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“WE NEVER EXPEL A FOREIGNER” – GLOBALISM, INTERCONNECTIVITY AND THE EXPERIMENT OF THE OPEN SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT.

This paper begins with Popper’s appeal to Pericles of Athens to illustrate the history and philosophy of a political principle of democracy and education that sustains the open society. It considers “globalism” as openness and proposes several dimensions of the concept of openness, before examining “Openness as Liberal Internationalism” and “Global Systems History”.

Keywords: Popper, Open Society, Openness, Globalism, Liberal Internationalism, Global Systems History

Introduction

Karl Popper (1945) appeals to “Pericles of Athens” in the opening pages of *The Spell of Plato*, Volume I of *The Open Society and Its Enemies* with the following excerpt

For the Open Society (about 430 B.C.) :
Although only a few may originate a policy, we are all able to judge it.

Immediately as a contrast Popper quotes from “Plato of Athens.”

Against the Open Society (about 80 years later):

The greatest principle of all is that nobody, whether male or female, should be without a leader. Nor should the mind of anybody be habituated to letting him do anything at all on his own initiative; neither out of zeal, nor even playfully. But in war as well as in the midst of peace to his leader he shall direct his eye and follow him faithfully. And even in the smallest matter he should stand under leadership. For example, he should get up, or move, or wash, or take his meals . . . only if he has been told to do so . . . In a word, he should teach his soul, by long habit, never to dream of acting independently, and in fact, to become utterly incapable of it (p. 3).

Popper uses these two references to frame a critical discussion of Plato's historicism. As a critical introduction to political philosophy his aim is to that 'this civilization has not yet fully recovered from the shock of its birth, the transition from the tribal or 'closed society', with its submission to magical forces, to the 'open society' which sets free the critical powers of man." In the final chapter he continues in this vein: "There is no return to a harmonious state of nature" ... "if we wish to remain human, then there is only one way, the way into the open society. We must go on into the unknown, courageously, using what reason we have, to plan for security and freedom."

His initial reference is to Pericles' Funeral Oration (after 490 BCE) from Thucydides', *The Peloponnesian War*. It is a speech by Pericles that provides a eulogy for the principles of Athenian democracy. The statement of its underlying principles in fact provide a better warrant for the political concept of openness:

It is true that we are called a democracy, for the administration is in the hands of the many and not of the few. But while there exists equal justice to all and alike in their private disputes, the claim of excellence is also recognized; and when a citizen is in any way distinguished, he is preferred to the public service, not as a matter of privilege, but as the reward of merit. Neither is poverty an obstacle, but a man may benefit his country whatever the obscurity of his condition. There is no exclusiveness in our public life, and in our private business we are not suspicious of one another, nor angry with our neighbor if he does what he likes; we do not put on sour looks at him which, though harmless, are not pleasant.

Our city is thrown open to the world, though and we never expel a foreigner and prevent him from seeing or learning anything of which the secret if revealed to an enemy might profit him. We rely not upon management or trickery, but upon our own hearts and hands. And in the matter of education, whereas they from early

youth are always undergoing laborious exercises which are to make them brave, we live at ease, and yet are equally ready to face the perils which they face.¹

In these brief passages Pericles points to the advantages of democracy that thrives on openness and transparency, despite the fact that the words themselves are reported by an anti-democratic Thucydides who while admiring Pericles' leadership criticized the mob rule of democracy (Perry, 2012).

George Soros, Popper's student, describes Popper's concept of the open society as an epistemological concept rather than a political one even though in Popper's hands it resembles liberal democracy and becomes a political instrument for societal improvement.

Living in the twenty-first century it is necessary to revisit the notion of openness as it has become one of the most used concepts to analyze a welter of problems and situations, often with conflicting meanings. Hilary Clinton, as then US Secretary of State, speaking at the Open Government Partnership² in Brasilia is reported as saying:

In the 21st century, the US is convinced that one of the most significant divisions between nations will be not between east or west, nor over religion, so much as between open and closed societies. We believe those governments that hide from public view and dismiss ideas of openness and the aspirations of their people for greater freedom will find it increasingly difficult to create a secure society.³

The history of open government has its origins in Enlightenment thought with philosophical attacks on state secrecy and the accompanying notion that government ought to be open to public scrutiny. As a doctrine it took the early form of constitutional commitment to freedom of the press in Sweden in 1766,⁴ followed by America and France that after the revolutions enacted public accountability and freedom of the press in their constitutions. Since the evolution of the Internet open government has taken on a new life with open source governance and the commitment to open politics (greater transparency, participation and collaboration) referred to as e-government, e-democracy, and wiki government (Noveck, 2009) and also associated with movements like digital government and open government data (Nath, 2011).

Globalism as Openness

On the basis of this discussion we can distinguish a set of meanings: openness as a *political concept* associated with a set of related concepts such as democracy, freedom and open government; openness as an *epistemological concept* linked to judgment, criticism and truth; openness as an *historical concept* that serves to defend liberal democracy and liberal modernity. In the Cold War the concept was used to defend liberalism against all forms of totalitarianism, and in the post-Cold War to defend Internet freedom against “closed societies” that prohibit the free flow of information and prevent social networking sites. To these easily distinguishable notions we can three more: *economic openness* that comes with the notion of the “open market”; openness that refers to the *openness of interpretation* (a hermeneutical concept); openness as it refers to *technological interconnectivity*; and its application and development in *open education* (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1 Meanings of the Concept of Openness

1. *Political* – liberal democracy; freedom of speech/information, open government
2. *Epistemological* – critical rationalism, falsification, culture of criticism; principles of open inquiry
3. *Historical* – “Open Society” used as a historical category (Bergson, Popper, Soros) often to stand for liberal modernity
4. *Economic/Finance* – “Open market” associated with the doctrine of “free trade”; refers to the relative absence of government regulation (Hayek, 1944)
5. *Interpretation* – the “open work” as an aspect of modernism, a work rendered open by an author or artist to be completed by performer, viewer, reader or audience (Umberto Eco, 1962)
6. *Psychological* – openness to experience as one domain to describe the human personality (McRae, 2004)
7. *Technological* – open source software, open standards (free for use), code defined by the community of users, (vs closed or “proprietary”), WWW, open access, open networks
8. *Educational* – open classroom, open university, OER, open education (Peters & Roberts, 2011)

Despite these multiple strands and suggestions that under neoliberalism opens has been colonized by technocratic functionalism that causes a democratic deficit rather than overcoming it (Götz, 2014) there is a story of global history emerging that tends to run different meaning together as an overlapping and unfolding skein. It is best represented by the notion of the twenty-first century as the century of openness detailing the history of the emergence of global systems as forms of increasing interconnectivity.

Kishore Mahbubani, Dean of the National University of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and author of the book *The Great Convergence: Asia, the West, and the Logic of One World* (2014), provides the story of a benign convergence with the growth of the global middle class and rising standards of living for those outside the West, and the prospect of greater integration of China, India, Africa and the Islamic world representing a new global era of shared power. He profiles this kind of narrative in the IMF periodical *Finance and Development*, under the title "The Global Village Has Arrived" (Mahbubani, 2012):⁵

Interconnectivity is growing by leaps and bounds

Quietly, without much fanfare, humanity passed a significant milestone. Today, there are more phones than people. This does not mean every human being has a phone. Some have two or three. In 1990, only 11 million people had cell phones. In 2011, the number of cell phones worldwide was 5.6 billion, while the number of landline phones stood at 1.32 billion—as the global population approached 7 billion. And we can call almost any part of the world at almost no cost through Internet services such as Skype. This level of teledensity means that people have become interconnected at a level never seen before in history.

Technology is generating global convergence. This global explosion of cell phones, and soon of smartphones, will take the Internet, and the information it conveys, to all corners of the globe. A small solar-powered battery and a tiny computer have already done this for remote African and Indian villages. This "big bang" of information—and education as well—is also improving human lives. As more people learned about vaccinations, the proportion of the world's infants vaccinated against diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus—via the DPT shot—climbed from one-fifth to nearly four-fifths between 1970 and 2006. And other ideas that save lives—such as washing one's hands, or not defecating in the fields one eats from—have made their way around the world and are increasingly accepted (Kenny, 2011). Connectivity saves lives.

He goes on to modify his position of technological convergence by suggesting that it is only one of the forces of "deep interconnectivity" citing a single global economy, the problem of global warming that pushes us toward a global ethic (Rodin, 2012), and emotional connectivity driven by technology as a material force.⁶ The thesis is defended in more detailed terms in his book. His defense of an optimistic picture of one global world—a new global civilization—revolving around the norms of a global middle class and the common "acceptance of the frameworks of modern science,

reliance on logical reasoning, embrace of free-market economics, transformation of the social contract between ruler and ruled, and increased focus on multilateralism” (p. 33) certainly suggests that states can act in enlightened self-interest without the resurgence of nationalism or the resource wars that drive international competition. His four key pillars of convergence — environmental, economic, technological, and aspirational— also point to an emerging set of moral norms centered on human rights. Rodin (2012) argues:

We are one humanity, but seven billion humans. This is the essential challenge of global ethics: how to accommodate the tension between our universal and particular natures. This tension is, of course, age-old and runs through all moral and political philosophy. But in the world of the early twenty-first century it plays out in distinctive new ways. Ethics has always engaged twin capacities inherent in every human: the capacity to harm and the capacity to help. But the profound set of transformations commonly referred to as globalization—the increasing mobility of goods, labor, and capital; the increasing interconnectedness of political, economic, and financial systems; and the radical empowerment of groups and individuals through technology— have enabled us to harm and to help others in ways that our forebears could not have imagined. What we require from a global ethic is shaped by these transformative forces; and global ethics—the success or failure of that project—will substantially shape the course of the twenty-first century (p. 33).

Yet global ethics like the “great convergence” depends on the reform of global governance. Other critics like Ian Bremmers (2012) with the historic shift in the international system detects a leadership vacuum. On his account we face global uncertainty, US decline, world conflict and a new dystopia. Charles Kupchan (2012) also charts the decline of the West and the shift in power to the rising rest. In his terms the twenty-first century will be “no one’s world.” There will be no center of gravity and multiple modernities. The challenge is to manage the global turn by design. World order or the coming anarchy? Henry Kissinger’s (2014) latest book *World Order* provides a recent introduction to the meaning of the concept of “world order” and its various models and interpretations. It also raises the question of the relativity of “world order” to a religious or cultural framing. Will Pax Americana endure? Does it have the capacity to recognise that “liberal internationalism” may be failing?

Globalism and World Order: Openness as Liberal Internationalism

The liberal internationalism promoted by Lord Palmerston as British Foreign Secretary in the early twentieth century and President Woodrow Wilson was designed to promote a form of intervention based on liberal principles. It was the means to encourage the architecture of global structures that were supposed to enhance the spread of liberal internationalist democratic politics: a liberal economic order including the free market together with the doctrine of global free trade, the Rule of Law with limited government at home, state sovereignty and self-determination. This internationalist order was also credited with the encouragement of human rights and a form of internationalism that could be built by multilateral organizations after WWII like the United Nations aimed at eliminating the worst excesses of power politics. Kissinger is sanguine. Kissinger's book is described as the summation of his "thinking about history, strategy and statecraft" and is surprising in the message that the concept of world order cannot be simply made in the West's own image and yet little argument to cope with radically different pluralism at the level of concepts of world order. We might say that Kissinger raises and defines the problem—perhaps *the* problem of global survival—although he does not provide the basis for its resolution. By contrast Robert Kaplan (2001) *The Coming Anarchy* documents how scarcity, crime, overpopulation, tribalism, and disease are rapidly destroying the social fabric of our planet and ranking alongside Huntington's (1996) *Clash of Civilizations* and Fukuyama's (1992) *The End of History and the Last Man*.

Nathaniel Tkacz (2012) examines the increased use and visibility of the term openness as a political concept—a sort of Openness 2.0, after the discourse initiated by Bergson, Popper and Hayek—tracing its re-emergence in the software and network cultures of the 1980s and following decades. He asks the question: "How is that new movements championing openness have emerged within a supposedly already-open society?" (p. 386). He begins his critique of open politics and the shift from open source to open government with two useful orienting quotations. The first from Lawrence Lessig (2005: 260) suggests that it is wrong to think of "issues of free software, or open source software, as if they were simply questions about the efficiency of coding." He continues: "I think the issues of open source and free software are fundamental in a free society. I think they are at the core of what we mean by an open society." The second quotation comes from Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2004: 340) who write:

One approach to understanding the democracy of the multitude, then, is as an open-source society, that is, a society whose source code is revealed so that we all can work collaboratively to solve its bugs and create new, better social programs.

Tkacz (2012) provides a useful account of the shift from systems to open source thinking--although not a social view of the mathematics evolution from cybernetics, to chaos and complexity theory—to the point of where open takes flight with software like GNU/Linuxbased operating system. He explores the translation of this kind of second-generation openness into a proliferating political ideal taken up in conceptions that treat openness as a platform for government. His critique is a critique of Popper's original conception that is good on identifying "enemies" but thin on giving "open" any positive content beyond a simply equation with democracy. The mistake in my view is to identify "open" as a naïve and non-contestable political concept and not to recognise it different meanings and appropriation (Peter & Roberts, 2011). The huge difference between Popper's formulation of "open" in the open society is that it embraces and is committed to the assumption of individualism not only of democracy but as a working assumption underlying his critique of historicism and all forms of collectivism. What differentiates Popper from Lessig and Hardt and Negri is precisely the way in which "Openness 2.0" depends on new social forms of knowledge (social media, social production, social innovation, social democracy) that utilised collective intelligence and collective action.

Much of the literature of openness in its first incantation is directed at the West as a defence of liberal modernity as the global template that the world might follow. Histories of globalization often tend to mention increasingly interdependence and interconnectivity as principal characteristics especially in the post-Cold War process of world economic integration. Some in addition reject explanations of globalization as a linear process but rarely do they go beyond a recognition of complexity to understand the problems of managing a complex multilateralism in a multi-tiered system with the development of the informal G-20 system, the rise of non-state actors, a new regionalism as well as an emerging international civil society based on a rapidly growing network of NGOs.

Global Systems History

World systems theory is an approach to world history examining the waves of world integration from the perspective of a transnational division of labour between core and periphery countries. It originated in the work of the Annales school characterized by Fernand Braudel who focused on long-term processes operated on the basis of geo-ecological units of analysis. World-systems theory represented by Immanuel Wallerstein drew on neo-Marxist dependency theory stringly associated with Andrew Gunder Frank to analyse the world development process. Wallerstein suggests that the contemporary

world-system originated in the sixteenth century with the “discovery” of the Americas. Much of the research is tied to analyses of the rise and impact of capitalism, the history of global labor movements and theories of temporality rather than focusing on the dynamic, nonlinear, transformational nature of current informational big data systems that change the nature of history in ever greater complexity. This is perhaps the difference with what Alan Woods calls “global systems history.”

Alan Wood (2010) suggests:

The old atomistic, mechanistic, and analytic worldview, which portrayed the world in strictly nominalist terms as consisting of parts with few or no intrinsic connections to each other, and which dominated modern life since the Scientific Revolution, is no longer adequate. Now the problems are systemic, interdependent, interdisciplinary, and interconnected (p. 289).

He imagines a new “global systems history”—“a universal, ecological, and systems perspective” (p. 289) that draws inspiration from Asian holistic traditions and modern scientific complex systems theory that focuses on “complementarity rather than separateness.” He mentions five characteristics of systems theory, well researched in the literature that he applies to global history: emergence, feedback, interconnectivity, self-organization, and cooperation. Andrea Jones-Rooy and Scott E Page (2010) point out that not all systems produce complexity or outcomes that are “good”—they can also produce large events like wars, financial crises and epidemics. Interconnectivity and interdependence are relational characteristics that speak to the growing links between networks perhaps best exemplified by the World Wide Web. But increased global interconnectivity does not necessarily imply spatio-temporal convergence or geo-temporal uniformity, nor should it be taken as an implicit endorsement for the view that world convergence is a result of the effects of Western colonialism, now represented by US hegemony at the centre of financialization and the world debt economy. Eisenstadt’s (2000, 2002) “multiple modernities” argued for the precedence of the cultural and the local over the global to highlight differences in local traditions and their resistances to Western modernization. Yet the interconnectivity of ideas, information, and increasingly images gives rise to a highly compressed sense of world temporality driving us toward “the epoch of digital reason” (Peters, 2014).

Even though some civilizational societies have the power to reconceptualise their own cultural interpretations of modernity—of change and development—rejecting the West model of development, increasingly they are caught up in the modern transmutation of information,

communication, knowledge, science and technology whether or not this leads to convergence or polychronicities. The hypothesis of openness is not determining of any outcome because it relinquishes that old linear cause and effect for a kind of transformation logic in which systems can rapidly change and transform their properties. This might be referred to as the deep grammar of world development that is a form of complexity and in principle as difficult to predict as an emerging weather system.

The complexity turn of the 1990s arose out of system thinking in the 1950s including the Macy Conferences on cybernetics that questioned the mechanised Newtonian epistemologies and linear causation of closed systems to prioritise process of structure and to theorise local determinism, flows, transformational and emergent systems and dynamic non-linear causation. Second and third generation cybernetics figured as a code word for global communications and media studies. As an epistemology related to systemics and systems philosophy the term as functioned as an approach for investigating a wide range of phenomena in information and communication theory, computer science and computer-based design environments, artificial intelligence, management, human systems and consciousness studies, cognitive engineering and knowledge-based systems, emergence and self-regulation, ecosystems, sustainable development, hypermedia and hypertext, and Web science. Innovations came with Simon's (1962) discussion of complexity, Miller's (1978) work on living systems, Maturana and Varela's (1980). work on autopoiesis, i.e. self-production, Mandelbrot's (1977) work on fractal forms, Zadeh (1965) work fuzzy sets and fuzzy logic, Thom's (1975) work on the theory of catastrophes, and the development of chaos theory. Recent contributions include the Hungarian Csanyi's (1989) work on the 'replicative model of self-organization', Langton (1989) on AL, Sabeili's (1991) theory of processes, and McNeil (1993) on the possibility of a better synthesis between physical sciences and living system's work on the theory of catastrophes, and the development of chaos theory (François, 1999).

The globalization of system analyses within and across the disciplines demands a complexity approach, but more importantly, it demonstrates that these complex systems can operate simultaneously at different levels—the level of infrastructure, code and content, for instance within communication systems, to enable certain freedoms while controlling others. Complexity as an approach to knowledge and knowledge systems now recognizes both the develops of global systems architectures in (tele)communications and information with the development of *open knowledge production systems* that increasingly rest not only on the establishment of new and better platforms (sometimes called Web 2.0), the semantic web, new search algorithms and processes of digitization but also social processes and policies that foster *openness* as an overriding value as evidenced in the

growth of open source, open access and open education and their convergences that characterize global knowledge communities that transcend borders of the nation-state.

What is missing here is a conception of openness as a complex skein that is powered by the cultural invention of a kind of mathematics, beginning with Boolean algebra and the evolution of electronics, like the invention of writing before it in human history, that has propelled human beings into new and greater forms of interconnectivity emulating and sharing various features of the natural world and now blurring the boundaries between the natural and the cultural. Part of the conceptual difficulty lies in accounts that are crude versions of technological determinism rather than a body of theory driven by an understanding that views the modern history of the computer, communication, and cognition in terms of the mathematics of complexity. This is a history that embraces a social account of these overlapping developments based on the observation concerning the social character of knowledge (and language), and a set of philosophical views of Pierce, Dewey and Wittgenstein that look to socialized accounts of logic, truth and language including their operationalization in electronics. A philosophical theory of technology can recognise its social roots and relations as well as posing critical questions concerning its distribution, ownership and access.

Hannu Nieminen (2014) provides “A Short History of the Epistemic Commons” emphasizing that the quest for openness (and public exchange) is seen as “a continuation of the long historical development of the epistemic commons, which began in the Middle Ages and culminated in the legacy of the Enlightenment” (p. 55). He suggests that “European modernity is fundamentally based on the assumption that knowledge and culture belong to the common domain and that the process of democratisation necessarily means removing restrictions on the epistemic commons.” Yet he remarks that neoliberalism has systematically weakened the expansion of the commons by privatising public institutions and CEE countries did not experience the same democratic development after WWII because there was no tradition of democratic public institutions.

The complexity analysis of globalisation can demonstrate at the same time convergence and heterogeneity, difference and monoculturalism, digital logics that encourage dispersal and decentralization on the one hand, and also regrouping, concentration and a core/periphery relationship, on the other. The notion of globalization as a form of self-generating capital seemed to point to the freedom of the transnational corporation during the 1990s and 2000s wedded to the process of ‘financialization of capitalism’ that seems to have accompanied neoliberalism and globalization, representing a shift from production to financial services, proliferation of

monopolistic multinational corporations and the financialization of the capital accumulation process.

In the second decade of the twenty-first century globalization has become more characterized by a geo-economics where economic warfare undermines economic integration and regional multilateral trading regimes take precedence of global ones (Leonard, 2015). Economic sanctions and restrictions, the geopoliticization of trade, forms of state capitalism and politicized central banks where debt and credit are weaponized, increasingly shift the world toward gated markets, regional institutions, and subglobal politics.

While global systems history depicts the underlying digital logics that increasingly structure overlapping big systems and integrate world trade and finance there is a disconnect and uncoupling from the world that involves movements of people who migrate often as a consequence of bad or failing markets, falling prices, war and conflict (Peters & Besley, 2015a & b). Economic migrants from poor regions to the rich Atlantic states can be understood partly in these terms. More troubling cases involve the forced migration of those seeking asylum from war zones such as the massive migration of Syrian refugees who have left Syria and refugee camps in neighboring states to travel through Greece and Macedonia to reach safe haven in Germany and the Nordic states. In this case the historic scale of migration imperils the refugees in collection border points like Lesbos and Calais and forces a contradiction of liberal internationalism which poses a paradox for the liberal state and the EU where some member states like Hungary and Austria seem no longer committed to principles of asylum that are fundamental to both the identity and constitution of the new Europe.

No longer is it possible to say “we never expel a foreigner”.

NOTES

1. The translation is by Benjamin Jowett (1881) and is an excerpt from *Reading About the World, Volume 1*, edited by Paul Briens, Mary Gallwey, Douglas Hughes, Azfar Hussain, Richard Law, Michael Myers Michael Neville, Roger Schlesinger, Alice Spitzer, and Susan Swan and published by Harcourt Brace Custom Publishing at http://public.wsu.edu/~briens/world_civ/worldcivreader/world_civ_reader_1/pericles.html

2. See <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/>: “OGP was launched in 2011 to provide an international platform for domestic reformers committed to making their governments more open, accountable, and responsive to citizens.”

3. See <http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2012/apr/17/open-closed-society-hillary-clinton>. See also Clinton’s “Remarks on Internet Freedom” at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2010/01/135519.htm>.

4. See the webpage “Openness Shapes Swedish Society” <https://sweden.se/society/openness-shapes-swedish-society/>. In operation see <http://www.opengov.se/govtrack/>. For the notion of “Nordic openness” see Norbert Götz and Carl Marklund (2014) *The Paradox of Openness: Transparency and Participation in Nordic Cultures*, and Götz “The Concept of Openness: promise and Paradox” (Chapter 1). Freedom of information (FOI), an extension of freedom of speech, is regarded as a fundamental human right including freedom of expression often conceptually linked to democracy. In the modern context the US was one of the first to embrace FOI in law (1966) and since then nearly half the world countries have enacted similar legislation. The movement has taken on related digital forms as such open government data and digital government.

5. See <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2012/09/mahbuban.htm#author>

6. The crude version of technological convergence is also the driving conception at the World Economic Forum: “Hyperconnectivity is the increasing digital interconnection of people – and things – anytime and anywhere. By 2020 there will be 50 billion networked devices. This level of connectivity will have profound social, political and economic consequences, and increasingly form part of our everyday lives, from the cars we drive and medicines we take, to the jobs we do and the governance systems we live in, <http://www.weforum.org/projects/hyperconnected-world>

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