

Globalisation and Localisation: A Critical Analysis

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Globalisation is a very old process of integrating and fragmenting the world: integrating on the basis of hegemonic powers' designs and fragmenting the challenges to the hegemonic power. War/conflict is as much a part of it as is cooperation/co-operation. No high moral principles are involved in it. Alliance systems are. Morals are relative to the truth a hegemon perceives. Since the commentators of the present researches on political power like to go back to the Athenian world, here is what Pericles said about Athens: Our ancestors 'have handed down to us, a free country.' Our forefathers 'added all the empire we have now'. We ourselves 'have, in most direction, added to power of our empire and have organised our state in such a way that it is perfectly well able to look after itself both in peace and in war... What I want to do is, in the first place, to discuss the spirit in which we faced our trials and also our constitution and the way of life which has made us great.'

There then is no absolute truth. They are all related to a quest to dominate the world for resources since at least the Persian wars to which a reference is made by Thucydides in his magnificent text on philosophy and history titled *The Peloponnesian War*, with reference to the Hellenic world. In the Persian War it was Sparta and in the Peloponnesian War it was Athens that dominated the Greek world for resources in and around the Greek world. Each of the ancient civilizations attempted these in their spheres of influence and with similar mindsets though with varying degrees of success. Earlier it was the agrarian Sparta and then it was the entrepreneurial Athens that dominated the Greek world, followed by the Roman and then by the Church's dominance over Europe to be followed by the modern mode of production.

Search for Resources

In each of these phases the search was for resources and that led to commerce and trade- an activity which saw great civilizations of ancient vintage and visage interact peacefully but more in warlike situations. Thucydides related this struggle to human nature. He said '...if these words of mine are judged useful by those who want to understand clearly the events which happened in the past and which (human nature being what it is) will, at some time or the other and in much the same ways, be repeated in the future.' (*History of Peloponnesian Wars*, 1954, Penguin, Great Britain, pp, 24-25; see also Book 2, Chapter 4, for quotes from Pericles). Without taking recourse to Thucydides' cyclical views of human nature and the study of war, we note here that the expansion drives on land have been marked by struggle over resources once a state regarded itself to be more advanced in terms of economic gain.

Secondly the penetration of the more advanced regions into the peripheries has taken place simultaneously. The advance has been marked by war. The resistance to it is marked by

insurrection. The Spartan king said of Athens 'She is extraordinarily well equipped in every aspect, so that we ought to consider it very likely that they will come and meet us in battle; and that, if they have not yet set out against us before we are there, they will do so when they see us in their own country... Athenians are especially likely to act in this way since they think they have a right to supremacy and are much more used to invading and destroying other people's land than seeing this happening to their own land (pp.103-104). In war there was no fear of God or concern for human beings that had any restraining effect. Revolts of colonies were also put down.

'Global' penetrates the 'Local'

The penetration of the core nuclear area into the other regions cannot be imagined as a unilinear process of globalisation because it may have hurdles that neither the sword nor the penetrating truth can determine. There may be no clear lines of demarcation between the local and the nuclear region. There may be interpenetration of the kind that colonialism has witnessed in its earlier version of globalisation in the 19th century. The British had gone to Canton to introduce order there but instead Canton introduced disorder owing to fall in overseas profit. This economic space has its obverse too. When, as a result of the commercial revolution of modern times, the White settler went to the Americas they took with them diseases like the plague against which the native had no immunity. It was as deadly as today's AIDS. The resultant mortality could not be regarded as localisation. It was a product of globalisation. Localisation was life, globalisation- lack of immunity against a virus unheard of.

The change in landscapes in case of the receiving countries could as well be cultural shocks and implanting of hitherto unknown wisdom. Current globalisation is talked about in terms of 'finance scapes', 'mediascapes', 'technoscapes', 'ideoscapes', 'ethnoscapes' etc. Behind these is the 'freemarketscape'. These scapes need not be imagined. Computer graphics hooked on to internet, (originally initiated by the US Department of Defence), and to the market give you a clear picture of the hidden agenda behind this megascape. The hidden agenda is not localisation but dislocation through deconstruction. The dislocation is double. It is both in the metropol and the other capital. Transcending language barriers the Internet leads to learning a common language, speaking a common sex language, a language of e-commerce, language of seeking partners, of national security and a global identity which reduces you to a cultural zero of a marketable commodity. Yes human beings sitting on the individualised laptops across language, religious, community boundaries get thus integrated or zero-inned.

Zeroised Locales

By this destruction could one mean localisation? In other words localisation means zeroisation of counter-points available in one's and others' areas of identity and interest. The pertinent question is what is human? Is it to make of an individual a market-success commodity by zeroing him? Is it in letting him discover that need through his own epistemological processes embedded in his analogous mind in contrast to the binary mould of the artificial intelligence? Globalisation opts for the binary. How human this is? As human as artificial intelligence is for war games and other laboratory simulation!

Marketisation means Mac-donaldisation, Coca Colaisation, Pepsi Colaisation, Dollarisation, internationalisation of other consumer items like male dresses from Van Heusen, Arrow, like shoes from Woodland, like automobiles from Cielo, Matiz, Santro, Benz, Lancer, Honda and banking through the 'power' of credit cards. An advertisement of BPL TV says big picture, big sound. Love is turned into sex and Patriotism into jingoism. Most of the transfer of finance, production facility, and technology to the Third World is on the basis of understanding between the three centres of economic power represented in the OECD countries.

The culture-media packages appeal to the middle class who think of getting rich through rich consumer items. The individual can now see war on the media. Of course as the media wants to show. There is nothing in the camera to show that it is neutral in giving messages. This has meant laying waste of national industrial capacities, distortion of economy, jettisoning of the welfarist content of the development strategy and listening to the prescriptions of the international lending institutions. Has it meant freedom? No. Latest examples of demonstrations during the deliberations of the OECD countries and then of the international lending institutions have proved that this has not meant freedom. On the contrary it has meant the denial of the substance called man, ironically in the advanced West – or has it become wild West-wild for the dissenter.

The Normative Basis

The normative basis for this is related to the Enlightenment views of the individual and its rationalisation to the belief that such an *ontos* of the individual is related to Freedom. Let us look at the ambiguous views on the individual. The British utilitarians regard an individual to be a maximizer of either utilities or power. This rationality leads to the creation of wealth/opportunities. In Emmanuel Kant the individual is conscious of his rights and that leads to intersubjectivity. There are others who question this existence of the conscious individual. For Leibniz the personal identity required an identity of metaphysical substance, in which consciousness has a significant place. In Hegel self-consciousness has reference to the other. He says 'self-consciousness exists in itself and for itself, in that, and by the fact that it exists for another self-consciousness; that is to say, it is only by being acknowledged as being recognised'. For Marx this was not a realist description of the individual. He was made a product of consciousness. For him individuals can individuate in the midst of society and that too in terms of class. Sociologists like Mead agreed with the view that society mattered. Nietzsche, Freud and Lacan challenged the consciousness thesis. For Foucault subjects are products of power relations. For Lyotard subjects are situated at nodal points of communication network. Adorno's dialectic of Enlightenment shows that modern European society is beset with a rupture between its telos (freedom) and ontos (rationality). This delinks the pursuit of truth unrelated to morality and beauty that Kant had originally mentioned. There is no truth between truth, morality and beauty- the three spheres that Kant had differentiated. Except for the market and its success one does not know why science is engaged in techno-science. Why is DNA is being pursued? Its pros and cons are delinked from objective basis of truth. Why defend instrumental rationality?

If this is so in the advanced West then the changes that the current spread of globalisation is introducing are nothing short of traumatic. The individual feels much more un-integrated in the western societies. The individual has become decentred and dislocated. Techno-science has overtaken him. Megalopolis has taken over his home. Landscapes have undergone changes. Long

ago Burke had defined loss of property as terror. Today it needs to be defined as loss of familiar landscape in which the threat to life is real and unexpected. Apart from the psycho-pathological cases of dislocation that are rightly dubbed as terroristic, there are groups defined as subordinate, including racial, gender-based, religious, and issue-driven interest groups. They are challenging dominant representation of history.

Today there is the scape goating of the counter culture in the heartland of the advanced societies. A new witch-hunt is on. And yet before Clinton came to India he thought that the countries of South Asia were in a time warp since they were in the throes of religious conflicts of the variety that Europe faced in the 18th century. This is also the position of the sociologists like Karl Polanyi and Roland Robertson. It is the latter whose research in the 1980s has taken him to theorise on the globalisation and localisation theme.

Impact of Globalisation

Current globalisation is an euphemism for extended accumulation, money economy, domination, high culture, instrumental rationality or banality of dominance. Each to each one's taste. The earlier globalisation meant preparing the economic basis for the industrial revolution in England through the loot and plunder of India, the slave trade in Africa, through the gold and silver of the Americas.

Today the extended accumulation aims at controlling diminishing world resources through not just the sea lanes that Pericles had mentioned but also the space assets through the techno-science. The induction of the neo-liberal agenda of reforms combined with the communication revolution and the spread of the funds through the Non Government Organisations (NGOs) in newer regions of Europe, Africa, South Asia and South-east Asia have created new asymmetries—criminogenic asymmetries—and new elites which by any account are interested in integrating with the global hegemony but at human costs that are causing inhuman dislocations. The deconstruction afoot has some very inhuman feature. Take a random sample: genocide in Rwanda, ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, air battle over Iraq, impact of sanction on Iraq, air interdiction in Kosovo, piracy in Africa, South Asia and South-east Asia. In all these the state sovereignty as the foundational principle of international relations is being jettisoned.

Soft States and International Capital: The Russian Example

The new States in Eastern Europe and Central Asia have become soft states. The States of Eastern Europe that have joined the European Union cannot yet guarantee to their people the living standards of the European Union despite the fact that they have become members. In Central Asia the call of the oil in the Caspian Sea is too strong for the multinationals. All the OECD countries and other European countries are involved in the scramble for the black gold. Jack London tells us about the old gold rush in the North America. They are now managing the local ruling elites that are interested in managerial capitalism of the new kind. In this a meltdown of earlier capacities is accompanied by a new loot and plunders by oligarchs in the interest of international capital.

The Yeltsin era in Russia was marked by the growth of the Plutarchs. They had the capacity to rob the wealth of the nation, bribe the court against instituting investigations against such criminal

activities, cause a melt down of the currency, the state, the economy and ordinary existence of individuals. For the ordinary citizen in Russia and the territories of the erstwhile Soviet Union there are criminogenic asymmetries. To take one example suicide is notoriously rising in this region. Suicide and homicide arose in the entire post-Soviet territory after 1991. Rates calculated for 1988-90 and 1992-94 showed that 13 nations in 1991 saw an increase of 4.65 per 10,000 per year in 1991. Eleven out of 13 nations saw the growth of homicide. Suicide was linked to life expectancy, population, areas, population density, birth rate, death rate, educational attainment, adjusted real gross domestic product per capita, and human development index.

According to official figures, the money income in 1999 fell by 15% on the previous year; every third Russian is beyond the poverty line and the purchasing power of money fell by 20%. All this is the result of the introduction of neo-liberal reform in its shock therapy version and the introduction of democracy. This dislocation is not different than the one in the advanced West. The difference is only in magnitude. The similarity can be gauged from the following. At the time when the Okalahoma City Federal building was bombed killing 200 employees and visitors, during those weeks only more than two hundred people died as a result of car accidents and handgun murders. In Russia topping the list of crimes is contract killings. Call this delocation or localisation, they are the products of the sweeping wave of globalisation.

The Third World

The states in the third world are in a more aggrieved state except the countries like Mexico, Argentina, ones in South East Asia, China and India. In Africa the incidence of internal conflicts and absence of rule of law and conditions of primitive accumulation are failures of capitalism and not socialism. It is reported that by 2025 Africa will be a 'continental slum'. The dislocation in the Third World states is related to the problem of migration owing to poverty. The problem of migration in the developed world is as much related to poverty in countries from which this (migration) is happening as with riches to the countries, which are its destination. Large-scale migration began after 1815 to the United States. In 1914 the total number of immigration was 1.2 million, which was 1.5% of the total American population. In 1996 they came to 9,11,000, which was only 0.35% of the population. This globalisation for Robertson is a period of uncertainty. It is a complex web of interrelated processes—some of which are weakening states and/or inviting state interventions. An OECD report suggests that migrations were beneficial to the advanced economies. But its obverse for the Third World countries is noted by the Human Development Report of 1996. Between 1960-91 the share of global income of the richest 20% of the world's richest people rose from 70-85% while that of the poorest declined from 2.3 to 1.4%. By 1993, of the \$23 trillion of global GDP, \$18 trillion was in industrial countries and only \$5 trillion in developing countries.

The social disruption caused by migration is very stark. It causes unemployment, change in the life styles and changes the character of society and causes tensions between older and the new generation in the family life. Globalisation has opened up communities; it has atomised individuals. It is forcing them not only to relate to the locale that is changed but also to the global locale. In contrast to the American TV there is alternative from a few countries-very few indeed.

Movies from India and Hong Kong (China), soap operas from Mexico and Argentina, pop music from Africa are some exceptional examples though not examples of the best in cultural packages. Dislocation or localisation has created faultlines across the board. New Tensions are generated for the States to handle in the global context of information barrage. Criminogenic asymmetries are not just one form of response. When whole people move as did the Hutus and Tutsis they did so in the context of depletion of scarce natural resources. If in other places such genocide is not taking place it may be more because communities and people have been able to bear the shock. Where ever globalisation leads to the disintegration of man and his worth in his and other's eyes there are bound to be revolts around ideologies available to him- be these liberationist, fundamentalist, liberal-democratic or any other.

Current theological understanding about religion by the West violates the emotional language of a human being. This is that in the emotional world the definition of the self involves the relationship with the other. In case of the Western constructs the self is defined in a manner to exclude, interdict and disorient the other and give it the name of localisation or failure. A whole people or a movement cannot become criminal. The revolt of the Chipias on the basis of a liberal agenda showed this. A fringe can become infantile and terrorist. Civilizations cannot become barbaric but their dislocations can create acts of barbarism—e.g. the drought in Ethiopia in the last part of the 20th century.

Conclusion

It would be rather incorrect to state that globalisation creates deconstruction of individual identity in both the advanced and the developing countries. Rather globalisation currently creates new social faultlines with its extended accumulation. These faultlines are bleeding as much as capital was in the earlier phase of global colonization, or even earlier during the phase of primitive accumulation. The theme of globalisation and localisation shows the travails, tribulations and tragedies of current extended accumulation. Individuals at home and abroad and states abroad are being deconstructed. Intra-State conflicts and wars are its only one manifestation. Angst, ennui, alienation could be other expressions of it.