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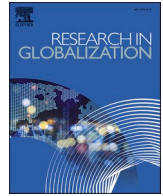
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ABSTRACT

Claims that ‘globalization is dead’ are premature, though some commentators refer to post-globalization and recognise various developments as signalling a move away from some of the globalized ‘certainties’ of recent decades. Established trends in world trade, international relationships and the broad ‘world order’ are facing significant challenges that are creating both threats and opportunities for global forces. Using material from *Research in Globalization* and elsewhere, this paper draws upon recent literature on the trajectory followed by globalization to consider the future. In particular, it draws upon analyses of recent events that are shaping that future, specifically the various responses to the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing Russia–Ukraine conflict. The pandemic revealed a certain fragility to globalization not only in terms of the lack of ability of production processes to deliver medical supplies in timely fashion but also the focus on national responses rather than co-ordinated global actions. In addition, the invasion of one sovereign European nation by another has raised questions about the existing global world order, raising prospects for increased regional political groupings and challenges to the so-called rules-based order that has supported globalization. In examining these and other challenges to globalization, the paper concludes with observations regarding how new research and writing on globalization can be captured by papers in *Research in Globalization*, with opportunities for those working in numerous disciplines to contribute to debates on the demise, reshaping or wholesale transformation of globalization. Possibilities for future foci are suggested.

1. Introduction: The demise of globalization?

In his book *The Levelling*, Michael O’Sullivan (2019), an investment strategist and former Princeton-based economist, argues that globalization is dead and that there needs to be a new world order. He attributes the ‘death’ to a slowing in global economic growth and an increased awareness of the negative aspects of globalization, notably wealth inequality, the dominance of multinationals and the dispersion of global supply chains. In particular, he views the lack of a co-ordinated response to the global financial crisis of 2007/8 as a major contributor to globalization’s demise. This argument views the efforts of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in controlling debt and reigning in attempts by state banks to pump money into economies as inadequate and ultimately embracing their own decline into growing irrelevance. O’Sullivan ponders the contribution of China to deglobalization, asserting that China itself is becoming less globalized and insular, certainly in terms of its controls over Western companies doing business within China. He sees a future dominated by regional trading blocs and large ‘poles’ in a multi-polar world in which the United States, China, the European Union and potentially India are the poles, with numerous trade-based tensions as flows of people, ideas, and capital become less global and more regional.

The evidence of growing economic disparities gives more succour to existing critics of globalization and perhaps widens its ‘discontents’ to coin Stiglitz (2002). Pre-Covid, while it is possible to identify multiple

benefits of globalization (Robinson, 2019), it was clear that globalization had not helped to reduce poverty in many countries, that fluctuating markets continued to give rise to economic instability, and the transition from communism to a market economy in eastern Europe brought wealth to a few but changed little for many others, most notably in Russia where poverty grew.

To set against this ‘discontent,’ China’s embracing of globalization by becoming manufacturer to the world and extending its internal welfare net has dramatically cut poverty there. Being connected to the rest of the world by being freed from the oppression of communism has also hugely benefitted the Eastern European members of the European Union. In contrast, the ongoing power imbalance between the West and many developing countries has led to inequities that invariably maintain or exacerbate the wealth gap between the rich West and the Global South, not aided by the policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Stiglitz is especially scathing about how the changes in policy of these two institutions since the early 1980s (which he terms the Washington Consensus) have had major negative consequences for the Global South. However, White (2021) reminds us that we all experience globalization in different ways and hence he talks about the role of human nature as part of the process of forging global connectedness. Yet, he speculates that human nature may in some way be antithetical to globalization, or at least the ‘discontents’ are more than just concerns over social and economic issues. A counter to this is to observe human behaviour worldwide that has connected so many people via social

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media and more specialized links, e.g., computer gaming and the latest digital sensations, such as TikTok. Indeed, the Covid-19 pandemic has hastened the shift to a globalized digital economy, with ever faster connectivity being generated and other internet and computing-based developments occurring, e.g., 5G networks, cashless transactions, Wi-Fi 6, multi-cloud and 'edge' computing solutions, chatbots, fully autonomous vehicles, and increased investment in machine-learning, artificial intelligence, and both augmented and artificial reality (Anthony, 2022).

There is also the issue of glocalization or John Urry's (2003, p.84) argument that "the global cannot exist without the local and that the relationship between them is symbiotic, unstable and irreversible." Thus, the local shapes the global and in turn the global shapes the local, as eloquently demonstrated in Robertson's (2014) examination of European glocalization in the context of globalization. How does this inter-relationship, this interdependence, play out if globalization is in retreat? Do we get a more polarised world as some contend? And is nationalism a factor eroding shared experience by chipping away at the homogenization of national practices and structures? One dimension that needs to be considered when examining glocalization is the notion of global culture, which often tends to be overlooked in favour of an emphasis on the economic (Robertson, 2018).

Indeed, Robertson (2020, p. 25) refers to globalization as a 'self-undoing' process by which, I think he means, in part, that it is globalization's many manifestations in local contexts that render globalization as a 'moveable feast', mutating and shifting its character as it is reshaped by local characteristics. He elaborates on this by referring to a quote from Inglis (2008) who refers to "an ongoing mix of the global with the local." However, Robertson (2021) stresses the significance of connectivity between different parts of the world as the impacts of both climate change and Covid-19 are felt globally, though in different ways in different locales. Hence, context ... the glocal ... is important. The need for systematic study of this inter-relationship between global and local is stressed by Steger and James (2019), while Robertson prefers glocalization as a better descriptor than globalization to describe much global discourse.

O'Sullivan's mixture of trend analysis and anecdotal observation is an interesting, thought-provoking read, strongest when talking about the debt crisis, weakest when asserting the death of something that on numerous indicators is clearly vibrantly alive. Indeed, O'Sullivan's recipe resorts to looking back to lessons from the English Civil War (when the Levellers referred to in his book title were a political movement embracing popular sovereignty, extended suffrage, equality before the law and religious tolerance). Ironically, the Levellers used the communication tools of the day, namely pamphlets, petitions and vocal appeals, which if translated into today's equivalent would embrace the likely most long-lasting aspects of globalization, such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, emails, Zoom, Teams and Skype. Globalization is not just how the financial world operates or trading patterns or emigration, but a concatenation of linkages and networks that can both unite and separate various groups of people in different parts of the globe. It has winners and losers, but reports of its death may be premature.

This paper considers various contributions to the supposed future (or death) of globalization before suggesting an agenda for *Research in Globalization* in terms of themes that may emerge or will be pursued over the next five years as the journal grows and becomes more established on the academic scene. The discussion draws explicitly on papers published in the first five volumes of the journal. The intention herein is to focus on two major issues that have challenged the trajectory of globalization while suggesting the ongoing potential for globalizing tendencies to challenge the arguments presented by O'Sullivan and others.

2. Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic

O'Sullivan's book appeared just before the outbreak of Covid-19 in Wuhan, China, which rapidly transmuted into a worldwide pandemic.

The policies adopted to contain and dissipate Covid have been cited as further contributors to the decline of globalization, with possibly long-lasting ramifications. For example, Shrestha et al. (2020) argue that the inter-connectedness of the world, inherent in globalization, enabled the virus to spread and mutate, so that globalization itself emerged as an essential mechanism of disease transmission, as was also the case with the earlier spread of the Hong Kong flu pandemic. Indeed, how to better manage the 'threat' posed by globalization is one strand of research that has emerged after the first few waves of Covid (see also Goldin and Mariathasan, 2014). However, it is in seeking to deal with ways to curb the pandemic that globalization has been threatened, though we can find contradictory interpretations of Covid's impacts on globalization.

The immediate economic threat came via the lockdown measures introduced to control transmission of the disease between people, thereby reducing economic growth whilst introducing more teleworking and telecommuting but disrupting production and supply chains and cancelling certain operations. Restrictions on travel curtailed air traffic, eliminated tourism, and cancelled events (with the 2020 Summer Olympics rescheduled to 2021). In the labour force, those in the informal economy, which underpins many globalizing activities, were severely impacted: as many as 1.6 billion workers according to one estimate (Long, 2020). Global flows of international students were suspended while many health services, including aged care, were overwhelmed by the tide of infected patients and residents. Fear of Covid-19 played a major role in measures such as border closures and lockdowns, though Robertson (2021), in stressing the notion of 'glocalization,' highlights the variability of responses. Thus, the notion of a global or worldwide pandemic must be set against the myriad of national, and even, local responses that give paramount importance to the particular context in which different management measures have occurred.

Rothmüller's (2021) study of responses to the pandemic highlights the changing attitudes to borders, with some 'hard' borders established to prevent spread of disease, including national borders closed to protect citizens. Indeed the 'borderless' world had been turned into a bordered one, though certain aspects of the borderless gained more traction, for example the growth in use of Zoom and Teams with which to conduct virtual meetings (Karl et al., 2022). Indeed, the internet has enabled a level of inter-connectedness and interdependence unimaginable even thirty years ago and gaining more importance during lockdowns.

Longer-term impacts of Covid on globalization centre on how the pandemic has exposed market vulnerabilities that were previously unknown or hidden (Farrell and Newman, 2020). The responses to the pandemic have also exposed deep weaknesses in the governance of global health. One example is the failure of supply chains in the medical sector, though this was not apparent everywhere. As with many other aspects of globalization, there were winners and losers, with some countries better prepared to cope with the demands of the pandemic. But there has also been hoarding of resources by some countries while others have been able to expand their influence on the global stage.

Some countries' lack of capacity to produce vaccines and other key supplies has attracted a response that manufacturing should be based 'at home' rather than relying on capacity located overseas. This was expressed most strongly by the Trump administration in the United States, thereby signalling a degree of retreat from global integration (see also Frieden, 2018). In addition, there has been a highly uneven pattern of distribution of vaccines, facemasks and protective clothing globally so that many parts of the developing world have lacked adequate supplies (Abbas, 2021). The ever-increasing specialization of labour across countries that is a characteristic of globalization is highly efficient but evidently is accompanied by vulnerability and fragility if a desired good cannot be supplied in time of need.

A key issue is the extent to which the pandemic will have lasting consequences for globalization. Ciravegna and Michailova (2022) argue that three aspects of the response to the pandemic have weakened globalization. First, the pandemic has increased inter- and intra-country inequalities, reversing trends in poverty reduction. This may intensify

future anti-globalization sentiments. Moreover, second, it has contributed to heightened populism, nationalism, and increases in state interventionism in the economy, and hence rising protectionism. Some of the governmental responses to the pandemic have undermined those multilateral institutions which have played a major role in facilitating globalization. Third, these developments have contributed to growing global uncertainty and rising costs in international transactions.

Anti-globalist rhetoric has risen in the last decade, in part through the rise to power of populist nationalists like Trump, Bolsonaro, Erdoğan, Modi, López Obrador and Meloni. In general, this trend has been associated with increased protectionism and stances taken against multilateral institutions. In the case of the United Kingdom, cessation of membership of the European Union through Brexit embraced populism but with attempts to develop new bilateral trade agreements. The Covid-19 pandemic gave governments across the political spectrum opportunities to embrace unilateralism, especially over supply and receipt of vaccines, even when there were changes of government, e.g., the Biden administration continued to adhere to Trump's policy limiting export of vaccines and their components (Veugeler et al., 2021). Arbitrary imposition of quarantines and restrictions on travel greatly affected tourism and the airline industry and illustrated individual state-led responses to the pandemic rather than a co-ordinated global response which might have saved lives. It is a response that has engendered uncertainty in international relations and which may increase protectionism in the future. One lesson is that multilateralism is fragile as it relies on the commitment of the most powerful economic nations, and their support can be withdrawn if there is a perceived threat to their national self-interest (Levy, 2021; Sachs, 2020).

This self-interest has been translated into ongoing aims that can be broadly described as protectionist via policies such as the United States' 'Build Back Better' under the Biden administration, using tax incentives to encourage American-owned companies to move back to the US or close by (near-shoring) if operations had been located offshore. In similar vein multi-national corporations have embarked on moves to concentrate some of their operations to reduce the length of supply chains. This may be more of a regional than a global strategy (Verbeke, 2020) and may survive the immediate aftermath of Covid restrictions worldwide as a counter against market uncertainties. Another view is that interpretations of how to emerge from the main impact period of Covid differ, notably between the United States and the European Union, and this has added to economic uncertainty (Cassola et al., 2022).

One of the most successful of the special themed issues of *Research in Globalization* has been that dealing with the Covid pandemic: 'The global spread of Covid-19'. This produced 25 papers looking at impacts and reactions to the pandemic across a range of different sectors. Some papers specifically addressed governments' responses to Covid. For example, Schindler et al (2020) argued that China's response had been far more effective in containing Covid than many countries in the West, and that this was likely to enhance China's reputation as a global power, also partly through China's generous donations of medical supplies to other countries. A similar view is expressed by Dunford and Qi (2020) who argue that the "pandemic will accelerate and intensify existing trends towards a global reset, a shift in the centre of economic gravity to Asia, the arrival of a multipolar world and new global development paths." In part, this prediction is predicated on continued decline in United States hegemony and a growing challenge from China that will create at least two 'super' powers vying for economic dominance around the globe. This echoes other similar predictions of the rise of China as a challenger to American power, foretelling that the centre of global economic gravity will shift to Asia, and especially a China-dominated East Asia (Frank, 1998; Mahbubani, 2020; Mearsheimer, 2018).

Dunford and Qi also present a rosy view of China's response to the pandemic, and primarily its success in preventing spread of the disease at the time of preparing their paper. Yet, at the end of 2022, after China has been forced to backtrack on its 'zero Covid' domestic policy

following widespread popular unrest, its production of a vaccine less effective than those developed in the West, and rapid spread of the disease in China's major cities, Covid's impact on shifts in global power looks much less clear-cut. The positive views of Chinese policy in relation to controlling the spread of Covid-19 are revealed as seriously misplaced. One counter view from Upadhyay (2021), for example, suggests that the security pact between Australia, India, Japan and the United States has exerted important soft power during the pandemic through its own effective vaccine development and distribution that has been far superior to Chinese efforts. Meanwhile, the perceived threat from Chinese militarism is resulting in emerging push-back in East Asia (Murphy, 2021; Singh, 2019) and the argument by Adu-Gyamfi et al. (2021) that greater collaboration between nations is needed to deal more effectively with pandemics has also been strongly supported by events. Similarly, Fagbemi's (2021) study of Covid-19 in Nigeria reveals how there and in many other parts of the world, Covid has contributed to increased poverty and neglect of critical socio-economic issues (notably education, employment and infrastructure development). Severe impacts on a range of businesses in Pakistan are reported by Shafi et al. (2020).

In looking beyond immediate impacts of Covid, Ujunwa et al. (2021) argue that for Africa a suite of measures is needed to protect globalization from future threats. They contend that increased protectionism is eroding benefits of globalization for African economies and society. But to counter this more needs to be done to address structural weaknesses widespread across the continent, especially the low-skilled labour force, large numbers of informally employed workers without the option of working remotely, and a sharp digital divide.

In formulating a more positive view of the post-Covid world, Berchin et al. (2020), and de Amorim and de Andrade (2020) argue that growing recognition of the negative impacts of the responses to the pandemic may yield a longer-term new enlightenment based on the need for global solidarity to implement a common agenda for sustainable development pathways. They champion measures proposed by the United Nations regarding how to address Covid-created impacts, but the lessons from failures of ongoing attempts to reach substantive agreement at various climate change summits would seem to suggest the world is far from being ready to harmonise actions to address sustainability concerns. Moreover, the economic impacts of the pandemic have created uncertainties that seem to have prompted a variety of responses rather than harmony despite calls for a 'common exit strategy' (Abid et al., 2022; Cassola et al., 2022).

Another themed issue in *Research in Globalization* focused specifically on the impact of Covid on the travel and tourism industries. Here the expected negative impacts are reported for several countries, but with some important nuances, e.g., in the case of Portugal nature tourism suffered a less severe impact on tourism demand because the domestic demand for this type of tourism was less affected than those more reliant on overseas tourists (Santos & Moreira, 2021). Meanwhile, in the Balearics, greater diversity has emerged, marking a move away from the traditional emphasis on sun-and-beach tourism to recover from a more than 80% loss of tourists and economic benefits in the immediate aftermath of Covid (Mitermiqué, 2021). This may amount to a transformation of the previous tourism model, with new sources of tourists, improved inter-island connections, loss of cruise traffic, fewer cheap 'packages', and more complex tourism business models. Similar changes to the previous tourism 'model' are noted for Croatia by Šulc and Fuerst-Bjeliš (2021). They point to the emergence of tourism focused on escapism and what they describe as 'slow' tourism or holidays involving walking, cycling and trekking.

The clear need for tourism around the world to grow again after the Covid-induced decline is established by Scarlett (2021), who used data from 46 countries (28 of which are not tourism dependent economies) to show that tourism has had a significant impact on economic growth. Irrespective of how tourism is measured, he shows that an increase in tourism has positive impacts on the services and agriculture value-added

shares of gross domestic product (GDP) as well as the labour prospect in the service and industry sectors. Increases in the tourism receipts relative to GDP can be expected to positively impact the net foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows to GDP ratio. However, as tourism 'rebounds' post-Covid it may have negative impacts on manufacturing's share of GDP, while providing additional employment for what he terms 'the vulnerable population' (those in insecure employment) and some of those in the agriculture sector.

Navarro-Drazich and Lorenzo (2021) provide a different focus in a similar context by examining the impact of Covid-related restrictions on tourism for a range of countries. The latter includes the ten economies receiving the most receipts from tourism (in 2018), the countries that are most dependent economically on tourism, and then the twelve South American countries. There are some alarming findings for the middle group (with tourism contributing at least 30% of GDP), which includes some of the small island developing states (SIDS), with many extremely vulnerable to Covid-related loss of tourism revenues. Vulnerability is not so great across South America, though Uruguay is the most vulnerable in terms of economic dependence on tourism and several others have a significant reliance on tourism revenues, notably Peru, Colombia, Chile and Ecuador. Both Argentina and Brazil export more tourists than they receive and so are net negative in terms of tourism expenditure. The same is true for Germany and the United Kingdom from the top ten countries in terms of tourism receipts.

One consequence of the Covid pandemic has been a more regionally fragmented global economy, though there are arguments over whether this will continue (Contractor, 2022). Ciravegna and Michailova (2022) take the view that certain 'shocks' attributable to responses to the pandemic will continue to affect globalization for at least the next decade. This includes growing inequalities both within and between countries. Some key aspects of this include a widening economic gap between the Global North and South, and increased instability and poverty in the South, leading to further out-migration and rising numbers of refugees. A counter to this is the view that the pandemic has shown that the Global North does not have all the answers or a monopoly on expertise (e.g., Oldekop et al., 2020) and that we cannot talk blithely about 'global development' and common development paths to which all countries should aspire (Büscher, 2019; Fischer, 2019; Hope et al., 2022). In addition, within countries the different experiences of the pandemic between those individuals able to telework from home and those unable to do so has been part of an asymmetric experience that has accentuated the so-called digital divide.

Meanwhile, Reinhart and Reinhart (2020), like many other observers, make some false assumptions about the path that Covid-19 will take, as we now know three years after the start of the pandemic. However, they too note the likely severe economic consequences of the pandemic, referring to an overall economic downturn greater than anything since the Great Depression. Their medium-term gloomy outlook for exports comes after a decade in which growth of global trade was half that of the early years of the new millennium. However, they and others commenting at the beginning of the pandemic could not foresee the global impacts of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

3. The Russia-Ukraine conflict

The almost unthinkable invasion of a sovereign European nation (Ukraine) by another sovereign nation (Russia) has raised further doubts about the future of globalization. In particular, it has resulted in reduced forecasts regarding worldwide economic growth and recognition of various increased costs, e.g., caused by the volume of refugees fleeing the conflict to the West, and also the impact of sanctions imposed on Russia. Yet, initial analysis shows that "consistent with the expected economic stimulus of military preparedness, markets of NATO countries exhibited higher returns" (Boubaker et al., 2022), but overall, developed markets have been more impacted than emerging and Asian markets.

"Experts expect a negative impact on household consumption, increased uncertainty, unpredictable stock swings, supply chain disruptions, bulging utility bills, decreased investment due to political risks, and economic growth impediments" (Mbah & Wassum, 2022, p.144).

An immediate concern of the conflict has been its impact on global food supplies, given that Ukraine produces half of all the sunflower oil on the world export market, along with 15% of the maize, nearly 10% of global wheat exports annually, and 6% of all food calories traded in the international market. Russia is the largest exporter of wheat (17% of all wheat sold across national borders) (Ben Hassen and El Bilali, 2022). In 2022 the estimated impact of the conflict on Ukraine's grain production was a fall of 40 million tonnes of grain, a 50% reduction on the 2021 harvest (Trollman, 2022). Whilst some of this shortfall can be filled by increased production elsewhere, there will certainly be shortages in parts of Africa which are reliant on Ukrainian exports, notably the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, especially Egypt and Morocco.

Mullan's (2020) book, *Beyond confrontation*, argues that globalization expresses a common belief, namely that it leads to peace because if there is economic interconnectedness and interdependence among nations, then nation states will choose peace with each other instead of conflict. Yet, two major developments seem to contradict this. First, there is the ongoing military build-up by China and threats made regarding what it sees as interference by the West over China's claim to Taiwan. Second, and more far-reaching at present, is Russia's invasion of Ukraine. To this can be added arguments that globalization has exacerbated inequalities and that highly mobile international capital has delocalized operations to developing countries, so that cheap imports have displaced local production. Moreover, global institutions designed to support and strengthen economic interdependence are being weaponized to channel conflicts between countries, via sanctions, disruption of global supply chains or controlling international payment systems (Lam, 2022). As part of this, over 400 companies have suspended or withdrawn operations from Russia. They include iconic brands of global consumerism such as Apple, Ikea and Rolex. Hence, instead of peace, some aspects of globalization appear to be producing more unstable international relations.

One immediate reaction to the Ukrainian conflict was that this will have a profoundly negative influence on globalization (Mbah and Wasum, 2022). Sanctions on Russia imposed by the West after the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 have undoubtedly harmed the Russian economy, but they have also added to economic problems not only in the West but around the world. Russia's willingness to restrict its export of vital commodities may also reduce global trade. Those countries most reliant on trade with Russia, notably the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan, are likely to be hit hard (Khudaykulova et al., 2022). By greatly reducing its reliance on energy supplies from Russia the European Union has contributed to a move towards deglobalization of energy markets. Meanwhile, as Russia looks to sell more oil and gas to both China and India, it is attempting to forge closer links to China especially, contributing possibly to the bipolar nature of what some are already terming a post-globalization or deglobalization of the international system (Antràs, 2020; Flew, 2020): one pole focused on the United States and the other on China.

Initial impacts of the conflict have included major price rises worldwide for certain commodities, notably natural gas, oil and grain. This has contributed to increased inflation in the West, reducing the value of incomes in real terms, and which has helped precipitate major strike action in the United Kingdom by workers in several sectors, including health and transport. For countries bordering the conflict, there is "disruption in trade, supply chains and remittances as well as a historic increase in refugee flows" (Orhan, 2022, p.142). Investor uncertainty has also risen, potentially leading to capital outflows from emerging markets. At the time of writing (February 2023) there were nearly eight million refugees from Ukraine and around 6.5 million internally displaced people within the country (UNHCR, 2023).

Worldwide, the conflict may lower economic growth by around one percent compared with forecasts pre-conflict, but probably declining more within the European Union. The additional impact on inflation may be around 2.5% (Orhan, 2022, p.143). Both Russia and the Ukraine are significant producers of metals and minerals that play an important part in the global economy. These include palladium for catalytic converters for automobiles, nickel, which is used in steel production and battery manufacturing, argon and neon for manufacture of semi-conductors, and titanium sponge, which is used in the aircraft industry. Of course, deficiencies in supplies of these commodities give opportunities for other countries to fill the void, e.g., Canada, South Africa and the United States for palladium.

The prospect is for a world that is more divided economically, which in turn will mirror a more politically divided world. Attitudes towards China are one key to this situation. If China is seen to provide clear support for Russia, then the United States and possibly other members of the NATO alliance may extend sanctions to China. More likely, though, is that the uncertainty caused by China's policies on Covid, featuring brutal lockdowns followed by a free-for-all open doors policy, will further encourage multinational corporations to move operations out of China, thereby contributing to further substantial reorganisation of financial flows and supply chains, potentially slowing economic growth. Meanwhile, China is seeking greater self-reliance in key sectors of its economy, by stepping up its own efforts to manufacture components of current imports domestically, such as semi-conductors.

Benedikter (2022) goes as far as arguing that we may be facing a future with two globalizations: one based on the open societies of the West and the other on the non-democratic and authoritarian powers based on China and Russia, which could create a parallel 'world order'. However, another factor to consider is the extent to which China will contribute to a decline in globalization by virtue of its own economic policies. Its desire for greater economic self-sufficiency is one aspect of this, and the stated intention to drive growth more from satisfying domestic consumer demand from within rather than relying on international trade. This would imply a major retreat from the China that assumed the mantle of the 'workshop of the world.' This may be affected also by multi-nationals moving operations out of China to locations with cheaper labour, such as Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines.

One Chinese policy runs counter to the self-reliance argument, namely President Xi Jinping's much vaunted Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The Belt is the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Road is the Maritime Silk Road (Blanchard and Flint, 2017). Essentially the BRI proposes to create new trade routes connecting industrialised eastern China to emerging markets across central and western Asia, Africa and Europe via the strategic corridor of western China (Zhang & He, 2021). The corollary to this plan is that several western Chinese cities must become industrial and logistical hubs and hence the massive influx of capital and labour into western China as part of China's ongoing state-building agenda (Clarke, 2017). Cities in western China have competed for this investment and capital accumulation. Examples of key hubs in this process include Kashgar, Shihezi, and Ürümqi in Xinjiang province. New major border ports in the same province have been established, e.g., Alashankou and Khorgos to facilitate trade with Central Asia. Special Economic Zones have been created in the province to promote trade with Central Asia, and a natural gas pipeline has been built from Khorgos to Turkmenistan (Woodworth, 2017).

Around 65 different countries have signed up in some form to be part of the BRI, and economic corridors have been identified to realise the vision. The BRI is a mixture of hard infrastructure, for roads, railways, ports and pipelines, and soft diplomacy relating to free trade, investment agreements and other accords. Huge investment is also scheduled, with China by 2016 having already devoted US\$40 billion to a Silk Road fund (Sarker et al., 2018). However, there are numerous obstacles to development of the BRI, not least of which are the various geopolitical disputes between the countries along the economic corridors, notably between India and Pakistan, Russian and Ukraine, and the instability in

Afghanistan, Syria and Myanmar amongst others. Economic problems are present in several of the participant nations, notably Sri Lanka, which was projected to develop a multi-billion-dollar Colombo Port City, Hambantota port and Hambantota international airport project before economic collapse. Hence there may be a mismatch between the grand design, including the attempt to spread Chinese influence, and the reality of increased trade and new facilities in partner countries.

Concerns in the West have translated into some push-back. For example, in Australia, the State of Victoria signed a memorandum of understanding on the BRI with the Chinese government in October 2018, essentially promoting future investment and trade. This was cancelled by the Australian government in April 2021 on the grounds that it was inconsistent with Australia's foreign policy or adverse to its foreign relations. Both Nepal and Pakistan have complained about the commercial terms being offered by China as part of the BRI, both withdrawing from dam projects. Indeed, China has recognised that some of its BRI-related projects could trap target countries in debt or fail to meet their needs, and has conceded that adjustments may be necessary.

Many of the Chinese commentators on the BRI present it as a geopolitical strategy linked to economic development (Shi, 2015), but with a domestic imperative too, namely reducing the wealth gap between eastern and western China. Internationally, the BRI has been interpreted by some in China as representing a globalization that does not need to adhere to the 'normal' rules laid down by the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. In another examination of the BRI, Sidaway and Woon (2017) note the history of the Silk Road idea stretches back into the classical worlds of ancient Greece, Rome, Persia, China and Japan. Some in the West may indeed note the imperialist connections embodied in the BRI, recognise it as part of China's global ambitions, and may take counter actions to reduce its impacts.

Views from China and the 86% of the world's population living outside Europe and North America often challenge the so-called 'rules-based world order.' This challenge has been expressed openly by both the current regimes in Beijing and Moscow, but what form it will take is less clear, especially when China has seen a decline in economic growth largely due its extended Covid lockdowns. It faces a population decline and a rapidly aging population that will challenge its ability to achieve the substantial economic growth that could enable it to play an even greater role on the world stage than at present. Yet, arguably, China has been the greatest beneficiary of economic globalization, so it is highly likely that it will continue to espouse many of the principles that have enabled that globalization to flourish (Kolodko, 2021). Meanwhile, it will try to restrict others, notably by trying to manage what internet content can enter the country and maintaining a surveillance of its citizens to control any internal dissent.

4. An agenda for research in globalization

Writing just as the Covid pandemic was breaking, Steger (2020) explored three possible scenarios for globalization: a backlash, with restrictions to movement and growing political authoritarianism with the decline of representative democracy; a re-emergence of neo-liberalism with a 'high-tech' face or so-called Globalization 4.0 (the complete digitalization of the social, political, and economic) (Postel-Vinay, 2020; Schwab, 2018); and a stand-off between nationalism and market globalism. He echoes the sentiments of several other commentators in arguing for "new more inclusive, and sustainable solutions, guided by the principles of ethical globalism" (Steger, 2020, p.129). It is the intention of *Research in Globalization* to reflect current research that addresses each of the three scenarios in various ways.

One aspect should consider how technology continues to reshape globalization, but meets barriers along the way. One example of the latter is the banning of Huawei from 5G networks in Australia, Canada, Japan, the United States, and the United Kingdom (Bartholomew, 2020). Several other countries are restricting Chinese investment in critical

infrastructure, and this attempt to limit China in the high-tech area is one of the few policies in the United States that has attracted bipartisan support. Similarly, concerns have also been voiced about Tik-Tok, the short-form video hosting service owned by the Chinese company Byte-Dance, perceived by some to represent a threat to both national and personal security. Given the rising concerns in the West over Chinese militarism, it is likely that there will be ongoing attempts to limit China's development of a range of contributing high-tech elements in Globalization 4.0, including advanced artificial intelligence, machine learning, battery technology, hypersonics, and even microchips.

The seemingly never-ending battle between authoritarianism and democracy continues to challenge free trade and ease of movement of individuals. Restrictions to the latter are likely to be contested if there is an increased volume in migrant streams from war zones, areas of social and economic instability, and perhaps 'environmental' migrants fleeing problems caused by climate change (e.g., sea-level rise) (De Haas et al., 2019). The need to place the rising volumes of migrants into global context presents opportunities for studies drawing on the many 'flash-points' for migrants and refugees around the world, e.g., the US – Mexico border, African and Middle Eastern migrants crossing the Mediterranean, and the English Channel.

One theme that can be expected to appear in the journal is work reflecting the notion that regional economic groupings will play a more significant role in the world economy. For example, O'Neill (2022) argues that whilst globalization has advanced and has produced many close linkages between countries, it has been accompanied by significant regionalization. She contends that the world of the 2020s is more regionalized than globalized. In part, this reflects the ongoing importance of the tyranny of distance. Moving goods around the world is expensive, so despite the presence of global supply chains, production close to major markets still makes much economic sense. This has been best exploited in three mega-regions: North America, Western Europe and East/South-East Asia. In these three regions, much of the trade stays within the region rather than being part of global flows.

One dominant region in terms of trade is Europe, and especially the European Union, which features as the subject of an ongoing themed issue in *Research in Globalization* edited by Claudio Morana. The theme is 'The future of Europe,' with the first paper published by Faggian et al. (2023), dealing with income inequality. Elsewhere manufacturing development has been more limited, with fewer global links but possibly with the development of incipient regional links as in South Asia and Latin America. It is these links that O'Neill argues will continue to grow, with the three mega-regions becoming more focused on production within their own region or, as she describes it, "global supply chains to get more regional" (p.14). She argues that the days of manufacturing companies locating 'offshore' to benefit from cheap labour are being ended by rising wages in many current offshore locations, notably China, and labour is also being displaced by robots, 3D printing and other technologies. A more segmented market undermines mass production as custom-made goods become more important in the market. Another factor is the intensification of competition within the regional markets, in which, for example, it has become harder for American brands to compete with local brands in Europe and Asia: Samsung displaces iPhones in Malaysia, while India's Tata Consultancy challenges IBM in South America.

In looking forward to the next five years of *Research in Globalization*, my wish is that the journal can capture not only the debates on the future of globalization, as discussed above, but also do more to represent the barriers and challenges to globalization being faced beyond the dominant mega-regions. The journal has already been successful in addressing some of the regional issues affecting Africa, not only in terms of the impacts of the Covid pandemic but also economic development pressures. Hence, there is an opportunity to build on work already published in the journal, for example by Immurana et al. (2023) on foreign direct investment in Africa, Obeng et al. (2023) on trade agreements and export efficiency in Ghana, and Agyeman et al. (2022) on external debt

and economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa. Such studies could be extended to Latin America, the Caribbean and other developing parts of the world.

To date, the journal has not engaged with the economic fortunes of China, so there is a broad canvas to explore with respect to how China emerges from its about face regarding lockdowns to combat Covid 19 and deals with its declining birth rate, a rapidly aging population and a slowing rate of growth of GDP. Kolodko et al. (2021, p. 75) contends that "irreversible globalization requires proper reinstitutionalization of global governance, which cannot happen without China's active participation." But will this entail a renewed engagement with the rest of the world via increased trade, perhaps led by the BRI, or will there be more of a domestic and regional focus for its economic policies? How will its military ambitions with respect to Taiwan shape its relations with the West and its Asian neighbours? Will China and Russia collaborate more closely or are their respective interests likely to deviate? Meanwhile, as India looks poised to become the most populous country in the world, what role will India play in globalizing tendencies? We would welcome more studies that consider the role of individual countries in helping to both shape and be shaped by the future of globalization.

Both China and India have supplied students to the growing global higher education sector. But, will this continue, as China has already announced that it will not allow its citizens to study online for degrees offered by non-Chinese institutions? Movement of students to study overseas has fuelled global migrations, with many seeking to stay in the country that provided their educational opportunities (Ha et al., 2016). Will this continue to be a 'brain drain' in the same way that the medical sector in the West increasingly sources its labour from developing countries thereby contributing to loss of a key group of educated individuals in some poorer countries (Hawkins et al., 2022; Karan et al., 2016)?

And what of other major movements of population? – some are determined to seek a better life in Europe or the United States, with push factors of war, violence, and environmental deterioration associated with climate change (Kaczan & Orgill-Meyer, 2020). As argued above, we need more studies that will 'unpack' these various flows of people to put them into a wider context and develop greater understanding of how they contribute to host and source economies. Indeed, one such 'unpacking' has already featured in *Research in Globalization* in the form of a themed issue on 'Disapora investment', edited by Badar Iqbal and Nayeer Rahman. Amongst others, these studies have included the effect of remittances on the ecological footprint in Pakistan (Chishti, 2023), diaspora investments in low and high interest rate environments (Ade-diran et al., 2022), how Tanzania engages with its diaspora (Kessy & Shayo, 2022), the effect of remittance houses on desire to migrate and usage of irregular migration routes (Osman et al., 2022), the determinants, policies, and impacts of diaspora direct investments (Naujoks, 2022), and remittances and income inequality across Africa (Ofori et al., 2022).

Another area to explore is that of governance, with state governments "increasingly 'outsourcing' policy implementation and even policymaking capacity to autonomous or semi-autonomous bodies and agencies" (Hawkins et al., 2022, p.10). This is especially so at the global level where multiple actors debate and respond to issues in various guises, often under the auspices of the United Nations. However, the inability of the United Nations to prevent multiple regional conflicts and the patchy record of the World Health Organization during the first wave of Covid-19 have led to pushback in many quarters regarding willingness to rely on multinational co-operation. So global governance breaks down into regional arrangements and sub-groups in various sectors. A recent example of this is how the United States is redefining its national technological and industrial base through the AUKUS agreement with Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

One area, not yet featured in papers published in *Research in Globalization*, is the global response to climate change. How will attempts to 'decarbonize' the world influence global trade and regional

development? When examining how difficult it has proved to obtain agreements in the various world summits on actions to curb the effects of climate change, it can be acknowledged that this reflects both the hugely different resource bases of individual countries and varied attitudes to potential constraints on development posed by moves to 'green' energy. So, China is greatly increasing its output of electricity from renewable energy sources whilst continuing to build new coal-fired power stations. It has agreed to emission reduction targets but it has a time horizon for this of several decades. Meanwhile, many Western nations are rivalling one another to have higher reduction targets and shorter timelines. There is much schizophrenia regarding policy. For example, Australia is rapidly shifting out of fossil fuel energy itself but meanwhile supplying China and other countries with coal and iron ore to build power stations adding to greenhouse gas pollution. Australia remains the world's second biggest coal exporter, a revenue that would be hard to replace from other sources.

The cost of the technology supporting carbon-neutral energy is also very high and the cost of the energy it produces is higher than for fossil fuel-based energy. How will this affect economic development and households faced with rapidly rising energy bills? A future themed issue of the journal could consider the various impacts on globalization of climate change-related policies. This could also consider how the much-vaunted United Nations' sustainable development goals (SDGs) are being addressed around the world. The SDGs are the seventeen goals (and 169 targets) adopted by all members states in 2015 and which form the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Efforts to develop an SDG agenda involve a strong amount of global co-operation to alleviate poverty, though they face the same barriers as actions on climate change but on a wider front, embracing policies to improve health and education, reduce inequality, spur economic growth and maintain biodiversity (Arora & Mishra, 2019; Bexell & Jönsson, 2017). There are also dissenting voices (Hope, 2022), and Hope et al. (2022, p.156) question "how global development, as constructed by the SDGs, treats and impacts claims for land and environmental justice in the Global South."

A key issue to address is the relationship between globalization and sustainability. If we move more towards greater regional polarity in the world, what will that mean for situations in which global collaboration is required to attain desirable outcomes. Can those outcomes be agreed without maintenance of forums where exchange of ideas is encouraged but with a striving to agree on future targets and time-frames? Does the notion of a 'rules-based order' disappear in a more polarised environment and how does that impact on notions of sustainable development? For example, how would a retreat from globalizing tendencies impact on what Fischer (2016) terms the 'transnational governmentality' in which regulation, certification and standardization operate on a global scale. He shows how global markets have enabled formerly local or regional diets, such as Kosher, halal and Hindu food to reach new consumers worldwide. Similarly, are aspects of green consumerism, which arguably have been spread around the world by global markets, global values and a growing global middle-class perspective (Fischer, 2023), going to withstand a more segmented less global future? Can 'green,' pro-environmental movements maintain their momentum without the impress of global forces or will they simply find new local expression thereby re-emphasising Robertson's globalization hypothesis? There are clear opportunities here for special issues of the journal.

Finally, there is a need to review the technological inputs to globalization, or the contributors to the truly borderless world via the internet. Each year seems to bring a new social media sensation that affects lives around the globe, but especially for those under thirty. How is this aspect of globalization shaping lives and extending new connections and linkages between people? Can we identify the next wave of technological developments that will be truly ground breaking and in what ways will they affect human behaviour? We have become used to the mobile phone, accessing information online, and interacting seamlessly with others via the computer screen, but what comes next and

what are the likely impacts good and bad? Papers that cover the broad sweep of the relationship between transformative technology and human society have a rich territory to mine for analysis.

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