

# Globalization Issues Regarding Contemporary Architecture of Iran

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**ABSTRACT:** The term Globalization undoubtedly has affected all parts of humanity life in current century. Globalization as a comprehensive phenomenon has influenced economical, political, social and cultural aspects of our societies. Contemporary architecture as a multidimensional category is depended on various factors and needs to be pursued in different fields, in order to reach to a perfect comprehending of it. In countries that they have not experienced modernity completely and also they have not passed the traditions, facing with global flows will cause different encounters. Although some defend the global and homogenous behaviors, the others as a reflection to that, support of particular and heterogeneous ideas. This dilemma also could be seen in traditional societies in confronting with modernity, but by the aim of global flows it has an incredible speed which could not be imagined before. By the rise of consideration to complexity theories and relational and fuzzy discourses, some kind of symbiosis ideas have aroused that are not going to omit while they are trying to connect contradictory issues together. The specifics of these points of views are going to be clarified and reviewed, so that to make clear the globalized and localized approaches in contemporary architecture and also to conceive an interconnection of them as a "glocalized" architecture.

**Keywords:** *globalized architecture, localized architecture, space, place, time, identity.*

## INTRODUCTION

Recent decades of 20th century and early decades of 21st century have been accompanied by numerous and tumult discussions of globalization process and its pervasive effects and outcomes have been considered seriously by sociologists, culture researchers and politicians. Nowadays, few scientific assemblies and academies bring up the globalization and its issues and it has recognized as a rapid spreading phenomenon and caused all to find it inescapable. Although aforementioned phenomenon is firstly brought up in the field of economy and is accompanied by global development of economic markets, but communication upheaval in last years of 60s caused it to move to the other political, cultural and social fields and it strongly influenced on these fields. Many believe that globalization is simultaneously started with modernity in west, but some know its initial date as simultaneous with forming the societies and first civilizations of mankind. "Antony Giddens" knows globalization as a process which comes from modernity and he knows postmodernism as manifestation of full globalization and believes that: "Globalization process is constantly considered from writing the history and its effects existed during all the times but this trend is suddenly increased." (Giddens, 1990:

3) although the globalization has rooted in historical course of western modernity, but certainly the 70s and 80s of 20th century has caused to move it quickly that couldn't be imagined in a way that some of thinkers believe it can be considered as a concept related to 90s.(Waters, 1995)

## Concepts and Viewpoints

There are different definitions of globalization phenomenon but in spite of these definitions, this phenomenon cannot be conceptualized as a certain definition about which all thinkers have a consensus of opinion. Some definitions such as world compression, becoming more dependent in different parts of world, making the world compatible, consolidating all aspects of the economy in a global area, widening influence area of social acts, decreasing imposed costs by space, time and etc are various and some are opposed. "Robertson" believes that: "Globalization is a concept that refers to both world compression and aggravation of global awareness... This is a phenomenon which caused to reciprocal dependency of global facts and global awareness as an integrated generality in 20th century." (Robertson, 1992) Or "globalization is time and space compression process by which people more or less will be relatively conscious consolidated in a single global society." (Ibid) Also, Giddens in a pervasive

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definition of that defines it a phenomenon which: “has caused to increase world’s social relations – the relations that link spatial positions which are far from each others in a way that each local event is formed under influencing of other events which are far from them.” (Giddens, 1990: 53) In fact, globalization is a gradual and permanent process which has been started in the near and far past and it still continues and the more its age increases, the more its speed and area enhances and the emphasis is on considerable increasing of communications and social, economic and cultural contacts which caused to increase the reciprocal dependency in the global area either consciously and voluntarily or inescapably and involuntarily.

### Dimensions and Characteristics of Globalization

Globalization is not a separate process in one of the economic, political and cultural dimensions but it is an integrated and consolidated process. “Praton” knows it as a multidimensional phenomenon which penetrated different contexts of social act, economic, political, legal, cultural, military, technology and environment. (Peraton et al, 1997) Another characteristic is that globalization is a challenge-based phenomenon in its first meaning in a way that different dimensions of it involves many of traditional and social concepts such as order, power, security, government, legitimacy, culture, sovereignty and identity and it provides a way for reinterpreting them. Another point is that in globalization process, we deal with “becoming” processes not with looking situation. (Taylor, 2000) Some believe that globalization hasn’t been remained in a permanent form and it finally enters to another stage which called “global integration”. (Waters, 1995) An important note is that in spite of many oppositions and agreements for globalization, it can be said that this phenomenon is neither good nor bad but this is an opportunity which can be either savior or fatal. (Featherstone, 1990) Moreover, this process is a contradictory phenomenon which faces with dual concepts such as global-local, world-based and region-based, convergence and divergence, congruity and incongruity, diversity and similarity and etc and although it has a contradictory face, but it hasn’t inherently like this and these dual concepts aren’t opposite of each other but they support each others.

### Globalization, Space, Place and Time

Undoubtedly, place and space play an important role in globalization and identity creation. The first distinction which emerges in assessing process of place and space is separation level of these two concepts. People understand and experience the place more easily than space and in comparison with space; they easily feel the necessity of place for their individual and social life. Even it can be said that they understand the space through the place and they know a space without a place as an unimaginable thing because the space is more abstract than the place. (Giddens, 1991: 16) Certainly, having identity firstly means being special and distinct, remaining permanent and stable and belonging to a whole. The place and space are the most important factors which fulfill identity needs of human. Border acceptance of the place

and as a result the space makes it possible that human achieves necessary calm and security for life by feeling being distinct, having stability and belonging to a group. Not only Place and land fulfill the need of social distinction by making objective bordering possible through geographical specifications such as river, mountain chain, sea and like these, but also they facilitate identity creation by reinforcing natural, social and cultural borders. In traditional societies, these borders are coinciding with each other more or less and they constantly reinforce each other. Even political and national borders in coinciding with place and land borders are able to give more identity. Moreover, the place makes and increases a belong feeling to the group because of restricting social relations in a relatively small and close territory. According to characteristics and capabilities of the place, this point can be understood that why identity crisis aren’t taken into consideration in traditional societies before the globalization process would be more quick and pervasive and that’s why the place is one of the most effective factors in creating social relations in traditional societies. In contrary to modern societies, the space is affected by globalization process and was under the dominance and is depended on the place in traditional societies and because of this, traditional space related to place territory and it is filled up by place signs and marks. Formed acts and deeds in this space were all place-based. This space was a limited one for living in a certain framework not for moving in its range. (Lash & Urry, 1994; 55) Globalization process accelerates separation trend of space and place because of surprising progress of communicative technologies and it separated liking lines of social space with place and a certain land more than before.

In this way, social affair get rid of limited and close circle of the place and it will be developed in a very wider space. This aspect of globalization process which alters the relation between living places of different individuals and their identities attracted the attention of various theoreticians. Giddens used the word ‘Displacement’. Thompson (1998) used the word ‘Delocalization’ and some used the word ‘Deterritorialization’. “Mark Auge” – French anthropologist– speaks about replacing the locations and places with “non-place”: “If the place is defined as a relative, historical and related to identity thing, then a space which couldn’t be defined as such will be a non-place.” (Auge, 1995) Time is one of the identity maker factors. Analyzing the nature and dimensions of the self shows critical position of time. One of the meanings of self principle is “individuality, nature of a person or a stable thing (internal similarity) during the time.” In fact, feeling of having a personality and being self means that being like the self during the time. Being similar in the individual nature, composition and characteristics is not experienced and examined without time factor as alteration is time related. (Hekman, 1983) In the individual viewpoint, “past” is memory and in the collective view “history” is the memory. Each individual and group establishes its continuity on the memory and history. (Jenkins, 1996) In the globalization process, time eliminated he continuity. Under the effect of this process, time is so compressed that it couldn’t engage in particular identities. This compression and apparent alteration transform the time from a

linear topic to an endless one. The world will be compressed in the framework of a clear and indistinct space and a kind of moment world emerge. The link between a common past and a common present will be destroyed and traditional order based on monopolistic places and meaningful and identity-maker continuities will be weakened.

### Dual Globalization

Modernity is likened to Roman myth or “Yanous” (or Janous) who had two faces which stuck together from backward, one to the front and another to the back or one proud and one mortal. This contradiction is also recognizable in the modernity. For example, Marshal Berman wrote in ‘The Experience of Modernity’: “Defect of capitalism is that it destroys all human capabilities which created by itself.” (Berman, 1988)

If we know the globalization as the outcome of modernity, then we will observe the same contradiction about that especially in culture topic that on one hand, unconscious tool of history for destroying any shortsightedness and lack of civilization and wildness and on another hand, great attack of greedy and insatiable capital to the culture field are opposed with each other in order to achieve more profit in expense of destroying human issues. This contradiction will be more complicated when “perimeter” societies (third world societies) emerge – the societies in which the tradition is not eliminated yet and the modernity is not entered yet, in a way that pre-modern social force of these societies which see their benefits subject to survival of globalization mortal attitude will express the same direction about this attitude under the control of defending the proud attitude of that. On one side, under the heading of combat against retardation and cultural opposition, a way will be provided for consolidating the cultures of these societies in dominant western culture and eliminating cultural differences and creating a “global” and “single” culture and on the other side, under the control of defending the cultural diversity and multiplicity and combat against cultural dominance of west, globalization proud attitude will be restricted and a way will be provide for mortal attitude of that. That’s why in these societies such as Iran, cultural globalization are considered in two aspects. The first aspect which can be called Globalism is mainly derived from ‘Marshal McLuhan’ viewpoint about global village and it knows cultural globalization as a completely global phenomenon which eliminates all national, local and tribal borders and it will create a “global” and “integrated” culture which is the west culture in all over the world. The other aspect which is the opposed point against the first aspect and can be called Localism knows cultural globalization as making the world as western and considers the globalization as weakening factor for nation states. Followers of this aspect include a wide range of mental, political and social courses such as third world nationalists and postmodernists.

### Globalization, Iran and Architecture

Apart from different theories and viewpoints and even contradiction which is said about globalization process,

surprising effects of that on the culture cannot be disclaimed especially in third world countries. Current conditions of Iran are in a manner that confusion between two viewpoints of globalism and localism is one of the greatest challenges. “Modernity doesn’t have a single definition in Iran but each Iranian person has created modernity during the life through personal experiences in a kind that it is a complicated form of modernism.” (Fakouhi, 2007) Confusion and contradiction is recognizable in most cases in nature of each person and fluctuation between Iranian tradition and modernity and modernism conceal a great contradiction.

In architecture field, diversity, multiplicity, disparity and eclectism are of the main branches of contemporary architecture of Iran in recent decades. Tendency to globalism view in architecture causes severance from the past and history and looks forward to a universal architecture. In most cases, without theoretical awareness and exact recognition of mental concepts of global attitudes, Iranian architect has imitated blindly and superficially. Lack of an integrated mental foundation in mind of architects cause to request more methods and styles and it will enhance multiplicity and disparity by exerting personal or collective ideas. In this attitude, it is not necessary to consider the past accomplishments and norms so the criteria are coinciding with today universal architecture, being different, individualism and self opinion. This kind of attitude can be seen in most of recent competition designs in Iran and works of Iranian young architects which doesn’t accomplish because of economic problems and poor technology. In fact, considering the technical patterns without philosophical and artistic support are of contemporary architecture crises and in Iran, it may be because of quick formation of modernity.

If in not very far pasts, returning of Iranian educated architects to the west establishes modern architecture foundations in Iran, today globalization process has established the foundations of this patterning through its great effect on media and communication. Of course, by moving toward universal architecture apart from aforementioned issues, the role of fast and quick cultural, social and economic changes should be taken into consideration as a contribution for approaching the global goods and products and this important issues is not only traceable in architecture field but also in many other fields.

Increasing tendency to the today global music, tendency to using global fashionable clothes and even increasing tendency to the new foods and fast foods and many other items are formed in most of third world countries under the effect of globalism attitude of globalization. In fact, moving of Iranian culture generally to the global culture will willy-nilly lead to universal architecture because the architecture is the field of cultural, social, political and economic activities and it will transform under the effect of these various and rapid changes and tendency of Iranian human to the global human will end up the products and goods to that direction and it will finally cause to separate the space from the place and to disconnect the linking lines of social space with place and land.

Another tendency is toward localism viewpoint which is in a way

contrary to globalism viewpoint. It should be mentioned that in most of developing societies, globalization encountered with some cultural particularities in cultural aspects and this is like tribal altercations, nationalist movements, nationalism, religious fundamentalism, excess movements, new racialism and etc which all combat against them. According to the opinions of some people such as Giddens, importance of ecology tendency, tribalism and local cultures is a part of globalization. Tendency to the history and past in the architecture of recent decades in Iran is considerable from several aspects. It is usually accompanied with objective imitation of works. Mere form imitation and repetition of previous patterns in the present time is product of a boring architecture and it sometimes created a caricature-shaped architecture by repeating historical components and forms in the buildings. Sometimes, several works are done toward a relatively reliable architecture by using past elements and components in today's architecture frame with some functional differences and in a few of them, redefinition of derived concepts from the past to the present language and informed considering to the references and appropriate analysis and creative expression showed some manifestations of a valuable architecture which couldn't be considered as a localism attitude. It can be a "Globalization" viewpoint. This attitude wants to solve different problems of today human by removing the contradiction from globalization process. This is an attitude that know the link between cultural experience of people and their living place as a false link – a link that restricts human attitudes to their living place – and in addition to this, it doesn't ignore mere attention to globalization and the same patterns so it recommends "homeland world" attitude because people interpret global products in the frame of local fields and this is clearly variable from one place to another one and they have new interpretations about global culture. Robertson used word "Glocalization" for that and this is formed in most politicians' speech under the rubric of "Think globally and act locally". For completing this issue, "Symbiosis philosophy" can be mentioned. "Symbiosis" is a keyword in order to interpret new global order from different viewpoints. (Kurokawa, 1994) Increasing number of private organizations asking for individuals and nature , development and protection, men and women, politicians and statesmen, different industries and even new ideas which are compatible with in scientific fields such as biology, chemistry, philosophy and physics show the determinant role of that. Shift from Euro-centrism to of diverse cultures, from dualism to the pluralism in direction of diverse values' Symbiosis, from anthropocentrism to the ecology and Symbiosis of diverse species, from industrial society to the information society, from universalism to the an age of Symbiosis of diverse elements and shift from the age of machine to the age of life principle emphasize on changing the attitude and importance of the word "Symbiosis" in 21st century. Symbiosis philosophy which mentioned by Kurokawa is about bilateral benefit. The logic "Both this and that" instead of "This or that" and Symbiosis are consolidation and coordination age, end of universalism, cooperation beside competition and age of consolidated viewpoints. It seems that glocalist views will be taken into consideration as a consolidated solution for most of problems and difficulties springs from

globalization. In today's architecture where there is an appropriate combination of reinterpretation of traditional and historical concepts and values with modern and global criteria and tools, a valuable product is formed.

### Forward Horizon

Nowadays Iranian society in confusion between tradition and modernity has not to choose one of them. It is important to redefine the tradition as it has been used in Europe. "Local traditions and geographical situations in Iran are variable which shows presence of different cultures in Iran. Modernity should be inspired by this multiplicity in Iran." (Fakouhi, 2007) So the effects of globalization on the Iranian culture and architecture are different from other parts of the world and it will also have many differences inside. To achieve integrated philosophical and mental basis for today Iranian architecture, cooperation of all sociologists, culture researchers, anthropologists, philosophers, economists and etc are necessary in order to attain a comprehensive definition of today Iranian human. Providing necessary theoretical bases requires formation and improvement of dynamic and democratic systems in order to converse and exchange the views among authorities of different fields and finally, thought poverty crisis and its stagnation will be ended by forming conversation challenges. Nowadays, globalization is an inescapable way of human society and whether we know it as a process or in belief of some opponents, we call it globalization or making western so it has many opportunities and threats inside. Today difficulties of global society require regional solutions and regional crises will not be solved by the same global prescriptions. In most cases, consolidated theories worked well. Glocalization concept is one of the newest and most considerable cultural and anthropological concepts and it tries to relate two concepts of "non-places" and "Glocalism". Answering to this question that how one can stay in a place or in contrast, how one can realize a global thought in local level requires more experiences. It will be favorable to speak about "glocalized architecture" besides "glocalized humanity" and "glocalized person".

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