

Challenges of globalization · Questions

- 1. Origins.** Globalization: distant, recent or very recent origins?
- 2. Cyclical dynamics.** Are there globalization waves or cycles? What factors cause the turning points? Mainly technological? Mainly political? Is expansion led by economic factors and contraction by political ones?
- 3. Slow down.** What could make globalization slow down? Will globalization necessarily slow down?
- 4. Stability.** Is globalization an inherently unstable phenomenon? Socially unstable? Financially unstable? Ecologically unstable? If globalization involves creative destruction, what guarantees that the creative dimension is stronger than the destructive one? Globalization contributes to create and shift wealth, but is greater economic insecurity the price to be paid?
- 5. Winners and losers.** Does globalization always create winners and losers? Do a few winners tend to win all? Are the potential benefits of globalization equally accessible to all?
- 6. Myths.** Are there globalization myths? Is globalization making the world 'flat'? Is globalization replacing states with markets? Does globalization require the sacrifice of the welfare state? Is there no alternative to globalization?
- 7. Fragmentation.** Is globalization making the world more alike? Is it creating more political and economic fragmentation? Is it polarizing more the world, between active/wealthy/powerful and passive/poorer/powerless regions? To which extent does globalization yield homogeneity, uniformity or cultural convergence? Does globalization intensify the 'us vs them' distinction?
- 8. Global peace.** Is globalization favouring a peaceful interaction of governments? Is it increasing/reinforcing tensions among them? Does increasing economic interdependence prevent military conflict? Is the increasing interdependence associated with globalization a 'good thing'?
- 9. Hegemon.** Does the success of globalization require a global hegemon supporting it (UK, 19th century; US, 20th century)? Does hegemon replacement endanger globalization? Under which conditions the replacement is peaceful? Is globalization a form of imperialism?
- 10. Nature.** Is globalization an essentially economic (and technological) process/phenomenon or an essentially political one? Should it be viewed optimistically or pessimistically? Does it rely on cooperation or competition?
- 11. States.** Are states, under globalization, more inclined to support national firms in international markets than to help the citizens, and local small businesses, more adversely affected by globalization? Are they even more inclined to protect financial interests than business interests?
- 12. West vs East.** Is there a historical race between 'East' (Asia) and 'West'? What caused the 'Rise of the West' and the 'Great Divergence'? Development as the outcome of the struggle between economic and political elites?
- 13. Convergence.** Does globalization lead to the world convergence of the standard of living? Why is not the whole world developed yet?
- 14. Overfinancialization.** Is an oversized financial sector detrimental to the economy?
- 15. Traps.** Is there a poverty trap? Is having abundant natural resources a curse? How important is having good governance, 'good' institutions in general, for development? Is there a 'paradox of prosperity' (prosperity breeds vulnerability)?
- 16. Success in development.** Is it better for development to embrace globalization without restrictions or to have some institution (governments) regulating the globalization process? Is concerted action by economic and political elites necessary for a successful development (the China paradox)? Are developed countries helping or blocking developing countries to fully develop? Is there a catch-up illusion?

- 17. Two economics.** Are there two economics, one for developing economies (focusing on protection and nurturing) and another one for developed economies (focusing on efficiency and deregulation)? One relying on biological metaphors (built from the bottom up) and another one on physical metaphors (following a top-down approach)?
- 18. Olson hypothesis.** Is political stability economically dysfunctional in the long run?
- 19. Lee hypothesis.** Are non-democratic political system better at delivering economic prosperity?
- 20. The modern Malthusian view.** Is the carrying capacity of the planet the ultimate limit for economies? Which is the winner in the long run, the Malthusian dynamics of growth with finite resources or the Darwinian dynamics of innovation and adaptation to overcome resource limits?
- 21. Washington vs Beijing.** Which economic agenda is more successful in globalization, the Washington Consensus or the Beijing Consensus? How much does globalization owe to the neoliberal ideology? Are 'markets', 'democracy', 'capitalist growth' good? Good for globalization?
- 22. Klein's shock doctrine.** Do elites exploit episodes of crisis to their own advantage?
- 23. Technology.** How autonomous is technology? Is technology self-propelled? Is the social context of technological progress largely irrelevant? Are technological doublings (Moore's law) the norm or the exception? Is the technological singularity fiction? Is artificial intelligence the best or the worst that could happen to humanity? How much vulnerability can be accepted in exchange for technological complexity? Does technological progress necessarily involve a social struggle (to reap the benefits)? Is the future technocratic? Are Cornucopians (techno-optimists) right?
- 24. Capitalist growth and environment.** Is capitalism a cancer for the Earth? Does a growing economy eventually improve the environmental conditions? Will markets save the Earth?
- 25. Jevons paradox.** Do efficiency improvements in the use of some resource actually increase the use of the resource and therefore accelerate its depletion?
- 26. Limits to growth.** Can capitalist globalization respect the planetary boundaries? How much ecological damage is globalization capable of creating? Does globalization care about the global ecological threats? Why the current lack of political response to ecological challenges? Do all civilizations eventually reach ecological/environmental collapse and resource exhaustion? For long is ecological overshoot sustainable?
- 27. Local vs global.** Can global problems be solved locally? Is national action enough to handle global issues successfully?
- 28. Monopolization.** How big can big corporations become under globalization? Why are big businesses so warmly supported by governments?
- 29. Global inequality.** Does globalization necessarily increase the gap between the rich and the poor, domestically and internationally? Is inequality the price to be paid for achieving growth? Is inequality the norm? Is the North-South Divide permanent?
- 30. Kuznets waves.** Are there waves of increasing and decreasing inequality? Which are the causes, essentially political or essentially technological?
- 31. Moneyland.** Why does it exist? For how long? Do the rich live globally and the rest of us have borders?
- 32. Labour vs capital.** Is globalization reinforcing the position of 'capital' (business interests) against 'labour' (the interests of the working and the middle classes)? Is globalization, together with technological progress, making workers more disposable? Is automation a threat to social stability?
- 33. UBI.** Is the Universal Basic Income proposal the future? Is technological unemployment a problem eventually solved by itself (technologies destroying jobs create new ones)?
- 34. China.** Is China's rise to be feared or welcome? Does it involve a Thucydides trap? Is the American (liberal) globalization/order going to be replaced by a Chinese one? Is G-Zero the future (no global leader)?