REVIEW ARTICLE

Democracy and the challenges of globalisation: a theoretical framework

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Abstract: Globalisation is an increasingly broad, dynamic and complex phenomenon. Given the previous context and in an attempt to reduce its complexity, the underlying objective of this article is to contribute to a broader and more comprehensive discussion on globalisation in the light of the theme, democracy. We used a qualitative, exploratory and descriptive methodology, which focused on a theoretical analysis through a systematic literature review. The systematic review made it possible to synthesize the existing literature in order to provide a holistic view of the phenomenon. Therefore, our intention is to present a theoretical framework on the dimensions that contain the essence of globalisation in a postmodern version of democracy. The results suggest that there are no unambiguous metrics to measure the impact of globalisation. In that regard, it is essential to recognise globalisation as an opportunity and not as a threat, being aware of the underlying inequalities and the risks that they can pose to democratic states. Future studies can analyse the impact of the dimensions identified in this article and examine the differences within different countries and cultural contexts. The identification of opportunities that globalisation creates, as well as ways to mitigate possible inequalities and risks, can be useful in looking for new scientific and academic ventures.

Keywords: Complexity; democracy; post-modernism; globalisation.

INTRODUCTION

The term "globalisation" has taken on a considerable emotional form, as some see it as a benefit (i.e., a key to future world economic development), but also a setback, as there is a belief that it can increase inequalities within and among nations (Krugman & Venables, 1995; IMF, 2002). Almost three decades ago, King & Schneider (1991) analysed the effects of the global revolution in stages, citing a report known as the "Club of Rome", where they argue that, among several factors, the economic change, national independence, demographic growth, environment and technological advances, are contributing to globalisation. However, as mentioned above, globalisation has not always been seen as a positive endeavor, but, on the contrary, it is often identified as a threat to human security (Fukuda-Parr, 2003), social progress (Mooney & Evans, 2007), religious freedom (Bloom *et al.*, 2014) and employment (Flaherty & Rogowski, 2021). There were also some historical episodes that did not contribute favorably to the phenomenon of globalisation, such as the Cold War (1945-1991) or the construction of the Berlin Wall (1961-1989).

The growing momentum of globalisation during the last quarter of the 20th century and the first decades of the 21st century coincided with the spread of democracy around the world (Nayyar, 2015). In this regard, Brady *et al*. (2005) stated that one of the most pressing controversies in the social sciences has been the relationship between globalisation and democracy. Their argument reinforced the relevance of deepening studies on this topic, not least because, after the end of the Cold War, the challenges for democratic states in an increasing period of globalisation are numerous (Sousa, 2006), and it deserves further discussion by the academic community.

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To the best of our knowledge, there are no studies similar to this one. Notable researchers such as Steger (2020) presented a theoretical framework on the dimensions that contain the essential elements of globalisation. Our suggestion is to analyse globalisation in a postmodern version of democracy. Although Premfors (1992) argued that the concept of postmodernism was vague and encompassing, over time the concept has been increasingly studied and clarified. For instance, Ghasemi (2019) studied extensively the paradigms of postmodern democracies. While he begins by standing that postmodernism has served as a tipping point in the human evolution of thought and has, therefore, challenged a number of central assumptions in the social, political, historical, cultural and literary fields. Ghasemi (2019) remarks that in postmodernity, each nation-state would design and implement a democratic model to recognize its own social, political, cultural and economic orientations. Therefore, democracy is invoked by postmodern theory as a way to move a population away from the "conservative" autocratic narratives of tradition-oriented philosophies that favor totalizing views (Rorty, 1999; McManus, 2018). In turn, globalisation represents a significant change in the special scope of social relations and organisations, on an interregional or intercontinental scale (Held & McGrew, 2000), so both concepts are closely related. While the two concepts are related, it may make sense to conduct a scientific research that analyses globalisation in a postmodern version of democracy.

The results of this article provided a broader view of the topic under study, by suggesting that there are no unambiguous metrics to measure the impact of globalisation on democracy. Globalisation is not uniform, or a one-way process. It is increasingly broad, dynamic and complex. Therefore, it is not restricted to the economic sphere, as it has influence on the social, political, ideological and ecological levels. However, there are also some dichotomies that deserves to be studied, since economies have become global, while policies remain national (Strange, 1970). Strange´s already-cited argument is evident today, with the Brexit and the US-China trade conflict.

This article is structured into five sections including this introductory section. Section two presents review of the literature on the main concepts and theories. Section three discusses the methodological process, in particular the way the systematic literature review was structured. Section four has described the analysis and provided a general discussion of the selected articles. Section five focused on the conclusions, presenting the contributions to theory and practice, as well as guidelines for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents the main concepts and theories, by providing a short discussion about the concept of democracy and a brief analysis of globalisation. In addition, we discuss Steger´s (2020) theoretical model that focused on the dimensions of globalisation, namely: economic, political, ideological, cultural and ecological dimensions.

Democracy - Dēmokratia

In the fifth century BC, the term dēmokratia was used for the first time to designate the political regime of Athens in the famous dialogue of the Persian nobles, book 3 of the stories of Herodotus. The term for the regime, where archē (the norm) belongs to the people, is not dēmokratia, but isonomy (Raaflaub *et al*., 2007). The concept isonomy appears to be equality under the law (Bitros & Kyriazis, 2015) but, according to Raaflaub *et al*. (2007) – the supplicants, from the tragedy of Aeschylus – uniting the terms dēmos and kratein it formulates what we know today as democracy. This model, where all decisions were made in the popular assembly, and in which citizens participated in the political life of the polis, continued to evolve over time, adopting various meanings according to the temporal context. In the eyes of etymological value of the word demos, it also holds a negative connotation. For the social and economic elite, just a small percentage of the population had the status of citizen, meant not only merely "the people", but also the masses – the poor and the underprivileged classes (Raaflaub *et al*., 2007).

Athenian democracy deserves to be studied, because it has inspired modern democratic systems. One of the great advancements at the time was introduced by Solon, breaking the paradigm commonly accepted by the Athenian polis: jus sanguinis and jus soli. Cleisthenes later reorganizes the system by changing the eligibility criterion that does not include the requirement for citizens to be property owners. The term evolved to res publica (thing of the people) that was coined by the Romans to translate the Greek word polytheia, serving to connote a politically organised community so as to avoid the opposite - oligarchy (Winters, 2014) or ochlocracy (Kamitake, 2007). The Greek heritage has greatly contributed to everyone enjoying civic ability and being able to participate in public affairs – by its nature,

man is a political animal (anthropos physei politikon zoon) – proclaimed by Aristotle (Lalaki, 2012; Aristotle, 2017).

Later, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, stemming from the progressive ideas of Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, John Locke in the Essay Concerning Human Understanding, and Jean Jacques Rousseau in the well-known Contract Social, just to name a few famous authors from history, have outlined and defended the existence of rights inseparable from human nature, which override the established authority at the time (Cohen, 2008). Today, democracy is founded on values, such as freedom, equality and fraternity. However, new dynamics have been created such as security, mainly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, as well as the human rights, more prominent since the current migrant crisis. Thus, democracy is assuming a fast-changing configuration, as it encompasses political responses to contemporaneous phenomena and is subject to several interpretations from the electorate. However, the closest model to the genesis of the concept refers to "government of people", and thus we identify democracy as a form of government based on popular consent, which allows citizens to participate in political decisions or elect representatives in government bodies (Sousa, 2006).

Globalisation and its dimensions

Held & McGrew (2000) define the concept of globalisation by the stretching of social relations and activities within and among regions and borders. Thus, they suggest a growing magnitude or intensity of global flows, so that states and societies become increasingly involved in systems and networks of interaction. In other words, globalisation represents a significant change in the spatial scope of social relations and organisations, on an interregional or intercontinental scale. Patomäki and Teivainen (2002) advances that, the first to use the term were Levitt (1983) and, Robertson & Chirico (1985). For instance, from an economic perspective, Levitt (1983) referred to a complex movement of opening economic frontiers and deregulation, which allowed capitalist economic activity to extend its scope to the entire planet. With the end of the Cold War & the proliferation of new information and communication technologies (ICT), namely: the spread of the Internet in the 1990s; the concept was definitely given new visibility. Globalisation then opened the emergence of global brands and institutions.

Steger (2020) does not restrict globalisation only on the economic field, although this is one of its origins. On the other hand, it encompasses the political, cultural and ideological dimensions. In his most recent edition, Steger (2020) neglects the ideological dimension and adds a new dimension: the ecological one. Sterger (2020) suggested adopting the term of globalisation associated with the social condition, characterized by the interconnection of global economic, political, cultural and ecological flows, which make most of the existing borders irrelevant. We decided to consider all dimensions (Figure 1), leaving the other considerations for the results discussion section.

Indeed, globalisation is increasingly broad and complex. This argument is well illustrated by Cuterela (2012), who claimed that a quarter of world trade in 1999 was already done through global companies. Therefore, globalisation also has negative effects. Sousa (2006)
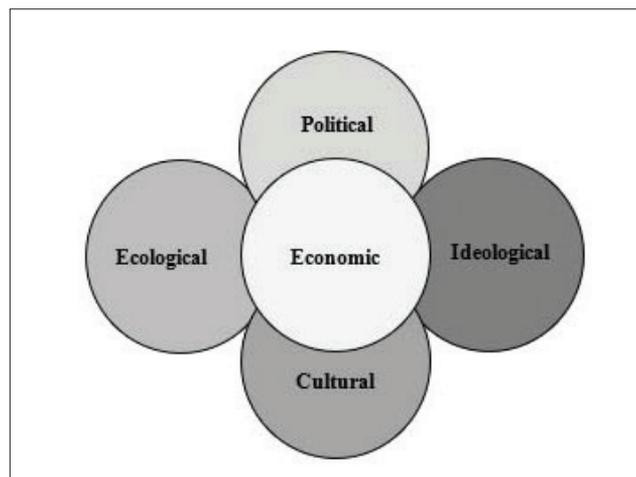

Figure 1: Globalisation and its dimensions

Source: Steger (2020)

classifies globalisation in developing countries, as a kind of neo-colonialism, as the dominance of the West over the rest of the world. Furthermore, Sousa states that globalisation has helped to reinforce fundamentalism, strengthening terrorist networks and, above all, has contributed to the worsening of inequalities between rich and poor countries. Another example is anti-globalisation movements, such as South Asia, specifically in the Indian continent, where there is evidence of civil disobedience to combat multinational corporations (Rajgopal, 2002). In that regard, Strange (1970) was right when she mentioned that economies have become global, but politics remains national, which means that globalisation does not have the same impact in all of its dimensions; although, depending on its impact, state powers may be also limited by the globalisation effect. It is also important to discern the difference between transnational and global. Transnationality supersedes globalisation, but usually has a more limited scope; whereas global processes are largely decentralized from specific national territories and occur within a global space, transnational processes are anchored and transcend one or more nation states (Kearney, 1995). The transnational and global phenomenon is raising the conflict with the jurisdiction and power of states, into what might be called "trans-state" (Kearney, 1995), a term that has not gained consensus, but is suggested by researchers who debate over the globalisation and transnationality themes.

METHODOLOGY

There is a vast literature on the subjects of globalisation and democracy. Early 20th century, Negreiros (1921), a Portuguese poet, commented that when he entered a bookstore, he started to count the books that were there to read and thought that all the years he had left would not be enough to read half of the books, then he thought – "there must certainly be other ways to save time, but I am lost". In light of the above, we also decided to save time in the most logical, objective and systematic way. To do so, Tranfield *et al.* (2003) recommend that a systematic literature review may be an adequate technique, as it represents a rigorous scientific investigation of the literature. Review processes tends to be complex, time-consuming, and partially incomplete (Mazzi, 2011). Therefore, a true systematic review may surpass the traditional ones on identifying, evaluating and synthesizing the existent body of knowledge (Fink, 2005). In that regard, the systematic review assisted us to build the theoretical background, contributing to avoid conceptual ambiguity. Overall, a systematic review was a valuable tool to discover key theories, concepts, ideas and debates around globalisation and democracy (Hart, 1998). Although a truly comprehensive approach to produce a systematic literature review generally requires the use of more than one database (Reis *et al.*, 2020a; Reis, 2021), our priority was transparency and ease

Table 1 : Globalisation and its dimensions

Scopus.com		
Criteria	Filters	Documents
Keywords	"Democracy" AND "Globalization"	
Restrictions	Article title	236
Articles selections		
Language	English	218
Document type	Articles	112
Source type	Journals	109
Subject area	Social Sciences	97

Source: Steger (2020)

of reproduction of results (Buchanan & Bryman, 2009). To fulfill that assumption, we chose Scopus – Elsevier, one of the largest peer-reviewed bibliographic databases. The research process was carried out using the keywords "Democracy" AND "Globalisation", in article titles. The search was carried out on May 18th, 2021 (Table 1) and to improve the review process we applied several filters, which helped to save time and ensure the viability of the results (Reis *et al*., 2019):

The first search has resulted in 236 documents. To avoid misinterpretation, we selected the universal language (English) and, in order to further narrow our search, we have chosen peer-reviewed articles from social science journals. The data analysis was accomplished by using a qualitative data analysis software, NVivo 11 (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013), that allowed to handle a large volume of data, and acting as an interactive process to find patterns and relationship between variables in a way to reduce data (Given, 2008). Thus, the data was analysed through a technique known as "content analysis" that had the objective to analyse data by clustering the articles text into hierarchized categories and subcategories in order to identify emerging ideas (Reis *et al*., 2020b). The results emerged from the content analysis, but were also triangulated by the identification of the investigated subject in each article and its keywords.

RESULTS

The analysis allowed us to identify a new dimension of globalisation in modern democracies. After reading and analysing all the articles, we could cross-check the information obtained with Steger´s theoretical model (Figure 1).

Emerging dimensions

From the literature review, we adopted Steger (2020) dimensions to redefine globalisation. From the 97 reviewed articles, we found that the most prominent dimensions were social, economic, political, ideological and ecological. That is, a new dimension emerged with great prominence – the social dimension, while the cultural dimension became negligible. That finding justifies the negative effects and population fears, presented in the previous section.

Globalisation and democracy at the social level have stimulated widespread discussion. Pierson (2001) states that the apocalyptic effects of globalisation are unrealistic. At its source, global trade has had an impact on states, but the nature of that impact is still ambiguous. Greater openness to trade coincides with larger public economies – following the compensation thesis[4]. After all, there are potential welfare gains for the citizens of nations that are more open to globalisation. Pierson (2001) also argues that the end of the Bretton Woods era did not imply total deregulation, as states now share the concept of "global governance": The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the G7[5] meetings, and G8[6], large corporations and a range of non-governmental organisations are part of this regulation. However, the control of certain international institutions is not linear. Conversi (2012) argues that transnational corporations are affecting states and their fellow citizens. The result may be the de-legitimation of existing institutions, although to compensate for the loss of authority, States may resort to populist, nationalist and xenophobic measures at a time when cultural diversity is threatened.
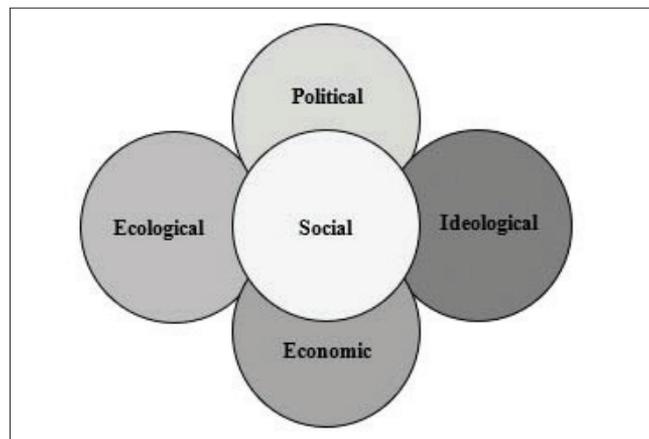

Figure 2: Globalisation and its new dimension

In Western societies, globalisation is already beginning to erode the very foundation of civil society, as evidenced by phenomena such as the London riots in 2011. Keyman & Öniş (2007) reinforce this idea, arguing that since the 1990s, parties have center-left and center-right tend to revise their strategies to cope more effectively with the new environment, a condition that has persisted to this day. Concomitantly, with the end of the Cold War, human rights violations have been invoked as justification for imposing deliberate sanctions, military invasions by states acting under this heading (Cohen, 2008). Indeed, the claim that human rights are a customary international legal right has legitimized some states (e.g., the United States of America) to the use of force in order to conduct pro-democratic invasions. We have found that in the wake of globalisation, military invasions need social consent. The US armed intervention in Iraq, in 2003, is an example. Without social support and international legitimacy for the alleged dismantling of nuclear weapons in the country, the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's despotic regime could have had different results. While armed intervention to overthrow an authoritarian political regime can last a day or be a matter of weeks, the consolidation of a democratic regime in all its dimensions can take decades (Sousa, 2006). In contrast, international organisations have been prime vehicles for promoting democratic expansion through sharing principles, promoting relations between states and societies, and developing and consolidating democratic institutions of government (Sousa, 2006).

Many scholars have wondered about the effects of globalisation: positive or negative? Brady & Denniston (2006) conducted a study to discuss three social welfare measures and a broad set of indicators of economic globalisation in seventeen democracies between 1975 and 2001. The results suggest that globalisation does not cause expansion, or the crisis, and it proposes some skepticism about claims, about the negative effect on social welfare, although they admit that there may be a modest negative effect. In contrast, Rajgopal (2002) conducted a study on anti-globalisation activities in South Asia. They found that certain people had begun a new form of civil disobedience to combat multinational corporations. Globalisation, instead of being seen as a democratic practice, is seen as synonymous with post-colonialism. The most visible actors in this wake are abstract entities, also known as transnational corporations. Seen as agents not of change but of neo-colonialism, they act as a vassal of interests, read business elite, and work against the interests of regional citizens. Rudra (2005) shares the same view, in stating that globalisation can lead to increased inequalities by radicalizing the lower classes and belittling democracy. While the importance of the

ideological dimension is beginning to be emphasized, and as citizens observe the effects of globalisation, the political dimension is no less important either.

According to Walby (2000), the processes of globalisation may compromise the ability of nation states to act autonomously (e.g., suffering pressure from transnational corporations), but some aspects of these processes are facilitating the development of certain democratic procedures. Globalisation is not a uniform one-way process, and many paradoxes can be identified (Walby, 2000): (1) the increase in the number of skilled workers, although global capital appears to be seeking cheap labor; (2) states are more democratic alongside the greater power of multinational corporations and financial markets; (3) increasing calls for state protection of human rights, while their role in welfare provision is diminishing. Kothari (2009) has a broader view, noted that global ecological and economic crises can be seen as opportunities to question the paths of development. In that regard, he suggests moving towards the ideological and political path, where ecological sustainability and social equity practices should be present. Ecological democracy implies major changes in governance and meets considerable resistance from today's political and corporate power centers. Let us see the Paris agreement within the United Nations on climate change and the friction it has aroused from large industrial groups.

Finally, Pierson (2001) suggests that there is no unambiguous metric to measure the impact of globalisation. Indeed, if we look at the issue in any detail, we will see that globalisation encompasses a range of different processes, the pace and impact of which will vary significantly from state to state. What is crucial is to recognize that globalisation is best understood not in terms of policies it "imposes" or "prohibits", but in terms of changes it brings and opportunities for different actors.

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATION AND GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

With the end of the Cold War and the proliferation of new ICTs that have given new visibility to globalisation, economies have become global. This research evidenced that globalisation is not only restricted to the economic level, although it was one of its origins. Currently, it includes the social, political, ideological and ecological dimensions. Therefore, globalisation is becoming increasingly broader, dynamic and complex. In an attempt to reduce the complexity of the subject, we have reviewed the literature and identified the globalisation model of Manfred Steger (2020), one of the most relevant

frameworks that can be found in the literature. We found that, for example, transnational corporations are affecting states and the well-being of their fellow citizens, which can result in the loss of legitimacy of institutions, either by increasing of populism, or by nationalism and xenophobic movements, which unequivocally threaten the cultural diversity. In addition, certain regions of the globe (i.e., India) are protesting against multinational corporations and globalisation, which is being identified as synonymous of post-colonialism as it is leading to an incense of inequalities. Ultimately, globalisation may add restrictions to the ability of nation-states to act less autonomously, at least when compared to the previous century.

Globalisation can also be seen as an opportunity for democracies. Issues such as the ecological crisis are being identified as global and are seen as opportunities to develop global actions against pollution. These global actions suggest integrated movements and synergies, such as the aforementioned opportunity that involves ideological and political dimensions in search of a sustainable ecology and social equity. Currently, there are no clear metrics to measure the impact of globalisation on democracies. Globalisation is not a linear one-way path. The key is to recognize globalisation in terms of opportunities for different actors, in view of the underlying difficulties and inequalities, as well as the risks for democratic States.

The findings from this article may have been limited, due to the methodological constraints that resulted from the research design and the data-set (Coombes & Nicholson, 2013). Similar to Mustak *et al.* (2013), the choice of search terms ended up dictated which publications would be included in the review, when choosing "democracy/globalisation" many contributions using other terminology to study the same subject were inevitable excluded. However, the used terms made more sense than "representative government" or "republic" for democracy, and "internationalization" or "mundialization" for globalisation. It should be noted that this article does not list all references that can be provided on request to the author.

Future studies should examine the impacts of the identified dimensions and analysing the differences within various cultural contexts. That is, although the central focus of this research is the Western hemisphere, it may be advisable to examine similar issues in the non-Western world vis-à-vis globalisation. Examining other contexts will also make it possible identify different opportunities created by globalisation, as well as new avenues to mitigate possible inequalities and risks to old and/or new democracies.

END NOTES

(1) Refers to the United Kingdom leaving the European Union.

(2) Athenian statesman and lawmaker, 640-561 BCE (Moore and Lewis, 2009).

(3) Athenian is credited to complete the work of Solon (Moore & Lewis, 2009).

(4) The compensation thesis states that economic integration induces states to expand social expenditures in order to provide social safety nets for those hurt by economic competition (Cameron, 1978; Garrett, 1998; Rodrik, 1998; Ha, 2015).

(5) Includes Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

(6) The G7, including Russia.

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