

GLOBALISATION AND CULTURAL STANDARDISATION

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ABSTRACT

Cross border conflict has been historically characterised by armed engagement. Often the genesis of this conflict was differing ideologies or merely a mercantilist approach for enhanced market share across the globe. Over time, and with inherent weaknesses, having taken their toll, ideologies and their die-hard followers have in a way reconciled to the convergence of these ideologies. More often than not, the ideological leadership has in a way seen the practical aspect of conciliatory attempts being more relevant in contemporary times rather than staunchly sticking to particular views and mindsets. We desist from value judgement here and merely look at how conflict in recent times has undergone a fundamental change from being one of aggressive or belligerent military exchanges to a subtler and at times more comprehensive cultural conflict.

The paper therefore, tries to theoretically present this progression of globalisation and the adaptation of culturally distinct nations and entities towards an emergent synthesis of cultures via autonomous conflict resolution.

The 20th century has been witnessing to substantial ideological turmoil in the political firmament. Singularly striking has been the political polarization of the world into diametrically opposite political and economic systems of socialism and mercantilism telescoping into rampant capitalism. Commencing from pure theory these distinctly significant thoughts have seen through their entire life-cycles of conception, establishment, struggle for survival and the eventual seeming triumph of one over the other. The road to this progression from a distinct bi-polar world to one of apparent uni-polarity has also been accompanied by strong influences of westernization, cultural dominance through market forces and conflict stemming from pure mercantilist aims of dominating both the productive and the cultural dimensions of national existence.

Nevertheless, "native" cultural and political resistance has also been an incidental characteristic of this increasingly strong wave for cultural

dominance. The present conflict, therefore, stems from the broader global perspective of economic dominance and the underlying currents of cultural inclinations. Westernization seems infinitely attractive with its glamorous vehicles of rampant materialistic innovativeness. Resultantly, conflict between cultures is an inevitable factor that eventually culminates in cultural assimilation and standardization across the globe.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In the backdrop of the two World Wars, the diverse ideologies of capitalism and socialism struck root. The globe got segregated into two virtually different worlds with their walls and bamboo curtains fending off the expectant onslaught from across the borders. It was no national sentiment that held up but rather a world divided on ideological groupings with a commitment to assist and participate if called on to

do so in any event of armed engagement. Countries in a way lost their independence to these ideological leanings and the entire effort was subservient to perpetual pushing forward of the ideological juggernaut to sustain and maintain the ideological utility in a world that was fast emerging and moving away from basic fundamentals.

Economics and political ideologies always go hand in hand. However, over time, differing theories crystallized into the two main thoughts of capitalism and socialism and with popular support countries tried to project themselves as proponents of two distinct forms of democracy too. Popular support of a vocal few has always been construed to be mass movements of social acceptance and in that perspective institutional development for the people, by the people and of the people is by definition democratic.

More often than not the entire institutional development of countries supportive of these ideologies has been undertaken with a view to serve the primary aim of maintaining and fostering the political environment within the country. Economic and political institutions are created and instituted with the primary aim of being able to maintain that hold over the diaspora in a way that contradictory viewpoints do not find a voice. If this voice finds a root then it is nipped in the bud.

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Apart from supportive institutional frameworks so necessary for these ideological successes, co-operant cultural developments need to be "administered" in a way to be conducive for further growth and perpetuation of ideology. The institutional frameworks and their "minders" are ever enthusiastic to curtail any signs of dissidence from among the emerging diaspora. Vehicles of domestic aggression commonly being used to stymie any dissident public voices are the media and the propaganda machinery.

Interestingly, "supportive" cultures are created in a way that seemingly try to foster the

general welfare of the population and curb inequalities, economic and of opportunities too, in a way to keep away dissidence. Irrespective of whether, fiat, fatwa or market forces are used, the end is to assure the citizens that the ideological backbone of the administration is working in their interest alone.

PERSPECTIVE OF CONFLICT

Having put into place the supportive wherewithal of the institutional and legislative frameworks, cross border approaches become the order of the day, with the success of current government being measured not in domestic control of the nation but in how many newer converts have been brought to the fold over time. The interplay of economics and politics makes it imperative that the global divide remains for perpetuity not for anything else but the success of the controlling powers. International cross border conflict can many times be interpreted in this context of keeping leadership chances alive and strong. Active conflagration and non-resolution of conflict can many a time be in the interests of political leadership but antithetical to the interests of citizens. However, this dilemma is seldom left resolved because it suits the protagonists well. Increasingly, multilateral forums get hijacked by these commanding blocs as has been the tendency and conflict get legitimized through group support quite analogous to the mob mentality.

Conflict resolution in these two conditions becomes increasingly difficult as the motivations of conflict remain less ideological and more driven by other extraneous reasons.

CULTURE AS A NEWER VEHICLE OF CONFLICT REDUCTION

Over time, acts of aggression or armed conflict have reduced in scope and effect primarily because the overload of people's resistance to large scale destruction is deterrent enough. In addition, culture is a vehicle increasingly used as a proxy for accession to the attitudinal leanings of the aggressor. Though

material evidence in this is starkly absent yet, it could be presumed that culture is a potent weapon in making countries subservient to political ideologies. Often called “cultural hegemonism” a potent offshoot of “imperialistic hegemonism” this onslaught is far more comprehensive and sustainable rather than any armed act of aggression. Clearly force loses out to a subtle form of indoctrination and eventual collapse of the “native” values and cultures. Resistance is rather limited in its approach and impact and hence, rather short lived and unsustainable over time. There is a tendency to adapt and adopt alien cultural norms and internalize these rather quickly. Over time these internalizations therefore present themselves in myriad forms all indicating a new equilibrium that has been achieved as a result of the inherent conflict resolution.

Though not a covert act yet, the symptoms exhibit a strong presence of such an approach that is being followed. Given the scale that such practices are being actively pursued, over time a commonality in cultural development is often forthcoming and evident across borders. Conflict has thereby paved its path for cultural standardization and often arrived at through an autonomous form of conflict resolution.

In the global scenario and perspective, cultural standardization has therefore been a potent and sustainable trend that is expected to sustain over time and be an enduring phenomenon.

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