

## Globalization, dwindling state power, and the asymmetric forces challenge

Anweting Kevin Ibok<sup>\*1</sup>, Aniah Undie Paschal<sup>2</sup>

<sup>\*1</sup>Department of Philosophy, Veritas University, Abuja, Nigeria.  
<sup>\*</sup>e-mail: kevinanweting@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>Department of Philosophy, University of Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria.

### Abstract

The vast and yet growing body of literature on the subject of globalization and the state suggests a cause-effect relationship in which the former is the cause of the latter's declining power in the face of the credible challenge of asymmetrical forces. However, this paper takes a different stand that, far from being the cause, globalization is merely the environment, a historical stage, within which a third variable creates an HIV-like condition on the state and which has enabled opportunistic asymmetrical elements to contest with the state for power and space. We intend to demonstrate that the real culprit is an agglomeration of interests and movements espousing pseudo-liberal tendency that has undermined the capability of the state, and has evened the odds for the asymmetrical forces. We will identify the trends of this tendency and the methodology of their operation. This discussion takes place within the frameworks of classical liberalism and Thomas Ferguson's investment theory of party competition. This paper method is entirely analytical, relying on existing literature but putting the facts in their proper perspectives.

### Keywords:

Globalization; state power; liberalism; anarchic guild liberalism.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The general usage or conceptualization of globalization in much of the existing literature is indicative of confusion/disagreement and as a phenomenon. There is confusion in the sense that no standardized definition is attempted ostensibly because it is difficult to define (Gosh, 2013) and mainly resort is taken to working definitions and carefree usages. The usages, however, reveal a common trend of globalization as a phenomenon. Moreover, as a phenomenon, globalization is sought to be implicated in a cause-effect relationship with every turn of events in the world, from the hypertensive condition of any individual to the mass feeling of general anxiety; from the collapse of an individual business venture to the apparent and insipient degradation of the state as both symbol and embodiment of ultimate power. The fact of today's existence is that globalization impacts or reflects in all aspects of life and all known corners of the (civilized) world (Ikegbu & Bassey, 2019). There is no escaping globalization, no matter what we do – God, principalities and powers.

That the state – and its power – is impacted by globalization is beyond dispute; and, so are the asymmetrical forces that have continued to contest the physical and power space with the state. An overriding question is: what is the nature of this all-transforming entity/ phenomenon/ idea called globalization that, like the blackhole, nothing within its universe escapes being sucked into it; and how does that happen? Furthermore, how does the result of the foregoing query affect the relationship between globalization and the power distribution between the state and the asymmetrical forces in their age-old death struggle for space? In answering the preceding query, scholars have generally shown a pattern of thought that accepts an absolutist conception of globalization as a phenomenon of event or thing in a straight-line cause-effect relationship in which the decline in the power of the state is the function of globalization, and the consequent state of affairs that has led to the prevalence or incidence of the asymmetrical forces that challenge the security of the state (Karacasulu, 2006; Combs, 2006; Kay, 2004; Hartman, 2002).

This paper follows a reinterpretation of the relationship between globalization and the growing decline in the state capability for the exercise of sovereign power in the face of an equally growing insecurity from the challenge of asymmetrical elements. We intend to reinterpret the logic of the relationship among the variables involved by re-characterizing globalization as an environment – an epoch or age - in history and society, and not an event or phenomenon; identify the causative variable/factor of this decline of power (as what we might call anarchic guild liberalism, a kind of pseudo – or inverted liberalism); and demonstrate that both the state and its asymmetrical adversaries are merely opportunistic challengers or contenders; and finally, we shall recommend the avenues of probable state recovery of sovereign preeminence.

## 2 FRAMEWORK: THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

### 2.1 Theories: Liberalism, Investment Theory

#### 2.1.1 Liberalism

The origins of liberalism as a world view are traced to the philosophy of the Englishman John Locke, "as there were no liberals before Locke" (Mukherjee & Ramaswamy, 2011). His "concepts of constitutionalism, toleration, natural rights, limited consensual and law-based authority, pluralism and property had a significant impact in establishing and nurturing a liberal society in England, and inspiring similar traditions in America, France and Holland" (Mukherjee & Ramaswamy, 2011). Liberalism has been defined "as an idea committed to freedom as a method and policy in government, as an organizing principle in society, and a way of life for the individual and the community. In other words, it is the voice of

free life – a life in which freedom is maximized to the extent that the individual may think, believe, move, express, discuss, associate and so on” (Johari, 1996). As a movement, liberalism seeks individual freedom, human rights, political rights, economic rights and the rule of law; and as an environment or society, it is one in which there is “material prosperity, social peace and common enlightenment” (Johari, 1996). As a way of organizing society, liberalism takes democracy for granted. Moreover, liberal democracy means universal franchise, free and regular elections, free speech, and market economy or free enterprise.

However, the interpretation of what constitutes the liberal society has split the liberal movement into a house that has risen against itself – the conservative and the ‘liberal,’ pursuing ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ goals, and classified as classical and modern liberalism. The major difference, however, is that though both favors the necessity for some discipline on human action and need for law, the liberals favor law as merely general guidelines that allow lots of room for spontaneity and human ingenuity for future actions. Conversely, the conservatives prefer law as a detailed guide to action and control on the human tendencies for excessiveness. Between them, the conservatives dislike the liberals’ penchant for sudden social changes and revolutions, and would prefer any changes to be rather evolutionary; and, insistence on the strict adherence to the rule of law. Instead of the frequent amendment of rules of conduct, which might threaten existing power structure that is entrenched and working, the conservatives demand that existing rules be implemented (<https://www.msu.edu/user/hallc/gec/libuscom.01/04/2016>).

### 2.1.2 Investment theory of party competition

This theory was put forward by Thomas Ferguson in his book, *Golden Rule: The Investment Theory of Party Competition and the Logic of Money Driven Political Systems*, which represents an indictment of what now actually passes for the liberal democratic society and its electoral system. This theory identifies election as some enterprise, involving two kinds of investors: those major investors who invest their (big) money and the minor investors who only have their votes to invest. The political parties are merely blocs of major investors who gravitate to support the candidates who best represent their interests. Voters never get the chance to set the political policy agenda, as that is the turf/prerogative of the major investors, and the candidates who want to get financed must find out what that is and align themselves accordingly; and the electorate will only get to vote to choose from the candidates favored to run by the major investors. This is because (big) money is decisive. If you do not have it, your ideas cannot become a campaign. The contestants are not in it for charity or so-called public service, but again, and they lack the kind of substantial financing necessary for elections. Any reforms, electoral or other, would be that favored - or not disfavored - by the (interest of the) money class; and only more significant money can overthrow big money (Ferguson, 1995 cited by Tensor, 2013; Ferguson, 1995 cited by Munger, 1996).

## 2.2 Concepts: Anarchy and Guild

### 2.2.1 Anarchy

According to Prince Peter Kropotkin: anarchism is a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government, harmony in such society being obtained not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements conducted between various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs of aspirations of a civilized being (cited from Johari, 1996). Anarchism is opposed to both the state and religion because religion is static and opposed to progress, and the state is harmful to the development of the individual. Moreover, because every so-called necessity of the state can be done – better – by other spontaneous voluntary groups, then the state is but an obstructive and harmful superfluity. “Anarchism is for decentralization, territorial and functional” (Bhandari, 1997).

### 2.2.2 Guild

A guild is a group of professionals or merchants who control the practice of their trade or business over some geographical spread, deriving their power through a legal document (letter of the patent) that gives them a monopoly. This practice has its ancestry in the medieval period but became widespread in the 10th century, and thrived until the 18th-century rise of modern capitalism and democracy, and during which period the guilds acquired the reputation for obstructing development in trade and spread of technology and skills through their restrictive trade practices and closed membership system.

The guilds held firm, undemocratic, unaccountable power over the society through tight control over trade and commerce, knowledge and skills, and economy and finance. The class cajoled the society through patronage of the arts and philanthropy; blackmailed the monarchy/government through taxes and purchase of patents, undermined the development of democracy through the fostering of class structure; and obstructed development/progress by not allowing or encouraging competition in their line of trade, controlling entry into the practice of the profession and the acquisition of skills, and not allowing the dispersal of new technologies.

The relationship between the guilds and the society was that of exploitation and control, and towards the government, it was that of manipulation, enervation, and blackmail. They had absolute economic power which enabled them to undermine political power and neutralize any measures of social control that threatened their economic dominance. They were accountable to neither state nor society, but only within themselves – each member owed complete allegiance to his guild because it alone guaranteed him sustenance. Through patents and charters, they turned different sectors of the society and economy into monopolies and within them, they set up rigid hierarchies. This guaranteed the power of control and exploitation.

The development of the modern society - the rise of the Westphalian state system – took place, or was made possible only by the coincidence of the factors of the decline of the guild system and the rise of nationalism in Europe. The forces of the great monarchy (teaming up with the church) with the people’s support eroded the power of the guilds in the increasingly democratizing societies of Western Europe in the 18th Century ([www.britanica.com/topic/guild-trade-association](http://www.britanica.com/topic/guild-trade-association)).

### **3 METHODOLOGICAL CONCERN: PROBLEMS AND ARGUMENT**

#### **3.1 Problem Reiterated**

The central argument of this paper is that there is an error in the general conception of globalization in the bulk of existing literature on both the subject and consequently other phenomenon or subjects connected with it, one such case being the contemporary decline in the power of the state as shown in its inability to dispatch the challenge or threat from otherwise inferior contenders here, call asymmetrical forces or elements.

A methodological implication or problem resulting from this is that of the wrong diagnosis, as the wrong casualty is often made because all the relevant variables are not correctly identified and in their correct cause-effect relationships. The logical problems are as follows:

- An important variable (causal variable) is not identified or is missing in the lineup;
- A variable is wrongly identified and, so, wrongly implicated in a cause-effect relationship; and,
- Consequently, a wrong scenario is sought to be created and, thus, addressed in the diagnosis.

We, therefore, re-state or operationalize our problem accordingly:

- That, globalization is not the cause nor the effect of the decline in the sovereign power of the state: it is only the environment within which that has materialized;
- That, the actual cause of the decline in the sovereign capability of the state is the operation of the tendency of (pseudo-liberalism) or anarchic guild liberalism; and,
- That, the consequent HIV-like enervation of the state, has created opportunities for the asymmetrical elements to seek to increase their capability to contest for political space hitherto monopolized by the state.

#### **3.2 Our Argument: Globalization as epoch or environment**

A prime pillar of our contention is our conceptualization of globalization as not a phenomenon but a stage in the history of human civilization and thus as an environment in which events take place. Globalization is a stage in the continuum of human civilization embodying the cumulative effect of the scientific and material achievements reflecting, literally, a curvature of space and time both as an idea and reality of conception of life and living (Ogar, et al, 2019). In historical terms, it is an epoch because it produces a platform in which every event takes place and the prism in which events acquire their meaning. Its manifestation becomes clearer in comparative history, alongside earlier stages of human civilization as the Dark Ages, Medieval, Renaissance, Enlightenment, and Discovery, in which the most exceptional achievements of the human mind have coincided to produce an impact on living so much as to demarcate the present and past as different stages/ ages.

In scientific terms, it is a situ or environment within which events and things acquire classifications of dependent and independent variables in a cause-effect relationship (Bassey, 2019). This is not a denial of the inevitability of the environment’s impact on cause-effect relationships, but an acknowledgment that complete removal of the environmental impact is impossible and belongs only in laboratory science, not a hard science – and indeed, not the social sciences. Moreover, the equal-opportunity exposure of both the dependent and independent variables to this variable can be taken to nullify its role in their relationship (Akpan & Leonard, 2018).

The nature of globalization is evident in these characteristics/conditions are as follows:

- The geophysical space barrier disappears/no longer insurmountable obstacles to the human mind.
- Changes in the behavior of groups and individuals.
- Changes in government policies and the behavior of firms (Lewis, 2004).
- Phenomenal leap in “spread of knowledge, dispersion of advanced technologies, and the movements of people” (Davis, 2003).
- Expanding global economic interactions (Davis, 2003).
- Global reverberations of events and rapidity of developments.

Nature of Globalization Concept: In anthropological/psychological terms, globalization represents the operation of instinct in the man of curiosity and the desire to conquer and expand into space – physical, or virtual, employing all his abilities.

### **4 THIRD/INTERVENING VARIABLE: ANARCHIC GUILD LIBERALISM**

For want of a more appropriate name, we shall employ the three concepts earlier explicated to denote the intervening variable as anarchic guild liberalism. It combines in its character the negative qualities of the guilds, anarchism and liberalism, in an inverted form in the tendency that manifests in ideology, movement, state policy and group dynamics. This tendency we so identify shares common objective with anarchism in seeking the demise of the state by neutering its capability for (exercise of) sovereign power, and so bring it to the same level or status and capability as other associations in the society. Other rival institutions, which are at different but advanced stages of effected demise, are the family, the

church, and organized labor. The motive for this tendency, as shared in the objective and character of the guilds, is current profit and unhindered access to future profit, commercial success and the consequent economic – and, thus, political – power without the attendant responsibility.

To achieve this objective, liberal principles are sought to be drafted in as a ploy. Today's liberalism has taken the highroad of overweening individualism (atomism) by raising individual freedom to the position of both a god and its religion, which must be adhered to at all cost. According to Hayek, "individual freedom is the tremendous social artifact which, in trying to represent itself as nature alone, guarantees the myth of liberalism (<https://www.msu.edu/user/halk/gec/George/libuscor>, retrieved: 1/4/2016.) In this liberalism, the masses—the versus-class distinction between progressives/liberals and the conservatives and which was the hallmark of party politics in the US and Europe has ceased to be. The classes so loathed by William E. Gladstone in a speech in Liverpool in 1866 when he said "All the world over, I will back the masses against the classes", have blended the two political persuasions into one in obscurantism in the era of globalization of push class/guild interest of profit and the undermining of state power by chanting the mantra of individual freedom.

To understand this disappearance of the ideological divide in party politics, we bring in Ferguson's Investment theory of party competition. In a businesslike approach, the modern guilds have taken the democratic electoral process as a part of the broader economic sector where investment is called for, and in the process have taken it away from the mass-thing that democracy was thought to be. Only those candidates who can attract powerful financial support from the guilds can have the chance of becoming contenders. Therefore, all aspirants tailor their political conviction not to rock/shake the confidence of this class. Ferguson called this campaign cost condition (Ekwonna, 2014). Moreover, in the event of a wave of popularity that could propel a candidate to victory against the interest of the class, much more money is mobilized in support of rivals. If he still manages a victory, he is sought to be pigeon-holed by being 'minoritized' or marginalized in power, or turned out of power by all manner of subterfuge (Frank, 1975).

As a group, the political parties are so dependent on this financing that Ferguson aptly described the term as blocs of major investors. Even though they brandish the image of pursuing competing ideological persuasions, their actions would demonstrate that because of the principle of non-competition across investor blocks, "on all issues affecting the vital interest that the investors have in common, party competition will take place" (Ferguson, 1995:28, cited in Munger, 1996). This way, the masses never get the chance to set the agenda by telling the candidates what they want; instead they must choose from the manifestos/ candidates set before them. Moreover, when the candidates become officeholders, they have worries only about where the money for the next campaign would come from. The impact of big money interests in US elections is no longer a problem because it has defied all solutions: the politicians unite not to reform the system because that is what keeps them in power and the system working (Berman, 2016; Sanders, 2016; Brennan Center for Justice, n.d.: Money in Politics. <http://www.beannancentre.org/issues/money-politics>). This situation is poignantly captured by US senator (now presidential candidate in 2016) in 2015 when he said: "I think many people have the mistaken impression that Congress regulates Wall Street [location of the biggest financial capital in the world in Washington, USA]. The truth is that Wall Street regulates Congress." (<https://theintercept.com/2015/07/30/politicians-admitting-obvious-fact-money-affects-vote/>).

Anarchic guild liberalism, like any ideology or movement, has behind it, real people whose interests are served by the turn of events sought to be brought about, or protected by it. This tendency or ideology is best represented in the large transnational corporations, international business interests, in whose interest it is to eliminate or escape all controls by the state by undermining the sway and operation of the sovereign power of the state. Their overall conduct betrays a perception of the state as their only rival and obstacle and which must be defeated and be overcome.

The general strategy adopted by these guilds is to market themselves as special interests and adopting the following methods:

- Financing political parties and candidates' campaigns and direct 'lobbying' of people in positions of power and authority.
- Funding specific academic (scientific) research projects, and institutions.
- Setting up and funding think tanks and policy research organizations.
- Donating to specific humanitarian causes like the Red Cross, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, etc.
- Funding special interest groups.
- Setting, and controlling news agencies and networks.
- Promoting by investing in certain businesses while ignoring or suppressing others, using one monopoly to create another monopoly.

## 5 LOSS OF STATE POWER IN GLOBALIZED ENVIRONMENT

With the capture of one big state's political process (especially the case of the USA) through the colonization of its politics by the guilds of special interests, the policies and other outputs of its political system are used to pressure other states to make concessions to the apparent demands of the state which are the specific business interests of the guilds. One state after another and all states are caught in the global web, as the unique guilds which hope to benefit from the accession to such foreign penetration of their state collaborate to pressure their own "purchased" politicians in government to capitulate.

Remember that the members of the guilds by way of their economic power are better placed to capture and maximize (privatize) the benefits and conveniences of the ideas and technologies driving globalization. In specific ways, the loss of state power occurs through some of these signposts in government policies:

- End of fixed exchange rates and associated abolition of capital controls: this makes global finance guilds all the more powerful as they can inflict damage, or show confidence (support), by merely shifting in or out of economies and sectors (Buttonwood, 2016).
- The integration of global economies means that each state's electorate is affected by matters far beyond their borders and their capabilities to control. Even a political leadership determined to do something would find its policies ineffectual.
- Decline/demise of trade unionism. The power of the organized labor in the West was eradicated by off-shoring industrial manufacture to weaker states with zero tolerance for organizations, dissent and dissidence and equally desperate for the investment.
- Governments' loss of control of information as the government's propaganda media can hardly approach the speed, reach and sophistication of the private sector owned networks, including the internet.
- Control intellect power through syndicated think-tanks and research institutes on policy, like the Rand Corporation, Mitsubishi Corporation, the Trilateral Commission, Foreign Policy Council (USA). Their analyses of policies and policy suggestions/recommendations carry a lot of weight with government policymakers.
- Privatization of defense R and D, production and supply, makes the state just one of the customers standing at the retail counters of Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, General Dynamics, United Technologies Corporation, etc. Rival states and asymmetrical elements are waiting to pay better money.
- The continued shrinking of the states' defense budgets means, their armies are often underequipped in increasingly tasking circumstances.
- Increasing sovereign debt has resulted in the states having currencies but not a penny of their own.
- Interfering activities of politicized non-governmental transnational organizations: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch etc. espousing blatantly anarchic principles that endanger the security of the state and its citizens.

## 6 CHALLENGE OF ASYMMETRICAL FORCES

In the globalized scenario, where the state has been so weakened, rift with internal colonialism by special interests, with increasing expectations from its masses, the greatest threat it faces are not from other states (they face similar conditions) but from asymmetrical elements like terrorists, international organized crime units, separatist groups, etc. These entities are in themselves compact groups because, necessarily, they are better organized, more efficiently manage their own power resources, have not been penetrated by these guilds and now sense opportunity for power at the expense of the state.

## 7 PROBABLE SOVEREIGN RESTORATION

The state cannot win fighting two wars against the insurrectional anarchic guild liberals, and the attacks from the asymmetrical elements, and expect a good performance. It must put down the insurrection at 'home' reclaim its heritage as a sovereign.

- Popular reclaim of sovereign power through mass action or nationalist coup d'état.
- Nationalization, on an international corporative action of states, of assets, businesses, and activities.
- Mass conscription and mobilization of all eligible people into the army and quartering them so. Dodgers are declared public enemies, to be shot on the capture of set sight.
- A complete black-out of free flow information over five years, while military action is conducted against all insurgencies.

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