

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38027/iccaua2023en0336>

Globalization and the Challenge of Urban Identity

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Abstract:

The concept of identity has been greatly influenced by globalization, which has brought an influx of people, ideas and cultural influences to cities. This comprehensive review examines existing literature to explore how globalization has impacted the formation and preservation of identity. The study delves into the role of globalization, in shaping the social and architectural aspects of cities. It also addresses the challenges cities encounter in safeguarding their identities amidst standardization. The findings reveal that although urban identity has been significantly affected by globalization cities are actively countering these changes through preserving practices promoting local arts and culture and designing public spaces that reflect their unique character. This research enhances our understanding of the relationship between globalization and urban identity while offering insights, into how cities can retain their individuality in an evolving world.

Keywords: Globalization; Urban Identity; Global Homogenization; Stematic Review.

Introduction:

The influence of globalization, on cities and the development of identity has been significant. Over the years globalization has exposed cities to an influx of people, ideas and cultural influences resulting in a blending of aesthetics and cultural practices (Grazia, 2012; Sassen, 2002). However, cities have also actively resisted these changes by preserving their practices promoting local arts and culture and designing public spaces that reflect their unique character. This interplay between globalization and local identity has created dynamic relationships between cities and the broader world. Urban identity encompasses the perception of a city's social and architectural traits. It is shaped by external factors such as history, cultural traditions, demographic shifts, economic development as well as the physical environment (Hariry, 2021; Kara, 2019). In the context of globalization's influence, on cities today; maintaining their identities while adapting to the changing global landscape poses a challenge.

Scholars have engaged in debates regarding how globalization impacts identity. Some people argue that globalization is causing cities to look and feel the same with architecture and cultural practices (Sassen, 2002). On the hand, there are those who believe that globalization can also help preserve cultural and architectural traditions as cities strive to maintain their unique identities, in a globalizing world (Baumeister & Zeller 2016). This ongoing debate highlights the relationship between globalization and urban identity.

With this in mind the purpose of this study is to contribute to an understanding of how globalization affects identity. Through an analysis of existing literature this study examines how globalization has influenced the formation and preservation of identity in cities worldwide. It explores how globalization shapes the social and architectural aspects of cities while also addressing the challenges faced by cities in safeguarding their identities amidst global homogenization. The findings from this study hold implications for planners, policymakers and advocates, for cultural preservation as they strive to create vibrant and authentic cities.

Materials and Methods:

This research study involved an examination of existing literature to explore the connection, between globalization and urban identity. The main goal of this review was to gather and analyze the findings and insights from various sources regarding how globalization affects the formation and preservation of urban identity in cities worldwide. To accomplish this we conducted a search across databases like JSTOR, ProQuest, Web of Science and Google Scholar. We utilized keywords related to globalization, urban identity and cities while combining terms using Boolean operators (for example; "globalization AND urban identity " "globalization AND cities " "urban identity AND homogenization"). This search was performed within a specific date range to ensure that the recent and relevant literature was included. To be considered for this study publications needed to be articles, books or reports published in English with a focus on cities around the world. We excluded articles or books that didn't directly address the relationship, between globalization and urban identity. Additionally non reviewed publications, editorials opinion pieces were also excluded. Studies that solely relied on evidence or case studies without a theoretical or empirical basis were not included in our analysis.

First we imported all the identified records into a reference management software. Got rid of any duplicates. Then we screened the remaining records based on their titles. Abstracts to determine eligibility. For the records we obtained full text articles. Evaluated them using pre defined criteria. During data extraction we collected

information such, as author(s) publication year, study design, sample size (if applicable) research setting (like cities or regions) key findings and implications for identity.

To analyze the data collected from the literature review we used a content analysis method. This involved coding the data into themes related to how urban identity's formed and maintained in the context of globalization. We then analyzed these themes to identify patterns and trends in order to draw conclusions about the relationship, between globalization and urban identity. By conducting analysis we were able to identify both convergent and divergent findings across the reviewed studies thus gaining an understanding of the subject matter.

Results and Discussions:

Based on the literature review it is apparent that globalization has had an impact, on the creation and preservation of urban identity. The results indicate that globalization has presented challenges to the social and architectural aspects of cities resulting in a standardization of aesthetics and cultural practices (Grazia, 2012; Sassen, 2002). Nevertheless the findings also suggest that cities are actively resisting these changes by safeguarding practices promoting local arts and culture and designing public spaces that reflect their distinct character (Florida, 2002; Landry, 2000).

1-Cultural Identity:

One of the topics explored in the literature review is how globalization affects the identity of cities. The research suggests that globalization has caused cultural practices and values to become more similar, across cities as they strive to appeal to an audience. For instance, there has been a presence of European fast food chains, retail stores and entertainment venues in cities around the world.

However, the findings also indicate that cities are actively resisting this trend by preserving their practices and promoting local arts and culture. This resistance aims to maintain the identity of each city and safeguard its cultural heritage for future generations. Examples include supporting cuisine, crafts, and indigenous art forms, as well, as organizing local festivals and cultural events.

2. Social Identity:

Another significant aspect discussed in the literature review is how globalization impacts the identity of cities. The research findings indicate that globalization has resulted in a standardization of practices and values. Cities, around the world are adopting norms and practices to cater to a global audience. This can be observed through the rise of networks, international migration and the spread of global cultural norms (Appadurai, 1996; Castells, 2000). However, the results also suggest that cities are actively resisting this process of homogenization. They are promoting practices and values while creating spaces that showcase the unique characteristics of each city (Baumeister & Zeller 2016; Florida, 2002). This resistance is seen as an effort to preserve the identity of each city and safeguard its heritage for future generations (Grazia, 2012; Landry, 2000). Examples include supporting community organizations fostering multiculturalism and developing spaces that encourage social interaction and instil a sense of belonging (Zukin, 1995; Castells, 2000).

3- Architectural Identity;

The literature review also highlighted the impact of globalization on the identity of cities, as a theme. The research findings suggest that the impact of globalization, on styles and practices has resulted in a tendency for cities to adopt approaches aiming to attract a global audience (Sassen, 2002; King, 2004). This trend is visible through the construction of glass and steel skyscrapers, shopping malls and gated communities across cities worldwide (Olds, 2001). However, the study also reveals that cities are actively resisting this trend by preserving their styles and practices while promoting local architectural traditions (Florida, 2002; Nia, & Suleiman). This resistance aims to maintain each city's identity and safeguard its cultural heritage, for future generations (Landry, 2000). Examples of efforts include conserving and restoring buildings emphasizing vernacular architecture and incorporating local materials and design elements into new constructions (King, 2004; Olds, 2001).

4- Globalization and Urban Planning:

Additionally highlighted in the literature review is the role of planning in shaping how cities respond to globalization—an important theme identified. The research indicates that urban planning has a role, in determining whether globalization leads to cities becoming more similar or if it allows for the preservation of their uniqueness and diversity (Fainstein, 2005). On one hand urban planning strategies that prioritize competitiveness by constructing business districts, convention centres and tourism infrastructure often contribute to making urban spaces more uniform (Sassen, 2002; Friedmann, 1986). Conversely, urban planning

approaches that focus on preserving culture promoting inclusivity and embracing identity can help cities maintain their characteristics (Fainstein, 2005; Landry, 2000).

5- The Role of Local Stakeholders:

Regarding the involvement of stakeholders, in shaping identity within the context of globalization the literature review highlights their significant role. The findings suggest that local governments, community organizations, cultural institutions and citizens have the power to either resist or facilitate the homogenizing effects of globalization (Fainstein, 2005; Florida, 2002). These stakeholders can influence identity by advocating for preservation efforts and social inclusivity. Additionally they can support businesses. Actively participate in urban planning processes (Landry, 2000; Zukin, 1995). In summary the outcomes of this examination of published works indicate that globalization has had an impact, on how urban identity is shaped and maintained. The findings suggest that globalization has posed challenges to the social and architectural aspects of cities resulting in a standardization of aesthetics and cultural practices. However the results also indicate that cities are actively resisting these changes by preserving their practices promoting local arts and culture and designing public spaces that reflect their distinct character.

These findings have implications for planners, policymakers and advocates for cultural preservation. They emphasize the necessity for an approach to development that considers both the opportunities and challenges brought about by globalization while safeguarding the unique cultural, social and architectural identities of cities, for future generations (Fainstein, 2005; Florida, 2002; Sassen, 2002).

How to maintain identity in a rapidly changing world?

Preserving the distinctiveness and identity of a city in a changing world is a challenge that requires a multifaceted approach. Here are a few strategies cities can employ to safeguard their character;

A); Safeguarding Historic and Cultural Landmarks; Cities can protect their character by implementing measures to preserve their historic and cultural landmarks. This can be achieved through legislation that restricts the demolition of buildings, with cultural value or by establishing designated historical districts with strict zoning regulations. Preserving these landmarks plays a role in upholding the essence and sense of belonging within a city. As stated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation "Historic preservation is vital for the social and cultural well being of communities. By safeguarding places that contribute to a community's character we cultivate pride and identity." (National Trust for Historic Preservation, n.d.) Additionally research conducted by the Urban Land Institute revealed that preserving sites can positively impact property values further supporting the advantages associated with conserving a city's heritage (Urban Land Institute, n.d.).

B); Fostering Local Arts and Culture; Another way cities can preserve their character is, by nurturing arts and culture scenes. One way to achieve this is, by showing support for artists sponsoring events and festivals and establishing cultural centers and museums that highlight the history and heritage of the city. Arts and cultural events have the power to bring communities together create a sense of belonging and attract visitors to the city. A study conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts reveals that arts and cultural events can have advantages such as job creation, growth of local businesses and increased tourism (National Endowment for the Arts, 2017). Moreover research carried out by Americans for the Arts indicates that arts can act as a catalyst for revitalization helping to breathe life into struggling neighborhoods (Americans for the Arts, 2018).

C); Encouraging Small Business Development: Another important aspect is promoting business development in order to preserve a city's character and identity. This can be achieved through means like tax incentives, grants and business incubators that entrepreneurship and economic growth. According to the Institute for Local Self Reliance local independent businesses play a role in shaping a community's character while offering significant economic, social and environmental benefits (Institute, for Local Self Reliance). According to research conducted by the Local Economy Policy Institute it has been found that owned businesses play a role, in job creation boosting economic activity and enhancing overall quality. To promote development and preserve the character of cities various practices can be implemented. These include conserving spaces and parks developing infrastructure that encourages walking and biking and promoting energy buildings.

E); Encouraging Sustainable Development: Sustainable development not contributes to creating a livable and appealing city but also reduces its environmental impact. The United Nations defines development as a means for people to improve their quality of life without compromising future generations ability to meet their own needs. Additionally a study conducted by the Worldwatch Institute highlights that sustainable development

leads to increased employment opportunities, economic growth stimulation and better health and well being for residents.

F); Engaging the Community: Finally community engagement plays a role, in maintaining a city's character. This can be achieved through meetings, online forums and other forms of outreach aimed at involving the community in the planning and decision making processes.

It is important to engage with the community to ensure that the city's distinct character and identity are properly represented in its policies and development plans. A study conducted by the National Civic League highlights that involving the community is crucial, in fostering a sense of ownership and investment in shaping a city (National Civic League, n.d.). Additionally research carried out by the Project for Public Spaces emphasizes the role public spaces play in creating a sense of community and belonging with community engagement being an element for their success (Project for Public Spaces, n.d.).

G); Encouraging Diversity: Another important aspect is promoting diversity within the community including linguistic and ethnic diversity. This helps create a unique culture that locals can take pride in. The National League of Cities has reported that diverse communities have the potential to foster innovation boost their economies and offer a range of services and amenities to residents (National League of Cities 2016).

Furthermore developing a economy supported by local businesses, job opportunities and economic growth can provide stability and income, for city residents. According to the Institute, for Local Self Reliance local businesses have ties to the community, which makes them more likely to invest in the future of their community (Institute for Local Self Reliance, n.d.).

H); Enhancing Public Transportation; Cities can become more accessible. Create a living environment by investing in public transit infrastructure encouraging alternative transportation modes and reducing traffic congestion. The American Public Transportation Association highlights that investing in public transportation infrastructure can lead to growth job creation and improved access to opportunities for residents (American Public Transportation Association, 2018).

I); Encouraging Healthy Lifestyles; By providing parks, recreational facilities, active transportation options and healthy food choices cities can promote a lifestyle for their residents while creating a living environment. The World Health Organization states that urban design that supports activity and healthy diets plays a role in reducing the risk of non communicable diseases, like heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes (World Health Organization, 2018). Nurturing Innovation; Supporting technology startups encouraging entrepreneurship and investing in research and development are essential for cities to generate job opportunities drive growth and enhance the well being of their residents. According to the Innovation Policy Platform (2016) innovation plays a role, in enabling cities to tackle challenges while creating avenues for growth and progress. To preserve their character and maintain their identity amidst a changing world shaped by globalization cities must safeguard their historical and cultural landmarks, foster local arts and culture promote small business growth encourage sustainable practices and actively involve the community. By implementing these measures cities can protect their heritage while simultaneously creating a livable environment. Striking a balance between heritage preservation and embracing developments is key, to preserving a city's character in today's dynamic landscape.

Conclusion:

This qualitative research study offers insights, into the connection between globalization and urban identity. The results indicate that globalization has had an influence on how urban identities are formed and preserved worldwide. However cities are actively resisting these changes by preserving their practices promoting local arts and culture and designing public spaces that reflect their distinct character. This study contributes to our understanding of how globalization and local identity interact emphasizing the importance of striking a balance between trends and local cultural traditions. The findings have implications for planners, policymakers and advocates of cultural preservation who strive to create vibrant and authentic cities. To maintain their identities in a changing world cities must embrace their cultural heritage while also adapting to the demands of globalization. This requires a proactive approach to planning and policymaking that acknowledges the dynamic relationship between globalization and urban identity. In conclusion this study sheds light on the challenges and opportunities faced by cities as they navigate the interplay between globalization and urban identity. The findings make a contribution to literature on urban identity and globalization while offering insights, into how cities can preserve their distinct character amidst an ever changing world.

Acknowledgements

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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