

Effectiveness of global governance



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Never in the history of the world, has there been such dynamic and complicated level of political, social, economic and cultural fusion. The world as we have it now has evolved from the political era of colonization, which featured states like the United Kingdom and France governing almost all parts of the world, to the subsequent emancipation of states, the popularization of democracy simultaneously with the jet rate of improvement in information technology and transport, which has more or less led to the new world that we have today, the one where lives are so intertwined that distance, gender and colour are no barrier, the world where racism has lost most of its meaning, as people from different races and backgrounds are united in ensuring that the technological revolution does not negatively impact us all.

The wide spread of scientific and technological discoveries has brought about the emergence of issues which transcend states' borders, from free trade, deregulation, drug trade, Internet scam, Cancer, HIV, Global warming to Terrorism. These issues have more or less propelled states' towards joint international efforts, aimed at providing a measure of safety and orderliness in world affairs.

Global governance has been given a lot of interpretations in literatures. Global governing can be seen as the coming together of different transnational actors to address political, economic, social and cultural issues of international importance that transcend national or regional borders.

This essay will attempt to focus on the existence of global governance and the people and organisations which has been instrumental to global

governing, these are regarded as actors in global governance and can be grouped into the Nation-State, International organisations, Transnational or Multinational Corporations, and (International) Non Governmental Organisations. I will also go further to explore the effectiveness, or lack thereof, of global governance. This essay adopts the Neo Gramscian theory of global governance which postulates that there is the presence of hegemonic power dominance in global politics and economics. These powers uses international organisations to maintain the existence of capitalism, thus shaping global governance at the expense of a majority of the society, (Gill, 2000; Gill and Law, 1993; in Held and McGrew, 2002. P. 13). I will conclude this essay by suggesting some possible reforms that can bring about some effectiveness in global governance. Global governance exist in theory and practice, what remains contestable is its effectiveness in addressing global issues.

Actors In The Shaping Of Global Governance

THE NATION STATE

The state can be defined in terms of a geographical and cultural entity, with heterogeneous or homogenous people occupying a definite territory. With this definition, we see that every geographically marked entity is a state, sovereign or not. The state as we have it today has come to be associated with sovereignty, security, power and territory, and as the only means of ensuring its citizens are well provided for.

The inclusion of the state in global governance, thus, is automatic. Among all the actors in global governance, the state has the longest history of existence, seen by their citizens as their representative both nationally and

internationally. The bloc of nations regarded as developed countries are those industrialized states which have enjoyed aeons of political and economic dominance, while the 'developing countries' is reserved for The state has been instrumental in the creation of all other political actors, (Held, 2000. P. 398). International organisations are the result of state deliberations and agreement, free trade, liberalized economy, recognition of fundamental human rights, and democracy adopted by the states have given transnational corporations and Non Governmental organisations alike, the freedom to contribute to global governance. The inclusion of these non state actors in governance, to some people, has eroded the powers enjoyed by the states, (Mathews, 1997. p. 50) while this might be true to an extent, it is noteworthy that the state still remains the most powerful actors, controlling the international institutions and their own territories. States like the United States of America, with a strong dose of hegemonic power, and China still get veto power on most issues in the international arena, and since international institutions laws are binding on NGOs and TNCs alike, it follows that they are still a little bit indirectly controlled by the states.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

International organisations simply refer to those organisations which are created as a result of the enhanced relationships between states, for the purpose of overseeing political, economic, and social relations between them, to ensure fair dealings amongst states, and act as an arbitrator whenever dispute arises.

International organisations can be split into those organisations set up through state agreements (membership is optional for all nations of the

world), and those which are also set up by the state, but for states sharing the same region,(regional organisations). Examples of the former include The United Nations, The World Trade Organization(WTO) formerly the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), The World Bank, and The International Monetary Fund(IMF). Examples of the latter include The European Union(EU), The North American Free Trade Agreement(NAFTA), The African Union(AU), and The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, (ASEAN).

The international organisations like the GATT, IMF and the World Bank were established during the Bretton Woods conference following the great depression. The United Nations was established in 1945 to promote international peace and cooperation, world security and human rights. Its membership include almost all soveriegn nations of the world and it has a number of organisations set up to carry out its duties. Organisations which include the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), and the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS

Transnational corporations are such corporations, which due to large capacity or capital, have been able to establish branches of their organisation in other countries apart from their home country. They are called transnational because they have been able to establish their subsidiaries in countries more than one. These corporations are also referred to as Multinational Corporations(MNCs). According to Held et al, " MNCs account for about 25% of world production, and 70% of world trade, while

their sales are equivalent to almost half of the world's GDP" (Held et al., 1999; UNCTAD, 2001, in Held and McGrew. 2002: p. 3). These corporations are usually privately owned, or owned by a group of persons with public shares. Examples of TNCs include Microsoft, Adidas, Wal-Mart, General Electric, Hewlett Packard, ExxonMobil, Toyota, etc. TNCs exist in every industry known to mankind.

The emergence of TNCs in the global economic arena has led to their inclusion in the political arena also, as they have become forces to reckon with in the international scene. The liberalization of trade, globalisation and democracy, revolutions in information technology and transport, has enabled these corporations to transfer their technology and services to different countries with favourable market structures, and has more or less unleashed their ability to give a new meaning to global economy. Due to efficiency and technological advancements of these firms, we see the privatization of government controlled corporations to them. In Nigeria for example, the Nigerian Telecommunications was privatized, giving TNCs the right to bid and buy, which resulted into the sale of the Nigerian Telecommunications plc, to Transcorp Ltd. Government-controlled firms are increasingly outsourced to TNCs, and their expertise is sought on various occasions.

The reason why TNCs are more popular and important in the world and especially in the developing world is because, due to their large capital base, they have been able to establish their presence in a lot of countries, they have enough capital to hire and pay smart technological geeks to keep them abreast of technological innovations, they even practically invent most things themselves anyway!. These companies, unlike most state

departments, are sophisticated and dedicated because they are capitalists who have been able to put together a team of people who are best in providing the services required. For instance, in Nigerian federal universities, it is not uncommon to find lackadaisical attitudes to teaching amongst lecturers mainly because there is always salary disagreements between themselves and the federal government. Meanwhile, private universities in the same country can effectively boast of the best,(might not be most experienced though!) lecturers because they can afford to pay them and monitor their activities. Subsequently, they use these incentives to draw federal lecturers away from government service.

Capitalism is the main driving force of TNCs, and this is a great propeller for their competition for economic and probably, political power control.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Non Governmental organisations,(NGOs) can be regarded as organisations or movements which are not established by the government of any state, rather they are liberal activist charity groups usually founded by individuals or corporate firms, to address issues affecting the society as result of globalisation. They are either globally recognised(International NGOs), or local mobilization groups. NGOs as we see this days, have been a significant force in global governance through their involvement and activities on issues such as the protection of human rights, environmental hazards awareness, the promotion of gender equality, etc, (Held and McGrew, 2002. P. 244)

NGOs' activities, like every other sector of the world affairs, have been made easier and more global as a result of the technological revolutions, (Castells,

2008. P. 86). Small scale activist groups get the chance to advertise and liaise with other people who share their vision in other parts of the world, to build a strong network for their cause. Examples of INGOs include the Amnesty International, The Red Cross Society, Greenpeace, etc., all of whose specialization ranges from environmental awareness and first aid, to the popularization of fundamental human rights.

NGOs are individual organisations who do not command the kind of traditional sovereignty enjoyed by the states and International organisations, or the capital that TNCs can boast of. As such, they resort to mass mobilization of workers, activists, and volunteers, as well as funds from corporate organisations, government donations, members' dues, individuals committed to charity, to effectively realize their goals. Concerned with humanitarian affairs, reduction of poverty, diseases, and the improvement of the welfare of the people in the developing countries, NGOs charge themselves with the duty of providing first aid, relief materials to victims of war and natural disaster, sensitizing people about growing killer diseases, while also acting as the mouth piece for the millions of neglected people, whose voices will never be heard in the international arena. Due to the nature of their activities and scope of concentration, we often find NGOs acting in roles traditionally meant for governments- providing avenue for public opinion for the people, (Wilkinson, 2002. P. xii). we also find that local NGOs could actually be single people who felt they needed to make a change in their environment, a classical example being nominees of the CNN Hero awards, people like 28year old Efren PenaFlorida who founded a teen company to keep youngsters out of gangsterism, and Andrea Ivory, a lady

who gives free awareness and tests to women to detect early signs of cancer, (CNN Living, 2009). These people use their money, resources and time to promote a better world in their own way.

The main contributions of NGOs to global governance lies in their attempt to influence the decisions of states and international organizations to include areas which affect not only the economic lives of people, but the social and cultural areas as well, in their legislations, i. e., to ensure that public opinion is sought on issues, and people benefit from both political and social globalisation. They also seek “ equality and social justice”, (O'Brien, 2007. P. 394). Equality and social justice as regards gender bias, economic imbalance between nations, racism, and social stratification. NGOs have been the most effective way of ensuring increased awareness of international politics to public opinion, they have, as far as I see, been able to somewhat promote accountability and transparency in global governance. Governments now know that there are associations which will launch demonstrations and picketings on them when they make selfish policies.

BENEFITS OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

The form of global governance that we have today, regardless of obvious lapses, controversies and inconsistencies, have been able to keep the world in a relative sanity, preventing anarchy, which would have been what we will have in absence of a regulating system. Due to the growing interconnectedness, the world needed a machinery that can be used to provide law and order and maintain relations. The ability of the form of governing that we have today, to successfully keep the negative aspects of globalisation to a ‘ bearable’ minimum, has also been a plus on its part. If we

did not have international organisations to regulate and arbitrate, states would probably have been raining weapons of mass destruction on each other!. This is very important because, in globalisation of the magnitude that we currently have, there should be a system to ensure orderliness, and the International organisations are surprisingly providing this in their own way.

Global governing has also been able (to a limited extent), check the excesses of governments against their own citizens and against other countries. This is more on the part of international organisations. They have been able to impose sanctions where agreements are breached, and this has promoted some form of accountability and responsibility. It has also been able to reduce wars between nations through negotiations, arbitrations and sanctions, which probably even made going to war more tedious than before.

SHORTCOMINGS OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

People usually say that the form of global governance that we have today has done little to be effective in terms of keeping peace and maintaining economic and social stability. This is not an unfounded accusation. The inability of international organisations to effectively eradicate the gap between the rich nations and the poor nations (Murphy, C. N. 2000. P. 789), socially and economically, has led to a distrust for the system. Poorer or developing nations have been given a chance to develop through free trade, and economic liberalisation, while developed countries have been given the chance to officially exploit the poor nations through this same economic policies. The policies made by these organisations are deliberated upon by participating nations, but like in the case of the United Nations, vetoed by the security council, which comprises of the most powerful nations of the

world. At the end of the day, we can say most policies will not end up being objective. This also brings in the unfairness of the system. Whether it is obvious or not, global governance is still aware of hegemonic powers and their influence, as such, preference is given to them above others. Even TNCs who do not make international rules, will probably sign a deal with the United States faster than it would, say, Benin Republic, except of course if it has a capitalistic motive on the latter.

The coalition of the states, international organisations, non governmental organisations, and transnational corporations, has led to multiplicity of opinion, interests, and actions. This is bound to have a negative effect on the society. Effective global governing cannot accommodate extreme diversity of opinion, and this sometimes bring chaos of ideas and ineffective policy making, and there goes the saying of ' Too many cooks spoil the broth'!. International organisations are accountable to their creators,(the states), NGOs are accountable to their donors, while the TNCs are accountable to their owners, and possibly, shareholders. This, I see as multiplicity of allegiance which is capable of bringing diverse self interest in governance. At the end of the day, only NGOs are capable of the largest rate of accountability to the people, who are supposed to be beneficiaries of global governance. Accountability to the states by the international organisations, is supposed to be a form of indirect accountability to the people, but this only works if the state is effectively accountable to its people. At the end of the day, it looks like they all are pursuing interests other than that of the people. Also, NGOs are obviously the only channel through which active public opinion is sought, developed nations try to do this to an extent.

Developing nations most times do not have the facility or the 'conscience' to seek public opinion. In Nigeria for example, results of the nation's dealings with other countries only appear in newspapers, when most times, nobody even knew the country was entering an agreement anywhere. The media is used to seek public opinion, and more than half of the nation probably do not even have access to a television, newspaper or radio.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

One of the most important things that can be proposed for an increased success in global governance is the increased effectiveness of international organisations, (Baylis, et al. 2008 p. 35). Since international organisations are the highest determinant of regulations in economic and political activities, they should have the ability to function effectively independently of any hegemonic power or dominant state. If these organisations are equipped with mechanisms to achieve their goals and less vetoes and influence comes from the states, they might just be able to transform into organisations with enough 'backbone' to see the world through. The possibility of total autonomy from the states might not be possible, but if partial autonomy is achieved, it will be better, at least GATT was a more dominated version of WTO and it was successfully transformed to this institution with better autonomy and standard dispute resolution techniques, (Narlikar, 2005. P. 86).

Efficiency in the making and execution of policies, in penalties for transgressors, sanctions, supports and objective governance, are crucial to any organisation established for regulating world affairs. If this actor of global governance is effective, it will be able to regulate the results of

globalisation and the relationship between the states, NGOs and TNCs in economy and politics. NGOs and TNCs are consisted mainly of private organisations, so the most effective way to achieve effective governance is through the international organisations who can check the excesses of the other actors.

There also needs to be a balance between the attention given to economic, political and social issues. The concentration of the present form of governance on global market outcomes, states' competition and power tussle, has left a huge gap in the social arena. These issues should not take precedence over poverty, education, health, employment, environment, etc. less hegemonic dominance is required to build a better and sustainable system of global governance.

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