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Entangled Opposites: Globalisation and Nationalism

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Abstract

The liberal international order was constructed by the United States after the Second World War which navigated the principles of neo liberal ideas through the mechanisms of integration and interdependence of the global economy. This construct was possible through the establishment of multilateralism and institutions which formalised and legitimised these neo liberal ideas, set forth by the pace of globalisation. But the pace of globalisation seems to have slowed down now and there seems to be a growing concern in the Global South as well as the North regarding the outcomes of this interdependence. However this does not necessarily come as a surprise because the idea of international trilemma as argued by Dani Rodrik (Rodrik, 2000) did mention that a synergy between national economics, nation state and mass politics is very difficult to arrive at and this could necessarily spill over to the international level and could impact integration.

This article attempts to review globalisation and the rise of nationalism with a theoretical framework.

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Introduction

Globalisation of trade and capital have been the two major tools through which the agenda of global economic integration was to be realised. Its main objective was to bring about development and growth by reduction of poverty and inequality, through the establishment of rule-based procedures and regulations. But a greater part of the world still remains largely unequal, and while poverty has been reduced, it persists to be a problem in many parts of the world.

Alongside this lopsided development and growth, globalisation has also challenged the state's centrality of position in international relations and therefore there has been a growing demand for "every state for itself and a resurgence to the West Phalian model of state sovereignty (Wade, 2011). The globalised and interdependent state today faces its greatest challenge not from the impacts of globalisation but from within its own domestic dynamics. Today, there seems to be a discontent within and amongst states, where national interest seems to be taking precedence over addressing the objectives of economic integration and interdependence. From Brexit to Donald Trump, Japan's orientation towards implementing nationalist policies, rise of Narendra Modi in India, and Turkish president Erdogan, to success of the far-

right in Italy, Germany, and Austrian elections of 2017 - there has been a global trend in rising nationalism (Beiber 2018). In the context of the global economy, this nationalism can be understood as protectionism, where definitively trade rules and regulations are not particularly succeeding to make things work. Also the argument proposed by Robert Keohane, Macedo and Moravcsik that multilateral institutions can enhance and improve the quality of democratic processes in a country by restricting the powers of special interest groups also do not seem to be working (Keohane et al, 2009). From integration and interdependence there seems to be a move towards rising nationalism and sovereignty.

While it is difficult to measure rising nationalism, one can identify nationalist trends happening with rise of nationalist policies, nationalist parties, nationalist violence, hate crimes and hate speeches. There has also been a growing intolerance amongst people generally. This article proposes to discuss how entangled opposites - globalisation and nationalism, are failing to co-habitat. Crisis in capitalism in this liberal international order have had impacts within the internal dynamics of countries, which have reopened debates on realist understanding of international relations. The ideal nation state which was to bring in welfare activities within

stable boundaries and mobilise support through democratic processes for redistribution and reallocation of resources for the benefit of all its people seem to have failed in its objectives. There is a growing dissent surrounding the role of the state today, the globalised state is perceived to be a a coercive state.

Simply put, nationalism means a sense of belonging and identifying oneself with a nation. That nation where one is born, is raised, grown up in known territories, has had interactions in a similar language and cultural orientation-there is a familiarity and there is a comfort which helps them create a national spirit. This national spirit forges a community of belonging with a particular national character. The 18th century philosopher Johann Herder was of the opinion that the world cannot solely be understood through reason because human natures is conditioned and therefore varies according to cultural and physical environments and therefore the result could be naturally flawed. In the realm of politics this sense of belonging may translate into pride, dignity and identity. Many have bene of the opinion that nationalism is a thing of the past. In an integrated world, simply focusing on national interest in isolation, is not a very encouraging proposition. But nationalism is neither occupying the entire space in the world, nor is it in decline (Hobsbawm, 1990).

Alternatively, globalisation is looked upon as a movement which is reformist - where aims to bring in benefits for people. But issues like cultural nationalism, right wing populism, market fundamentalism which are viewed as regressive and backward, come into a natural conflict opposing the idea of globalisation.

What did integration in the global economy aim to do? It aimed to bring in the establishment of institutions with the help of rules and procedures, which were to benefit trade and capital liberalisation in the global economy, and gradually this gave rise to what came to be understood as the theory of complex interdependence (Keohane and Nye, 1970).

It was Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye who in the 1970's, challenged the fundamental assumptions of traditional structural realism which focussed on the military and economic capacity of the state. But complex interdependence widened the focus to include international regimes and institutions to add the element of cooperative behaviour amongst states. Neo liberal ideas viewed complex interdependence as a basis to explaining of state behaviour in international politics. Rules and procedures established through global economic institutions in the liberal international order found its expression through the World Bank and WTO. The key to understanding and making a success of the globalisation discourse was cooperation on the basis of integration and interdependence. But at the same time there has been a growing concern that the rate of economic growth did not offset the rate of return on capital, which has perhaps led to inequalities in wealth distribution (Piketty, 2014).

Interdependence and Cooperation

Over the last two decades, there seems to be a drag on the economies, especially after the subprime crisis in 2008, the world has witnessed rising inequalities, job losses, layoffs, stresses on governments for bail outs and cuts on government spendings - all these have had political consequences as well. It has also exposed the inability of political as well as economic institutions to ensure integration. Robert Keohane has also argued that cooperation in the global tics is contested,

because he is of the opinion that cooperation requires actions of separate individuals or organisations which are not in a pre-existent harmony but are brought together in conformity with one another through a process of policy coordination (Keohane 1984). Similarly the idea of interdependence also can sometimes work and sometimes work, because scholars are not sure why some international institutions work and some may not work. Additionally, Keohane has also argued that the theory of integration, cooperation and interdependence could work better and likely to remain more stable under the influence of a hegemon. Robert Wade has also added cooperation could also become more problematic in a multipolar world, and a shift (perceived) less dominated by the G-7, there is a tendency to understand that there is an occurrence of power shift as well from the US and Europe to China (Wade 2011). Multipolarity has led to complexities in international regimes where there has been an increase in the density of their composition and therefore has led to inconsistencies and not achieving the desired outcome, because international institutions and regional institutions have overlapped (Gomez-Mera, 2021).

Starting from the Global South and mostly emerging economies, conflicts have emerged in world politics demanding more social protection and welfare activities, uncomfortable questions have come to the surface regarding privatisation and deregulation, scaling unemployment and lack of protection for labourers (Porta *et al*, 2021). Economic inequalities, class divide, regionalism, collective identification, social activism and political transformations-all contribute to greater fragmentation than integration.

Additionally in the political space, national leaders have used nationalist and religious tools for political mobilisation. Chakravarty and Roy argue that electoral success of politicians having a nationalist background should not be confused with nationalist sentiment. Narendra Modi's victory has been attributed to the social and economic platform rather than his nationalist Hindu identity (Bieber 2016). Vladimir Putin has also been building his internal domestic legitimacy on the basis of nationalism-and a combination of autocratic control and re-establishment of state power in Russia. Russia's nationalist policy reorientation was most permanent with its annexation of Crimea in 2014 and successively war on Eastern Ukraine and getting into a direct confrontation with the West. In the economic space, opposition to free trade and rise of protectionist policies have also contributed to the rise of nationalism-several countries have been increasing there protectionist policies in recent years; with US and China leading, other countries which have embarked on this path are Mexico, EU, India, Brazil, Japan and the Netherlands - all these moves have been taken to safeguard domestic interests. Corcoran and Smith argue that the Brexit referendum have had a substantial impact on hate crimes. The number of hate crimes rose subsequently around the campaign and during the referendum (Bieber, 2016).

So why has this been happening. The answer could be found primarily in the failure of the capitalist order to bring about the integration thats they had aimed for. The fact that the global economy is integrated cannot be denied, it also needs to be understood, that this integration has a very fragile existence. There is a growing sense of insecurity growing around globalisation. That is being reflected in modern and anti-modern protests and movements because crucial decisions taken at a global level, are affecting people down the line. The modern element of securing and safeguarding ones nation and its territory can be understood but the anti-

modern propaganda of questioning the evolution of modern societies and the dilemma to adjust the unpolluted past with the now cannot be really accepted (Kaldor 2004). Additionally Anthony Smith is of the view that nations have not yet transcended in the global era. On the contrary, this current wave of nationalism which is taking shape in various parts of the world holds testimony to the fact that the idea of the nation has a deep connect with human need. He further adds that supranational identities would not be able to take the place of national cultural identities (Smith 1995).

There are also different ways globalisation has had an impact on societies - While some scholars have spoken about the effects of cosmopolitanism on nationalism (Calhoun 2008), there has also been a development of "resistance identities" (Castells 2011). Middell argues that the rise of nationalism today has been an effect of globalisation. Nationalism does not directly oppose globalisation but it is inherent in the structures of society to manage the political, economic and social balance as opposed to global flows and influence (Middell, 2019)

Conclusion

Salman Rushdie (2000) has quoted, that among the greatest struggles of man - good/evil, reason or unreason, there is also the mighty conflict of Home and fantasy of Away, the dream of roots and the mirage of the journey - beautifully depicting the analogy of cosmopolitanism (fantasy of away) due to the modernisation process brought about by globalisation and the "home" being the roots of nationalism, national identity and culture (Calhoun, 2007). With growing interdependence in the world, there is bound to be growing dissent due to the process of redistribution of wealth and also societies caught in the unpolluted pasts being incapable of coming to terms with modernity. At this point it would only be correct to disapprove of Ernest Gellner's theory that cultural homogeneity is a natural outcome of modernity through the process of industrialisation. Hence a world expected to be integrated globally is confronted with issues of secessionist movements and anti-globalisation protests - as seen through backlashes happening because of World Bank assistance policies, or IMF conditions of granting loans and surveillance or even WTO protests culminating in the collapse of the Doha trade talks in 2001 due to lack of consensus on safeguard mechanisms. Additionally, there seems to be a revival of realism-led dynamics of state centric ideas, conflict and rise of right wing populism and nationalism. But one cannot dismiss the idea of nationalism as Hobsbawm where he places nationalism as an anachronism best suited to an earlier historical period. Both nationalism and globalisation are entangled in each other's domain, inherently opposite but a compromise with social cohesion and adjustments may just make these two cohabitate and coexist with one another.

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