

Research Article

Reflections for New Inclusivity and Course Correction in Global Governance Mechanisms: Understanding Significance of Global South Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

The concepts of Global North and Global South are closely tied to issues of development and growth within international political economy, while also serving as pivotal elements in the understanding of capitalism in interstate relations. Nations such as India, South Africa, and Brazil provide crucial case studies for comprehending the dual facets of the Global South's ascendancy and the need to address deficiencies in global governance. Mechanisms of global governance, spanning from globalization to the roles played by multinational corporations, have consistently been subjects of debate. They have presented new opportunities, but the shortcomings resulting from their implementation cannot be overlooked. While they have fostered growth, they have also engendered ecological imbalances, climate change, biodiversity loss, and disparities in technological advancements, thus perpetuating a sense of misplaced priorities that disproportionately benefit select nations. This paper seeks to emphasize the importance of recognizing the concerns of the Global South, particularly from the perspective of countries like India. It underscores the necessity for reform and a course correction in global governance, with insights from the Global South, to bring about a more equitable and balanced international political economy. The paper is organized into three sections. Part I delves into an exhaustive exploration of the meanings and distinctions between the terms Global North and Global South, while delving into the historical backdrop behind their emergence. Part II sheds light on the evolving discourse of governance and its impact on the Global

South, with a specific focus on the increasing influence wielded by these nations in comparison to their Global North counterparts. This chapter examines whether this augmented influence of the Global South is advantageous or not. The central theme of this section revolves around India's role in the evolving governance discourse, with an extensive discussion on how India has shouldered global responsibilities. The final section highlights the obstacles faced in establishing equitable platforms for all nations and offers a forward-looking perspective for these developing nations.

Keywords: Globalization, Global south, Global Governance, Indic perspective

INTRODUCTION

The distinctions between the Global North and Global South are rooted in economic, social, and political differences, echoing historical disparities tied to the dependency theory. This theory, which revolves around colonial relationships, accentuated how colonized regions often languished under the power of colonizers. This division paints a picture of two disparate worlds, but, in reality, they are interdependent and share common norms and interests. Global North and Global South are not homogenous labels, each carrying intricate nuances stemming from their unique historical, cultural, and traditional backgrounds.

During the 20th century, the Global North was typically seen as superior across these domains, characterized by technologically advanced, infrastructurally developed, and industrialized nations. In contrast, the Global South was marked by its dense populations, resource scarcity, and lower incomes, often heavily reliant on agriculture and raw material exports. Up until the 1960s, economically advanced nations, notably the United States, the USSR, and the European Union, dominated the world stage. Willy Brandt's Brandt Report, which divided the world into North and South, visually represented this disparity.

However, the advent of globalization reshaped the course of history, becoming a guiding principle in world history and economics. While liberal ideals existed prior to globalization, it is this era that emphasized individual freedoms and minimized state intervention. The term "Global South" was coined by Carl Oglesby in 1969. Today, development is not exclusive to the Western Global North; in the 21st century, Global South, comprising developing countries, plays a pivotal role in shaping a better future for the world. For centuries, the Global North dominated economically, politically, and culturally. However, recent decades have witnessed a challenge to this dominance with the rise of South-South cooperation and regionalization. This collaboration began during the Cold War, marked by the adoption of the idea of Non-alignment by many newly

independent Global South nations at the Bandung Conference in 1955. This conference laid the foundation for “South-South Cooperation,” a movement emphasizing reciprocal self-reliance and mutual assistance among developing countries.

The economic development in the Global South, coupled with a growing recognition of the rich cultures and traditions within these nations, has blurred the lines between the North and South. Historically Global South countries like Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea have invested in education and technology, advancing their economies to developed nation status. International organizations like the United Nations and various NGOs have integrated the world into a global community, confronting common issues such as poverty, malnutrition, hunger, and terrorism. Digitalization and changes in the knowledge economy have accelerated progress in the Global South, offering opportunities for rapid advancement. The 2009 United Nations Conference in Nairobi affirmed South-South cooperation as the new global norm and the way forward.

Scholars and experts have highlighted the importance of this shift. Stephen Cohen emphasized India’s commitment to decolonization, anti-imperialism, and non-alignment as key factors in its post-Cold War progress. Susanne Soederberg critically examined the term “global governance” and its linkage to global economic governance. Andrew Cooper shed light on the shifting balance of power in the 21st century, emphasizing that international governance necessitates the cooperation of Global South countries like Brazil, China, India, and ASEAN members. Hardeep Singh Puri pointed out the economic growth resulting from increased South-South cooperation and its impact on the global economy. Reports from organizations like the OECD underscored the shift in global growth towards emerging economies like India, China, and Brazil, fueled by social policy innovation and the tapping of global markets.

Justin Dargin highlighted the growing influence of the Global South on international affairs, stemming from initiatives like the New International Economic Order promoted by the United Nations General Assembly. Abu Bhuiyan addressed the challenges posed by the digital divide and the need for norms to control digital platforms to foster equal partnerships in global governance. Haroon Khan emphasized that good governance is pivotal for human development, as it determines a country’s social and economic progress. Yolanda Kemp Spies delved into the evolving dynamics of power politics involving both state and non-state actors, illustrating how traditional diplomacy has transformed. Stephanie Barrientos underscored the control of the Global North over multinational companies, profiting by extracting resources from the Global South at lower rates, but acknowledged the growth of global value chains, expanding consumer goods markets across developing nations.

GLOBAL SOUTH AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

The discourse surrounding governance is a far more intricate matter than it may initially appear. For decades, discussions on governance have been primarily steered by developed nations. The very definition of ‘governance’ and its various aspects have often been left to the discretion of these developed nations. Governance denotes a novel process of governing that encourages creative thinking involving a multitude of actors (ranging from the state, market, to civil society) and operates at various levels, from local to global, addressing global issues (Rhodes, 1996). Governance transcends national borders and is influenced by numerous actors. It encompasses systems of rule across all domains of human activity, from the familial to international organizations, where goal pursuit through control exercises transnational influence (Rosenau, 1995).

While we emphasize the importance of achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (2000) and The Sustainable Development Goals (2015) to reduce inequalities, eradicate poverty, and attain peace and prosperity, we often overlook a crucial factor—governance. Here, governance broadly refers to the structures, processes, and systems that define decision-making, interactions among stakeholders, and the exercise of functions and powers through a country’s economic, social, and political institutions (Liu, 2022). The most significant obstacle in this governance paradigm is that it has long been dominated by Western ideologies. This dominance has been reinforced by the perception that the transnational transfer of knowledge flows primarily in one direction, from the developed North to the developing South, under the assumption that Western countries possess superior knowledge, technology, and expertise (Lee, 2022).

The end of the Cold War introduced a multitude of non-state actors into the mainstream, greatly impacting global governance and its power dynamics. This shift has ushered in a wave of change in the interests, power networks, and ideologies.

These changes have significantly transformed the developing nations in recent decades. These nations no longer wish to be mere spectators but seek an active role in all facets of governance. This shift has brought about a substantial power redistribution in global governance. While understanding the division between the Global North and Global South remains essential, it is even more critical to recognize how developing nations are actively reshaping the realm of governance. These third world nations, home to over 70 percent of the world’s population, have become global voices and their opinions hold tremendous weight, given their substantial stake in the future. As a result, they have gained a pivotal role in shaping global policies and practices in recent years.

The progress of developing countries is largely attributed to globalization, which has forged interconnections and deepened ties between nations. To comprehend Global Politics, we must meticulously scrutinize every facet of globalization. The number of stakeholders in policymaking has grown significantly. What sets these countries apart is their commitment to principles of equal resource distribution and income equality. Their governance policy is geared toward creating an international landscape based on the values of human dignity, equality, liberty, and fraternity while respecting the sovereignty of other nations. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi puts it, developing countries advocate learning from each other's developmental experiences through a consultative, outcome-oriented, demand-driven, and people-centric approach. This can only occur when the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities is acknowledged by all nations, while respecting international law and reforming international institutions.

Even developed countries have begun to recognize the importance of developing nations in shaping the future. India's presidency of the G20 is a prime example.

Developing countries have become active participants in global policymaking. Today's issues extend beyond individual nations, spanning matters such as migration, terrorism, and climate change. No nation, regardless of its strength, can independently address these issues. Solving these challenges requires the active involvement of multiple nations, and international cooperation must be more open and participatory. This shift has significantly elevated the role of the Global South. What is commendable is that these developing nations have heavily relied on knowledge-based growth. Human capital is of utmost importance.

This knowledge-focused approach has yielded positive cross-sectoral impacts on human development indicators, competitiveness, and economic performance (Beleboni, 2019). Sharing knowledge among these nations has enabled them to tackle emerging challenges uniquely. The efficacy of this approach is evident, with the trading capacity of both material and human capital doubling between 2004 and 2011. As of 2021, the Global South contributed to half of the world's economic growth, despite challenges imposed by the pandemic. In many instances, countries like China and India have outperformed several Western economies. Their development progress offers a reliable alternative to the Western model of modernization and industrialization. Regional blocs like BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) now hold significant importance in decision-making and regional trade worldwide.

India plays a pivotal role in this power transition. Without seeking validation from other powerful nations, India is reshaping the discourse of diplomacy as one of the strongest

Asian countries. Since independence, India has actively participated in major international negotiations. India's role in shaping the post-Cold War international order cannot be overlooked. It has consistently challenged decisions made by established countries that have sought to dominate India and other developing nations. By rejecting mainstream Westernized ideas, India has consistently championed alternatives suitable for third-world nations. Whether opposing the GATT's Uruguay Round, launching its own economic liberalization program in 1991, or conducting nuclear tests in 1998 despite opposition from the West, India has set a model that respects national sovereignty and promotes harmony among developing countries. Stephen Cohen aptly encapsulates this, "Western diplomats were for many years put off by India's flexible non-alignment, which, for a time, was a pretext for a close relationship with the Soviet Union. They were also irritated by the style of Indian diplomats. While professional and competent, they seemed compelled to lecture their British or American counterparts on the evils of the Cold War, the moral superiority of India's policies, or the greatness of its civilization" (Cohen, 2001). In short, India's governance adheres to its own terms and conditions, resisting conformity for conformity's sake.

India is now crafting foreign policies that align with its national needs. India's stance on the Ukraine-Russia war is a prime example. It views issues and takes stands through the lens of developing countries that have suffered from years of economic inequalities. India, along with other countries of the Global South, is actively participating in global governance, promoting harmony between national and international interests. In its quest to lead the world, India adheres to its foundational ideals of democracy, transparency, and accountability. India has assumed global responsibilities, fulfilling its primary needs: development and growth. India is no longer entirely dependent on other countries for essential items. Initiatives like 'Make in India' and 'Digital India' have sparked revolutionary changes. India has transitioned from a consumer to a producer, largely responsible for the increased presence and role of India and other developing countries on the world economic stage. India is now at the forefront of promoting green growth and enhancing connectivity, becoming a growth engine for the world.

India's status as a global power is increasingly recognized, with New Delhi assuming greater responsibility in addressing global challenges and establishing itself as both a stakeholder and shareholder in the global governance system (2014). India's role has been further magnified due to global challenges such as climate change, terrorism, pandemics, natural disasters, energy crises, and more. India's commitment to finding solutions to these problems is commendable, and it is widely accepted that maintaining global peace necessitates India accepting greater global responsibility. The global

governance agenda needs to be formulated by India. India has achieved this by grounding its governance in the twin pillars of modernization and history.

However, this development has come at a significant cost. The relentless pursuit of maximum profits through international trade, at breakneck speed, has taken a toll on the environment, impacting both the Global North and Global South. Climate change exacerbates poverty, property and infrastructure destruction, reduced crop yields, community displacement, and loss of lives (Bandera, 2022). Both blocs tend to blame each other for the increasing carbon emissions. Today, the Global South is responsible for over 63 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. Each bloc accuses the other of being responsible for global warming and attempts to shift responsibility to the other. None are eager to reduce their emissions, as it would hinder industrialization and economic growth. It is crucial to recognize that countries categorized as the Global South seldom perceive themselves as having common objectives in international climate negotiations, nor do they act as a collective group (Fuhr, 2021). The bulk of 21st-century urbanization is occurring in Global South countries, leading to unprecedented floods, droughts, soaring temperatures, and increased pollution. Most of these nations, including India and China, consider themselves victims of the powerful developed countries' hypocrisy. Continents like Africa, contributing less than 3 percent of emissions, continue to suffer the most from climate change. Developing countries bear the brunt of this climate crisis. Unfortunately, despite ongoing debates, climate change continues to worsen, and no comprehensive policy has been formulated to address it to date.

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