

# Globalization, the Problem of War, and Normative Issues\*

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*This essay begins by defining globalization, antiglobalization, and alterglobalization. Next, a case is made for the relevance of the new international, interdisciplinary field of Global Studies for understanding and assessing globalism. This perspective represents the post-Cold War synthesis of previously independent Global Studies in the Soviet Union and in the West and is epitomized in the recent Global Studies Encyclopedia. Finally, a normative framework is developed for addressing global issues, specifically one that regards ending war as the most pressing global problem. Specifically, a call is made for developing nationally and internationally what John Dewey termed political ethics and for utilizing in this area of applied philosophy the global humanist values proposed by Robert Johansen.*

**Keywords:** alterglobalization, antiglobalization, global studies, globalization, John Dewey, norms, Robert Johansen, values, war.

## Defining Globalization and the Importance of Global Studies

In this essay I wish to address the connection of globalization to normative issues. Before doing so, I need to review the issue of defining globalization and to indicate the emergence of Global Studies as central to the understanding of globalization.

The terms 'globalization' and 'antiglobalization' are used in such a variety of ways that an effort at understanding and assessing these processes is difficult (Gay 2008a, 2008b). Consider the various ways these terms are used. Some who call themselves globalists and some who call themselves antiglobalists view environmentalism and democracy positively. At the same time, some who call themselves globalists and some who call themselves antiglobalists view capitalism and militarism negatively. Furthermore, some globalists and some antiglobalists view globalism as continuous with modernity, while other globalists and antiglobalists regard it as breaking from modernity.

Historically, discussion of issues related to globalism has been explicit for about fifty years. Since the 1960s concepts of ecology, ecological crises, global problems of modernity, globalization, antiglobalization, and so forth have been widely used in scientific and political discourse. These discussions make clear that globalism concerns far more than merely how capitalism has impacted the entire planet economically. Globalism is also closely connected to concerns about the environment and human rights.

Four basic positions have emerged in relation to globalization. First, some supporters of globalism present it as being or as capable of being humane. Second, some critics of globalism, whether they call themselves antiglobalists, favor a grassroots process working

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\* This article was first published in *Journal of Globalization Studies*, Vol. 1, Num. 1, May 2010, pp. 141–149.

from below rather than the elitist globalism that has been imposed from above. Third, many scholars, regardless of whether they support globalism, concede that the future of globalism is indeterminate. Fourth, some scholars, regardless of whether they support globalism, advocate a disciplinary approach for understanding and assessing globalism.

Both globalism and antiglobalism need to be distinguished from the more recent term 'alterglobalization'. Alterglobalization or alternative globalization (or alter-mondialization from the French *altermondialisme* – sometimes translated into English as altermondialism or altermondialization) refers to the position that affirms global cooperation and interaction but opposes the negative consequences of economic globalization. Alterglobalization views economic globalization as insufficiently oriented to such human values connected with the environment, economic justice, and protection of human rights and the rights of labor and indigenous cultures. Since they support involvement on a global scale, alterglobalists typically do not like to be labeled as 'antiglobalists'. Their opposition is not to economic globalization in general; instead, they are opposed in particular to the type of neoliberal globalization that favors the developing world at the expense of the less developed world. In this regard, they often are opposed to the position of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The origin of the alter-globalization movement is often linked to the protest in 1999 to the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Seattle, Washington (USA). The aim is to protect those afflicted by the selfish acts of global corporations. They oppose the exploitation of labor and the outsourcing of jobs to foreign nations. They have an online link at The Independent Media Center.<sup>1</sup> Their largest forum is the annual World Social Forum that began in Brazil in 2001.<sup>2</sup> This group made popular the slogan 'another world is possible'. Alterglobalists favor a form of globalism that also supports national sovereignty and cultural diversity.

Beyond these four basic positions on globalization and antiglobalization and the position of alterglobalization, I want to note the important role of Global Studies. The field of Global Studies is actually connected with philosophy, though more outside than inside the United States. Historically, I wish to suggest that the consideration of Global Studies has gone through three stages. First, during the 1960s the world scholarly community began to study seriously the consequences of globalization. Second, during the 1970s and 1980s, as a result of the Cold War, Global Studies was advanced separately in the West and in the Soviet Union. Third, since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, a more integrated field of Global Studies has emerged. About forty years separate the emergence, on the one hand, of the first major institutions devoted to the study of globalization and subsequent work of groups like 'The Club of Rome' and, on the other hand, the publication of the first integrative and interdisciplinary international encyclopedia devoted to Global Studies (Mazour, Chumakov, and Gay 2003; Mazour and Chumakov 2003).

### **Globalization and the Separation of Wisdom and Power**

Processes of globalization do not have any inherent normative framework. Unless such a framework is infused into the study of global problems, we likely will have incomplete and inadequate results. Plato said that as long as wisdom and power, or philosophy and politics, are separated, 'there can be no rest from troubles' (Plato 1941: 179). In the *Republic*, he sought to forge such a union. For over two millennia, from Plato through John Rawls (1971), philosophers have put forward models for the just state. Despite these on-

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.indymedia.org/en/index.shtml>.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.wsfindia.org>.

going efforts, W. B. Gallie contends, 'No political philosopher has ever dreamed of looking for the criteria of a good state *vis-à-vis* other states' (Gallie 1978: 140). Processes of globalization underscore the need to address normative issues among nation states.

I wish to argue that as long as wisdom and power are separated in international relations, we will continue to have problems. As processes of globalization continue, we need to forge a normative framework capable of addressing global issues. I further maintain that, in order to advance a global normative framework, achieving peace, or at least the 'outlawry of war' championed by John Dewey (Dewey 1983a, 1983b, 1983c), may well be the precondition for success in addressing the myriad global problems facing humanity. I agree with Ronald Glossop that, among all the global issues that need to be addressed, war is 'humanity's most pressing problem' (Glossop 1994: esp. 2–8). How can we adequately protect everyone's human rights, secure economic well-being for all persons, preserve this planet's rich biological diversity, and attend to other serious global concerns if we fail to end war?

### **National Sovereignty and the State of War**

From the time of Thomas Hobbes, political philosophy has recognized that while the establishment of a nation may end an internal state of war, sovereign nations stand in a state of nature in relation to one another. In other words, sovereign nations are in a state of war with one another because no superior power dictates terms to them. The normative implications of the temporal and geographic limits of the social contract are especially stark in the absolutist political theory of Hobbes. Moral principles are inapplicable prior to the establishment of the commonwealth and outside the boundaries of the commonwealth, because in a state of war 'nothing can be unjust' (Hobbes 1996: 633). Just as every one has a 'right to every thing' in the prior state of nature, even so the commonwealth is not restricted in its international affairs since 'covenants, without the sword, are but words' (*Ibid.*: 634, 649). Hence, at the very outset of social contract theory, a normative framework for addressing global issues was absent.

The lack of restraints on a government's international affairs receives a novel and disturbing twist in the liberal political theory of John Locke. Liberalism, like absolutism, is directed almost exclusively to the conduct of the internal affairs of the state and helps us little with issues of globalization. Although Locke says very little about the international relations among states, he draws an important distinction in the executive branch between a national and an international function which he terms, respectively, the 'executive' and the 'federative'. Locke connects the executive to domestic actions dealing with regulations passed by the legislative branch and the federative with international actions, including 'the power of war and peace, leagues and alliances' (Locke 1996 [1689]: 785). He suggests that the federative role will often be united with the executive. He ends by noting that, despite the implications of its far-reaching powers, the federative 'is much less capable to be directed by antecedent, standing, positive laws, than the executive; and so must necessarily be left to the prudence and wisdom of those whose hands it is in, to be managed for the public good' (*Ibid.*). In other words, within liberal political theory as well, principles of consent and morality do not bind governments in their international relations. Consequently, liberal political theory likewise fails to provide a normative framework for addressing global issues.

The democratic political theory of Jean-Jacques Rousseau does move toward a normative framework with potentially global applicability, but the formulation of this framework is abstract and underdeveloped. In contradistinction to Locke's liberalism, Rousseau begins by placing the welfare of the community before individual rights. Moreover, rather than

basing political decisions on majority rule, which Rousseau characterizes as the adding of all the private wills of the people, he favors the general will, which is based on the common interest (Rousseau 1996a: 919–921). This principle of common interest was intended for internal application by a government founded on at least an initial unanimous consent. With his concept of the general will Rousseau unwittingly provided a framework for addressing the common interests of people beyond the confines of their particular nation state. Clearly, one common interest of humanity is to avoid senseless slaughter in the wars of states that purportedly were founded in large measure to avoid the high death toll from conflicts within a state of nature. As Rousseau observes about national wars, ‘More murders were committed in a single day of combat and more horrors in the capture of a single city than were committed in the state of nature during entire centuries over the entire face of the earth’ (Rousseau 1996b: 882). And Rousseau was writing in the eighteenth century! Yet, even in Rousseau, consent of the people as a necessary condition for waging wars is absent. So, democratic political theory as well fails to develop an explicit transnational normative framework capable of addressing global issues.

More explicitly than any of his predecessors, Immanuel Kant sought to respond to the state of war that exists among nation states. Accepting the nation state, Kant applies to the relation among states his moral principle that we should always treat persons as ends and never as means. On this basis, he rejects the acquisition of one nation by another nation because such action would turn a nation into a thing (Kant 1923a: 344; 1983a: 108). In other words, Kant wants each nation to regard every other nation as an end in itself and never as a mere means to satisfy its own narrow national interest. Moreover, Kant contends that whenever the consent of citizens is not necessary for waging war, genuine peace is not possible (*Idem* 1923b: 349; 1983b: 112). Nevertheless, the price that Kant pays for accepting nation states is noninterventionism (Gay 2000: 149–159). Kant explicitly states, ‘No nation shall forcibly interfere with the constitution and government of another’ (Kant 1923b: 346; 1983b: 109). Kant argues, ‘a foreign power's interference would violate the rights of an independent people struggling with its internal ills’ (*Ibid.*). Gallie observes that Kant is simply an heir to the Western tradition of statism, namely, Kant develops his political thinking from the point of view of taking the state for granted.

Gallie contends that from the time of Plato, political philosophy has focused on the good in relation to a particular city or state. Even though all states have also had neighbors who could be potential rivals, political philosophy has not addressed how to pursue the good in relation to these other states. Insofar as other states are addressed it has been in relation to issues of national security. Despite this tradition, Gallie stresses that Kant at least recognized questions about relations among nations are ones that need to be faced. In particular, he says that Kant concerned himself more than any other philosopher with the questions of how morally nations should interact. In the age of globalization, how nations interact has become even more vital. However, because of Kant's noninterventionist position on the response of one nation to a perceived injustice in another nation, Gallie contends that Kant's position is ‘disappointingly negative and palpably incomplete’ (Gallie 1978: 141).

### **Globalization and Political Ethics**

Despite the persistence and even intensification of global problems, such as war, which elude management – let alone resolution – by nation states, this system of national sovereignty likely will continue well into the twenty-first century if not even longer. Nevertheless, during the continuation of the nation-state system, philosophy need not remain on the sidelines offering only theoretically abstract and politically irrelevant reflections. By ex-

panding the concept of applied philosophy, useful normative frameworks can be developed for responding to problems within and among nation states and to the various problems of globalization. However, to do so requires moving applied philosophy beyond professional ethics to political ethics. Interestingly, the basis for political ethics was developed prior to the recent surge of interest in professional ethics.

Since the very beginning of the twentieth century, various attempts have been made to apply ethics to national and international politics. In these efforts, John Dewey provided what are probably the most prolific and influential contributions. Dewey's pragmatism, which is so closely associated with an advocacy for democracy, increasingly addressed global issues and did so from a perspective that aimed to avoid or at least reduce reliance on violence. As Charles Howlett observes, the destruction of World War I and especially the devastation wrought by nuclear weapons in World War II led Dewey to aim for 'a new democratic organization in which human beings, not citizens of different nations, would have a say in the execution of world peace' (Howlett 1977: 148–149). In his 'Ethics and International Relations', which appeared in the first volume of *Foreign Affairs* in 1923, Dewey questions whether we can rely on utilitarianism in international arena, since the motives to which it appeals (general happiness) 'have little chance to operate in international affairs' (Dewey 1983d: 59). Instead, in seeking to make possible reliance on ethics in international relations, he proposes that the 'one legal change' which could facilitate 'enormous change' is the outlawry of war (*Ibid.*: 62).

Some would suggest that, at least in the context of current terminology, Dewey would prefer the term 'social ethics' to 'political ethics'. In fact, Dewey himself more frequently used the term 'social ethics' (Dewey 1991: 267–445). Regardless, he is making transnational applications of normative principles. Nevertheless, he is not doing so as an 'externally imposed authority' who 'knows' what should be done (*Idem* 1989: 201). On the contrary, he denied that any normative system provided a straightforward decision mechanism on which one could rely. Instead, as Abraham Edel and Elizabeth Flower contend regarding what could be called Dewey's approach to applied ethics, 'The preliminary step is the diagnosis, the analysis of what kind of problem is involved, its locus in the situation, what resources are available to handle conflicting claims, goods, values, and what is required in a constructive effort to resolve the problem-situation' (Edel and Flower 1985: xxxiii).

### **The View that the Future of Globalism is Not Set**

Whatever attitudes we have toward globalism or antiglobalism, we need to be cautious about arguments from the extremes in the debate. Even some famous philosophers have fallen victim to overdrawing their arguments, as occurred in debates between Bertrand Russell and Sidney Hook in which Russell used the suspect premise that all would die in a nuclear exchange and Hook used the equally suspect premise that no freedom exists under communism (Gay 1990). Michael Pearson and I also noted the problem of extreme arguments when we cautioned against either denial of or resignation to the prospects for nuclear war (Gay and Pearson 1987: 58–59). In logical terms, historical possibilities are contingent events and have a probability greater than zero percent and less than one hundred percent; they are neither impossible nor certain. One is likewise arguing from the extremes when the outcomes of either globalism or antiglobalism are cast as already determined. Fortunately, among proponents and critics of globalism, some writers are careful to qualify their claims.

In the conclusion to his edited collection *Egalitarian Politics in the Age of Globalization*, Craig N. Murphy observes that the contributors to his volume remain agnostic regarding the Polanyian thesis of a double movement regarding globalization in which one

simply assumes that each stage of rapid marketization in which the state retreats from regulating economic forces is followed by a more liberal and socially oriented stage in which egalitarian social movements have increasing success (Murphy 2002: 211).

Among antiglobalists Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello, and Brendan Smith address the results of efforts from below to redirect globalization in *Globalization from Below: The Power of Solidarity*. They argue that the final outcome is not now known. The possibilities include 'a war of all against all, world domination by a single superpower, a tyrannical alliance of global elites, global ecological catastrophe, or some combination thereof' (Brecher *et al.* 2000: xiv). So, what people decide to do can make a difference. Brecher, Costello, and Smith, while they know the outcome they favor, do not promise victory and admit that the final result may be even worse than our present situation.

These qualified arguments by globalists and antiglobalists have in common a view that since the outcome is not predetermined, human action is relevant. What we do can make a difference. This message is appropriate regardless of where one falls in political debates on how to assess globalization.

### **Norms for Addressing Global Problems**

Of course, war is only one among a variety of serious global issues. A comprehensive normative framework for addressing global issues needs to articulate the key values that it seeks to advance. In this area, the lead has been taken by a group of value-oriented political scientists associated with the World Policy Institute (formerly the Institute for World Policy). One of the founding works by the Institute is Robert Johansen's *The National Interest and the Human Interest*. His distinction between national interest and human interest is very helpful when dealing with global issues and helps lead us beyond the myopia of looking at global issues through the normative lens of the nation state. He sees pursuit of national interest as thwarting an adequate resolution of the global problems facing humanity. Beyond our differences are our similarities as members of the human race and as inhabitants, along with other species, of the global eco-system. The concept of human interest, like Rousseau's general will, gives priority to our broader interests and facilitates dealing with global issues in ways not subject to the limitations that occur with the particularist interests, the national interest, of sovereign states.

At the outset, Johansen considers five alternative models for achieving world order. He compares the Westphalian nation-state system, the concert of great powers, a concert of multinational corporations, and world government with the World Policy Institute's humane world community. As he notes, the institute's four key world order values are: 1) peace without national military arsenals, 2) economic well-being for all inhabitants on the earth, 3) universal human rights and social justice, and 4) ecological balance (Johansen 1980: 20). In the first place, as Johansen notes, from a global perspective 'the human race is the constituency to consider in policymaking' (*Ibid.*: 21). An orientation to the human race should include not only horizontal (trans-national) but also vertical (trans-class) considerations. In addition, at both the economic and political levels, the focus should be on service to 'human needs' (*Ibid.*). Finally, consideration of the planetary eco-system as a whole needs to be included. As Johansen puts it, 'the entire planet, the atmosphere around it, and the high seas are of prime concern' (*Ibid.*). This point is also one that is central to Global Studies.

### **Preserving Our Globe**

Whether our future is bright or bleak will not be determined solely by whether we augment or diminish the processes of globalization. The point I wish to stress is that the

complexity of the issues demands a highly interdisciplinary approach and values oriented toward sustaining the planetary eco-system and respecting the rights of human beings with it. Documenting the damages of human activities on the environment and on human beings themselves and analyzing and extrapolating trends are complex interdisciplinary tasks that may well be most effectively addressed by Global Studies. While Global Studies does not settle the political debates, it does provide a post-Cold War perspective in which past East-West and continuing North-South differences can be set aside in the face of our global challenge to protect our precious human rights and the delicate eco-system upon which the continuation of all life on this planet depend. Global Studies can develop and apply the needed normative framework for addressing global issues.

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