

Stronger Together: Why Globalization is Great for America

I believe that globalization has had a tremendous positive impact on the everyday citizens of the United States of America, in tangible economic, cultural and political terms. Globalization has greatly reduced prices and expanded the variety of goods on American store shelves, markedly increasing the accessibility of many products and significantly stretching the value of a dollar. Unfettered worldwide free trade created a boon in employment across various industries and sectors, which has benefitted the U.S. as much as the rest of the world. The accompanying notable uptick in immigration has improved lives throughout the nation, as immigrants go on to found important businesses, excel in specialized high-demand roles and serve in labor positions necessary to the economy. Meanwhile, globalization has had excellent unintended consequences for our culture, which has become far more inclusive, adaptive, and open to the world as we have accepted people of all backgrounds into our society and learned about their ways of life. The process of opening markets across the globe also lead to the development of many new investment opportunities, such as stocks and assets, kept both at home and abroad.

First, the effect of globalization on the market for manufactured goods has been enormous. It has simultaneously managed to lift millions of people out of poverty, boost the economic growth and weight of countries exponentially, and line store shelves in many countries with affordable products. This has led to the emergence of new markets and the growth of the global middle class in areas where it previously had not existed. It has also been a net positive development for the first world, improving life styles and quality of life. Daniel Yergin, one of the authors of *Commanding Heights*, confirms that while globalization does have some “very visible losers,” with an exaggerated picture of job loss, it has a much longer list of “invisible beneficiaries,” like consumers everywhere (Yergin and Stanislaw 1998).

In fact, the idea that globalization has built up emerging markets by devastating already-developed nations, causing mass unemployment in places like the United States and Western Europe, is overstated. Yes, there are global mobilities and complexities (Cohen and Kennedy 2013). However, these have unleashed the American manufacturing juggernaut on the world, more than ever before, even if they may have created additional regulation. This theory is supported by Ylan Mui of the *Washington Post*, who confirms that American manufacturing has improved its productivity, number of exports, and overall size and production quantity exponentially, in spite of the dystopian projections of some current politicians (Mui 2016; Samuelson 2016).

The developed world nations have actually acquired a particular advantage over many developing nations. Worldwide networks have been created by the new global economy and society, leading to not only the exchange of ideas and goods, but also the movement of people (Cohen and Kennedy 2013). The United States in particular has seen a significant influx of immigrants, who have come mainly from developing nations (Ip 2016). The globalization that has been blamed for sending jobs and companies overseas, supposedly empowering developing nations while harming the rich world, has in reality brought many products overseas into rich world shops, and many immigrants to developed nations, strengthening America with dynamism and needed skills (Ip 2016; *The Economist*, July 2, 2016). In the end, though, this exchange and movement occurs in both directions; therefore, all of the nations involved benefit.

Many of these immigrants have created major businesses and done necessary high-level work in the U.S. *Forbes* verifies that about 40% of Fortune 500 companies were founded by immigrants or their descendants (Anderson 2011). For example, Steve Jobs, the co-founder of Apple, was the son of a Syrian immigrant parent, Walt Disney was the son of a Canadian immigrant, the

founders of Oracle had Russian and Iranian ancestry, and the founder of IBM had German ancestry (Anderson, 2011). Additionally, many of the high-tech specialists at Apple came to contribute to the American economy and international digital technology sector from nations in Asia and throughout the developing world. This forms a compelling case for globalization being far more positive on the whole than negative.

The benefits of globalization for everyday Americans do not start and end solely with the economy. Neoliberalism has also created a global society in which information about countries in remote corners of the world becomes mainstream news, a society in which nations and cultures communicate their best ideas and repair their worst flaws. This enables the United States to absorb the most positive and transferrable aspects of other cultures in order to improve ourselves. This is 'glocalization,' or taking elements of globalization from around the world and adapting them to one's own local model (Cohen and Kennedy 2013). The fast food industry, which was born in America and moved to many foreign locations, has in turn led to a 'slow food revolution' of quality ingredients and taking time to eat. This initiative has positively impacted the lives of many Americans directly, and indirectly through changes in government food policies.

Although globalization has greatly enhanced economic performance and quality of life around the world, this is not always clear to those who take part in this worldwide system. Some people see it instead as a scapegoat for deep, painful issues which affect their daily lives. American manufacturing as an industry, for instance, has profited enormously from globalization, but certain less-specialized manufacturing workers have lost jobs, received less pay, or experienced difficulty with breaking into the high end of the sector which produces more jobs (The Economist, April 2, 2016). From time to time, these workers blame overseas production and trade for their woes, when in truth, these are simply unfortunate results of increasing automation, as well as a shift to a 'knowledge-based economy' in which higher education and skilled backgrounds are necessities for gainful employment (Samuelson 2016). Free trade only accounts for approximately 13% of heavy industry job loss, while the rest of the picture was created by new economic trends which may not be reversible (Ogrodnik 2016). The bright side of this situation is that with training, many displaced people would be able to find new jobs. Computer-related work, for instance, holds great potential and continues to grow as a share of the world economy.

Another idea brought forth by the anti-globalization movement is the belief that other countries have become much more powerful at the expense of the United States. This does not tell the whole story. As other countries have grown tremendously, the United States has continued to be a powerful country economically and politically, wielding both hard and soft power in international affairs. In fact, the United States benefits greatly from a multipolar world, because even if it ends up no longer being the sole superpower, it has many allies who share its democratic and economic values. Therefore, globalization is an effective political tool against the typically isolated enemies and adversaries of the United States, as well as an efficient way to forge stronger bonds with potential new allies.

Globalization has been very beneficial to American citizens on the whole, in spite of a number of remaining rough edges, because it has empowered our population with better purchasing power and investment opportunities, increased access to international information, and created new employment and education opportunities in 21st-century fields. This economic system must continue, and policymakers in the United States should pursue it courageously in order to create a better society in the future.

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