

Local Globalization as International Development: Adoption or Adaptation Process?

Ji-Young Park (Assistant Professor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York)

Abstract

Ji-Young Park

The demise of a traditional society and the rise of the modern are an unavoidable stream in the era of globalization. It is easily verified that many local areas of developing countries are quickly adopting a dominant globalized development process as they become involved in an international network society; the transformation mostly accompanies the abandonment of their local, but traditional, inestimable space values switching to a modern place that would lose unique originalities the place has been remembered. This study tried to answer two issues: firstly, how should globalization be interpreted in this modern era? Is it a process to adopt the major streams fashioned as globalization? Or is it a process to adapt to its own environment creating their own style evolved from their own needs. Addressing the first question, secondly, this study tried to address with what process these two actions can be reconciled to the globalization of local spaces. This study proposed a Double-A approach to progress to modern network society, which is useful not only for developed local areas, but also more necessary for developing local areas which intend to find the coordinates to attain their development level and, at the same time, maintain their amenity. While the Double-A framework discussed in this study suggests a roadmap to indicate where local areas move toward, the arrival through a Double-A framework should not be understood as the end for local globalization, but the start for new globalization. This is because reconciliation between the developed and the developing, between the space of flows and space of places, and between adoption and adaptation has been proven throughout our history.

주제어: 지방의 세계화, 순응, 적응

Keywords: local globalization, adoption, adaptation

I. Introduction

The demise of a traditional society and the rise of the modern are an unavoidable stream in the era of globalization. It is easily verified that many local areas of developing countries, in particular, are quickly adopting a dominant globalized development process as they become involved in an international network society; the transformation mostly accompanies the abandonment of their local, but traditional, inestimable space values switching to a modern place that would lose unique originalities the place has been remembered. The local areas seem to feel that transforming themselves into globalized places, is a mission they must undertake immediately, converting to redeveloped, modern places, trendy and stylish. Although each local area has different but varied completing velocity in redevelopment to some degree, a common convergence seems to exist after its achievement related to the modern transformation in a globalized era.

In those cases, globalization can be perceived as flows originating from advanced modernity, focusing especially on a connection from the higher modernized local dimension to the lower. A variety of factors within the lower local spaces initiate the flows based on their needs or sometimes just on the dominant styles. In this position, the direction of globalization for lower local spaces should have the necessary proviso of the preexistence of the local entity. Based on the above stance of one side flow, the following question arises: Is a higher local modernized space in the developed countries the first origin to initiate any modern flow? If any local space creates its own property, then, can we refer to the creation as globalization? More specifically, should the local globalization be interpreted only as the receiving phenomenon, instead of internally evolving experience?

This study, depending on those questions, tried to answer two issues: How should globalization be interpreted in this modern era? That is, the receiver as the developer of lower local spaces would briefly have two manifest behaviors: adopt the major streams fashioned as globalization; or adapt to its own environment creating their own style evolved from their

own needs. Can we define both behaviors as globalization? If yes, the next question arises: with what process can those two actions be reconciled to the globalization of local spaces?

For this reconciliation, this study suggests using the Double A (Adoption-Adaptation) model that help explain globalization uniformly. This model can explain various kinds of case-studies describing globalized locations which include local identification along with the diverse phenomena of globalization. This is because most of globalized spaces have been identically treated only as either globalization or counter-globalization although it has still been explained by different theories.

In the following section, three important concepts, namely, globalization, modernity, and localization, are discussed to move toward further discussion of the Double A model. Accepting the concept of globalization that Castells (2000) mentioned in his book, I related the globalization concept to modernity, and then, described the relationship it has with localization. These are basic steps for introducing the Double A model in section III.

II. Globalization, Modernity, and Localization

1. Globalization

In general agreement with Castells (2000), globalization can be described as the flow (of money, of information, of technology, of image, of space, and so on.) within a global network without any time delay. Surely, it is a process. According to Pizarro et al (2003: 113) who thoroughly described the nature of globalization in the aspect of flow, it "is at once transitional and transcendental. It is a condition of flux rather than stasis. It replaces certainty, stability, order, and equilibrium with uncertainty, instability, disorder, and disequilibrium. It is a process that can be described in terms of flows, networks, capacities, distributions, diffusions, and movements".

When following this brief nature of globalization as flow, however, an interesting question arises. Human history has always encountered new

flows, whether this is our intention, or whether it is massive to accept. When goes from Stone Age to Bronze Age or when the Orient touches the West through geographical discoveries started from early 15C, the local spaces in the Stone Age or in the Orient had experienced new flows which eventually distorted their stable identity.

If then, what are the differences between globalization and pre-globalization ages? They are a 'gate to contact' and a 'speed of spread'. Today's infrastructure, especially the worldwide Internet, allows the elements within localized regions to access all information; it can reach all other cultures and exchange and access information. Without this connection, they would have to obtain any requested information through hierarchical local and class structure. This unconstrained access to all possibilities enables new information entirely or partially different from the former localization structure to be spread, whether it is positive or not.

When accepting the basis of those general, a simplified concept of globalization understood as flow, more narrowly, only space surfing the flow is considered in this study. This space of flows is also well defined by Castells as, "the material organization of time-sharing social practices that work through flows" (2000: 442). When this definition is confirmed, two questions arise: What is characteristic of material? From where does the flow begin? By relating those to the rhetoric of modernity and originality, a significant reply about the nature of globalization can be exposed.

2. Modernity

As Castells (2000: 441) declares, "space is not a photocopy of society but society. Space is crystallized time", and hence "space is the material support of time-sharing social practices." Which characteristics of material support are able to change space by the globalized flow in the current era? We can find the answer from two characteristics of modernism.

As easily observed, many developing countries simply accept the urban form of developed countries, which are constructed on the basis of modernization. That is, the globalized flow can be considered the flow of westernization or

modernization. The main distinction in modernization can be summarized as 'development speed' and 'standardization.' Modernity requires 'speedy' results, which are "a vibrant and dynamic new social system, a system oriented toward free activity, high productivity, long-distance trade and cosmopolitan commerce, abundance for all" (Berman, 1988: p.68-69), although it allows losers to be behind the development and change process. Speedy results are usually achieved by the standardized process.

'Standardization' is understood as identical input gives the same output such like the answer of formula by setting up models; therefore, it allows mass production by identicalness, generalization, eternization, and formalization. Certainly, in many aspects, I agree with Toulmin (1992: 30~35)'s discussion is useful for this concept. By this standardization process, the modern state could extend their outputs to the edges of the state, widely reaching other countries, and deeply to all times. The standardized outputs can be any of goods, systems, or institutions. In truth, standardization rapidly obliterated the local personality and diversity, and the peculiar culture of other countries by superseding the standardized outputs (Taylor, 2001).

To the developing countries, it is the most important issue to reach the dominant power benefited already by developed countries through modernization. In the network society, material support characterized by modernity affects the space form of local area. This modernization process, therefore, can be accepted as a way to evolve, utilizing the standardization process. At the same time the process connotes a seismic wave to wipe locality, but the wave never has met in its history. It would change the unique locality rapidly. Without the modernization [and standardization] process, the local space will disappear in the worldwide race with a huge relative deceleration.

3. Localization

Another question about the flow is its originality. Flow should have a starting point for its arrival. Depending on so many modern systems, in

fact, our network society might endlessly provide the system if it can be the enormous ocean to give seafood to the lives in coastline area forever. Castells (2000) seems to be in this assumption about his space of flow. However, how was urban form change by the Emscher Park IBA project in Germany able to adapt to its own environment? Or can we accept the flexible transformation of modernity suitable to its locality as other superseding phenomena of modernity? If we can agree with those cases, the existence of originality for the space of flow can restore the mutual flow of each locality from the one-way flow of dominant space and, therefore, allow any local space to create the originality. This creativity will contribute to the slow advancement of the locality, at least maintaining the locality.

Therefore, the definition of localization as from its originality is not to lose its own characteristics in the dominant spatial fashion of flow; on the contrary, it can exist independently contributing to the network society. This localization always considers its elements: local residents, its valuable environments, and so forth.

How can successful localization be acquired? Under the market oriented planning position and briefly introduced, modernization as development of the traditional area should be enacted by its residents, not from any planner who try to be the organizer helping the residents. As a matter of fact, this market oriented planning position can be understood as an indirect planning process supported by a planner: the planner, therefore, needs to be understood as the establisher and supervisor to improve the capability of an individual, letting the market play a more efficient role than itself does in planning, not through exclusive relation, but through their cooperating relationship. This means the state exists as an institutional reformer and supporter, and the market acts as a planner to give a stage to private sectors. To planner or governor, even if it is the best plan for developing the area, unexpected matters may happen while reaching its goal.

So, three prerequisites are suggested as the scheme for development of localization: voluntary community, planners as the guider, and amenity. For instance, the residents in Fes Medina should establish a community which includes voluntary communication in order to preserve and develop

living conditions. Of course, other supporting systems, such as the educational system are also important. Here, the planner can suggest some good examples and directions for the helper for the community. In many cases, the compromise is not easy, and development projects are frequently decided in the planning stages with unsuccessful results. However, the local area should have enough time to develop an agreement for its goal. As Castells (2004:92) stressed the role of government in cities similarly to this issue; he addressed that “innovative urban policy does not result from great urbanist (although they are indeed needed), but from courageous urban politics able to mobilize citizens around the meaning of their environment.” It is necessary for this development to proceed in keeping or finding its amenity; the community and planner should consider what is representative of their area and how it can be maintained during its development. According to these basic conditions, a local area like Fes medina can be developed or globalized with minimized conflicts between the for and the against, and then contribute to supporting a new space of flows to the existing network society because Fes medina already has the representative amenity to be used in its westernization.

Therefore, globalization is understood that it is not in conflict with localization. Although Castells (2000: 453) pointed out using Belleville’s example, “the space of flows does not permeate down to the whole realm of human experience in network society. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of people, in advanced and traditional societies alike, live in places, and so they perceive their space as place-based”, and accordingly, “a place is a locale whose form, function, and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of physical contiguity”, his explanation is still not enough to accept the reconciliation of the space of flows and space of places because it is still based on one-way flows starting from dominance. In the next section, applying the Double A model, this study tried to reach a reconciliation between globalization and localization.

III. Space Convergence

In recent times, Castells (2004: 90) suggested the integration of the space of flows and space of places: “in a world of spatial networks, the proper connection between these different networks is essential to link up the global and the local without opposing the two planes of operation.” However, how can it be accomplished? According to the Castells’ theory of the space of flows (2000:448), it “includes the symbolic connection of homogeneous architecture in the places that constitute the nodes of each network across the world, so that architecture escapes from the history and culture of each society and becomes captured into the new imaginary, wonderland world of unlimited possibilities that underlies the logic transmitted by multimedia: the culture of electronic surfing, as if we could reinvent all forms in any place, on the sole condition of leaping into the cultural in definition of the flows of power”, and concluded “the enclosure of architecture into an historical abstraction is the formal frontier of the space of flows”, it appears that it will not be easy to make the connection between the space of flows and the space of places.

At this point, it would be useful to bring the concept of globalization understood as mutual flow in order to reconcile the two spaces. The curiosity of planners in the local area, particularly in a developing area, is how to change the local space. For them, there are two ways: Adoption or Adaptation. Before moving this discussion of the mutual flow concept further, the relation between Adoption/Adaptation and Space of Flows/Space of Places should be clarified. Referring to Figure-1, one manifest difference of the direction in the two approaches is understood as following: the Adoption/Adaptation approach focuses on dynamic behavior of the local; however, the Space of Flows/Space of Places observes phenomena that have already occurred. The latter approach focus is concerned with current results; therefore, it cannot capture the origination, and more severely has no reason to look into the origination. However, since the Adoption/Adaptation approach has its anchor such as planners or residents, it is another expression of localization. This model, therefore, focuses on the activity in each local space and regards its origination as a critical point.

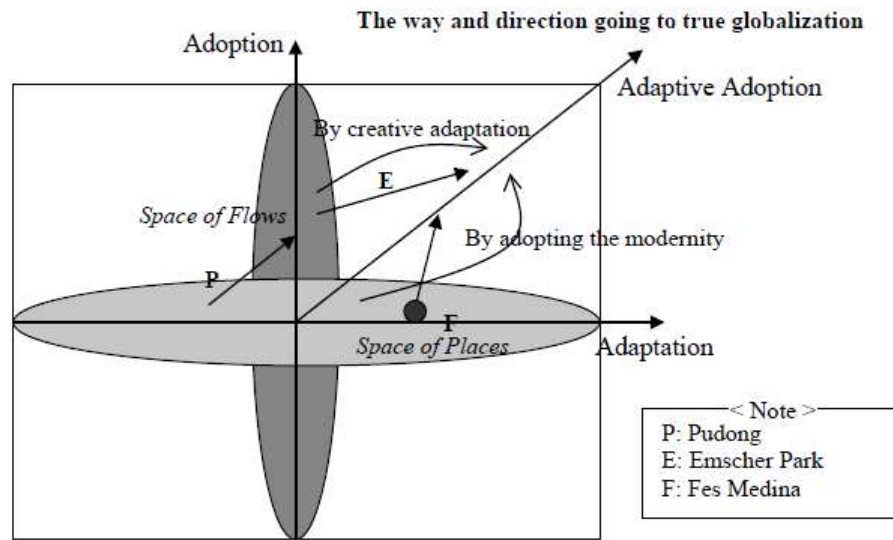


Figure 1. Double-A Model

To adopt the dominant space of flows based on modernity is to accept the system of modernity represented as efficiency. The space of flows already exists as successful stories in developed countries and has a good formulization so as not to permit trial errors. Its fast velocity in structuring a local area provides a chance to catch up with developed countries. Also, to the people from developed countries, it can show a familiar attraction. So, rapid change in Pudong, shown as P in Figure-1, is a representative example of this adoption. However, due to its speed, the local should incur the necessary costs by letting losers who “are too old, too stubborn, maybe even too stupid, to adapt and to move” be in the back of development and change; the face that they have their own beautiful past, history, and relations with their environment should be considered (Berman, 1988: p.68-69).

Another way to transform a local space is to adapt to its confined context. This adaptation accompanies the necessary creativeness based on its own characteristic, such as “spontaneity of uses, the density of the interaction, the freedom of expression, the multifunctionality of space, and the multiculturalism of the street life” (Castells, 2004: 91). Those creative works surely supply new information in the local’s survival. However, the obstinacy to remain its own status without any relationship with current

network society is, in many cases, to force the local areas to ensure an unfortunate destiny to their children and grandchildren; indeed, it may be true unless the creativeness overwhelms the current fashionable flow sometimes shown in developed countries like Emscher Landscape Park (E in Figure 1). In fact, the new creative adaptation resulted from developed countries, in many parts, depends upon the modernity already acquired. However, for this, its creativity cannot be spoiled. This should be considered as a kind of local globalization to be explained below. Therefore, many local areas which continue to maintain their own characteristics, like Fes Medina (F in Figure-1) should try to reject inflexibility.

Therefore, to let a local area be in the globalization process, that is, to reach local globalization, it is most important to adopt the space of flows only based on local situation. the space of places, meaning the local life structured in its area for enough time needs to be the strategic way of globalization that a local area pursues. In other words, adaptive adoption is a real significance of local globalization. It can be said that globalization is to create something commonly transferable throughout this world. This is the convergence of the space of flows and the space of places, "to structure the space of places as a living space, and to ensure the connection and complementarity between the economy of the metropolitan region and the quality of lie of its dwellers" (Castells, 2004:90). True localization is, therefore, formed through local globalization, which then can be a barometer for an actual global city.

IV. Conclusions

This study proposed what local globalization is. It is to creatively adapt to their situation by selectively adopting modern fashion. It is not only integration between the Space of flows and the Space of places, but also, more importantly, the dynamic activity of developing their local areas to participate in modern network society through adaptive adoption. It is an innovative transformation of the local to modern network society. To

accomplish this advance, voluntary community, planner as an organizer, and locality are necessary. The Double-A approach to progress to modern network society is useful not only for developed local areas, but also more necessary for developing local areas which intend to find the coordinates to attain their development level and, at the same time, maintain their amenity.

Therefore, the Double-A framework discussed in this study suggests a roadmap to indicate where local areas move toward. Also, the arrival through a Double-A framework is not the end for local globalization, but the start for new globalization. This is reconciliation between the developed and the developing, between the space of flows and space of places, and between adoption and adaptation, proven throughout our history.

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접수일(2013년 11월 01일)

수정일자(2013년 11월 25일)

게재확정일(2013년 12월 03일)