

Is Globalization Good for the World?

Tracing back when the ancient Silk Roads spread its wings from China to the Mediterranean (Voyakin), the ships of exploration crossing oceans to reach land far beyond that was once imagined (Mitchell), and more recently, the prosperous rise of global supply chain networks connected economies across regions and continents (AJG Transport Operation Team) – the trade and provision of goods, services, and resources across the globe, globalization, has worked its fruitful footprints across space and time into the history of mankind. Unprecedented exponential growth was sparked: from a few decades after the emergence of industrialization, 1820, life expectancy more than doubled (“Life Expectancy”) and Global GDP grew approximately 100 times larger from 1.63 trillion to 161 trillion (“Global GDP over the Long Run”). In the past four decades alone, rapid growth reduced extreme poverty from 43.9% to 9% of the world’s population (“World Bank Open Data”); literacy rates, living standards, education, access to infrastructure, and healthcare all rose! Goods and services from all around the world have found their way into the hands of billions of people. The ‘Globalization Doctrine’, as defined as the unification of a world market built beyond the domestic level of trade, has been incredibly appealing. Globalization saves the world, some say...

Whether globalization is good truly does not comply to the substantial amount of wealth from its produce, but whether the development or growth brought by globalization is sustainably beneficial and whether these benefits reached the hands of the most.

Why might globalization bring about economic growth across the globe for everyone? This was compellingly explained by growth’s key factors: the division of labour (Smith, “Wealth of Nations — Bk 1 Chpt 02”), trade and growing markets (Smith, “Wealth of Nations — Bk 1 Chpt 03”). These factors are complementary. Globalization is a model where the manufacturing and purchasing of goods to be spread across markets, intertwined. The produce of a single product is to be formed by dozen parts of manufacturing spread out in different factories based on geographical, resource-wise, or variations in technological advancement; each step is more efficient as the manufacturing of every little part of the product is allocated to the area best at that

specific production, and as the workers substantially specialize in the only specific detailed skill of production. This is a big change. Such way of production sparks growth of thousands of areas that may have been previously excluded from the benefit of growth, that falls way behind. For example, Smith tells us that a woolen coat may seem simple but is in fact the product of many workmen. The herdsman, the wool sorter, the carder, the dyer, the scribbler, the spinner, the weaver, the fuller, the dresser (Smith, “Wealth of Nations — Bk 1 Chpt 01”). Every single work and process involved in the manufacturing of a single pen could be split into hundreds even thousands of steps and sub-steps; each step needs labour, employs workers, and creates capital. Globalization thus drives universal accumulation as it necessitates trade with more and more people: the supply and demand of so many raw materials, machines, and transportation crosses a tremendous variety of fields and jobs, greatly fostering trade: spreading wealth among all people. This account identifies the beginnings of what we call ‘capitalism,’ showing how productivity and trade that globalization brings reinforced each other to allow the accumulation of capital.

Yet, such ideal accumulation will only happen given the pre-existence of a considerable amount of capital and of labour power, ready in the hands of producers of commodities. Therefore, the concept of ‘primitive’ or prior accumulation is important to the beginnings of growth because we need to look at accumulation as not just the result of the production, but its starting point. Most economists say ‘original’ capital can be explained through hard work: “In times long gone by there were two sorts of people; one, the diligent, intelligent, and, above all, frugal elite; the other, lazy rascals, spending their substance, and more, in riotous living (Marx).” As a result, people who work hard accumulate. Marx and Engels, however, pointed out: “in actual history it is notorious that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly force, play the great part (Marx).”

For worldwide trade to generate abundant wealth, a non-stop, sufficient manufacturing of such goods and services must take place. To whom is globalization good for? No world is utopian, although globalization today seemingly took a brighter journey proceeding the dark history, but the nature that one group of people benefit more or even at the expense of other groups did not change. Power that arouses from capital allow those people to stand superior in the line, taking over the cake.

Accumulation is not a smooth story of labour, trade, and open market commerce at the beginning; it does not come out of nothing. Rather, there must be an initial capital; and under the complex nature of human beings, the accumulation of this initial capital happened in a darker way.

Take the Great Britain as an example. Using labour and commodities from enslaved people and turning Africa and the Americas into markets for European goods, Britain was able to assert its global power beginning 1713. As a result, untold wealth was stripped to fund continued industrialization and make sure profits were made. It is also impossible to tell the story of the industrial revolution without remembering the people who did the work. For Engels, “destitute millions, who consume today what they earned yesterday” were suffering terribly. “The streets are generally unpaved, rough, dirty, filled with vegetable and animal refuse, without sewers or gutters, but supplied with foul, stagnant pools instead (Engels).” The oppression on work force – the slaves and the industrial workers – allowed the owners of the factory, either landlords who already had plenty of wealth, or beneficiaries from political complicity, to gain a significant amount of wealth out of the exploited workers.

Once this new form of primitive accumulation was unlocked, global capitalism emerged, demanding new markets to profit from. Unleashing an “invisible hand” of trade, wealth violently extracted in the lead up to British industrialization continues today to allow growth and prosperity for many, but at the expense of the vulnerable. This piece of history, as well as the fundamental theory of cruel primitive accumulation behind, reminds us of the tremendous inequality and suffering that continues to exist. Roughly 50 million people still live in situations of exploitation threats, violence, coercion, or deception, known as “Modern Slavery” (“Global Slavery Index | Walk Free”). But billions more live in poverty and extreme inequality, working hardly day and night endlessly, yet still unable to change their situations. Economic growth has been a beautiful consequence that many enjoy, just like peace and our happy lives. But unseen, behind the curtains may be a darker side, and today we must remember the cost and its ongoing consequences for many of the world’s people.

Globalization and its consequential precipitation on technology and spread of trade to get most people employed is the reason why we can have such luxurious lives. But it is crucial to be aware of the unfairness that still exists, that some still suffer being pushed down to the bottom of the societal hierarchy providing the fundamental work that runs the mechanics of globalization, but not gain from globalization's interests.

It is not necessary to blame globalization for the occurrence of unfairness – globalization is a double-edged sword. The above theories of why globalization is beneficiary or harming upon 'whether it has benefited all' are just systematic postulations of what might happen. What truly happens is not the decision made by globalization, but the 'leaders of globalization', mankind. We must think upon how to resolve such dilemmas.

Some people may not have a choice other than to be pushed to the bottom of the profit chain. They may not have the skills to excel in fields other than the provision of physical labour. Opportunity is key to allow people to freely have a choice and to live a better life. And exactly education provides people with such opportunity.

A full globalization model in the real world must recognize and award the efforts of all people that participate in running the system. It should not be the businessmen that takes the most out of the final yield, but the worker class should also be commended by awarding large parts of the yield for their hard efforts. Only by that will globalization's merit fully unravel before our eyes. It is a world where people are not discriminated of the work or class; a world where everyone gets to benefit not by the kind of work they do, but by the effort they put in; and where globalization does not focus anymore on economic growth, being the increase in wealth produced measured by the ice-cold metric GDP, but the economic development as the expansion of real freedoms for mankind (Sen). Sadly, whether this may happen is under great uncertainty as the sense of greed from the possessors of power and ultimate beneficiaries of such trade are motivated to minimize the cost – being the wages of the workers, the prices of resources – for the products to be favored by the market for lower prices, simultaneously leaving enough space for more profit.

It is a choice that everyone must make and persevere to embrace a globalization in benefit for everyone by prioritizing the 'greater good' over personal benefit. Because the amount of wealth produced does not matter, but what the wealth serves and how it serves to the benefit of mankind as a whole is all that matters the most.

Works Cited

- AJG Transport Operation Team. "AJG Transport." *AJG Transport*, 25 Aug. 2022, www.ajgtransport.com/ajg-blog/2022/8/25/history-and-evolution-of-the-global-supply-chain. Accessed 8 May 2025.
- BBC Bitesize. "What Was the Triangular Trade? - BBC Bitesize." *BBC Bitesize*, Oct. 2024, www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zkptrmn#zx9cmbk. Accessed 9 May 2025.
- Engels, Frederick. "The Great Towns." *Marxists.org*, 2025, www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/condition-working-class/ch04.htm. Accessed 10 May 2025.
- "Global GDP over the Long Run." *Our World in Data*, 2025, ourworldindata.org/grapher/global-gdp-over-the-long-run. Accessed 8 May 2025.
- "Global Slavery Index | Walk Free." *Walk Free*, 28 Feb. 2025, www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/. Accessed 10 May 2025.
- "Life Expectancy." *Our World in Data*, 2024, ourworldindata.org/grapher/life-expectancy. Accessed 8 May 2025.
- Marx, Karl. "Economic Manuscripts: Capital Vol. I - Chapter Twenty-Six." *Marxists.org*, 2025, www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch26.htm. Accessed 10 May 2025.
- Mitchell, Jean Brown. "European Exploration | Definition, Facts, Maps, Images, & Colonization." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 27 May 1999, www.britannica.com/topic/European-exploration/The-Age-of-Discovery. Accessed 8 May 2025.

Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom*. 1999.

Smith, Adam. *Of the Division of Labour*. 1776.

---. *THAT the DIVISION of LABOUR IS LIMITED by the EXTENT of the MARKET*.
1776.

---. "Wealth of Nations — Bk 1 Chpt 01." *Marxists.org*, 2025,
www.marxists.org/reference/archive/smith-adam/works/wealth-of-nations/book01/ch01.htm. Accessed 10 May 2025.

---. "Wealth of Nations — Bk 1 Chpt 02." *Marxists.org*, 2025,
www.marxists.org/reference/archive/smith-adam/works/wealth-of-nations/book01/ch02.htm. Accessed 10 May 2025.

---. "Wealth of Nations — Bk 1 Chpt 03." *Marxists.org*, 2025,
www.marxists.org/reference/archive/smith-adam/works/wealth-of-nations/book01/ch03.htm. Accessed 10 May 2025.

The. "Triangular Trade | Definition, Route, & System." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 6 Apr. 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/triangular-trade. Accessed 9 May 2025.

Voyakin, Dmitry. "The Great Silk Roads | Silk Roads Programme." *En.unesco.org*,
en.unesco.org/silkroad/content/great-silk-roads.

"World Bank Open Data." *World Bank Open Data*, 2017,
data.worldbank.org/topic/poverty. Accessed 10 May 2025.