THE CONFLICTS OF GLOBALIZATION

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> We live in a world that is simultaneously shrinking and expanding, growing closer and farther apart. . . . National borders are increasingly irrelevant. And yet globalism is by no means triumphant. Tribalisms of all kinds flourish. Irredentism abounds. Attali, 1991: 117

> Because of the great increase in the traffic in culture, the large-scale transfer of meaning systems and symbolic forms, the world is increasingly becoming one not only in political and economic terms . . . , but in terms of its cultural construction as well; a global ecumene of persistent cultural interaction and exchange. **This, however, is no egalitarian global village**. (emphasis added)
>
> Hannerz, 1991: 107

The pace of global change is extremely rapid, and even those trained to track and analyze it have difficulty keeping up with new developments. However, trends are regularly observed and named, and these new terms become "buzz words" in the lexicons of governments, academia and the media. Such a term is **globalization**. Though it is, admittedly, rather vague, and the phenomena it is employed to describe extremely diverse, it does express a prevailing sentiment at century's end that our lives are increasingly influenced by forces which have transcended borders, and which, precisely because of their scope and power, are changing, irreversibly, life on this planet. All levels of society are being reshaped by this process: the individual may find her/his livelihood threatened or identity thrown into question; localities and whole regions are forced to recreate themselves or die in the face of new economic forces; and nation-states themselves experience steadily decreasing freedom of action and ever closer ties to each other.

At the moment there is a serious contradiction between the fact that globalization is in full swing, and the fact that existing processes of global governance lack sufficient power, authority and scope to regulate and direct this process toward beneficial ends. As a result globalization is often disruptive and inequitable in its effects. It has also posed new challenges for existing public institutions while at the same time weakening their autonomy and support; and, paradoxically, provided the means for those it excludes culturally or economically to organize against its subordinating and homogenizing force. Many analysts have pointed to the turbulent nature of this planetary process and to the increasing frequency and variety of reactions to it. Drawing on this literature, this paper first attempts to clarify various aspects of globalization and then considers its potential for generating social conflict and unrest. Subsequently, human needs theory, as developed and applied by John Burton, is used to explore some of the roots of these conflicts and, finally, **globalism** is put forth as a positive, and potentially corrective, dimension of globalization.

Globalization: A Closer Look

1. Definitions

There are a variety of definitions and descriptions of globalization, which, though overlapping in many respects, do emphasize different dimensions of the process. Robertson's is one of the first and the most general:

> Globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole . . . both concrete global interdependence and consciousness of the global whole in the twentieth century (Robertson, 1992: 8).

Anthony Giddens's adds an important dimension to the picture by emphasizing the interactive, or dialectical dimensions of the process:

> Globalization can thus be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. This is a dialectical process because such local happenings may move in an obverse direction from the very distanced relations that shape them. Local transformation is as much a part of globalisation as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space (Giddens, 1990: 64).

However, it is in regard to business and economics that the term "globalization" is most frequently invoked. What is referred to here is: ". . . a qualitative shift toward a global economic system that is no longer based on autonomous national economies but on a consolidated global marketplace for production, distribution, and consumption;" (Holm and Sørensen, 1995: 5) in which ". . . distinct national economies are subsumed and rearticulated into the system by essentially international processes and transactions" (Hirst and Thompson, 1992). The primary vehicles for this process have been the increasing transnationalization of production, and the resulting rise in influence of multinational enterprises, and even more importantly, the explosion in the volume and scope of transactions on international financial markets. In this regard, consider the following commentary on contemporary change in the banking industry:

> Banking is rapidly becoming indifferent to the constraints of time, place and currency . . . an English buyer can get a Japanese mortgage, an American can tap his New York bank account through a cash machine in Hong Kong and a Japanese investor can buy shares in a London-based Scandinavian bank whose stock is denominated in sterling, dollars, Deutsche Marks, and Swiss francs (Waters, 1995: 89).

And one of its most often noted effects is the homogenization of consumer markets around the world, at least in certain areas—the so-called "McDonaldization" of global consumption.

2. Critiques

Though often touted as representing the height of economic rationality, globalization has also been portrayed as having a very dark side. Critics repeatedly point out that the contemporary form of globalization[1], driven by economic power, clearly promotes the hegemony of Western culture and corporations; puts jobs and communities at risk in the rich countries and exploits cheap labor in the poorer countries; increases threats to the environment; and undermines the foundations of democracy and social stability by subjecting national political institutions to forces of economic change beyond their control. Furthermore, as a recent volume of essays (Holm and Sørensen, 1995) has highlighted, globalization is **uneven** both in its processes and in its effects. It produces concentrations and deprivations which, in the aggregate, constitute an increasingly well-defined global power structure.

Claude Ake, a leading African critical thinker, has argued in this regard that:

> Economic forces are constituting the world into one economy and, to a lesser extent, one political society. Nations participate in global governance according to their economic power, which is coextensive with their rights. The global order is ruled by an informal cabinet of the world's economically most powerful countries; its law is the logic of the market, and status in this new order is a function of economic performance (Ake, 1995: 26).

Critics also argue that there is a neo-liberal ideology of globalization which serves to "normalize" the process—to make it seem natural, inevitable and beneficial. Thus, while it is clearly in the particular interest of big multinational and global corporations to be free to move money, factories and goods around the planet seeking access to the cheapest factors of production, the most congenial regulatory environments and the most lucrative markets, the ideology of globalization promotes the belief that the interests of humanity and even of the earth itself will also be best served if world markets are ". . . left unfettered by ethical, moral, social, or environmental considérations." (Ritchie, 1996)

In an analysis of the North American Trade Association as a case study of both the ideology and practice of globalization, economist Robert MacEwan presents data from the United States and Mexico to substantiate what he calls the "social failures" which are produced by the trade pact: greater income inequality, environmental damage and the decline of democratic control:

> Greater income inequality is not the only social failure generated by the success of globalization generally and by NAFTA particularly. Environmental destruction is surely exacerbated with the success of globalization. The greater mobility of capital makes it more and more difficult for citizens of any one political unit to

> organize and use their government to impose regulations on polluting firms (MacEwan, 1994: 2).

Finally, he argues that globalization has a negative impact on the quality of politics and public life by placing restrictions on governments' powers to intervene in their own economies, and, thereby ". . . limiting people's power to exercise political control over their economic lives" (MacEwan, 1994: 2).

Though one should not necessarily take all this criticism at face value, it does reflect what can go wrong as corporations and capital have acquired the means to move and operate on a much broader scale. Furthermore, it conveys a sense of alarm that the nation-state as an institutional structure cannot cope effectively with these new developments, and, in fact, finds its own priorities and policies heavily influenced, if not dictated, by them.[2] The question then arises, who will articulate and defend the **public** interest against the global reach of *private* financial and commercial interests, when the latter go too far? For instance, all but the most **laissez-faire** of economic thinking argue that governments must intervene to protect the public when markets fail, i.e., when they are no longer free and competitive. However, efforts to implement such a strategy at the global level, through various multilateral and international institutions, have achieved little. Consequently, world markets have become increasingly concentrated in major sectors.

Furthermore, while there is a case to be made for reducing expensive and inefficient government regulatory structures, the lack of adequate regulatory standards applying across borders does provide an incentive for multinational firms to choose less-regulated operating environments, and involves countries seeking foreign investment in a "race for the bottom" competition to see who can provide the most "free" and least regulated business environment (*The Economist*, July 1995: 114). In summary, there does appear to be at least "a kernel of truth" in the negative characterization of globalization, and this judgment becomes even more plausible when globalization is evaluated as an "engine" of social conflict.

Globalization and Conflict

Though the previous discussion is suggestive, the link between globalization and conflict requires further explication. Much of the literature distinguishes between conflicts which focus on issues of culture and identity, and others which appear to be primarily economic, and the discussion that follows adopts this approach while acknowledging that in practice the two elements are interrelated. Conflicts of world views and interests should not, however, be seen as inherently threatening or negative. Indeed many of the tensions of social change are largely unavoidable, and some are undoubtedly creative in their effects. At the same time, however, the analysis which follows suggests that if the human needs and rights issues involved are not adequately addressed, the incidence and intensity of social conflict associated with globalization are likely to increase steadily in the years ahead.

1. The Pace and Scope of Change

Social change, in and of itself, has historically been associated with increasing levels of conflict. This has been explored in great depth by P. A. Sorokin in Volume III of his classic *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, entitled *Fluctuations of Social Relationship, War and Revolution* (Sorokin, 1937: 409-75). His study of twelve European countries and empires over the period 500 B.C. to 1925 A.D. showed that the magnitude of what he called "social strife" was at its highest during periods when a given society was undergoing a great change of world-view—for instance from a religious, other-worldly, outlook to a more secular and materialist perspective. Such periods of change are, by definition, transitional, and are characterized by conflicts of values and interests, which have become widespread and violent.

One of the few points of agreement among globalization commentators as diverse as Richard Barnet (Barnet and Cavanagh, 1994) and Ruud Lubbers (Lubbers, 1997) is that the spreading and acceleration of globalization is generating change on an unprecedented scale. Therefore, generalizing Sorokin's findings to the world as a whole, there may be grounds to conclude that the process of globalization is inherently disruptive and that an increasing incidence of conflict is an inevitable bi-product of it. Following Arnold Toynbee (Toynbee, 1956)[3] it could be further argued that the conflicts generated by globalization represent a significant early challenge to what he himself saw as an emerging world civilization (Toynbee, 1960: 107) whose immediate future will be greatly influenced by how these divisive issues are approached and dealt with in the years ahead.

2. The Paradox of Reflexivity

Several analysts have argued that one of the effects of rapid changes in societies around the world is to increase **reflexivity**, which, in turn, contributes to the incidence of conflict . Consider this passage from Waters:

> Modern society is . . . specifically reflexive in character. Social activity is constantly informed by flows of information and analysis which subject it to continuous revision and thereby constitute and reproduce it. . . . **The particular difficulty faced by moderns is that this knowledge itself is constantly changing so that living in a modern society appears to be uncontrolled, like being aboard a careening juggernaut**. . . . (emphasis added) (Waters, 1995: 51)[4]

Anthony Giddens argued that the industrial nation-state was the embodiment of "modern" society, and that it has been characterized by what he called "expert systems"—repositories of technical knowledge that can be deployed across a wide range of social contexts. These expert systems have, for instance, given rise to a technocratic style of civil administration. However, this dimension of modernity rests on the trust which, in the face of multiple risks and uncertainty, individual people—"citizens," "consumers," "clients," "passengers" or "patients," depending on the context—place in these rather abstract and socially distant expert systems. Growing

reflexivity is, however, undermining trust in expert systems around the globe. In regard to more and more issues there is a feeling that experts have either failed, or do not have the public interest at heart. Spybey, for instance describes how in "late modern society" there is a: ". . . growing refusal of people to accept expert assurances about its dangers" (Spybey 1996, 153). He goes on to state:

> If, in the nineteenth century, those people who understood it and had access to its benefits rejoiced in the bounty of modernity and its scientific-technological wonders, the people of late modernity are cultured to expect mass consumption but are increasingly sufficiently well informed to develop doubts about its benefits. This is self-reflexivity and it is stimulated by negative experiences shared on a global scale, like for instance the Chernobyl disaster. It is individualism, enabled by mass education and encouraged by post-1960s permissiveness and self-awareness. (emphasis in original) (Spybey, 1996: 153)

In a similar vein, James Rosenau has written at length about what he calls the "global authority crisis" and his analysis provides insight into the nature and scope of political conflict in a world of globalized "postinternational politics." He explains that as a result of greatly increased access to information and a general impression of the diminished competence, or declining effectiveness of public institutions, citizens have lost their habit of obeying. If leaders are not able to find more effective means to gather support, people ". . . begin to consider redirecting their loyalties and legitimacy sentiments"(Rosenau, 1990: 389). He goes on to illustrate how crises of this kind interact and "cascade" around the planet:

> The world is now so interdependent that "crisis networks" evolve, as information about a crisis in one collectivity flows to others, and as its consequences ramify. By virtue of the information flows and of the interaction engendered by refugees, traders, terrorists, and other boundary-spanning individuals and groups, authority crises overlap and cascade across collectivities, forming linkages among them on an issue or regional basis (ibid, 390).

Giddens and Rosenau describe a world in which people are more aware, and to some extent more empowered by their access to information and their increased ability to analyze the events shaping their lives. In this picture, populations have become less compliant and more demanding at precisely the time when national political institutions, as described below, are in many cases reducing their budgets and programs. The intersection of these trends sets the stage for intensified competition between groups who benefit from the state's protection and those who seek more freedom from state intervention.

But reflexivity, while aided and stimulated by globalized media and information technology, is also threatened by these same forces. Increasingly powerful media giants diffuse the ideology of globalization, with the effect that:

> The values of Globalization, transmitted through satellite television and the distribution of worldwide publications, permeate everyone's life. Global marketing, international stock markets, and the availability of nomadic world-wide venture capital complete the scene for the rise of a global market value system. No culture is protected by topography, tradition or just plain disinterest—essentially nobody is out of reach of the extended arm of Globalization. (Steingard and Fitzgibbons, 1997)

Thus, globalization both enlightens and pacifies, both widens horizons and narrows vision. However, it does seem that the globalization narrative of the media is vulnerable to increasing cognitive dissonance as its utopian image of widening prosperity is subverted by images of deprivation and marginalization, and by a rising tide of insecurity and anxiety.

Globalization and Identity

Another paradoxical effect of intensifying globalization, is that while it seeks to homogenize, is also increases awareness of social **heterogeneity**. Groups whose identity and solidarity is based on race, ethnicity, religion, language have become increasingly vocal and have used the global media to make their discontent known. This contemporary "ethnic revival" was to some degree "unleashed" by the end of the Cold War. The Cold War was a conflict among states, and served to perpetuate the primacy of national identity in world society; but in the 1990's the state, weakened by globalization, is less effective in either coercing compliance or integrating national society, and minorities are able to more effectively reassert their identity in reaction to hegemonic cultural forces. These minorities often see the state as no longer a promoter and protector of domestic interests, but rather a collaborator with outside forces (Scholte, 1997). Thus, in the 1990's it can be argued that the primary locus of conflict may no longer be found between and among states, but between the state and subnational groups (see Gurr, 1994). The overal effect of these developments has been to increase the salience of cultural diversity issues, both within and across borders, for all the major players in world politics.

Several prominent political analysts have argued variations on this theme. Samuel Huntington, for instance, has put forth inter-civilizational conflict as the new "danger" to the dominant powers in world affairs, stating that ". . . the efforts of the West to promote its values of democracy and liberalism as universal values, to maintain its military predominance and to advance its economic interests engender countering responses from other civilizations" (Huntington, 1993: 29); and he does not hesitate to take his argument to its logical conclusion, predicting that: "The next world war, if there is one, will be a war between civilizations" (Huntington, 1993: 39).

The controversy and rebuttals provoked by Huntington's work are not of immediate concern here; however, his argument does provide important insights into some prominent

conflicts of globalization. Globalization in its contemporary form is the carrier of values which are essentially Western and liberal in character, but they are being aggressively promoted internationally as universal values, the inherent worth of which should be obvious to all right-thinking people. This is the perspective behind such notions as Francis Fukuyama's (1992) "end of history" thesis, [5] or the standard package of liberal economic reforms prescribed for all struggling economies by the International Monetary Fund (Sachs, 1995: 51).[6] Huntington is explicit about debunking the globalization myth that world culture is Western culture, and argues further that:

> Western efforts to propagate such ideas produce instead a reaction against "human rights imperialism" and a reaffirmation of indigenous values, as can be seen in the support for religious fundamentalism by the younger generation in non-Western cultures (Huntington, 1993: 40-41).

Writing a few years later on a similar theme, Graham Fuller, a political scientist at the Rand Corporation, traced further the dynamics of "culture conflict," explaining how non-Western peoples are confronted with a flood of evidence that someone else's values are re-shaping their societies as:

> . . . systems of international marketing and communications create freeways for the mass import of foreign cultural materials—food, drugs, clothing, music, films, books, television programs, even values—with the concomitant loss of control over societies, symbols and myths. Such cultural anxieties are welcome fuel to more radical political groups that call for cultural authenticity, preservation of traditional and religious values, and rejection of the alien cultural antigens. Big Macs become in-your-face symbols of American power—political, economic, and military—over weak or hesitant societies and states (Fuller, 1995: 152).

Fuller also argues that, on a shrinking planet, the West cannot escape the secondary effects of these conflicts:

> Chaos and turmoil in various regions create serious ripple effects that will not leave the rest of the globe untouched: Wars, refugees, embargoes, sanctions, weapons of mass destruction, radical ideology, and terrorism all emerge from the crucible of the failing state order. . . . The West will not be able to quarantine less-developed states and their problems indefinitely, any more than states can indefinitely quarantine the dispossessed within their own societies—on practical as well as moral grounds (1995, 154).

Fundamentalisms of various kinds are prominent in the conflicts of "cultural reaction." Traditional identity groups in non-Western societies were already put on the defensive during the modernization of their societies as Western institutions and values were introduced through state-

building. They feel even more threatened now as their national institutions are undermined by the international pressures described earlier . Both the pace and direction of change in these societies ". . . accelerates the search for a single, often mythologized truth that can reference all social mores and practices," (Waters, 1995: 130) and fosters a kind of fundamentalist religious and ethnic movement which is ". . . A value-oriented, anti-modern, dedifferentiating form of collective action — a socio-cultural movement aimed at reorganizing all spheres of life in terms of a particular set of absolute values" (Lechner, 1990: 79). Globalization thus sets the stage for the confrontation between what Benjamin Barber has called "McWorld" and "Jihad." Though covering much of the same ground in his analysis as Huntington and Fuller, Barber goes further to show how neither globalizing commercialism nor parochial solidarity bodes well for democracy, and he trenchantly critiques the role of religion as a contributing cause to the conflict, characterizing contemporary fundamentalist movements as:

> . . . parochial rather than cosmopolitan, angry rather than loving, proselytizing rather than ecumenical, zealous rather than rationalist, sectarian rather than deistic, ethnocentric rather than universalizing . . . fractious and pulverizing, never integrating (Barber, 1996: 6).

These passages suggest that globalization seems to be pulling virtually all identity groups on the planet out of their various degrees of isolation, pushing them into the currents of the global **ecumene** and, thereby, obliging them to re-define, or as Robertson and others put it, **relativize** themselves in regard to global trends. Relativization, however, is a process which may involve **either** rejection **or** some form of accommodation, integration, or synthesis with the hegemonic cultural and economic forces. Thus, a more nuanced picture would show that instead of the steady expansion of Western cultural dominance what we are really witnessing is a:

> . . . contested and undecided . . . encounter between global cultural flows and inherited local identities, . . . the uneasy balance between the persistence of unique local cultural identities and the reshaping of such uniqueness by totalizing transnational cultural influences ranging from Coca-Colarization to the universalisation of western ideological and political concepts (Waters, 1995: 130).

Though in some respects a more optimistic scenario for the emergence of world culture, this juxtaposition of cultural forces produces just the mix of tensions which Sorokin identified as characteristic of periods of high social strife; a situation exacerbated by changes in the global economic system.

A Changing World Economy

As mentioned earlier, the economic dimensions of globalization have attracted the most popular attention, much of which has been negative due to the frequency and variety of conflicts for which the process is blamed. The economic realm is also an area in which it can be argued that conflict has led to some creative responses from the international community.

First, it should be acknowledged that, as Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter (1942: 84) argued, capitalism inevitably involves a process of "creative destruction." Competition stimulates firms to innovate, both in products and in production, in order to outdo their rivals. However, entire industries and regions can be "destroyed," or at least marginalized, as more innovative competitors take the lead in a given sector. This is demonstrated, for instance, by the change from the horse and cart to the automobile, or from canals to railways. The liberal argument has always been that, despite the rather Darwinian way this process produces "winners" and "losers," society as a whole benefits from constant improvement in the quality and range of goods and services available to consumers. In this sense economic globalization is viewed as the logical extension of this process to an increasingly unified global market.

However, as MacEwan has forcefully stated:

> Losers . . . are not simply impersonal firms or abstract inefficient technologies. In the real world, losers are people, sometimes capitalists, but always workers, individually and as communities. Creative destruction means the unemployment of real workers, the destitution of real communities, devastation of the environment, and disempowerment of the populace (MacEwan, 1994: 3) (emphasis added).

This has, in a sense, always been the case since capitalism replaced feudalism as the dominant system of production. But the contemporary period is also characterized by a reduction in both the willingness and ability of governments to keep employment high through public expenditure or to pay the unemployment and welfare benefits which, to some degree, protected workers in the industrial countries from the creative destruction of capitalism during the decades immediately after World War II. Rather, the increasing importance of international finance capital in the world economy has compelled governments to be much more concerned about the "investment climates" in their countries, and to insure that financial markets " approve" of their macroeconomic policies.

Put very simply, globalization has radically shifted the balance of economic power in favor of capital, which is highly mobile and thus able to move where profits are to be gained; and against labor, which is much less mobile (even in an economic community like the European Union), and whose basis of organization is still more national than international. As Ethan Kapstein has argued:

> The forces acting on today's workers inhere in the structure of today's global economy, with its open and increasingly fierce competition on the one hand and fiscally conservative units—states—on the other . . . Growing income inequality, job insecurity, and unemployment are seen as the flip side of globalization (Kapstein, 1996: 17).

Kapstein and MacEwan are writing primarily about the industrialized countries, but the situation of those former "Third World" countries who cannot find a place in the new world economy is even more grave:

> . . . with the absolute costs of labor becoming less and less important as a competitive factor (versus low labor costs relative to a certain level of technological sophistication and economic integration in the world economy), many countries and regions face a process of rapid deterioration that could lead to destructive reactions. Within the framework of a new informational economy, **a significant part of the world population is shifting from a structural position of exploitation to a structural position of irrelevance**. (emphasis added) (Castells, 1993: 37)

He goes on to describe what form these "destructive reactions" might take:

> . . . first . . . is to establish new linkages with the world economy via the criminal economy[7] . . . A second reaction is the expression of utter desperation through that widespread violence, either individual or collective, which has transformed major cities in the Fourth World (and entire regions in some countries) into savage, self-destructive battlegrounds. . . . A third reaction, rapidly developing in the Fourth World . . . is the rise of ideological/religious fundamentalism, easily associated with terrorism and/or semireligious war (1993: 38).

In his third point, Castells links the cultural reaction discussed earlier to the deteriorating economic conditions of what he calls "Fourth World" societies. He suggests that movements of reaction—whether ethnic, fundamentalist or Marxist have in common a wish to:

> . . . cut all bridges with the "the Other" (i.e., the developed world and its logic in the developing world), since there is little chance that the excluded can ever become true partners in **a system that is so extraordinarily inclusive of economies and somewhat exclusive of societies** (1993: 39) (emphasis added).

Significantly, social deterioration and reaction are not confined to the Third/Fourth World as Steve Hellinger, Executive Director of The Development GAP organization, points this out:

> What has been the reality across the Third World for more than a decade is now coming home to roost. Declining incomes, growing inequalities, job insecurity, drugs, crime—these are the forces that are tearing at the social fabric of communities across the Northern hemisphere (Hellinger, 1996).

Furthermore, both Hellinger and Kapstein argue that such conditions have been fertile ground for demagoguery in the United States, Europe (both Western and Eastern) and the former Soviet Union. As Kapstein puts it:

> It is hardly sensationalist to claim that in the absence of broad-based policies and programs designed to help working people, the political debate in the United States and many other countries will soon turn sour. Populists and demagogues of various stripes will find "solutions" to contemporary economic problems in protectionism and xenophobia. Indeed, in every industrialized nation, such figures are on the campaign trail (Kapstein, 1996: 17).

These domestic tensions also contribute to conflicts among states. Domestic manufacturers threatened by free trade frequently lobby their governments for legal protection from foreign competition. When they succeed, though some element of domestic political support is gained by the national leadership, relations with the state(s) whose exports are restricted, necessarily suffers. Or, states (such as the U.S.A.) which have fairly open markets for a variety of industrial imports pressure other states which are perceived as not as reciprocally open (such as Japan), for "fairer" trading arrangements—with the threat of retaliation never very far in the background. The accelerated creation and expansion of regional trading blocs reflects the same tensions between a need to increase free trade, and a concern to safeguard traditional economic activities from overseas competition by guaranteeing regional producers an expanded market.

Despite the fact that global free trade is far from an accomplished fact, there is nonetheless evidence that many governments have understood the need to avoid a return to the type of extreme economic nationalism and "beggar thy neighbor" policies often portrayed as having contributed to the onset of World War II. This explains why international economic relations are characterized by an institutional structure which is more comprehensive than anything yet existing in the political realm. In this regard, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have recently been joined by an even more supranational organization, the World Trade Organization, which has a well developed dispute settlement mechanism and the authority to impose substantial penalties on those member states which flout its decisions. These developments demonstrate that in regard to a wide range of economic matters, many of the world's political and economic elites have concluded that the benefits of submitting to these organizations outweighs the benefits of a more independent policy.

Such advances in global collective action could be seen as harbingers of similar initiatives in other areas. However, Rosenau's "global authority crisis"should be kept in mind. The average people around the world increasingly feel they have suffered from economic globalization, and

they are increasingly doubtful about the wisdom and motivation behind many contemporary international "trade deals". It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the promotion of further free trade has become a divisive political issue. For instance, at the time of writing, a poll by the Bank of Boston showedthat 51% of U.S. citizens believed free trade pacts cost U.S. jobs and 57% opposed any new trade agreements with Latin America. Furthermore, 73% wanted labor and environmental issues included in negotiations for any new trade agreements (NAFTA & Inter-American Trade Monitor, Novemember 14).

Contemporary events show that this skepticism is also shared in other parts of the world. Consider the following examples:

- the Zapatista uprising in the Chiapas region of rapidly liberalizing Mexico, which since January 1994, has been demanding land and social justice for the mainly Mayan, and largely disenfranchised, Indian peasants of the area;[8]
- the extensive strikes by French public sector employees which were provoked in 1995 by the government's plans to cut public expenditure to conform to the so-called "Maastricht guidelines" for entry into European Monetary Union;
- the protests and demonstrations by non-governmental organizations and other groups from all over the Pacific, on the eve of the November 1996 Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Manilla, Philippines, against plans to create a comprehensive free trade zone in the region; or,
- the widespread strikes and demonstrations of the German construction sector trade union IG Bau in mid-March, 1997 against unemployment in the construction industry and the influx of foreign workers (who work for lower wages)

These few examples highlight a point made by Roland Robertson when he argued that the world is already **united**, but it is not **integrated** (Robertson, 1992). On the one hand problems and topical concerns are expressed in global terms[9] while, on the other, approaches to their solution tend to be piece meal, halting and generally inhibited by diverging conceptions of identity and interest.[10] All of which suggests that a world society becoming more and more inter-connected physically while lacking a consensus on fundamental values and priorities may well be torn by conflicts ". . . more intractable than the previous disputes between nations"(Waters, 1995: 46).

Analyzing the Conflicts: Burton and Basic Needs

As we have seen, globalization seems to be both creative and destructive; but distinguishing its positive from its negative effects is a demanding and controversial exercise. One conceptual framework which provides insight into this problem is human needs theory as applied by John Burton to the study of social conflict. Burton explains that in analyzing conflict one must distinguish among **needs**, **values** and **interests**. In trying to resolve disputes it should

be understood that only interests are negotiable in the short run; while values can only change over the long run in an atmosphere of security and non-discrimination, and needs cannot be negotiated away under any circumstances (Burton, 1990: 36-41). The implications of this formulation are far-reaching. For instance, it suggests: ". . . that there are limits to the extent to which the human person, acting separately or within a wider ethnic or national community, can be socialized or manipulated . . . ;" and ". . . that there are human development needs that must be satisfied and catered for by institutions, if these institutions are to be stable, and if societies are to be significantly free of conflict" (1990: 23).

While acknowledging that there is still only limited consensus in this research area, Burton does present a plausible list of needs. First, human beings require a sense of **security** and of **identity.** Second, since we have a generic drive to learn, we require a **consistent response from the environment,** without which learning is impossible. Third, from their social context people require both **recognition** and **valued relationships,** or **bonding**. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, individuals require (some) **control** over their environments in order to insure that their needs are fulfilled (Burton, 1990: 47, 95).

This approach has important implications for social institutions. If, on balance, needs, whatever they are determined to be, are being met within an institution, the institution receives support and is consolidated and perpetuated. If, however, needs are not met, the institution loses support and legitimacy, and confronts increasing opposition. In the latter case, authorities tend to react with repression and coercion, but if an institution is "de-legitimated" for enough people, conflict can not be resolved this way. Rather, the institutional structures have to evolve, sooner or later, to more fully accommodate the needs of the people they affect. If a particular social order is only legitimized for a portion of the society, one would expect that, given enabling conditions, those whose needs are not met would react. Burton goes so far as to assert that this has become the general condition in modern societies, arguing that:

> Human needs are being frustrated on a large scale in all modern societies, and the more law and order is enforced to control frustration the more the frustration. There is now a widespread concern regarding the legitimacy of even the most seemingly legitimized authorities. The members of protest movements of many kinds in many different societies, and the terrorists who spring from relatively privileged classes, are demonstrating that there are features of societies, of all political types, unacceptable to a significant number of the people that comprise them (1990: 98).

He also explains how this leads to various forms of deviant behavior, because ". . . deprivation frequently leads to overreaction, and the individual goes beyond the normal pursuit of needs satisfaction . . . ," and overreaction which may find an outlet in extremism of one form or another (1990: 99).

This conceptual framework does highlight various aspects of the conflicts of globalization. First, we can see that all three types of conflict "stakes"—i.e., needs, values and interests—come into play. However, as Burton himself explains, in any given conflict, such as a strike over

better working conditions, one has to consider the possibility that it is really caused by a more general deprivation of basic needs (perhaps recognition, valued relationships, or control) which will eventually have to be addressed if further disruptions of production are to be avoided in future.

Second, as we have seen, there are signs that many of the contemporary effects of economic and cultural globalization are not considered legitimate by an increasing number and variety of populist groups all over the world. If the means to the fulfillment of basic needs are seen to be eroded by processes of globalization, reaction, rejection and increasing hostility are to be expected. Thus, in the Global South globalization has weakened the state as a barrier to Western economic and cultural domination, creating an even more acute sense of vulnerability, and in the North a popular perception of economic globalization as a threat to community (i.e., valued relationships and identity) and economic security has increased receptivity to xenophobic and protectionist extremism.

In summary, Burton's work indicates that, ideology aside, globalization cannot continue indefinitely in its contemporary form. Either processes of national and global governance will evolve to better accommodate the basic needs and values of those groups now mobilizing against current patterns of change, or the frequency and intensity of disruption and reaction will continue to accelerate with unpredictable, but decidedly negative, short to medium run effects. Both scenarios indicate that the only constant is change.

Globalization vs. Globalism

Despite the divergence of views about globalization and its conflicts, there is, more common ground in this debate than is apparent at first glance. All parties (whether North or South, governmental or non-governmental, Left or Right) acknowledge that conflicts are related to the following conditions:

- the pace of global change is quickening;
- this change puts great stress on individuals, social institutions (like the family), and governments;
- something must be done to help individuals and societies adjust to change;
- measures taken so far have not provided an adequate solution to the perceived problems.

These points indicate a need for new thinking about old questions, and in that sense, globalization issues are world order issues. As the existing institutions of international politics and society have confronted these issues, basic questions of political philosophy having to do with power, authority and distributive justice—resolved, to some extent, for the nation-state in the 18th and 19th centuries—are increasingly being raised again, but this time in regard to the planet as a single political, social and economic system. Again, somewhat paradoxically,

globalization lays a foundation for such new thinking by creating a growing awareness of the planet as "one place", a perspective which some have called **globalism**. Mark Ritchie, for instance, defines globalism as:

> . . . the belief that we share one fragile planet whose survival requires mutual respect and careful treatment of all its people and its environment. Globalism is also a set of values and ethical beliefs requiring active practice in our day-to-day lives. Active communications to foster understanding, the sharing of resources on the basis of equity and sustainability, and mutual aid in times of need are three central activities that undergird globalism (Ritchie, 1996).

Globalist thinking grows out of a perception of the world as steadily becoming more interdependent and integrated—a trend which is reflected in phenomena as diverse as the delicate balance of the biosphere, the emergence of planet-straddling systems of communication and transportation and the destructive power of modern weapons (Bahá'í International Community, 1995: 2).

Ritchie further makes the case that the negative dimensions of globalization are both creating unprecedented crises (such as ozone depletion, climate change and massive waves of migration) and undermining the ability of states and peoples to cooperate across borders to cope with these issues. For him:

> Globalism—the belief that the well-being of each and every neighbor, no matter how far away, affects us all—is . . . the only weapon we still have for tackling the level of ecological and social dislocation caused by unbridled globalization, especially the political violence of war and the personal violence of crime, racism and xenophobia (1996).

Lastly, according to Ritchie, the longer a creative response to the negative trends of globalization is delayed, the more difficult it becomes:

> As globalization causes greater poverty and hunger, it fuels involuntary emigration, which in turn may result in racism and fear of immigrants. In this way, globalization destroys the feelings of globalism, love and concern with neighbors around the planet, while creating the economic and ecological conditions that cry out for more, not less, globalism (1996).

However, while most dispassionate analysis of the "Global Agenda" calls for closer international cooperation, leadership adequate to the necessary tasks has not yet emerged. The Commission on Global Governance put the matter this way:

> At national, regional, and international levels, within communities and in non-governmental bodies, the world needs . . . leadership that is proactive, not simply

> reactive, that is inspired, not simply functional, that looks to the longer term and future generations for whom the present is held in trust . . . This cannot be leadership confined within domestic walls. It must reach beyond country, race, religion, culture, language, life-style. It must embrace a wider human constituency, be infused with a sense of caring for others, a sense of responsibility to the global neighborhood (Commission on Global Governance, 1995: 353).

If political leadership is, as often claimed, generally captive to the financial, commercial and strategic interests driving globalization, then globalist initiatives will continue to come primarily from civil society, both within states, and through international non-governmental organizations, and to the extent that vested interests are challenged, such initiatives will foster further confrontation and conflict. This is the point made by Richard Falk when he argues that globalism from "below" is necessary to counter globalization from "above" (Falk, 1995).

Conclusion

One point which emerges from the previous discussion is the enormous breadth of views on globalization. On the one hand we have leaders in business and, to some extent, government touting it as the wave of the future which, though requiring adjustment, promises new opportunities for all. On the other hand, we have a variety of groups and individuals saying it is a vehicle of economic and cultural disaster. Such a wide divide has led, as we have seen, to increasing polarization in the debate about globalization's origins and effects, and has fostered some increasingly extreme views. It seems more judicious to conclude that though the process is in several respects irreversible—i.e., there are no plausible scenarios for "de-globalizing" the planet—it is also open-ended and interactive, and participants have the opportunity to shape it even as they react to it.

From this perspective, the conflicts discussed above reflect a spreading determination of the world's peoples to promote alternative agendas to that currently driving globalization, and to thereby participate in decisions shaping the future of their planet; a determination which should be seen as democratic in the broadest sense of the term. The very acceleration of this trend, enabled in large part by new information technologies, permits a degree of optimism that adaptive responses to the conflicts will eventually be found. However, the continuing gap between ***unity*** and **integration** in the contemporary world order foreshadows further tensions and conflicts until its institutions and processes of governance can accommodate both the universalizing and the localizing effects of globalization.

Notes

1. Several writers have argued that globalization has been underway for a long time. Robertson, for instance charts its evolution from the 15th century (See Robertson, **Globalization**, op. cit.)

2. This is what political economist Robert Cox (1987: 253-65) has called the "internationalizing of the state."

3. Toynbee argued that the progress, stagnation or disappearance of civilizations has been a function of what sort of challenges they have faced, and how they have dealt with these challenges.

4. The juggernaut image is from Giddens.

5. Fukuyama argues that the spread of liberal democracy and free-market economics represents the culmination of social evolution—i.e., the "end of history."

6. Jeffrey Sachs has provided the following list of "core reforms": (1) open international trade; (2) currency convertibility; (3) private ownership as the main engine of economic growth; (4) corporate ownership as the dominant organizational form for large enterprises; (5) openness to foreign investment; and (6) membership in key international economic institutions, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the new World Trade Organization (WTO).

7. The types of crimes referred to include drug production and trafficking, illegal arms deals, smuggling, and commerce in human beings (women and children in particular), or even in human organs for transplants in the private clinics of the North.

8. In its early stages this confrontation was also "globalized" by the fact that the Zapatista leader, "Commandante Martí," made extensive use of the Internet to communicate his group's views and demands.

9. Waters (p. 42) expresses it this way: ". . . we define military-political issues in terms of a 'world order;' or economic issues in terms of an 'international recession;' or marketing issues in terms of 'world products' (e.g., the 'world-car'); or religious issues in terms of ecumenism; or citizenship issues in terms of 'human rights;' or issues of pollution and purification in terms of 'saving the planet.'"

10. In this regard, one often hears national leaders justifying their hesitation to take far-reaching and comprehensive action in terms of fears about "losing sovereignty". Strictly speaking, **national sovereignty** is really a legal concept referring to a given national political unit's constitutional independence. In that sense it cannot be "given up" in pieces—a political unit is either sovereign or it is not. Thus, the contemporary controversy over "loss of sovereignty" is really about control, identity and preserving political and economic advantage in the face of globalization and other challenges.

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