



PROJECT MUSE®

---

## Fairness, Globalization, and Public Institutions

Dator, Jim

Published by University of Hawai'i Press

Dator, Jim.

Fairness, Globalization, and Public Institutions: East Asia and Beyond.

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.

Project MUSE., <https://muse.jhu.edu/>.



➔ For additional information about this book

<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/64094>

# Fairness and Globalization

JAMES ROSENAU

Order and fragmentation have always been integral features of world affairs, but due to technological developments that have shrunk time and distance, today they are considerably more interactive than ever before. The tempo of global life within and among countries has accelerated to the point where it is plausible to assert that each increment of order gives rise to an increment of fragmentation, and vice versa. So as to stress and capture the extent of this interaction, I have long argued that its centrality to the course of events justifies a special label, one that highlights the ways in which the tensions between order and fragmentation are inextricably linked to each other. My label for this linkage is “framegration,” a term that derives in part from fragmentation and in part from integration and that has the virtue, despite its grating and contrived nature, of capturing in a single word these contrary tendencies and thus serving as a reminder of how closely they are interwoven. Indeed, I would argue that the best way to grasp global life today is to view it through framegrative lenses, to treat every circumstance and every process as an instance of framegrative dynamics.<sup>1</sup>

To appreciate the underpinnings of globalization, therefore, it is important to recognize that both order and fragmentation are loaded with values, that one person's order is another's disorder and that what is fragmentation for some is coherence for others. Both order and fragmentation, in other words, can be desirable or undesirable, depending on the value perspective through which they are assessed. Put more specifically, order can suggest group or societal arrangements that enhance fairness, allowing diverse groups to prosper and participate freely in how issues are handled; or it can connote a deadly stagnation and tyrannical hierarchy that denies justice and sustains unfairness for those encompassed by the issues. Likewise, fragmentation can highlight the breakdown of coherence and the onset of chaos; or it can point to a pluralism that affords opportunities for various groups to pursue their goals. Table 6.1 depicts four different societal conditions and political forms that may prevail when the value dimensions of

**Table 6.1** Desirable and Undesirable Order and Fragmentation

	ORDER	FRAGMENTATION
<i>Desirable</i>	Centralized Democracy	Decentralized Pluralism
<i>Undesirable</i>	Tyranny	Chaos

order and fragmentation are taken into consideration. Viewed from the perspective of fairness, two of these conditions, centralized democracy and decentralized pluralism, have the potential of expanding the degree to which globalizing dynamics promote fairness for people, while the other two, tyranny and chaos, are likely to foster a wide range of inequities that deprive many of their material and spiritual needs.

It follows that while our inquiries into the equities and inequities inherent in globalization must in good part be founded on empirical assessments, they are equally rooted in our temperaments, our inclinations toward optimistic or pessimistic conceptions of the human condition. It is a mistake, I think, to resort to our professional training and treat questions about fairness as simply a matter of gathering data and sifting them for evidence. Inevitably our assessments are rooted in coherent values schemes or uncoordinated impressions as well as in systematic data and cogent analysis. In an intensely fragmentative era, empirical materials cannot alone yield an adequate understanding of where globalization is taking humankind. Perforce we must engage in nuanced inquiry even as we acknowledge our underlying impulses and intuitive feelings. We must also recognize that all the sources from which globalizing processes spring can lead both to greater fairness and greater injustice.

### Major Sources of Fragmentation

Implicit in the foregoing is a strategy of inquiry for assessing how fairness and justice may be affected as the fragmentative epoch unfolds and becomes increasingly institutionalized. The strategy calls for clarity on the prime sources of fragmentation in the present era and an analysis of how these sources might be operative through micro-macro processes. Table 6.2 seeks to summarize these two analytic steps by listing in the rows eight major sources that underlie fragmentation throughout the world, while the columns encompass the micro, macro, micro-macro, and macro-macro levels of aggregation.<sup>2</sup> The entries in the cells of table 6.2 are crude and untested hypotheses intended to suggest how each source might shape attitudes or actions at each level. Inferentially they also point to ways in which fairness or unfairness may be affected at each level of aggregation.

Table 6.2 Eight Sources of Globalization at Four Levels of Aggregation

SOURCES OF GLOBALIZATION	LEVELS OF AGGREGATION			
	MICRO	MACRO	MICRO-MACRO	MACRO-MACRO
<i>Microelectronic Technologies</i>	Enable like-minded people to be in touch with each other anywhere in the world	Render collectivities more open, connected, and vulnerable; empower them to mobilize support	Constrain governments by enabling opposition groups to mobilize more effectively	Accelerate diplomatic processes; facilitate electronic surveillance and intelligence work
<i>Skill Revolution</i>	Expands people's horizons on a global scale; sensitizes them to the relevance of distant events; facilitates a reversion to local concerns	Enlarges the capacity of governmental agencies to think "out of the box," seize opportunities, and analyze challenges	Constrains policy making through increased capacity of individuals to know when, where, and how to engage in collective action	Multiplies quantity and enhances quality of links among states; solidifies their alliances and enmities
<i>Organizational Explosion</i>	Facilitates multiple identities, subgroupism, and affiliation with transnational networks	Increases capacity of opposition groups to form and press for altered policies; divides publics from their elites	Contributes to the pluralism and dispersion of authority; heightens the probability of authority crises	Renders the global stage ever more transnational and dense with non-governmental actors
<i>Mobility Upheaval</i>	Stimulates imaginations and provides more extensive contacts with foreign cultures; heightens salience of the outsider	Enlarges the size and relevance of <i>subcultures</i> , diasporas, and ethnic conflicts as people seek new opportunities abroad	Increases movement across borders that lessens capacity of governments to control national boundaries	Heightens need for international cooperation to control the flow of drugs, money, immigrants, and terrorists

Table 6.2 continued

SOURCES OF GLOBALIZATION	LEVELS OF AGGREGATION		
	MICRO	MACRO	MICRO-MACRO
<i>Bifurcation of Global Structures</i>	Adds to role conflicts, divides loyalties, and fosters tensions among individuals; orients people toward local spheres of authority	Facilitates formation of new spheres of authority and consolidation of existing spheres in the multicentric world	Empowers transnational advocacy groups and special interests to pursue influence through diverse channels
<i>Weakening of Territoriality, States, and Sovereignty</i>	Undermines traditions and national loyalties; increases distrust of governments and other institutions	Adds to the porosity of national boundaries and the difficulty of framing national policies	Lessens confidence in governments; renders nationwide consensus difficult to achieve and maintain
<i>Authority Crises</i>	Redirect loyalties; encourage individuals to replace traditional criteria of legitimacy with performance criteria	Weaken ability of both governments and other organizations to frame and implement policies	Facilitate the capacity of publics to press and/or paralyze their governments, the WTO, and other organizations
<i>Globalization of National Economies</i>	Swells ranks of consumers; promotes uniform tastes; heightens concerns for jobs; widens gap between winners and losers	Complicates tasks of state governments vis-à-vis markets; promotes business alliances	Intensifies trade and investment conflicts; generates incentives for building global financial institutions

## Microelectronic technologies

While it is important to avoid deterministic interpretations of the surge of information technologies, they are surely central to the emergent epoch. They serve to undermine time and distance, thereby rendering developments that enhance or set back fairness anywhere as potentially integral features of life everywhere else in the world.

The data are stunning that depict the ways in which a variety of communications technologies (from the fax machine to the fiber optic cable, from the cellular phone to the orbiting satellite, from television to the Internet) continue to shrink the world and reduce the relevance of geographic boundaries. Today there are more than one billion telephones in active use throughout the world, and the number is just as great for mobile phones, of which there were less than a million in 1985.<sup>3</sup> In 1964 there was one TV set for every twenty persons, whereas in 1999 there was one for every four. More than two hundred functioning satellites orbit Earth, each capable of carrying tens of thousands of calls and numerous TV signals at once. The number of Internet hosts, or networked computers, grew more than sixfold between 1995 and 1999.<sup>4</sup> Stated even more dramatically, the number of computers linked to the Internet grew from two hundred in 1981 to more than fifty million in 1999.<sup>5</sup> More than 1.4 billion e-mail messages are estimated to cross national boundaries every day.<sup>6</sup> It is presumed that the Internet is growing by one million Web pages a day.<sup>7</sup> At the end of 2001 the number of persons online throughout the world was 505 million, of which roughly 43 percent used English, 32 percent used a European language, and 25 percent used an Asian language; by 2003 the number of persons online had grown to 793 million.<sup>8</sup> A historical perspective provides an even more impressive picture of the Internet's ubiquitous growth: it took the telephone forty years to reach its first ten million customers, the fax machine roughly twenty years, personal computers about ten years, and e-mail little more than one year.<sup>9</sup>

Quite possibly, moreover, these dynamics are poised for another step-level leap forward with the advent of new computer technologies, which include the prospect of a computer chip ten billion (repeat, ten billion) times faster than those available today.<sup>10</sup> Future generations might look back to the early twenty-first century and the widening scope of the Internet as the historical starting point for a new phase of modern globalization. As indicated by the hypotheses in the cells of table 6.2, it is not difficult to extrapolate from these data the conclusion that increasingly people have close encounters with foreign cultures through global networks.<sup>11</sup>

## The skill revolution

Taken together, the several dimensions of the skill revolution are pivotal to all the other sources of fragmegrative dynamics noted below. The data descrip-

tive of enlarged skills are hardly voluminous and many are anecdotal, but those that have been systematically collected all point in the same direction:<sup>12</sup> the skill revolution enables people to trace more readily the course of distant events back into their own homes, to know more precisely what they favor and oppose as situations unfold, to imagine more fully other cultures, to appreciate more explicitly the possibility that the identity and bases of their citizenship may be changing, to know more clearly the ways in which they may be treated unfairly, and to engage more effectively in collective action. Of course, the working knowledge of people has expanded at different rates, depending on the salience of their life experiences as well as the varying sources, amounts, and types of information and education they receive. To posit a worldwide skill revolution is not to say that everywhere people are becoming equally skillful, but it is a safe wager that the complexities of ever-greater numbers of urban communities are giving people a robust and ever-growing working knowledge of how the world works in the twenty-first century.

### Citizen organizations

Hardly less so than the population explosion, recent years have witnessed a veritable explosion in the number of voluntary associations that have crowded onto the global stage. In all parts of the world and at every level of community, people (ordinary folk as well as elites and activists) are coming together to concert their efforts on behalf of shared needs and goals. (See James Rosenau's *Further Thoughts, "Election Monitoring in Paraguay: A Personal Story of Globalization and Public Institutions,"* on page 72.) Exact statistics on the extent of this pattern do not exist (largely because so much of it occurs at local levels and goes unreported), but few would argue with the proposition that the pace at which new associations are formed and old ones enlarged is enormous, so much so that to call it an explosion is almost to understate the scale of growth.<sup>13</sup> It has been calculated, for example, that registered nonprofit organizations in the Philippines grew from 18,000 to 58,000 between 1989 and 1996; in Slovakia the figure went from a handful in the 1980s to more than 10,000 in 1999.<sup>14</sup> By one estimate, "there are now two million [nongovernmental organizations] in America alone. . . . In Russia, where almost none existed before the fall of the Soviet Union, there are at least 65,000. Dozens are created daily; in Kenya alone, some 240 NGOs are now created every year."<sup>15</sup>

The importance of networks can hardly be overstated.

The rise of network forms of organization (particularly "all channel networks," in which every node can communicate with every other node) is one of the single most important effects of the information revolution for all realms: political, economic, social, and military. It means that power is migrating to small, nonstate actors who can organize into sprawling networks more readily than

can traditionally hierarchical nation-state actors. It means that conflicts will increasingly be waged by “networks,” rather than by “hierarchies.” It means that whoever masters the network form stands to gain major advantages in the new epoch.<sup>16</sup>

In sum, the proliferation of organizational networks contributes to bridging the gap between people at the micro level and their collectivities at the macro level. It offers a vast array of routes through which individuals can move into the political arena. It also serves to sustain the dynamics of de-territorialization and the spread of the skill revolution. If hierarchically structured states still dominated the course of events and were thereby able to contain and control the vibrant spread of horizontal networks, it is doubtful whether a new epoch would be emerging. For better or worse (and given the vitality of the drug trade and crime syndicates, sometimes it is for the worse) the ever-greater salience of organizational networks is serving to restructure the underpinnings of world affairs.

### The mobility upheaval

The vastness of the mobility upheaval can be readily depicted. The movement of people has been so extensive that around 5 percent of the people alive today are estimated to be living in a country other than the one where they were born.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, every day one-half-million airline passengers cross national boundaries.<sup>18</sup> In 1997 a total of 220.7 million people (a 4.6 percent increase over the previous year) went abroad by airplane.<sup>19</sup> Even more stunning, it is estimated that by 2020, every year 1.56 billion tourists will be moving around the world, a figure more than double the roughly 668 million foreign tourists in 2000.<sup>20</sup>

Perhaps also indicative of the mobility upheaval is the pattern whereby “personal international calls have burgeoned, fed by immigrants talking to relatives or friends. The number of calls from the US to other countries in 1997 was 21 times that in 1980.”<sup>21</sup> In 1965, on a worldwide basis, 75 million people were migrants from another country, whereas the figure for 1999 was 125 million.<sup>22</sup>

Despite the positive benefits that follow from people being exposed to greater economic opportunities, new cultural premises, and alternative lifestyles as they move around the world, the mobility upheaval can also foster negative consequences. The vast movement of people from the developing into the developed world has generated a backlash against “strangers” (i.e., migrants) and thereby precipitated a rise in immigration issues and a surge of unfair macro policies, not to mention right-wing politicians, to salience on political agendas in a number of countries. In short, while the distinction between the global and the local has been further obscured by the mobility upheaval, in some communities it has become increasingly salient.



### The bifurcation of global structures

As the density of the global stage has increased with the proliferation of organizations, the structures of world politics have undergone a profound and pronounced bifurcation in which a multicentric macro world comprising a variety of nongovernmental, transnational, and subnational actors (from the multinational corporation to the ethnic groups, from the NGO to the social movement, from the advocacy network to the humanitarian organization, from the drug cartel to the terrorist group, from the local government to the regional association, and so on across a vast range of collective endeavors) has evolved to cooperate, compete, or otherwise interact with the state-centric world.<sup>23</sup> States may still be central to the course of events, but their international system is no longer as predominant as it once was. Now there are two worlds of world politics, a bifurcation that has heightened the relevance and intensity of frammegrative dynamics.<sup>24</sup> These two worlds are still working out their respective domains as the emergent epoch unfolds. While in some instances the actors in the two worlds go their separate ways, most of the time they interact even as the boundaries separating them are maintained. Their interactions turned violent in Seattle in late 1999 and subsequent meetings of international financial institutions, but prior to that, starting in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, they interacted peacefully. In effect, the bifurcation of global structures has become institutionalized and, as a result, contributes to the weakening of states (noted below) by creating spaces for the formation or consolidation of collectivities in the multicentric world and, thus, for the activation of individuals who have not previously had an outlet for their global or local orientations.

### The weakening of territoriality, states, and sovereignty

Although some analysts insist states are as viable and competent as ever,<sup>25</sup> many (myself included) contend that they are in decline. For all its continuing authority and legitimacy, key dimensions of the power of modern states have undergone considerable diminution. In many states, for example, the assertions of monopoly over the use of force has been undermined by the emergence of private security forces that operate alongside, if they do not supercede, official police and military organizations. Put more generally, the ability of states to cope with the dynamics of change has lessened as the complexities and contradictions of frammegrating have become more pervasive. In the words of one analyst, "As wealth and power are increasingly generated by private transactions that take place across the borders of states rather than within them, it has become harder to sustain the image of states as the preminent actors at the global level."<sup>26</sup>

In other words, while state institutions still have a modicum of authority and are not about to disappear from the global stage, their state-centric world is,

as already noted, in continuous competition with collectivities in the multicentric world, an indication of the degree to which their capacity to exercise their authority has lessened. States cannot prevent ideas from moving across their borders. Many cannot control the flow of money, jobs, and production facilities in and out of their country. With few exceptions, they have only minimal control over the flow of people and negligible control over the flow of drugs or the drift of polluted air and water. At best they have difficulty controlling the flow of terrorists across their boundaries. In short, the obstacles to containing or redirecting transnational flows are considerable, and often states lack the will to exercise the full range of controls available to them.

To be sure, the United States' preemptive attack on Iraq following 9/11 demonstrated that its military power is unparalleled, but the subsequent insurgency against US forces made clear the extensive limitations on force as an instrument of state power. Just as the intensive nationalism and flag-waving diminished as memories of the 9/11 terrorist attacks faded, so did the appreciation grow that the superpowerdom of the United States is easily exaggerated. Yes, the United States successfully flexed its muscles by making it more difficult for foreigners to enter the country, but this lessened permeability of its borders hardly negates the presumption that the capabilities of the country have diminished.

Closely related to the weakened capabilities of states is a decline in their sovereignty, their ability to claim the final word at home or speak exclusively for the country abroad and, if necessary, to use force in support of their actions at home or abroad that is widely considered legitimate. Indeed, in some ways sovereignty claims have long been a major source of state capabilities. Strictly speaking, sovereignty is a legal fiction and not a capability, but as a legal fiction it accords legitimacy to states and is thus a source of their capacities.<sup>27</sup> Historically sovereignty was conceived in dichotomous terms—either states do or do not meet certain formal requirements such as having a specified territory and a functioning government. Although most states have not been able to exercise full sovereignty at all times, the myth of states as sovereign has long remained intact. But in the emergent epoch the new uncertainties and contradictions over where, when, and how states can exercise their sovereign rights under particular circumstances are posing serious challenges to this myth.

In all probability the erosion of sovereignty is also lessening the readiness of people to view their states as the object of their highest loyalty.<sup>28</sup> In the absence of threatening enemies, people in many parts of the world experience lessened concern about the preeminence of their state as their expanded skills and ties to a proliferating array of organizations enable them to evolve new commitments or otherwise reorganize their hierarchy of loyalties. In addition, national loyalties have been further undermined by the mobility upheaval that has spawned

multicultural societies. Put differently, with the distinction between domestic and foreign affairs increasingly confounded, the sovereignty of states can seem increasingly peripheral.

Stated more generally, the long-term and worldwide process whereby authority is undergoing relocation in response to the skill revolution, the organizational explosion, and the mobility upheaval has hastened the decline and decentralization of national governments. In some instances this trend has resulted in vacuums of authority filled by criminal organizations or by uncertainties as to where the rule-making power lies, but more often than not local, provincial, or private authorities move into the vacuums and sustain the processes of governance.<sup>29</sup>

### **Authority crises**

With people increasingly skillful, with states weakened, and with other types of organizations proliferating, governments everywhere are undergoing authority crises in which traditional conceptions of legitimacy are being replaced by performance criteria of legitimacy, thus fostering bureaucratic disarray, executive-legislative stalemate, and decisional paralysis that, in turn, enhances the readiness of individuals to employ their newly acquired skills on behalf of their perceived self-interests. Indeed, there is hardly a national government today that is not caught up in one or another form of crisis that severely restricts its capacity to frame innovative policies and move toward its goals. To view most states as deep in crisis, in other words, is not to have in mind only street riots and the violence that can accompany them; it is also to refer to cross-cutting conflicts that paralyze policy-making processes and result in stasis, in the avoidance of decisions that would at least address the challenges posed by a fragmegrative world undergoing vast and continuous changes.

Nor are these crises confined just to governments and states. The fragmenting tendencies are also operative within other institutions and organizations. Political parties are in disrepute in many parts of the world, with the long-standing dominant parties of Mexico and Japan having undergone major setbacks in recent years. Some churches have also experienced rifts that lessen their authority, and so, even more conspicuously, have the Mafia. Likewise, increasingly shareholders are challenging the decisions of corporate boards and, in a few cases, bringing about resignations and changes in their memberships. Given fragmegrative dynamics, it follows that some authority crises have enlarged the jurisdiction of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and NGOs, while others have contracted the range of national jurisdictions and extended that of local institutions.

### **The globalization of national economies**

In contrast to the tendencies toward decentralization and subgroupism, the dynamics at work in the realm of economics are powerful sources of central-

izing tendencies. A few states may be able to exercise their power to disrupt or divert these tendencies on occasion, but for the most part economic globalization in the last few decades has resulted in financiers, entrepreneurs, workers, and consumers now being deeply enmeshed in transnational networks that have superseded the traditional political jurisdictions of national scope. Such a transformation has served to loosen the ties of producers to their states and workers to their firms, to expand the horizons within which citizens ponder their self-interests, and to contribute to the proliferation of organizations that can operate on a global scale to protect and advance the economic interests of their members. The rapid growth and maturation of the multicentric world can in good part be traced to the extraordinary dynamism and expansion of the global economy. No less important, the global economy has also accentuated the identity of most people as consumers and, in so doing, possibly weakened their sense of affiliation with national communities.

Clearly, then, economic globalization is a key dynamic of fragmentation. Since it is virtually impossible for any national or local economy to be self-contained and independent of global economic processes, the lives of people everywhere are affected in one way or another by these processes. This intrusion may vary from community to community or from occupation to occupation, but no community and few occupations are immune to the global forces of supply and demand. Of course, the vulnerabilities of workers, business executives, and politicians to economic developments abroad are not new and have been observed in earlier centuries. In the past, however, neither the scale nor the pace of foreign economic consequences was nearly as great as is the case now that national economies are increasingly absorbed into the vast global market.

## Conclusion

In sum, despite the value and empirical obstacles that inhibit cogent analysis, it seems clear that the prospects for fairness throughout the world are shaped by a number of powerful dynamics. No single set of reforms can reduce the injustices at work and increase the prevalence of fairness. Rather, it appears inescapable that bringing about movement toward greater fairness will require efforts at all levels of aggregation and in a vast number of institutions and issue areas. Stated even more pessimistically, the long-term future may consist of islands of desirable order and fragmentation surrounded by oceans of undesirable tyranny and chaos, with neither capable of encroaching on the other, a prolonged stalemate that is unlikely to yield to efforts to improve greatly the extent of fairness throughout the world.