". According to the history, Butwal was a center point previously for western part of Nepal and people form hilly villages had to come down to Butwal basically to buy for salt through exchanging with other goods. Bir Gorkhalis like Balbhadra Kunwar and others fought with Birtish at Jitgadhi Butwal and won the war against British, where the place is still protected as a historian area.

My family's process of migration from Arghakhachi to Kapilvastu and to Butwal drags my attention towards the process of globalization. My family slowly and steadily got exposed to different world of business and lifestyles and then compete themselves to be a better one to strive with this global world. The family adapted with various environmental and cultural backgrounds and changed themselves too. Here what I felt is the effect of globalized world where the culture is shared along with other goods and items.

After my family arrived at Butwal I was then admitted to a boarding school along with my siblings. The Nepali community before didn't use to send their girl child for education but with the age of globalization made them realize the importance of education, and now with this impact my family had choose better option for me even though I was a girl child. After successful completion of my schooling, I was sent to college to study science. My family selected this subject for me was also a part of globalization where the technical areas was rapidly growing, developing and created a lot of scopes among technical fields.

After completion of my +2 level, I then migrated to Kathmandu form Butwal. This time my father kept me with his brother in Kathmandu. First time I was put aside from my family in Kathmandu, the capital city of the country. The beginning days of Kathmandu used to make me feel a different world, massive roads, and people with different cultural backgrounds from different corners of the world. I started to pursue counseling with people of various backgrounds for my future career and finally came up to join with Bachelor in Social Work. This course exposed me to a different social world of the country where I was exposed to various social issues of the country. I started observing my society through the

lens and glasses of social scientist. I love to examine social problems and issues with the effects of globalization and also with social orthodox and practices.

Today I am attached to with a social organization as President which works for rights, protection and empowerment of elderly citizens. The globalization has made me able to study the elderly of my society and the global world in various paradigms and circumstances. In future I shall definitely reach to elders among my nation and the world for the better life of elderly.

Case 4: U. Ghising, a Son of Transnational Businessman

I was born in Arunachal Pradesh in 1988, one of the popular states of India. It is said that my parents had been migrated there earlier before they got married, in about 1956 afterwards for the purpose of business expansion or economic prosperity. We are originally from Pachthar district of Nepal, but since our grandparents' visit to India, our clans have permanently been living in Arunachal Pradesh in India. As so far, I memorize initially, our family had been associated with the strict religious norms and values. My father had a small-scale business for the sale of ginger locally. While speaking on the regard of my schooling, I was admitted to one of the advance schools which were really situated far, almost 10 kilometers away from home. It was perhaps an impact of globalization in my parents' thinking due to the different geographical setting.

Therefore, they chose an advance school for my better education. As a local businessman, he was highly affected globally, being people and market oriented for his business success. Thus, my father had to be integrated with the whole market economy in business. My school was completely English environment-based school, and our principal always encouraged us to speak through English compulsorily for our better education in future. In the beginning, it was very tough for us as we had to go through the Tamang language at home. Our grandparents basically used to make us talk in our mother tongue while communicating with them. I think during my elementary learning phase, I indirectly integrated to the globalization process through the education patterns. Our teachers highly encouraged us to prefer the modern dress and beliefs. Sometimes, a clash emerged between me and my parents as I chose the modern getup. Slowly we habituated to English speaking and as a result, parents also forced us for better English speaking. My parents completely did not allow us to speak Tamang language since my grandfather's death.

As the time went by certain changes occurred in every aspect of our family life. My parents' frequent visit to Nepal and other parts of India definitely had incredible effects of globalization on my family. My father expanded the business with partners for the excessive flow of required investment concerning for the globally accessible products. As so far concern to my father's business expanded strategies, due the compulsion of adaptation for business, he was forced to ignore literally the Tamang traditional usages, which of course made a massive changes in term of life style, thoughts, and practices as a globalization innovations. Later, our family migrated back to Nepal in about 1999 A.D and I started my

high school in Birgunj, Parsa. Since the moment there was easy access to internet, computer and technology like mobile which of course made tremendous changes in my life perception and style. Since then, I gradually declined to use the modern products for being modern and specially to be recognized globally.

Now, with the regard to the impacts of globalization so many things can be analyzed both as negative and positive as well. Firstly, of course one can talk on the regard of attack on our typical cultural traits. Due to the globally adaptation our ritual and tradition have been almost lost as I can't speak my own Tamang language neither I am known to my cultural beliefs and practices. But I think along with the globalization I found easy access, quiet comfortable life style and most importantly mentally and emotionally distinctive characteristics within myself. Within the globalization sphere due the excessive job opportunity I found independence economically which certainly makes me quiet more powerful while deciding.

Thus the term, globalization is in fact quite a controversial concept as concern to its impacts on individual. Due to the globalization, our tradition cuisine has been replaced as we mostly prefer to have fast food chains such as McDonald's or restaurants with foreign dishes. Through the internet, mobiles and other means of communication I was gradually socialized into a more 'Americanized' society. Consequently, today I am entirely unknown and almost unconscious regarding my ancestral god *(Kul Deuta)* neither being accustomed to the traditional customs and rituals. But definitely, globalization makes me able to perceive and think both locally and globally a long with too.

Discussion: Citizenship and Subjectivity in Globalized World

Based on above theoretical discussion and empirical evidences, we can draw some points for discussion:

Globalization has mainly two aspects of implications for citizenship. First, the movement of people across national boundaries to live and work calls into question issues of national identity and belonging, of membership in a polity, and of the rights that accrue to that membership. Second, a hallmark of globalization is the existence of transnational and multinational organizations that are overlays on national sovereignty.

In his classical study on citizenship, T. H. Marshall (1950) noted that citizenship as it arose in Western liberal democracies has both positive and negative connotations. In the positive sense, citizenship is an expression of activism on the part of citizens; in its negative quality, it is the freedom from bureaucratic control and intervention. If his theory is true, where does global citizenship fit into it?

Under globalization, the subjectivity linked to human agency is threatened. Causal elements within events often present as technologized, multiplied, scattered, and remote from their effects. They resist attribution in terms of human causal agency, and particularly, individual agency. There can be result a perceived loss of the "subject" or "self as agent", and an associated vacuum of moral agency, encapsulated by a difficulty in answering the

questions, "Who acts? Who is responsible?" or "who am I? What am I?"

Finally, it is true that due to globalization, human subjectivity also became globalizing because self and subject itself as fluid and socially constructed. Human agency has become more complex. Individuals face greater options in deciding where to live and work, making decisions in the context of social and economic networks that span national boundaries.

Conclusion

In conclusion, as Isin and Turner (2002) argue that the problem of the historical connection between citizenship, nationalism and the nation-state, 'citizenship' has often been an important component of social movements to expand social rights and the dynamic relationships between region, state, and global society in the modern world are the unavoidable issues of globalization and citizenship debate. As a process of globalization, citizenship must be a central component to whatever answers and policies emerge towards global governance. Globalization threats the notion of citizenship and both globalization and citizenship shaping, constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing the human subjectivity.

Acknowledgements

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