



University of International Relations, China

Aalborg University, Denmark

China and International Relations joint Master's Programme

Master Thesis

**Why does China need to focus on the Construction of
Discourse in the Global Game of Digital Globalization?**

Li Kaiyuan

Supervisor A: Guo Huimin

Supervisor B: Ane Bislev

Table of Content

Abstract.....	4
List of Abbreviations.....	5
Chapter 1 Introduction	6
1.1 Background Introduction.....	6
1.1.1 The Development of Digital Economy in the COVID-19 Era	6
1.1.2 Evolution of Economic Globalization	7
1.1.3 Digital Economy and Digital Globalization	9
1.2 Problem Formulation.....	10
1.3 Research Question.....	11
1.4 Aim of the Project.....	12
Chapter 2 Methodology	13
2.1 Choice of Theory.....	13
2.2 Choice of Data.....	15
2.3 Approach of the Project.....	16
2.4 Method.....	16
2.5 Structure of the Project.....	17
2.6 Limitations.....	17
Chapter 3 Theory	19
3.1 World-System Theory.....	19
3.1.1 The World System under Capitalist System	19
3.1.2 Nation-States in the World System.....	20
3.1.3 World System and Economic Globalization.....	22
3.2 Social Constructivism Theory	22
3.2.1 Social Constructivism.....	22

3.2.2 Discourse Construction on Globalization.....	23
3.3 Securitization Theory	24
3.3.1 Discourse Construction of Security Agenda.....	25
Chapter 4 Analysis	27
4.1 The Rise of China in the Digital Globalization	27
4.1.1 Digital Economy Scale and Growth of China	27
4.1.2 Internet Giants of China	28
4.1.3 Digital Construction under National Strategy of “Belt and Road”	29
4.2 Power System and Global Games in Digital Globalization	31
4.2.1 The Digital Divide between Global North and Global South	31
4.2.2 The Global Games under the World System	33
4.2.3 Securitization of the China Threat.....	37
4.3 The Importance of China’s Discourse Construction in Economic Globalization	40
Chapter 5 Conclusion.....	42
Bibliography	43

Abstract

As a new form of globalization, digital globalization is driven by digital technology, using digital platforms and information networks as carriers, which has changed the way of the national economy, global trade, government management, and personal development in the era of COVID-19. In the wave of deglobalization, the booming digital economy and science and technology have constituted the main features of the new round of globalization.

Subject to the unbalanced world-system formed by the long-term development of globalization in capitalism, digital globalization has also caused unbalanced development such as the digital divide. For emerging countries such as China, which have been rising in terms of economic volume and technological level, the construction of discourse power in globalization is becoming an important factor of future development based on the continuous improvement of the level of hard power.

This project chooses world-system theory, social constructivism theory, and securitization theory to explain the inequality in digital globalization, as well as the resulting problems of the global game and security construction. Besides, this project attempts to explain the dilemmas that need to be faced by China in the development process of globalization and the importance of paying attention to the construction of discourse power.

Keywords: Digital Globalization, World-System, Securitization, Discourse Power, Digital Divide

List of Abbreviations

WHO	World Health Organization
QCA	Qualitative Content Analysis
CAICT	China Academy of Information and Communications Technology
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
MGI	McKinsey Global Institute
ICT	Information and Communications Technology

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background Introduction

As a globally phenomenal large-scale infectious disease, COVID-19 has caused a profound impact worldwide since it started to spread in China at the end of 2019, moreover, which is still posing a serious threat continuously to political, economic, and social conditions of the whole world. By 18 May 2022, the number of COVID-19 infectious cases in different countries in the world had reached around 520.37 million, and the number of deaths had already exceeded 6.27 million (WHO, 2022).

For the development of economic globalization, the outbreak of COVID-19 is undoubtedly an aggravation in the current wave of deglobalization. Before the outbreak of COVID-19, the global service industry showed rapid growth which was an important part of the global economy, and the proportion of service industry to GDP was no less than 70% in developed countries and generally more than 50% in developing countries (UNCTAD, 2021). After the outbreak of COVID-19, different countries successively implemented quarantine measures which made the whole world fall into the Great Lockdown, with service industries such as catering, tourism, and aviation suffering from heavy losses. According to Peterson Institute for International Economics, the degree of reversal had reached its highest level in history (PIIE, 2020).

However, the trend of globalization is difficult to reverse under the operation logic of the capitalist system, the world economy has already developed into a highly integrated world economic system, with national economies achieving complex interdependence. The outbreak of COVID-19 has deepened the trend of deglobalization on the one hand but promoted the economic activity to the transformation of digital globalization on the other, which is reshaping globalization and the world economic situation under the pandemic.

1.1.1 The Development of Digital Economy in the COVID-19 Era

According to the Statista data website, there were 4.66 billion active Internet users

worldwide by January 2021, accounting for nearly 60% of the global population of 7.9 billion. There were 4.32 billion mobile Internet users and 4.2 billion active users of social media (Statista, 2021). The number of global internet users grew by more than 10% in the first year of the pandemic, which was the largest annual increase in the last decade (United Nations, 2021). According to statistics, the online economy triggered by the COVID-19 had increased bandwidth by 35%, which was the largest increase since 2013 (TeleGeography, 2020).

The worldwide emergency and control measures during the pandemic, such as lockdowns and the closure of public places, coupled with the demand for access to news, government services, health information, e-commerce, and online banking, have led to a rapidly growing digitalization. COVID-19 has changed people's lifestyles, like working from home and studying online, which is undoubtedly accelerating the popularity of the Internet and the digital economy.

With the rapid development of new businesses such as online education, telemedicine, and telecommuting, traditional industries are going digital under the pandemic, and digital technologies are providing new tools and access to information in multiple fields. In that way, digitization has become a basic need, and the digital economy acts as a macroeconomic stabilizer, to some extent, reducing the impact of the pandemic on the offline economy. The non-contact nature of the digital economy allows it to overcome the adverse effects of pandemics and demonstrate its resilience to deglobalization.

COVID-19 accelerates the development of digital technology, promotes the transformation of the world economy to a globalized digital economy, and injects new momentum into the development of globalization. Data has become the fourth factor of production after land, capital, and labor.

1.1.2 Evolution of Economic Globalization

The system of economic globalization that has gradually emerged since Columbus' discovery of America in 1492 can be roughly divided into three phases. Until the first half of the twentieth century, driven by the Industrial Revolution, it was the first wave

of globalization, its economic form was the colonial economy. The first wave of globalization was driven by industrialization, with economic interests as the driving force, warfare as the means of expansion, and colonialism as the means of power domination and control, which was the first wide-scale and long-lasting globalization process in history of mankind.

The second wave of globalization started after the end of the Second World War, the economic form was the capitalist economy. Based on global geopolitical reconstruction, which was driven by technology, the second and the third Industrial Revolutions. The second wave of globalization was linked by capital, driven and maintained by the global economic order and multinational corporations, creating global industrial chains and supply chain relationships.

However, the traditional economic globalization entered an adjustment phase after the global financial crisis of 2008. The economic recession in developed countries has caused rising unemployment rates and the slippage of traditional middle classes, resulting in a rising wave of right-wing populism with Brexit and Trump winning the U.S. presidential election in 2016. Whereafter, the call for deglobalization was increasing, which was undoubtedly a major blow to the development of capitalist globalization. But although the global goods trade has flattened and cross-border capital flows have declined sharply since 2008, globalization is not heading into reverse. Rather, it is entering a new phase defined by soaring flows of data and information.

The third wave of globalization driven by the digital economy started to develop at the end of the 20th century. With the development of technology, economic globalization began to show a long-term trend of inherent transformation. The emergence of new business models based on digital technology is making digital platforms become the new global marketplace. Meanwhile, the emergence and rapid development of digital trade are profoundly changing the way of international trade.

For China, although it was allowed to join the Internet in 1994 which was 30 years later than the United States, China entered the mobile Internet era with the developed countries at the same time around 2010, which coincided with a period of rapid economic growth in China. The mobile Internet is an important symbol for the

development of the digital economy. Nowadays, with its deep integration of digital technology and economy, China's digital economy has reached the window of an explosion, and the digital economy is gradually taking shape as a powerful economic form.

The new order of globalization driven by the digital economy is moving from China and other emerging technological powers to the world, it's likely to become the first wave of globalization initiated by China's participation. As a developing country with ideological differences from the Western capitalist countries, China is eager to build its own discourse system in the new round of globalization as a way to change its passive position in the traditional world system, enhance its soft power and international influence, thus promoting its economic development and realize its national interests.

1.1.3 Digital Economy and Digital Globalization

The digital economy as an economic concept, it refers to a new economic form in which can achieve rapid and optimal allocation of resources through big data, with data resources as the key element and modern information networks as the main carrier. At the technical level, it includes big data, cloud computing, the Internet of Things, blockchain, artificial intelligence, 5G, and other emerging technologies. The digital economy brings a new socio-political and economic system in which capital and business activities are digitized on a large scale.

The revolutionary mark of digital technology lies in the commercialization of 5G, which makes digital technology not just an accumulation of data volumes compared to 4G, but an interconnection of everything based on high-speed rates and large capacity. This connection can greatly compress the physical space of globalization and make globalization completely connected by digital technology.

By using information tools such as upgraded network infrastructure and information technology, the digital economy has enabled human beings to enhance their ability to handle big data, promoting the transformation of the human economic form from an industrial economy to an information economy or intelligent economic. It can be said that the digital economy is the main economic form after the agricultural

economy and industrial economy.

In the current process of economic globalization, the role played by science and technology is becoming more and more important. Countries that master advanced technology become the leaders of the new round of technological revolution and economic globalization. Especially at a time when the traditional economic form is gradually weakening, resulting in the wave of deglobalization, the new digital globalization form has become a new driving force to promote the development of globalization.

1.2 Problem Formulation

Since the 1990s, the most common topic of international relations has been discussed is the concept of globalization. The topic of globalization is mainly a set of discourses about the economic and cultural development of the world. However, within the discourse of globalization, there is very little discussion of the political relations between nation-states, although they have always existed. It can be regarded that globalization seems to be more inclined toward an economic topic, but the logic behind its operation is closely related to political factors.

Globalization is a modern concept of the development of the capitalist system, and it is determined by the logic of the overseas expansion of capitalism, so the trend of globalization under the capitalist system has its inevitability of existence. However, due to the expansionary and monopolistic nature of capitalism, the different division of labor in global status means that economic globalization is an unequal world system for developed and developing countries. In order to attract marginalized nation-states and political forces to join this world system, the developed capitalist countries, construct “globalization” as a discourse, emphasizing the inevitability of capitalism’s economic globalization in the process of world development through mainstream political discourse.

In nowadays, with the development of the digital economy under the Internet technology, especially the intensified pressure of traditional industries under the impact

of COVID-19, more and more national policymakers realize that the digital economy is likely to become a new lever to enhance economic growth in the next phase and lead a new wave of economic globalization. For China, a developing country with rapid economic development in recent years, it has become a global power and the second-largest economy in the world, yet its discourse power in the capitalist world system, part of its soft power, is not commensurate with its hard power of economy and digital technology. In order to find its place in the new wave of globalization, it has to construct its own discourse system in order to break its passive position in the capitalist world system, to exert international influence in the international arena, and to realize its national interests to a greater extent.

1.3 Research Question

There seems to be something inevitable and irreversible about the process of globalization. How can politics manage the globalization process and how much political autonomy do nation-states continue to have under globalization conditions? The discussion is about managing globalization rather than radically altering its processes.

In connection with the problems above and problem formulation, this project focuses on the development of digital globalization and global game under the capitalist world system with the purpose to explain and analyze the following research question:

Why does China need to focus on the Construction of Discourse in the Global Game of Digital Globalization?

The discussion of research issues will also involve the following sub-questions: Why does capitalist economic globalization operate as an unequal world system? Why has economic globalization created a global game of nation-states, and why has the new wave of digital globalization created a digital divide? How is China making a difference in the globalization of the digital economy?

1.4 Aim of the Project

In General, this project aims to explore the unequal world system brought about by the development of globalization under the capitalist system, and the rise of China in the new round of digital globalization in this context. For the process of globalization, this project attempts to expose its principle and logic under the capitalist system and to explore the discourse construction and powerful operation over the process of globalization.

Based on this, the project explains how the digital economy gives new development momentum to globalization when the wave of deglobalization is gradually emerging. As the second-largest economy and the largest developing country, why does China need to use the dividends of the digital economy to try to establish its own discourse power in the world system dominated by developed countries, and to change its passive position in the globalization system, so as to shape its international image, exert international influence and realize its national interests.

Besides, this project can provide informative implications for global governance and nation-state development in the digital globalization, with the intention of bridging the gap between different countries in the development of globalization by exposing the nature of the globalization process and the logic of the existence of imbalanced status quo such as the digital divide. For China, with its hard power increasing, striving for a better situation in international relations may be more important for further integration into the globalization process.

Chapter 2 Methodology

2.1 Choice of Theory

In this project, the world system theory, social constructionism theory, and securitization theory are used to explain the nature, internal logic, and contradictions of the development of economic globalization. The development of the digital globalization, which is the research background of this project, still exists within the framework of international relations formed by the world system, and the unequal division of labor in the world system is also the structural root of the digital divide between Global North and Global South countries.

World-systems theory is a multidisciplinary approach to world history and social change which emphasizes the world system as the primary unit of social analysis. This research inquiries into the new development of globalization and the relations between economic globalization and nation-state from the perspective of world-system theories.

The world-system theory outlines the history and essence of capitalist global development from a macro perspective, and it fits to a certain extent with the course of globalization, thus clearly demonstrating that globalization is the history of the formation of an unequal modern world system. From this point of view, it is profound and relevant, and it reflects the research value of this theory.

World-system theory also emphasizes the role of nation-states in globalization. Therefore, although this project focuses on digital globalization, it is too optimistic to focus on the integration of the single global market and the world economic system by completely leaving the framework of nation-states behind in view of the current world system and the pattern of international relations. The global game and unequal status among nation-states are still a problem that needs to be solved in the current development of globalization. Therefore, it is still relevant to choose such representative sovereign countries as China and the United States as the subjects of this project.

Securitization theory is in line with social constructivism theory, which is an

important part of constructivism theory on security issues in international relations. In this project, social constructivism is used to explain the discourse construction of globalization by the developed capitalist countries represented by the United States, they use the discourse power to maintain a pattern with capitalist logic in line with their national interests, continuously attracting periphery countries to join and sustaining the operation of the world system.

The securitization theory analyzes the threat construction of security issues against emerging technological powers by developed countries, which is for limiting the development of emerging powers in the globalization. In addition, both social constructionism and securitization theory emphasize the role of discourse, the hegemony of discourse is also the ruling foundation and political root of the unbalanced development of Global North and Global South countries in the context of globalization.

In short, the world-system is the logical paradigm of globalization development, while discourse construction and securitization are the means to sustain this unbalanced world system. The combined application of these three theories can explain why China, with its growing hard power in terms of economic level and technological strength, needs to break the restrictions and exclusion imposed by the hegemony of the developed countries' discourse in a world system, and to enhance its international discourse and influence in order to achieve economic development and national interests.

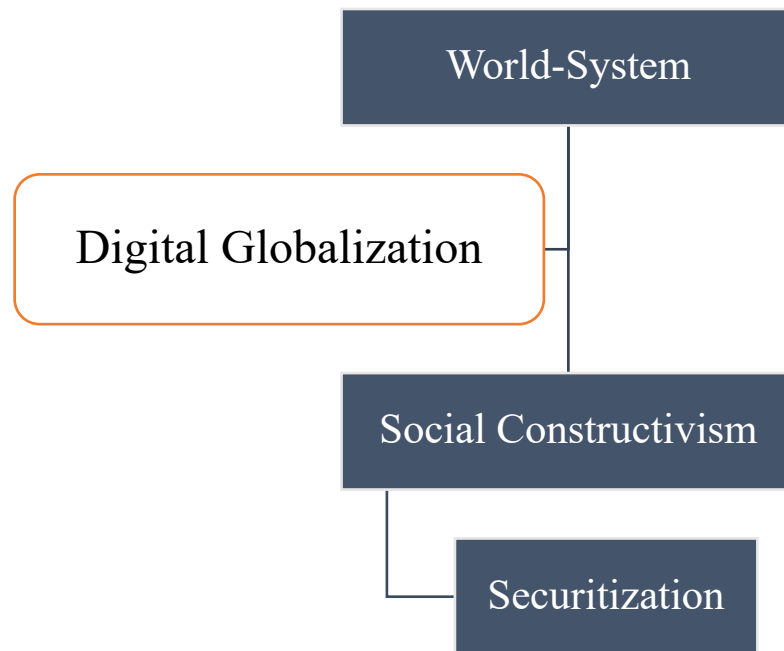


Figure 1. *Choice of Theories*

2.2 Choice of Data

The researcher will collect second-hand data with political implications through books, academic journals, media, and the Internet. To be specific, the data is mainly composed of official government documents of China, academic research results in the world and the authoritative and relatively fair media worldwide. Official government documents are used to understand the policy ideas, diplomatic strategies, development motives and political intentions of the Chinese government in the process of digital globalization. In order to avoid falling into the subjective misunderstanding of a single governmental decision, this project will attempt to understand the logic of globalization and the interests of different countries in an objective and neutral stand from the vast academic research results of the Chinese and Western academia, so as to better understand the balance, game and complex interdependence among nation-states in the process of globalization.

In addition, by deriving data from mass media reports, the researchers can obtain supplementary information on government documents to gain a more comprehensive understanding of government policies, decision-making processes, and consequences.

To ensure objectivity, the researchers will only select descriptive information that reflects a reality about the development of digital globalization and the global game in the world system of capitalism in the media and will not select any critical information.

2.3 Approach of the Project

The research mainly uses the qualitative approach, in somehow the focus of the research in many ways is difficult to quantify. The research collects detailed information using various data like government documents, mass media, and academic journals. Then use a qualitative content analysis method to analyze the data. In addition to this, it tries to collect objective data and not use data with a unilateral political stance, strong personal values, bias, or stereotyped images.

2.4 Method

In this project, qualitative content analysis (QCA) will be applied in performing the analysis of this paper. The method of content analysis is utilized as research to observe certain themes, concepts, and even words in qualitative data (Columbia Public Health, 2021).

Therefore, this enables one to analyze and quantify meanings and the relationships of various words, concepts as well as themes. Thus, it is stated that “Researchers can then make inferences about the messages within the texts, the writer, the audience, and even the culture and time surrounding the text.” (Columbia Public Health, 2021) In using QCA one can observe communication themes within an institution, individuals, or a group. In addition to this, it can also examine forms of communication and present potential patterns and discover international disparities in communication content (Columbia Public Health, 2021). Therefore, using qualitative content analysis QCA as a research tool can be beneficial as it can enable one to analyze communication through text and it can also be used by means of qualitative and quantitative analysis.

2.5 Structure of the Project

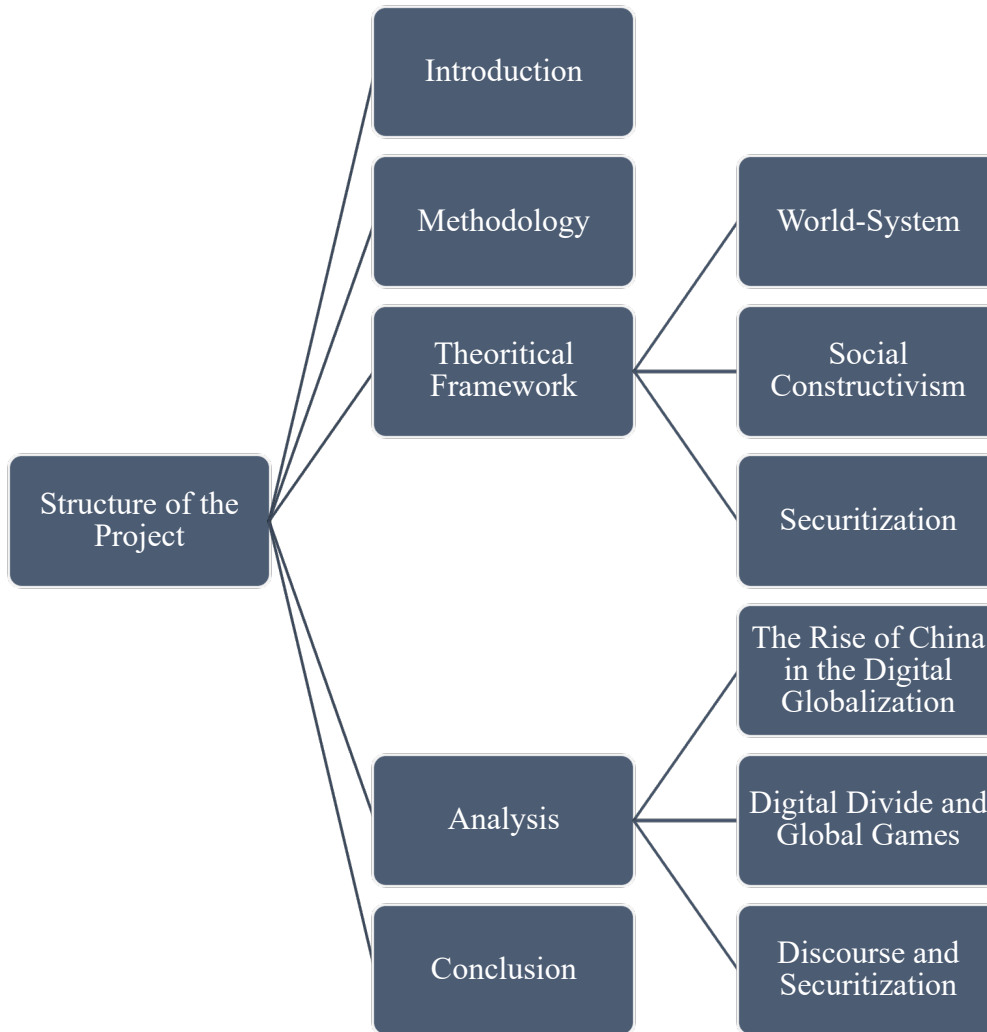


Figure 2. *Structure of the Project*

2.6 Limitations

In terms of sources and data, this project is mainly collecting second-hand data from official websites on the Internet, the data are not directly collected by researchers, so the viewpoint expressed by researchers is based on a small sample size which is not all-around, it may have limited generalizability.

Besides, the project has made delimitations to the scope of the research. Given that globalization is a large and complex concept, this project limits the research context to the new wave of digital globalization that is gradually developing due to the impact of

COVID-19.

Research results on digital globalization have been increasing in recent years. However, it is undeniable that the research on digital globalization is still at the stage of exploration because the current form of the digital economy shown is far from taking shape, coupled with the lack of systematic and accurate statistical data to support it.

Contributing to the study of globalization and power through the lens of social constructivism and securitization theory is also a challenging task. The difficulty lies in the fact that the meanings of “social constructionism”, “globalization”, and “discourse power” are not only unclear but also controversial and divergent in Chinese and Western academia.

Further and future research about this specific topic could discuss and analyze how will digital globalization evolve after COVID-19? How will China build its discourse power in the world system to realize its national interests and thus lead the new wave of globalization as a developing country, and will this bridge the North-South gap in the context of globalization or create new divisions and exploitation among developing countries?

Chapter 3 Theory

3.1 World-System Theory

3.1.1 World System under Capitalist System

According to Immanuel Wallerstein, from an economic point of view, contemporary society has only one social system, the “world system”, a whole consisting of a single division of labor and a multicultural system (Wallerstein, 1998). All parts of this whole coexist in a single division of labor, for their respective needs, they achieve complex interdependence economically with each other. Wallerstein mentioned two types of world systems: one with a common political system, world-empire. The other one does not which is world-economy. The capitalist world system in the context of contemporary globalization belongs to the latter type, which manifests itself in the form of unification of globalized markets among nation-states to achieve economic interests, international economic exchanges on a national basis, and maximization of their respective interests in a state of balance (Wallerstein, 1998).

According to Wallerstein’s world-system theory, the modern world system in the context of capitalism is an unequal globalization system, which is the inevitability of capitalism. The capitalist system did not emerge from the beginning in isolation within individual countries but as a worldwide system. This system consists of three parts: core countries, semi-periphery countries, and periphery countries (Wallerstein, 1998).

Three different regions assume different economic roles: core countries utilize the raw materials and cheap labor provided by periphery countries, then produce and sell it to periphery countries for profit, which controls the functioning of financial and trade markets in the world system. In addition to providing raw materials and cheap labor to core countries, periphery countries also provide sales markets. The semi-periphery countries are in between, which partly plays the role of the marginal zone for core countries and partly plays the role of the central zone for periphery countries (Wallerstein, 1998). Without any one of the three roles, the capitalist world economy cannot exist. They influence each other, link into a combined structure, and function as

an integrated whole. It functions in the global expansion of capitalism, continuously integrating periphery countries into the world system.

It is worth noting that the modern international relations and nation-state system represented by the Westphalian paradigm were basically developed and formed in synchronization with capitalism. This world economy has three basic elements (Taylor, 1993). Firstly, the single world market. Production in this market is for trading, for profit. The consequence of this process is uneven development worldwide. Secondly, the multi-state system. Nation-states and state sovereignty are unique forms of the capitalist world economy. The multi-state system prevents the entire system from transforming into a world empire, which enables international politics in a state of balance of power. Lastly, the third-order hierarchical structure. This is the basis for the stability of the world economy, a structure that has been successfully maintained by ruling groups in various areas of conflict (Johnston, 1982).

However, the world-system theory also assumes that the economic status of countries is variable (Wallerstein, 1998). The core and periphery regions are not fixed. Periphery and semi-periphery countries have the opportunity to rise in the period of world economic change, but the rise of the status of some countries is bound to be accompanied by the decline of the status of other countries. Changes in core and periphery regions are actually changes in the combination of international forces and the transformation of the international system. The globalization of the digital economy is a major transition period in the development of globalization. In this context, nation-states that master core technologies are more likely to enter the core and dominant regions. Therefore, China is eager to lead a new era with its current economic volume and technology. But for the western developed countries that have ideological conflicts with China, they do not expect China rise to the center of the new stage of international relations and the world economy.

3.1.2 Nation-States in the World System

The world-system exists as an economic entity, the primary basis for its growth and expansion is to achieve economic growth. Only by achieving continuous economic

growth can the growing world system become possible. Douglass North believes that the emergence of an efficient economic organization is the key to economic growth, the rise of the West prior to the East and its expansion overseas is due to the development of an efficient economic organization in Western Europe (North & Thomas, 1973).

The nation-state is clearly more efficient in terms of its ability to organize the economy, so its existence is the key to achieving economic growth (North, 1981) It provides the conditions for economic growth in the following three ways. One is to implement property rights and encourage innovation. Nation-states either buy individual innovations to make them public goods or provide protection for individual property rights and encourage innovation. The second is to provide protection and justice, that is, political order, to partially address market failures. The third is that the states provide the capitalists with political status so that their economic activities can be carried out with legitimacy in the name of the state. Besides, only nation-states can afford the enormous costs to expand abroad. In this sense, the formation of the nation-state and its system has profoundly affected the economic growth, modernization, and globalization of Europe in the past. With the new round of digital globalization, it has continued to develop in the international arena.

From the current point of view, the process of globalization under the world system does not mean that the power of nation-states gradually declines. On the contrary, it is a discourse system for developed countries to exert influence and realize economic interests under the capitalist system. At the present stage, globalization is more manifested as a system between nation-states, rather than the global circulation and development in the true sense advocated by globalization. The traditional status of the nation-state is changing, but this does not mean that the power of states has disappeared.

Therefore, although this project focus on digital globalization, considering of current world system and international relations, it is still hard to ignore the nation-state framework but focus on the integration of a single global market and the world economic system. The global game and unequal status among nation-states in the context of globalization are still urgent problems to be solved in the current globalization development. Therefore, it is still meaningful to limit the research subject

to representative sovereign countries such as China and the United States.

3.1.3 World System and Economic Globalization

Globalization includes economic globalization, political globalization, and cultural globalization. Digital globalization is a new feature of today's economic globalization. The source of this new feature due to the development of science and technology in human civilization---the emergence of the Internet in the late 20th century, the development has accelerated in recent years due to the impact of COVID-19.

In terms of Wallerstein's capitalist world economy, that is, the world system, the trend of economic globalization that is widely discussed in academic circles today is nothing more than the worldwide colonial expansion of the Western capitalist countries after the discovery of America by Columbus in 1492. In this process, capitalism as an economic factor and the nation-state system as a political factor play a decisive role. They support each other and become the most important driving force of globalization.

If the driving force of economic globalization is capitalism and the market economy, then the nation-state and its system provide institutional guarantees for expansion. The expansion of the world economy has caused changes in the global political economy, enlarged the economic and social differences between different regions, and led to a modern world economy with hierarchical structure characteristics and a vertical division of labor system, that is, the so-called unbalanced and asymmetric economic globalization.

3.2 Social Constructivism Theory

3.2.1 Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is a social trend of thought and ideological proposition opposite to essentialism. It refers to the continuous construction and reproduction of human subjects through daily practical activities to realize the social construction of reality. Constructivism can be described as a social ontology that insists that humans cannot exist independently out of their social environment and its collectively shared

system of meaning— “culture” in the broadest sense. Social structures and actors are not only mutually determined but also mutually constructed.

3.2.2 Discourse Construction on Globalization

Currently, the concept of globalization has become part of the standard interpretation of global reality, often used by political, economic, and social actors to understand the world and the context in which they operate. Globalization has led to the creation of global norms of international institutions, nation-states, and mainstream international ideologies. (Risse, 2004) It has made many research perspectives of globalization tend to be structural ontology.

But social constructivism argues that the discourse of “globalization” is a result of social construction. Social constructivism emphasizes the constructive role of discourse. As Michel Foucault said, discourse is power, and the practice of discourse establishes power relations (Foucault, 1984). Foucault’s perspective demonstrates how the discourse of globalization constructs power structures of domination and subordination. This perspective allows us to critically examine the different systems of meaning and power relations involved in talking about globalization.

As a mainstream discourse, “globalization” concretizes the phenomenon of globalization into an inevitable social structure, in order to guide the political behavior, economic behavior, and social culture of international actors under the capitalist system. The activities give more connotations to the development of globalization, so as to conform to the development of globalization and the capitalist system.

Social constructivism takes a critical look at discourses of globalization that are taken for granted. The social constructivist understanding of globalization emphasizes the role of immaterial forces, focusing on the construction and interpretation processes of meaning, and regards them as components of globalization.

Economic globalization naturally becomes inevitable for specific purposes and interests under the capitalist system. But those who separate hidden market forces from human agency ignore the fact that liberalization of the capital market is usually triggered by specific political decisions at specific points in time. Globalization is

continuously intensified and reproduced through social and political practices, and these practices are changed by changes in the globalization process.

The globalization process seems to have no actors. It is only those structural and hidden forces that determine our destiny in the absence of actors. Discourse theorists remind us, however, that the rhetorical construction of invoking hidden power often masks underlying power structures. The main task of critically deconstructing the discourse of globalization is to reveal that the power structure is the structure of dominance and subordination. The critical analysis of the discourse of globalization presented here also applies to the so-called “neoliberal discourse”, which is regarded as the dominant discourse in the process of globalization, i.e., the inevitability and irreversibility of globalization.

The neoliberal discourse on globalization was so pervasive in the mid-1990s that it was described as an irreplaceable norm of the age. However, this changed after the 2008 financial crisis. In this context, the tide of deglobalization has come one after another, and the voice of right-wing populism against globalization and multicultural integration has begun to attract more and more people. Therefore, it is not difficult to find that the trend of globalization is not irreversible and irreversible. It can be swayed and influenced by social and political ideology, like the economic crisis and cultural identity.

Dominant discourse builds structural power. It defines how the world works and determines who is the legitimate and authoritative respondent. But actors under power structures are always ready to challenge the practice of communication. The globalization discourse identified above contains universal truths but needs to be tested, such as whether economic liberalization and market integration can benefit people of different classes in developed and developing countries.

3.3 Securitization Theory

Securitization is a security theory of social constructivism that has developed and became increasingly prominent after the end of the Cold War in international relations.

Since the 1990s, changes in international relations had led to changes in security studies, which were affected by constructivism theories in international relations. European constructivist security studies represented by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, namely Copenhagen School have taken security study beyond its traditional height and level in the field of international relations.

Securitization theory emphasizes the constructed nature of security, and its central connotation is that securitizing actors construct an issue as an existential threat to audiences so that they could use unconventional and extraordinary measures to cope with it legally, thus fulfilling specific political benefit.

Security is an “essentially contested concept”, the meaning of security as something that is not objectively definable, and inherently disputed (Buzan, 1983). With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, non-traditional security threats have become increasingly prominent, and security referents and threat sources have become increasingly diversified.

3.3.1 Discourse Construction of Security Agenda

The speech act theory of the British philosopher of language John L. Austin puts forward the proposition that speaking itself is action. Nicholas Onuf believes language is both representation and implementation. People use language to represent actions, and they also use language to implement actions. Philosophers such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Jurgen Habermas also believe that language itself is a form of human activity. Influenced by these theories, the scholar representing the Copenhagen school of securitization theory, Ole Waever, defined securitization as a “speech act”, which could construct the security issues politically (Waever, 1989).

Securitization is a kind of social constructivism in which language is prior to security, it means that speech act can shape the reality, and shape the cause, evolution, and dissolution of the security issues, in that way security is not necessarily an objective survival need, but it's seen as a speech or debate about self-survival to a nation-state. Principally, powerholders can succeed in constructing issues as a security problem through speech acts. From the perspective of sociolinguistics, security is speech act, the

process of conceptualizing security as a speech act is equivalent to the process of securitization, therefore, securitization is defined as “discourse construction of threats” (Waever, 1989).

“Speech-Act” is a breakthrough in security study by the Copenhagen School using linguistic constructivism analysis tools, and it is one of the core concepts of securitization theory. Since securitization is the process of establishing common cognition among subjects, and according to the theory of language constructivism, establishing this cognitive process is a speech act.

The core argument of securitization theory is that safety is the expression of the behavior’s own opinion. “Speech-act” of securitization is to label an issue as a safety issue (Waever, 1989). It can also be seen from this point that since security itself does not have any established meaning, it can be any matter referred to as “security” by the agent of security, and it can be constructed through the social construction, and security is a process of specifying threats. In security discourse, an issue is presented as having the highest priority, so that by labelling it security, an actor can claim a right to respond to the threat through extraordinary measures.

Political problems are recognized as security issues when a problem has been classified as threatening by securitizing actors, which enables institution power to act on the matter and surpass politics (McGlinchey, 2018). Therefore, securitizing actors have the power to decide to determine a potential threat (McGlinchey, 2018). Regarding this notion of securitization, it can be observed that security can result in unbalanced power relations between different countries or powers.

Chapter 4 Analysis

4.1 The Rise of China in the Digital Globalization

With the rapid development in recent decades, China has become one of the world's largest investors and adopters of digital technologies, and it is home to one-third of the world's unicorns (Unicorns are defined as privately held startups valued at over 1 billion dollars) (MGI, 2017). China has the scale to drive rapid commercialization of digital business models, it has the advantage of a very large home market of consumers who are young and eager to embrace digital in all its forms.

China's huge market volume and a significant number of Internet users create conditions for the rapid development and commercialization of the digital economy, the huge Internet user base provides the possibility for digital enterprises to achieve economies of scale quickly. In that way, three giant internet companies with global reach—Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent, the so-called BAT, are creating a digital ecosystem that touches every aspect of consumers' lives (MGI, 2017).

Besides, the Chinese government is actively encouraging digital innovation and entrepreneurship by giving companies room to experiment and offering support as investors, developers, and consumers of new technologies.

4.1.1 Digital Economy Scale and Growth of China

In recent years, with the rapid development of cross-border e-commerce, mobile payment, online education, online entertainment, and cloud computing, the digital economy has become an important driving force for China's economic growth. Affected by COVID-19, the proportion of China's digital economy in GDP has further increased. According to the white paper on the development of China's digital economy issued by the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, the digital economy is accelerating against the trend of economic recession. In 2020, the scale of China's digital economy reached 39.2 trillion yuan, an increase of 3.3 trillion yuan over the previous year, accounting for 38.6% of GDP, a year-on-year increase of 2.4

percentage points. (CAICT, 2020)。

In e-commerce, for instance, China accounted for less than 1 percent value of worldwide transactions only about a decade ago, but that share is now more than 40 percent (MGI, 2017). The value of China's e-commerce transactions is today estimated to be larger than the value of those of France, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States combined (MGI, 2017). In 2020, China's cross-border e-commerce is still in a state of prosperity, in sharp contrast to the downturn in global offline tourism. Statistics from the Customs of China show that in 2020, China's cross-border e-commerce imports and exports reached 1.69 trillion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 31.1%. Among them, China's cross-border e-commerce exports was 1.12 trillion yuan, an increase of 40.1% (Customs of China, 2020).

In mobile payments, penetration among China's internet users has grown rapidly from just 25 percent in 2013 to 86.3 percent in the end of June of 2021, the number of mobile payment users reached 870 million. (People's Bank of China, 2021) In 2020, the total transaction value of mobile payments increased to 432 trillion yuan, around 21 percent up from the previous year. That year, there were more than 123 billion mobile payment transactions in the country (Statista, 2022).

In terms of monetary policy, the launch of the digital RMB will help promote the circulation in the digital economy. The e-RMB is a central bank digital currency (CBDC), which has already begun to circulate in 2021. The circulation of the digital RMB will provide China with a channel for the cross-border flow of funds, without the need to rely on the global payment system SWIFT, which is influenced by the United States.

4.1.2 Internet Giants of China

In financial technology, nine of the 23 privately held unicorns in the world are based in China, and they account for more than 70 percent of the total valuation of financial technology worldwide. One in three of the world's 262 unicorns is Chinese, commanding 43 percent of the global value of these companies (MGI, 2017).

The BAT companies and others like them began their ascent with an anchor

offering—e-commerce in the case of Alibaba, internet search for Baidu, and social media for Tencent—but have expanded into products and services spanning multiple industries.

The BAT companies are developing a multifaceted, multi-industry digital ecosystem. The rise of the super app gives China's internet giants advantages in the speed of collection of consumer data and its diversity. As the companies have expanded their ecosystems and built-up huge user bases, they have been able to accelerate the commercialization and performance of new products and services significantly. These giant internet companies now touch almost every aspect of consumers' lives, and they are able to tap into a comprehensive understanding of consumers. They played a far more prominent role in the development of the digital sector than Facebook, Amazon, Netflix, and Google of the United States.

In terms of cultural creativity, TikTok has broken the previous bottleneck of Internet companies entering overseas markets, it has become China's most successful Internet product company going overseas. It not only surpassed global short video giants such as Instagram and YouTube, but also overwhelmed the apps that dominated the list all the year round, such as Spotify and LINE. TikTok has taken the lead in the market in Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, and Japan, and has reached the top many times in overall charts of the local AppStore and Google Play. In terms of revenue, according to Sensor Tower, Douyin and TikTok attracted more than 90.7 million US dollars in the global App Store and Google Play in June 2020, which was 8.3 times that of the previous year, and once again ranked as the global mobile application (non-Games) revenue list champion (Sensor Tower, 2020).

4.1.3 Digital Construction under National Strategy of "Belt and Road"

At the government level, "Belt and Road" initiative is a global infrastructure development strategy adopted by China to foster new momentum for the development of economic globalization. The construction of the digital economic community along the "Belt and Road" is mainly based on the practical problems of jointly building high-quality development and breaking the digital divide. For achieving the purpose of

effectively safeguarding the network sovereignty and digital economic rights and interests of the vast number of developing countries.

Building a digital economic community is an important measure to promote the development of the digital economy along the “Belt and Road”, because the countries along the route are mainly developing countries. The gap between the development of the digital economy in these countries has become increasingly prominent compared with developed countries in the West. The digital economic community emphasizes inclusive development, a development that promotes a more balanced and equalized digital governance. In this community, any country has an equal opportunity to share the achievements and technologies of digital economic development, and the construction of a digital economic community by countries along the route will also help break the digital hegemony and safeguard the interests of the vast number of developing countries along the route.

In Brief, China’s digital potential is enormous. First, China’s large home market offers powerful scale advantages, and extremely enthusiastic digital natives (aged 25 or under), which will both continue to enable rapid commercialization of digital technologies. Second, competition is fierce in a rich ecosystem that was initially built around the BAT companies but that is now spreading and deepening. Third, government regulators initially left space for innovators to flourish, and they now provide support for China’s burgeoning digital sector by facilitating investment in, and adoption of, the latest technologies.

In combination, the three factors propelling the expansion of digital China mean that China has an increasingly visible presence on the global stage and a rising impact on the global economy. China’s increasing prominence on the world’s digital stage also means that China can contribute to, and even lead the globalization in the future, on the other side, broader debates rise on global governance issues such as barriers to foreign competition, the digital divide, the China threat, and the global game in digital globalization and the capitalist world system.

4.2 Power System and Global Games in Digital Globalization

4.2.1 The Digital Divide between Global North and Global South

Globally, digital technology has brought huge opportunities and severe challenges while promoting a new round of economic globalization transformation. The development of digital globalization faces the damage of the digital divide and digital trade barriers, it has brought different powers into a new era of global competition.

The concept of the “digital divide” was first proposed by the American futurist Alvin Toffler in *Powershift* published in 1990 (Toffler, 1990). It mainly refers to the structural differences in digital infrastructure and other aspects between different countries and regions. Digital trade barriers are caused by differences between countries in digital trade rules. The existence of the digital divide and digital trade barriers impairs participation in the globalization of the digital economy. In this regard, countries should actively participate in the formulation of digital trade rules to bridge differences under the framework of the United Nations.

As a new economic form, the digital economy has high requirements for digital infrastructure and digital technology. Due to the huge differences in the development between different countries or regions in the previous process of globalization, the development imbalance between nation-states and even within countries has been further exacerbated. While the digital economy promotes the transformation and development of the world economy, it also causes an uneven global distribution of digital resources. Therefore, the rapid rise of the global digital economy has not filled the gap between the north and the south of the world’s economic and social development but has created an insurmountable digital divide to some extent.

In recent years, both developed and developing countries have increased their investment in network infrastructure, and even developing countries have built networks at a relatively faster rate than economically developed regions. However, due to the weak ICT foundation in developing countries, the gap between network penetration rates and developed countries cannot be eliminated in the short term. The huge digital divide has continuously strengthened the digital monopoly advantages of

developed countries, made developing countries fall into digital poverty, and exacerbated the imbalance of global economic development, which had a profound impact on the sustainable development of the world economy and the process of globalization.

Currently, the global digital economy was dominated by the United States and China, accounting for 90% of the world's 70 largest digital platforms, while Africa and Latin America only accounted for 1.5% of the global digital platform market value (UNCTAD, 2019). This is closely related to the digital infrastructure, digital innovation capabilities and huge market purchasing power of the United States and China.

Data shows that by 2025, 5G technology in North America is expected to account for 47% of mobile information technology, while Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa only accounted for 8% and 3% of 5G technology (UNCTAD, 2019). More than 80% of the world's colocation data centers were concentrated in developed countries, and the combined ownership of Africa and Latin America was less than 5% of the global total (UNCTAD, 2019).

Moreover, the issue of digital divide governance continues to be politicized and securitized, and digital hegemony is rampant. This has caused a serious impact on the formation of the global digital divide governance mechanism and the improvement of the governance system. Since the Trump administration came to power in 2016, it had vigorously implemented the principle of "America First", which had seriously damaged the governance system and order of the global digital divide, and greatly weakened the governance effect of the digital divide. Although Trump was out of office, Trumpism has greatly shaped and changed the development orientation of American globalization.

For other powers, Europe's current internal conflicts, debt crises, and the rise of right-wing populism make it less capable of leading the governance of the global digital divide. Emerging countries, headed by China have a strong willingness to actively participate in the governance of the global digital divide, but the existing global governance system has serious imbalances in the distribution of power resources.

4.2.2 The Global Games under the World System

In the process of capitalist world economic expansion, the capital and technological superiority of the developed countries have aggravated the imbalance in the development of the world economy, resulting in the continuous central of the core countries and the continuous marginalized of the periphery countries. The strengthening of the multi-state system is reflected in the fragmentation of many nation-states and the rise of various nationalist movements, and the increasing closeness and strengthening of world economic ties while becoming increasingly decentralized. Inequalities in income distribution and development opportunities on a global scale have led to an increasingly differentiated three-tier hierarchy in the world system, with not all countries and regions participating to the same extent in the process of economic globalization.

Taking the North-South relationship as an example, accelerated economic globalization has not eliminated the inequality between the core and the periphery. On the contrary, with the development of the third technological revolution, the economies of the core countries in digital globalization have become knowledge-based and information-based, and the digital divide has widened the gap between the two. In addition, the current structure of the division of production and labor in the world economic system has already been formed, and it is difficult for developing countries to break this structure fundamentally because there are already inequalities between countries in the arrangement of production methods and product exchange, and globalization has accelerated the transfer of production processes to countries and regions with cheap labor.

The unequal exchange between the core and the periphery ensures the functioning of capitalism and the accumulation of capital, allowing for faster capital accumulation and economic development in the core and less economic and political development in the periphery. The economic situation of globalization is an international structure of many countries of unequal status, which maintains the international division of labor and promotes the accumulation of capital in the advanced capitalist countries and the

cycle of backwardness and underdevelopment in the rest of the countries.

In the new wave of digital economy globalization led by digital technology, the Internet provides a high-speed channel for cross-border data transmission in the virtual world. A large amount of data transmission begins to break away from the boundaries of national borders and interact on a global scale. However, during its development, cross-border data flow is increasingly influenced by complex factors such as national strategies, economic operation, technology level, national security, privacy protection, etc. It has always been challenging to reach a consensus and form global unified governance rules.

From the current global development pattern, there is an obvious divergence between developed and developing countries on data regulation. In terms of legislating ideas, there are two types, which are free flow policy and localized policy. Developed countries mainly promote the free flow of data across borders while localized policy has become a defensive choice for more developing countries. Developed countries have a high level of digital economy development, they can promote the full free flow of data to maximize the economic utility of data. However, developing countries arguing that unrestricted free flows can negatively affect national sovereignty and security. Cross-border data flow governance rules have become the focus of global games in the digital economy.

Specifically, the U.S. has implemented hegemony in the field of data by promoting the free flow of data and the right to enforce the law outside the country. The U.S. has gathered a large number of international financial institutions and technology companies' headquarters, and its advocacy of open actually provides a legal and political basis for it to obtain data from other countries and regions. The US signed the Safe Harbor Agreement with the EU in 2000 in order to break through the EU's data protection defenses, and more than 5,000 US companies, including Google, Facebook, Microsoft, and others, are protected by the agreement to transfer European user data to the US for storage and processing. In 2016 the U.S. and Europe reached the EU-US Privacy Shield Agreement, which allows U.S. companies to receive personal data from the EU after voluntarily committing to comply with EU data protection regulations. In

2018, the U.S., Mexico, and Canada signed the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, which for bided localize the storage of collected financial data as a prerequisite to conducting business within its territory.

Countries and regions such as the European Union, Singapore, and Japan that have already developed a relatively mature digital economy also hope to maintain a high level of free flow of data and make full use of data resources. Unlike the aggressive data policies of the United States, the European Union and Singapore adopt a balanced regulatory approach to promote cross-border data flow on the premise of maintaining high standards of privacy protection in their regions.

Developing countries such as China, Russia, India, and Brazil protect national security by restricting the export of important data and localizing data storage. Due to the lack of data drainage capacity in developing countries, if the control is loosened, it may lead to the large-scale export of data to developed economies, weakening competitiveness, and threatening national security. Therefore, most developing countries have adopted localized policies that strictly restrict the flow of data. The 2017 Cybersecurity Law promulgated by China laid a legal foundation for the implementation of its localization, stipulating that personal information and important data collected by operators should be stored in China.

After years of development, the world has gradually formed three major cross-border data flow circles in the EU, North America, and Asia-Pacific. Among them, the EU mobility circle is the most stable, because the geopolitics of Europe is a strong guarantee. In 2015, the EU began to implement the EU digital single market strategy, which aims to eliminate data transfer barriers between countries and establish a complete trust mechanism within the EU. The North American flow circle is also relatively stable, but the United States has absolute dominance. The flow circle in the Asia-Pacific region is the most complicated. As the development of the digital economy gradually shifts from the Atlantic Rim to the Pacific Rim, the governance dominance of cross-border data flows in the Asia-Pacific region has become the focus of competition. The United States, Japan, and Singapore have all joined the competition. In the Asia-Pacific region, there have been several cross-border data flow agreements,

Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP), Comprehensive Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), etc. But due to the changes in members and the lack of consensus, which have not been able to effectively promote cross-border data flow.

Compared with relatively stable production factors such as land, labor, and natural resources, data factors have greater uncertainty, and countries have not yet formed a solid foundation for mutual trust. The localized data governance is difficult to synchronize with the process of digital globalization. The digital economy emphasizes the integration and sharing of global data resources.

From the theory of the core and the periphery of the world system, the rise of China's technological power and economic size as a developing country has triggered strategic competition among political powers, causing the United States, the sole superpower in today's globalization pattern, to compete in the global strategic anxiety. On the one hand, China is trying to build a new center by establishing better relations with neighboring countries, weakening the dominance of the United States, and thus breaking the restrictions imposed by the traditional capitalist discourse on China. On the other hand, it is gradually infiltrating the traditional sphere of influence of the west, and deploying economic resources in Latin America, Africa, and even the United States.

In 2019, the added value of the global digital economy reached 31.8 trillion dollars, accounting for 41.5% of GDP. The value-added scale of the digital economy in the United States ranks first, reaching 13.3 trillion dollars, and China ranks second, reaching 5.2 trillion dollars. But China ranks first with a growth rate of 15.6%, and the United States and other developed countries are below 6% (CAICT, 2020). It can be seen that China and the United States, as leaders in the development of the global digital economy, are gradually entering a white-hot stage of the competition in this field.

However, for developing countries such as China, further opening is needed to better integrate into the process of globalization. The localized data policy will affect China's opening to the world and limit the right to speak in the formulation of international rules. Although the data governance paths of developed economies such as the United States and the European Union are different, the ultimate goal is to form a cross-border data flow circle and maintain an absolute discourse power in the system.

Under the background of the Sino-US trade war, technology war and other frictions are escalating, the United States is very likely to use the cross-border flow of data as an entry point, put pressure on other countries, or introduce further sanctions, thereby suppressing China's position in global data governance. China's localized policy, although to a large extent maintains national security, also hinders the market-oriented configuration of data elements. At present, China's digital economy has stably ranked second in the world, with a clear lead. However, the localized policy will lead to damage to the dividends of data sharing and exchange, which will affect the economic recovery in the post-COVID-19 era.

4.2.3 Securitization of the China Threat

Due to the differences in history, culture, ideology, and political systems with China, the United States has long regarded China as an outlier in the world system, and constantly highlighted the "China Threat" in international public opinion. After the end of the Cold War, the "China Threat" became popular in the United States, Japan, and other countries. American scholar Ross Munro said that "China will be the greatest potential enemy of the United States after the end of the Cold War" (Munro, 1992).

For the last decade, China's economy had risen against the trend of the global economic crisis and the economic recession in the early stage of COVID-19. Its economic influence has gradually expanded, and China has begun to lead the growth of the global digital economy in the Internet field. The United States believes that China's economic development will threaten international trade. If China's economy is not restrained, it will be too big and too strong, which will shake the entire Asia-Pacific and global regions, it will even undermine the existing world economic order, which is a threat to U.S. and western interests (Foreign Affairs, 2020). In that way, a new round of "China Threat" is rapidly emerging, and the content begins to cover more fields.

The new round of China threat has new features: first, it points to the digital economy and foreign investment. Western countries believe that China's economic foreign investment in the world will bring a sense of threat to the world, and economic assistance to African countries and countries along the Belt and Road may be the "New

Marshall Plan”. Second, it points to ideology. The West believes that China’s ideology and values are completely different from those of the West, and a series of public diplomacy activities such as China’s foreign discourse construction poses a threat to the capitalist discourse system in the process of globalization.

After the right-wing leader Trump took office, the discourse construction of the China threat has become increasingly targeted. In 2017, the Trump administration listed China and Russia as primary threats for the first time. The Trump administration took advantage of the spread of the COVID-19 in China to the world to launch public opinion wars, security wars, and diplomatic wars against China, and politicize the pandemic, calling the COVID-19 “Chinese Virus”. Former US National Security Adviser O’Brien claims that China’s communist ideological agenda poses a threat to democratic ideals (Foreign Affairs, 2020).

In 2020, due to the strong growth momentum of TikTok and related products in overseas markets, Trump and relevant departments of the US government banned TikTok and forced it to sell its US business. According to ByteDance, as of the end of 2019, the number of global monthly active users of ByteDance’s products has exceeded 1.5 billion, and its business covers 150 countries and regions and 75 languages (ByteDance, 2020). In the United States, the short video app TikTok had become a favorite app among young Americans, with 165 million downloads by American users, which accounts for almost half of the total population of the United States (ByteDance, 2020). On the other hand, some American politicians and companies have elevated TikTok’s success to the output of ideology and values in the United States.

Although president Biden released a signal to improve Sino-US relations after taking office, he has not given up playing up the China threat. In February 2021, he likened China to the toughest competitor in a foreign policy speech. The U.S. containment strategy toward China has become normalized.

The discourse traps set up based on the China threat are more diverse, resulting in “sharp power”, “neo-imperialism”, “neo-colonialism”, “new totalitarianism”, “digital authoritarianism” and other new discourses. From the perspective of the United States, the target of the China threat is already the entire capitalist world system.

At present, the new wave of “China Threat” in the United States is born in the context of the overall change in the international political landscape. It can be said that the gradual rise of China’s economy in the process of globalization has brought a sense of hegemonic crisis to the United States. China’s economic, technological strength, and comprehensive national power have leaped to a new level, and its international influence has increased significantly. Some western scholars believe that China will use the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the “Belt, and Road” initiative, and its influence in developing countries to establish a new model of global governance. In this model, there is a strong hierarchy of countries, and China will be at the top of this hierarchy (The Hill, 2020). Although China is still a developing country in terms of industrial structure, innovation capacity, and the balance and adequacy of its development, its continued signals of external development and expansion have greatly exceeded U.S. expectations, triggering a sense of crisis and, in particular, an unprecedented sense of strategic anxiety among right-wing conservative forces about the loss of world hegemony.

From the perspective of securitization, the “China Threat” is a kind of securitization of the other. The securitization theory suggests that the threat can be merely linguistic, and thus the “China Threat” is a deliberately constructed but realistic political myth. American scholar Thomas Bork has said that the American public has no reliable access to the realities of China. American media and official opinion set the perceptions, ideas, and interpretations of China, and the public’s acceptance and agreement with these perceptions will finally support the interests of the ruling class. (Bork, 2000)。

In the process of securitizing China, the object of reference is U.S. national security, and the source of the threat is China. In other words, the securitization of China mainly adopts the direct model of securitizing the other, i.e., China is presented as a threat source and China itself is presented as a threat. This is a top-down model in which the subjects of securitization include not only state actors like the government but also non-state actors like the media and scholars.

The process of securitizing the other is the process of creating an enemy.

Huntington's theory of the clash of civilizations aims to create a concept of non-west outside of the west, creating a "them" to account for the "us". Why the distinction between "us" and "them"? Ken Booth has said that the question of identity, which leads us to believe that we are the same and they are different. It is inseparable from security issues. Yet identity itself can be defined and constructed, rather than existing a priori. (Booth, 1997).

It is through official expression and media propaganda that the "China Threat" has gradually become a hegemonic discourse in the United States and even in the international community. In the post-cold war era, U.S. scholars and strategists have used this discourse hegemony in international relations to create a theory and discourse about the "China Threat" as a theory.

4.3 The Importance of China's Discourse Construction in Economic Globalization

After the reform and opening-up in the 1980s, China gradually integrated into the global capitalist world system. With the rapid economic development in recent decades, China's current economic volume and technological strength seem to make it become a new world power. However, although China has made significant achievements in building a digital economy, there is still a certain gap between China and developed countries in terms of digital facilities, digital innovation, and digital industries. The business model and market environment of enterprises that match the digital economy also need to be further developed and upgraded. The construction of "Digital China" should be accelerated, and a modern digital economy powerhouse should be built in an all-around way.

During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union belonged to two different world economic systems, but now China and the United States coexist in one economic system, a globalized world system dominated by the capitalist system. Political games and checks and balances between different forces within a system exist objectively, so China cannot ignore this complex interdependence between major

powers. China should pay attention to the common interests and concerns of each side, expand the space for cooperation, and make international public opinion agree that Sino-US cooperation is the best choice to realize the national interests of the two countries.

In the long-standing unequal relationship between developed and developing countries in the capitalist world system, the discourse construction on globalization and the construction of security issues in developed countries hinder China's development in the new round of digital globalization. Unless China masters the art of public relations and shaping public opinion, the essential skill set of successful Western politicians, they will always find it hard to compete in the international arena. In that way, China needs to pay close attention to the trend of international public opinion, innovate international communication methods, strengthen multi-level cultural exchanges and dialogues with other countries in the world, and build a theoretical system and discourse system that can effectively explain the motivation of China, then reshaping China's image in the global arena.

From a Foucauldian understanding of discourse and power, if China succeeds in changing the global "system of discourse," in doing so it could alter the very nature of international ordering in the capitalist world system of globalization, in that way China could achieve its national benefits by its advantages of digital economy more effectively.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

Digitization and globalization have converged to create a new normal of global connectivity, fortifying deeper, broader, and more intricate connections between nation-states. Digital global connectivity signifies both a dominant feature of the new era of international business and a critical catalyst to address uncertainties in this new era.

Undoubtedly, digital globalization requires the joint participation of developed and developing countries, but the road to globalization for developing countries is even more difficult. Developing countries like China, not only need to realize the social and economic transformation towards globalization and rebuild national economic autonomy but also avoid falling into the misunderstanding of extreme nationalism and conservatism. This requires researching globalization issues more deeply to minimize the risks and costs in the context of globalization.

Although U.S. hegemony has faced partial decline, and emerging technological powers like China are rising economically, it is difficult for emerging countries to replace hegemony in the short term. The rise of emerging countries is beneficial to gradually changing the relationship between core and periphery countries, but as long as they do not completely reverse the current world system, do not have the ability to form scientific and technological innovation, and do not have discourse power in international relations, then it's difficult to improve a free development situation in the context of globalization.

Neither the world-system theory nor the securitization theory can fully explain the various contradictions inherent in the international structure, nor can the new phenomena of world economic evolution completely replace the political and security competition among countries in a short period. It's still a fact that hegemonic countries and emerging countries compete for resources and geopolitical advantages in the context of globalization, just the forms and means of competition are no longer highly confrontational.

Bibliography

Baldwin, R. 2016. *The Great Convergence: Information Technology and the New Globalization*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Barry, B., 1983. People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-cold War Era. *Harvester Wheatsheaf*. pp.105-115.

Buzan, B., ed., 1998. *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Buzan, B., ed., 2003. *Regions and powers: the structure of international security*. Cambridge University Press.

Booth K., 1997. *Security and Self: Reflections of a Fallen Realist*.

Bradley A. Thayer, Lianchao Han, Kissinger's folly: The threat to world order is China, The Hill, April 19, 2020.

Available at: <<https://thehill.com/opinion/international/491507-kissingers-folly-the-threat-to-world-order-is-china/>> [Accessed 12 May 2022]

China Academy of Information and Communications Technology (CAICT). 2021.

Available at: <<http://m.caict.ac.cn>> [Accessed 12 March 2022]

Chakravorti, B. ed., 2019. *Which Countries Are Leading the Data Economy?* Harvard Business Review.

General Administration of Customs P.R.China. 2020.

Available at: <<http://www.customs.gov.cn>> [Accessed 20 May 2022]

Giddens, A., 1986. The nation-state and violence. *Capital & Class*, 10(2), pp.216-220.

Global digital population as of January 2021,

Available at: <<https://www.statista.com/statistics/617136/digital-population-worldwide/>> [Accessed 5 April 2022]

Johnston.R.J., 1982. Geography and the State: An Essay in Political Geography, *The Macmillan Press LTD*. pp.66 -119.

Juris, J.S., 2005. The new digital media and activist networking within anti-corporate globalization movements. *The ANNALS of the American academy of political and social science*. 597(1). pp.189-208.

Ketels, C., ed., 2019. Global Trade Goes Digital. BCG Henderson Institute.

Luo, Y., 2021. New OLI advantages in digital globalization. *International Business Review*. 30(2). pp.101-107.

Lund, S. and Tyson, L., 2018. Globalization is not in Retreat: Digital Technology and the Future of Trade. *Foreign Affairs*. 97(3). pp.130-140.

Manyika, J., ed., 2016. Digital Globalization: The New Era Global Flows. *McKinsey Global Institute*.

Meltzer, J.P., 2019. Governing Digital Trade. *World Trade Review*.

Nguyen, D., and Paczos, M., 2020. Measuring the Economic Value of Data and Cross-Border Data Flows. *OECD Digital Economy Paper*.

North, D. C., and Thomas, R. P. 1973. *The Rise of the Western World: A New Economic History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

OECD. 2018. *The Next Production Revolution: Implications for Governments and Business*.

Popov, E.V. and Semyachkov, K.A., 2018. Problems of economic security for digital society in the context of globalization. *Ekonomika Regiona*. (4). p.1088.

Robert C. O'Brien. 2020. How China Threatens American Democracy. *Foreign Affairs*. October 21, 2020.

Available at: <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2020-10-21/how-china-threatens-american-democracy>> [Accessed 5 May 2022]

Robinson, W.I., 2011. Globalization and the sociology of Immanuel Wallerstein: A critical appraisal. *International Sociology*. 26(6). pp.723-745.

Waeber, O., 1989. Security, the Speech Act: analyzing the politics of a word. second draft. *Centre of Peace and Conflict Research*. pp. 6-35.

Waeber, O., 1993. *Securitization and desecuritization* (p. 48). Copenhagen: Centre for Peace and Conflict Research.

Wallerstein, I., 1976. A world-system perspective on the social sciences. *The British Journal of Sociology*. 27(3). pp.343-352.

Wallerstein, I., 1979. *The capitalist world-economy*. Cambridge University Press.

Wallerstein, I., 1984. *The politics of the world-economy: The states, the movements, and the civilizations*. Cambridge University Press.

Wallerstein, I., 1991. *Geopolitics and Geoculture: Essays on the Changing World-System*. Cambridge University Press.

World Health Organization. 2022. WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard
Available at: <<https://covid19.who.int/>> [Accessed 19 May 2022]

Statista. 2020. The annual transaction value of mobile payments in China from 2013 to 2020

Available at: <<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1060702/china-mobile-payment-transaction-value/>> [Accessed 12 May 2022]

Stritzel, H., 2007. Towards a theory of securitization: Copenhagen and beyond. *European journal of international relations*. 13(3). pp.357-383.

Strange, R., and Zucchella, A. 2017. Industry 4.0, global value chains, and international business. *Multinational Business Review*. 25(3). pp.174-184.

Taylor, P.J., 1993. *Political Geography: World Economy, Nation-state, and Locality*. Longman. pp .9-10.

Toffler, A., 2022. *Powershift: Knowledge, Wealth, and Power at the edge of the 21st Century*. Bantam.

United Nations. 2021. ITU: 2.9 billion people are still offline.

Available at: <<https://news.un.org/zh/story/2021/11/1095212>> [Accessed 8 April 2022]

UNCTAD. 2019. *Digital Economy Report 2019---Value Creation and Capture: Implications for Developing Countries*.

UNCTAD. Digital Economy Report 2019[EB/OL].

Available at: <<https://unctad.org/web-flyer/digital-economy-report-2019>> [Accessed 6 April 2022]

Verbeke, A. and Hutzschenreuter, T., 2021. The dark side of digital globalization. *Academy of Management Perspectives*.35(4). pp.606-621.

Williams, eds., 1997. *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Case*. London: UCL Press.