

Deglobalization vs. Globalization: Economic Strategies for Uncertain Times

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Abstract:

The ongoing conversation about globalization and deglobalization has become more apparent in recent years due to economic uncertainty, geopolitical tensions, and technological change. Historically, globalization has driven growth and international cooperation, but due to recent trade conflicts, supply chain disruptions and shifting policies, there has been a rise in deglobalization. This paper aims to explore the economic strategies that governments, businesses and policymakers can adopt to face these difficulties.

The study delves into key drivers of deglobalization, such as geopolitical tensions and faltering regional cooperation, while also highlighting the benefits of globalization, including access to new markets and knowledge and technological exchange. By examining data and reviewing case studies, this research analyzes how economies can align national priorities with global integration to ensure stability and growth.

Furthermore, the paper discusses regional trade agreements, resilient supply chains and digital globalization as strategies to adjust to evolving economic conditions. The outcome of the research suggests that instead of a full withdrawal from globalization, the world is shifting toward a more strategic and selective form of global engagement.

Keywords: Globalization, Deglobalization, Post-pandemic economy, Global Economic Shifts, Geopolitical Tensions, Economic Recovery

Introduction

Throughout recent decades, globalization has been significant in shaping the global economy, building connections through trade, investment and movement of goods and services. However, the global landscape is currently undergoing great changes due to rising concerns over economic inequalities, environmental sustainability and geopolitical tensions. These aspects have led to the debate between globalization and deglobalization, especially as a consequence of global disruptions like COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing trade wars. As nations struggle with these challenges, the question arises: Should economies continue to embrace the driving factors behind globalization or should they prioritize self-reliance and economic nationalism through deglobalization strategies?

In 2020, global trade shrank by 5.3% as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, underlining the fragility of global supply chains and trade dependencies (*World Trade Organization, 2021*). This disturbance has encouraged discussions on the vulnerabilities of the globalized systems, pressing some nations to reconsider their reliance on international markets. Additionally, the 2020 Global Risks Report by the World Economic Forum, 70% of respondents indicated “economic confrontations” as significant threats to future economic stability, illustrating growing concerns over the continuation of globalization. On the other hand, advocates of globalization

argue that the interconnected world is essential for the future of innovation, expanding markets and solving global difficulties like climate change and pandemics.

Ultimately, this research aims to provide valuable insight into how nations and businesses can develop strong economic strategies in the midst of the shifting balance between global integration and national autonomy. The study hypothesizes that instead of a full retreat from globalization, economies will adopt a selective engagement approach, focusing on regional trade agreements, resilient supply chain and digital globalization as a strategic adjustment. By critically evaluating both globalization and deglobalization trends, the study offers guidance on fostering sustainable growth, enhancing economic security and adapting effectively to the complexities of an increasingly unpredictable global environment.

Literature review

The Dynamics of Globalization and Deglobalization

Globalization is defined as “the increasing interconnectedness of economies through trade, investment, and movement of goods, services, and people” (Stiglitz, J. E., 2002). However, he also critiques how this process other disproportionately benefits wealthier countries and emphasizes the need for more inclusive policies that address inequality and the negative impacts on developing nations. His take on this matter is that there should be more reforms in international financial institutions to ensure that globalization is managed in a way that is fair and beneficial for all countries. In contrast, deglobalization refers to “the reversal or slowing down of globalization processes, driven by protectionist and geopolitical tensions” (Dani Rodrik, 2011). The debate over these trends has intensified as global disruptions create economic uncertainty.

World-Systems Theory explains globalization as “a process where core economies exploit peripheral regions, leading to economic dependencies” (Wallerstein, I., 2004). Besides, Economic Nationalism Theory supports deglobalization, arguing that “self-sufficiency should take precedence over global integration” (Eric Helleiner, 2002). The Global Value Chain Model highlights how “production is distributed across borders and how disruptions impact global trade” (Gary Gereffi, 1999).

Key Drivers of Deglobalization

- **Economic Protectionism:** Trade conflicts, such as the U.S.-China trade war, have led to “increased tariffs and economic nationalism, reducing trade flows” (Douglas A. Irwin, 2017). The Infant Industry Argument suggest that “emerging markets benefit from protectionist policies” (Ha-Joon Chang, 2002).
- **Geopolitical tensions:** Political conflicts have disrupted trade, fostering “a preference for regional self-sufficiency” (Niall Ferguson, 2020). Realist Theory emphasizes “the role of power struggles in shaping economic decisions” (John J. Mearsheimer, 2001).
- **Supply Chain Vulnerabilities:** The COVID-19 pandemic revealed “the fragility of global supply chains, prompting shifts towards domestic production” (Gary Gereffi, 2020). Just-in-Time Supply Chains are being reassessed for “more resilient production systems” (Taiichi Ohno, 1988).

Benefits and Challenges of Globalization

- **Economic Growth:** Global markets enable businesses to “scale operations and enhance competitiveness” (Bhagwati J., 2004). However, Dependency Theory warns that “globalization reinforces disparities between developed and developing nations” (Prebisch R., 1950).

- Technology and Knowledge Exchange: Digital globalization accelerates “knowledge transfer beyond physical borders” (Baldwin R., 2019).
- Challenges: Critics argue that globalization “exacerbates inequalities and environmental concerns” (Piketty T., 2014). The Environmental Kuznets Curve suggests that “globalization initially harms the environment but can lead to sustainable practices” (Grossman G. M. & Krueger A. B., 1995).

Economic Strategies for Global Shifts

- Regional Trade Agreements: Organizations like the EU and CPTPP strengthen “regional trade networks to counterbalance global uncertainties” (Petri P. A. & Plummer M. G., 2020).
- Resilient Supply Chains: Businesses are “diversifying suppliers to minimize global risks” (Javorcik B. S., 2020).
- Digital Globalization: E-commerce enables businesses to “engage in global trade without physical constraints” (Baldwin R., 2019). The Platform Economy Model shows how “companies like Amazon and Alibaba drive cross-border commerce” (Kenney M. & Zysman J., 2016).

Identifying the Research Gap

Existing research papers and articles explore both globalization and deglobalization but lack analysis on balancing these forces. This study examines “how governments and businesses can develop adaptive strategies that incorporate globalization’s benefits and deglobalization’s protections” (Rodrik D., 2018). Case studies and observed data contribute to understanding these evolving economic interactions.

Summary and Insights

The literature review suggests economies are shifting towards “a more strategic engagement with global markets” (Baldwin R., 2019). By balancing national priorities with global integration, policymakers can “foster resilience and sustainable growth in an increasingly volatile economic landscape” (Ferguson N., 2020).

Methodology

This research utilizes a mixed-methods approach, combining both primary and secondary data to examine the changing dynamics of globalization and deglobalization. The study’s objective is to assess the economic strategies that nations and businesses adopt in response to global disruptions, employing both qualitative and quantitative techniques to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. By doing so, the study captures not only statistical trends but also insights from experts within the field.

The author’s core hypothesis for this research is that, rather than a complete shift toward deglobalization, economies are increasingly adopting a selective engagement strategy. This strategy emphasizes embracement of regional integration and trade agreements, diversifying and building resilient supply chains, and digital globalization as key elements of evolving global economic framework. To test this hypothesis, the study integrates empirical analysis, articles, research papers, citizens and personal perspectives. The research further aims to identify the key drivers of globalization and deglobalization trends in the current economic landscape, examining their impact on national economies, businesses and trade policies. Additionally, the study evaluates how regional trade agreements, supply chain diversification and digital globalization contribute to fostering economic stability and growth. Ultimately, this research aims to offer policy recommendations that align national economic objectives with global integration.

To gather primary data, the research employs structured surveys addresses to a focus group consisting of university students. This method allows for an exploration of how various individuals perceive globalization and deglobalization in our current times. The survey is designed to measure attitudes toward economic policies, trade agreements and supply chain resilience, while also testing how informed university students, the future of our country, are on this topic. Through this approach, the study gathers an all-rounded understanding of the factors influencing economic change and the interest that people present towards this matter.

Secondary data is gathered from a variety of sources, including media and news outlets, economic reports, publications from major institutions, economic reports and online databases. These sources help review the findings from the primary data. Additionally, statistical datasets are utilized to analyze trade flows, investment patterns and economic performance over time. The secondary data helps validate the primary data and enhance the understanding of the global economic changes under examination.

This study includes both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques. The qualitative analysis involves a survey addressed to a focus group that helps identify common themes and perspectives regarding globalization and deglobalization. Furthermore, comparative analysis is conducted to examine how different economies have adapted to global challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and trade conflicts. For quantitative analysis, summarizing data, making predictions and analyzing trends over time are used to assess correlation between policy changes and economic outcomes.

To guarantee the reliability and validity of the research, multiple data sources are used. This strategy ensures that consistency and accuracy of the findings across different data points. The survey is designed to minimize biases, while statistical methods further support the validation of the quantitative results.

By combining both primary and secondary data, this methodology offers a solid foundation for understanding the relationship between globalization and deglobalization. The research enables a refined examination of how nations and businesses navigate economic shifts, providing valuable insight into sustainable and adaptive economic strategies. The mixed-methods framework ensures that the study's findings are both data-driven and informed by expert perspectives, making the research valuable.

Results and discussion

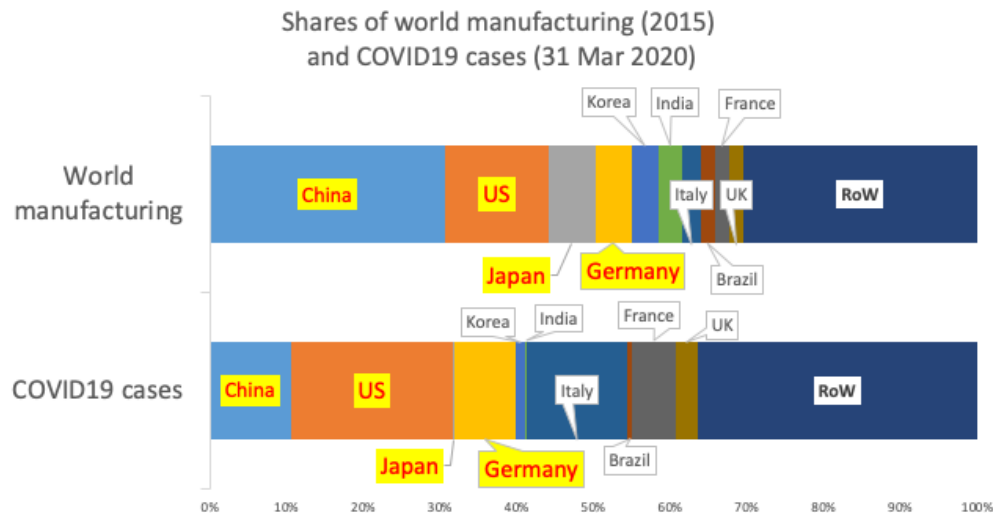
The adoption of a selective engagement strategy, centered around regional integration, supply chain diversification and digital globalization has become increasingly relevant in today's rapidly shifting economic landscape. This approach aims to strike a balance between the advantages of global economic integration and the necessity of national and regional economic resilience. After thorough research on various matters such as: what are the key drivers of globalization and emerging e-globalization trends, what is their effect on national economies, businesses and trade policies and, last but not least, an assessment on how regional trade agreement, diversified supply chains and digital globalization contribute to economic stability and growth, the author has reached the following conclusions.

Key Drivers of Globalization and E-Globalization Trends

Historically, globalization has been propelled by various factors, including advancements in transportation and communication technologies, trade liberalization policies and the expansion of multinational corporations. However, in recent years, significant global events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical conflicts and shifts in economic policies, have altered the

trajectory of globalization. These changes have led to the emergence of new trends like a slowdown on globalization and a shift towards sourcing goods and services from geographically closer locations to reduce risks (Baldwin R. & Freeman R., 2020).

The pandemic, in particular, exposed vulnerabilities in globally integrated supply chains, highlighting their overdependence on specific regions and the risks associated with single-source suppliers. Consequently, businesses and governments have started reconsidering their approach to global trade, focusing more on regional supply networks, technological advancements in logistics and digital transformation to ensure greater economic resilience (OECD, 2021).



(Source: Baldwin R. & Freeman R., 2020)

Impact on National Economies, Businesses and Trade Policies

The transition toward regional economic integration and supply chain diversification has had profound implications for national economies and businesses. The COVID-19 pandemic led to an unprecedented 5.3% decline in global merchandise trade in 2020, underscoring the fragility of highly independent global supply chains (World Trade Organization, 2021). Factory closure, disruptions in transportation, labor shortages and border restrictions caused massive economic disruptions, forcing companies to rethink their supply chain strategies.

To mitigate future risks, many firms have moved away from reliance on just-in-time manufacturing and have instead adopted just-in-case strategies that prioritize supply chain resilience over cost efficiency. Companies have expanded their supplier bases, sought alternative sourcing strategies and invested in digital technologies to enhance agility and competitiveness (Eva Jenisch, 2023). Similarly, national governments have revised trade policies to promote economic self-sufficiency while engaging in global trade to ensure long-term growth.

Contributions to Economic Stability and Growth

Regional trade agreements play a crucial role in stabilizing economies and fostering long-term growth by facilitating trade among member nations, reducing dependency on distant markets and creating economic synergies within geographic regions. A key example is the expansion of the BRICS group, which recently welcomed new members such as Iran, the UAE, Egypt, Ethiopia and Indonesia. This expansion is expected to strengthen economic ties, increase trade flows and unlock new opportunities for investment and development (Julian Borger, 2023).

Additionally, supply chain diversification has merged as a critical strategy for ensuring business continuity and reducing risks associated with geopolitical tensions, pandemics and natural disasters. Companies that adopt multisourcing and multishoring strategies have demonstrated greater resilience in times of crisis, enabling them to maintain production and distribution despite external disruptions (World Trade Organization, 2021). Governments and multinational corporations alike are investing in diversified supply networks to minimize economic vulnerabilities and enhance global trade stability.

Digital globalization has also transformed international trade by providing businesses with new paths to reach global markets. The rise of e-commerce, digital trade platforms and remote work solutions has accelerated economic globalization, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises. With digital tools and global payment systems, small and middle-sized enterprises now have unprecedented access to international markets, allowing them to expand their customer base and compete on a global scale (World Economic Forum, 2021).

Policy Recommendations

To align national economic strategies with global integration while maintaining economic resilience, policymakers should consider the following strategic actions:

1. **Strengthen Regional Trade Agreements:** Encourage active participation in regional trade agreements to facilitate regional trade, reduce reliance on distant economies and support local industries.
2. **Enhance Supply Chain Resilience:** Provide financial incentives and regulatory support for businesses to diversify their supply chains, invest in flexible logistics infrastructure and develop contingency planning strategies.
3. **Invest in Digital Infrastructure:** Expand digital infrastructure, including broadband access, cloud computing and cybersecurity, to enable businesses to participate in the digital economy and facilitate international trade.
4. **Develop Adaptive Trade Policies:** Implement trade policies that allow for a balance between open-market benefits and national economic security, ensuring that businesses can adapt to shifting global conditions while maintaining stability.
5. **Encourage Sustainable Trade Practices:** Promote environmentally sustainable trade and manufacturing practices that align with global climate change goals and long-term economic sustainability.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Trade Wars on Globalization and Deglobalization

The COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing trade conflicts have significantly shaped the current trajectory of globalization. The pandemic revealed critical weaknesses in global supply chains, particularly those that relied heavily on a single country or region for essential goods. This led to and increased discussion around slowing down on globalization and a heightened focus on economic self-sufficiency (World Trade Organization, 2021).

Meanwhile, trade wars, particularly the U.S and China trade conflict, have added further complexity to global trade relationships. The imposition of tariffs, retaliatory measures and increased economic nationalism have disrupted traditional trade flows, forcing companies to reconsider their international sourcing and manufacturing strategies. Many businesses have responded by exploring alternative markets, investing in regional supply chains and diversifying their production bases to mitigate risks (International Monetary Fund, 2019).

Navigating Economic Shifts: Sustainable and Adaptive Strategies

To successfully navigate these economic shifts, both nations and businesses must adopt sustainable and adaptive strategies that prioritize resilience, flexibility and long-term stability. Key approaches include:

- **Strengthening Regional Economic Ties:** Enhancing regional trade agreements and partnerships to create more self-sufficient and resilient economic blocs.
- **Investing in Supply Chain Technology:** Leveraging AI, blockchain and Internet of Things to improve supply chain visibility, efficiency and security.
- **Fostering Innovation and Workforce Development:** Encouraging research and development initiatives, supporting workforce reskilling programs and fostering entrepreneurship to enhance economic competitiveness.
- **Promoting Green and Sustainable Growth:** Aligning economic strategies with global sustainability goals by adopting eco-friendly trade policies, investing in renewable energy and promoting circular economy practices.

Therefore, while globalization continues to evolve, the adoption of a selective engagement strategy that balances economic integration with national and regional resilience is essential for long-term stability. By prioritizing regional trade agreements, supply chain diversification and digital globalization, nations and businesses can foster sustainable economic growth and navigate the complexities of the modern global economy effectively.

Figures and tables

Charts and tables simplify complex economic data, making trends and comparisons easier to understand. They visually highlight key patterns, such as trade shifts, policy impacts, and supply chain changes, enhancing clarity and credibility. This section presents data through graphs and tables to support the analysis of globalization and deglobalization.

Table 1. Key Differences between Globalization and Deglobalization

Factor	Globalization	Deglobalization
Trade Policy	Open markets, free trade agreements	Protectionist policies, tariffs
Economic Impact	Increased GDP growth	Focusing on national industries
Supply Chains	Global sourcing	Regional/local production
Technology	International knowledge exchange	Domestic innovation focus

(Souce: Authors' own research, 2025)

Table 1 outlines the fundamental contrasts between globalization and deglobalization across various economic dimensions. It highlights how each approach impacts trade policies, supply chains, economic growth, and technological exchange.

- Globalization is characterized by open markets, interconnected supply chains, and international cooperation, promoting economic growth and innovation.
- Deglobalization emphasizes self-sufficiency, protectionist policies, and regional trade focus, aiming to reduce economic vulnerabilities but potentially limiting market access and innovation.

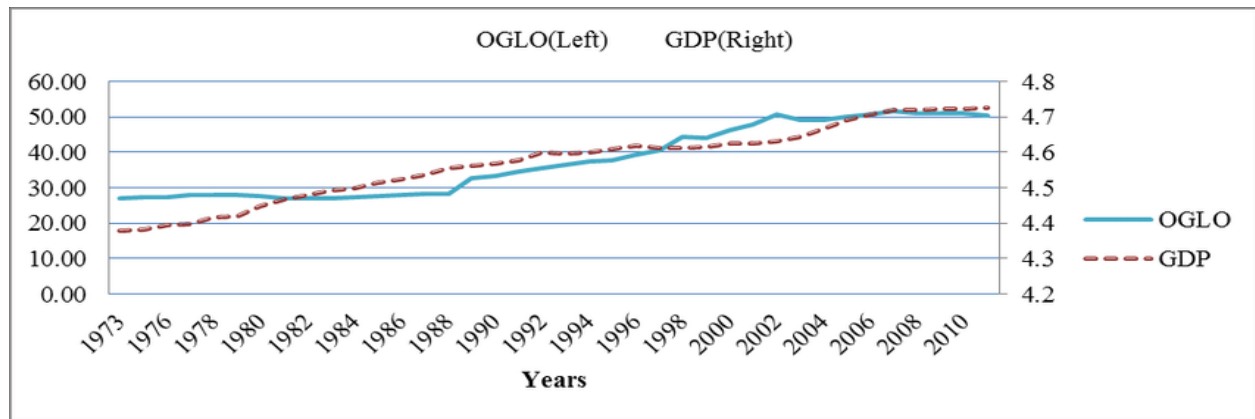


Figure 1. Graphs of Economic Growth and Overall Globalization

(Source: Aqil Khan, 2016)

The graph in Figure 1 shows trends in Overall Globalization (OGLO) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over time. The blue solid line represents OGLO on the left vertical axis, while the red dashed line represents GDP on the right vertical axis. The x-axis displays the years from 1973 to 2010.

From the graph we can observe a general upward trend in both globalization and economic growth, with some fluctuations. There is a noticeable increase in OGLO around the early 1990s, suggesting a period of intensified global integration. Meanwhile, GDP follows a more stable and steady rise. The correlation between these two indicators highlights the relationship between globalization and economic development.

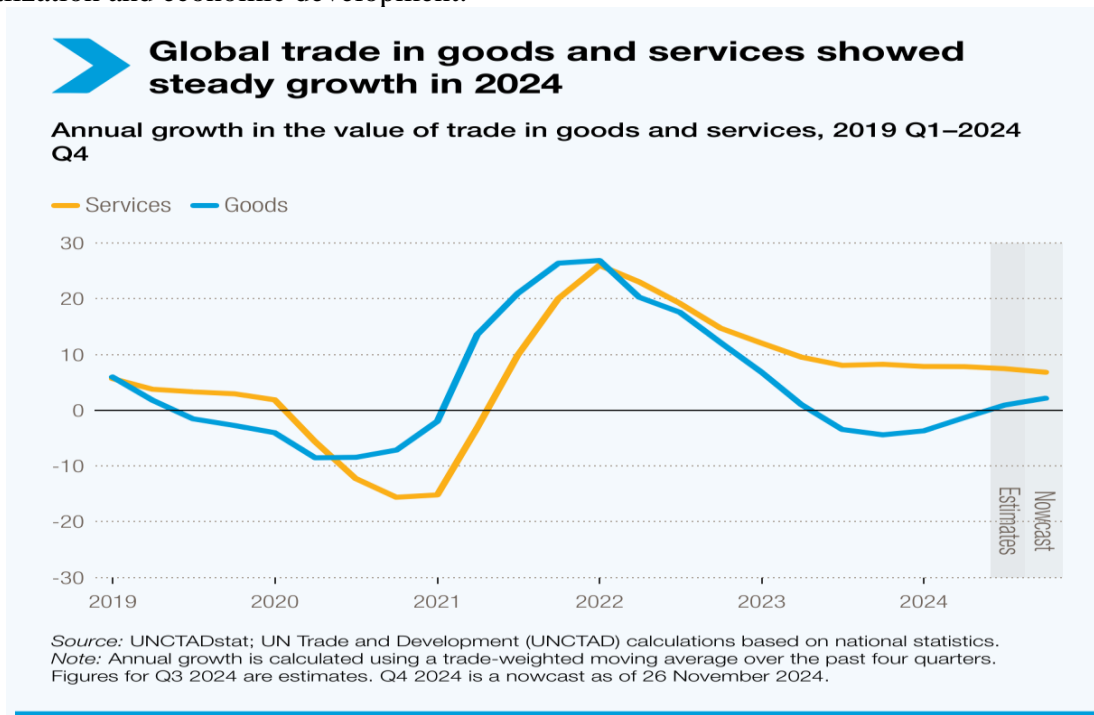


Figure 2. Global Trade Trends

(Source: UNCTADstat, 2024)

The chart emphasizes the contrasting growth dynamics between goods and services in global trade. While goods trade has faced volatility, services are on a more stable upward trajectory, reflecting broader economic recovery trends. This analysis can help businesses and policymakers understand where to focus their efforts for growth and development in the coming years.

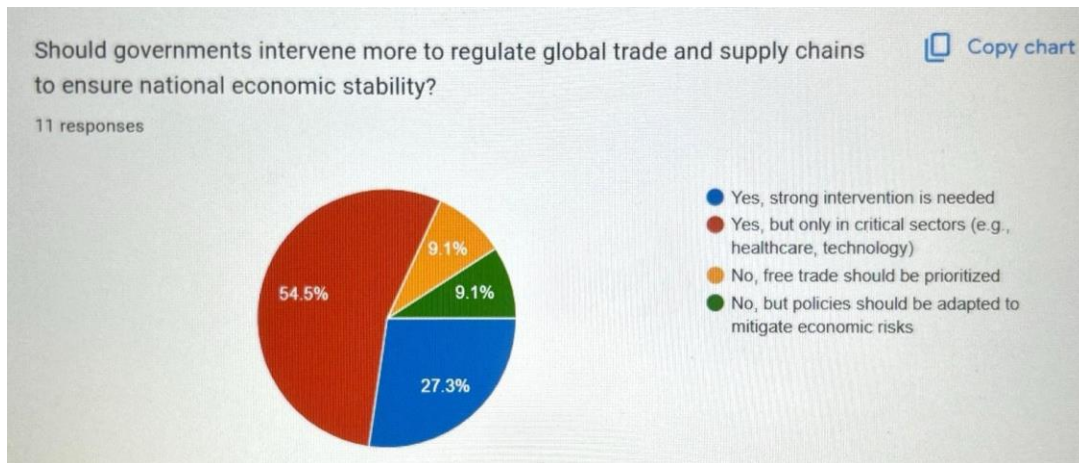


Figure 3. Global Trade and Supply Chains Regulations

(Source: Authors' own research, 2025)

After seeing the result from Figure 2, the author's survey asked its focus group if government should be more involved in regulating global trade and supply chains in order to ensure economic stability. Based on the pie chart above, more than half of the people answered that governments should intervene, but only in critical sectors like healthcare and technology. Followed by 27.3% that thought that governments should step in because strong intervention is needed. The rest of 18.2% of them distributed their votes equally between "No, free trade should be prioritized" and "No, but policies should be adapted to mitigate economic risks".

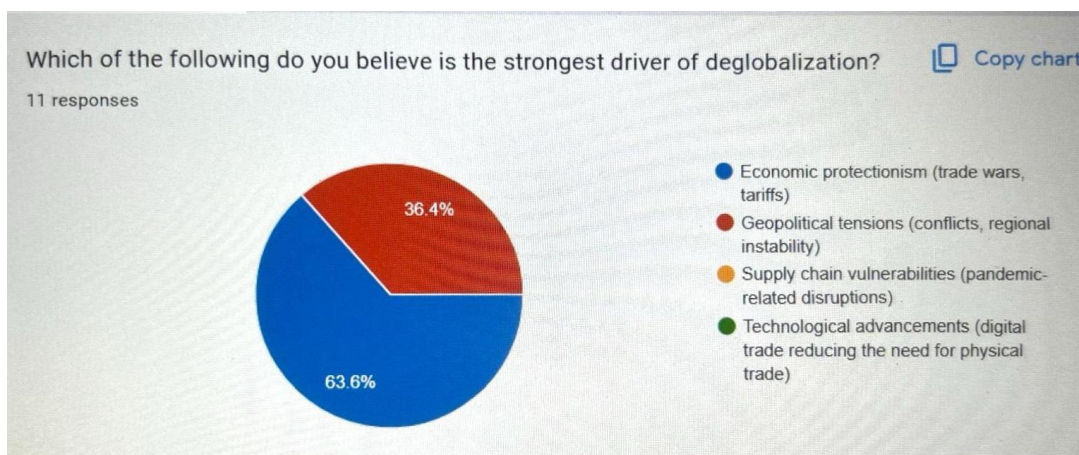


Figure 4. Key Drivers of Deglobalization

(Source: Authors' own research, 2025)

Although given multiple choices like supply chain vulnerabilities and technological advancements, most people chose that the strongest driver of deglobalization is economic

protectionism like trade wars and tariffs, adding up to an amount of 63.6%. The remaining of 36.4% chose the option of geopolitical tensions, conflicts and regional instability.

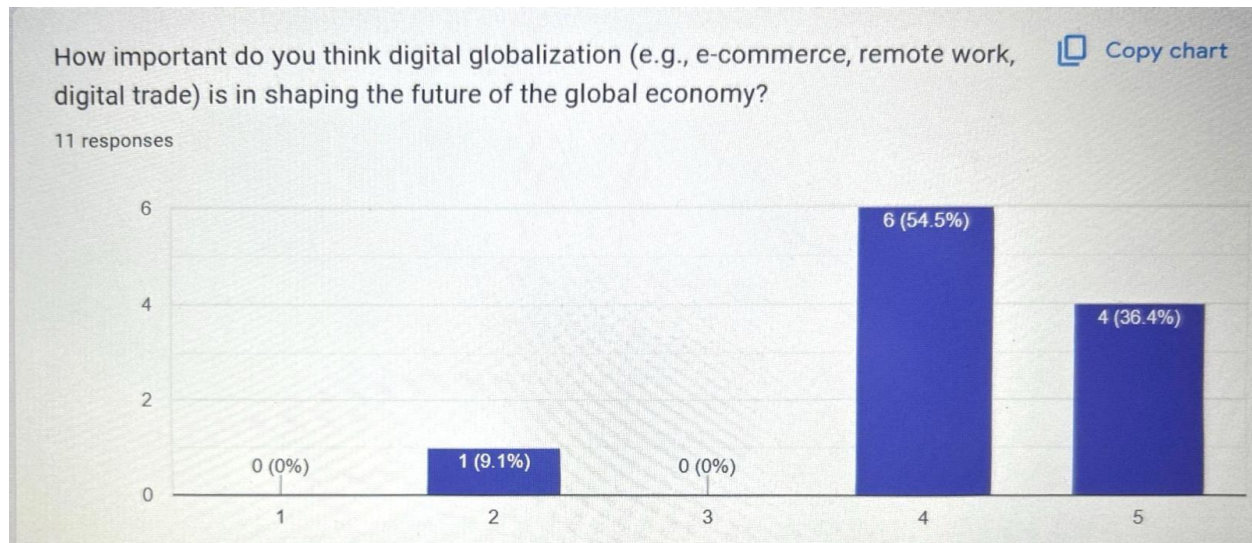


Figure 5. The Importance of Digital Globalization

(Source: Authors' own research, 2025)

When asked about the importance of e-commerce, remote work and digital trade in shaping the future of global economy, mostly everybody agreed or strongly agreed that these factors are of great importance. Only one person who answered to the survey disagreed with this statement.

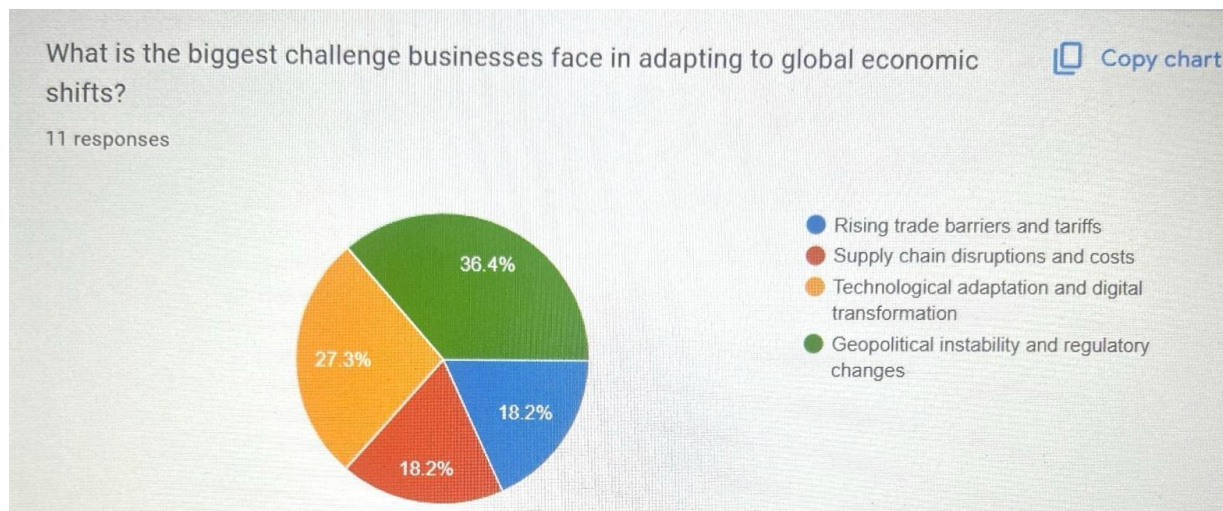


Figure 6. Challenges Businesses Face in Adapting to Global Economic Shifts

(Source: Authors' own research, 2025)

Finally, when asked about the biggest challenge businesses face in adapting to global economic shifts, the opinions were pretty divided. 36.4% said that the biggest challenge is geopolitical instability and regulatory changes, while 27.3% agreed that technological adaptation and digital transformation is a greater challenge. The rest thought that rising trade barriers and tariffs and supply chain disruptions and costs are equally great challenges.

Overall, the data and survey findings highlight the complex dynamics of globalization and economic growth. While global integration has driven progress, challenges like trade protectionism and supply chain vulnerabilities are shaping new economic realities. The shift toward digital trade and services suggests evolving priorities, and government intervention remains a debated but significant factor. As globalization continues to transform, balancing integration with resilience will be key to future economic stability.

Conclusion

This project has examined the delicate balance between globalization and deglobalization, analyzing how shifting economic, political and technological landscapes are reshaping global trade. While globalization has historically driven economic growth and innovation, recent challenges, including trade conflicts, geopolitical tensions and disruptions to supply chains, highlighting the limitations of a fully integrated global system.

The author's findings indicate that rather than a complete retreat from globalization, the future will likely involve a more strategic, flexible approach to global engagement. This includes embracing regional trade agreements, strengthening resilient supply chains and leveraging digital globalization to ensure growth and adaptability in a changing world.

Moreover, governments and businesses must adapt by focusing on policies that balance the benefits of open markets with the need for economic security and stability, particularly in critical sectors. As technological advances continue to shape global trade, future research should explore their role in further redefining these dynamics.

Ultimately, this project underscores the need for a carefully calibrated approach, one that integrates national priorities with global opportunities to foster sustainable economic growth and stability in an increasingly unpredictable global environment.

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