



“GOODBYE GLOBALISATION:
THE RETURN OF A DIVIDED WORLD”
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The term globalisation refers to the increasing interconnectedness of the world that results in free flow of trade, goods, services, ideas and values. Journalist Elizabeth Braw in her book *Goodbye Globalisation: The Return of a Divided World* (Yale University Press, 2024) deftly narrates the speedy rise of globalisation after the Cold War and eventually the downfall of the globalisation in the recent years. Braw’s account of globalisation is a fresh take on the subject as the author tries to establish a mutual relationship between business community and geopolitics.

The author in her opening chapters gives a background of the major events of the world that paved the way for steady rise of globalisation. After the end of the Cold War events such as the fall of Iron Curtain and subsequently the fall of Berlin Wall, opening of China’s economy under Deng Xiaoping, financial deregulation in various parts of the world, improvement in technology resulted in dramatic rise of globalisation. During the heyday of globalisation, jobs were exploding in the market and as a result new possibilities were opening up. The idea that trade would reduce war gained popularity among policy makers, world leaders, business executives and even common people.

However, the initial optimism regarding globalisation received a jolt due to events like 9/11, 2008 financial crisis where people lost jobs and savings. As a result, the vulnerabilities of

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an interconnected world got exposed. Despite facing severe obstacles, globalisation continued its steady rise, and this was possible due to the development of the telecommunication and the electronics sector. The telecom revolution and globalisation helped each other to grow. It is at this juncture that the author introduces her protagonist: China. China's rise as a growing economic and political power has been meticulously narrated in Braw's account of globalisation. The author through several case studies shows China's key role in rise and fall of globalisation. Braw through several examples shows how China became the world factory after its integration in the world economy through its induction in Wto in the year 2001. China's rapid industrialisation fuelled the ambition of the hyperglobalists as its manufacturing abilities aided the multinational companies to scale their production and decrease their cost. China's ascent helped the ordinary masses to get out of poverty. The export-based economy created a demand for global goods and as a result a mutual dependence was established between China and the West. Braw notes that during this early phase of globalisation China was deemed to be ideologically aligned with the liberal democracies.

However, Braw argues that with time China started using its economic power as a political tool. Braw shows through relevant case studies how China imposed trade sanctions on countries that opposed its policies (for example ban on Australian wine import). Another significant example in this regard is China's policy towards Lithuania as the latter engaged diplomatically with Taiwan. As a result, Lithuania had to face major economic consequences.

With time the West realised that Ip theft by China led to rapid rise of China as an economic power. The global rollout of the 5G technology escalated the tension between the West and China where China's telecommunication giant Huawei was at the centre of the debate. The Western countries had their concerns regarding potential data breach and political espionage. As a result of this rivalry between China and the West, national security got intertwined with economics.

Another example cited by Braw which shows how China tried to influence global power was its policy of militarisation

of islands in South China sea. Therefore, Braw argues although initially China was deemed to be a like-minded partner of the liberal democracies but with time the authoritarian government of China showed its true colour. This ideological difference contributed significantly to the fall of globalisation according to the author. While China occupies a central part of Braw's chronicle of the rise and fall of globalisation, there are other factors also that led to the demise of globalisation. Some of the factors as highlighted by Braw are Brexit, the rise of populist movement all over the world, rising inequality in both developed and developing nations, job losses due to offshoring etc. As the drawbacks of the globalisation became more visible, the world became more divided and fragmented.

After the Cold War when globalisation gained its prominence, it was assumed that there won't be any large-scale conflict due to economic independence. The basic premise behind this thinking was the idea that democracies don't go for war. However, this myth got badly busted when Russia invaded Ukraine. In due course of time it was proved that economic interdependence does not necessarily translates to a peaceful world. Soon, the economic fallout from the war became visible as Europe was highly dependent on Russia for energy. Braw argued that Russia was never a key player of globalisation unlike China. Its role was restricted only in energy trade, as a result it could not properly integrate into the global supply chain. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in the year 2022 marks an important point for the decline of the globalisation. It can be said that it marked the beginning of the end of globalisation. In order to retaliate, the Western countries imposed economic sanctions, threw Russia out of financial systems and froze its assets. Braw argues that the era of economic "deglobalisation" began. Regionalism became the order of the day in place of globalisation. As for Russia, it started to look eastwards towards China and India to bypass the imposed sanctions. Due to this, parallel global systems emerged instead of an integrated global world.

Braw looks beyond the conventional notions behind the fall of globalisation and attributes that Generation Z (those who are born after 1996 and before early 2010) played a crucial role in the decline of the globalisation. The author argues that as



Generation Z is socially and environmentally aware, they won't choose consumer goods that are not sustainable. As they are politically and socially active citizens, they are likely not to choose products which are produced as a result of gross human rights violation or due to exploitative labour practices. This marks a departure from the earlier practices in which the costs of the products were of utmost importance. The author argues that Generation Z is not anti-globalisation, but it rightly questions the idea of globalisation whenever it is required. Values and ethics are more valued as a result.

Therefore, the author through various case studies comes to the conclusion that the era of hyper globalisation has come to an end. Instead, we can witness regionalism and rise of economic nationalism. According to the author, "off shoring" has been replaced by "friend shoring" where nations are prioritizing security over cheap products. Braw believes firmly that globalisation is not being reformed but being reversed.

Braw's take on the journey of globalisation is undoubtedly insightful and refreshing. What makes it different is Braw's use of personal stories to understand the complex geopolitics. Braw interviews almost all stakeholders of globalisation including business heads, common people, policy makers, politicians etc. In a very lucid way without using economic jargons, Braw deftly chronicles the rise and fall of globalisation. This book will definitely be a useful resource for scholars in the future.

However, the only shortcoming of the book is that it only views globalisation through the lens of the Western nations. Although, the author tries to give a global perspective but at times it may be said that the Global South has been ignored blatantly.

