

From Liberal Democracy to Global Justice: A Conceptual Review

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Abstract: There is an apparent consensus among the Western politicians and policy makers that the central condition for achieving development in the ‘third world’ countries is to ‘institutionalize’ liberal democracy which cannot be done without ensuring security. On the other hand, some prominent leaders from Global South as well as critical scholars have claimed that sustainable human development can only be attained by the spread of social welfare, reform of the global governance and eradication of the unequal politics of development. This article gives a deeper look into the conceptual base of these two opposing positions, and argues that the utmost emphasis that is given to universal application of liberal democracy is not well founded, and rather misleading. Instead of placing overarching and politically motivated – emphasis on a particular form of governance, that is, Western liberal democracy, more attention should be directed to bringing about governance systems that might be more in line with the history and culture of a particular nation or region. Instead of wrongly imagining linear connection between democracy and development, more attention and focus should be given to transnational global order. Inequality embedded within the governance structure at global level should be brought under scrutiny with a view to make them more inclusive of developing countries, and thus ways to global justice might be paved.

Introduction

Whereas ‘development’ as a *mantra* for emancipation of impoverished people has gained almost unequivocal acceptance over the past few decades among the political leaders and development practitioners, what ‘development’ really means is still unclear. How the goals of development might be achieved, these questions also remain ever contested. There is an explicit consensus in the Western leadership and international development community that one central condition for international development is the spread of liberal democracy. Others – including leaders from developing countries such as former Venezuelan president Chavez, previous Brazilian president Lula da Silva, or former Malaysian leader Mahathir Mohammad, and critical scholars such as Cox (2002), Payne (2005), and Duffield (2001) – have made the assertion that development can only be achieved by addressing global inequality, by the spread of social welfare, and by reforming the system of transnational governance.

This write-up engages with these two opposing positions: one that attaches insurmountable importance to global practice of liberal democracy, and the other that stresses on the elimination of unequal politics of development and radical reformation of global governance structure. By analysing the constituting elements of these two positions, I try to build an argument that establishment of liberal democracy at the level of nation-states would not necessarily hold the ‘only’ key to development of

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impoverished people in the contemporary ‘globalizing’ context. Instead of propagating universalization of liberal democracy what is needed is to make a critical understanding that inequality and injustice are firmly structured at the supra-national level. It also needs to be pointed out that because of its exclusive Western genealogy, liberal democracy cannot be imitated as a ‘one size fits all’ model of governance across the globe. Given the overwhelming level of inequality at both global and local levels, it is unjustified to give much importance to the question of liberal democracy as it is done by Western leaders and development actors.

There is no doubt that polity and economy are inextricably related. International market structure and global institutions have far reaching impact on the ways in which people around the world access have to resources and enjoy rights. Enterprises to encounter inequality and fight poverty are not conceived and implemented at national or local levels in isolation. When there are cases that show that non-Western models of governance have historically been successful at times to engender increased well-being and greater human security, there are also cases which show that democratization at state level *per se* is not sustainable. After examining the conceptual frameworks, I would argue that instead of propagating a particular brand of liberal democracy in postcolonial countries, more energy and effort should be directed toward critical scrutiny of the institutions of global governance. Radical reorganization and democratization of global institutions should be prioritized. Without creating space for active participation of governments and people from less developed countries in the international politics of development, the system of injustice will prevail.

Questioning Liberal Democracy’s Universal Applicability

I will first examine whether liberal democracy and development should be viewed as inextricably interlinked for paving ways to emancipation of people from economic and social sufferings. Is liberal democracy universally applicable as political philosophy and governance system? Is it so that efforts to attain economic progress and ensure human rights embrace to be unviable if formalities and procedures that are at the core of liberalism are not practiced? Drawing on critical review of liberalism as political philosophy, I contemplate to show that such juxtaposition of democracy and development is rather flawed and politically motivated. Uncritical promotion of such simplistic and generalized assumptions is a political act. I also look into the assertion that security needs to be prioritized along with democracy. I first argue that ‘security’ should better be re-conceptualized as ‘human security’ for making development more meaningful for masses; and then I highlight how unequal politics of development and discriminating system of global governance are most responsible for the current prevalence of hunger, disease and impoverishment. A total transformation of the ways in which market economy and current global (dis)order is stressed at this point.

The advocates of liberal democracy present the ideological tenets of liberalism and democracy in an unquestionably universal way though critical analysts have shown that liberalism represents a set of essentially Western norms (Thomas 2000). The Western assumptions that underpin liberal democracy are challenged in different ways in diverse countries and contexts of contemporary world. The magnitude of this challenge is more

visible in developing countries; however, the trials that liberal democratic principles go through in the ‘home’ – that is, in Western contexts – are equally important to be acknowledged.

The forms of uneasiness and conundrum that liberal democracy comes to face in the developing world brings this point to focus that the discourses and propositions associated to liberal political philosophy cannot adequately account for the social, cultural and political diversities that have historically evolved in societies in the developing countries. It has been argued for long that in terms of its conceptual base, the political ideology of liberalism is ‘individualistic’, and lacks a ‘coherent ontology’ at its foundation (Gould 1998: 91). Another well-known criticism that the way liberalism draws a line of separation between ‘public’ and ‘private’ proves to be too alien to many of the non-Western contexts. It is in the same vain that many commentators (e.g. Leftwich 1993, Khan 2017) have observed that this particular form of democracy is idiosyncratic to the historical developments that took place in Europe and America (Marquand and Nettler 2000). This idiosyncrasy explains why it overplays some of the particular civil rights that are closely linked formation of European modernity.

One feature of liberalism is that it has historically shown intense inclination toward secularism; in fact, separation of religion from domestic and international politics has been one of its main political projects. As Scott observes, it has searched for a cosmopolitan ethic that was originally rooted in the enlightenment rationalism of the West (Scott 2000). Critiques have noted that because of such doctrinal fascination toward secularism, liberal democratic philosophy has failed, and continues to fail, to understand the public character of religion (Asad 1999: 178). That failure becomes most apparent in the contexts of developing world and, in consequence, liberalism faces multifaceted challenges in Oriental value and morality dominated countries. Liberalism is not prepared to address the question: What are the ways in which to account for and accommodate dominant public presence of religion?

In the contexts of developing countries liberal assumptions comes under scrutiny in different other ways. The received historical wisdom that private world of religion has to be separated from the public domain of politics is not practically applicable in many of the Asian and African countries. In fact, the imagined strict disjointing of ‘the religious’ and ‘the secular’ is contradicted in the historical record even in the western context – a vivid exploration of this is made in many of the analytical pieces placed in a collected volume (van der Veer and Lehmann (1999).

Since intermixture of religion and politics presents an unsolvable puzzle for the proponents of liberal democracy, there has been renewed interest among scholars in recent decades to uncover connections between religion and politics in different cultures. Talal Asad summarizes a widely held view, when he notes that “the Enlightenment’s view of the place of religion in modern life needs to be revised” (Asad 1999: 178). Secularization theory once made the claim that religion would become increasingly marginalized or privatized with the advancement of modernity. By now it has become clear that such hope was never going to be materialized in the developing world – this is

evident from the emergence of religious movements and the phenomenon of political Islam in particular (Ibid.).

‘Individual’ is at the heart of liberal conception of democracy – all versions of liberalisms are individualistic. The basic proposition is that individual should be the main focus of moral theory and of social, economic and political institutions. Liberalism places importance upon the intrinsic and ultimate value of each individual. In fact, individual is prioritized over society (Ramsay 1997: 4). Such pre-eminence of individual subject in liberal philosophy has been subject to continuous criticism. Spencer (2007: 9) summarizes the view: “The universal subject of post-Enlightenment political theory, we have been repeatedly told in recent years, is not universal at all – ‘he’ is gendered, white, European, heterosexual – and the appeal of universalism conceals the way in which marks of culture, race, gender, class, all work to exclude certain people from power”. In spite of all such criticisms liberal democracy has not been able to substantially move away from its focus on individualism.

This dominant presence of ‘individual’ raises the key problem what Gould (1998: 91) calls, the lack of a ‘coherent ontology’ at its philosophical foundation. Gould has characterized this as ‘social ontology’. This is what Charles Taylor has criticized as ‘atomistic ontology of liberalism’ (in Thomas 2000). Ontology refers to a conception of the nature of the entities and relations that constitute social life. What is meant by lack of ‘social ontology’ or dominance of ‘atomistic ontology’? To put it simplistically, liberal political philosophy lack adequate social ontology means that it fails to properly conceptualize the nature of the individual or person and the social relations that exist among them. Because of this failure of conception this philosophy also lacks an adequate and proper conception of the realities that are constituted by such social relations, institutions and their processes. In place of any ‘social ontology’, the theory of liberal political democracy is presupposed by ‘abstract individualism’ – what Charles Taylor would call ‘atomistic ontology’: each individual is understood as an independent ego, seeking to satisfy its own interests or to pursue its happiness. This abstraction ‘does not account for the differences among individuals that constitute them as the distinctive beings as they are’ (Gould 1998: 94).

This ontology fails to take into account the fact that individuals, in reality, live social lives – they are not separated, but rather they become the individuals that they are through their social relations. This failure becomes so crucial in the context of non-Western countries. Individuals are related to each other not only externally, social relations are fundamentally internal. Moreover, the conception of individuals as isolated and self-seeking does not account for the fact that they often have common purposes which are not reducible to aggregations of their separate self-interests.

Here we can draw on some of the discussions made by Charles Taylor in relation to liberal conception of ‘self’ while we also can also look into his ‘social thesis’ including his conception of ‘common good’ (Taylor 1984, 1985). Following Taylor’s analysis, it is argued that Liberal politics not only overemphasize the idea of self and its interest, it also neglects the social precondition necessary for the effective fulfillment of those interests. Taylor (Taylor 1985; also discussed in Kymlicka 1991 and Sandel 1984) claims that

since many liberal political theories are based on ‘atomism’, these envision individuals as self-sufficient outside of society and hence not in need of the cultural context of choice in order to exercise their ‘moral powers’ (e.g. to choose a conception of the good life). Taylor argues that such atomistic ontology of liberalism ignores the principals of belonging and obligation necessary to sustain any viable conception of society (Thomas 2000). For him, the liberal individual is ‘concerned purely with his individual choices ... to the neglect of the matrix in which such choices can be open or closed, rich or meager’ (Taylor 1985: 207). Taylor argues instead for the ‘social thesis’, which says that these capacities can only be developed and exercised in a certain kind of society, with certain kind of social and cultural surrounding.

Another important feature of liberalism, which Charles Taylor feels inadequate in terms of people’s engagement, is its insistence on ‘neutral political concern’. According to him such a politics of neutral concern has to be abandoned for what he calls ‘politics of common good’ (Taylor 1986). For him since liberal politics does not pursue a politics of common good it fails to involve civic participation. Hence, participation has less meaning in liberal regimes because of its disconnection from the collective pursuit of shared ends. Kymlicka has argued in the same line and noted that “(t)he lack of participation is an effect of the loss of a politics of the common good” (Kymlicka 1991: 85). In developing world where pursuing of ‘common good’ has traditionally been one of the defining features of societal life, liberal democracy finds itself at odds since it cannot come up with proper conception that can account for ‘common good’.

Charles Taylor’s criticism of liberal democracy is generally understood to be related with the popular debate between ‘liberals’ and ‘communitarians’ in Western context. In fact, the criticisms of communitarians unveils many of the shortcomings of liberal tradition that are relevant for making better sense of the challenges it faces in developing countries. Communitarians argue that – also, Taylor has argued in his discussions – liberals do not recognize the moral virtues of communities. Communitarians highlight the importance of cultivating such values in the society though they too fail to acknowledge the ways in which religious traditions and communities in different contexts nurture and promote them in diverse ways. This is in this conjunction that Thomas (2000) points the concerns in more precise way: “Where does the sense of belonging and obligation come from, how is it nurtured, encouraged and supported?” – Liberalism’s political philosophy is not adequately prepared to address this question, and it is because of this failure that it faces strong predicaments in dealing with challenges put forward by religion and other traditional social systems in developing countries contexts. In opposition to such failure of liberalism to give recognition to and make use of collective values, beliefs and ideas, what is striking about religions and religious traditions is that they are already in very good position to encourage common values, and they also draw on such values.

This is in effect a paramount dilemma for liberal democracy as to how to motivate and organize people to participate in its practice in collective way whereas in theory it constantly refers to ‘individualistic’ achievements. It has been shown by many that while ‘individuals’ live their lives in shared ways, liberal doctrine’s persisting attachment toward individualistic thinking and policy can cause serious alienation. In course of such alienation, people gradually turn away from liberal discourses and practices. Sometimes

they turn to religiosity, sometimes to cosmological or metaphysical explanations, sometimes to informality and traditional ways of organizing – in many cases liberal democratic practices thus prove to be rather counter-productive.

Another significant consequence of the flawed assumptions that underline liberal democracy is that it fails to account for critical issues such as ‘identity’ which have become so important across the globe, though in different senses (UNDP 2004). There have been growing demands for people’s inclusion in society, for respect of their ethnicity, religion and language. Francis Fukayama (2006: 6) notes that “modern identity politics springs from a hole in the political theory underlying modern liberal democracy”. For him this hole is related to the degree of political deference that liberal societies owe to groups rather than to individuals. “The line of modern political theory that begins in some sense with Machiavelli and continues through Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the American Founding Fathers, understands the issue of political freedom as one that pits the state against individuals rather than groups”, Fukayama extends his observation (Fukayama 2006: 6). This clearly highlights the ambivalence of liberal democracy with regard to identity politics and issues of collective movements. Such ambivalence proves that this tradition of thinking is not well-equipped to address the complex interplay that often takes place among religion, ethnicity and nationalism in developing countries.

Liberal political theory thus fails to explain and account for ‘identity’, ‘plurality’, ‘multiculturalism’ etc., which have emerged as pertinent issues in contemporary contexts. One of the key causes for such failure is that these complex phenomena cannot be understood in isolation from the larger question as to how these societies organize themselves. In understanding the organization of these societies one has to recognize the central importance of religion – ironically, making such recognition contradicts the basic assumptions of both liberalism and modernity.

Liberal political philosophy also fails to adequately account for ‘culture’ – every culture is a system of meaning through which people make sense of themselves and their identity. This system of meaning and interpretation is again significantly informed by the religious values, beliefs, practices and rituals. This we can relate with what Charles Taylor has criticized as modern theories failure to ‘provide a basis for men’s identification with their society’ (Taylor 1984: 191). This is in extension to this failure that liberal theories and practices are faced with challenges of cultural and religious pluralism. Although this challenge is most often articulated in the debate over ‘multiculturalism’ in North American or European countries, it is really a global issue: ‘how can liberal democracy be constructed in politics embedded in non-Western cultural and religious traditions rather than the enlightenment rationalism of the west?’ (Thomas 2000).

Another problematic assumption and practice of liberal democracy has been the practices of homogenization. Taylor has observed that, ‘modern societies have moved towards much greater homogeneity and greater interdependence, so that partial communities lose their autonomy and to some extent their identity’ (Taylor 1984: 193-194). He goes further to comment that homogenization increases minority alienation and resentment.

Liberal democracy's other perils come from its inclination toward materialistic economism and belief in modernization. The promises of modernization have failed to deliver and the dream of science and technology conquering every aspect of human life has already been shattered. This creates a significant vacuum which is taken up in most cases by the re-emergence of widespread faith and spirituality. For example, with such failures there might be situations where recognition of human imperfection may be important and religions bring in that recognition (Alkire 2006). In Western contexts liberal theorists are now searching for 'civil society' and 'social capital' (Putnam 1993) which again proves that it is in fact approaching the conclusion that it cannot do with its obsession with individualism. Religion could be conceived as providing us with the 'capacity to aspire' as Appadurai (2004) argues it with reference to culture.

What is important to note is that liberal democracy's inadequacies does not necessarily imply that 'religion' and 'democracy' are entirely incompatible (Esposito and Voll 1996). Democracy has always been a contested philosophy – we need to continue this contestation and go beyond any monolithic version. Adherence to a monolithic version causes failure to accommodate achievements of different civilizations. 'Indeed, the very idea of democracy, in the form of participatory public reasoning, has appeared in different civilizations at different periods in world history.' (Sen 2004: 21). We have not reached a phase of human history where we can declare 'the end of history' (Fukayama 1992) or can celebrate the triumphant achievement of any particular political philosophy. The assumptions of liberal political philosophy might require significant overhauling; the contents of these assumptions need to be subject to continuous examination and re-examination. Human endeavour cannot cease searching for understandings and practices that would be accommodative to religious and cultural pluralism greater than ever before.

Despite these basic philosophical limitations, liberal democracy – as a form of government – might be adopted in a developing country given the society makes its own choice for it. However, in our current debate, what is more important is the point that the relationship between liberal democracy and development are unduly highlighted by political leadership of the north (Bolton, 2000; Tsai, 2006) – when there are many discontents and contradistinctions with respect to the 'inter-relationship' of the two, in most of the cases it is presented in very simplistic way to show that liberal democracy is the panacea for solving whatever problems people in the developing world face.

The constraints that the developing countries currently experience in their journey toward development are mostly related to the situations and processes which are beyond their territorial boundary. Claiming that spread of democracy would solve the problems of these countries is a wrong representation of the whole scenario. Such claims invoke the assumption that the people of these countries themselves are solely responsible for their sufferings –they could overcome all the odds, if they could practice democracy! Such formulation conceals the role of international actors, and thus 'depoliticizes' the unequal role that global institutions and system of governance play (Cerney, 1999).

The assumptions underlining the importance of liberal democracy in relation to development are problematic in many other ways. In today's globalized world the reality is that a democratic state does not enjoy the autonomy or capabilities to pursue policies

that further the interests of the people; the state is rather constrained by external factors - the democratic state is therefore a limited (Hutchings, 1996; Evans, 2000). The old wisdom that governments remain in control of state borders cannot be sustained under conditions of globalization, where economic flows, ideas, cultural exchanges, social interactions and political interconnectedness make state borders ever more penetrable (Held & McGrew, 1993; 1999); transnational decision making increasingly takes precedence over national decision-making processes. This is evident in the growing intensity of global economic, social and political interconnectedness that threatens the capacity of the state in its role as the guardian of the 'common good' and the national interest. In the wake of globalization, international organizations assume many of the tasks previously undertaken by the state, raising questions concerning the territorial state as the appropriate community for democratization (Held & McGrew 1999).

Another feature of globalization that challenges the dominant conception of democracy is the growing economic power of transnational corporations (TNCs). In the scramble to attract inward investment, the demands of TNCs often take precedence over the needs of the community as a whole. (Evans & Hancock, 1997; Evans, 2000). Furthermore, the need to create and maintain the stable conditions that attract investment often leads a country to accept the constraints imposed by international financial institutions, without regard for the suffering that this might bring to large sections of the community. Structural adjustment programmes are often cited in this regard (Thomas, 1998).

This is against such reality that Johansen comments, 'If the democratic state is no longer fully accountable to the people, if the state is losing its autonomy then the universal acclaim that democracy enjoys at this historic moment does not mean that all is well with democracy' (Johansen, 1993: 213). It is clear that the claim about positive relationship between development and liberal democracy need to be taken with some grain of suspicion and dealt with greater caution.

As this stage we can raise the question as to why some quarters so vigorously promote the point that there is a close relationship between liberal democracy and development. Many argue that these are fully rhetorical claims and promoted for fulfilling defined goals. After cold-war in the changed context the threat of social unrest, which would disrupt the supply of raw materials, restrict investment opportunities and severely damage prospects for exploiting low cost labour, cannot be avoided by using coercive policing and military suppression (Mahbubani, 1992); the promotion of democracy in such context is mostly concerned with the need to create an appropriate global order that provides a stable environment for future economic planning and investment (Evans, 2001).

It has also been argued that democracy is thus used as a form of intervention (Cox, 1997; Pickering and Peceny, 2006). Its intent is to pre-empt either progressive reform or revolutionary change. Beyond seeking to demobilize popular forces, it also seeks to legitimize the status quo. The paradox of such externally imposed democracy is that a civilianised conservative regime can pursue painful and even repressive social and economic policies with more impunity and with less popular resistance than can an openly authoritarian regime (Gills *et al.*, 1993: 8). In this view, democracy and human rights are of limited interest when social unrest threatens the smooth continuation of the

practices of globalization. Thus, questions concerning accountability are rarely asked by decision makers when the maintenance of the global political economy is at stake. The effort to promote the dominant version of democracy has more to do with maintaining an order that serves particular economic interests, rather than the interests of those whose human rights and security are threatened.

While democracy at national level, thus, proves to introduce limited impact for achieving development in greater sense, what is needed is making the decisions and actions of transnational actors democratically accountable (Cox, 1997). Former Secretary General of the Commonwealth Shridath Ramphal has noted the point rhetorically, 'the democracy idea has a larger reach than national frontiers. Democracy at the national level but authoritarianism in the global homeland – these are contradictions in terms' (Ramphal, 1992).

Liberal Democracy and Security

The relationship between liberal democracy and security might also be better understood if put in this global context. In fact, the emphasis upon liberal democracy and juxtaposing the question of security with that emphasis is also a historical understanding – it is described as a characteristic of the post-Cold War widening the meaning of security. Duffeld (2004) has eloquently explored the process as to how development and security became merged. However, if we move beyond the conventional usage of the term and take up the greater conception of 'human security' then it becomes clear that the issues to be taken into account have to be broadened (Thomas 1998; 2000).

If we relate 'human security' with development, it becomes inevitable that the widening gap between rich and poor be considered as the foremost threat for humanity: we need to focus more upon the ever widening inequalities – we have to do in term of global politics of development and global governance. According to the 1998 United Nations Development Report, the top 20% of the world's highest income counties account for 86% of total private consumption, while the poorest 20% account for a mere 1.3%. Furthermore, the richest 20% consume 45% of all meat and fish, compared to the poorest 20% who consume 5%, and 58% of total energy, compared to 4% by the poorest 20% (UNDP, 1998).

Human insecurity results directly from existing power structures that determine who enjoys the entitlement to security and who does not. Such structures can be identified at several levels, ranging from the global, through the regional, the state and finally the local level. Regarding the future prospects for human security, there is a very simple but hugely important question as to whether the mechanisms in place to tackle poverty and to promote wider development are adequate to the task. Emancipation from oppressive power structures, be they global, national or local in origin and scope, is necessary for human security.

Global Order and Inequality

Global governance institutions play crucial role in attaining human security needs of the citizens. A consideration of human security in the contemporary era requires us to

consider humanity embedded not simply within discrete sovereign states, but within a global social structure, the capitalist world economy.

While focusing on the global scenario of development, the issues that appear to be of foremost relevance are related with the nature and consequences of globalization. The questions that have come to the fore quite frequently in recent decades include: What has gone wrong during seven decades of development whereas half of the world's population lives in extreme poverty? What role should the Bretton Woods institutions play in a world haunted by the specter of contagious financial crises? Is the United Nations (UN) system still relevant in the current conjuncture of United States unilateralism? Between superpower disagreements and popular protests, is the World Trade Organization (WTO) viable?

It was after the Second World War that a coherent international economic policy framework was brought into existence (Vines & Gilbert, 2004). However, many factors have dramatically changed the social, economic, and political landscapes at global level during last two decades. In response to this changed situation 'the post-war multilateral institutions have either not evolved fast enough (in matters such as debt relief or human rights) or have gone beyond their original mandates (in international lending for national institutional reforms, for example)' (Chan, 2007: 5).

Since the early 1980s, the World Bank has become an active agent of the Washington Consensus (pact between the US Congress, senior members of the US administration, economic agencies of the US government, the Federal Reserve Board, think tanks, and international financial institutions). At the World Bank, the Consensus was embodied in structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) which, Stiglitz argues, they became "ends in themselves, rather than means to more equitable and sustainable growth" (2002: 53). It became gradually clear that SAPs (dubbed by movement activists as Suffering for African People) were a social disaster. The cumulative result of structural reforms has been a rise in inequality in both developed and developing countries.

The multiple criticisms that have been made against the inherited global governance structure can be grouped into three interrelated concerns (Chan, 2007): (a) Inefficiency and ineffectiveness (in part due to an overlap of responsibility); (b) Democratic deficits (power beyond mandates, non-transparency, and lack of participation parity); and (c) Market fundamentalism (ignoring human development, freedoms, and the environment).

Now there is agreement among the Bretton Woods institutions, the UN agencies, and civil society that the current governance structure is inefficient and ineffective, even though the definition and focus on 'inefficiency' differ among various actors and proposals (Annan, 1997; World Bank, 1997; Camdessus, 2004). For some, however, the problem lies beyond streamlining bureaucracy. For many critics within and outside the UN system, the crisis in the current multilateral governance structure cannot be resolved merely by the internal structural reforms of individual institutions to make them more efficient, but a complete overhaul of the entire system along the principles of equitable representation, accountability and redress, transparency, and subsidiary/ devolution of power (Woods, 2001).

Another example of the failure of international organizations in pursuing development is likely to be the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In 2000, in a Millennium Declaration signed by 189 countries, the UN General Assembly launched eight Millennium Development Goals with time-bound targets (by 2015). Laudable though the goals, targets, and recommendations for action are, the approach is plagued with problems. It does not necessarily follow that it seeks greater influence for UN agencies and the governments of less developed countries in the decision-making process on aid or that it empowers certain UN agencies to take a leading, coordinating role on aid and development (Manor, 2005). Already some monitoring reports show that the MDG in the areas of health, child and maternity mortality, and basic sanitation, particularly in Africa, are unlikely to be achieved (World Bank, 2004; Bond 2006).

Besides the above mentioned dilemmas, current global institutions for development are failing to address many of the issues of critical importance to developing countries, including international labour mobility, international taxation of capital income, financing mechanism to compensate marginalized countries and social groups, and a mechanism for ensuring policy coherence among industrialized countries and a consequent reduction in the exchange rate volatility among major currencies (UN, 2005).

Conclusion

From the discussion presented above, it becomes clear that while the root causes of persistent inequality and poverty are embedded in the global structures and dynamics, and while liberalization policies and market irregularities have been producing many asymmetries, it is not of much use to keep focusing on exercise of liberal democracy at state level in an isolated and de-linked way. What is needed is addressing the greater causes of increasing inequalities – examining and eliminating the far-reaching asymmetrical results that emanate from the policies and actions of global institutions, market mechanism and the systems of trade and finance. The structures of global governance are to be subjected to radical, participatory and living democratic processes. In addition to human rights, equity, jobs, livelihood, employment, and food security, the principles of living democracy, economic and cultural diversity, and subsidiarity should form integral part of global governance process. In place of upholding the ‘national interest’ of powerful nations or corporations, the global politics of development should incorporate the principal of shared living and mutual respect – peoples’ identity and distinctiveness should be recognized and celebrated. A fundamental recognition and representation of the majority developing world as equal partners in global governance should no more remain a dream, and such representation should mean that pathways to global justice are sought more earnestly.

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