

GLOBALIZATION: JUSTICE AND ORDER IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

Globalization highlights the interconnections and interdependencies among human beings, institutions and societies and that makes it a carrier of some positive human values. Yet this world may never have been more divided, given prevailing ideas and realities both natural and man-made that challenge the world (global terrorism, trade imbalances, arms race, annexation of other territories, boundary disputes, human rights abuses, poverty, environmental disasters, pandemic diseases, etc.). A contested world order arises because, despite human technological advances, our ethical instincts and sociopolitical arrangements have not caught up with this advance. Our finding is that some implications of globalization are debilitating given a surge of unaccountable, oppressive, unelected, national and international power through either direct causal or regulative hegemony. There is a problem because global leadership's causal and regulative control or construct has jettisoned the culture of dialogue, accountability and respect for consensus on divergent views or perspectives. This paper recommends the normative and prescriptive human values required for mitigating discontent; these include justice, fair play, respect and cooperation for peaceful coexistence of all states.

Key words: Globalization, Justice, International Order, Human Values, Power, Hegemony.



INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM

This essay tackles the problem of globalization and a discontented World order by setting up a framework for rethinking the ethical requisites for a new global order. Africa and the world are living in an era of intensified globalization a process marked by accelerated flows and accelerated closures.¹ The work examines the critical threshold of turbulence and imbalance of globalization as a political and socio-economic phenomenon with important practical implications.² The task of this paper is to present the ethical correlates of globalization by interfacing with the second of two distinct views of globalization. This is the idea that there has been an intensification of levels of interaction between states and societies³. This paper is also interested in the character and consequences of these interactions. The problem of a contested world order arises because despite technological advances, our sociopolitical arrangements have not caught up with these advances.⁴ Specifically, problems facing the world today have considerably worsened due to a construct that has jettisoned the culture of dialogue, accountability and respect for consensus on divergent, views and perspectives.

Sustainable strategies are required for injecting moral or ethical principles and human values into a discontented world order plagued by domination and turbulence. This inquisition is important because we must look for more systematic ways of making globalization to enrich our lives beyond mere economic or cultural accretions. We are in need of a more fundamentally analytical understanding of the dynamics of global discontents and complexities. The ethical presupposition of this essay is the common assumption that “morality has no place in international affairs”. This position is the standard line of the prophets and practitioners of *realpolitik*”.⁵ Is this true? Will this view create a better, peaceful world system? The world is in need of a conceptualization of the prevailing “morality” in international politics and economy and a way forward.



BACKGROUND

The interplay between globalization, politics and the rise of inequality provides a point of entry for this analysis. One can understand easily the point that globalisation is as much about politics as it is about economics, and the link between the two seems to be responsible for the production and reproductions of inequality. The concept of inequality manifests in different forms. It is enough to know that “two major sorts of inequalities of income and wealth exist: inequalities within nations and inequalities among nations”.⁶ One is interested in the latter due to the challenge of theorizing the conceptual and empirical basis for creating and sustaining a harmonious world order, whereby each group or state presumably has equal opportunity to satisfy his or her basic need. This view of the world has been aptly posited by Toure that “in awareness of the specific problems resulting from our historic background and our material conditions, the gravest imbalance in the world and the most dangerous, is the imbalance created by the division into rich and poor nations, the haves and the have-nots.”⁷

The above-mentioned point is significant in the context of a multinational global community where the widely diverse difficulties and contradictions of societal life are usually reflected in the form of problems and frictions that lead to deprivation, injustice, conflicts and insecurity. Insecurity is either the cause or effect of historical realities or social conditions. So this paper joins Goulet in posing the provocative but foundational moral and political question of “why have privileged nations and social classes, even when professing moral ideals of compassion and justice, failed to mount a successful war on global poverty?”⁸ This same question was previously posed even more normatively and directly by Beitz as “do citizens of relatively affluent countries have obligations founded on justice to share their wealth with poorer people elsewhere?”⁹ This is an intriguing question because we do not want what some scholars have termed as global development ethics to become a weapon or tool of deception, both of the self



and others. If this happens, “it could make people especially the privileged of the north and West- feel good about doing bad things”.¹⁰

The conceptual and ethical complexity of the situation described above remains in so far as one can make further distinctions in the problem of justice earlier posed. On his part, Paton insists that there are two problems within this problematic relations between the nations and states of the world under the global ordinance. These are “the problem of moral justice among nations and the problem of legal justice.”¹¹ Essentially, moral justice raises questions about whether humanity as a whole or any component of it has attained the capacity to distinguish right from wrong and to act accordingly for proper harmonization of interests for the overall good of all. Legal justice raises questions about the conceptualization and existence of the instruments or institutions that can attain global justice. It is in these dual contexts that the question of the lopsidedness of globalization arises. The crisis of global morality compels a clarification. The point is that states, principles and social institutions come under the pressures of globalization. Let us note that coming to terms with globalization is as likely to involve rejection as acceptance.¹² If this is true then one can ask the question of what are the ethical and political consequences of adopting certain cultural and political practices? These apparent ethical posers in this work are further dependent on core theoretical and methodological foundations captured by Strawson when he states that men make for themselves pictures of ideal forms of life. Such pictures are various and may be in sharp opposition to each other.¹³ The picture that a human being has of herself and other human beings will portray what a human being is and will ever become. To be specific, what picture can or should the African person get from an unbalanced globalization and a trenchant hegemonic international order that seems to pursue vigorously (by omission and commission) the undermining of Africa? The challenge therefore is; how one can create and sustain a more positive conception of global reality that will ensure security and comfort for the different parts of the world especially



the less privileged or marginal areas. To achieve this, one must analyze further the intricacies of globalization.

Globalization: Constructive or Destructive?

In recent times, globalization may well be one of those ideas that offer one of the most far-reaching opportunities for a spectral methodological and multidimensional examination. This has ensured that “today, friends and foes of globalization debate ‘its’ effects.”¹⁴ According to Axtmann “we now live in a truly global world of dense ever increasing inter and transnational political, economic and cultural interdependence.”¹⁵ Since globalization deals generally with relations between parts of the globe it becomes crucial to identify and emphasize the types of relations that globalization deals with. The assumption has been that globalisation deals with the intensification of world wide social relations that link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles ways and vice versa. Globalization draws more attention to the reality of turbulence and contradictions in the world of today. Globalization does not abolish power or politics but it does change the context of politics.¹⁶ But the changes wrought by globalization go beyond politics. According to Kofman and Youngs “globalization has opened up new imperatives for investigating power linkages between thought and action, knowledge and being, structures and process.”¹⁷ Hence, there is an emphasis on the framework underpinning globalization and the effects on individuals in differentiated positions of power.

Scholars have identified major shades of tension and resistance to the traditional positive view of globalisation. So there is a consequential dualism or divergence. In one view, globalisation has been described as a continuation of imperialism under another name. Another view sees globalisation as the latest label for the same basic process or mission previously described in modernisation. Such nuances are worth paying attention to when we realize that globalization can be interpreted in terms of two visions: the benign and the malignant. Essentially, the benign one



is based on voluntary exchanges and free circulation of peoples, capital, goods and ideas, while the malignant view is defined by coercion and brute force.¹⁸ A further historical interpretation or conceptual analysis of the trajectory of globalization can only reinforce some of the main points that we seek to clarify in this essay.

Let us have a brief history of globalization, which some have suggested, is not a new phenomenon. Economic globalization especially is as old as history, arising from a reflection of the human drive to seek new horizons, albeit with a considerably slow pace. The pace seems to have picked up in recent decades due to the driving forces of improvements in technology; the lowering of barriers to trade and capital flows – reflecting the acceptance by economists, citizens and policymakers that this is the way to greater prosperity; and the questing human spirit. Brown argues that globalization must be seen as the compression of the world.¹⁹ Held informs us that the earliest phases of globalization can be traced from the 1400's to the 1600's discerned as sea going military and commercial activities, which culminated in a global system of trade and production relations. Out of this scenario emerged the expanding capitalistic economic mechanisms or capitalist economy.²⁰

According to Held, the emergence of capitalism ushered in a fundamental change in the world order making possible for the first time, genuine global interconnectedness among states and societies. In this way, globalization penetrated the distant corners of the world, and brought far-reaching changes to the dynamics and nature of political rule. Above all, Held holds that economic globalization has arguably become more significant than ever as the determinant of Hierarchy or the structure of dominating countries.²¹ This conception of globalization ensures Europe and North America constitute the nucleus of economic globalization. One valuable consequence of globalization as Held argues is the fact that it implies that political, economic and social activity is becoming worldwide in scope and that there has been an intensification of levels of interaction and interconnectedness



within and among states and societies. But there are alternative positions that have been offered by scholars who do not share the optimism of Held.

In a significant way, the character of our world today is seen in the extremely tentative character of things.²² There are major shifts in power and influence. There are demands for the redefinition of priorities there are major convulsions of thought and identity and what these can produce. Under globalization, the question of distribution and the diverse placements of individuals and groups cannot but occasion an enquiry into the state of marginal territories and their quest for survival. According to Amin the marginalized peripheries have neither a project nor their own strategy.²³ Countries in this group are therefore the passive subjects of globalization. Their passivity crystallizes into alienation and deprivation. According to Opel the most serious threat to economic progress comes from the reality of an uneven distribution of the dividends and products of that economic progress. We are frequently reminded, “that in much of the third world hundreds of millions are still living on the ragged edge of survival. With few exceptions their progress in development has been despairingly slow, our efforts to aid them have ended in disappointment.”²⁴ The meaning of all this is that “a glancing familiarity with the globalization literature will make plain the extent to which globalizing forces have debilitated social coherence and resilience.”²⁵ What are the effects of these convolutions and imbalances?

The shortfalls of globalization seem to define the complicatedness of the demands of an increasingly diverse and modern world where there is a struggle between tentativeness and permanence, good and evil, civility and savagery. The question is: How do our ideas, processes and institutions stand in the quest for genuine civilization? The allure of civilization has generated a crisis of expectations without a corresponding capacity for fulfillment. Hence, Ghali holds that the globalization of the economy and communication has produced high levels of economic expectation and political awareness around the world.²⁶



People everywhere want to have an input or contribution in the vital decisions that affect them. There is a greater consciousness of the distribution of economic and political power as well as the means for attaining such distributions. In our view this is where democracy and social justice as well as the linkages between them come to bear on the challenge of our humanity. The expectations are not only in terms of material goods but also in terms of values and other ideational basis of social reality. This situation definitely poses new challenges to all in the world on all levels. We are in need of upgrading our quality of perception as central to the rectification of the human situation.

A World Out Of Balance: Economic Globalization and The Crisis Of United States In World Politics

It has been said that “globalization is another word for US domination.”²⁷ But a number of questions arise from this statement. Is it the case or is it not the case? If it is not the case, what has led to this misconception? However, if it is the case, then what are the instruments by which US defines and attains this goal of domination? Is it through US foreign policy? If yes, what are the foundations (moral, historical, political and even philosophical) bases of this foreign policy? If the historical and political bases of US foreign policy have been clarified, then what insights can we elicit from the ethical dimensions? How can the US rectify from this misconception? Does it want, or need to rectify it? How, if at all, can the ethical basis of US foreign policy be a way to confront the problems of global justice, power and poverty? What part has the US played in tilting the world of balance? One cannot pretend to be able to answer all of these questions in the limited space available, yet there is a trend to be outlined that can lead us to the solution being sought.

To start with, Buchan informs us that “the united states largely brought the present international system into being.”²⁸ We may wonder if anyone can argue on any basis that U.S. domination is compatible with social justice. More so, is the claim ‘the united states largely brought the present international system into being’



to be taken as a justification for the intrusion and domination of the US in world affairs. Is this a defense of intrusion and parochialism? Is this a justification of the paternalism towards Africa in the scheme of world affairs? Perhaps, we need to authoritatively determine the extent of US involvement in global affairs through the thoughts of the some icons. Brzezinski makes it clear that America finds herself so deeply involved in the world economy that on the economic plane the concept of isolationism becomes at worst a suicidal policy and at best an irrelevance.²⁹ After overcoming the problematic of urbanization and post American civil war reconstruction the foreign policy relations of the United States was evolved in terms of a blatant economic nationalism seen as “the effort to open the markets everywhere to free competition. Every negotiation of a commercial treaty centered on the inclusion of a most favoured nation clause.”³⁰

Slater reinforces the above point by saying “that the central goal of US domination is commonly described in economic categories. Using its vast economic power, the united states works to keep the rest of world conservative, capitalist and docile.”³¹ This vision and plan has essentially not changed. The rash of ethnocentrically instigated foreign policy of the United States occasioned an inimical repercussion. Other nations laboring under a variety of handicaps, could not view free competition in the world’s markets with like confidence. Free competition profited the strong but hurt the weak. Worse still, there is evidence of a US chaperoned conglomeration of dominant countries that now determine the political and economic fate of the world.

It is thus correct to infer that power in the global economy increasingly has spread among other countries, particularly U.S. allies. Therefore, “so long as inequalities remain we may expect the attacks on united states “imperialism” to continue.”³² The basis for the obtrusive and inimical influence of foreign policy in the workings of globalization lies in the fact that no matter which element is important to any one nation’s well being or security, that element is unequally distributed among countries. This is the more significant when we realize that materials ranging from oil,



coal, population to technology and capital are all unequally allocated or distributed. This imbalance makes interchange among nations imperative. And it is this interchange, international trade and finance that are central to the foreign relations of all. This has been true of the United States since the days of the founding fathers and is significantly more so today.

Without denying the significance of the above, our point is just a bit different. The reality of unequal genius, character, moral luck, endowments and the spectral consequences arising thereof, compel the focus on the conflict-ridden aspect of human and state relations in the world, as we know it. More so, beyond the relative availability and location of strictly economic and natural resources, it must be stated that even power, influence, control, and status are all credible political and cultural resources. All of these retain a currency that raises the stakes in the eternal jostling among nations for more vantage positions relative to the others. In the broadest possible sense, even power is an economic resource, where for example it draws in rents, tribute and levies from the dominated and even likewise ensures the immobility and thence, vulnerability and docility of the subjugated. Also power can become a moral issue when one queries the basis of legitimate or illegitimate authority. The emphasis on the economic basis of US domination must allow for a clarification of the gamut of this dominance. Here, it is enough to state that the USA exercises two types of domination and imperialistic control: the actual causal control and the regulative control. This can be translated again into the analysis of power. The desire of the US as seen in the description of the trajectory of US domination as globalization simply insinuates that it either causes things to move in the way that they do or it seeks to ensure either the occurrence of something or its non-occurrence.

Either way the actual and regulative forms of US control in the world insinuate a proclivity to subjugate or subordinate the local and transnational forces to its dictates. This can only breed a defective totalitarian world order or a chaotic state of extreme global imbalance that will get the dominant and dominated



mutually distressed. Such a situation may well be unfavourable in the short or long term. The direct consequences of such control mechanisms for US global political and economic conduct implies the twisting and gliding within the suspicious continuum of interventionism and puppeteer machinations. As an example, it is instructive that “the united states, the one remaining super power in the post cold war era, shows little inclination to transfer real power to any multinational authority that it cannot control.³³ This may well be similar to the US posture of exhibiting reluctance in navigating within the confines of the United Nations strategies. As Beres rightly puts it, “the result of this American policy, then, will be increasing world-wide instability.”³⁴

Another challenging issue arising from the foregoing is the crucial question of the nexus between power, control and responsibility. It was Said who made the point that “power becomes destructive only when committed to the service of a narrow conception of morality. Power can be used for moral or immoral purposes.”³⁵ Anyone can actually retain power; even common criminals exercise power, howbeit cruelly and fleetingly. It is also known that power gives rise to a sense of security. But power in itself, and the security that comes from it, are both equally ephemeral when such are not founded on a strong moral or social authority. Whereas power embodies so much capacity to control, yet it must bring itself to bear on the crucial issue of responsibility. The questions of accountability, liability and responsiveness are integral elements of the definition of a better conception of power and the control that goes with it. This is now imperative in the light of globalization.

The Ideological Basis of Globalization

It has been said that “power and accountability are not antithetical.”³⁶ This view is tied to ideology and the outcomes of this. Can a truly liberal and capitalistic proclivity inspire or generate normative or prudential attitudes of care about the feelings or needs of others? Are the principles underlying liberalism and capitalism tolerant of the recognition and



consideration of others? How can we review the nature and effects of the conduct and policies of others (terrorism, debt renunciation, etc) as strategies of calling for more responsibility from the global liberal ideology? Let us leave these issues for now and go to the next problem of US isolationism as either genuine or instigated. The point must be quickly made that “for friend and foe alike the ideological framework of globalization is liberalism-arguments for free trade and free movement of capital.”³⁷ This is the economic core of liberalism. But liberalism connotes more than this. A normative view of liberalism is necessary for the conceptualization of its links with, and consequences for globalization. The ideology of liberalism places value on liberty or personal autonomy as the fundamental good. It emphasizes the opportunity for individuals to be self-determining. The liberal goal is therefore to construct a society within which individuals can flourish and develop each pursuing the good as he or she defines it, to the best of his other abilities. Thus, the individual’s interests and experience form the core of liberalism. Individualism as a central element in liberalism reflects a belief in the supreme importance of the human individual. Accordingly, dominant liberal ideology has reduced society to a group of individuals and, asserted that the equilibrium produced by the market both constitutes the social optimum and guarantees, by the same token, stability and democracy.

But the question is; how does the ideology of liberalism impact on the activities of institutional or state actors. Also, what does liberalism signify, in the context of international affairs or better still global relations? Conceptually, the thrust of liberalism is essentially, the endorsement of individualism in relations in, and with the world. This may lead to alienation, inequality and domination arising from exercise of superior genius (ability, talent and power) that will yield immense gains in influence, control and wealth. More over, the consequential personal and institutional exploitation, differentiation, oppression and hegemony will inevitably breed injustice, acrimony, and anarchy. This situation is definitely worrisome especially in the context of global relations.



Thus in view of long and short-term effects of a situation of global turbulence, Nielsen has put it correctly that “we need to be concerned with the kinds of social structures, including modes of production, that place some in positions of dominance and control and place others in positions of submission and powerlessness.”³⁸ It is on this basis that the question of the need for morality exhumes the age-long problematic of egoism. Egoism holds that morality should serve the interest of the self and that the goal of a person’s action should be his own self-interest. In effect, egoism holds that man should not only seek his own interest in everything he does, but that he should act morally only if he has something to benefit from such an arrangement.³⁹

Some questions arise here which have been posed by various scholars continuously: Is there an affinity between liberalism and self-interestedness or egoism? Can we justify morality on the basis of egoism? Can self-interest be a genuine basis for enduring morality? How can the presence of altruism be explained in social life? It seems that a strictly egoistic moral life will not be conducive to personal and social morality. The promotion of self-interest as the moral rule may ensure that the goal of harmonizing conflicting interests is largely defeated. Only confusion can attend any order or society founded strictly on egoistic principles of morality. The egoistic morality underlying liberalism ensures that the gross inequalities in the ownership of wealth and income arising from the operation of a free market economy could neither be acceptable to the oppressed or underprivileged nor justified even on ideological grounds. Thus, the question remains how can a liberal view that endorses freedom and exercise of genius, tolerate outcomes and relationships that permit huge discrepancies in wealth, possessions and opportunities.⁴⁰ Problems such as these have led to the struggles for redistribution and social justice. The challenge is at best, to define a basis of reconciling the acceptance of capitalism as the only reliable socio-economic mechanism for generating wealth, and a desire to distribute wealth, in accordance with moral rather



than market principles or considerations.

Rethinking Global Ethical Community: The Roles Of Social Justice And The Common Good

There is a global challenge of infusing human values such as social responsibility, justice and the common good into the debate on globalization. From the arguments presented earlier, it is now clear that we must move beyond visions of a future world as essentially an extension of American institutions: whether political or economic. Accordingly, there is a growing need for more sustained reflection on the condition of modern man and for mutual learning process among the societies. The truth then is that as world politics becomes more complex, the power of all major states to achieve their purposes seems to diminish. One must distinguish power over other countries from power over outcomes, and so be able to carry along others or at least to dissuade them from becoming a threat to our well being some recognition must be accorded to their interests. This point of recognizing the other is particularly important if there has been an established historical case of unfair treatment to the other. This is what some scholars imply in the demand for compensatory justice—“the victims of exploitation deserve compensation for the harm they have suffered. This is true within a society as well as within societies.”⁴¹ Compensation is more than just giving back. It is better seen as seeking to redress permanently an imbalanced situation in view of reexamining the context of relationships. This implies an understanding that other peoples in the world have much that is of worth to contribute to creating the future and have a legitimate right to do so.

Arising from the above-mentioned is a social justice question which deals with how social institutions are to be arranged, as well as, how just social institutions can be established. Accordingly, Young maintains that the central concern of social justice is to eliminate institutionalized domination and oppression.⁴² Individuals must recognize the personhood of others and their rights to have a secure and worthwhile existence. The application of the rules of justice ensures that man can live with dignity, freedom and responsibility. The synchronization of interests as the central focus of social justice



and order predicates itself on a concept of mutuality or the appreciation of reciprocal obligations. Reciprocity is important because it aims at populating the just society with reasonable persons retaining feelings that reinforce interrelated actions among persons. This is the challenge of community. What kind of community can be established through the principle of social justice?

The affirmation of common justice and fairness can only be attained when some notion of solidarity is accepted. The need for peaceful cohabitation among men compels the quest for solidarity, understood as the establishment for conditions for conscious mutual cooperation and responsibility between the society and its members. The idea of the common good is attached to objects and policies that are beneficial to the whole taken collectively. We must seek the relative theoretical and practical merit of a position such as that of the liberal idealists that we need a “broad ethical consensus that international politics should be conducted, not with the aim of maximizing the national interest but in order to enable mankind to live in a community of mutual tolerance and respect, settling its differences rationally, resolving its conflicts by peaceful means.”⁴³ In order to achieve justice, we must seek social reform and economic redistribution. Kymlicka holds that we need to focus on the wider context of solidarity. In our quest for ties that bind there is the question of social justice, community and fraternity. Social unity depends on shared values.⁴⁴ Such values may include: belief in equality and fairness, belief in consultation and dialogue, the importance of accommodation and tolerance, support for diversity, compassion and generosity commitment to freedom, peace, non-violent change and social justice. These values are to operate at the global and national levels.

Our life will make more sense only in the context of what Struhl refers to as “a community of human beings who value each other and who recognize each other as ends in themselves.”⁴⁵ This mutual respect will create a community of mature, creative and self regulating human beings” in order to allow for growth. Jeter has insisted that “if we are deceived into concentrating on our differences and not common interests then enmity and rivalry will trespass where hope and cooperation should prevail.”⁴⁶ The members of society



cannot achieve the peace, security and progress of each and all unless they establish a clear and effective system of social justice. If these normative requirements are accepted as crucial for the reconstruction of global justice then one is then right that political issues today literally force humans to deal with values.

CONCLUSION

The ethical, institutional and methodological obstacles to the accomplishment of the goals of attaining viable world community are clear. The real context of the exploitations and injustices that paved the way for the creation of wealth in the Metropolitan states raises a historical and phenomenological question of social justice. This question has gained more significance in the modern world that is increasingly plagued by crisis both natural and man-made that have threatened all and spared none. To overcome these historical and global social exigencies there must be a collapse of the dominant boundaries of the world, so that a positive globalization can take effect for the global good. The challenges, forms and process of globalization, define the urgent task confronting man in terms of seeking better ways of appropriating the available global resources for the overall security and well-being of peoples. In order to realize this task, it is important to examine the values or value system of human social life in terms of their universal character and goals. What are the means for the improvement of the human situation? There are fundamental questions about the conditions for entrenching actions directed at the public interest or collective good in the society. The sustenance of a just and viable global political-economic community depends on each group having a responsibility for the well-being of others as well as the recognition that the well-being of individual states remains inextricably tied to the global collective well-being. The central value that the global community ought to pursue is the realization that the common good always takes precedence over the pursuit of individual ends. The good of all the members of the community presupposes some shared understanding of the



requirements of justice and human rights necessary for proper living in the community and society



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