



Impacts of Globalization On contemporary World Order

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Abstract

Order is ontological to nature. Humans as the prime minds in nature have continued to order nature according to their own visions and their own ends. This order is manifest in the family, the clan, in the state and across international boundaries. The more man extends his influence, the more he seeks to order the world. Globalization has provided humans with powerful tools to extend their influences and create order on a global scale. These tools, humans have seized, creating a new world order that is fast compressing the world from a universe to a global village. Every human endeavour now has global dimensions. This work analyses the impacts of globalization on the contemporary world order. It critiques the processes and provides novel philosophical insights on the contemporary milieu.

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I. Introduction

Globalization is generally seen as the greater integration of the world's processes, to enhance greater synergy, uniformity and more barrier free interactions. It is the enlargement of the individual's horizon from the parochial to the global. Globalization has made it far easier for an individual to influence the world than was scarcely possible in the past. It has compressed the world socially to a reasonably manageable magnitude. Globalization has considerably beaten back the barriers of space and time. Distance is no longer a formidable barrier as air and space travels have helmed in the barriers of distance. Man could be electronically present in any part of the world in an instant. Communication is instantaneous on a worldwide scale. These are the facilities globalization has aided the world with. They have changed the mode of human interactions globally and decisively.

History has equally been changed by the forces of globalization. As a naturally order-creating animal, man has leveraged on the instruments of globalization to create order on a global scale. The forms of global interactions have significantly been re-ordered in response to the stimuli of globalization. Globalization engendered new global institutions, new global trends and several global ideologies. It banded, banded and bonded people across borders, across climes and across cultures. It has birthed a global order in which no one is immune to the forces of globalization. In the contemporary world order, everything affects everywhere. Politics and economics have become inexorably interwoven across borders. It is indeed, a global village from which no nation can successfully opt out. The emerging order keeps unfolding as globalization keeps advancing. It is a dynamic process whose direction cannot be comprehensively predicted at the moment. Globalization is not really a new phenomenon. It has always been there but contemporary advances in technology have expanded it exponentially.

II. Ontological Bases of Globalization: Universal Order in Nature

The world seems fated to the process of globalization. Therefore, it would be ad rem to characterize the concept and process of globalization as what Robert Greene would call 'a fated idea', a phenomenon that is bound to happen as a matter of historical necessity [1]. The idea of the cosmos as one entity predates even the Greek philosophers [2]. However, Parmenides' opinion on the phenomenon is so interesting for anticipating much of the modern thoughts on the subject matter. For Parmenides, nothing comes from nothing [3]. Therefore, existence is eternal. Hence, there can be neither void nor vacuum; and reality can neither come into being nor vanish from existence. Rather, the entirety of existence is eternal and immutable.

If it is established metaphysically and scientifically that the cosmos is one, then it is safe to assume that the diversity of beings in the cosmos will have the preponderance to interactions and interconnectedness. These interactions are easily observed in nature. All persons for instance share the same terrestrial cosmos. All animals take in oxygen. They have their being in the same uninterrupted cosmos. All men share essentially the same nature. Both creationists and evolutionists are in agreement that humanity is of common ancestry. While creationists hold God to be the source of humanity, evolutionists hold primates as the source of humanity. In either instance, ontological unanimity is inherent. If men are ontologically one, there would necessarily be a pull towards oneness. This is the ontological basis of globalization. Therefore, the phenomenon of globalization is so to speak an ontological necessity. It is embedded in the very ontological nature of man as man. To the extent contingencies of epoch and nature allow him, the human society will always be impelled to globalization. The unprecedented strides of progress in technology have merely increased the scope and speed of globalization. As technology increasingly conquers space and time, so globalization for good or for bad will bestride the earth. Humanity is unambiguously a genus. Although there are accidents of race or colour, the unanimity of the genus is unambiguous. Despite racial prejudices predicated on colour and geographical location, the ontological imperative to globalization is still evident in the interactions among nations.

Prior to 1914, people migrated freely from one nation to another without visas. It was a contiguous world. The world was so to speak one big home for all who had the itch for adventure. The ontological bases of all this is that the cosmos is one and uninterrupted. Political boundaries are artificial and temporal. States have not always existed. All through history, boundaries have always been changing, the latest being the separation of South Sudan from Sudan [4]. As ideological and political barriers keep giving way, boundaries will continue to lose their significance.

III. Metamorphosis of Globalization in World History

That the seed of globalization has always been with humanity is not in doubt. What is in contention is the manner and scope of the process with respect to different epochs. Globalization is basically a phenomenon of growth and expansion. The origin of humanity is a subject of immense controversies. But what is not in doubt is that in every era, the known world has always sought interactions in varying capacities. These interactions were achieved through trade, culture, politics or war.

The first phase of globalization generally took the form of powerful states rising to extend their suzerainty over greater parts of the known world. These powerful states spread their unique civilizations with the attendant values and culture. Alexander the Great championed and led the Greek state, Macedonia to conquer the known world of his day. His forces swept past the Asia Minor into the Indian subcontinent. He continued marching further east until his soldiers refused to cross the Indus River [5]. Alexander was able to bring much of the known world of his day under a single political authority. He promoted the Greek culture and Greek influence over much of the globe of his day.

The Romans were the next to embark on territorial globalization. Like Alexander's Greece, Rome brought greater part of the globe under her rule, thus spreading Roman culture and influence on the globe. The legacies of the Roman civilization endure till today. They wanted to make the whole world a single nation state. They built highways, dissecting the empire and established courier service from almost every important location in the empire [6]. Internal contradictions ultimately led to the demise of the Roman empire. Not before imposing a universal language – Latin, and a universal religion – Christianity. The globalization of Christianity by the Roman empire marked the shift from territorial globalization to ideological globalization.

Economic imperatives drove Western Europe into exploring and colonizing the known world from Africa to India, the Americas to Oceania. Some countries in Western Europe brought much of the world under their rule, joining different peoples into one nation and imposing Western values on them. The overall objective was the exploitation of the colonized peoples and the repatriation of their wealth to Europe. The contradictions inherent in this form of globalization ultimately led to the Second World War.

The end of the Second World War made colonialism unfashionable. Yet the self-same economic deficiencies that led Europe to conquer the colonized peoples existed. Hence the formation of Breton Wood institutions and the rise of multinational companies. These ushered in the present era of globalization.

The Cold War was a war of values in the apparently globalized post-World War II world. It was a crisis of which value would rule the globalized world. While USSR led the communist bloc, the US led the capitalist bloc. This war of ideologies was to rage until the defeat of communism in 1989 symbolized in the fall of the Berlin Wall and the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 [7]. Some authors, notable among them, Thomas Friedman, argued that the process of globalization was 'frozen' during the Cold War [8]. The freezing of the process of globalization was the result of the conflict of directions. In other words, the Cold War produced a dual centred process of globalization. While the one revolved around the Soviet Union, the other revolved around the USA. But the defeat of communism saw the unification of the process and the eventual geometric progress of the process. Today, we are no longer talking of a global village but a global tea table.

However, the explosive progress in information and communication technology and the rise of social media have taken globalization to another level. It has become difficult to pin down globalization around the influences of any particular institution.

IV. Impacts of Globalization on Global Politics

The formation of the United Nations Organisation in 1945, after the Second World War set the tone for the globalization of world politics. The events of the Second World War had clearly shown that peace would elude the world if the political institutions in individual states did not follow universally agreeable values. Hence, the need for international cooperation and synergy. The Second World War was caused largely by Germany's Nazi government led by Hitler, and Italy's fascist government led by Mussolini. The ideologies of these governments excluded in its entirety, the notion of the private sphere, encouraged war mongering and territorial expansionism.

Post-WWII responses saw the world evolving towards globalized politics. Today, no political event in any corner of the globe can be completely isolated from the rest of the world. The principle of non-interference in a member nation's internal affairs which was so pronounced at the inception of the UN is fast becoming obsolete. The line between internal and external affairs of a state is growing thinner by the day. Lots of factors are responsible for this. But most significant is the process of globalization. The phenomenal success of information and communication technology has made the whole world available on the screens of a personal computer or a mobile phone. Events in the remotest parts of the world can be broadcast worldwide in a matter of seconds. In 2011, Muammar Gaddafi could not make the conflict in Libya an "internal affair" [9]. The UN passed a resolution authorising NATO to use the necessary means to protect the civilian population in Libya. In the not so distant past, that would have been unthinkable. The conflict would have been dismissed as Libya's "internal affair", but not in the globalized world anymore. The Libyan crisis was beamed on television screens at homes worldwide. It could be argued that NATO's motives in Libya were less than altruistic. The point in the example is that the crisis could not be made a domestic affair. Even the Syrian crisis attracted international players though it appeared that there was a balance of power between the US and Russia.

What was clear after the Second World War was that the world needed to globalize its politics in order to eliminate wars. So many factors made this option an existential necessity. But there was the dilemma of which form of politics ought to be globalized? This dilemma expressed itself in the crisis of the Cold War. In this war of ideologies, communism and liberal democracy contested fiercely for the control of the world. Hence the bipolar globalization that obtained in the Cold War era [10]. While there was harmony within the respective blocs, the blocs were at each other's necks. Hence, the failure of the bipolar globalization of the Cold War era to achieve world peace. Peace was achieved only within the respective blocs where there were respective globalizations of politics. The eventual fall of communism in 1991 resulted in the globalization of world politics. Almost every part of the world is either a liberal democracy or is gradually heading towards it. Of course, there are exceptions. But they are insignificant. Today's China for instance is far different from the unbridled communist China of Chairman Mao Tse Tung. China has significantly adopted the principles of liberal democracy. Although it is not yet fully a democracy, it has shifted significantly away from totalitarian communism [11]. China has opened up its economy to private enterprises, and is today the manufacturing destination of the world. The whole world is going to China for business. Although its human rights records are less than palatable, China is definitely on the way to democratization. Cuba on the other hand is a tottering state. It cannot endure as an isolated communist enclave for long without significant changes.

Democracies do not fight democracies - a fact of history [12]. Therefore, the globalization of the world's politics greatly enhanced the stability of the world. Ultimately, the emerging global order is that of a universal democracy bound together in peace and stability. This process, though far from being achieved, seem feasible, nonetheless. There is a smattering of groups which do not accept liberal democracy - notably Islamic fundamentalists.

Nations continue to increase bonds among them as nations open up to forces of globalization by and by. The globalization of world economics has made the world more or less, a comity of economic interests. Of course, where there is economic interest, there is always the concomitant political interest. In today's world, investments have no boundaries. This reality has enormous political significance. For instance, China made significant investment in the US economy. Should the American economy crash, China would lose a significant proportion of its wealth. The political significance is that both countries will always strive to cooperate politically for their mutual economic benefits. This scenario has been replicated more or less on the global level. It has led to the formation of the European Union, a union which has become a single political bloc, sharing one currency and one political ideology - liberal democracy. In the European Union, national boundaries have become insignificant as there is free movement of persons within the Union. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed to merge the European Union with North America into a single political and ideological bloc under liberal democracy. The African Union did not fare much better due to heavy presence of

dictatorships on the continent. African Union states are in a crisis of ideologies. Hence, political cohesion within the Union is an uphill task. The contradictions in the internal politics of member states have held the union down. At any rate, liberal democracy is gaining momentum on the continent as dictatorships continue to crumble.

However, the globalization of the world politics is quite unlikely to bring about a single global leadership. The idea itself is inherently antithetical to the core value of liberal democracy – liberty. Samuel Huntington also dismissed the idea of a universal civilization,

...the very notion that there could be a “universal civilization” is a Western idea, directly at odds with the particularism of most Asian societies and their emphasis on what distinguishes one people from another [13].

The emerging order is more of values than a ruling class. What is globalized is an ideology – liberal democracy; not a hegemony of a state, individual or class.

But, the current picture of defacto state of affairs is not as perfect as the one visualized above. Powerful nations have always sought to lord it over less weak states. They deploy their political might in subtle ways to have their way over weaker states. Sometimes, they do it brazenly. In 2001, America ignored the rest of the world to wage war on Afghanistan. In 2002, it did same thing, this time around to wage war on Iraq under the pretentious charge that Iraq was amassing weapons of mass destruction, an allegation that was eventually proven to be a hoax [14]. Global institutions are controlled by the superpowers. In the UN for instance despite the over a hundred and half member states, the superpowers hold veto powers. They can sit in the fifteen-member security council and veto any decision they don't fancy. This is not liberal democracy in practice! The superpowers have often exhibited neo-colonialist tendencies in relation to the Third World. But developments in information and communication technology and greater globalization of humanity are making it easier for citizens of the Third World to resist such tendencies.

V. Issues in the Globalization of World Economy: Erratic Roles of the Breton Wood Institutions

Most of the criticisms against globalization revolve around the manner the forces of globalization have impacted on the global economy. Arguably the most significant factor driving the process of globalization is the quest for economic gain. Information and communication technology is driven, honed and fine-tuned by capitalism – the desire to maximize profit. As Anthony Kiyosaki sarcastically argued, ‘the cash flow gave rise to the GSM’ [15]. The process of globalization has resulted in massive movement of capital from the developed countries to developing countries. The rise of multinational companies made the world a single marketplace for investment and exploration of business opportunities. The informational mode of production engendered by globalization made spatio-temporal limitations on economic activities insignificant since an investor can seal a deal instantaneously from one end of the globe to another by the click of the mouse.

But Breton Wood institutions championed by the West, especially by the Washington Consensus utilized economic globalization effectively as a veritable instrument for the ruthless exploitation of the Third World [16]. When the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development aka World Bank was established in 1946, it was ostensibly formed to help developing countries fast-track their development pace. This mission was shared by its sister bank, the International Monetary Fund. These banks are dominated by the US, France, the UK and Japan – all industrialized countries. However, instead of using the banks to aid the industrialization of the Third World, the forces behind these banks are steeped in the practice of a norm which holds that the Third World should remain the global lucrative market for finished goods and the supplier of cheap raw materials to the industrialized world. They enforced these unwritten codes using institutions like the GATT (General Agreement on Trade and Tariff) and the WTO (World Trade Organization). But these institutions in which the Third World are grossly under-represented made and imposed clearly anti-Third World policies which grossly retard the development of the Third World. For instance, the patency and intellectual property laws as made by the WTO have frustrated decisively the flow of technological know-how from the developed countries to the developing countries. These policies have made the Third World perpetual consumers instead of manufacturers of technological products. The unwritten global division of labour imposed on the Third World by these institutions have ensured that while the industrialized world, consisting mainly of Western Europe and Japan produced finished goods, the rest of the world produced raw materials. While European and American economies are driven by the manufacturing industries most Third World economies are driven by extracting industries. The WTO not only determines the prices of these raw materials but also sets the benchmark on the duties to be paid on them. The General Agreement on Trade and Tariff brutally reduced duties on raw materials to as low as 5%. Yet these raw materials when turned into finished goods are sold back to the Third World with as high as 5000% profit and are still heavily taxed – as high as 63%! This is sheer economic brutality [17]!

The political issue in this brand of global economics is that the developed countries will never encourage the industrialization of the developing nations. The contention is that the industrialization of the Third World will result in economic doom and drastic lowering of the standards of living in the developed world. For the industrialization of the Third World in economic terms is sheer loss of lucrative market to the developed nations. This is the conspiracy of WTO. It is the logic of the Washington Consensus.

The ethics of Breton Wood institutions is the ethics of economic brutality. Its political foundation is unbridled Machiavellianism. Its political expression on the Third World is neo-colonialism. These organizations are anything but democratic. They are Machiavellian in principles and in practices. They have been used to subjugate a significant proportion of the globe. Among the twenty-five seats on each of the boards of the IMF and World Bank, the US controls eighteen and seventeen respectively [18]! Yet that bank is called a 'world bank'!

The process of loaning in the IMF is an interesting study in the ethics of Machiavellian economics. Most loans given to Third World countries by the IMF are tied to specific changes in their economies which are generally termed SAP (Structural Adjustment Programme). This seemingly harmless programme insidiously sapped the economies of most countries of the Third World. The first requirement of SAP is the devaluation of the currency of the credited country. This effectively lowers the ability of the country in question to repay the loan. It automatically lowers the standard of living of the citizens of the affected country. The second demand they make is the privatisation of state-owned parastatals, giving leeway for multinationals attached to these banks to buy deeply into the credited country's national assets usually at giveaway prices in connivance with corrupt government officials. This move effectively limits the power of government to direct the economy. The third condition is the demand that the state spend less on education and welfare institutions in order to save more money to service the loan. When education is neglected, the future of the credited country as well as its capacity to develop are endangered. Education is the forerunner of economic development. Low funding of education means low funding of researches which translates to dearth of innovations. In a world where technology drives the economy, how can a nation break even without a Technological Age compliant working class? Ours is a world that has gone beyond the industrial mode of production to the informational mode of production! The result is that by merely taking the toxic loan, the credited nation has taken many steps backwards in its quest for development. These banks are not done yet!

Another requirement is that the country concentrate on their major export commodity usually agricultural produce or raw material. This increased activity and concentration has a dual negative effect on the credited country. First by concentrating on one item in the economy, many sectors suffer neglect and decay. Secondly, when too much of a thing is produced the market value drops. Hence, they have to produce more and more at an increasingly dropping market value in order to repay the loan. This is a rat race indeed. Is there any wonder that these loans are never fully repaid? This is exactly how the Breton Wood institutions want them – un-repaid! That way, they keep controlling the economy of the shackled country, impoverishing its people and enriching their own citizens back home. If not, why are loans given on the condition that the debtor pledges to take further loans? Is this not curious? The simple explanation is that these institutions want the debtor countries to remain perpetually indebted. None of the countries that broke even, industrialized and left the Third World category ever did that with IMF loans. China rejected the loans. Malaysia rejected the loans. Singapore rejected the loans. These countries are the better for it today. Definitely, some aspects of the processes of economic globalization have done a bad deal on some countries of the Third World. The activities of Breton Wood institution leave much to be desired.

Another ethical issue in the globalization of the world economics is the ruthless exploitation of the world and the devastation of the environment by the multinationals. The so-called investments brought to the developing countries by the multinationals are so skewed in terms that the very meaning of some the said investments are called to question. For instance, oil companies in Nigeria take 40% of every barrel of oil it drills from the Nigerian state [19]. The 40% reward for the technological know-how is rather exploitative. To make matters worse, these companies have no regard for the environment in its exploration of oil in Nigeria. They have wrecked immense ecological disaster in the Niger Delta.

The multinationals have increasingly encroached on the power of nation-states to act as sovereign entities. Their budgets are often larger than those of the individual countries they operate in. Often, they control vital institutions in nation-states, thereby controlling their policies and politics albeit indirectly.

VI. Impacts of Globalization Technologies on World Order

What is the relationship between the phenomenon of globalization and technology? There is no gainsaying that information and communication technology more than anything else has put the world in immediate connectivity. The level of global integration achieved by ICT is unprecedented. The social networks are fast turning the world into a monoculture. Interactions across continents are done by millions of people by at the fraction of a second. The Facebook for instance as at July 2022 had about 2.8 billion active users, interacting

instantaneously among themselves [20]. If the Facebook were to be a country, it would have been the most populous country in the world. Facebook was founded only in 2004. By the time it is twenty years old, it might attract half of the world's population if not more. This social media has virtually turned the world into one interactional community. It is only a matter of time before a popular global culture will emerge from these interactions. It is gradually evolving its unique vocabulary and its mode of thinking. The ICT in general compressed the world to the handful size of a tablet phone. It is just what it is called: the web! It has seamlessly woven the world into an invincible, invisible web. Today, there is scarcely any facet of life that is free from the influence of information and communication technology. The ICT so to speak, has changed the *modus vivendi* of the globe. It has changed the face of politics, business, economics and the society in general. Indeed, the world has been globalized with information and communication technology. This is what the founders of Google, Facebook and Microsoft set out to achieve. The world also has been globalized by information and communication technology. The ICT came with dynamics some of which the earliest inventors never imagined. The US Defence Department never imagined that something like Facebook would ever come out from the Internet when they intended the technology for surveillance over the then USSR! Today, the ICT is the most powerful globalizing force in the world.

VII. Conclusion

The world has been irreversibly changed by globalization. A new order has been birthed by globalization. It is the world that has become a global village, the world where anywhere could be reached from everywhere in an instant. The world where trade has become globally interwoven beyond borders. Ours is the era of transnational corporations, the era of digital currencies and digital business. We are in the era of business without borders. We are in the era of the social media; everybody is everywhere and everywhere can be virtually reached by everybody. It is a world where the political order is increasingly becoming interwoven across borders. In the emerging order, isolationism has become an impossibility. Globalization has birthed a human community with a virtually common social environment and common social consciousness. We are witnessing the era of the universal man.

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