



The World Shrinks Again *Regionalisation Is Not a Retreat from Globalisation—It's Its Next Stage*

From Global Ambitions to Local Realities

Not long ago, globalisation seemed unstoppable. Goods, capital, people, and ideas flowed ever more freely across borders. Corporations scaled vertically and horizontally, orchestrating global supply chains from boardrooms thousands of miles away from the markets they served. That was then.

Now, regionalisation is taking centre stage. This is not a retreat from globalisation, but its transformation—a reorientation of economic activity into clusters that are geographically tighter or culturally aligned, though not always physically proximate. The world isn't merely fragmenting; it is reorganising.

The Digital Revolution as Catalyst

The transition began with internationalisation—the export of high-quality manufactured goods from industrialised nations to the rest of the world. It then evolved into globalisation, as information, labour, and finance began to circulate with greater ease. But in recent years, two forces have accelerated a new shift; the digital revolution and the maturation of emerging economies.

The smartphone has become more than a communications tool—it has a means of production and distribution. What once required entire departments and vast budgets can now be executed by a single individual with access to software and connectivity. The manufacturing sector, too, has evolved. In the case of electric vehicles, modular components and simplified architecture have enabled even start-ups to challenge incumbent automakers. In China alone, hundreds of new EV firms have emerged.

The Rise of the Regional Consumer

At the same time, rising income levels in countries like India, Indonesia, and Vietnam have shifted the nature of demand. Consumers are more discerning. Local tastes and constraints matter more. Multinationals can no longer impose global templates with impunity. The region has become the unit of competition.

This shift is shaping how organisations make decisions. Where strategy was once determined at corporate headquarters and cascaded down through operational layers, today it is increasingly shaped at the frontline. A motorbike driver in Jakarta using a super-app or a clinic in Manila adopting

digital payment trends is no longer just executing a strategy—they are shaping it. Technology enables them to respond to real-time needs in ways centralised command structure never could.

From Command Centres to Platforms

Platforms like Gojek exemplify this evolution. Their services vary meaningfully from city to city, driven by local market dynamics rather than corporate mandates. The role of the executive has changed—from being the architect of strategy to the designer of systems: setting purpose, establishing protocols, and ensuring internal alignment, while allowing decentralised innovation to thrive.

This does not signal the end of scale, but a redefinition of it. Regional platforms are growing not by cloning global models, but by adapting their core philosophies—digital inclusion, local empowerment, logistical infrastructure—to each context. Taobao Villages, for example, born in rural China, are extending their reach to places like Mexico and East Africa. The blueprint remains, but the structure bends to local conditions.

Scaling with Context, Not Uniformity

This form of regionalisation resists easy dominance. It demands humility, patience, and a deep understanding of context. Companies cannot rely on brute force or uniform branding. They must localise interfaces, services, and even corporate culture, while maintaining scalable back-ends systems such as pricing algorithms or logistics hubs.

The result is not a balkanised world, but a layered one—where integration takes different forms, and success depends less on size than on relevance. The firms that will thrive are not those with the most resources, but those most attuned to the needs within a five-kilometre radius.

A New Age of Global Design, Regional Execution

In this new world, regionalisation is not the antithesis of globalisation. It is its evolution—more adaptive, more decentralised, and, perhaps, more resilient.

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After joining Cap Gemini and Coca Cola, Kohki joined Revamp Corporation where he managed projects on global expansion and turnaround in various sectors including F&B, healthcare, retail, IT, etc. After joining IGPI, he has managed projects mainly on global expansion and cross border M&A in various sectors such as logistics, IT, telecom, retail, etc. In addition to his broad experience in implementing solutions that has been developed in Western countries, he has developed multiple methods to turnaround Asian companies with focus on setting clear vision and employee empowerment. Kohki has proven the practicality of these methods by turning around Asian companies not only as an advisor but also as senior management.

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