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Global Justice: The Terrors of Interdependence

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This article reflects on the events of 11th September, 2001, in their immediate aftermath. Globalisation has brought economic interdependence without institutions for global distributive justice. The challenge for social policy of greater mobility of people, both within and between states, is as pressing as the problems of security highlighted by those events. These issues will demand attention long after the 'war against terrorism' has abated, because rich First World countries can no longer insulate themselves from the effects of poverty and injustice in the developing world.

It is extremely difficult to analyse the wider implications of an epoch-making event, such as the attack on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, in the immediate aftermath of that event. Any such analysis runs the risk of being overtaken by subsequent events, and becoming dated – of reflecting only the immediate reactions to the atrocity, rather than the complexities and long-term consequences that emerge later. However, the attack was so momentous in its implications, and had such far-reaching effects, that the political landscape seemed suddenly transformed.

By the end of September 2001 when this article was written (and thus prior to the United States military action) it was already clear that the attack was being understood in the light of economic interdependence, and as one of the costs of the integration of the world economy. Increased security checks for air travellers, the debate about identity cards for UK citizens, and the impact on tourism were all indications that the free movement of people was a factor in facilitating the attack, and its control an aspect of the subsequent campaign against terrorism. As the city editor of the *Daily Telegraph* put it on 12 September, in a piece entitled 'World pays the terrible price of globalisation'.

> the force that has delivered a cornucopia of consumer goods has a dark side which is a nightmare beyond the wildest imaginings of the protesters lobbying against the World Trade Organisation.

This article does not attempt to make direct links between the attack and its aftermath (the 'war against global terrorism') and the development of global capitalism. What it tries to do is to address the issues of distributive justice that arise in an integrated world economy, and the actions through which individuals and groups challenge current distributive shares. I shall argue that, just as global capitalism relies on the transnational mobility of the factors of production for its dynamic, so resistance to it (including terrorism) has made strategic use of movement of people across borders. This in turn

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reflects the fact that, since the end of the Cold War, and in line with the redesign of the public infrastructure that has taken place in most countries, both direct and democratic collective action by disadvantaged people have become less effective. Hence they rely more on opportunistic methods (such as crime, informal economic activity, and irregular migration); and these in turn are now seen as creating conditions favourable for international terrorism.

During the summer of 2001, in the UK the news reports were dominated by issues of race relations (the riots in northern cities) and asylum seeking. The former concerned clashes between Asian Muslim and white youths; the latter centred on attacks on refugees from the Middle East in Glasgow and Hull, and attempts to get through the Channel Tunnel by people coming mainly from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia. The connections in all these between ethnicity, religion, poverty, and political persecution were far from obvious; but all defied the optimism about the fruits of global economic development under the new, post-1989 world order. Somehow the 'triumph of democracy' has not delivered harmony, or equalized life chances, despite economic success.

With the end of the Cold War, the ideological argument over the future of economic development seemed settled. Trade, not nationalist or socialist protectionism, would be the vehicle of growth, from which all would benefit – and this in turn would eventually lead to the downfall of all despots and demagogues, who promised justice under conditions of totalitarian rule.

On this account, the fact that national governments faced strict limits on the possibility of redistributing towards their poor seemed good news. In a world where investors would quickly move their funds elsewhere, tax rates would be held down, so business could prosper. The World Trade Centre and the commercial flights that soared above it were emblems of this impersonal economic rationality, transcending the politics of rivalry and envy. The day before the attack on the USA, Jack Straw wrote in the *Guardian* about 'the real benefits that globalisation and global capitalism have brought to millions. The right choice is to preserve and maximize the benefits while minimising the risks through joint global action'.

What was left out of this account was the fact that there are still more losers than winners in the world from the impact of these forms of global capitalism. And by making the national politics of social justice more difficult – disempowering organized labour, socialist parties, and collective action by the disadvantaged – these economic forces were also making spaces and opportunities for other kinds of action and critique. Anticapitalist demonstrations have been the noisiest, but ultimately least problematic of these, because they relied on much the same strategies and tactics as old-fashioned campaigns, even if they were aimed at international organisations rather than national governments.

Much more threatening are those movements and actors that use global capitalism's own mechanisms against it. Transnational mobility is the most fundamental of these. Hundreds of millions of people move across borders, in pursuit of business, tourism or study, every year – 90 million visit the UK alone. These journeys provide the pathways for migration, as people from poor countries, who lack opportunities and freedoms, seek better lives elsewhere. Economic migration is the new movement for global justice, and more effective for the fact that its activists shout no slogans and carry no placards. Asylum seekers are just the visible tip of this movement; most of its members travel in

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disguise, as the very business people, customers, tourists, and students who transact global capitalism's exchanges.

The politics of globalisation makes a strict separation between business, trade, and tourism, on the one hand, and democratic governance, on the other. What is good for business is good for people, and people should elect governments that protect business, global business. Economic migration muddles up the economics of free trade and open borders with politics of redistribution. International terrorism muddles up the means of capitalism with the politics of fear.

Mobility and interdependence

Mobility is a defining characteristic of present-day life, and a key feature of our identities and autobiographical narratives (Marcus, 1992). It is mobility (geographical, social, and economic) that has allowed the transformation from the old order of communal, class, and political loyalties to one of individual autonomy and choice (Giddens, 1991). Without free movement, it is not only global capitalism that cannot deliver on its promises of prosperity and consumer satisfaction; its political counterpart, post-socialism, cannot offer the rewards of meritocracy that now substitute for the old solidarities.

The basic unit of both global capitalism and post-socialist politics is the rational economic actor, seeking the best return on his or her assets (material resources and skills) in the world market-place. The idea that individuals should take responsibility for themselves in a competitive economic environment, and that this should include insuring themselves and their families against all adverse contingencies, is fundamental to this view. Nowhere is it now stronger than among the aspiring groups in post-communist countries, such as Poland. It is in pursuit of this principle that they catch buses everyday from their home cities, to travel as tourists to London, with the sole intention of working, to save up for cars or houses (Düvell and Jordan, 1999). As one put it:

> We work for the welfare of England. And we shouldn't be put off working. I understand that someone who causes trouble is not allowed to come, but if you want to work and pay tax, why not? (research interview, London, 1998)

Irregular migration of this kind challenges the new order, because it takes one side of its prescription for peaceful prosperity (the welfare-enhancing potential of all transnational exchanges) and deploys it against the other (the benefits of orderly competition between democratic states, all organized around principles of justice). It therefore forces states to limit mobility, and control border crossings.

If the world were really One Big Market (Polanyi, 1944) – as it is, from the perspective of international corporations – and the conditions for perfect competition prevailed, then the mobility of all factors of production would be essential for optimum output *and* distribution. But, given the facts of uneven development and the system of nation states, the economics of welfare demands that governments provide a particular public infrastructure for their citizens, including redistributive transfers to achieve justice between members. Although economics textbooks acknowledge (usually on their last page) that 'the quickest way to equalize world income distribution would be to permit free migration between countries' (Begg, Fischer, and Dornbusch, 1991: 644), they hasten to add that such policies would subvert welfare states and the whole rationale of territorial government. So the notionally infinite mobility in the micro-economics of

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production under perfect competition (that underpins the theory of global capitalism) is contradicted by the idea of bounded membership as the basis for redistribution in the macro-economics of social citizenship, social justice, and social welfare.

But the fact remains that individuals do move about, not merely in search of the highest rewards for their expertise, but also for the sake of the best quality of life per dollar paid in taxes (Tiebout, 1956). This includes the best leisure and cultural amenities, security of property and persons, health and education provision for families, and care in old age. Mobility of this kind occurs between local authorities, and between nation states (Cullis and Jones, 1994: ch. 11). The communities in which people live are either self-selecting 'communities of choice', whose members tend to have similar incomes and tastes, or residual 'communities of fate', where residents cannot afford to go anywhere else, or are tied by responsibilities to others with disabilities or disadvantages (Jordan, 1996: ch. 5).

Post-socialist politics celebrates these developments. Because people are free to vote with their feet against government interference and high taxes, they get good (small) government and lower taxes, so it is argued. Although there may be dangers of a 'race to the bottom' in welfare provision (Brückner, 2000), the art of government is to find a balance between low-cost efficiency and tax-financed equity, preferably through giving people incentives to work and save. And the public choice theorists who have inspired this approach to the provision of social services cheerfully acknowledge that it pays the rich to exclude the poor from collective goods, whether privately or publicly funded – 'it may be that the most efficient solution is for individuals of similar tastes to group together. . . . There may well be a tendency for zoning on the part of high-income groups in order to exclude the poor' (Cullis and Jones, 1994, p.300).

The trouble is that this utopian system works only for the world's privileged few, who can afford to live in entirely private communities, and pay for luxurious on-site services. In the rich nations' cities, the segregation of income groups means that better-off people cannot find local labour to service their needs. In London, there is a recruitment crisis among public service professionals – nurses, teachers, social workers – because they cannot afford to live in even half-decent districts on their salaries. This creates a need for foreign staff (the largest category of legal overseas recruits to the UK) and a space for irregular migrants, who provide the adaptable, cheap workforce for the private service sector of the cosmopolitan city.

It is the better educated and better resourced citizens of Third World countries who come to work as cleaners, chambermaids, washers up, building labourers and sweatshop workers (Düvell and Jordan, 1999). Although they try to send remittances home, it is usually not enough. Those left behind are the least equipped to deal with the new demands of competition and self-responsibility. There are billions of them, and it only takes a very few to hijack a plane, and destroy a building.

Migration and the Global Economy

The economic interdependence that comes with an integrated world economy has opened up new pathways for migration. It is not just that air travel and improved transport links allow journeys to be made more cheaply and quickly. The flows of personnel between branches of international corporations, the travelling necessary to fix deals, supervize contracts, review plans, check progress and monitor outcomes, and the

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processes of transporting products all over the world, all require cross-border movements of people, as part of their working lives. For many employees, these journeys provide the 'perks' of their jobs, as well as entailing some inconveniences and disruptions to their relationships. But the invisible consequences of these processes are worked out through other kinds of movement by other people.

It has long been recognized that the transnational mobility of capital stimulates mass migration from less developed to more developed economies. Saskia Sassen (1988) pointed out that the big increase in migration to the USA that started in the 1960s was from precisely those Asian, Caribbean and Latin American countries that were the focus of direct investment by US companies. The development of export processing zones in those countries, along with export-orientated agriculture, created new links with the USA. These same changes, while stimulating the rapid growth of the economies of Mexico, the Philippines, South Korea, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Colombia, also caused the disruption of traditional production and social systems. It led to massive urban employment opportunities for young women, but redundancy for may young men, creating whole new classes who saw emigration as an option, and were able to act on opportunities at certain points in their life cycles. Between 1970 and 1980, the Asian population of the USA increased by 100 per cent, and the Hispanic population by 62 per cent (Sassen, 1988, ch.3).

New York, like London, has become a 'global city', whose economic functions are determined more by the presence of these international company headquarters and the business support services they require than by their domestic economies (Sassen, 1991). The service workers of these cities attend to the needs of such companies and their staff; they have to be flexible, mobile and willing to work unsocial hours. Single immigrants provide a far more adaptable workforce than indigenous workers with high housing costs and families to support.

The social consequence of these developments is to create cosmopolitan cities, with populations who interact in unusual ways. Polish irregular migrants in London insist that they rarely meet English people (Düvell and Jordan, 1999). Typical comments are:

> 'I'm surrounded by Poles and Turks. I came to England but it's just like I was in Turkey'.
> 'I only come across Indian people'.
> 'I don't know any English person, not a single one, just Black and Indian, and Polish maybe who can speak English' (research interviews, 1998).

More Polish migrants spoke of partnerships or friendships with people of non-British origin. As well as Turkish and Indian employers and colleagues, they mentioned Somalis in particular, as landlords, friends, employers or partners.

However, not all irregular migrants experience this kind of society positively. Several Brazilians, who found it easy to get menial work in London, saw the ways that they were used, and the competition for this work, as cruel and exploitative (Jordan and Vogel, 1997).

> 'It is a very aggressive reality. It is a jungle, a jungle made of concrete and stones. You are on your own here, it is you and you alone all the time. We live under very poor conditions here. Life is hard in Brazil, but we live much better'.
> 'People in ''the black'' are highly competitive. I started to hear about people being caught and sent back because of betrayal and accusation' (research interviews, 1997).

Turkish and Kurdish migrants, most of who are asylum seekers, emphasize that they

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are forced into the shadow economy by the lack of decently-paid formal employment (Düvell and Jordan, 1999).

> 'I think the British aim at big growth of the textile industry, achieved mainly by cheap human labour, supported by the government, and people who provide this cheap labour are on the one hand condemned, but on the other hand also supported, because they are paid this social assistance. And this all becomes illegal, but at the same time deliberate' (research interview, 1998).

Thus, quite apart from the settled populations of immigrants who have become citizens of the USA and UK, the migrant population is a cosmopolitan, multiethnic mix of legal and illegal entrants, along with short-term visitors, on business or study trips, or taking career breaks and tourist trips. Illegal immigrants – those who are trafficked, who enter by clandestine means, or deceive the authorities about the real purpose of their visits – are easily able to survive in such societies. Their strategies consist partly of avoiding contact with all enforcement authorities, including many welfare agencies; partly of assimilating their behaviour to that of other marginal groups, including some minority ethnic communities; but mainly of making themselves inconspicuously useful in the host economy, in various service roles.

It is very easy for people with extreme political views to conceal themselves among such migrants. Indeed, the networks formed among immigrants include a great diversity of political ideas, some strongly hostile to global capitalism, and to the geopolitical role of the United States. And their experiences of life at the bottom end of these societies are unlikely to alter these views. At very least, they may be willing to offer shelter and succour to organized terrorists. This makes the 'war against terrorism' particularly difficult to conduct, and raises the risk that its means will involve an escalation of racial discrimination and xenophobic violence (Fekete, 2001).

Community, Inclusion and Justice

In both the USA and UK, a new version of citizenship emphasizes responsibility and contribution to the common good. Individuals are expected, under this 'new social contract', to take care of themselves and their families, to work hard, and save for retirement and dependence (Department of Social Security, 1998). This means being more willing to move to where work is available, and to travel further from home in search of work. In return, governments promise to dismantle the barriers to opportunity for those qualified, talented and energetic enough to rise up the ladders of status and earnings. Part of their reward will be living in more congenial and well-appointed communities, with better amenities and resources.

Community (and its companion concept, social capital) have become the panacea for all social ills within the new meritocracy. Community exists when members respond reciprocally to each other's needs, recognising common interests in solving local problems, and sharing in a life of mutually beneficial common activities. It is also a source of benign social control, since neighbours keep an eye out for troublesome behaviour, and avoid the need for official interventions, with words of friendly advice or reprimand (Etzioni, 1993). Networks of trust and co-operation (Putnam, 2000) have indirect benefits for both prosperity (the world of business runs on such values) and democracy (a vibrant civil society leads to active participation in the political process).

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However, there are fatal tensions between the different aspects of this cosy, folksy story. Although mobility may promote some aspects of community, by making residents living far from kith and kin more reliant on colleagues and neighbours, it also leads to more homogeneous communities of people in the same income bracket, occupational grouping and consumer preference segment. They may be more likely to join a fitness centre or a weighwatchers' club, but this will probably not introduce them to others very different from themselves. Above all, the fastest-growing civic associations are Neighbourhood Watch Schemes and Not-In-My-Back-Yard groups, organising to protect the homogeneity of their districts, the value of their properties, and the security of their streets. Balanced and inclusive communities they are not.

Furthermore, in the UK this clustering includes the right to access to the best public facilities of all kinds. Parents move or travel to the most successful schools; patients seek the health services and hospitals with the best treatment facilities; and older people position themselves near the best care services (Jordan, 1996, ch.6). Those who cannot afford to move or travel are left with the least successful and worst resourced of all these public agencies, as well as the highest concentrations of urban decay, poverty, crime, drug misuse and deviance of all kinds. Local authority housing, which used to guarantee some kind of balance in communities by supplying some 30 per cent of the accommodation in all towns and rural areas, has shrunk into a residue of dilapidated provision for the most disadvantaged households.

All this means that community tends to reinforce the advantages of the better off, and consolidate the exclusion of the poor. Policies that aim to drive unemployed people, lone parents and those with lesser disabilities back into the labour market end up by forcing them to travel from their ghettos of poverty into better-appointed districts, to serve the needs of others, whose communities they will never be able to afford to join (Jordan and Jordan, 2000; HM Treasury, 2000, sec. 4.33).

Immigration, and especially asylum seeking, adds a potentially explosive element to this situation. Immigrants are usually insecure and marginal members of communities, unless they have been settled for more than one generation. Even then, they may see new arrivals as a threat. The Home Office immigration enforcement authorities in London report that 70 per cent of denunciations of undocumented workers come from minority ethnic informants (Düvell and Jordan, 1999).

In order to relieve the congestion effects and competition for scarce resources in the global cities, the UK and European governments have adopted policies for dispersing asylum seekers to peripheral areas, with few settled immigrants from their countries of origin. But this often puts them side by side with very deprived white citizens, who (wrongly) see them as privileged and pampered. The results in the UK have been attacks (one fatal) on those seeking humanitarian protection from persecution at home.

There are high costs associated with societies based on exclusive 'communities of choice' and excluded 'communities of fate'. In some US states, public spending on prisons is higher than that on higher education. In the UK, despite the rhetoric of social justice, inequalities between rich and poor have continued to grow. In both countries, mistrust of politicians, and low turnout at elections, is the norm. These issues of social justice at the national level have become intertwined with ones of global justice between regions of the world.

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Global Justice?

The search for global justice has become more urgent in the aftermath of the attack in the USA. In the first shock, this was seen purely in terms of punishing the perpetrators, and the campaign against international terrorism was initially codenamed 'Operation Infinite Justice'. Calmer reflection showed that, in building a coalition against terrorism, a broader understanding of justice was required, not least because there were so many resistance movements in the world whose governments regarded them as terrorists, and these had the support of states or citizens from so many nations, including the USA. There has been something in the dynamic of global economic development, and the political reforms that have accompanied it, that has fed into such conflicts, rather than defused them.

The case of Israel is an extreme version of the problems identified in this article. The Israeli settlements are the ultimate examples of 'communities of choice', surrounded by hostile 'communities of fate', with armed conflict between the two. When power is concentrated in the hands of the former, this breeds the sense of injustice that legitimates fanatical attacks. This in turn justifies excessive retaliation, setting up a cycle of violence and terror.

Where this has a racial, ethnic or religious component, such conflict is given an extra edge, as in Northern Ireland, Zimbabwe or South Africa. Even when formal political power is transferred, continuing inequalities in wealth and income perpetuate conflict, either in the form of political violence, or crime rates that are almost as intolerable. The horrors of ethnic cleansing in Central Africa and the former Yugoslavia shows that terrorism is not simply an activity that is exported from the developing and post-communist worlds to the rich countries of the West, but the manifestation of hatred and frustration, bred by historical abuse of power and the daily experience of inequality.

The challenges of these phenomena to democracy and freedom are many. Can institutions for global governance evolve to deal with grievances and injustices between populations? Can the notion of citizenship be rid of its exclusive elements, and the barriers to global justice they pose? Can the ideas of community and social capital be rescued from the platitudes of Third Way politics, and put to real use in combating economic and social polarisation? Does irregular migration and the growth of an informal, shadow urban economy undermine attempts to achieve equity, gender equality and racial harmony? Does the emergence of xeno-racism against asylum seekers set back the progress in race relations achieved in recent decades, and signal new problems around tolerance and harmony?

There are some encouraging signs, which provide clues for progressive policies for the longer term. For instance, the European Union is a diverse collection of states, with very different political traditions and levels of income *per capita*. Yet it has managed to set up a regime of free mobility between states that would have seemed very unlikely in the 20 years after the war. Although asylum seeking and the enlargement of the Union, embracing the post-communist countries of central Europe, challenge this new regime, there are indications of new thinking that may tackle these issues more constructively in future.

First, migration has not posed problems since the EU embraced the poorer countries of Southern Europe – Greece, Portugal and Spain. Indeed, there are fewer workers from these countries in the more prosperous North European states than there were in the

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1960s. This is partly because the EU has redistributed income to the South, through the Common Agricultural Policy and the Structural Funds, and allowed these countries to develop embryonic welfare states. Economic migration slowed when conditions in the poorer countries, and especially the poorest regions, were improved by redistribution – Ireland being the most obvious case in point. And countries that had for centuries been ones of emigration (Ireland, Italy, Spain and Greece) became countries of immigration.

This should provide some clues about how to absorb the post-communist countries of Central Europe in the process of enlargement of the EU. Making conditions in their own countries better is probably a preferable solution to increasing controls over migration. It worked for the former East Germany, when the two halves of that country were reunited with the fall of the Berlin Wall. But it will also be necessary to address inequalities within these countries, and especially discrimination and violence against the Roma in them (Castle-Kaněrová, this volume).

Second, migrants (including asylum seekers) are a potential resource for the host societies. Both the USA and the UK are coming to recognize this, as skills shortages appear in many occupations, and some unskilled tasks (such as agricultural seasonal work) are hard to get done (Roche, 2000). Whether this takes the form of regularising illegal immigrants (as in the USA and Southern Europe), or increased recruitment from abroad (as in the UK), what matters is to include migrants as full members, with proper rights, and not just opportunistically, to exploit their adaptability and expertise. And asylum seekers should have access to the new opportunities that are created.

In Europe, demographic reasons for accepting migrants are as important as economic ones. Birth rates are falling dramatically, in the Catholic countries of Southern Europe especially, but also in Germany and in the post-communist countries. Immigrants are young blood, and can restore the balance between age cohorts in these countries.

Above all, the new century demands a broader concept of justice, which goes beyond the doubtful benefits of trade, foreign investment, tourism and the exploitation of cheap labour. The demand of compensation for centuries of slavery is just one example of the issues at stake in relations between rich and poor nations. The campaign for debt relief is another. The demand for global justice will always be accompanied by the threat of terror in a globalize economic environment, unless measures of these kind are seen to be progressing, through processes of global governance that go well beyond anti-terrorist and migration control regimes.

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