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THE PARADOXE OF GLOBALIZATION: BETWEEN CONVERGENCE AND THE MARGINALIZATION OF PEOPLES

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ABSTRACT

Globalization, or globalisation, is a relatively recent geo-economic process that connects different parts of the world. While it raises hopes, it also generates fears about homogenization, the marginalization of territories, and populations. It fosters convergence among peoples by facilitating the circulation of ideas, goods, and people. Advances in communication technologies bring societies closer together and reduce distances. Similarly, economies become interdependent, stimulating growth and employment opportunities. This process also contributes to the spread of common values and similar lifestyles. However, globalization also leads to significant inequalities. Some countries and regions benefit greatly from international trade, while others remain on the margins. The most vulnerable populations are often excluded from economic benefits. Global competition can weaken local economies and traditional jobs. Although it offers development opportunities, globalization is also seen as an unequal phenomenon, as it strengthens the role of already connected actors while increasing inequalities in isolated territories and undermining peace due to the failure to fully achieve its intended objectives in practice.

Keywords: Globalization, peace, Unification, Marginalization and populations.

1 INTRODUCTION

Globalization-referred to as “mondialisation” in French-is a process of integrating societies and economies. This phenomenon also denotes the opening up of all national economies to a market that has become global in scale. It is a complex process with multifaceted consequences. It is therefore not surprising that the term has acquired numerous emotional connotations, and that its application has become a subject of controversy and ambiguity. Discussions and debates surrounding the substance of globalization are frequently marked by confusion. In its drive toward unification, it facilitates the emergence of nations on several levels. It is often viewed as an irresistible and beneficial force that brings economic prosperity to all the world’s inhabitants. “Globalization is not an option; it is an unavoidable reality” (B. Clinton, 2000, p. 93). In terms of how it functions, globalization has become a double-edged sword-or even a poison-

for certain nations, particularly those that are underdeveloped; it is often viewed as the root of all contemporary ills. It is generally acknowledged that this phenomenon has emerged from the combined effect of two factors: policies aimed at reducing national barriers to international economic transactions, and the impact of new technologies, especially within the spheres of information and communication. Globalization fosters the convergence of peoples by facilitating the rapid movement of ideas, goods, capital, and individuals on a global scale. It also helps bring societies closer together through communication technologies and the spread of shared values, cultural practices, and lifestyles. While industrialized nations were the driving force behind the technological revolution that enabled globalization, this revolution has also had a profound impact on the rest of the global economy. The dissemination of these technologies has had particularly direct effects on developing countries. The effects of technology have also been felt well beyond the economic sphere-vast as that sphere may be today. The very technologies that enabled rapid economic globalization have also been harnessed, more broadly, by governments, civil society, and individuals. Does globalization, as a process of unification, not pave the way for development in certain parts of the world? And are the advantages often attributed to it not far less substantial than its drawbacks? It gives rise to marginalization, excluding specific countries, regions, and populations from the benefits of global economic exchange. It also exacerbates inequalities by weakening local economies, widening wealth gaps, and leaving behind territories that are less integrated into global networks. Will the liberal system that underpins globalization-with its "law of the strongest" principle-not end up leaving Africa trailing in its wake? Might globalization, as experienced by Africa, be a double-edged sword? Does globalization not represent both an increase in bilateral and multilateral trade ties-connections that, in turn, have contradictory effects on peace?

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

We focused this study on literature review, which involved consulting academic works to define the key concepts: globalization, convergence, and marginalization. An analysis was conducted to understand the mechanisms of globalization through concrete examples (developed countries vs. developing countries, integrated territories vs. isolated territories). The approach also highlights the disparities between regions that benefit from globalization and those that are excluded from it.

2.1 Search Results

Globalization promotes the convergence of peoples through economic exchange, technology, and the standardization of lifestyles, enabling certain emerging countries to grow and gain access to international markets. However, it leads to the marginalization of many territories and populations, particularly landlocked or less industrialized regions.

Inequalities in income and access to resources are widening, and international competition is undermining local economies.

2.2 Conceptual Approach

2.2.1 Globalization

Globalization is the process of increasing interconnection among societies and economies on a global scale, facilitating the flow of goods, capital, information, and people, while generating unequal effects across different regions and populations. It is characterized by the rapid spread of technologies, ideas, and cultural norms on a global scale, while generating contrasting effects, such as economic integration on the one hand and the exclusion or marginalization of certain actors and regions on the other.

2.2.2 Convergence

Convergence refers to the process by which societies, economies, or regions tend to grow closer together economically, technologically, socially, or culturally, gradually narrowing the gaps between them in terms of development, living standards, or practices. It refers to the convergence of societies or economies through the narrowing of their gaps in development and wealth.

2.2.3 Marginalization

Marginalization is the process by which individuals, groups, or territories find themselves excluded or sidelined from the economic, social, and political benefits of a society or a global system, thereby exacerbating inequalities and precariousness.

2.3 Historical Overview

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union around 1991, globalization has accelerated. Today, it affects all areas, and every continent and every nation is influenced by the others. Western and industrialized countries initiated the process of globalization. Differentiation today is primarily economic, and its characteristics are varied. Furthermore, regions are

integrated and ranked within the global trading system : population (its size and skill level), the presence or absence of natural resources, regional planning and infrastructure, the establishment of international firms, and the diplomatic clout of states all contribute to the liberalization of trade and the emergence of “financial capitalism.” Trade flows-of manufactured goods, raw materials such as oil, raw resources, and metals, as well as agricultural products including wheat, milk, coffee, tea, rice, and fruits and vegetables of all kinds, etc.-have experienced remarkable exponential growth. Financial flows have also increased significantly. Human mobility has intensified for reasons such as tourism (air travel has become more accessible) and work-for example, the thousands of Indians who are building soccer stadiums in Qatar at the risk of their lives. Borders, particularly in Europe, have “virtually disappeared” with the creation of the European Union (EU), cementing the success of liberalism. Similarly, the “transportation revolution” has contributed to the efficiency and acceleration of this process. Relentless technical progress has made it possible to build increasingly advanced modes of transportation, such as container ships, supertankers (giant oil tankers), and jumbo jets (the Airbus A380, which can carry 900 passengers). Furthermore, the “digital revolution”-that of “Information and Communication Technologies” (ICT)-has multiplied the flow of information through the internet and mobile telephony (with international networks such as Skype, WhatsApp, Messenger, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, Pinterest, Instagram...), thanks in part to advances in aerospace that have enabled the deployment of satellites, which in turn allow for the use of wireless mobile devices everywhere.

2.4 Conceptual Definition

Economic globalization refers to a process of increasing trade and production integration. The term “economic” might also lead one to analyze its financial aspects, but this discussion will not focus on financial globalization. This global economic process has emerged as a positive development in the history of societies, enabling increased wealth, improved business productivity, and the ability to meet diverse consumer demands. Globalization, in general, is a long-term process of development and unification of countries led by the West, aimed at transforming the world into a “global village” through the removal of borders. Globalization is a “global village”-or, in other words, a finite world-where technology has facilitated trade and reduced its costs, where administrative barriers have been gradually removed, and where flows of goods, services, money, and information circulate continuously, without friction and without natural or political obstacles. Globalization, by definition, goes beyond the traditional understanding of the internationalization of trade and capital flows to express a new reality of global integration and the emergence of global actors. It is a phenomenon, a process that pits territories (fixed factors) against one another in competition to attract mobile factors (highly skilled labor).

3 THE ROLES OF STATES IN GLOBALIZATION

Globalization also involves states. They are either active participants who exert significant influence on it, or they are merely subjected to it because they lack the means to engage with it. States that are active on the global stage are, by definition, sovereign; this allows them to defend their interests by promoting national development (they develop their territory by ensuring its effective organization through an efficient network of infrastructure and an ambitious transportation policy-the proposed infrastructure aligns with their international ambitions). The role of governments is all the more fundamental during an economic crisis ; for example, during the 2008–2009 crisis, government intervention was crucial :

- nationalization of failing companies,
- aid to certain sectors hardest hit (e.g., real estate),
- support for banks and the financial sector by providing significant liquidity (which was heavily criticized, since the financial sector and its deregulation were partly responsible for the crisis).

Some countries have realized that they cannot act alone, so they have joined together in organizations in order (in particular) to have more influence on the international stage : the EU (European Union), the AU (African Union), MERCOSUR (Southern Common Market), ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement). The actions of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) are guided by the directives of globally influential nations : at the UN : the functioning of the Security Council is limited by the veto power of the five permanent members (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China), as well as within the IMF, the World Bank, the WTO, and the G20 : the dominant/dominated relationships are very pronounced. Globalization also relies on other actors : major metropolitan areas that, by virtue of their size, wield global influence ; nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) ; and major consumer markets (for example, if the U.S. or European market slows down, it impacts the global market, since these markets, with their high purchasing power, drive the global economy). The underground economy, which escapes government control, with its various illicit activities, is also a major player in the global economy (illicit networks involving drugs, arms sales, pharmaceuticals, prostitution, counterfeiting, and illegal immigration), as are organized crime groups.

3.1 The Opportunities of Globalization in the Service of Peace

Globalization promotes convergence by facilitating the flow of ideas, goods, capital, and people on a global scale. It enables emerging countries to accelerate their economic growth, improve their infrastructure, and participate in international markets. Technology and cultural exchange bring societies closer together, contributing to the spread of shared values and practices. Globalization offers opportunities for international cooperation and the sharing of knowledge among nations. Globalization serves as a catalyst for fostering culture and entrenching peace worldwide, given that, through it, the nations of the world have now become a single community. As an economic opening to the world, globalization has evolved into a broad, cultural openness that extends to politics, trade, art, and technology. It offers clear advantages, as no nation can develop on its own. Under these circumstances, globalization breaks down the ideological, cultural, and political barriers that fuel and perpetuate controversies. All of this is made possible by the establishment of international institutions to manage disasters and conflicts between nations. It benefits all countries and contributes to the well-being of all the world's inhabitants, which implies that globalization accelerates economic growth in poor countries and reduces global poverty, that it does not increase inequality, and that it does not undermine socioeconomic security within countries. The goal of globalization is to unite all nations and contribute to their development. In this sense, it offers economic and commercial opportunities by accelerating and intensifying trade through economic cooperation among all parts of the world via the rapid transfer of information and capital. "Globalization is inextricably linked to industrial development" (S. DESPOT, No. 55, 2012, p. 7). It is in this sense that multinational corporations relocate their operations to the Global South to transfer their technology. In terms of communication, globalization has made global interconnection possible. With Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the world has become a unified human family. On the political and legal front, it works toward a common policy of democratization, respect for human rights-also known as the rights of the human person or simply human rights-and the maintenance and promotion of universal peace. We can therefore understand Thomas Friedman's position : "Globalization increases the chances that we will not fight one another" (Th. Friedman, 2005, p. 58). On the sociocultural level, globalization has brought peoples closer together and fostered cultural exchange. In the field of technoscience, it has facilitated the transfer of scientific and technical knowledge, making it possible to improve inventions both quantitatively and qualitatively. André Comte-Sponville compares globalization to a destiny rather than a choice. He argues : "Globalization is not a political choice that one can love or hate, but a destiny and an inescapable reality, comparable to the weather, which must be accepted and managed with clarity rather than denied" (A. C-Sponville, 2004, p. 65). Globalization is not a self-evident fact, like the succession of days and nights: it is, in fact, a social process-constructed, driven, appropriated, and transformed by social actors. It is these actors and their relationships that underpin our analysis throughout this discussion, as we apply a very broad definition to the concept : individuals, organized groups of various sizes, firms, governments, local authorities, and international organizations. What defines an actor is its ability to define a strategy that necessarily includes a spatial dimension, whether implicit or explicit. Both spaces and territories are creations of society, and it is through their analysis that we can understand globalization.

4 THE TERRITORIAL IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION

The phenomenon of globalization came to the forefront of scientific and political debates during the 1990s. Without retracing the genealogy of the concept-which dates back to the notions of the "world economy" proposed by Fernand BRAUDEL and the "world-system" proposed by Emmanuel WALLERSTEIN (1979) -The collapse of the Soviet bloc granted the combination of formal democracy and the market economy the distinction of practical success in the face of the failure of the socialist experiment. Logically, one can first speak of the globalization of firms and trade before extending the concept of globalization. The concept of globalization has been used merely as if it were an isolated phenomenon, yet it offers a new analytical perspective that could help reignite certain debates-particularly the one on development-and identify new avenues for improving living conditions. "The globalized world is made up of a multitude of spaces linked to one another by ties of varying strength, including both old and new territories" (DOLLFUS et al., 1999, p. 343). Territories are spaces appropriated and organized by social groups, serving their material and symbolic reproduction and contributing to their transformations. A territory is not merely a vehicle or a byproduct of the history of societies; it is one of its constituent elements. The changes brought about by globalization involve the concentration of knowledge and power in a few locations, the creation of new hubs of economic activity, but also decentralization policies and identity-based demands-which also seem to be inherent to globalization-all of which require the capacity to manage, control, secure, appropriate, and organize spaces of varying sizes.concept to all areas of social life, including cultural phenomena and the mobility of people.

4.1 Asymmetries in the Effects of Globalization

To assess the impact of globalization, we must first examine economic growth rates globally and in individual countries. It is striking to note that global GDP growth has slowed since 1990, the year in which globalization began to accelerate. The asymmetries in the effects of globalization show that its benefits are not distributed equally. Some countries and regions benefit from economic exchange, technological innovations, and the opening of markets, which stimulates their growth and development. In contrast, other regions remain marginalized, facing poverty, unemployment, and exclusion

from global flows. These disparities create economic, social, and cultural inequalities on a global scale. Thus, globalization appears to be a process that is both integrative and selective. At the very least, this finding contradicts the most optimistic predictions regarding globalization's beneficial impact on growth. The phenomenon of globalization is described as inevitable, ubiquitous, and irreversible. It seems to overdetermine the evolution of societies, leaving no alternative or room for difference. For citizens of the Global South, this constraint appears to be driven by the Global North and certain global actors linked to it, and can be interpreted as a new form of imperialism in disguise. There is both an expansion in the scope of global phenomena and a persistence of differences: between countries that drive the globalization project and those that are subjected to it; between countries that control its economic engines—in terms of production and consumption—and countries that are trying to adapt. Globalization, while bringing the world together, creates differences, exacerbates segregation, and re-establishes borders that progress had, for a time, seemed to ignore. The spread of human settlements and economic activities across the globe contributes to the fragility of an ever-changing environment, with far-reaching consequences for human, economic, and social life. Environmental degradation, in turn, affects human health, as evidenced by the spread of malaria in the Amazon. What generally distinguishes globalization in the Global South is the speed and intensity with which these changes are occurring, even though some of the processes described are at work in both the Global North and the Global South, albeit in different ways—notably the breakdown of wage-labor relations, the mobility of economic activities, the rise of market-based regulation, and decentralization.

4.2 The Inequalities and Injustices of Globalization in the Global South

In practice, globalization has become a poison for certain nations, particularly those in the Global South (underdeveloped countries). By severely undermining their development, it ceases to be a chance or an opportunity and loses its value and benefits. "The rush of peoples toward the ugly was the main phenomenon of globalization" (S. TESSAN, 2011, p. 18). Thus, in several areas, it has created inequalities. For example, on the economic front, it is based on deception, which means that while the countries of the North (developed countries) continue to develop further, underdeveloped countries are intimidated, overexploited, and divided. The polarization of the world in the process of globalization creates a divide between these two extremes. In light of this observation, Bishop Albert ROUET, in his concise essay **Should We Fear Globalization? Spiritual Issues and the Mission of the Church**, states: "Contemporary economic liberalism, which is overly materialistic, tends to reduce human beings to mere consumers, and this logic accommodates exclusion and growing poverty in one part of the world." (Mgr. A. ROUET, 2000, pp. 28–29). On a sociocultural level, it is often denounced as the cause of the acculturation of certain peoples around the world. Globalization contributes to the loss of cultural and linguistic identity in underdeveloped countries, in that it leads to a. The cultures of so-called "poor" peoples are disappearing, giving way to Western culture, which continues to gain ground. Unfortunately, this process has effectively sealed the fate of the cultures of underdeveloped countries. It should first be noted that the "clash of civilizations," far from giving rise to a mutual exchange of values while respecting cultural identity, has instead led to the absorption of civilizations foreign to those of the so-called major developed nations. Western culture has become a predatory monster devouring the cultures of Third World peoples. Ways of life are being standardized. It is in this sense that Daniel Cohen speaks of "the Westernization of the world." " Harmful to underdeveloped countries, globalization is perceived by citizens of the Global South as a constraint and a new form of colonization of Africa—one that appears to be driven by the countries of the Global North and certain global actors linked to them—and can be interpreted as a new form of imperialism in disguise. That is why Samir Amin asserts: "Globalization is a new form of economic colonization." Hervé Juvin adds: "Believing that what is good for us is good for others leads to promising those who have not experienced it that they will be able to replicate the unique journey of Europe and the West: common sense alone is enough to sense the futility—and even more so, the folly—of this promise" (H. Juvin; 2010, p. 57). There is both an expansion in the scope of global phenomena and a persistence of differences between countries that drive the globalization project and those that are subjected to it; between countries that control its economic engines—in terms of production and consumption—and countries that are trying to adapt. These differences partly reflect the divide between what used to be called "developed countries" and "underdeveloped countries," with a few significant shifts. Globalization poses a threat to the preservation of cultural identities. Current globalization thus appears as a new phase in the internationalization of trade by corporations. In this sense, it can be interpreted as the continued expansion of capitalism and its logic into every corner of the globe, within the geopolitical context of the post-Cold War era. In this process of expansion, the countries of the Global South appear in particular as territories to be conquered. To assess the social impact of globalization, it is essential to look beyond economic performance and examine what has happened in terms of employment, income inequality, and poverty over the past two decades. Globally, ILO estimates show an increase in officially reported unemployment over the past twenty years. In 2006, there were some 188 million unemployed people. Employment trends over the past twenty years have varied by region. Income inequality has widened in some industrialized countries, with an increase in the share of capital in national income and a rise in wage disparities from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. In this regard, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated: "Globalization must benefit everyone, not just a few" (B. Ki-Moon, October 14, 2002).

4.3 Globalization and Environmental Violence

By promoting the intensive exploitation of natural resources and the massive flow of goods, globalization increases pressure on ecosystems, leading to deforestation, pollution, and climate change. This dynamic generates environmental violence, particularly affecting vulnerable populations in developing countries, who suffer the consequences of activities from which they derive little benefit. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2020) and researchers such as N. Castree (2010), these impacts are not limited to the environment but also exacerbate social and economic inequalities. To reduce this violence, globalization must be accompanied by strict international standards, sustainable technologies, and global cooperation geared toward ecological justice.

The marginalization of peoples manifests itself as political exclusion, which limits their participation in decision-making and their representation in institutions. It is accompanied by economic inequalities, such as limited access to employment and precarious working conditions. Social discrimination, such as prejudice and racism, also reduces their opportunities in daily life. Furthermore, access to education and health care is often inadequate, which exacerbates inequalities. Cultural marginalization and geographic isolation contribute to weakening their identities and limiting their development.

In Africa, Francophone partnerships and public-private partnerships enable foreign investors to enter key sectors such as water and electricity distribution, telecommunications, rail transportation, and port facilities. In Mauritius, a free trade zone—created at the government's initiative—has facilitated the establishment of foreign entrepreneurs alongside local entrepreneurs. In Brazil, the government plays its role to perfection in supporting the development of the infrastructure and technologies necessary for competitiveness, which is considered imperative. These achievements do not come without conflict or destruction. "I am fully aware that in our time the word 'property' has been tarnished by the corruption of big capitalists" (G. K. CHESTERTON, 1994, p. 77).

They do not exempt companies from responsibility. Globalization, while bringing the world together, creates differences, exacerbates segregation, and recreates borders that progress had, for a time, seemed to ignore. The spread of human settlements and economic activities across the globe contributes to the fragility of an ever-changing environment, with far-reaching consequences for human, economic, and social life. Environmental degradation, in turn, affects human health, as demonstrated by the spread of malaria in the Amazon (see the contribution by H. Da Costa Gurgel and J.-M. Fotsing).

What generally distinguishes globalization in the Global South is the speed and intensity with which these changes are occurring, even though some of the processes described are at work in both the Global North and the Global South, albeit in different ways—notably the breakdown of wage relationships, the mobility of economic activities, the rise of market-based regulation, and decentralization. Through financing policies, countries in the Global South are burdened with debt and dependent on the decisions of the international organizations that provide them with funding. They are subject to an accelerated implementation of the principles of globalization. In this free-trade model, import-substitution industrialization—deemed inefficient and distortionary—is set aside in favor of primary sector activities, which are supposed to align with these countries' comparative advantages. At the 7th African Union-European Union Summit held in Luanda, Angola, on November 24 and 25, 2025, a harsh reality became clear. The entire world notes with regret that Europe continues to dump its toxic waste on the African continent. The figures cited and the toxic products dumped in Africa are beyond comprehension. Not even the UN acknowledges this fact. We are talking about 122,000 metric tons of obsolete pesticides in the European Union—substances deemed too toxic for European citizens—that are exported to Africa every year. The main countries responsible for these exports are Germany, Belgium, and Spain. Chemicals banned in Europe, such as glufosinate, mencozeb, atrazine, and chlorpyrifos, paradoxically end up being used elsewhere. While Europe protects its soil and the health of its people by banning the use of these substances on its territory, these same discarded products end up on other soils and continue to threaten health and the environment elsewhere in the world. This amounts to a transfer of hazards rather than a genuine elimination of risks. It is important to remember that these toxic substances contaminate the soil, water, air, and the human body. This behavior by European countries constitutes environmental violence, a crime against humanity, and the poisoning of the environment and human beings.

5 CONCLUSION

Globalization appears to be an ambivalent process, oscillating between bringing peoples closer together and widening inequalities. In pursuit of its goal, globalization works toward harmonization and unification among the nations of the world. Its impact on trade helps reduce local dependencies and prevent bilateral conflicts between neighboring countries. In doing so, it promotes convergence by facilitating economic, cultural, and technological exchanges on a global scale. It also enables a greater flow of ideas and innovations, contributing to the development of many societies. The apparent paradox, then, is that while globalization is often portrayed as heralding the end of distance in international relations, the changes in bilateral and multilateral dependencies it brings about actually lead to the exact opposite result. The impact of technology gives the current process of globalization a distinctive character compared to

similar episodes in the past. The natural barriers of time and space have been significantly amplified. However, not all peoples benefit equally from this dynamic. Certain regions and groups remain on the margins, excluded from the benefits of this global integration. Economic and social inequalities thus tend to intensify in many contexts. The dominance of certain cultures can lead to homogenization and a loss of cultural diversity. Unequal access to resources, education, and technology further exacerbates these disparities. Consequently, globalization highlights a profound imbalance between inclusion and exclusion. It is therefore essential to rethink its mechanisms in order to promote development that is more just, inclusive, and respectful of diversity. However, not all peoples benefit equally from this dynamic. Certain regions and groups remain on the margins, excluded from the benefits of this global integration. Economic and social inequalities thus tend to intensify in many contexts. The dominance of certain cultures can lead to homogenization and a loss of cultural diversity. Unequal access to resources, education, and technology further exacerbates these disparities. Consequently, globalization highlights a profound imbalance between inclusion and exclusion. It is therefore essential to rethink its mechanisms in order to promote development that is more just, inclusive, and respectful of diversity.

STATEMENTS ON COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

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