

The Wealth of Anthropocentric Globalization Strategies and the “Symplegades” of Natural and Manmade Disasters

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Main text Globalization varies in definitions and aspects; yet, it holds the most promising ideology for continuous sustainability and development, both for humanity and the environment [1]. While a notable percentage of people describe global management policies as hydra-headed tools affecting cultures, politics and societies, everyone agrees that globalization is not just a theoretical principle, but the worldwide expansion of conservation management areas, such as governance, affairs, finance and the environment [2, 3]. Global ecology for instance, refers to Earth as one vast ecosystem and although experts specialize ecology based on types and characteristics, the total of the many ecosystems and their wildlife are affected by same factors (impacts of climate change, pollution, etc.) at a certain degree [4].

As the world is increasingly threatened by natural and manmade disasters, joint disaster response actions are perhaps the only mechanisms that are instantly accepted, fact that proves that global policies could be applied if the circumstances demand it [5]. Furthermore, the United Nations, and more specifically the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development and Environment Programme (UNDP), as well as the World Bank and other international or regional organizations tend to bring humankind even closer to that direction, primarily by promoting international cooperation and participation in major fields, such as disaster risk reduction, trade or commerce and environmental protection [6]. Additionally, the achievements in science and technology have reached their current levels due to the rapid information sharing and know-how exchange in education and research [7]. Therefore, it could be stated that a multilayered globalization is inevitable and irreversible, at least for groups of similar interests; but how about the rest?

Current approaches are not always the most appropriate for convincing heterogeneous populations to accept homogeneous management policies. On June 23, 2016 the United Kingdom (UK) voted to leave the European Union, eliminating all hopes for a complete European integration [8]. This is just one of the many examples that show the unwillingness of nations to follow regional and global management frameworks while other problems remain unsolved, many of which have multi-dimensional impacts. In other words, modern countries prefer to maintain their national identification and adopt specific conventions from which they believe they can benefit. This perspective exists since the beginning of recorded history and proves that globalization can become ideal only when symbiosis is not forced, but adopted. The Greek philosopher Plato describes this phenomenon as “ants or frogs around a pond”, where countries/states continue to preserve political, historical, cultural and ethnic differentiations, while they accept a joint network linked with each other in multiple levels under the encompassing counseling of mutually agreed authorities [9]. This anthropocentric approach of globalization is very similar to the synthesis of ecosystems, as it respects the heterogeneity of individuals in a homogenous environment effectively, just like the different species of living organisms exist in balance in an ecosystem.

According to the “The Human Cost of Weather Related Disasters” report, extreme weather events have caused more than 150,000 deaths and affected 2.3 billion people over the last 20 years [10]. Equally, warfare, terrorism and other manmade disasters have affected countless lives in the most tragic way, regardless their nationalities and other differential characteristics, showing that the necessity of global response is more than crucial. International conventions and other

agreements such as the “Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction”, the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” and the United Nation Environmental Programme (UNEP) in combination with a plethora of regional and national disaster response plans have successfully resulted in a “premature” form of globalization for disaster preparedness and resilience, as they highlight combined critical issues that benefit environmental and socio-economic sustainability, that are top priorities for the majority of the affected countries.

Since the second half of the previous century, a lot has been accomplished for global safety, climate change adaptation and environmental protection. Especially for the environment, great progress has been made, regarding the overexploitation of natural resources, the establishment of protected zones and the promotion of ecotourism. There is no doubt that this outcome was the result of efficient multi-national partnerships for further sustainability. The establishment of multi-scaled frameworks and human-centered solutions could be the paradigm shift towards a successful globalization. On the other hand, strategies that solely focus on one-sided topics without taking into consideration the opinion of all the involved stakeholders are doomed to fail. The continuous involvement of experts, local communities and young populations is vital for boosting the potential of international strategies that can surpass the “Symplegades” of the many obstacles they must face.

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