

Is Globalism Dead?

On a November evening of 1989, the Berlin Wall collapsed, uniting East and West Germany following decades of notorious separation. It, however, was not just concrete fortifications which crumbled that night, but a 45-year ideological war that plummeted alongside it; the Cold War. Successively, formerly-isolated communist-bloc nations integrated into Western markets, lowering cultural and economic boundaries at unprecedented scales, and propagating humanity's biggest aspiration yet; globalism. British political-scientist David Held construed this concept in 1999 as 'the widening, deepening, and speeding-up of global interconnectedness'¹, whereas today, the IMF compartmentalised this theory into three constituents; The 'economic, political and cultural' domains², all associating nations together to, theoretically, fulfill an equanimous Earth. However, many consider these once-practical aspirations having now plateaued; the overall perceived inefficacious impact of globalism economically, politically, and culturally inclines many toward pessimistic attitudes regarding this once-prevailing notion, causing the majority to question; 'Is Globalism Dead?'

Economic globalism aspires to integrate economies worldwide via cross-border trade, where dampening these international restrictions has been prominent since the 1986 'Big-Bang' of stock-trading deregulation, allowing globalized economies to, ideally, prevail. Yet, unsubstantiated negative perceptions

¹Held, David & McGrew, Anthony & Goldblatt, David & Perraton, Jonathan. (1999). *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics, and Culture*. 10.2307/40203424.

² International Monetary Fund. *Globalization: Threats or Opportunity?* IMF Issues Brief, April 12, 2000.

undermine this concept, claiming its ineffective nature. Capital flight is one misrepresented criticism, whereby declining country assets resulting from increasing financial burdens, such as tax-hikes, transmit liquidity crises into foreign-trading-associated nations, witnessed within the 1997 Asian Financial Crises and the 2001 Argentine 'Great Depression'. Additionally, profit-driven incentives for businesses to manufacture within lesser-regulated countries, threatening the welfare of laborers in an eventual 'race to the bottom', is also argued in abjection of impactful economic globalization, instead constructing oppressive working-conditions within countries including Bangladesh and China. However, such claims stand uncorroborated; capital flight is simply pre-determined via government-raised taxes, and business demand within poorer countries has instead witnessed increased wages for deprived communities. Instead, globalizing countries have witnessed accelerated economic growth under this system, escalating from 1.4%/annum GDP growth in 1960 to 5%/annum within the 21st century. Considering the stagnant denouements of non-globalized countries, which together remained at around 1.4 %/annum in 1990, the association between globalism and prospering markets is unparalleled. Coupled with the extraordinary reductions of poverty in globalized economies, exhibited via rising wages of the poorest fifth, including a 5.4% increase within Malaysia, and 3.8% within China, alongside the dollar-per-day poverty population reduced from 20% to 15% in China and 43% to 36% in Bangladesh, globalization continues to impact countries economically, whilst assisting those most vulnerable in society, conclusively remaining an extremely relevant force today.

Canadian Entomologist William Thomson elucidated political globalization as 'the expansion of a global political system'³, wherein the dispersion of democratization and out-phasing of sovereignty promotes coequal governance. However, this concept's

³ Tessaleno Devezas; William R. Thompson (20 December 2007). *Globalization as Evolutionary Process: Modeling Global Change*. Routledge. p. 59. ISBN 978-1-135-97764-1.

impactfulness remains challenged within the flawed Modelski Model⁴, which theorizes that from the Portuguese to the British Empire, century-long cyclic world-order shifts exist, with modern-political globalism being simply another epoch, as opposed to a unique, evolving movement. Additionally, radical trends of reinvigorating nation-state autonomy over global-political governance, witnessed within the 2016 British campaign on EU withdrawal and Trump's multiple US withdrawals to the 2015 Paris Agreement, supposedly portray trends of sovereign importance over globalization. Yet, these contentions stand superfluous; the Modelski model remains incoherent in addressing global North-South divides, and within the aforementioned withdrawals, America and Britain remain isolated in their decisions. In actuality, the diminishing significance of nation-states today accentuates the impactfulness of political globalization; the amelioration of global structures persists, ranging from the conceptualization of the UN in 1945 as the global-standard for sovereign self-determination, to the ICC's issuing of essential decrees upon 125 member-nations, including the 2024 arrest warrants of Netanyahu and Putin. Today, <6% of nations remain unassociated with any subregional-political union, and instead, these unions prevail in political importance over such disparate nations. The reverberations of united political globalization are also concomitantly ideological; From the worldwide adoption of the Human Rights Declaration in 1948 whereby upholding individual freedoms stands globally regarded as indispensable, to the dispersion of democratization in now >60% of countries, political homogeneity within governance and social norms unites humans in addressing future provocations, an overall depiction of a very-much-alive globalisation movement.

⁴ Modelski, George. "The Long Cycle of Global Politics and the Nation-State." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20, no. 2 (1978): 214–35. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/178047>.

Dutch sociologist Jan Pieterse characterized cultural globalization as large-scale ‘human integration’⁵; an exponentially-increasing commodity exchange of customs, rapidly diffused via modern advances within communication, and experienced on a day-to-day basis. However, rising skepticism regarding its impactfulness considers the ‘realities’ cultural globalization carries, with one misguided criticism being homogenization, whereby diverse interactions may coalesce into monocultural American values whilst diminishing ethnic individuality, observed within the ‘McDonaldization’ and ‘Coca-colonisation’ of ethnic experiences. Interestingly enough, many instead attest that cultural globalization propagates polarisation, with American Political-scientist Samuel Huntington attributing civilization-consciousness from cultural interactions as accentuating geopolitical conflicts⁶, seen within the 2024 UK riots against ‘contra-British’ cultures, and ongoing Israeli-Palestinian disputes originating from 1948 Partition Treaties. However, these divergent views remain unsubstantiated; ‘cultural imperialism’ is undermined by the glocalization of international businesses adapting towards local customs, and polarization is mostly exacerbated by marginalized extremist factions. Instead, increasing interdependence worldwide portrays much-active globalism. Constructed by Indian-American anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, global-cultural flows⁷ reconsider colonialist-imposed binary oppositions in society as ‘flows’ of cultural exchange, constructing necessary human interdependence, such as within the Olympics, whereby cultural-financial flows of international businesses and host-cities, and ideas-exchanges regarding the opening/closing ceremonies in representing the host’s heritage, depict this now-integrated element of life. Pivoting deeper,

⁵ Nederveen Pieterse, Jan. (2000). Globalization and human integration: We are all migrants. *Futures*. 32. 385-398. 10.1016/S0016-3287(99)00082-8.

⁶ Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1996.

⁷ Heyman, J. McC., & Campbell, H. (2009). *The anthropology of global flows: A critical reading of Appadurai’s ‘Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy’*. *Anthropological Theory*, 9(2), 131-148.

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cultural globalization espouses individualistic moral development. American psychologist Lene Jensen posits the Cultural-Developmental Theory⁸, claiming ethical values are expanded through cultural interaction, with her 2024 study, which explored 80 rural/urban Thai-nationals, finding that urban-integrated Thai people emphasised greater individualistic moral values in-light of cultural globalisation, whilst distanced rural counterparts expressed increasingly micro-traditionalist values. Evidently, cultural flows still remain alive within our day-to-day interactions, subtly shifting our empathy toward fellow-humans in global unity.

We're transported once-more to Berlin in 1989. Upon either side stand citizens separated by imposed labels of capitalism and communism, yet seeing beyond such limitations, knowing they are all human. As walls collapse, Berliners dismantle the intangible boundaries of decades-long polarisation, and humans collaborate once more, all with due success; Economically, we've experienced unprecedented growth whilst fighting inequality, politically, we've unified on rights and built vast institutions for nations to collaborate, and culturally, we've set up an extensive public-market of ideas-exchange whilst increasing our own moral frameworks. In what is our largest, most ambitious project ever, humans are now pivoted to tackle future problems in salvaging our subsequent generations: climate change, AI, disease, resources; the list is immeasurable, and work is to be done. But it is thus clear; Is Globalism Dead? Without a doubt, no.

⁸ Jensen, Lene. (2010). The Cultural-Developmental Theory of Moral Psychology. 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195383430.003.0001.