

From ‘Why Americans Hate Politics’ to analyze the Dilemma of Globalization

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Abstract: *Globalization, the world's most dominant trend in recent decades, seems to be in serious trouble at the moment. Firstly, the United States, the globalization leader, is in chaos in its domestic situation after 2016. Secondly, along with the decline in global trade, there are signs of anti-globalization in different world regions. What has gone wrong with globalization? This article starts from Why Americans hate politics and related materials to analyze the domestic phenomenon in the United States as an entry point to study the problems of globalization: analyzing the apparent contradictions between Democrats and Republicans, radicals and conservatives, and finally suggesting that the essence of the current issues of both the United States and globalization is due to the conflict between the industrial economy and the financial economy caused by technological development.*

Keywords: *Globalization; America; Industrial economy; Financial economy*

1. Introduction

As the global hegemony, even the United States' domestic affairs will also have enormous influences worldwide [1]. Therefore, it's meaningful to have a more comprehensive understanding of the US domestic issues for International relationship study. One unignorable affair is that its domestic situation seemed to change totally after the election of the United States president in 2017. In some critics' eyes, the 45th president, Donald Trump, adopted significantly different international and domestic policies compared to his predecessor, which caused remarkable and enduring effects in American society even after his leave. Especially during the election last year, there was much shocking news in the media about the conflict in Washington. Some journal pictures, just like the second civil war, had erupted in the US. It's no doubt that Donald Trump has to bear the responsibility of causing the circumstances. Still, if we consider one person as the crucial point for history, it means ignoring some more profound and real factors.

According to the author of the book *Why Americans Hate Politics*, the current chaotic situation in the US is not a novel and isolated event [2]. Those zealous political actions, such as the occupation of Capitol Hill, the BLM parade, are both caused by American's hate of politics. Simultaneously, outside the US, there also presents tricky dilemmas of global governance. Reasonably, we can propose this question: Are there having some connections between the American domestic chaos and the globalization problem? Hence, although the first edition of *Why Americans Hate Politics* was published in 1991, this paper will use it as the base and together with other historical materials to obtain some useful inspirations to understand the US, the most potent sovereignty today, and then attempt to analyze the problem of globalization today.

2. The “Second Civil War” in America

In history textbooks, the famous Civil War that happened in the North America (Of course, there only officially has one Civil War in textbooks.) refers to the four-years long military conflict between the southern and the northern governments of America beginning in 1861 [3]. This war changed the previous political situation of North America, closed up the gap of different classes, and established the following road of the United States for about 100 years. However, the “second civil war” is totally different. This “war” has no guns and no drops of blood but continues from the last 60s to the present, creating the divided US society today.

According to Dionne, the "New Left" (compared with the traditional one that focuses more on the worker class) in the US was cultivated by the movement that appealed to civil rights and the Anti-Vietnam War event in the 1960s, whose central concept is using participatory democracy against representative democracy. It's no doubt that representative politics is more favored by elites because these wealthier, more educated people always had more time and resources to devote to politics than those of the lower class. However, the "New Left" asserts that the working class, which Marx described as the "gravediggers of capitalism," has been captured by capitalist culture and has become the "affirmative force" or the most energetic supporter of capitalism [4]. Therefore, the New Left's revolution task falls to those who have not yet been assimilated into capitalism, such as young intellectuals, colors, immigrants, and minorities. Their reconstruction approaches have the features of "primitive instincts": from the 60s rock music and drug-using to today's movements of abandoning laws against abortion, laws against racial discrimination, and so on. In the Left's eyes, these actions mean the struggle for freedom and equality. But to conservative people, it means the degenerate of family values and collapse of morality. Moreover, politicians deliberately promoted these divisive issues over and over again to win elections. As a result, these issues have not received any practical solutions, but only old resentments and anger have been stirred up. Indeed, the views between the Left and Right have become more and more irreconcilable. The book defined the situation as the second civil war, which led Americans to have to choose the political position around a series of issues today.

3. The Threat to the Domestic Political Institution

According to the situation described in the *Why Americans hate politics*, we can conclude that the Democratic Party's tangled relationship with their counterpart, the Republican, or the long historical dispute between the liberal and the conservative is the initial reason for the split. Liberals support state intervention in the economy but oppose state intervention in morality, so liberals ceded moral advantages to conservatives in past decades. In contrast, conservatives oppose state intervention in the economy but support state intervention in morality and result in their predicament between moral and economic. No one is willing to offer a neutral and good choice because of the uncertainty of voting [5]. This is the reason why Americans hate politics.

However, the above only historically analyze the American domestic problem under the frame of its political institution and doesn't consider whether the institution has fundamental shortages when facing the current situation. For many scholars, the divergence and balance between different parties might be the core of democracy [6-7]. But at the beginning of the establishment of US democracy, many grand people, including Washington, Hamilton, and Adams, expressed their worries about the subtle balance of the party system and favors of the elite politics [8].

So, it's necessary to reconsider what is the meaning of democracy under the discourse of the US. In The federalist papers, the concept of freedom is a much more classical republicanism view and value. In short, it's the freedom from domination and the common good guidance of the individual's will. But all the virtues of the political institution that the American founding fathers attempted were seemingly disappeared. Especially after the cold war, the situation became worse because of the emerging of a fatal challenge, the media's rapid progress. According to Condorcet's Jury Theorem [9], when a group decides to make a binary choice by majority rule voting because the statistics tell us that the correct result of the blind selection is 50%, therefore with the increase of participated voters, the possibility of making a correct decision will increase together. This could be the basement of democratic theory. However, today the politician can sway public opinion so easily through the influence of the media and control the choices of the majority of people, thus making the seemingly democratic choices actually only the opinion of a few. Considering the US case, the present institution doesn't have enough control to prevent the media from amplifying the consistent split, intensifying the conflicts, and finally resulting in Donald Trump's election.

4. The Relation between Domestic Chaos and Globalization

In the first sentence of Dionne's book, the author attributes President Ronald Reagan's election victory in 1980 to the conflicts between the Left and the Right. Definitely, Trump's victory in 2016 was also directly because of the conservatives' counterattack. As the book describes, in the past decade, under a series of radical affirmative action movements, low- and middle-class whites of the United States felt socially and politically abandoned because they did not enjoy any benefits of affirmative action but had to suffer its costs.

However, only considering Trump's victory or the related chaos from the domestic aspect is not enough. Moreover, if we have a more global perspective, recently there are many similar problems in separate regions and countries worldwide. According to the data from the World Trade Organization [10], numerous predicaments emerge in the international economic, cultural, and political areas: total world merchandise trade will fall by 13-32% compared to the pre-epidemic period, and the global foreign direct investment will fall by nearly 40%, slipping to its lowest level in almost 20 years. Additionally, the anti-globalization cultural trend and trade protectionism are rising globally, the globalization process is obviously obstructed [11]. The dilemma of globalization is no less tricky than the American domestic chaos, just as Francis Fukuyama's outspoken declaration: at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, the world would experience several forms of social disease [12]. Therefore, what's happening with globalization? And since globalization is also being called 'Americanization' [13], can we find some clues for global problems from the American domestic situation?

Reviewing the process of globalization, it's definitely accompanying with the development of technology and industrial revolutions. According to the "Third Industrial Revolution" report from the Economist [14], the technology plays the vital role to construct our society: the first industrial revolution began in the 1760s and was labeled by replacing hand-style working with steam machines. This one cultivated the industrial economy. The Second one emerged at the beginning of the 20th, was characterized by the "Ford system" and the "flow line production," and incubated the financial economy [15]. The newest technological developments and applications are still underway, and we are in the process of the "Third Industrial Revolution." Comparing the stage of technological development with the growth of globalization shows that the first industrial revolution integrated the European or Western world, and the second one "flats" [16] the whole earth.

Therefore, this work holds that the domestic chaos in the US and the dilemma of globalization are both caused by the conflict between the geographic and geoeconomics/geopolitical America, or between the power of "industrial" economy and "financial" economy. Some scholars define the industrial economy as one who produces goods and sells them at a lower cost than competitors to gain the surplus, such as what was described in Marx's theory [17]. However, the financial one exploits economic gains by stock, debt, and financial leverage [18]. Because of their different features, these two kinds of economies have totally different influences on their communities. For a small but important example, Industrial one will spend money to increase competitiveness by building infrastructures to reduce the cost of transportation and doing business. In this way, it also will increase the community's living level passively. However, there has no motivation for the financial to make this investment. In other words, the financial economy is the production of new tech and is more suitable for globalization. Thus, during globalization or Americanization, there is more financial economy replacing industrial economy in the US. It causes the Rustbelt, provokes people's hate, and arouses rebellion and other chaos. Moreover, because financial one has more liquidity than traditional industrial one, when we consider America in the geoeconomics definition, it indeed includes the economies of other developed countries and emerging states. So, the dilemma of globalization is related to the separation of the "soul" and the "flesh" of America.

5. Conclusion

The book, why Americans hate politics definitely is an excellent way to learn more about the current situation in America. Even though it isn't a newmade work, the scenario it described is becoming worse today, and some reasons it reveals are still inspired. However, the author ignores the international perspective and doesn't consider the issue globally enough, which I express my opinion above. In sum, the previous development and the recent dilemma, whether in the US or outside globally, are both leading by the increase of tech and the corresponding economic pattern. Therefore, having cooperation globally in making technological breaking through might be a more effective and stable way to solve today's global dilemma.

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