

Argumentative essay on globalization and the internet

[War](#), [Cold War](#)



Argumentative Essay - Globalization and the Internet

Globalization as an ongoing practice has led to a shrinking of our world; through the Internet, as well as faster transportation methods and a host of other concerns, it is much easier to conduct business and government activities on a global scale. In an instant, information can be passed or collected from anywhere in the world, granting those with these capabilities a unique responsibility and power. The way in which the Internet is applied towards globalization is very important: Friedman, in "National Strategies for a Changing World: Globalization and National Security," argues that "[w]hat is different about globalization is that instead of being built around one balance between states and states, it is built around three balances of power". I do support Mr. Thomas Friedman's position that the internet has made dramatic changes in the globalization of the world to some extent, but I find Thomas P. M. Barnett's argument about the "Gap" and Samuel P. Huntington's study in the patterns of conflict in "The Clash of Civilizations" more influential in the globalization of our blue planet.

Friedman argues that the world has become increasingly globalized, and this globalization has become an effective and permanent replacement for the Cold War. The balance of power is still an incredibly present and viable concept, but Friedman introduces two new balances that supplement the typical international conflicts. First, there are the super markets; like super powers, these large companies have a great deal of financial and political capital, with market forces of substantial number and the ability to manipulate them to get things done in the real world: "The United States can destroy you by dropping bombs. The super markets can destroy you by

downgrading your bonds". Secondly, there are now super-empowered people and states; the power of email, social networking and instant messaging allow individuals and smaller groups to corral larger groups to achieve goals. These super-empowered men and women can use their power for good (exposing government corruption by whistle-blowing online) or ill (Osama bin Laden's organization of terrorist activities through the Internet).

All of these factors, according to Friedman, led to an extension of Cold War-era democratizations, which had effectively ended the Cold War themselves and expanded greatly into what has now become an increasingly democratized and globalized world. The democratization of finance, information and technology has led to the erosion of barriers to entry for a country or corporation, thereby linking everyone to each other more concretely. Friedman illustrates the concept of a "golden straightjacket" that causes economies to become more deregulated and privatized due to globalization, which thereby limits political discourse and political choice to what these private interests deem valid.

In order to navigate this increasingly globalized world, Friedman argues that there is still a substantial link to the physical state in which you reside: "The state, your state, your civil service is still the plug through which you plug your country into this system". This is typically the conduit by which most things get done, and relying on it is the best way to avoid 'messy states.' However, Friedman also notes the changes in international geopolitics that has come with the end of the Cold War and the beginning of globalization, noting that 'good guys' and 'bad guys' are outdated notions that do not reflect today's increasingly complex and interweaved global environment.

This interconnection prevents war, as suddenly everyone is dependent on everyone else to survive economically. That being said, Friedman also claims that the "hidden fist that keeps the hidden hand operating" is the superior US Armed Forces: "Ain't no McDonald's without McDonnell Douglas". Friedman, in effect, argues wholeheartedly for a hugely dramatic shift in world perspective and the notion of barriers due to the advent of globalization.

Despite this fascinating and pervasive perspective, however, Barnett's argument regarding the "Gap" is much more effective in understanding Earth's globalization. Barnett focuses much more on globalization as it relates to defense: "Disconnectedness defines danger". In essence, globalization almost necessitates joining the global community, lest you be cut off from the type of interconnectivity Friedman mentions in his lecture. For example, Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq is said to be dangerous because it is cut off from "all the ties that bind countries together in mutually assured dependence". However, while Friedman seems to indicate a nearly binary experience for globalization, Barnett notes a "gap" in globalization - pockets of the world where communication and connectivity are not as prevalent as others. There are many factors that must be in place to lead to globalization: "network connectivity, financial transactions, liberal media flows, and collective security". These are the nations that benefit most from globalization, and have higher standards of living - the Functioning Core. Those that are missing this globalization (and, like Iraq, consequently live under authoritarian regimes) are part of the Non-Integrating Gap. Barnett's primary point differs from Friedman's in that, while Friedman

effectively argues that the world is already totally globalized, and therefore everyone has too much of a vested economic interest in each other to wage war, Barnett believes there are pockets of the world that have no such dependence on the industrialized world, and therefore are more likely to attack. He argues that 9/11 shattered the assumption that we would be attacked by near-equivalent nations or armies (i. e. members of the globalized world) like in the Cold War; instead, we had to focus on those pockets of the world that did not receive the benefits of globalization as potential threats.

In "The Clash of Civilizations," the author provides yet another fascinating factor in globalization - the patterns of conflict around the world and how they have changed as the world grows increasingly smaller. Huntington furthers Barnett's idea that the assumption that globalization would lead to world peace through economic interconnectivity is false; however, he specifically points out the increasing importance of cultural differences as a barometer for conflict. This flies directly in the face of Friedman's claim as well, as Huntington's thesis, by extension, indicates that civilizations and cultures will wage war regardless of economic dependence; these cultural and religious clashes may be all that is required to wage war. Throughout history, the "fault lines between civilizations" have remained steady among religious and cultural lines, with civilizations fighting over spiritual beliefs and political systems, on a micro- and macro-level. This seems to be much more plausible, given the strength of ideology in cultures, and civilization's status as a creature of culture.

In conclusion, Barnett and Huntington have far more compelling arguments

for the importance of globalization and its link to the Internet than Friedman's strictly economic point of view. Friedman believes that globalization has had such a dramatic effect on world culture that the world itself is seemingly boundary-less; economic interconnectivity has reached the point where nations would risk hurting themselves in the long run by fighting against other nations, and so they would stop. Barriers to entry are eliminated as a result, and the free market becomes a much more powerful force than many actual nations. However, Barnett notes the inability for globalization to reach many countries and groups, leading to a gap in globalization that would dull the effects Friedman describes. Furthermore, Huntington notes that many of these nations might go to war with each other anyway, due to the strong and inextricable ties civilizations have with culture (and the constant need to defend that culture or impose it on others). With those considerations in mind, Friedman's overall points about globalization are compelling, but less so than the remaining influence of political/religious cultures and gaps in said globalization.

Works Cited

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