

Internationalism: Some problems of interpretation

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Aims/objectives

- Revise dot points
- Problems of definition
- Issues of Western bias and perspective
- Outline some significant issues
 - (i) Relationship between Globalisation and Internationalism
 - (ii) Internationalism the State and Sovereignty

The Dot Points

(the dreaded dot points re G and Internationalism)

- Key ideas and meanings associated with Globalisation and Internationalism
- Key organisations UN, World Bank, WTO, IMF
- Influence of G & I on global issues – international trade, environment, human rights and refugees, technology communication and politics
- Influence of G and I on role of state and concept of sovereignty

Definitions of Internationalism

1. **Formal Internationalism** – any international governmental agreement
2. **Ethical, Ameliorative or Altruistic internationalism**
 - international agreements to mitigate or minimise global problems
 - the motive of attempting to improve the quality of human life

Definition 1. Formal Internationalism

- The more obvious and non-problematic meaning
 - Includes
 - (i) any/every international agreement a state enters into
 - (ii) all organisations joined
- (Eg the EU – used by the resource book)
- Would include NATO, ANZUS, APEC, OPEC etc
 - Huge range of agreements and bodies
 - Not a helpful definition

Definition 2: Ethical or Ameliorative Internationalism

- The more consensus view - my preferred definition (despite the resource book)
- Covers efforts to solve or mitigate the effects of global problems
- a form of **idealism**
- Assumes global problems so large that -
 - unilateral or even bilateral action is ineffective one state can't achieve much
 - extensive multilateral action is required

UN Preamble: We the peoples of the UN Determined

- to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
- to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
- to establish conditions under which **justice** and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
- to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,
- AND FOR THESE ENDS
- to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and
- to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and
- to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and
- to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

Components of Internationalism

- (i) cooperation – voluntary, or willing engagement
- (ii) between states, international agencies and NGOs
- (iii) Largely altruistic global citizenship – a form of extended global humanism – responding to the underling interconnectedness of humanity
- (iv) the existence of global problems

What are the global problems? -a partial list

- (i) Global poverty economic development**
 - (ii) World health**
 - (iii) Environment**
 - (iv) Weapons of Mass Destruction**
 - (v) Social problems**
 - (vi) Human Rights**
- 


(i) Global Poverty & Development

- Self explanatory
- Attempt to address global imbalance in
 - wealth
 - health
 - quality of life

Perhaps the biggest ethical and political issue of the age.

Note the consensus assumption that economic development (along western neo-liberal lines – free market capitalism) is the answer.

(ii) World health

- HIV/AIDs,
 - Pandemics - SARS, Avian 'flu, Swine 'flu
 - Infectious diseases- Tuberculosis, smallpox, etc
 - Diseases linked to poverty and development
- 

(iii) Environment

- Improving the global environment
- prevent global warming,
- encouraging biodiversity,
- sustainability,
- preventing deforestation, salinity and desertification

(iv) Weapons of Mass Destruction

Controlling the spread of, and if possible
eliminating, WMD

- nuclear,
- chemical,
- biological

Plus - landmines

- terrorist attacks

Both are indiscriminate attacks on civilians often
on a mass scale

Landmines: the Ottawa Treaty

- 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction
- states agree not to use, develop, manufacture, stockpile or trade in anti-personnel land mines
- signed by 158 States (2007) – non signers include Russia, China, Israel, Pakistan , India, US

(v) Social problems

Eliminating or controlling the spread of

- Piracy
- Slavery – including sex slavery
- International crime
- Arms trafficking ('gun running')
- Narcotics trafficking

(vi) Human Rights

- **Eliminating torture,**
- **encouraging judicial rights** - fair trials, due process, independent judiciary, trial by jury
- **encouraging social rights-** no discrimination, equality of opportunity
- **encouraging democratic political rights** - right to vote in fair and frequent elections

Two difficulties of ethical or ameliorative Internationalism

1. Is it purely altruistic?
2. Is it universal or relative –a product of Western ideology?

1. Not purely altruistic

The dominant motive often seems to be concern for human welfare – **altruism**

But there is often a strong **national self interest component**

National Self interest and Internationalism

- It's better to solve or mitigate problems before they impact on your own state – Internationalism is sensible rational politics not necessarily idealism
- Obvious examples
 - health - international pandemics, AIDs
 - WMD – the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological examples
 - environment
 - social issues – narcotics trafficking

Problem of universal human goals

Is ethical internationalism just another form of western dominance?

Possibly! Are human rights universal?

Some are ? – elimination of torture for example

But others depend on western liberal assumptions of **autonomous individualism**

Autonomous individualism

Western liberal view – individuals (last 300 year) are

- (i) the primary ethical category (not communities or states)
- (ii) Take responsibility for themselves , independent of undue coercion or influence of others (autonomous)

But not all cultures share this view

- * Confucian (Asian) cultures – social rights or family rights may be greater than individual rights
- * Islamic cultures – individualism less prized;
not all equal- individual rights may be subordinate to religion; women's rights more limited

Whose culture is correct?

Example – US intervention in Somalia

- Intention to encourage democracy interpreted as an attack on Islamic values
- One result was encouragement of Islamism - attempt to maintain own culture and minimise cultural influence of western liberalism

Internationalism and Globalisation

How are they related?

A range of answers

(i) both global – interconnectedness

(ii) both can involve reduction of State sovereignty – but critically for different reasons and in different ways

(iii) More important relationship – both are heavily reliant on non-state actors – international agencies and NGOs

Relationship of G and I

(continued)

(iv) Some international agencies are fundamental to both:

World Bank – significant role in I

IMF? - internationalism more suspect

WTO ? - internationalism more suspect

UN ? – role in globalisation more suspect, but clearly the major internationalist clearing house

Significance of UN & Internationalism in

(i) Principles – Preamble and Charter

(ii) Role of Security Council

(iii) Agencies

UNICEF Children's rights, survival, development and protection

UNESCO Education, Scientific and Cultural organisation encourages international peace and universal respect

UNHCR Refugee agency

FAO Food and Agricultural Organisation raising levels of nutrition, standard of living and agricultural productivity

UNEP Environment promoting environmental awareness, including public knowledge of environmental issues

UNAIDS Inter-agency project and fight against HIV/AIDs

UNDP Development programme to eliminate poverty and environmental regeneration

UNVVolunteers

WHO World Health Organisation

(iv) Support for International Agents – IMF, World Bank, WTO

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Relationship of G and I

(continued)

(v) Fundamental conceptual question – are they opposed or complementary?

Opposed – some argue Internationalism is dealing with the problems caused by globalisation –

G causes international poverty, environmental degradation ??; I tries to solve these problems

Complementary – they work together – best solution to world poverty is economic development based on free market?

Internationalism the state and sovereignty

- Ambiguous relationship to the state
- (i) Internationalism often **enhances** state sovereignty – it improves state capacity to control events within its borders

Obvious egs. Prevent arms, and narcotics imports

- (ii) But there can be a **reduction** of sovereignty – International Criminal Court? Reason for the US reluctance (and Aust.) to participate