

Reflections of Globalization on Political Science

Dr. Irsad Ali Khan

Lecturer, Political Science, Govt. Bangur College, Didwana, Rajasthan, India

ABSTRACT: Globalization is an economic, social, cultural, and political phenomenon. Considering globalization as evil in itself or as a panacea for all the problems is not realistic. In general, globalization is welcomed by the elite and the corporate sector in India, whereas the poor are generally against it. Considering the impact of globalization on economic life, culture, and the environment in India, this article tries to see why globalization needs to integrate the values of justice and solidarity if it really wants to facilitate true human development. In spite of the advancement in technology, communication and trade, inequalities, exploitation, and corruption have increased in a globalized world. Economy needs ethics to function correctly. Globalization has an inherent tendency to bring homogeneity in socio-cultural and religious life. Consequently, the indigenous cultures feel threatened. Only by respecting the uniqueness of cultures, globalization can strengthen cultures through healthy dialogue rooted in solidarity. Another important aspect of solidarity is solidarity with nature. To enhance real human development, globalization should safeguard ecology, discerning the needs of the present generation, as well as future generations. Globalization is not first all about money, market, or competition, but about people and their interconnectedness. Economic prosperity, if it does not ensure justice to all, will not lead to long-lasting peace and development. Justice is rooted in love and solidarity with all.

KEYWORDS: globalization, political, reflections, world, generations, economic, justice, peace

I. INTRODUCTION

Globalization is an ambiguous term. It means different things to different people. It may mean different things to the same person. So what does globalization mean? Is it a new stage in human civilization that goes beyond national borders or native cultures? Could it lead to a universal entity within which criteria of race, color, religion, class, language ... etc, would disappear? Or is it just another transformation in world economy? Is it a means of dominance or another face of neocolonialism intending to control people's minds and lifestyles, or to make their future dependent upon the actions and behaviors [1,2] of market whales and business groups. With the rise of Japan and Germany as main economic powers in the beginning of 1960s, scholars started to deal with the term as a merely economic phenomenon. But after the "withering" of Communism and the end of the Cold War, the term becomes the 'buzzword' of our time and its meaning remains elusive. It is now no more an economic phenomenon or a merely mental state as perceived during the Cold War, but it transforms into a movement being enhanced through concentrating on (a) global common principles such as democracy and human rights, (b) growing interdependence between states, and (c) unprecedented revolution in information technology. The quantitative and qualitative effects of this process are seen in many aspects of human life. Within these perspectives, globalization becomes a process of reshaping human life through globalizing certain values which include economic patterns [3,4] related to free trade, production, consumption and distribution; cultural patterns related to entity, language, and lifestyle; and political patterns related to democratic process and human rights. There are many instruments by which globalization is being promoted and enhanced. But the most important instruments influencing this process are the multinational corporations and the new revolution of information technology.

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1. Multinational corporations are main instruments of globalization. They possess huge capitals and assets. As profit maximizers, they establish their factors in many developing countries where cheap workers and raw materials are found. Because of their size and their contributions to national economies in terms of taxes and employments, they influence decision-making processes in those countries.[5,6] Once they established, none has the ability to stop them from withdrawing their investments or moving their capitals from country to another whenever it is in their advantage to do so. In spite of their contributions, the given privileges are not without price. Their activities usually leave serious effects on many host economies; they even sometime create civil unrests. This is because these companies control not only markets, but also peoples

2. New Information Technology, which is a product of the industrial revolution, is another instrument of globalization. Its aspects, in particular the Internet and multimedia, remarkably contribute to the spread of globalization due to their rapidity, easiness and availability. In spite of its huge benefits, the revolution is still possessed and controlled by some advanced nations, which might use it as a means of cultural influence and informational hegemony. With the end of the Cold War, liberalist nations have become more interested in promoting the free trade principle, where market mechanisms must be dominant, and governments must not interfere in economic activities. The economic and military strengths of these nations assist them to pursue this objective through convincing many other countries to conduct structural changes in their economic, political, cultural and social spheres. As a result, this process has brought profound impacts on the various aspects of human life in many societies, particularly of those involved. Not only it changes many types of lifestyles, but also involves the bridging of temporal, spatial, and cultural distances in new ways, and that these processes tend to be driven by the revolutions in transport technologies, communications, the internationalization of capital notions of the world system, and post industrialism. In spite of all these changes associated with globalization, a large number of peoples and scholars do not trust this process. Some, who may be described as conservatives, are skeptical about the role of globalization in human life, and view it as a phenomenon which may bring destructive effects on all human beings. Radicalists, on the other hand, argue that the process is not without great benefits to all peoples; its effects may reach all spots of the earth. [7,8] Still others view this process as any other historical human experience which may have its positive and negative affects. Regardless of these stands, it is wrong to view the process from an economic perspective only because it is increasingly involving political, cultural and technological fields and is remarkably being reinforced by the huge development of communications and information technologies. The significance of these developments does not only lie in the rapid communications or flow of information among peoples, but also in its role in changing the nature of the lives of all social classes, 'the rich and the poor.' Therefore, its importance manifests in the fact that its effects are not limited to the 'macro' social systems such as economic or financial systems, but exceed that to affect other social sub-systems such as family structures and individual private patterns

Positive and Negative Effects of Globalization

The previous introduction shows that globalization has both positive and negative effects on the various aspects of human life.

A. Positive Effects of Globalization

There are some positive effects brought with the process of globalization:

1. In the education field, some of the new communication and information technologies, which are of course linked to the globalization process, have enabled students, researchers and young people in distant and to access ideas and information from the best libraries in the world. They are able to peruse through libraries in different countries without having to travel. Globalization from this point of view assists people in the dissemination of values related

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to knowledge, and in the promotion of values related to health care etc.

2. Globalization has made communication much easier and cheaper than before. The number of subscribers and users of the Internet are now increasing remarkably.
3. The potential for people of different communities, countries, cultures and religions to know and understand one another is greater than ever before. Knowing and understanding each others are very important to promote and establish common values among people of different communities. Globalization also makes it possible for people to demonstrate their sympathy and compassion for the victims of natural calamities and man-made tragedies all over the world regardless of religions, lands, languages, colors, cultures etc.
4. Globalization has also brought to the fore issues such as the rights of women and children.

All these aspects promote globally certain common values such as equality, human rights, justice, democracy and moral values.[9,10]

B. Negative Effects of Globalization:

While there are some positive aspects of globalization, its negative effects are 'overwhelming.' It almost affects all aspects of human life.

Globalization and culture: Globalization affects human cultures from various perspectives:

- a. Globalization represents a challenge to cultural and local languages. United Nations' study shows that half of local languages in the world are expected to disappear. This could lead unenthusiastically to marginalizing many local cultures. Scientific and economic superiority of the US and the flow of information technology assist in imposing certain languages in particular English as a second language in some developing and developed countries, and as a first language in some others. There is no doubt that language has significant impact on cultures and, therefore, the dominance of English could contribute to the emergence of a global and intercontinental culture which may wipe out traditions, customs, and values of many societies and marginalizes their cultures .
- b. Globalization has significant impact on local entities. Its complexity takes decisive dimensions in particular with regard to its effects on labor immigration from the South to the North. In many cases this problem not only has political reflections, but also social dimensions. For example, when the Algerian football player Zaindeen Zaidan has appeared as a star in the French team in World Cup 1998, French Right Wing started to criticize the presence of non-aboriginal French in the national team .At the same time, Algerians in both France and Algeria were so pleased and looked at Zaidan as an Algerian hero, despite the fact that he was born in France and still resides there. So globalization in this sense is reshaping the identity of many peoples particularly migrants.[11,12]

II. DISCUSSION

Globalization and developing countries: Globalization has serious effects on many developing countries:

- a. Although developing countries contribute in away or another to this process, yet they do not yield the benefits of this contribution. Indeed, they remain far away from what we might call 'the impact point' to influence its truck or contribute to its direction. In contrast, the process destroys many aspects of life in these societies. The irresponsible behavior of some multinational corporations toward the environment of those countries, or more dangerously marketing expired products and other illegal goods are examples of this destruction. So globalization in this context changes the world to become a "global pillage instead of being a global village" .

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b. The widening gap between the North and the South at international level, and between haves and have-nots at national level is another serious aspect of globalization. In fact, the real test to globalization is through its success in reducing the gap between the rich and the poor at local, national and global levels.

c. Globalization has forced many countries in various parts of this world to regulate to a lower league the most fundamental needs of their peoples. The equitable distribution of food, adequate health care facilities, and the quality of education are no longer priority concerns the political agendas of the governments in these countries.

All these indicate that poor societies in the third world not only remain far away from benefiting from globalization, but also they continue to suffer from its calamities, pitfalls and misfortunes. It then contributes to laying the foundation of injustices and social inequalities, and moreover preventing the growth of new markets in these countries because they are unable to compete with the advanced markets. Here, competitiveness seems to be unequal and its result under all circumstances remains in favor of the strong and those who control international markets. So instead of filling up the gap between the rich and the poor, globalization in its present formula widens this gap. [13,14]

Globalization and religions: Although globalization might benefit religions through the easier exchange of information and different opinions about these religions, it however represents a source of harm to many religious and spiritual values. Globalization, through its cultural and informational aspects and the promotion of consuming patterns and value corruption, challenges religious systems. In fact, it is gradually replacing these values with pure secular systems within which certain religious values will lose their influence on peoples' behaviors.

Globalization and morals: The immoral character of globalization is becoming even more serious and its negative impacts in this context have different aspects:

a. Globalization has internationalized crimes. Drug trafficking and the trafficking of women and children have become much more difficult to control because of their international character. Not only crimes are globalized, but also disease

b. Another aspect of this problem is that most users of Internet in cyberspaces are adults and they waste a lot of time using the Internet for unnecessary purposes. One of the most dangerous effects of globalization on young people is the immoral usage of the Internet. Studies show that the number of adults and young people who use web sites containing immoral materials are increasing in particular among schools and universities' students.

Globalization and international politics: The collapse of the Soviet Union has led to the US control of the global system and international relations. This provides the US with many opportunities to defend its own national interests globally and to challenge international legitimacy through marginalizing the role of the United Nations and ignoring the international law. Power and interests become the main characteristics of interstate interactions.

Globalization and economy: Globalization as an economic movement has significant effect on national and global economies. Although many trade blocs were established and many industrial and economic nations have emerged as a response to this process, the rules of this process have contributed to the collapse of many national economies. The emergence of what can be called 'electronic trade' though the Internet is another negative aspect of globalization. Piracy is also reinforced by this process. [15,16]

Globalization and science: Although globalization contributes remarkably to new scientific revolutions in many fields including computer and space sciences, these revolutions are accompanied by new sciences that may be used

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for immoral purposes or to damage the dignity of man whom the Almighty God honors. Example of these sciences is Genetic Engineering Science, which leads to the emergence of Cloning Science.

Globalization and societal structures: The free economy and the development of technology have negative impact on laborers. As known, twenty percent of the world population is producing the needs of all population in this world, while most of the rest 80% are unable to find a suitable source of income. This is serious because underprivileged people are expected to revolt against their bad conditions. This is possible with the growing decline of state's power to the favor of private sectors, on one hand, and to the growing decrease of the governmental expenditures on social and public services such as health, education etc., on the other. In this, globalization is a source of social instability and class disparity.

Globalization, motivated by economic and technologic progress, has also popularized a consumer culture among people due to the flow of goods and products. Since the desire to consume more and more can never really be satisfied, the consumer becomes addicted to shopping to a point where the spiritual, moral and intellectual dimensions of his/her personality do not grow or develop. These are actually due to the business corporations, which produce the wide array of consumer goods and the media, which advertise them. This aspect could eventually create what is called "homogeneous global culture" and, therefore, lead to the decline of diversity and variety among peoples.[17,18]

Globalization and prosperity: Globalization poses serious questions about peace and prosperity: Is there any relationship between the process and peace or prosperity? Could the implementation of free market principle globally enhance international peace and security or prevents wars, as globalists argue? Prosperity, welfare and economic progress which market economy is expected to achieve could enhance or create some opportunities for political stability; but it does not necessarily ensure peace or social stability. It is true that market economy has contributed to social and political stability in liberal states and to peace among them, but it does the opposite in many developing countries. Asian economic crisis of 1997 is a case in point. The free market forces allowed manipulators to control stock markets and to transfer large amount of money just to maximize their profits, while they were destroying the economies of many Asian countries. Indeed these activities have destroyed the social structures of those societies, and furthermore, created what might be called potential social unrests in the region. That is why globalization in its current formula does not necessarily ensure social and political stability, and therefore will not lead to a more peaceful world, particularly if market forces continue to dominate the mechanisms of power without restrictions. There is also no guarantee that economic crises and social unrests will not spread to advanced nations. The largest demonstrations against globalization are usually held in these countries.

All these negative aspects of globalization pose real challenges not only to many developing countries as usually emphasizes, but also to all human beings who should, if they have to manage these problems, inject religious, ethical and moral considerations, activities and objectives associated with the globalization process. Indeed, peoples should globalize themselves within the religious sphere and common values to build a more just world.[19,20]

Globalization emerged as an economic phenomenon in the 1960s. But with the development of communications and the vast technological revolution brought by liberal systems, it has become an extension to the world capitalism, which seeks to create a liberal global community within which liberal values prevail. If we are to reflect upon the credit and debit sides of the process, we would realize that whatever advantages have come out of it, they are to a large extent accompanied with unintended effects of a process the basic motivation of which is the expansion of market economies, the accumulation of wealth and the maximization of profits. While the current mechanisms of globalization provide certain opportunities to achieve technical progresses, and might push toward democracy and political rights, or even open unprecedented 'horizons' for the freedom of information, the process, on the other

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hand, paves the way for injustices and inequalities in the distribution of wealth among and within societies. The most serious effect of this process on human life lies in its role in widening the gap between the poor and the rich, not only at global level, but also at local/national levels. Therefore, injustices and inequalities associated with this process, and its various consequences on societies, religions, cultures, moral systems, and even sciences, could undermine its claim that it is a harbinger of a new age of global solidarity. In contrast, the process in its current formula could destroy the social systems of less power societies and threaten the future of human civilization. However, and regardless of our attitudes toward globalization, it is our moral responsibility, as proponents or opponents; individuals or groups; NGOs or governments, to rethink the process of globalization in a manner that enhances its advantages and reduces or eradicates its negatives.

III. RESULTS

During the 20th century, global average per capita income rose strongly, but with considerable variation among countries. It is clear that the income gap between rich and poor countries has been widening for many decades. The most recent World Economic Outlook studies 42 countries (representing almost 90 percent of world population) for which data are available for the entire 20th century. It reaches the conclusion that output per capita has risen appreciably but that the distribution of income among countries has become more unequal than at the beginning of the century.[21,22]

But incomes do not tell the whole story; broader measures of welfare that take account of social conditions show that poorer countries have made considerable progress. For instance, some low-income countries, e.g. Sri Lanka, have quite impressive social indicators. One recent paper finds that if countries are compared using the UN's Human Development Indicators (HDI), which take education and life expectancy into account, then the picture that emerges is quite different from that suggested by the income data alone.

Indeed the gaps may have narrowed. A striking inference from the study is a contrast between what may be termed an "income gap" and an "HDI gap". The (inflation-adjusted) income levels of today's poor countries are still well below those of the leading countries in 1870. And the gap in incomes has increased. But judged by their HDIs, today's poor countries are well ahead of where the leading countries were in 1870. This is largely because medical advances and improved living standards have brought strong increases in life expectancy.

But even if the HDI gap has narrowed in the long-term, far too many people are losing ground. Life expectancy may have increased but the quality of life for many has not improved, with many still in abject poverty. And the spread of AIDS through Africa in the past decade is reducing life expectancy in many countries.

This has brought new urgency to policies specifically designed to alleviate poverty. Countries with a strong growth record, pursuing the right policies, can expect to see a sustained reduction in poverty, since recent evidence suggests that there exists at least a one-to-one correspondence between growth and poverty reduction. And if strongly pro-poor policies—for instance in well-targeted social expenditure—are pursued then there is a better chance that growth will be amplified into more rapid poverty reduction. This is one compelling reason for all economic policy makers, including the IMF, to pay heed more explicitly to the objective of poverty reduction. Anxiety about globalization also exists in advanced economies. How real is the perceived threat that competition from "low-wage economies" displaces workers from high-wage jobs and decreases the demand for less skilled workers? Are the changes taking place in these economies and societies a direct result of globalization[23,24]

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Economies are continually evolving and globalization is one among several other continuing trends. One such trend is that as industrial economies mature, they are becoming more service-oriented to meet the changing demands of their population. Another trend is the shift toward more highly skilled jobs. But all the evidence is that these changes would be taking place—not necessarily at the same pace—with or without globalization. In fact, globalization is actually making this process easier and less costly to the economy as a whole by bringing the benefits of capital flows, technological innovations, and lower import prices. Economic growth, employment and living standards are all higher than they would be in a closed economy.

But the gains are typically distributed unevenly among groups within countries, and some groups may lose out. For instance, workers in declining older industries may not be able to make an easy transition to new industries.

What is the appropriate policy response? Should governments try to protect particular groups, like low-paid workers or old industries, by restricting trade or capital flows? Such an approach might help some in the short-term, but ultimately it is at the expense of the living standards of the population at large. Rather, governments should pursue policies that encourage integration into the global economy while putting in place measures to help those adversely affected by the changes. The economy as a whole will prosper more from policies that embrace globalization by promoting an open economy, and, at the same time, squarely address the need to ensure the benefits are widely shared. Government policy should focus on two important areas:

- education and vocational training, to make sure that workers have the opportunity to acquire the right skills in dynamic changing economies; and
- well-targeted social safety nets to assist people who are displaced.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

National and international institutions, inevitably influenced by differences in culture, play an important role in the process of globalization. It may be best to leave an outside commentator to reflect on the role of institutions:

"...That the advent of highly integrated commodity and financial markets has been accompanied by trade tensions and problems of financial instability should not come as a surprise, The surprise is that these problems are not even more severe today, given that the extent of commodity and financial market integration is so much greater.[25]

" One possibility in accounting (for this surprise) is the stabilizing role of the institutions built in the interim. At the national level this means social and financial safety nets. At the international level it means the WTO, the IMF, the Basle Committee of Banking Supervisors. These institutions may be far from perfect, but they are better than nothing, judging from the historical correlation between the level of integration on one hand and the level of trade conflict and financial instability on the other." As globalization has progressed, living conditions (particularly when measured by broader indicators of well being) have improved significantly in virtually all countries. However, the strongest gains have been made by the advanced countries and only some of the developing countries.

That the income gap between high-income and low-income countries has grown wider is a matter for concern. And the number of the world's citizens in abject poverty is deeply disturbing. But it is wrong to jump to the conclusion that globalization has caused the divergence, or that nothing can be done to improve the situation. To the contrary: low-income countries have not been able to integrate with the global economy as quickly as others, partly because of their chosen policies and partly because of factors outside their control. No country, least of all the poorest, can afford to remain isolated from the world economy. Every country should seek to reduce poverty. The international

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community should endeavor—by strengthening the international financial system, through trade, and through aid—to help the poorest countries integrate into the world economy, grow more rapidly, and reduce poverty. That is the way to ensure all people in all countries have access to the benefits of globalization.[26]

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