

Is deglobalization possible?

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Abstract

Deglobalization seems to appear with the Brexit, Trump 's election as US president, and the victory of the " No " vote of 2016 Italian constitutional referendum. Globalization or deglobalization is ultimately driven by strong party 's interests. With the development of globalization to a certain extent, the benefits that several major developed capitalist countries can gain in the trend of globalization are gradually less than the benefits of damaged ones. Therefore, these major developed capitalist countries want to safeguard their interests by promoting deglobalization. Is deglobalization possible? Now the force of globalization and deglobalization coexist, and it depends on which side is more motivated. As long as the two major trends that continuous developing of the global value chain and the continuous improvement of science technology have not fundamentally changed, the process of globalization will not be fundamentally changed. In fact, these two major trends have not be changed fundamentally, and they are difficult to be changed. In the process of globalization, there will inevitably be imperfections and deficiencies in management mechanisms, such as income inequality among countries and income inequality among different hierarchies in a country. Some so-called deglobalization phenomena in the current can be seen as exploratory amendments of the deficiencies of globalization rather than real deglobalization. This article will discuss why the deglobalization is not very likely from the following three aspects: 1. The developing countries gradually have more initiative in the global arena; 2. The development of information technology is irreversible; 3. To analyze from other driving factors of deglobalization.

Keywords

globalization, developing countries, information technology

1. The developing countries gradually have more initiative in the global arena

As Wallerstein(2004, p. 23) points out, the world-system is and has always been a capitalist world-economy, and the structure of world-economy is most unified by the division of labor and hence significant internal exchange of basic or essential goods as well as flow of capital and labor. In this capitalist world-economic system, the system of division of labor of the world is gradually formed. However, this system which is promoted by developed capitalist countries is always unequal. This unequal status leads to the continuous accumulation of capital in developed capitalist countries while other developing countries still find it difficult to accumulate capital. Then with the continuous accumulation of capital, the hegemony of the developed capitalist countries has been consolidated. They hence have the chance to be at the core of the world-system, while developing countries are at the peripheral or semi-peripheral status. The globalization which is conducted by this world-system has thus initially been filled with unequal relations between developed capitalist countries and developing countries. At that time, globalization is dominated by several major developed capitalist countries. This leads to the rules of global investment, global trade, and global finance to reflect mainly the interests and discursive right of developed capitalist countries. However, with the local

economic development, developing countries have begun to have discursive right even though not too much, to the rules of the existing globalization system. Thus developing countries can begin to profit from globalization gradually and then they gradually develops. As the developing countries grow up more and more, they will be able to occupy a more advantageous position in the division of labor of the world, and then they can gain more and more profits in the globalization. Therefore, developing countries are slowly moving from the peripheral or semi-peripheral position to the core position in the world-system. The unequal system of division of labor of the world has thus begun to be broken. As Wallerstein(1974, pp. 347-57) defines for the world-system:

a social system, one that has boundaries, structures, member groups, rules of legitimation, and coherence. Its life is made up of the conflicting forces which hold it together by tension and tear it apart as each group seeks eternally to remold it to its advantage. It has the characteristics of an organism, in that it has a life-span over which its characteristics change in some respects and remain stable in others. One can define its structures as being at different times strong or weak in terms of the internal logic of its functioning.

As the definition of the world-system theory says, the world-system has fluidity: the core countries may fall to semi-peripheral, and the peripheral countries may also rise to semi-peripheral. With more and more accessible profits in globalization, developing countries have gradually grown up and they are increasingly able to take the initiative in the world-system. Therefore, there are more and more developing countries willing to participate in globalization, and looking forward to globalization. Developing countries have gradually become an important driving force for globalization. For example, China advocates the One Belt One Road policy, which is a new international economic cooperation model proposed by China to promote the further development of globalization. It will not only have positive effects on the development of China and other developing countries, but more importantly it will have a catalytic effect on the changes in the international economic structure. Once the status of developing countries in the international economic structure has been raised, driving force of developing countries to globalization will be stronger and more durable. Globalization is gradually developing from a pattern dominated by developed capitalist countries to a truly more equitable pattern. As the profits that developing countries can achieve in globalization increase, the profits that developed capitalist countries can achieve in globalization is relatively reduced. In order to mitigate the profit damage caused by the current globalization and to maintain their interests, some developed capitalist countries are more politically inclined to promote deglobalization strategies. As to whether or not deglobalization is possible, it depends ultimately on which side of driving force(of developed capitalist countries or developing countries) is powerful. Judging from the current state of development of developing countries, the force of developed capitalist countries might not be able to overshadow that of developing countries. Contemporary globalization has broken the unequal system of division of labor and brought new opportunities for development. Developing countries thus have a more equal chance to develop and become more initiative in the world-system. Their advocacy and promotion to globalization will become an important obstacle to the deglobalization of the developed capitalist countries.

2. The development of information technology is irreversible

The convenient transportation and the Internet have made the global highly integrated. The number of people participating in cross-border travel and cross-border shopping has been increasing, and resources can be deployed at a low cost worldwide. Even just with a smart phone, the information, finance, shopping, entertainment and other activities which are related with digitalizing can be exchanged at a very low cost. These are all benefited from the

development of information technology. It can be said that in the Information Age, the development of information technology is an important driving force for social development. The technology that has been invented can not be wiped out, and the trend of development of new information technology is difficult to be stopped. Therefore, the development of information technology is irreversible and unstoppable.

As Castells(2004, p. 1) says, the network of network society is a set of interconnected nodes. In real life, every unit, from individuals, families, organizations, and even countries, exists in the network of relationships with others. In other words, human society is composed of these networks of relationships. Various social resources flow in these networks. But also as Castells(2004, p. 1) says, a network society is a society whose social structure is made of networks powered by microelectronics-based information and communication technologies. Only if information technology develops to a certain extent, these social entity networks can become a node of the information network, and then information of various social entity networks can be transformed into digital information of the information network. Only at this time, the network society can operate globally in an “ instant ” way. Therefore, the development of information technology is the material basis for the formation of the network society. When informatization is been as a basis, networking as a structural form of the society, the final result is globalization. Castells(1998, p.322) introduces a new culture of network society under the informational paradigm: the culture of real virtuality which has emerged from the superseding of places and the annihilation of time by the space of flows and by timeless time. It compresses the distance of time and space through the virtuality environment created by computer networks and electronic media, but it is also reality because this virtuality environment is constructed by our real life. The culture of real virtuality goes beyond the limits of time and space, making the global society highly integrated, thus various resources achieve flowing globally at a low cost. As Castells(2004, p. 32) says, the network society is a global society. There is no doubt that this new culture has greatly contributed to the process of globalization. As the development of information technology is irreversible, the development of the network society is also difficult to retrogress. As long as the network society, as an important driving force for globalization exists, the process of globalization will be difficult to reverse, and deglobalization will be very difficult to possible. In addition, the network society is also a negative impact on the original global value chain. The network society has enabled the original global value chain to jump out of the original framework which is dominated by developed capitalist countries, allowing other international entities(especially developing countries) to have the opportunity to participate actively instead of being passively involved. The capital can thus flow in a multidimensional space, which is also an important impetus for globalization. Once developing countries can seize the opportunity to develop this new global value chain under the development of the network society, their resistance to the deglobalization promoted by developed capitalist countries will greatly increase.

The typical representative of the Information Age is the generation and development of the Internet. It is a decentralized information network that can enable communication at any node. For example, the Internet of Things (IoT), as an extension and expansion on the basis of the Internet, directly or indirectly links all things in the globe through its embedded information technology and wireless sensor technology, in order to realize the connection between things and things, things and people. It is convenient for humans to identify, manage and control all things when the things are connected to the Internet. From the Internet to the Internet of Things, it shows that not only among people, the connections among all things in the globe will be more and more and also more convenient. The Internet of Things is a trend of development, and it is difficult for any country to block or reverse its development. The

development of this kind of information technology has also broken the space-time constraints between things and things as well as things and people. It can realize the instant communication of all things and people in the globe. It is a great driving force to globalization. With the existence of the Internet, it seems that it is not that easy to retrogress globalization. Even though there are political policies which are inclined to deglobalization, people can always participate in globalization directly or indirectly, actively or passively through the Internet. It is a contest between the power of deglobalization and the power of information technology. From the global historical perspective, the power of information technology seems to be more unstoppable.

3. To analyze from other driving factors of deglobalization

The first wave of modern globalization began in the second half of the 19th century. Colonial expansion led to the global trade. However, World War I in the early 20th century disintegrated this wave and led to the first deglobalization. After the Second World War, some developed western countries led the establishment of three major world economic organizations: the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization. Under the trinitarian effect of "world currency - international finance - world trade", developed western countries led the second globalization wave. However, the two times of oil crises (1973-1974, 1979-1980) caused serious economic blows in western countries, and the global economy dominated by western countries also suffered the most serious crisis after World War II. Therefore, after two oil crises, the world economy was damaged heavily and the second deglobalization began quietly. After the end of the Cold War, the third globalization began. The first oil crisis began from the Yom Kippur War. The second oil crisis began from the Iran's political turmoil and continued to be affected by the Iran-Iraq War. Therefore, both the beginning of the first and the second deglobalization can be essentially attributed to the political tension and military conflicts. It seems like that there is no country willingly and actively promote these two deglobalizations. Thus these two times of deglobalization seem to have happened passively and accidentally. To compare the current wave of deglobalization which is actively promoted by several developed capitalist countries, with the former deglobalizations, it is difficult to draw a firm conclusion that this active impetus can have enough strength like the wars to compete with the force of globalization.

Globalization has different dimensions. In addition to economic dimension, it is also reflected in politics, culture, and society. With the development of economic globalization, more and more people can exchange information and products more conveniently. This has also promoted the integration of cultures of various countries. For example, McDonald's which is from America, now operates almost all over the world. Although the global diffusion of McDonald's is fundamentally driven by commercial interests, it can always be a powerful global cultural output. However, a product of single McDonald's food culture is not easily accepted by local people of other non-western countries. Therefore, the McDonald's company tries to integrate those local food cultures to transform the original McDonald's products so that more local people of non-western countries can accept it. For example, McDonald's in Hong Kong sells Hong Kong-style macaroni and milk tea in order to meet the tastes of Hong Kong customers. These kinds of macaroni and milk tea have never appeared in McDonald's in the United States or other areas. Although economic globalization will have a certain influence on cultural globalization. For example, the world market has brought consumerism to many areas of the globe, and the cross-border communications, transportation, and networks has stimulated the cultural integration of different nations. The cultures of different nations may fuse and influence each other. However, global culture will not just converge. As Hofstede (1984, p. 389) says, culture can be defined as the collective programming of the mind

which distinguishes the members of one category of people from those of another culture. Every kind of culture has unique nature, and it can be used to distinguish two different national members. The uniqueness of each culture is also difficult to be replaced by other cultures. That is why McDonald's tries to integrate local culture of some countries with the original McDonald's food culture. Another typical example is language. With the dominance of developed western countries in economic globalization, the importance of English is increasing, especially on the Internet. Although a large number of non-English speakers are learning English, they still speak their native languages instead of English in their daily life when they interact with people of the same ethnic group. As a tool for the transmission of a nation's culture, language can give people who speak the same language a common sense of identity of national culture. As long as the inheritance of the native language of a nation is not cut off, the unique culture of this nation will be difficult to be annihilated. As Herkenrath et al.(2005, p. 374) consider, convergence and divergence, as well as 'glocalization', occur simultaneously. The connotation of cultural globalization cannot be generalized. It does not mean that the global culture is totally integrated, it includes the phenomenon of cultural convergence, divergence and glocalization. Therefore, the result of cultural globalization is actually uncertain. The uniqueness of every national culture can act as a resistance to the integration of global cultures, and this irreconcilability can also act as a counter-globalization force. But on the other hand, cultural convergence and glocalization can be a force to globalization. In addition, as long as economic globalization continues, there is always an opportunity for the convergence and glocalization of global culture. When the convergence, divergence and glocalization of the global culture work together at the same time, although cultural divergence of various nations worldwide have a certain positive effect on deglobalization, it is not sure that such effects are able to overshadow the driving forces of globalization.

4. Conclusion

This article concludes that the possibility of deglobalization is very small by comparing which side of driving force (of globalization or deglobalization) is powerful. First of all, with the development of globalization, developing countries have gradually grown and the world-system is gradually jumping out of the unilaterally dominant framework of developed capitalist countries. Developing countries more advocate globalization and more hope to promote globalization when they can benefit from globalization. The support of globalization from developing countries will become an important resistance to deglobalization promoted by some developed western countries. In addition, the arrival of Information Age can not be reversed, and the development of information technology is also unstoppable. The network society formed under the paradigm of information technology will be a very important source to the development of globalization. It will connect people and things all around the world more closely. As long as information technology is still developing and the network society is still continuing, deglobalization is almost impossible. Finally, from the cause of the two former deglobalization and the operation of cultural globalization, the chance of the current deglobalization occurring is also quite weak.

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