

Ethics and Globalization

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I.PRELUDE

Globalization penetrates all aspects of life, radically transforming them. The relations between countries of the West and the North on one side and those between countries of the East and the South on the other seem in need of reviewing and renewing; a modification to be done on several political, traditional and ethical planes that concern principles and legitimacy. As previously mentioned, this change-inducing phenomenon lead for one thing to the increase of economic exchanges, concomitantly with an increase in competitiveness.

Countries are thus made to find ways to strengthen their positions in this complex web. What would the international standard that transcends personal and individual interests be then, if not solidarity and avoiding trouble?

This being the case, political, religious and social parties should take part in the debate on the advantages and disadvantages of the thriving development processes.

II. DEFINITIONS

1. ETHICS

"Ethics as a guide to all action and behavior"--this saying is part of the philosophy that looks into the origins of the human values and symbols, and even into public customs and ethics. The main issue in ethics is the search for motives, ways and consequences of human behavior. Many domains of ethics branch out of this central thought, depending on the importance given to each part. The scholar can then define the science of ethics as a theory to justify and determine the principles governing human behavior. Ethics are, with no doubt, in general, the outcome of particular traditions

and historical know-how of a given community or society.

2. GLOBALIZATION

This term is coined from Economics and Sociology at once. It refers to the multiplication of transborder and transnational relations in all domains. It began when capitalism made its first entrance into the world, and gained even more importance with the collapse of the Socialist camp. The solidarity of transnational and transcontinental relations is a proof for interdependence.

3. UNITED NATIONS

An organization that groups almost all states of the planet (191 states); its main objectives are to safeguard international security and affirm the rights of the peoples, through international law, as well as to encourage international cooperation and protect human rights.

III. THE PROBLEM

The decades that followed the end of the second World War witnessed the evolution of ethical principles for cooperation, solidarity and development on an international scale. They soon weakened in the last decades, though, and proved insufficient to formulate an international policy for development and progress.

Should we consider international policies for development an ethical necessity, then the reasonable conclusion would be the need for a new strategy in that matter?

Today's understanding of this issue implies that a strategy is to originate from ethical philosophy, as it should be the result of a global coordinated dialogue. This requires coordination between different academic departments. So it appears that the question at hand concerns the moral motives and justifications of globalization.

Until now, the common public opinion has been: Gather together for cooperation talks that benefit nations and peoples and push them forward. Had it not been for particular ethical justifications, the development policy would have been unable to become, throughout past decades, an independent field incorporated in the institutions and behavior of States. We should examine the words and promises of developed countries and see how well they adhere to the international rules as set by the United Nations.

IV. DEBATES

1. Supporters of globalization:

a) Trade, economy and growth: supporters describe globalization to be first and foremost a way to reach an efficient economy, by removing all barriers to trade and competitiveness. The real purpose of globalization is then to upscale all divisions of work and make them international. International markets, international services

and international investments will then see the day. Technology transfer and the exchange of networks and communications are also included. This new option gives all states the possibility to use their personal strong points and increase their incomes by way of exchange. With the absence of subsidies, competition is unleashed between industrialized and developing countries. Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations described globalization as the removal of all barriers and obstacles to the free flow of goods and capital. He added that it is accompanied by an important technical progress, a reduction of production, transportation, communication, finance mechanism costs as well as the exchange of information.

b) New chances for international relations: relations between states are on the increase. New equations and chances have emerged, owing to the principles of freedom and equality between all beings and the recognition

by distinct cultures of the "other." Human rights become a goal to which everyone aspires. The whole world, with all its peoples, witnesses a new growth and closeness between different parties.

c) Development stimulates the economy, while the spread of technology throughout the world aids in overall progress. This progress is strengthened by renewed ways of communications reaching all. On the other hand, poverty, inequality and vulnerability move to the front of the scene. It is not only beauty that is exposed. The other side, other people and other lives are shown. The viewer not only watches facts, but feels them as well; in addition, the institutions of different countries work together to fight crime.

d) Democracy: democracy governs markets, the internal fronts of states and international relations. It marks the end of the necessary conflict between freedom and control. When

globalization has such big effects on the social front, those who fight for justice and equality have no reason to stand against it.

2. Objections of the detractors of globalization:

a) Distance from others: globalization makes people lose their individuality. Their personal freedom and privacy are affected. They all become of one color, turning to numbers, while middle class disappears. And so is lost cultural diversity and ties. Globalization also erases local traditions and cultures that preserve the stability and familiar ways of living for many people. The traditions and life in Algeria are an example to this. They are effectively on the verge of disappearing and this can only be explained by the necessity for Algerians to work for the French, after the end of colonialism. In this way, globalization turns local cultures into "folklore." Even table manners and the culture of food changed because of "hamburgers and McDonald's" etc.

b) Danger to local markets: to globalize agricultural economy necessarily means to destroy the agricultural world, with its accompanying developments that people became familiar with. True enough, there are some positive points in globalizing the food industry, but local particularities disappear with this change. Food globalization wipes away many origins and roots of the economy of vegetation. While local foods disappear, developed foods are monopolized by industrialized countries and multinationals. People become victims of big enterprises.

e) The state as weak and incapable of handling local matters: detractors of globalization find that the increase of international communication brings about limits to the states inner and outer influence. Especially since their economy, a part of the international market becomes uncontrollable. This may cause political and economic instability. This

weakness also creates economic and social disparities and double standard policies between states and classes.

Foreign and security policies face new challenges:

f) Money and Power: society is taken over by purely materialistic values, while the power of big companies is exacerbated and prices skyrocket. The human critical judgment is, meanwhile, relegated into the background. Globalization could then introduce a new type of colonialism, by way of big capitals. As previously mentioned, the unequal distribution of wealth, combined with the free flow and use of capitals, generate a threat to the social and political stability. Those who control the market can marginalize or besiege countries and regions. It is a known fact the worldwide flow of capital is not intended for specific investments. Instead it is after speculation and profit. Only reasoning people know contentment, while money does not.

g) Ecological consequences: the world today is the scene of many destructive ecological incidences that affect the planet and its inhabitants. We see that in: the global warming, causing the rise of the global sea level, desertification, decrease of drinking water sources and the loss or reduction of genetic diversity.

Technological advancement quickens by 1000 to 10,000 times the loss of genetic types and species that would otherwise not become extinct following natural evolution. Soil erosion due to deforestation and the abuse of green and cultivated pastures, by their wrongful use, or through construction works, reduce the level of subterranean water, cause deforestation, result in the decrease of crops, and the increase of poverty and hunger.

h) Risk probabilities: terrorists and violence enthusiasts exploit globalization. They use networks and other ways of communication, different resources of financing, the internet and mobile telephones.

Communication technologies involve three risks:

- The use of high technologies to better control and supervise economy and liberties, or the use of these technologies by terrorist groups. We find examples of this in: the endless data that people of the extreme right, the extreme left and fundamentalist groups upload on the internet. The United States, through Echelon, controls the telephones lines of the whole world.

- When radicalists break into networks to control them or destroy them.

-Electronic terrorism, i.e. the use of technological methods to affect peoples' health, their economy or their daily lives.

V. ETHICS AND GLOBALIZATION: THE IMPERATIVES

It is imperative to develop ethical economic values. The dimensions to which reasonable people should give attention, in order to accomplish this international goal, seem clear. Having postponed this project until now, created a state of "comforting despair," and a sense of helplessness that spread in the midst of the elites as well as the masses.

Ethical economy requires all parties to be ready and willing: the masses, the economists and the authorities. The biggest economical powers in developing countries, loose and uncontrollable, are called upon to take their share of responsibility, since they are concerned with stability that keeps their profits

flowing. Those who want a global market have to accept some kind of imposed control so they can enter the competition over goods and markets. Those who care about global civil societies should not leave the whole responsibility to states and politicians. Instead, they ought to cooperate and work for a better world, one of global ethics and values. The reasonable and enlightened among pro-market enthusiasts should know that effective policies of development are inherent to the human and civil global project.

VI. ETHICS AND GLOBALIZATION: PROSPECTS

Human beings were the ones who demanded globalization; they were the ones to make it. That is why it is also up to them to modify it, rectifying its chosen path. Only they can put in on the right direction that benefits them. Freedom and equality are two starting points, if we want to put the economic and political globalization back on the right track.

Only those with ethical visions and values that surpass the mere Economy can influence the path of Globalization. We can only coexist in this world if we are guided by diverse values to accept and acknowledge cultural, economic and political differences. Leading researchers have said that it is a weird ethical view that permits economic elites to import "brains" from developing countries, while shutting the doors to the production of these same countries, all at once.

The human being is the principle, everlasting value. A thriving market is then the one that understands the ethical side of humanity and put man in his proper place amidst the whole globalization system. Politics, as well as economy, were created for the sake of humanity. When people feel that they are on the margin of globalization, or that this movement is against them, they tend to either become violent or neglect it as well. Their enthusiasm for democracy and the state of law wears off.

It may be appropriate to establish an international institution that deals with the problem of over-indebted countries. Needless to say that responsibility for this specific issue is that of the economy of globalization. He who takes part in a dialogue should be convinced that not only he detains the truth. According to Georg Gadamer, he who takes part in a real conversation bears in mind the possibility of the other opposing him to be right.

VII. CONCLUSION

No matter the temptations lying in globalization, it is still not right for it to bring about colonialism of the third world by the western world, through its capitals and industry. The pro-globalization groups talk of opportunities while those criticizing it warn against negative consequences and highlight challenges and risks. Critique is a form of warning, one that politicians and economists should not drop. There are people who decide

and greatly profit of their decisions. Other people are, whether they like it or not, included in these decisions. The world is a big mutating scene, ever since the days of the ancient Egyptians and it will not cease to be such. We have a duty to rectify matters, for everyone's sake.

The mutation of large populations and states have retraced the lines on the planet's face: whether beginning with the emperors and empires of the ancient and middle age world, or ending with Muslims of Andalusia and Napoleon's war, all these events were mutational ones, seeking some kind of order and organization.

Globalization is no different. The new powers, i.e. traders, businessmen, politicians, etc. all seek methods to express their desires, interests and aspirations. In the last decades, Europeans have reached progress that can be considered as a Europeanized coalition of dozens of states and peoples, joined together by freedom and equality.

No doubt, some were negatively affected by measures such as the abolition of borders and the unification of the whole. This small effect is borne because of big advantages to come, those of the entry into the European Union. The good economic situation of man, combined with the political freedom, are a surely a necessity. They no longer suffice, though, since it is also necessary to quiet all fears and inspire hope in the future. Europe was quite able to quiet anxieties. Europeans, living in stable and democratic entities, feel safe and free, since they enjoy complete guarantees inside their countries and outside of them.

According to the desires and aspirations of serious globalization, it is safe to say that when globalization implies democratic laws, equality and social comfort for all, then it should be supported. All those who stand for or against globalization should have the priority of serving others.

The United Nations and the UNESCO are tools devoted to the service of humanity. All those in favor of globalization are also in favor of humanity and its unified aspirations. As Beethoven said in his "Ode to Joy": "All men become brothers under the sway of [joy's and fairness's] gentle wings." Recalling the aforementioned, if globalization offers them more freedom and democracy, regardless of their race, religion or nationality, then it should be endorsed so it serves as an effective power for the service of humanity.

[1]- German thinker.