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Maritime Chokepoints and the Spatial Concentration of Capital: The Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz in the Contemporary World-Economy

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Abstract

This study examines the strategic role of the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz within the contemporary world-economy by analyzing the spatial concentration of global trade, energy flows, and capital accumulation. The article argues that contemporary globalization increasingly operates through concentrated strategic maritime corridors rather than geographically dispersed trade networks. Drawing on world-systems theory, geoeconomic analysis, and comparative macro-structural methodology, the study conceptualizes maritime chokepoints as structural infrastructures organizing corridor dependency, systemic vulnerability, and asymmetric capital accumulation within global capitalism. Methodologically, the article employs longitudinal trade, maritime transportation, and energy-flow data covering the period between 2000 and 2025. The study develops a macro-structural analytical framework based on the Corridor Dependency Ratio (CDR), Maritime Trade Concentration Ratio (MTCR), Energy Corridor Exposure Ratio (ECER), and Strategic Chokepoint Exposure Index (SCEI). Empirical findings demonstrate that global trade and energy systems have become increasingly concentrated around the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz, intensifying systemic dependency and geopolitical vulnerability. The findings further reveal that corridor dependency is unevenly distributed across economies, generating differentiated forms of exposure and asymmetric interdependence within the contemporary world-economy. The study introduces the concept of corridor capitalism to explain how globalization increasingly depends upon strategically concentrated logistical geographies sustaining global circulation systems. The article concludes that strategic maritime chokepoints have evolved into central infrastructures of contemporary capitalism, simultaneously facilitating global integration and intensifying systemic fragility.

1. Introduction

Contemporary globalization is increasingly characterized not by geographical dispersion, but by the spatial concentration of trade, logistics, and capital flows along a limited number of strategic maritime corridors. Although globalization has often been associated with the expansion and decentralization of international economic networks, recent transformations in global trade reveal a contrasting structural tendency: the growing concentration of economic circulation within narrow and highly strategic chokepoints. Maritime corridors such as the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz now function as critical infrastructures through which global production systems, energy supply chains, and intercontinental trade flows are organized. This emerging structure has intensified systemic dependency on a limited number of geographically constrained routes, increasing the vulnerability of the global economy to geopolitical tensions, maritime insecurity, and logistical disruptions.

Despite the rapid expansion of the literature on global trade, maritime transportation, and supply-chain resilience, the structural role of strategic maritime chokepoints in shaping contemporary capital accumulation remains insufficiently theorized. Existing studies largely approach maritime corridors through the lenses of transportation efficiency, logistics optimization, or regional trade integration, while overlooking their function as spatial mechanisms of structural dependency and asymmetric power

reproduction within the world economy. As a result, the relationship between corridor-based trade concentration and the changing geography of global capitalism remains conceptually underdeveloped.

From a historical perspective, the control of trade routes has long constituted a central mechanism of capital accumulation and geopolitical dominance within the capitalist world-system. Braudel (1984) demonstrates that capitalism historically evolved through the monopolistic control of long-distance trade routes and commercial infrastructures rather than through abstract market competition alone. Similarly, Arrighi (2010) emphasizes that capital accumulation tends to become spatially concentrated around strategically advantageous nodes linking trade, finance, and political power. Within the world-systems tradition, trade routes therefore emerge not as neutral logistical channels, but as structural infrastructures reproducing hierarchical relations between core and peripheral regions. In the contemporary era, this historical logic increasingly manifests through maritime chokepoints such as the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz, where global trade, energy flows, and geopolitical competition converge.

This study asks whether contemporary globalization is generating a new form of spatially concentrated capitalism organized around strategic maritime corridors. More specifically, it investigates how the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz function as structural nodes of global capital accumulation, trade dependency, and geoeconomic power within the contemporary world-economy. The article further examines whether increasing corridor dependency intensifies systemic vulnerability by concentrating global trade and energy flows within geographically constrained chokepoints.

This article makes four main contributions to the literature. First, it reconceptualizes maritime chokepoints not as passive logistical routes, but as active structural infrastructures shaping the spatial organization of contemporary capitalism. Second, it introduces the concept of spatial concentration of capital to explain how global trade and energy flows increasingly cluster around narrow maritime corridors. Third, by integrating world-systems theory with geoeconomic analysis, the study develops a unified analytical framework linking trade dependency, corridor concentration, and asymmetric interdependence. Finally, drawing on longitudinal trade and maritime transportation data between 2000 and 2025, the article demonstrates that the expansion of globalization has paradoxically increased systemic fragility through growing dependency on strategic chokepoints.

Methodologically, the study adopts a comparative macro-structural analysis based on longitudinal trade, maritime transportation, and energy-flow data obtained from UNCTAD, UNCTADstat, and international trade databases covering the period between 2000 and 2025. Rather than focusing on short-term causal estimations, the article prioritizes the structural dynamics of trade concentration, corridor dependency, and spatial centralization within the global economy. The remainder of the article proceeds as follows. The next section develops the theoretical framework linking world-systems analysis and geoeconomics. The subsequent sections examine the historical transformation of maritime trade corridors and analyze the evolving strategic roles of the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz within contemporary global trade

and energy systems. The final section discusses the broader implications of corridor dependency for global economic stability and geopolitical power relations.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1. World-Systems Theory and the Spatial Organization of Capital Accumulation

The theoretical foundations of this study are grounded in the world-systems tradition, which conceptualizes capitalism not as a collection of isolated national economies, but as an integrated and hierarchical world-economy structured through unequal relations between core, semi-peripheral, and peripheral regions (Wallerstein, 2004). Within this framework, global capitalism operates through mechanisms of uneven exchange, spatial hierarchy, and asymmetric capital accumulation. Trade networks and transportation infrastructures therefore emerge not merely as technical systems facilitating exchange, but as structural mechanisms reproducing the geographical organization of global power.

Braudel's historical analysis of capitalism emphasizes that long-distance trade routes historically constituted central infrastructures of commercial monopolization and capital concentration (Braudel, 1984). Rather than functioning through decentralized market competition alone, capitalist expansion depended heavily on the strategic control of trade corridors, ports, maritime routes, and financial centers. In this sense, trade infrastructures historically enabled the spatial concentration of economic power within dominant commercial centers.

Similarly, Arrighi (2010) argues that successive cycles of capitalist accumulation have historically relied upon strategically advantageous geographical nodes integrating trade, finance, and political authority. Capital accumulation therefore exhibits a strong tendency toward spatial centralization around critical logistical and commercial infrastructures. Within this perspective, maritime corridors can be understood as structural components of global capitalism through which surplus extraction and capital circulation become geographically concentrated.

The contemporary world-economy increasingly reflects these historical tendencies. Although globalization is commonly associated with spatial expansion and geographical integration, recent transformations in global trade suggest a parallel process of strategic concentration. Maritime chokepoints such as the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz have evolved into structurally indispensable nodes linking production systems, energy transportation, and global supply chains. Consequently, the geography of globalization increasingly reflects corridor-based concentration rather than dispersed integration.

This interpretation also resonates with David Harvey's concept of the "spatial fix," which emphasizes capitalism's tendency to reorganize geographical space in order to sustain accumulation processes and

overcome structural crises (Harvey, 2001). Strategic maritime corridors can therefore be interpreted as contemporary spatial fixes through which global capitalism reorganizes circulation, logistics, and trade dependency. Rather than eliminating geographical constraints, globalization increasingly restructures them around highly concentrated strategic infrastructures.

2.2. Maritime Corridors, Geoeconomics, and Strategic Power

The post–Cold War transformation of international political economy has intensified the strategic role of economic infrastructures within global power competition. Within this context, geoeconomics has emerged as a central analytical framework explaining how states increasingly employ economic instruments, trade routes, infrastructure networks, and logistical systems as mechanisms of geopolitical influence (Luttwak, 1990).

Contemporary global competition increasingly revolves around the control and security of critical logistical corridors. Maritime trade routes, port infrastructures, energy transportation systems, and shipping networks now constitute strategic arenas through which states project economic and geopolitical power. As global trade volumes expand and supply chains become increasingly integrated, maritime chokepoints acquire growing strategic significance within the organization of the world economy.

Existing literature on maritime transportation and logistics largely emphasizes efficiency, transportation costs, and trade facilitation mechanisms (Stopford, 2009; Rodrigue, 2020). While these approaches provide important insights into the operational dynamics of maritime trade, they often understate the broader structural implications of corridor dependency and strategic concentration. Maritime corridors are frequently treated as neutral logistical infrastructures rather than as mechanisms shaping global asymmetries of power and dependency.

At the same time, recent geopolitical developments—including disruptions in the Red Sea, tensions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz, and growing rivalry between the United States and China—have demonstrated that maritime corridors increasingly function as strategic instruments of geoeconomic competition. The securitization of trade routes, expansion of port investments, and militarization of strategic waterways indicate that maritime chokepoints operate simultaneously as logistical infrastructures and geopolitical power spaces.

In this context, the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz occupy uniquely strategic positions within the contemporary world-economy. The Suez Canal constitutes one of the principal arteries of East Asia–Europe containerized trade, while the Strait of Hormuz functions as a critical node of global energy transportation. Both corridors therefore play central roles in sustaining the circulation of commodities, energy, and capital across the global economy.

2.3. Spatial Concentration, Corridor Dependency, and the Geography of Globalization

A central argument of this study is that contemporary globalization increasingly operates through spatial concentration rather than geographical dispersion. Although globalization is commonly associated with decentralization and the expansion of interconnected economic networks, empirical transformations in global trade suggest the emergence of highly concentrated logistical geographies organized around strategic chokepoints.

The growing concentration of trade and energy flows through narrow maritime corridors reflects the structural reorganization of global capitalism around critical logistical infrastructures. This process generates what may be termed corridor dependency: a condition in which national economies and global supply chains become increasingly reliant on geographically constrained maritime routes for trade continuity, energy security, and industrial production.

The increasing importance of strategic chokepoints also reflects broader transformations in the spatial organization of global production systems. Castells (2010) argues that globalization increasingly functions through networks of strategic flows linking critical nodes within the global economy. Similarly, Saskia Sassen (2001) emphasizes that global capitalism tends to centralize strategic functions within specific geographical spaces despite broader processes of international integration. Within this perspective, maritime chokepoints emerge as infrastructural nodes organizing the circulation of global commodities, energy, and capital.

The concentration of global trade along strategic maritime corridors simultaneously increases systemic vulnerability. As trade flows become increasingly dependent on narrow chokepoints, disruptions arising from geopolitical conflict, maritime insecurity, infrastructure failures, or supply-chain interruptions can rapidly propagate throughout the global economy. Consequently, globalization increasingly generates a structural paradox: greater logistical integration produces greater systemic fragility.

This dynamic became particularly visible following disruptions in the Red Sea and fluctuations in energy transportation through the Strait of Hormuz. Rising transportation costs, route diversions, and supply-chain instability demonstrated the extent to which the contemporary world-economy depends upon a limited number of strategic maritime infrastructures. The geography of globalization therefore increasingly reflects concentrated dependency rather than decentralized resilience.

Within this framework, strategic maritime chokepoints should be conceptualized not merely as logistical bottlenecks but as structural infrastructures organizing contemporary capitalism through concentrated circulation and asymmetric interdependence.

2.4. Literature Gap and Analytical Contribution

Despite the growing literature on maritime transportation, logistics, and global supply chains, several important theoretical and analytical limitations remain. First, existing studies predominantly approach maritime corridors from operational and logistical perspectives, focusing on transportation efficiency, shipping costs, or trade facilitation. These approaches often overlook the broader political-economic implications of corridor dependency and spatial concentration within the global economy. Second, although world-systems theory provides important insights into uneven development and global hierarchy, the literature has paid relatively limited attention to the strategic role of maritime chokepoints within contemporary capital accumulation processes. Existing studies rarely integrate world-systems analysis with geoeconomic approaches capable of explaining how strategic infrastructures shape global trade dependency and geopolitical vulnerability simultaneously. Third, the relationship between globalization and spatial concentration remains insufficiently theorized. Much of the globalization literature continues to emphasize decentralization, deterritorialization, and expanding connectivity, while paying limited attention to the growing concentration of trade and energy flows along narrow and strategically constrained maritime corridors. This study addresses these limitations by developing an integrated analytical framework combining world-systems theory, geoeconomics, and macro-structural trade analysis. The article advances the concept of the spatial concentration of capital to explain how contemporary globalization increasingly operates through concentrated maritime infrastructures rather than geographically dispersed networks. Within this framework, the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz are conceptualized as structural nodes organizing corridor-based capital accumulation, trade dependency, and asymmetric interdependence within the contemporary world-economy. By linking historical trade-route dynamics with contemporary maritime concentration processes, the study provides a broader structural interpretation of globalization as an increasingly corridor-dependent system. Accordingly, the article contributes to the literature in four principal ways. First, it reconceptualizes maritime chokepoints as structural infrastructures of capital accumulation rather than passive transit routes. Second, it introduces corridor dependency as a macro-structural dimension of globalization. Third, it integrates world-systems analysis with geoeconomic approaches to develop a unified analytical framework for understanding maritime concentration. Finally, by employing longitudinal trade and maritime transportation data between 2000 and 2025, the study empirically demonstrates that globalization increasingly operates through strategically concentrated logistical geographies.

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a comparative macro-structural research design to examine the changing role of strategic maritime chokepoints within the contemporary world-economy. Rather than conceptualizing maritime corridors merely as logistical infrastructures facilitating international trade, the article approaches them as structural nodes through which capital accumulation, trade dependency, and geoeconomic power are spatially organized (Braudel, 1984; Wallerstein, 2004; Arrighi, 2010). Within this framework, the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz are analyzed as critical maritime chokepoints

shaping the concentration of global trade and energy flows between 2000 and 2025. The study is theoretically grounded in the world-systems tradition and geoeconomic analysis. World-systems theory conceptualizes capitalism as an integrated global system characterized by uneven spatial hierarchies between core, semi-peripheral, and peripheral regions (Wallerstein, 2004). Within this structure, trade routes function not simply as channels of exchange, but as mechanisms reproducing asymmetric relations of capital accumulation and geopolitical power (Arrighi, 2010). Simultaneously, geoeconomic approaches emphasize the growing strategic role of trade infrastructures, logistics corridors, and maritime security within contemporary global competition (Luttwak, 1990; Rodrigue, 2020). Methodologically, the article prioritizes long-term structural transformation and corridor dependency patterns rather than short-term causal estimations. Instead of employing narrow econometric modelling focused on short-run fluctuations, the study adopts a longitudinal macro-structural perspective examining the evolution of maritime trade concentration, corridor dependency, and strategic vulnerability over time (Harvey, 2001). This approach enables the identification of broader systemic tendencies shaping the geography of contemporary globalization. The comparative dimension of the analysis derives from the differentiated strategic functions of the two selected corridors. While the Suez Canal primarily operates as a central artery of East Asia–Europe manufacturing and containerized trade, the Strait of Hormuz constitutes one of the most critical chokepoints of global energy transportation, particularly for oil and liquefied natural gas flows (UNCTAD, 2023). Comparing these two strategic corridors allows the study to examine how trade dependency and energy dependency interact within the broader structure of the contemporary world-economy.

3.2. Analytical Framework

The analytical framework of the study is based on the assumption that contemporary globalization increasingly operates through the spatial concentration of trade, logistics, and energy flows along strategically constrained maritime corridors. Contrary to conventional interpretations associating globalization with geographical dispersion and decentralization, this study argues that global capitalism increasingly depends upon narrow and highly concentrated chokepoints organizing intercontinental circulation networks (Castells, 2010; Sassen, 2001). Within this framework, strategic maritime corridors are conceptualized as structural infrastructures simultaneously facilitating capital accumulation and generating systemic vulnerability. The increasing concentration of global trade through a limited number of maritime chokepoints intensifies corridor dependency among national economies and global supply chains. As a result, disruptions affecting these corridors are capable of producing systemic consequences extending far beyond regional boundaries. The study develops its analytical perspective around three interrelated structural dynamics. First, global trade and energy flows increasingly concentrate along a limited number of strategic maritime corridors. Second, this concentration generates rising dependency among major economies by increasing reliance on geographically constrained trade routes. Third, corridor dependency reinforces asymmetric interdependencies within the global economy by increasing the strategic significance of specific logistical and geopolitical spaces.

Accordingly, the article evaluates the strategic role of maritime chokepoints through four interconnected analytical dimensions:

1. Trade concentration
2. Corridor dependency
3. Energy exposure
4. Strategic vulnerability

Together, these dimensions provide a macro-structural analytical framework for understanding the changing geography of global capitalism and the spatial concentration of capital within the contemporary world-economy.

3.3. Research Hypotheses

The analytical structure of the study is organized around four interrelated hypotheses derived from world-systems theory, geoeconomic analysis, and the macro-structural transformation of global maritime trade networks.

H1. Global maritime trade increasingly concentrates around strategic chokepoints.

This hypothesis argues that the expansion of globalization has intensified the concentration of global trade and logistics flows through a limited number of strategic maritime corridors rather than generating geographically dispersed trade networks. Rising trade shares of the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz within global maritime commerce are expected to reflect this structural concentration process (UNCTAD, 2023; Rodrigue, 2020).

H2. Trade concentration through strategic chokepoints increases systemic dependency within the global economy.

This hypothesis proposes that increasing concentration of trade flows within narrow maritime corridors generates rising structural dependency among national economies and global supply chains. As trade networks become progressively dependent on geographically constrained routes, disruptions affecting these chokepoints are expected to generate broader systemic effects across the global economy (Castells, 2010; Sassen, 2001).

H3. Energy-import-dependent economies exhibit higher vulnerability to maritime corridor disruptions.

This hypothesis suggests that economies highly dependent on imported energy resources become structurally vulnerable to disruptions occurring within strategic maritime chokepoints, particularly the Strait of Hormuz. Rising dependence on Gulf-based oil and liquefied natural gas transportation is expected to intensify exposure to geopolitical instability, maritime insecurity, and energy supply shocks (Yergin, 2011; EIA, 2025).

H4. Strategic maritime corridors function as mechanisms of asymmetric capital accumulation within the contemporary world-economy.

This hypothesis argues that strategic maritime chokepoints operate not merely as neutral logistical infrastructures but as structural mechanisms reproducing uneven patterns of capital accumulation and asymmetric interdependence within the capitalist world-system. Economies controlling, securing, or strategically benefiting from major maritime corridors are expected to gain disproportionate advantages within global trade and energy systems (Braudel, 1984; Arrighi, 2010). Together, these hypotheses establish the analytical backbone of the study by linking corridor concentration, trade dependency, energy vulnerability, and asymmetric capital accumulation within the contemporary global economy.

3.4. Operationalization of Variables

To examine the structural transformation of maritime trade dependency, the study develops a macro-structural operationalization framework based on four interconnected indicators measuring trade concentration, corridor dependency, energy exposure, and strategic vulnerability. These indicators are designed to quantify the extent to which global trade and energy systems increasingly rely on strategically constrained maritime chokepoints. Rather than treating maritime corridors simply as logistical transit routes, the operational framework conceptualizes them as structural infrastructures organizing global circulation, capital accumulation, and asymmetric interdependence (Harvey, 2001). Accordingly, the selected indicators aim to measure not only logistical intensity but also systemic dependency generated by concentrated trade geographies. The first indicator is the Corridor Dependency Ratio (CDR), measuring the proportion of a country's total trade dependent upon strategic maritime corridors such as the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz.

Equation (1)

$$CDR = \frac{\text{Corridor-Based Trade}}{\text{Total NationalTrade}}$$

Higher CDR values indicate stronger structural dependency on corridor-based trade systems and greater exposure to geopolitical and logistical disruptions. The second indicator is the Maritime Trade Concentration Ratio (MTCR), evaluating the relative concentration of global maritime trade flows passing through strategic chokepoints.

Equation (2)

$$MTCR = \frac{\text{Trade Through Strategic Corridors}}{\text{Total Global MaritimeTrade}}$$

The MTCR measures the degree to which globalization becomes spatially concentrated around a limited number of maritime corridors. Rising MTCR values indicate increasing geographical centralization of global trade flows. The third indicator is the Energy Corridor Exposure Ratio (ECER), designed to measure the dependence of economies on energy imports transiting through the Strait of Hormuz.

Equation (3)

$$ECER = \frac{\text{Energy Imports Through Hormuz}}{\text{Total Energy Imports}}$$

This indicator reflects the structural vulnerability of energy-import-dependent economies to disruptions affecting Gulf-based oil and liquefied natural gas transportation systems (Yergin, 2011). Finally, the study develops a composite macro-structural indicator termed the Strategic Chokepoint Exposure Index (SCEI), combining trade dependency, energy exposure, and trade concentration into a unified measure of systemic vulnerability.

Equation (4)

$$SCEI = \frac{CDR + ECER + MTCR}{3}$$

The SCEI provides an integrated analytical framework for evaluating how deeply national economies are embedded within corridor-dependent structures of global trade and energy circulation. Higher SCEI values indicate stronger structural exposure to maritime chokepoint risks and concentrated logistical geographies. Together, these indicators enable the study to move beyond descriptive geopolitical narratives toward a structured macro-analytical framework examining the spatial concentration of capital and trade dependency within the world-economy.

3.5. Data Sources

The empirical analysis is based on longitudinal trade, maritime transportation, and energy-flow data covering the period between 2000 and 2025. The principal data sources include the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UNCTADstat, the United Nations International Merchandise Trade Statistics database, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), and international maritime transportation reports. UNCTAD's *Review of Maritime Transport* reports constitute the primary source for maritime trade volumes, ship traffic, corridor-based trade flows, and global transportation trends (UNCTAD, 2022; UNCTAD, 2023). UNCTADstat provides supplementary annual statistics regarding maritime tonnage, merchant fleets, and trade distribution patterns. Energy transportation data concerning the Strait of Hormuz are derived from EIA global energy statistics and international energy transportation reports (EIA, 2025). The study combines directly observed trade and transportation statistics with trend-based macro-structural estimations to evaluate long-term changes in corridor dependency and trade concentration. Where necessary, regional trade-flow estimations are constructed using aggregated trade shares, corridor utilization ratios, and longitudinal trade trends reported within international databases. The analysis prioritizes structural consistency and long-term comparative interpretation rather than short-term forecasting precision. Consequently, the study focuses primarily on identifying systemic transformations shaping the geographical organization of global trade and capital accumulation.

3.6. Methodological Limitations

Several methodological limitations should be acknowledged. First, due to the structural complexity of global maritime trade networks, certain corridor-based trade values rely on aggregated estimations derived from international trade and transportation databases. Therefore, the study prioritizes macro-level structural tendencies rather than exact shipment-level precision. Second, the analysis focuses on macro-systemic trade concentration and corridor dependency patterns and does not incorporate firm-level supply-chain data or micro-level logistics behavior. Third, while the study identifies structural relationships between corridor dependency and systemic vulnerability, it does not attempt to establish short-term causal relationships through econometric estimation techniques. Nevertheless, the macro-structural analytical framework employed in this study provides a theoretically grounded and empirically informed basis for examining the spatial transformation of global trade and capital accumulation. By integrating world-systems analysis with geoeconomic perspectives, the article develops a comprehensive framework for understanding the strategic role of maritime chokepoints within the contemporary world-economy.

4. Historical Evolution of Maritime Corridors and the Spatial Organization of Capital

4.1. Historical Trade Routes and Early Forms of Capital Accumulation

The historical development of long-distance trade routes constituted one of the foundational mechanisms underlying the emergence and expansion of capitalism. Far from functioning merely as channels facilitating commodity exchange, trade corridors historically operated as spatial infrastructures organizing surplus extraction, commercial monopolization, and geopolitical power (Braudel, 1984). Control over strategic trade routes enabled dominant commercial centers to concentrate wealth, regulate circulation, and expand political influence across interconnected regions of the world-economy. Within this historical structure, the Spice Route represented one of the earliest integrated maritime-commercial systems linking Asian production zones with Mediterranean and European markets. Extending from Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent through the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea toward the Mediterranean basin, the Spice Route facilitated not only the circulation of commodities but also the expansion of financial instruments, commercial institutions, and imperial competition (Chaudhuri, 1985). Maritime transportation significantly reduced transaction costs relative to overland trade while enabling larger cargo volumes and longer-distance exchange networks. The historical significance of the Spice Route was closely associated with the emergence of early capitalist accumulation mechanisms. Commodities such as pepper, cinnamon, silk, and cloves generated exceptionally high profit margins due to their scarcity and strategic value within European markets (Findlay & O'Rourke, 2007). As a result, commercial competition over maritime access intensified among expanding European powers. Portugal, the Dutch Republic, and later Britain attempted to establish monopolistic control over strategic maritime corridors connecting Asian production centers to European markets. This process transformed maritime trade routes into infrastructures of imperial and financial

power. Semi-state commercial institutions such as the Dutch East India Company and the British East India Company functioned simultaneously as trading enterprises, financial organizations, and geopolitical actors (Arrighi, 2010). Consequently, maritime trade corridors became deeply embedded within the early spatial organization of capitalism. Within this historical geography, the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea emerged as critical intermediary zones linking Indian Ocean trade with Mediterranean commercial systems. During the Abbasid period, Basra functioned as one of the most important commercial and financial centers connecting East Africa, India, Southeast Asia, and the Islamic world (Hourani, 1995). Credit mechanisms, partnership systems, and maritime financing expanded significantly within these networks, facilitating the integration of regional trade structures into broader systems of intercontinental exchange. From a world-systems perspective, these trade routes should therefore be understood not merely as commercial pathways, but as structural mechanisms enabling the geographical concentration of capital accumulation and asymmetric integration between core and peripheral regions (Wallerstein, 2004). The historical organization of maritime trade thus established the foundations of corridor-based spatial concentration that continues to shape contemporary global capitalism.

4.2. Maritime Expansion and the Spatial Centralization of Global Trade

The transition from land-based commercial systems to maritime-centered trade networks fundamentally transformed the geography of global capitalism. Maritime expansion enabled unprecedented increases in trade capacity, reduced transportation costs, and accelerated intercontinental economic integration (Headrick, 2010). More importantly, maritime trade reorganized the spatial structure of global accumulation by concentrating circulation within strategically advantageous ports, canals, and chokepoints. The rise of European naval power between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries significantly intensified this process of spatial centralization. Mahan (1890) argued that maritime dominance constituted a decisive source of geopolitical and economic power, enabling states to control trade routes, protect commercial interests, and project influence across global markets. Sea power therefore became inseparable from the organization of capitalist expansion. The increasing strategic significance of maritime transportation simultaneously reshaped the geographical hierarchy of the world-economy. Port cities and maritime trade hubs emerged as central nodes of accumulation linking financial systems, imperial administration, and global commerce. Braudel (1984) emphasizes that capitalist development historically concentrated around strategic commercial centers capable of controlling circulation networks rather than around dispersed systems of production alone. This transformation also reflected broader processes of spatial concentration within capitalism itself. Harvey's (2001) concept of the "spatial fix" suggests that capitalism continuously reorganizes geographical space in order to facilitate accumulation and overcome structural crises. Maritime infrastructures—including canals, ports, and strategic sea lanes—therefore functioned as mechanisms stabilizing and expanding capitalist circulation systems through spatial reconfiguration. By the nineteenth century, the construction of the Suez Canal marked a major turning point in the historical geography of global trade. The canal dramatically shortened maritime distance between Europe and

Asia while restructuring intercontinental logistics around a narrow and strategically concentrated route (Mahan, 1890). This transformation reinforced the growing dependence of global trade upon specific maritime chokepoints and intensified the strategic significance of corridor control within international political economy. Consequently, maritime expansion did not eliminate geographical dependency within global trade systems. Instead, it reorganized dependency around increasingly concentrated strategic infrastructures linking production zones, trade networks, and financial centers.

4.3. From Historical Trade Routes to Contemporary Maritime Chokepoints

The strategic importance of contemporary maritime chokepoints reflects a strong historical continuity between early trade-route systems and modern global logistics infrastructures. Although the technological scale of globalization has dramatically expanded, contemporary trade networks continue to rely heavily on geographically constrained corridors linking major production and consumption regions. The Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz represent two of the clearest examples of this historical continuity. Both corridors occupy strategic positions connecting major global trade and energy systems while simultaneously functioning as infrastructures of geopolitical competition and economic dependency. In this sense, contemporary maritime chokepoints can be interpreted as modern extensions of historical corridor-based accumulation systems. The Suez Canal increasingly functions as the principal artery connecting East Asian manufacturing systems with European consumer markets. The rapid expansion of containerized trade, global supply chains, and just-in-time production systems has intensified the canal's strategic significance within the contemporary world-economy (Rodrigue, 2020). Simultaneously, the Strait of Hormuz remains indispensable for global oil and liquefied natural gas transportation, particularly for energy-import-dependent Asian economies (Yergin, 2011). Recent disruptions affecting the Red Sea and Gulf regions have further demonstrated the structural centrality of these chokepoints. Maritime insecurity, geopolitical tensions, and route disruptions rapidly generated global supply-chain instability, rising transportation costs, and energy-market volatility (UNCTAD, 2024). These developments reveal the extent to which contemporary globalization depends upon highly concentrated maritime infrastructures.At the same time, the strategic importance of these corridors increasingly extends beyond transportation efficiency alone. Major powers now compete through port investments, maritime security strategies, naval deployments, and infrastructure initiatives aimed at securing corridor access and trade continuity (Luttwak, 1990). Consequently, maritime chokepoints simultaneously function as logistical infrastructures, geopolitical spaces, and mechanisms of capital accumulation. Within this broader transformation, globalization increasingly appears less as a process of deterritorialized integration and more as a system organized around strategically concentrated logistical geographies. Contemporary capitalism therefore continues to reproduce historical patterns of corridor-based dependency and spatial concentration.

4.4. Corridor Capitalism and the Contemporary World-Economy

The historical evolution of maritime trade routes suggests that contemporary globalization increasingly operates through what may be termed corridor capitalism: a form of spatial organization characterized by the concentration of trade, energy flows, and capital accumulation within strategically constrained logistical infrastructures. Corridor capitalism reflects a structural tendency within contemporary global capitalism toward geographical centralization rather than spatial dispersion. While globalization has expanded the scale and intensity of international economic integration, this expansion has simultaneously increased dependence on a limited number of strategic maritime chokepoints sustaining intercontinental circulation systems. This process generates a fundamental structural paradox. On the one hand, concentrated maritime infrastructures increase logistical efficiency, economies of scale, and supply-chain integration. On the other hand, growing corridor dependency intensifies systemic vulnerability by exposing global trade and energy systems to geopolitical conflict, maritime insecurity, and infrastructural disruptions (Castells, 2010). The contemporary world-economy increasingly reflects this paradoxical structure. China's manufacturing-centered export model depends heavily upon uninterrupted maritime access through the Suez Canal and surrounding routes. Similarly, the European Union relies extensively on Suez-based trade flows connecting European markets with Asian production systems. At the same time, Asian economies such as China, India, Japan, and South Korea remain highly dependent on energy transportation transiting through the Strait of Hormuz (EIA, 2025). Consequently, strategic maritime chokepoints have evolved into structurally embedded nodes organizing contemporary globalization through concentrated circulation systems. Control over these corridors increasingly shapes patterns of trade dependency, geopolitical influence, and capital accumulation within the global economy. Within this framework, globalization should not be interpreted simply as an expansion of interconnected networks. Rather, it increasingly represents a system of concentrated logistical geographies organized around strategically indispensable maritime corridors. The contemporary world-economy therefore reflects not the disappearance of geography, but the intensification of strategic geography through corridor-based spatial concentration.

5. Empirical Analysis

5.1. Global Maritime Trade Concentration and Strategic Chokepoints: Evidence for H1

The first hypothesis argues that global maritime trade increasingly concentrates around strategic chokepoints. The evidence strongly supports this argument. In 2023, global maritime trade reached approximately **12.3 billion tons**, while more than **80% of world trade volume** continued to be transported by sea. UNCTAD also emphasizes that chokepoints such as the Suez Canal and Panama Canal have become increasingly vulnerable to geopolitical tensions, climate risks, and route disruptions. The data support **H1**. Globalization has not produced a fully dispersed geography of trade; instead, a significant share of global trade and energy flows remains concentrated in a small number of strategic maritime corridors. The Suez Canal is especially central for containerized Asia–Europe trade, while the Strait of Hormuz is structurally indispensable for global oil transportation.

Table 1
Global Maritime Trade and Chokepoint Concentration Indicators

Indicator	Observed Value	Year	Interpretation
Global maritime trade volume	12.3 billion tons	2023	Confirms structural centrality of seaborne trade
Share of world trade volume carried by sea	Over 80%	2023	Shows maritime dependence of globalization
Suez Canal share in global maritime trade volume	About 10%	Annual	Indicates strong chokepoint concentration
Suez Canal share in containerized trade	About 22%	Annual	Confirms strategic role in manufacturing trade
Hormuz oil flow	20.9 million b/d	2023	Confirms centrality in energy trade
Hormuz share in global petroleum liquids consumption	About 20%	2023	Confirms systemic energy chokepoint role

Source: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). (2024). *Review of maritime transport 2024*. United Nations; U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). (2025). *World oil transit chokepoints*. U.S. Department of Energy.

Note: Global maritime trade volume and seaborne trade shares are derived from UNCTAD's *Review of Maritime Transport 2024*. Strait of Hormuz oil-flow figures are based on EIA global transit chokepoint statistics. Suez Canal trade shares and containerized trade estimates are compiled from UNCTAD maritime transport indicators and Suez Canal Authority annual navigation statistics. The table combines directly observed maritime transportation and energy-flow data.

5.2. Suez Canal Disruption and Corridor Dependency: Evidence for H2

The second hypothesis argues that trade concentration through chokepoints increases systemic dependency. The Red Sea crisis provides strong empirical evidence. According to UNCTAD, attacks in the Red Sea since late November 2023 led many shipping lines to reroute around the Cape of Good Hope, increasing distance, transit time, fuel costs, insurance costs, and logistical inefficiencies. These figures strongly support **H2**. A decline of **50% in vessel transits** and **66.6% in net tonnage** demonstrates that the Suez Canal is not merely a logistical passage but a systemic dependency point. The especially severe decline in container ships and LNG ships shows that both manufacturing supply chains and energy-related flows are highly exposed to chokepoint disruption.

Table 2
Suez Canal Traffic Collapse During the Red Sea Crisis

Indicator	2023	2024	Change
Total vessel transits	26,434	13,213	-50.0%
Net tonnage	1,568.3 million tons	524.5 million tons	-66.6%
Container ship transits	5,847	1,748	-70.1%
Container ship net tonnage	657.0 million tons	74.8 million tons	-88.6%
LNG ship transits	819	119	-85.5%
LNG ship net tonnage	91.8 million tons	13.2 million tons	-85.7%

Source: Suez Canal Authority. (2024). *Annual navigation report 2024*. Arab Republic of Egypt.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). (2024). *Navigating troubled waters: The impact of disruption of shipping routes in the Red Sea, Black Sea and Panama Canal*. United Nations.

Note: The table is constructed using annual vessel transit and net tonnage statistics reported by the Suez Canal Authority. Percentage changes are calculated by the author based on observed annual differences between 2023 and 2024. The table measures the direct impact of Red Sea disruptions on corridor-based maritime trade flows.

5.3. Energy Corridor Exposure and the Strait of Hormuz: Evidence for H3

The third hypothesis argues that energy-import-dependent economies are more vulnerable to maritime corridor disruptions. The Strait of Hormuz provides the clearest evidence. EIA reports that oil flows through Hormuz averaged 20.9 million barrels per day in 2023, equivalent to about 20% of global petroleum liquids consumption. In 2024, flows remained around 20 million barrels per day. The evidence supports H3. Since approximately one-fifth of global petroleum liquids consumption passes through Hormuz, countries dependent on Gulf oil and LNG—especially China, India, Japan, South Korea, and parts of Europe—face heightened vulnerability to disruptions in this corridor.

Table 3
Strait of Hormuz Energy Exposure Indicators

Indicator	Value	Year	Interpretation
Oil flows through Hormuz	20.9 million b/d	2023	Major global energy artery
Share of global petroleum liquids consumption	About 20%	2023	Systemic energy dependency
Oil flows through Hormuz	20 million b/d	2024	Persistent centrality despite volatility
Oil flows through Hormuz	20.9 million b/d	1H 2025	Continued strategic exposure

Source; U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). (2025). *World oil transit chokepoints*.

U.S. Department of Energy. International Energy Agency (IEA). (2024). *World energy outlook 2024*. OECD/IEA.

Note: Oil transit volumes through the Strait of Hormuz are based on EIA transit chokepoint data and IEA global petroleum statistics. The table reflects directly observed annual energy-flow volumes and estimates of global petroleum liquids consumption associated with the Strait of Hormuz.

5.4. Strategic Chokepoint Exposure and Asymmetric Capital Accumulation: Evidence for H4

The fourth hypothesis argues that strategic maritime corridors function as mechanisms of asymmetric capital accumulation. The evidence supports this claim in two ways. First, chokepoints concentrate trade and energy flows into narrow geographical spaces. Second, disruptions in these spaces produce unequal effects across the global economy. Overall, the empirical findings confirm that strategic chokepoints are not neutral transit spaces. They are structural nodes through which global trade, energy security, capital circulation, and geopolitical power are organized. The evidence therefore supports the broader argument that contemporary globalization increasingly operates through spatial concentration rather than geographical dispersion.

Table 4
Hypothesis-Based Empirical Evaluation

Hypothesis	Indicator Used	Main Empirical Evidence	Result
H1	Maritime Trade Concentration	Over 80% of world trade volume moves by sea; Suez carries about 10% of maritime trade and 22% of container trade; Hormuz carries about 20% of global petroleum liquids consumption	Supported
H2	Corridor Dependency	Suez vessel transits fell by 50% and net tonnage by 66.6% in 2024	Strongly supported
H3	Energy Exposure	Hormuz carried 20.9 million b/d in 2023 and around 20 million b/d in 2024	Strongly supported
H4	Strategic Chokepoint Exposure	Chokepoint disruption raises route distance, costs, freight rates, insurance costs, and systemic vulnerability	Supported

Source; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). (2024). *Review of maritime transport 2024*. United Nations.

U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). (2025). *World oil transit chokepoints*. U.S. Department of Energy.

Suez Canal Authority. (2024). *Annual navigation report 2024*. Arab Republic of Egypt.

Note: This table synthesizes the empirical findings of the study by linking observed trade concentration, corridor dependency, and energy exposure indicators with the four research hypotheses. The table is analytically constructed by the author using comparative interpretation of maritime trade, logistics, and energy-flow statistics.

5.5. Comparative Structural Exposure to Maritime Chokepoints: CDR–ECER–SCEI Analysis

To further evaluate the differentiated exposure of major economies to strategic maritime chokepoints, this section develops a comparative structural exposure table covering China, the European Union, India, Japan, South Korea, and Türkiye. The purpose of this table is not to present country-level shipment microdata, but to construct a macro-structural comparative index based on observed chokepoint dependence patterns. The comparative framework combines three dimensions: corridor dependency, energy corridor exposure, and overall strategic chokepoint exposure. The Corridor Dependency Ratio (CDR) captures exposure to trade flows through the Suez–Red Sea corridor; the Energy Corridor Exposure Ratio (ECER) captures exposure to energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz; and the Strategic Chokepoint Exposure Index (SCEI) provides a combined vulnerability score. The empirical basis for this comparison is drawn from three key observations. First, the Suez Canal handles roughly 12% of global trade and around 22% of global seaborne container trade, indicating its strategic importance for Asia–Europe manufacturing and containerized trade. Second, the Strait of Hormuz carried around

20.9 million barrels per day of oil flows in 2023, equivalent to about one-fifth of global petroleum liquids consumption. Third, China, India, Japan, and South Korea are the dominant Asian destinations for Hormuz-related crude oil and condensate flows, accounting for a very large share of total flows through the strait. Scores are normalized between 0 and 1. CDR reflects comparative exposure to Suez–Red Sea and related maritime trade corridors. ECER reflects comparative exposure to Hormuz-related energy flows. SCEI is calculated as the average of CDR and ECER in this comparative table. The table should be interpreted as a macro-structural exposure index rather than shipment-level microdata. The results show that China has the highest structural exposure because it combines two forms of dependency: export-oriented manufacturing flows linked to the Suez–Red Sea corridor and substantial energy exposure through the Strait of Hormuz. This supports the argument that China's position in the contemporary world-economy is not only based on industrial capacity but also on highly concentrated maritime circulation systems. The European Union displays a different exposure pattern. Its vulnerability is primarily trade-based rather than energy-based. The EU's high CDR score reflects its dependence on Asia–Europe containerized trade through the Suez Canal, while its lower ECER score reflects relatively limited direct dependence on Hormuz compared with major Asian importers. This confirms that corridor dependency is not uniform across economies; it varies according to each economy's position within global production and energy systems. India, Japan, and South Korea display stronger energy-related exposure. Their vulnerability is mainly linked to Gulf-based oil and LNG flows passing through the Strait of Hormuz. This finding supports H3 by showing that energy-import-dependent economies face higher structural exposure to maritime chokepoint disruption. Türkiye shows a more moderate exposure profile. Its position is not defined by very high direct dependence on either Hormuz or Suez alone, but by its growing role as a regional logistics and transit economy located near overlapping Eurasian, Mediterranean, and Middle Eastern trade corridors. Therefore, Türkiye's exposure is structurally important but less intense than that of China, the EU, India, Japan, and South Korea. Overall, Table 5 strengthens the empirical support for H2, H3, and H4. It demonstrates that maritime chokepoint exposure is unevenly distributed across the global economy. China represents the highest dual-exposure case, the European Union represents a trade-corridor exposure case, while India, Japan, and South Korea represent energy-corridor exposure cases. This confirms that strategic maritime corridors do not simply facilitate global trade; they reproduce differentiated forms of dependency and asymmetric vulnerability within the contemporary world-economy.

Table 5
Comparative Structural Exposure to Strategic Maritime Chokepoints

Economy	Main Chokepoint Exposure	CDR Score	ECER Score	SCEI Score	Structural Interpretation
China	Suez + Hormuz	0.85	1.00	0.93	Very high dual exposure: manufacturing exports and energy imports
European Union	Suez-dominant	0.80	0.15	0.48	High trade exposure but lower direct Hormuz energy exposure
India	Hormuz-dominant + Suez secondary	0.55	0.40	0.48	High energy exposure with rising trade-corridor dependence
Japan	Hormuz-dominant	0.45	0.30	0.38	Strong energy vulnerability, moderate trade-corridor exposure
South Korea	Hormuz-dominant	0.45	0.32	0.39	Strong energy vulnerability, export-chain sensitivity
Türkiye	Suez/Red Sea secondary + regional transit	0.35	0.10	0.23	Moderate corridor exposure, lower direct Hormuz dependence

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). (2024). *Review of maritime transport 2024*. United Nations.

U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). (2025). *World oil transit chokepoints*. U.S. Department of Energy.

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Note: The table is constructed using comparative macro-structural estimates derived from UNCTAD maritime trade statistics, IMF Direction of Trade Statistics (DOTS), EIA energy-flow data, and UNCTADstat transportation indicators. CDR (Corridor Dependency Ratio) reflects comparative exposure to Suez–Red Sea trade corridors, while ECER (Energy Corridor Exposure Ratio) reflects comparative exposure to Hormuz-related energy flows. SCEI (Strategic Chokepoint Exposure Index) is calculated as a normalized composite indicator combining corridor dependency and energy exposure. Scores are standardized between 0 and 1 and should be interpreted as macro-structural comparative exposure estimates rather than shipment-level microdata.

6. Discussion

6.1. Reinterpreting Globalization Through Spatial Concentration

The findings of this study suggest that contemporary globalization should be reinterpreted not as a process of unlimited geographical dispersion, but as an increasingly concentrated system organized around strategically critical maritime corridors. While dominant globalization narratives frequently emphasize deterritorialization, decentralization, and expanding network integration, the empirical evidence presented in this article reveals a parallel and contradictory structural tendency: the intensification of spatial concentration within global trade and energy systems.

The empirical findings strongly support this interpretation. The concentration of approximately 12% of global maritime trade and nearly 22% of global containerized trade around the Suez Canal, together with the strategic centrality of the Strait of Hormuz for global energy transportation, demonstrates that globalization increasingly depends upon a small number of geographically constrained chokepoints (UNCTAD, 2024; EIA, 2025). Rather than eliminating geography, globalization reorganizes it around concentrated infrastructures of circulation.

This transformation reflects a broader restructuring of capitalism itself. Harvey (2001) argues that capitalism continuously reorganizes spatial infrastructures in order to sustain accumulation and circulation processes. Within this framework, strategic maritime chokepoints can be interpreted as contemporary “spatial fixes” through which global capitalism concentrates logistical efficiency, trade integration, and capital mobility within highly strategic geographical corridors.

The findings therefore challenge conventional assumptions that globalization necessarily reduces the strategic significance of geography. On the contrary, the contemporary world-economy increasingly depends upon highly localized maritime infrastructures capable of generating systemic consequences at the global scale. Geography has not disappeared under globalization; rather, strategic geography has become more concentrated and more structurally important.

6.2. Corridor Dependency and Systemic Fragility

A second major implication of the findings concerns the relationship between corridor dependency and systemic fragility. The Red Sea disruptions and the sharp decline in Suez Canal traffic during 2024 reveal the extent to which concentrated trade systems generate vulnerability within the global economy. The observed collapse in vessel transits, net tonnage, and container traffic demonstrates that disruptions affecting strategic chokepoints rapidly propagate across global supply chains, transportation costs, and trade networks (UNCTAD, 2024).

This confirms the central argument of H2: increasing trade concentration through strategic maritime corridors intensifies systemic dependency. The concentration of global circulation systems within narrow chokepoints creates a paradoxical structure. Although corridor concentration enhances logistical efficiency, economies of scale, and integrated production systems, it simultaneously reduces systemic

resilience by increasing exposure to geopolitical tensions, maritime insecurity, and infrastructural disruption.

The comparative findings also indicate that corridor dependency is unevenly distributed across the global economy. China's exceptionally high exposure scores reflect the dual dependence of its export-oriented manufacturing system on both the Suez corridor and Hormuz-related energy flows. The European Union displays strong trade-corridor dependency linked to Asia–Europe containerized trade, while Japan, India, and South Korea exhibit greater energy-related exposure through Gulf-based oil transportation.

This differentiated exposure structure reinforces Castells' (2010) argument that globalization increasingly functions through hierarchically organized networks rather than horizontally integrated systems. Corridor dependency therefore produces asymmetric forms of vulnerability shaped by each economy's position within global production, logistics, and energy systems.

The findings further suggest that contemporary supply-chain integration may generate structural fragility rather than systemic resilience. As trade flows become increasingly concentrated around strategically constrained maritime infrastructures, disruptions occurring within a limited number of chokepoints can generate cascading global effects extending across production systems, transportation networks, and financial markets.

6.3. Maritime Chokepoints and Asymmetric Capital Accumulation

The findings also demonstrate that strategic maritime corridors function as mechanisms of asymmetric capital accumulation within the contemporary world-economy. This conclusion strongly supports H4 and reinforces world-systems perspectives emphasizing the spatial organization of capitalism through unequal control over circulation systems (Wallerstein, 2004; Arrighi, 2010).

Strategic chokepoints are not neutral logistical spaces. Rather, they are infrastructures through which geopolitical power, trade dependency, and capital accumulation intersect. Economies capable of securing maritime access, controlling trade routes, or shaping corridor governance acquire disproportionate strategic advantages within global circulation systems.

This process reflects Braudel's (1984) historical argument that capitalism develops not simply through production, but through control over the infrastructures of circulation. Throughout capitalist history, dominant powers have concentrated economic and political influence around strategic commercial nodes linking trade, finance, and transportation systems. Contemporary maritime chokepoints reproduce this historical pattern at a global scale.

The empirical evidence further suggests that corridor dependency generates unequal exposure structures across economies. While some economies benefit from logistical centrality and trade integration, others become increasingly vulnerable to disruptions occurring beyond their territorial

boundaries. This asymmetry produces differentiated capacities for adaptation, resilience, and strategic influence within the global economy.

The growing strategic significance of the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz also intensifies geopolitical competition surrounding maritime security, naval projection, infrastructure investment, and logistical governance. Maritime corridors therefore increasingly function as spaces where geopolitical rivalry and economic accumulation converge simultaneously.

In this sense, the contemporary world-economy reflects a structural transformation in which strategic chokepoints emerge as central infrastructures organizing global capitalism through concentrated circulation and asymmetric interdependence.

6.4. Corridor Capitalism and the Future of Global Trade

Taken together, the findings of this study point toward the emergence of what may be conceptualized as corridor capitalism: a structural form of globalization characterized by the concentration of trade, energy flows, and capital accumulation within strategically constrained maritime infrastructures.

Corridor capitalism represents a new phase in the spatial organization of the world-economy. Rather than operating through geographically dispersed networks alone, contemporary capitalism increasingly depends upon concentrated logistical geographies linking production systems, energy transportation, and intercontinental circulation through a limited number of strategic corridors.

Within this structure, chokepoints such as the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz become indispensable infrastructures sustaining global accumulation processes. However, the same concentration that generates logistical efficiency simultaneously intensifies systemic vulnerability. The result is a global economy that is simultaneously more integrated and more fragile.

The concept of corridor capitalism therefore provides a broader analytical framework for understanding contemporary transformations in globalization, trade dependency, and geopolitical competition. It suggests that future global economic stability will increasingly depend upon the resilience, security, and governance of strategic maritime infrastructures.

At the same time, the findings indicate that emerging geopolitical tensions, maritime conflicts, climate-related disruptions, and supply-chain fragmentation may further intensify the strategic significance of maritime chokepoints in the coming decades. The future geography of globalization is therefore likely to be shaped not by the disappearance of strategic corridors, but by their growing centrality within the organization of global capitalism.

Ultimately, this study argues that contemporary globalization should be understood as a structurally concentrated system organized around corridor-based circulation networks. Strategic maritime chokepoints have evolved into central infrastructures of trade dependency, energy security, and capital accumulation. Consequently, the contemporary world-economy increasingly reflects the dynamics of

corridor capitalism: a system in which concentrated logistical geographies organize both the expansion and the fragility of global capitalism.

7. Conclusion and Policy Implications

7.1. Main Findings and Theoretical Contribution

This study examined the strategic role of the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz within the contemporary world-economy by integrating world-systems theory, geoeconomic analysis, and comparative macro-structural evidence. The findings demonstrate that contemporary globalization increasingly operates through concentrated strategic maritime corridors rather than geographically dispersed trade networks. In this sense, the article challenges conventional interpretations portraying globalization primarily as a process of deterritorialization and decentralized integration.

The empirical findings strongly support the four central hypotheses of the study. First, global trade and energy flows have become increasingly concentrated around a limited number of strategic maritime chokepoints. The structural centrality of the Suez Canal for Asia–Europe containerized trade and the indispensable role of the Strait of Hormuz in global energy transportation clearly illustrate this concentration process. Second, increasing corridor concentration generates systemic dependency within the global economy by intensifying reliance on geographically constrained logistical infrastructures. The disruptions observed in the Red Sea during 2024 revealed the extent to which concentrated trade systems generate cascading effects across global supply chains, transportation networks, and energy markets.

Third, the findings confirm that energy-import-dependent economies exhibit significantly higher vulnerability to maritime corridor disruptions. The continuing dependence of major Asian economies on Gulf-based oil and liquefied natural gas flows passing through the Strait of Hormuz demonstrates the structural fragility embedded within contemporary global energy systems. Fourth, the study shows that strategic maritime chokepoints function as mechanisms of asymmetric capital accumulation within the world-economy. Corridor dependency and strategic logistical centrality generate uneven exposure structures that reinforce geopolitical asymmetries and differentiated capacities for economic resilience.

The principal theoretical contribution of the article lies in the development of the concept of corridor capitalism. The study argues that contemporary capitalism increasingly organizes trade, energy flows, and global circulation through concentrated maritime infrastructures linking production systems, financial networks, and geopolitical power. Strategic maritime corridors therefore emerge not simply as logistical routes, but as structural infrastructures organizing the spatial concentration of capital within the contemporary world-economy.

This contribution extends existing world-systems and geoeconomic literature in several ways. First, the study reconceptualizes maritime chokepoints as active mechanisms of capital accumulation rather than passive transportation spaces. Second, it introduces corridor dependency as a macro-structural

dimension of globalization. Third, it demonstrates that globalization does not eliminate the strategic significance of geography; rather, it intensifies the concentration of strategic geography within narrow and highly vulnerable logistical corridors.

Accordingly, the article argues that the contemporary world-economy increasingly reflects a paradoxical structure: globalization simultaneously expands international integration while intensifying systemic fragility through concentrated corridor dependency. The future stability of global capitalism therefore depends not only on trade expansion itself, but also on the resilience, governance, and security of strategic maritime infrastructures.

7.2. Policy Implications

The findings of this study carry important implications for global trade governance, maritime security, supply-chain resilience, and energy policy. The increasing concentration of global trade and energy flows within a limited number of strategic chokepoints suggests that corridor dependency has become a major structural vulnerability of the contemporary world-economy.

One important implication concerns the need for supply-chain diversification. The concentration of containerized trade through the Suez Canal and surrounding maritime routes exposes global production systems to severe disruption risks. Governments and multinational corporations may therefore increasingly seek alternative logistical routes, diversified transportation infrastructures, and regionalized supply-chain strategies in order to reduce concentrated corridor dependency.

A second implication relates to energy security. The continued strategic centrality of the Strait of Hormuz indicates that major energy-import-dependent economies remain structurally vulnerable to geopolitical instability in the Persian Gulf region. This finding highlights the importance of energy diversification policies, renewable energy transitions, strategic petroleum reserves, and alternative transportation corridors capable of reducing excessive dependence on single maritime chokepoints.

Third, the findings emphasize the growing strategic importance of maritime governance and international cooperation. Since disruptions affecting maritime chokepoints generate systemic global consequences, maritime security increasingly constitutes not only a geopolitical issue but also a structural economic necessity. International coordination concerning navigation security, infrastructure resilience, and crisis management may therefore become increasingly important for maintaining global trade stability.

The study also suggests that emerging geopolitical rivalries may intensify competition over maritime infrastructures in the coming decades. Port investments, naval expansion, corridor initiatives, and logistical alliances are likely to become increasingly central components of global geoeconomic competition. Consequently, strategic maritime corridors may evolve into even more important arenas of geopolitical and economic power projection within the contemporary world-economy.

7.3. Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations of the study should be acknowledged. First, the analysis primarily relies on macro-structural trade and energy-flow indicators rather than shipment-level microdata. While this approach is appropriate for identifying long-term structural transformation and systemic dependency patterns, future research may benefit from incorporating firm-level logistics data and detailed shipping-route analytics.

Second, the study prioritizes comparative macro-structural interpretation rather than econometric causal estimation. Although the findings strongly indicate structural relationships between corridor concentration, trade dependency, and systemic vulnerability, future research may further investigate these relationships using panel-data econometric models, network analysis techniques, or dynamic trade-flow simulations.

Third, the comparative exposure indicators developed in this article should be interpreted as macro-structural analytical estimates rather than exact shipment-level measurements. Future studies may refine the Corridor Dependency Ratio (CDR), Energy Corridor Exposure Ratio (ECER), and Strategic Chokepoint Exposure Index (SCEI) using more detailed bilateral trade and transportation datasets.

Future research may also expand the analytical framework developed in this study by incorporating additional strategic chokepoints such as the Panama Canal, the Strait of Malacca, and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. Comparative analysis of alternative corridor systems could further contribute to understanding the evolving geography of globalization and the future dynamics of corridor capitalism.

Ultimately, this study argues that contemporary globalization increasingly operates through concentrated strategic corridors organizing trade, energy flows, and capital accumulation within geographically constrained infrastructures. Strategic maritime chokepoints therefore represent not peripheral logistical spaces, but central structural mechanisms shaping the future geography of global capitalism.

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