Week Three: Globalization Today

Objective: to learn what is happening with globalization today

Lesson 1: Theories on Globalization

There are so many theories on globalization that people have developed subcategories of theories. We will look at a few theories and their meanings, but be aware that there are many more out there that can be studied. The three main theories are liberalism, political realism, and Marxism.

The liberalism theory of globalization believes that globalization is just an extension of market expansion in capitalist societies. The theory is that people just want two things: to maximize their economic potential and to exercise basic freedoms. As they attempt to expand their market, they spread these two ideas across the world.

In the theory of political realism, nations want expansion and power. This expansion and power leads to the spread of ideas and goods to other countries. The theory takes one of two tracks from here. Some believe that if one nation gets too powerful all the other nations have a collective resistance to hold it in place. Another theory believes that one nation with the most power is a stabilizing force in the world.

The theory of Marxism revolves around social class and inequalities in society. Karl Marx believed that capitalism would eventually erase all barriers or boundaries between nations in order to make the whole world into one big market. There are other theories very similar to Marxism but make different categories the focus of the inequality. For instance, a feminism theory sees the inequality stemming from the different sexes and not social class.

While there are many theories, the central themes to each theory involve markets and the spread of goods, ideas, and culture. Each theory places the emphasis on a different part of globalization, which results in the primary focus of each theory being slightly different.
Activity

In the theory of political realism, there are five states that are the major powers. Identify the following major powers on the map below: US, UK, Japan, China, and France.
Lesson 2: Drivers of Globalization

Historically, new methods of transportation and the development of manufacturing were the two biggest drivers of globalization. Today, technology and communications are two of the biggest drivers. With the Internet and wireless devices, we are connected worldwide for twenty-four hours a day. Corporations have never had such access to their markets. Technology tells them what we buy and when we buy it. It also tells them when we look at their product, even if we don’t buy it. All this information gives businesses the ability to target their marketing message directly at us.

At the same time, the communication and technology drivers have accelerated the pressure for trade deals between nations that are free and fair. Both drivers have created a new group of entrepreneurs who are accessing new markets and capitalizing on old markets.

Activity

Read this World Book article on Technology.
Read this World Book article on the Trade.

In your journal, write down what you believe to be the five most relevant facts from these articles.
It might be hard to imagine, but there was a time when people didn’t have computers in their homes. They didn’t have tablets. They didn’t have smart phones. They didn’t have Wi-Fi. They didn’t have cable TV. Technology is the main driver in globalization today.

Think of all the ways you use technology every day. Do you want to compare prices on a new phone or look up the birth weight of African elephants? Today these things can be done right from your home. Imagine how people had to do things like retrieve basic information before the Internet.

The Internet connects us worldwide. We can see news from faraway places, shop at faraway countries, and learn how to make foreign food. But it is not just people connected through the Internet. Banks, governments, and companies are all connected as well. Banks can process transactions from anywhere, governments can communicate events and disasters in real time to each other, and companies can sell their goods anywhere.

Today there is concern over the use of technology and globalization. There is real concern over the use of robotics to replace workers around the world.
Activity

Define the following terms.

1. Liberalism Theory

2. Political Realism Theory

3. Marxist Theory

4. Technology

5. Communications

6. Corporations

7. Internet

8. Markets

9. Entrepreneur

10. Robotics
Lesson 4: Impacts of Globalization

Globalization has many impacts on the world we live in today. Our interconnectedness to the entire world has driven changes in culture and political systems and how we obtain goods and services. The biggest driver right now in globalization is the Internet and our technology. Technology has made our travel safer, buying products easier, and calling Grandma faster.

Activity

Research the development of the Internet and technology. Write a paper between 300 and 500 words on the significance technology plays in today’s world. Technology has improved the quality of life in many ways. How has technology been detrimental to daily life? Will robots replace workers? What happens to those workers? What is the responsibility of corporations or society to these displaced workers?
Lesson 5: Quiz

True or False?

1. The theory of Marxism states that the strongest nation will rise to the top.

2. The theory of liberalism states globalism will occur as we expand markets.

3. The theory of political realism states that nations are always looking to have power.

4. The biggest driver in globalism today is transportation.

5. Entrepreneurs are drivers in today’s global economy.
Going Deeper

Video

Theories of Global Stratification: Crash Course Sociology #28
Max Weber & Modernity: Crash Course Sociology #9

Readings

National Geographic - Globalization
US News - News of the day on Globalization