

Globalization After September 11th

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It is easy to overstate the moment – to overgeneralize from the experience of one event and one time. Thus, we could interpret 9/11 as a, if not the, turning point in the contemporary period; the moment when the project of globalization met the project of mass terrorism, tinged with global radical Islam. Mass terrorism could be thought of as the challenge to globalization and the spread of such values as the rule of law, democracy, and equal liberty. It is a challenge to all these things, of course. But there are other challenges as well, which could be interpreted as broader and deeper. In what follows, I will map some of these.

There is nothing new about globalization. There have been many phases of globalization over the last two millennia including:

- the development of world religions
- the Age of Discovery
- the spread of empires

But having recognized this, it is important to note that there is something new about globalization today; that is, about the confluence of change across human activities - economic, political, legal, communicative and environmental. We can trace this by measuring the extent, intensity, velocity

and impact of human networks and relations in each of the core domains of activity, and this I have tried to do with Anthony McGrew in *Global Transformations* and other works.¹

Contemporary globalization shares elements in common with past phases, but is distinguished by unique organizational features, creating a world in which the extensive reach of human relations and networks is matched by its relative high intensity, high velocity and high impact propensity across many facets of social life. The result is the emergence of a global economy, 24 hour trading in financial markets, multinational corporations which dwarf many a country, new forms of international law, the development of regional and global governance structures and the creation of global systemic problems – global warming, AIDS, mass terrorism, market volatility, money la undering, the international drugs trade, the regulation of genetic engineering, and so forth. A number of striking challenges are posed by these developments.

First, contemporary processes of globalization and regionalization create overlapping networks of power which cut across territorial boundaries; as such they put pressure on, and strain, a world order designed in accordance with the Westphalian principle of exclusive sovereign rule over a bounded territory.

Second, the locus of effective political power can no longer be assumed to be simply national governments – effective power is shared and bartered by diverse forces and agencies, public and private, at national, regional and

international levels. Moreover, the idea of a self-determining people – or of a political community of fate - can no longer be located within the boundaries of a single nation-state alone. Some of the most fundamental forces and processes which determine the nature of life-chances are now beyond the reach of individual nation-states.

In the past, nation-states principally resolved their differences over boundary matters by pursuing ‘reasons of state’ backed by diplomatic initiatives and, ultimately, by coercive means. But this power logic is singularly inadequate to resolve the many complex issues, from economic regulation, resource depletion and environmental degradation to mass terrorism, which engender – at seemingly ever greater speeds – an intermeshing of ‘national fortunes’. We are, as Kant most eloquently put it, ‘unavoidably side by side’. In a world where powerful states make decisions not just for their peoples but for others as well, and where transnational forces cut across the boundaries of national communities in diverse ways, the questions of who should be accountable to whom, and on what basis, do not easily resolve themselves.

Third, existing political institutions, national and international, are weakened by three crucial regulatory and political gaps:²

a jurisdictional gap - the discrepancy between a regionalized and globalized world and national, separate units of policy-making, giving rise to the problem of externalities and who is responsible for them;

a participation gap - the failure of the existing international system to give adequate voice to many leading global actors, state and non-state); and

an incentive gap - the challenges posed by the fact that, in the absence of any supranational entity to regulate the supply and use of global public goods, many states will seek to free ride and/or fail to find durable collective solutions to pressing transnational problems.

Fourth, these political disjunctures are conjoined by an additional gap – what might be called a ‘moral gap’; that is, a gap defined by:

a) a world in which over 1.2 billion people live on less than a dollar a day; 46% of the world’s population live on less than \$2 a day; and 20% of the world’s population enjoy 80% of its income.

b) and by commitments and values of, at best, ‘passive indifference’ to this, marked by UN expenditure per annum of \$1.25 billion (minus peace keeping); US per annum confectionery expenditure of \$27 billion; US per annum alcohol expenditure of \$70 billion, and US per annum expenditure on cars that is through the roof (over \$550 billion).

This is not an anti-America statement, of course. Equivalent EU figures could have been highlighted.

Seemingly obvious questions arise. Would anyone freely choose such a state of affairs? Would anyone freely choose a distributional pattern of scarce goods and services, leading to hundreds of millions of people suffering serious harm and disadvantage independent of their will and consent (and 50,000 dying every day of malnutrition and poverty related causes), if these individuals did not already know that they had a privileged stake in the current social hierarchy? Would anyone freely endorse a situation in which the annual cost of supplying basic education to all children is \$6 billion, of water and sanitation \$9 billion, and of basic health to all \$13 billion, while annually \$4 billion is spent in the US on cosmetics, nearly \$20 billion on jewellery and \$17 billion (in the US and Europe) on pet food.³ Before an impartial court of moral reason (testing the reasonable rejectability of claims), it is hard to see how an affirmative answer to these questions could be defended. That global inequalities spark conflict and contestation can hardly be a surprise, especially given the visibility of the world's life styles in an age of mass media.

Fifth, there has been a shift from relatively discrete national communication and economic systems to their more complex and diverse enmeshment at regional and global levels, and from government to multilevel governance. Yet, there are few grounds for thinking that a parallel 'globalization' of political identities has taken place. One exception to this is to be found among the elites of the global order – the networks of experts and specialists, senior administrative personnel and transnational business executives – and those who track and contest their activities, the loose

constellation of social movements (including the anti-globalization movement), trade unionists and (a few) politicians and intellectuals. But these groups are not typical. Thus, we live with a challenging paradox – that governance is becoming increasingly a multilevel, intricately institutionalized and spatially dispersed activity, while representation, loyalty and identity remain stubbornly rooted in traditional ethnic, regional and national communities.⁴

Hence, the shift from government to multilayered governance, from national economies to economic globalization, is a potentially unstable shift, capable of reversal in some respects and certainly capable of engendering a fierce reaction – a reaction drawing on nostalgia, romanticized conceptions of political community, hostility to outsiders (refugees) and a search for a pure national state (e.g., in the politics of Haider in Austria, Le Pen in France and so on). But this reaction itself is likely to be highly unstable, and perhaps a relatively short- or medium-term phenomenon (if we are lucky!) To understand why this is so, nationalism has to be disaggregated.

As ‘cultural nationalism’ it is, and in all likelihood will remain, central to people’s identity; however, as political nationalism – the assertion of the exclusive political priority of national identity and the national interest – it cannot deliver many sought after public goods without seeking accommodation with others, in and through regional and global collaboration. In this respect, only an international or, better still, cosmopolitan outlook can, ultimately, accommodate itself to the political

challenges of a more global era, marked by overlapping communities of fate and multilevel/multilayered politics. Unlike, political nationalism, cosmopolitanism registers and reflects the multiplicity of issues, questions processes and problems which affect and bind people together, irrespective of where they were born or reside.

We require a shift from a club driven and executive led multilateralism – which is typically secretive and exclusionary – to a more transparent, accountable and just form of governance – a socially backed, cosmopolitan multilateralism.⁵

The core requirements of this are:

- a) recognition of the increasing interconnectedness of political communities in diverse domains (including the social, economic and environmental);
- b) the development of an understanding of overlapping ‘collective fortunes’ which require collective norms and solutions – locally, nationally, regionally and globally;
- c) the acknowledgement of the need for more decisions and more effective and accountable decisions at transnational levels.

d) the extension and transformation of our existing multilevel, multilayered polity, running from the local to the regional and global, so that it adopts, within its *modus operandi*, the principles of transparency, accountability, and democracy.

Cosmopolitan multilateralization cannot be built on the American model of geopolitics and international engagement, especially as conceived by the Republican right after 9/11, which constitutes a new form of global unilateralism. The European social experiment – pursued on the model of social democratic values and the noble experiment in collaborative governance: the EU – points a way forward. Yet within the EU, we are in the gravest danger of generating a deep split between elite and mass politics, and of the alienation of the popular will. Can this be avoided?

Like nationalism, cosmopolitanism is a cultural and political project, but with one difference: it is better adapted and suited to our regional and global age. But the arguments in support of this have yet to be won in the public sphere; and we lose them at our peril.

It is important to return to 9/11 and to say what it means in this context. One cannot accept the burden of putting justice right in one realm of life – physical security and political co-operation among defence establishments – without at the same time seeking to put it right elsewhere. If the political and the security, the social and the economic dimensions of justice are separated in the long term – as is the tendency in the global order today – the prospects of

a peaceful and civil society will be bleak indeed. Popular support against terrorism, as well as against political violence and exclusionary politics of all kinds, depends upon convincing people that there is a legal, responsive and specific way of addressing their grievances. Without this sense of confidence in public institutions the defeat of terrorism and intolerance becomes a hugely difficult task, if it can be achieved at all. Globalization without cosmopolitanism could fail.

References

1. See David Held and Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt and Jonathan Perraton, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999; David Held and Anthony McGrew (eds.), *The Global Transformations Reader*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000; and David Held and Anthony McGrew, *Globalization/Anti-Globalization*. Cambridge: Polity Press, forthcoming October 2002.
2. See Inge Kaul, Isabelle Grunberg and Marc Stern (eds.), *Global Public Goods: International Cooperation in the Twenty-first Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. xix-xxxviii.
3. These figures are drawn from the US economic census (1997) and from http://www.wwflearning.co.uk/news/features_0000000354.asp.
4. See William Wallace, 'The Sharing of Sovereignty: the European Paradox'. *Political Studies*, 47, 3, special issue, 1999.
5. I am indebted to Michael Zürn's distinction between 'executive' and 'social' multilateralism, which he made at a recent presentation at the London School of Economics, 17, 5, 2002.