

# The Myth of Deglobalization

## *Definitional and Methodological Issues*

Didem Buhari

### ABSTRACT

This chapter first discusses the lack of consensus on how to define *deglobalization*, a term that is likely to become the buzzword of the mid-twenty-first century. There are at least three different accounts of deglobalization. First, deglobalization is defined as a series of processes that serve to “reverse” globalization. Second, deglobalization is celebrated as an emancipatory project decentering the West and aiming at reglobalization. Third, from a historical perspective, deglobalization is understood as a temporary phase or “wave” that is constitutive of global polity. Then, the chapter focuses on the popular indices and measurements of globalization that are employed to better grasp the current state of globalization and predict whether it will be replaced by deglobalization. While quantitative measurement and indices serve to provide the “big picture” in terms of comparing hundreds of nation-states across certain (economic, political, social, and technological) dimensions of globalizations, they attract much criticism, not only for their methodological nationalism, but also for overlooking the complex, nonmeasurable aspects of globalization.

### KEYWORDS

deglobalization, emancipatory project, globalization index, reglobalization

In the wake of the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, several nations sought to restrict trade and adopt stricter border controls against the global flow of people, services, and capital. Regional developments such as the Arab uprisings and the ongoing Syrian conflict since 2011 had global effects in terms of both reinforcing radical Islamist terrorism and causing a refugee crisis, which added fuel to the

rising xenophobia and far-right populist politics in Europe and elsewhere. Add to this the detrimental effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on economy, society, politics, and culture. Unable to easily reach the necessary quantity of masks and vaccines, many states chose to ban travel and reduce international cooperation and aid. Trust in international cooperation mechanisms declined. Accordingly, Brexit (the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union) was interpreted as an important symptom of deglobalization. States also fear the rise of criminal networks, nonstate armed groups and terrorist organizations that smoothly operate across borders without being easily tracked down and punished. The rising uncertainty around the liberal world order led to the revival of "strongman politics" in the form of new authoritarian leaders who override democratic constraints by emphasizing "Nation First!" From Russia's Vladimir Putin to America's Donald Trump, from Hungary's Viktor Orbán to India's Narendra Modi, strongman leaders in both Western and non-Western parts of the world oppose cosmopolitan ideals and undermine the global governance mechanisms of the post-World War II liberal world order. They tend to see domestic restrictions on the flow of people, goods, labor, and liberal ideas as justified. They openly blame globalization for domestic problems such as rising youth unemployment, socioeconomic malaise, health issues, and persevering wars and conflicts.

Even the United States—the main provider of security guarantees and economic incentives for the maintenance of the post-Cold War world order—fell prey to strongman politics under the Trump administration (2017–21). It was reluctant to endorse novel multilateral efforts for the consolidation of global regimes on environment, justice, and diplomacy (such as the International Criminal Court, and the Iran nuclear deal, among many others) and withdrew from the established ones such as the INF Treaty (US-Soviet arms control agreement of 1987). The U.S. retrenchment or abdication from world affairs due to both intervention fatigue associated with the post-2001 war on terror and the rise of challengers such as Russia and China as economic and political forces in the global system has led many to publicly claim that "globalization as we know it is over" (Sharma, 2016). In academic and policy circles, the concept of "deglobalization" is increasingly used to warn policy makers that there is a need for better grasping the emerging world order and the new threats and opportunities associated with it. However, there is a lack of consensus on how to define deglobalization. While the prefix *de-* hints at the "reversal" of globalization, several analyses refer to deglobalization to mean different things from diverse perspectives. They also provide different types of evidence for deglobalization. This chapter dwells on the definitional and methodological issues arising from the recently (re)popularized concept of deglobalization. The chapter's main argument is that defining deglobalization as the end of globalization is oversimplistic and reductionist. Deglobalization as "the end of the world as we know it" is a myth.

The chapter is organized as follows. First, it summarizes the three different accounts of deglobalization that can be frequently found in the academic literature, in the media, and in policy documents: deglobalization as the reversal of globalization, deglobalization as an emancipatory project, and deglobalization as a phase (or wave) that is constitutive of global polity. Second, it focuses on the main indices and measurements of globalization that are employed to better grasp the current state and future trajectories of globalization processes. Finally, it provides a summary of the sociologically informed criticisms against the way of understanding and explaining deglobalization.

#### MULTIPLE MEANINGS OF DEGLOBALIZATION

Barrie Axford (2013) explains that globalization is used to refer to three different phenomena: a process, a project, or a polity. Similarly, the concept of deglobalization implies various phenomena related to processes that seek to reverse global flows of people, goods, services, and ideas; to projects of emancipation from a Western-centric and capitalistic global order; and to cyclical phases of the global polity that inherently involves globalization and deglobalization “waves” from a historical perspective. While Walden F. Bello (2002) popularized deglobalization as an emancipatory project, the recent tendency is to understand deglobalization as “the curtailing of globalization *tout court*” (Steger & James, 2020: 190). Hence, the following part starts with the definition of deglobalization as “reversing globalization by returning to just doing things in unconnected places” (Lechner, 2009: 52). It will then discuss the account of deglobalization as a project and, finally, as a constitutive phase of global polity.

##### *Deglobalization as Reversing Globalization*

This radical and pessimistic account of deglobalization predicts the end of globalization. In academic and policy circles, it is increasingly used to argue that globalization is eventually coming to an end due to various social, economic, and political crises that force nation-states to close their borders. The argument is that the reactionary backlash reinforces the global resurgence of parochialist worldviews that seek to end globalization once and for all. Deglobalization is roughly defined as the “opposite” of globalization or “globalization going in reverse” (Piet-erse, 2020: 235). If globalization is “the process of increasing interdependence and integration toward a world society,” deglobalization signifies “the process of diminishing interdependence and integration between certain units around the world, typically nation states” (Kim, Li, & Lee, 2020: 83–84).

Deglobalization requires active efforts by national governments to reverse the already existing global networks and institutions through “the reconstruction of national barriers to trade, investment and migration; the reshoring and shortening of supply chains; and movement toward exclusive regional trade blocs and

great-power spheres of influence” (Arase, 2020: 4). It entails “a reduction of global exchange and a reassertion of national control over commerce, politics and social affairs” at the expense of global governance mechanisms such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and the World Bank (Ripsman, 2021: 1328). Accordingly, “Deglobalization is a movement towards a less connected world, characterized by powerful nation states, local solutions, and border controls rather than global institutions, treaties, and free movement” (Kornprobst & Wallace, 2021).

Accordingly, deglobalization involves a series of processes that reverse deterritorialization by reinforcing territorial segmentation in the global polity and helping states regain their sovereignty over national territories. Moreover, it entails the reversal of the cross-national functional integration in certain sectors where the flows of capital and services had already reached a significant level since the end of the Cold War. This does not only mean the reduction in the level of international trade and foreign investments globally. It also means the rise of “parallel orders” (Benedikter, 2022: 8) led by rising power China, which for instance aims to replace the U.S. dollar with Chinese yen as the global currency in trade.

Furthermore, deglobalization reverses the social and political stratification in the current global polity. Many rising powers in the non-Western world contest the legitimacy of the liberal world order and its global governance mechanisms such as the United Nations, among others. They suggest that the world order and its institutions tend to reflect Western interests and norms, which also makes it easy for Western states to enjoy certain privileges and impose “double standards” on other nations. For instance, during the George W. Bush administration, the United States bypassed the UN and formed its “coalition of the willing” in order to attack Saddam’s Iraq. Yet, it condemns Russian and other states’ international interventions for violating the multilateral order led by the UN. For their part, many African states protested the International Criminal Court due to its inability to penalize big Western states.

Besides, during the Trump administration, the United States also challenged several security and economic arrangements of the liberal world order. It signaled its interest in abdication from world affairs to both its allies and adversaries. The United States’ military withdrawal from Afghanistan, its failure to effectively respond to the terrorist attacks against the Saudi oil storage facility (Aramco) and the Russian aggression against Ukraine, and its criticisms of NATO led many of its allies and foes to think that U.S. hegemony was in decline. French president Emmanuel Macron commented to the international media that the United States was as threatening for European and world security as Russia and China and had rendered NATO “brain-dead” by preferring pragmatic, transactional, and bilateral dialogue over Syria and many other crises, undermining NATO’s strategic decision-making mechanisms (*The Economist*, 2019). The deepening transatlantic rift between Europe and the United States over many foreign and security issues such

as the relationship with Russia, China, Iran, and Israel provokes debates in Europe about the emerging need for an autonomous European army and defense industry. Overall, deglobalization refers to the dissolution of the global and Western-led governance mechanisms and institutions that sought to maintain stability and order in the post-Cold War era.

While some believe that deglobalization is a structural phenomenon that is “here to stay” (Novy, 2022: 76; Hammes, 2019), others find it a temporary phase. Many analysts emphasize that globalization has visibly “slowed down” in the last decade but this does not mean the end of globalization (Olivie & Gracia, 2020). Sociopolitical, economic, and cultural processes of globalization are not likely to be easily reversed (Steger & James, 2019). Frank J. Lechner (2009: 52) finds “reversing globalization by returning to just doing things in unconnected places—‘deglobalization’—hard to imagine.” Hence, deglobalization seems to be a limited and temporary phenomenon in the twenty-first century (Karunaratne, 2012). An alternative definition of deglobalization considers the latter as a project of emancipation decentering the West in the global polity.

#### *Deglobalization as Decentering Globalization*

A Filipino sociologist, Walden Bello (2002), popularized the term *deglobalization* as a political project of emancipation against Western neoliberalism underlying the current trajectory of globalization. This radical and optimistic account criticizes the imposition of Western norms, actors, and institutions as universal standards and sees deglobalization as a panacea. Here, deglobalization is presented as an emancipatory project to save the nation, the state, and the individual from the pernicious effects of globalization that reinforce inequalities, deprivation, and violence across nations, regions, classes, and people.

For Bello, deglobalization means “the re-empowerment of the local and the national” (2002: 114). Criticizing the current form of globalization as reinforcing poverty, discrimination, inequalities, and environmental problems, Bello suggests that deglobalization can bring an alternative system where elite-driven and transnational companies-led global projects can be replaced by people-oriented democratic policies that enhance social solidarity, equity, and security (Bello, 2002: 114). Similarly, Neo-Marxist accounts of globalization criticize the “Davos spirit” that implies the predominance of top-down elite projects led by the Western capitalist classes in determining the global rules of economic, political, and social interactions (Curry, 2017).

From a non-Western and postcolonialist perspective, deglobalization as a project would bring the decline of the Western norms and power that not only shaped the globalization processes in the post-Cold War era but also hijacked the dominant social and political imaginaries (see, for instance, Elmandjra, 2000). Writing for the 2021 special issue of *International Affairs* on deglobalization, Navnita Chadha Behera suggests that deglobalization “opens up a realm of new possibilities

to challenge the western hegemony in knowledge production” by giving voice to those whose past and “ways of knowing” had been “buried” by Western-centric ontologies that shaped globalization (2021: 1580). Similarly, from a feminist perspective, globalization is denounced for reinforcing gender injustices. Hence, deglobalization is seen as an attempt to “give voice” to the underrepresented and disadvantaged actors, if not the “subaltern.”

Yet, Bello and other followers of the deglobalization project do not necessarily foresee or advocate the end of globalization. Rather than disentangling from the international economy, deglobalization is about diminishing dependence on foreign investment and production for export and producing for the local market with domestic resources (Bello, 2002: 113). In fact, the movement of “deglobalization” observed in the national economy is likely to coexist with a movement towards constructing a “pluralist system of global economic governance” (Bello, 2002: 112). Therefore, deglobalization involves both a deconstruction of the post-1945 global governance mechanisms and the reconstruction of a more inclusive and legitimate governance through “globalization from below.” Deglobalization cannot restore the status quo ante in the sense that it is not possible to return to a spatiotemporal context where and when globalization did not exist. It is not possible to unthink or unlearn global social imaginaries.

Hence, deglobalization as a project aims for a reformed globalization or “reglobalization” (Paul, 2021). “As a program, re-globalization denotes attempts at reform, revision, or renewal of ‘classical’ globalization since the 1990s” (Benedikter, 2022: 17). Reglobalization is the (1) refining, (2) recontextualizing and reframing, (3) reforming, (4) redefining, and (5) revisioning of globalization (Benedikter & Kofler, 2019). Accordingly, reglobalization involves a double-movement: the rethinking of the Western-centric world order due to rising multipolarity and the “redefinition of the West” in both economic, political, and cultural terms (Benedikter, 2021: 78). An advocacy of deglobalization without reglobalization would raise questions about how “poor countries would benefit from focusing on the local market and de-emphasizing growth” (Lechner, 2009: 278). Many scholars who criticize the current state of globalization for creating global injustices are not merely deglobalizers, but they seek “reglobalization” in a more humane, just, and fair way (Lechner, 2009: 279).

Finally, there are at least two different types of deglobalization projects: “deglobalization from the right” and “from the left” (Bishop & Payne, 2021). Both of them seek a halt to the “‘unholy’ alliance between neoliberal realism and left-liberal cosmopolitan idealism that shaped the self-understanding of Western-led globalization over the three decades 1990–2020” (Benedikter, 2022: 11–12)—albeit with different motivations. While rightist deglobalization entails a regressive neonationalist trend of deinternationalization and renationalization, leftist deglobalization is progressive in terms of building, for instance, a “green state” (Bishop & Payne, 2021: 8). Accordingly, while some deglobalizers call for the

return of the local and economic nationalism, others suggest regionalism. In this sense, deglobalization as a project covers various anti- and alter-globalist visions that aim to decenter the West in the global polity. The following part explores the accounts of deglobalization as a temporary phase or “wave” that is constitutive of the global polity.

### *Waves of Deglobalization*

It is often thought that deglobalization is a reactionary and corrective movement against the pernicious effects of globalization. It is therefore an antiglobalization backlash. Its origins date back to the 1999 Seattle protests of the World Trade Organization (Ripsman, 2021). The main argument is that throughout history, hyper-globalization has brought about counterphases of deglobalization where states began to look inward and restrict cross-national flows (Karunaratne, 2012; Holton, 2011: 228). Strong globalization “carries the seeds of its destruction” as it leads national governments to limit their internationalization (van Bergeijk, 2019). For Geoffrey Jones (2005), the globalization wave of the 1840s was followed by deglobalization waves in the wake of the 1929 Great Depression, and then the Second World War and the Cold War. In particular, in the 1930s nation-states attempted to limit imports in order to increase domestic production, which was considered an important symptom of deglobalization (Hillebrand, 2010). Jonathan Friedman (2014: 518) concurs that the world witnessed economic and cultural deglobalization from 1920 to 1945.

Economic historians tend to divide the history of globalization into various “waves.” For instance, Neil Dias Karunaratne (2012: 374) provides a list of waves of globalization (1870–1914, colonization-led; 1946–73, free trade-led; and 1980–2009, capital mobility-driven) and deglobalization (1914–30, protectionism; 1939–46, interwar) since the nineteenth century. According to Hermann Schwengel (2006), an economic recovery after “the deglobalization of the world wars” began in 1973 and it was followed by a political globalization phase after the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989. This contributed to the consolidation of globalization as a “core concept” in the late-twentieth-century social imaginary (James & Steger, 2014: 423).

The world-system has certainly become more integrated in the latest wave of globalisation. The current high degree of economic integration is already higher than the peak in the 19th century, but we should also remember that waves of globalisation have always been followed by periods of deglobalisation in which long-distance interaction decreases, and this is likely to also be true of the future even though most analysts find this difficult to imagine. (Chase-Dunn & Lawrence, 2011: 144)

In a 2014 interview given to a special issue of *Globalizations* edited by Manfred B. Steger and Paul James, Jonathan Friedman argued that the world was heading towards another deglobalization phase in terms of a “decline in connectivity.” For Friedman, such periods of deglobalization are produced by the changes in

the global system “due to hegemonic decline and the fragmentation that it generates” (Friedman, 2014). A recent wave of deglobalization in the post–Cold War era has been triggered by the United States’ retrenchment and its geostrategic and geo-economic competition with the rising powers in Asia as well as the legitimacy crisis of the post-1945 liberal world order. In addition, the 2008 World Economic Crisis, the rise of populism, the U.S. retrenchment, Brexit, the deepening of the transatlantic rift, trade wars, and the COVID-19 pandemic can be seen as accelerators of the current wave of deglobalization (van Bergeijk, 2019).

Attempts at historical periodization of deglobalization remain flawed due to the multifaceted and complex nature of globalization. For instance, Joseph S. Nye Jr. (2009) reminds readers that while the post–Cold War era saw the rise of economic globalization, there was simultaneously deglobalization in the military sector due to the reduction of troop deployments abroad. Similarly, Florian Haelg (2020) notes that after the 2008 financial crisis, trade integration declined and economic globalization stagnated whereas social, political, and financial globalization progressed. It is therefore necessary to take more seriously the multidimensional and complex nature of globalization while attempting to measure the level of deglobalization today.

#### METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO DEGLOBALIZATION

The current discourses on deglobalization are endorsed by positivist approaches that tend to reduce globalization to its economic dimension (Holton, 2011: 229). Measuring the decline in the world trade and capital flows and stressing the rise of protectionism, currency wars, and sanctions, many claim that deglobalization is looming on the horizon. For instance, Hag-Min Kim et al. (2020) claim that deglobalization can be estimated by the decline in the share of import in a country’s gross domestic product (GDP). They particularly focus on the increase in the import tariff and nontariff barriers imposed by the developed countries (Kim et al., 2020: 85).

In order to measure deglobalization, many scholars focus on the decline in the levels of trade interdependence, capital flows, and migration (Hillebrand, 2010: 14). World exports of goods as share of world GDP and foreign direct investment as share of world GDP are therefore important empirical indicators of deglobalization (Karunaratne, 2012). The withdrawal of multinational companies from the global market can also be counted as reflecting deglobalization (Hammes, 2019: 13). An increase in the regulatory restrictions reported by the OECD Services Trade Restrictiveness Index—such as limits on foreign equity, nationality of board of directors, licensing requirements, cross-border mergers and acquisitions, capital controls, work permit requirements, entry visa quotas, duration of stay for foreign persons providing services—is used as an indicator of deglobalization in the trade sector (BIS Papers, 2018). However, economic data give mixed

results about deglobalization (James, 2017). Furthermore, economic accounts of deglobalization “are too narrow from a sociological point of view” as they overlook “complex cultural, political and social exchanges” (Raab et al., 2008: 597).

The literature on deglobalization points to trade imbalances, unemployment rate, trade conflicts, and rising populism as the main drivers of deglobalization (Kim et al., 2020: 83–84). In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the limitations of movements of people, goods, and services, which led to the further shrinking of the global economy (Kim et al., 2020: 84). Investigating 169 countries, the DHL Global Connectedness Index (2018) emphasizes that even though there is a certain increase in the international flows after the 2008 World Economic Crisis, national barriers to trade, crackdowns on foreign investments, and resistance against immigration remain alarming (Altman, Ghemawat, & Bastian, 2019).

While the DHL Global Connectedness Index focuses on connectivity rather than globalization as a whole, there are several indices and measurements of globalization used in the literature: the KOF Index of Globalization (Gygli et al., 2018), the A.T. Kearney / Foreign Policy Globalization Index (Kearny / Foreign Policy, 2003), the Centre for the Study of Globalization and Regionalization Index (Lockwood & Redoano, 2005), the Maastricht Globalization Index (MGI) (Figge & Martens, 2014), and the New Globalization Index (NGI) (Vujakovic, 2010). Economic indicators that are frequently used in various indices on globalization include: exports or trade, Income payments and receipts, capital and portfolio flows, foreign direct investment, and other financial flows and reserves. As regards the flow of people, a decline in international migrants, students, remittances, travel, and tourism can be considered as a slowing-down of globalization. Flow of information through communication technologies is another aspect of globalization that is covered by many indices. Hence, the changes in international telephone traffic, Internet users and hosts, Internet bandwidth, and digital flows (social media and cross-border e-commerce) are studied in order to better grasp the current phase of deglobalization. In addition, technological innovations and trade in cultural goods and personal services (based on, for instance, international trademarks) are covered by several indices on (de)globalization.

Since 2002, the KOF Globalization Index provides data on globalization that covers almost every country in the world from 1970 to 2016.<sup>1</sup> Introduced by Dreher (2006), the index was updated (Dreher, Gaston, & Martens, 2008) and then revised (Gygli et al., 2018). Its revised version measures *de facto* and *de jure* globalization with a focus on the economic, sociocultural, and political dimensions of globalization. It criticizes the measurements of globalization that reduce the complex process into its economic dimension.

Single indicators, often reflecting openness, such as trade as a percentage of GDP, are frequently used as a proxy for globalization. Globalization is, however, a multifaceted concept that encompasses much more than openness to trade and capital flows. It also includes citizens of different countries communicating with each other and

exchanging ideas and information, or governments working together to tackle political problems of global reach. Consequently, scholars need to account for manifold facets of globalization. (Gygli et al., 2018: 2)

Political and military dimensions of globalization are also taken into consideration by certain indices. For instance, the A.T. Kearney / Foreign Policy Globalization Index assesses changes in nation-states' political engagement by looking, for example, at their membership in international organizations, their ratification of multi-lateral treaties, and their contribution to the budget and the missions of the United Nations. Moreover, the numbers of foreign embassies and of international nongovernmental organizations are taken as empirical indicators of political globalization. Finally, military globalization is often measured by the changes in the deployment of military force and contribution to the UN peacekeeping operations.

In addition, Iliana Olivie and Ignacio Molina (2011) introduced the Elcano Global Presence Index, which measures 120 countries' international projection in terms of economic, military, and soft (migration, tourism, culture, sports, information, education, science, technology, development cooperation) presence. They conclude that "the world is not experiencing a process of de-globalization. Globalization has slowed down since the beginning of the decade but has retrenched in only two years (-0.7% in 2014 and -1.4% in 2015) and is now recovering" (Olivie & Gracia, 2020: 996). They suggest that economic globalization has slowed down in the last decade but what is striking is the change in the nature of globalization: the soft dimension of globalization has become the main driver of the current phase of globalization (Olivie & Gracia, 2020: 997).

An alternative index is Marcel Raab et al.'s (2008) GlobalIndex, which seeks to add sociological factors about the cross-national convergence of norms and values such as human rights. It aims to cover economic, sociotechnological, political, and cultural dimensions of globalization at the same time. GlobalIndex criticizes the KOF Globalization Index for neglecting the proxy indicators of sociotechnological globalization such as the international spread of landlines and cell phones and of the English language as the lingua franca, as well as the import and export of books or periodicals (Raab et al., 2008: 606). The revised version of the KOF Globalization Index is better in this regard. Yet, it is still found deficient in measuring cultural globalization. While it includes McDonald's and IKEA franchises as proxy indicators of cultural globalization, it fails to include other indicators related to cross-national convergence of norms and values, including "the right to education, its importance as a factor of production, the spread of human rights, gender equality, the increase in urbanization and the increasing tertiarization as globally shared values and standards" (Raab et al., 2008: 606).

Moreover, Randolph Kluver and Wayne Fu's (2004) Cultural Globalization Index aims to measure the spread of cultural values and ideas. Yet, they resort to the imports and exports of books, brochures, newspapers, and periodicals as proxy indicators of cultural globalization because other possible indicators lack

systematic data sources (Martens et al., 2015: 222). Consequently, their analysis emphasizes the centrality of English-speaking advanced countries in cultural globalization, at the expense of the non-Western dimension of cultural globalization (Martens et al., 2015: 222).

In addition to a Western-centric bias, the arbitrary and subjective choices underlying the construction of such indices have already been denounced by several scholars:

First, a judgement is made about the 'relevant variables' that should enter the index. Second, quantitative measures of these variables are made—here, data constraints are important. Third, these quantitative measures are normalised, to deal with the problem that different variables are typically measured in different units and therefore may yield wildly different numerical values . . . Fourth, a weighted sum of the normalised variables is calculated, which gives a numerical score for each country. (Lockwood, 2004: 507)

It is difficult to leave aside one's personal, cultural, and other values, which may insert bias in the construction of a globalization index (Figge & Martens, 2014). Moreover, composite indicators used by these indices are only estimates of complex phenomena related to globalization (Martens et al., 2015: 219). A priori decisions of the researcher about what dimensions of globalization will be studied and prioritized directly affect the analysis. In particular, the tendency to measure the changes in the level of global connectivity should be complemented with an in-depth analysis of global consciousness (Caselli, 2008; Martens et al., 2015; Robertson & Buhari-Gulmez, 2016). Yet, how to measure one's consciousness of one's global existence remains a challenge (Martens et al., 2015: 223).

The Kearney / Foreign Policy Globalization index measures outcomes of globalization rather than the main policy towards global interactions (Lockwood, 2004). For instance, rather than using the value of total trade as a percentage of GDP to measure trade openness, focusing on trade policy such as tariff and nontariff barriers to trade imposed by national governments makes more sense because outcomes are determined by a nation's specific economic, demographic, and geographical characteristics (Lockwood, 2004: 510). Yet, national policies on noneconomic aspects of globalization cannot be quantitatively measured (Lockwood, 2004: 511). It is therefore necessary to develop interdisciplinary studies that adopt mixed methodology reconciling quantitative and qualitative research on globalization (Martens et al., 2015).

There is also a need to go beyond methodological nationalism, which limits a better understanding of globalization as a multiscalar process that takes place not only at nation-state level but also in various territorial (e.g., city), supraterritorial (e.g., planet), and nonspatial (e.g., class and gender) realms (Martens et al., 2015: 225). There have been certain attempts to go beyond methodological nationalism in globalization indices by introducing the Person-Based Globalisation Index

(Caselli, 2013) and the Global Cities Index by A.T. Kearney (2018). Marco Caselli admits that it is difficult to operationalize several of the themes that his proposed Person-Based Globalization Index seeks to cover—individual resources and ability to operate in the global scenario; mobility in global domains; sense of belonging to global community; exposure to and participation in global flows of mass communication; and degree of global consciousness (Caselli, 2013).

For its part, Kearney's Global Cities Index seeks to measure the degree of global engagement of 156 cities across five dimensions: business activity, human capital, information exchange, cultural experience, and political engagement. The Index focuses on factors such as the city's market dynamics, education levels, information access, culture and entertainment options, and presence of international civic organizations. Last but not least, many of the capital, trade, and people flows today take place within regions rather than between regions (Hammes, 2019: 19). Hence, deglobalization means fewer interregional but more regional interactions. Based on diverse historical backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and institutional settings, regions are differently and unevenly affected by globalization. The measurements of deglobalization need to take into account the analytical distinction between regionalism (or internationalization) and globalization (Martens et al., 2015: 219). However, data on alternative territorial units such as persons, cities, and regions remain scarce due to the prevailing state-centrism in determining the main unit of analysis (Martens et al., 2015: 221). Therefore, the question of deglobalization remains a serious methodological challenge for those who want to capture the complex and multidimensional character of globalization.

#### IN LIEU OF CONCLUSION

This chapter has summarized the main tendencies in defining and measuring deglobalization today. As a project, deglobalization is far from bringing equality and prosperity to the disadvantaged communities. Given the uncertainty around the effects of deglobalization in economic, social, and political terms, it is not easy to consider deglobalization as a savior of the nation-state. Several scholars contest the optimism about deglobalization:

We do not believe that deglobalization will necessarily bring about a more equitable global order, irrespective of whether this notion refers to the undoing of all or most forms of international cooperation, or to the abandonment of the multilateral trading system in favour of bilateral trade relations whereby the most powerful states are best able to secure their interests. (Hannah, Roberts, & Trommer, 2021: 71)

Besides, deglobalization does not necessarily mean localization or local self-sufficiency. It accelerates the emergence and consolidation of regional blocs at the expense of national sovereignty and local authorities. It is also misleading to use deglobalization interchangeably with decolonization or the “decentering” of

the West. Deglobalization cannot be relegated to anti-Western or antiglobalist phenomena. Jarrod Hayes and Katja Weber (2021) suggest that deglobalization is more about changing the operational environment for international actors than reversing globalization. Deglobalization is often thought of together with reglobalization.

The present degree of interdependence of world technology and production precludes deglobalization or complete local self-sufficiency. The system is fragile and could collapse at any time. A collapse would bring misery even deeper and more widespread than is now experienced by the most poverty-stricken. Reglobalization, not deglobalization, is required, and it can be accomplished in a way that will provide for considerable local control, including autonomy for Indigenous peoples (Bray & Bray, 2002: 118).

Sociologically informed critiques of the prevailing accounts of deglobalization emphasize the inherently complex and uneven character of the globalization processes. In this context, while globalization has slowed down in some sectors, it has accelerated in other realms. “Deglobalization could well be occurring on some levels, while re-globalization intensifies on others” (Featherstone, 2020: 160). For instance, Steger and James (2019) emphasize that “disembodied globalization”—in terms of a flow of ideas, electronic texts, audiovisual materials, and digital currencies across national borders—is accelerating, whereas both “embodied globalization”—the flow of peoples, including workers, migrants, and refugees—and “object-extended globalization” (circulation of goods) are increasingly facing national restrictions. Hayes and Weber (2021: 1472) report that:

With respect to the physical technological component of globalization, deglobalization is largely not occurring. The physical technological underpinnings of globalization—mass air travel, containerized shipping, large-scale infrastructure projects (dams, railroads, ports, palm oil plantations) enabled by digitized and globalized financial flows, the ICT revolution—are not diminishing. Indeed, the growth in internet connectivity continues, increasing the potential for further expansion of the intensity and scope of globalized processes.

Referring to the concept of “physical deglobalization” (Livesey, 2017: 171), Steger and James (2020: 196) remind us that “the flipside of ‘deglobalization’ is ‘reglobalization,’ that is, a profound rearrangement of its constituent formations that move at different speeds and at different levels of intensity.” It is therefore crucial to remember that globalization is a “self-limiting” process in the sense that it involves both integration and fragmentation or the “universalization of the particular” and the “particularization of the universal” at the same time (Robertson, 1995, 2018). In this regard, it is plausible to argue that globalization inherently involves deglobalizing dynamics, if not “waves” that constitute the global polity. Hence, “deglobalization and globalization are both global systemic phenomena” (Friedman, 2014: 524). Accordingly, from a critical perspective, defining deglobalization as the end or reversal of globalization is an exaggeration, if not a myth.

## NOTE

1. [www.kof.ethz.ch/globalisation](http://www.kof.ethz.ch/globalisation).

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