

A Critique of Pantaleon Iroegbu's Thought on Globalized Ethics

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Abstract: This paper discusses Pantaleon Iroegbu's thought on globalized ethics in which he argued that the world has now become a global village where everybody knows or at least can know what is happening to others, and can influence or be influenced by others. From the communication point of view, it is said to be a globe that hides no one again, where you are and what you are doing, can be found out. Hence, no persons can do things all alone as they wish, without others somehow interfering with them. It is on this basis that man as the case may be, is regarded as a social being that needs to interact with his fellow human in the society. This work is an attempt to critically analyze Pantaleon Iroegbu's thought on globalized ethics which he captured as enwisdomised ethics that means to be filled with, and characterized by wisdom. For him, ethics is for wisdom at its highest importance and how human actions can become correct, complete and perfect in goal. He sees global ethics as ethics for all, which constitutes the complete round of our existence in the one globe. The paper is analytical in approach. It analyses the thought and discourse of Iroegbu on the globalized ethics. It is discussed as follows: introduction, Iroegbu on Globalized Ethics, Issues in Iroegbu's discourse on Globalized Ethics, Summary and Conclusion.

Introduction

Global ethic is not a new ideology but the necessary minimum of common values, standard and basic attitudes. In other words, a minimal basic consensus relating to binding values, irrevocable standards and moral attitudes which can be affirmed by all human beings irrespective of their religious and ideological differences. It is therefore a project which needs more than a decade to fulfill; it calls for a change of consciousness which has already made great progress in the last decade. Anyone who is interested in seeing human rights fully respected and more effectively defended throughout the world must surely also be interested in achieving a change of consciousness concerning human obligations and responsibilities. These need to be seen in the context of global challenges and efforts to establish a global ethics, an ethics for humankind. Efforts to establish a global ethics have received wide spread international backing in recent years.

The problem of globalized ethics is as old as man himself. There has been a problem of how to determine what a man ought to do and not to do. What should be the moral principle that should guide man's action? What should be the goal of a truly moral man? What kinds of action are right and wrong in particular circumstances? Why should we do good and avoid evil? The question of ultimacy of human life and a host of others. These ethical questions have led many philosophers into theorizing. Among them is Pantaleon Iroegbu who propounded globalised ethics which holds the principle/theory of enwisdomization. The question remains, can this serve as a standard of wisdom in contemporary society? What should be the duty of individual, should it be individualistic or universalistic?

Pantaleon Iroegbu's thought on Globalized Ethics

Global ethics (universal ethics) is that set of ethics whose principles and maxims were established through the activity of thinkers and philosophers, on a rational and objective basis; as such, every individual is obliged to adhere to them if he wishes to conduct himself conscientiously, or if he seeks happiness in his life. Two examples illustrating this are the "ethics of duty" established by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, and "the utilitarian ethics" whose principles were laid down by the-English philosopher and jurist, Jeremy

Bentham, expanded thereafter by his successors, the English philosopher John Stuart Mill (Taha 1).

For Schapowal, the 21st century makes it clear that the world has grown smaller and the world's people have become almost one community interdependent in large multinational groups, in global economy, industry, trade with worldwide communications eliminating nearly every ancient barrier of distance, language, and race. At the same time, there are common problems such as overpopulation dwindling natural resources, environmental pollution threatening our air, water, food, eliminating of life forms minute by minute. By this, it creates a common ethical basis, i.e. a global ethics. All persons, religious and political or social cleavage notwithstanding, agree on one item; respect for nature and humanity (Iroegbu 24).

According to Schapowal (Iroegbu 24) whether we believe in the sayings of Confucius, the Discourses of Buddha, the Jewish Torah, the Christian Sermon on the mount, or the tenets of any other Religion or Psuedo Religion or not, the fact remains that; No one wants suffering. All humans desire happiness. All have equal rights. On this, the ethics of do good and avoid evil for oneself and also for the other, is founded. Human rights have been legislated by the world community in the 1947 General Declaration of Human Rights. Schapowal concludes that in identifying the meaning of human action, the intention is decisive.

On this platform, ethics for Pantaleon Iroegbu is otherwise called moral philosophy, is able to distinguish between good, right, wrong, helpful, harmful, wholesome, unwholesome. Iroegbu (25) holds that whether we accept a descriptive or prescriptive or legislative understanding of moral action, the intention we want to realize is fundamental in determining our projected endeavour. Accordingly, no intention to cause harm to an innocent person can be regarded as good. Nor can one who decided to eliminate his or her life because of some economic difficulties, be regarded as having performed a heroic deed. In ethics, good and bad, right or wrong are at stake. In ethics, we show that the knowledge acquired can be beneficial. In ethics, we acquire knowledge to behave properly. Iroegbu (25) concludes that that globalized ethics is enwisdomised ethics. Which he considers as being imbued with, filled with, and to be characterized by wisdom. Iroegbu sees enwisdomized ethics as the compendium of the totality of goodness. Hence ethics is for wisdom at its highest importance, so that our action can become correct, complete, and perfect in goal, content and consequence. The enwisdomisation of ethics makes our ethical actions achieve perfection.

According to Pantaleon Iroegbu (26) the history of human conduct has not arrived at this level of ethical praxis, that is, at enwisdomised ethics. But that must be our constant and ongoing endeavour. From wisdom to enwisdomisation is the overall goal of the truly moral man and woman, the ones who can assist others in the noble and compulsory task of achieving fullest being through fullest commitment to a completely fulfilled life. It is based on the foregoing that Iroegbu (27) thought that the 21st century can be known as the century of globalized ethics. Which implies that our thought, actions and general behaviour have close links, effects and inspiration on one another. None is alone again; in life, behaviour and specific activities: This has not wiped away individual action. It has however given it a global status. Ethics has on this score become global ethics. It is our ethics, in our (one) world-globe.

Iroegbu (27) goes further to argue that globalised ethics has therefore ushered in a globalised ethical imperative. This is the theory and practice that uphold the universality of moral acts. Ethics is no longer a mere individual affair. It is no longer based on national frontiers. In contemporary ethical praxis, all are concerned because all are involved, directly as actors and indirectly as affected. My action affects and to a good extent influences your action, etc. ethical human actions now have positive relational effects on one another. A chain of ethical action is at stake. This can and does reduce unethical life. Positively it encourages noble ethical behaviour.

Globalised ethics may not solve all human problems, but it must be open to the basic needs, aspirations and problems that confront the human person, all human persons in the world of our times. What does it have and what does it portend in future for the destiny of the universe and for human destiny implication as such? On this, a noble, respectful and reputed scholar, John Paul II has written:

Globalisation will be what people make it. No system is an end in itself. It must be reaffirmed that globalisation like any other system, must be at the service of the human person: it must serve solidarity and the common good. This means to say that while globalisation can do a lot of good, it must also be wary of counterbalancing the situation such that things, instead of getting better for the generality, get worse. The powers that steer the engine of this world affairs must think of the good of all especially of the least privileged of this world. Evils must be eradicated and goodness must be prompted. All must fight international evils keep all agape with resolve. Justice is an ongoing challenge and must be ensured for all and at all levels. (Iroegbu 28)

Iroegbu (28) sees the International terrorism as a case in point which all must fight, for all are victims. No one knows whom the next bomb will bring down, or whom the next-coming bullet will pierce through. All are however sure that terrorism is an evil to be avoided. All are convinced that peace is an imperative. Traditional ethics taught all of us with epistemological flavour: man know thyself. Contemporary globalised ethics teaches today: man behave yourself. It is not out of place to discuss the colossal effect of corona virus pandemic in the contemporary world.

Issues in Pantaleon Iroegbu's Thought on Globalized Ethics

Pantaleon's discourse on globalised ethics appears plausible and attractive but in a seemingly overridden with moral clumsiness and inconsistency. That is, despite the attraction of Iroegbu's thought, it is still faced with difficulties. Hence, the thrust of this segment is to present a critique of his thought on globalized ethics.

Iroegbu's thought on the universal nature of globalized ethics that is, one ethics for all that exist on the global appear highly plausible and likely valid. Christoph Stuckelberg (25) discusses the basic things that unite humanity as the golden rule of reciprocity which points to the fact of universal values which is the fact of global ethics. Meanwhile, Francois Gonzalez (9) presents the fact of shared values and ethics which has been the foundation of the proper functioning of the political, economic and social network of the society. He goes further to state that shared values and ethics brings about the well being and development of the potential of every world citizen. In view of the above, it could be affirmed that globalized ethics is universal in nature, it brings about shared values, ethics, well being and development of the universe.

One of the problems with Iroegbu's thought is the issue of human behaviour towards a global ethics which is to provide an ethical standard by which all other ethical standards might be measured. What is clear is that the belief in universal ethics is derived from the inclination that culturally defined systems are in some manner inadequate; the source of this inadequacy being essentially the lack of differentiation between thinking something is right or wrong and something actually being right or wrong. Ethical relativist, such as W.T. Stace in "Ethical Relativism" rightly points out two opposite beliefs in two opposite cultures means two versions of what is right. Rightness and wrongness, from this viewpoint, are assessments that come into being only after the facts of any given ethical dilemma have been filtered through a mind formed largely by culture. There can be no doubt that different cultures do indeed demonstrate different ethical systems and that this variety does in itself seem to suggest that norms are contingent upon cultural determinants. Stace counters this conclusion by calling

notice to the many different views societies and times have espoused regarding a multitude of issues in particular, the subject matter of the physical sciences and concluding: If the various different opinions which men have held about the shape of the earth do not prove that it has no real shape, neither do the various opinions which they have held about morality prove that there is no one true morality (Stace 209). In the same vein, Stuckelberger (25) holds that contextual, differentiated values are a reality as old as humanity. The context of different geographical conditions, ethnic identities, religious convictions, gender diversity, generational transformations, technological innovations, and forms of organization of communities lead to contextual values which can be in conflict with each other. Paul F. Buller et.al. (767) opines that there exist diversity in thought and action due to strong cultural differences but there is the need for multinational firms to increase their level of interdependence and mutual cooperation to enable them achieve greater goal. It seems obvious that both Iroegbu, Stace, Stuckerberger and Buller are of the view that the fact of globalized ethics does not negate the fact of diversity in ethical systems and behaviour.

In the final analysis, despite the clarity and pointedness of Stace's essay, it is essentially an exercise in avoiding that which it claims to seek. The proof is in the title itself rather than tackling the difficult problem of at least justifying if not actually proving the existence of a universal ethical system, Stace chooses rather to undermine ethical relativism. This smacks of the ineffective general mocking his enemy before examining his own troops. Indeed, when Stace does briefly examine universal ethics, there seems virtually a declaration of defeat. According to Stace (211) "It is idle to talk about a universal morality unless we can point to the source of its authority." This is followed shortly by the admission that there is no evidence for such a source, but that: "It is always possible that some theory, not yet examined, may provide a basis for a universal moral obligation (Waddington 4)." Stuckerberger (26) argues that global ethics is an inclusive approach to common binding values, guiding principles, personal attitudes and common action across cultures, religions, political and economic systems and ideologies. Accordingly, global ethics is grounded in the ethical recognition of inalienable human dignity, freedom of decision, personal and societal responsibility and justice. It acknowledges the interdependence of all human and non-human beings and extends the basic moral attitudes of care and compassion to the world. It identifies transboundary problems and contributes to their solution. In essence, global ethics could be universal in outlook and particular in its discourse and decisions.

The problem with a belief in a universal ethical system is that it represents one of the most treacherous of philosophical terrains., Once we have decided that such a standard exists, how do we know what belongs to it and what belongs only to a culturally relative measure? In other words, when a moral judgement is made, how can we be sure it is based upon an absolute right? The suggestion that ethical relativism leads to the dangerous undermining of all moral values is frighteningly far from the truth. On the contrary, ethical relativism, since it is by nature descriptive, is an essentially benign philosophy which does nevertheless maintain that right and wrong do exist. It is the neophyte of prescriptive universalism who represents the real threat demonstrating by the very existence of his belief a claim to particular knowledge of that standard and, by grace of his lofty position, feeling both willing and able to judge others (Waddington 11).

The word duty means an obligation to act in a specific way in a particular moment in a given action. It gives no room for an alternative action. Thus, a duty is an obligation of individual to satisfy a claim made upon him by some other individuals or the community in the name of the common good. When we perform our duty we do not only do our work, but also fulfil our moral obligation. There are two different ways in which a right may involve a duty. If one individual has a right, another must have a duty of satisfying a claim that is recognized by that right. Secondly, if an individual has a right, it is his duty to use that right for the common good of the community. How do we determine duty? For centuries, it has been a common practice for

people to make a statement of universal duties. William Lillie (63) refers to them as “common-sense statement of universal duties”. MacKenzie examines universal duties under the following headings: respect for life, respect for freedom, respect for character, respect for property, respect for social order, respect for truth and respect for progress. The problems of vagueness and conflict are likely to arise in some cases. There are problems in the case of universal prohibitions. For example does murder include killing under extreme provocation, killing in self-defence, the inflicting of capital punishment, killing in a war and killing of the lower animals? Does theft include the exploitation of labour, the evading of taxes by devices permitted by the law and gaining an unearned increment? Such are the problem in the stating of universal duties. There is also the problem of giving guidance in particular difficult cases.

One hundred and fifty years ago, Karl Marx gave a one-sentence summary of his theory of history. Marx argued that in the long run we never reject advances in the means by which we satisfy our material needs. Hence history is driven by the growth of productive forces. He would have been contemptuous of the suggestion that globalization is something foisted on the world by a conspiracy of corporate executives meeting in Switzerland, and he might have agreed with Thomas Friedman's (16) remark that the most basic truth about globalization is no one is in charge. For Marx this is a statement that epitomizes humanity in a state of alienation, living in a world in which, instead of ruling ourselves, we are ruled by our own creation, the global economy. Friedman on the other hand, all that needs to be said about Marx's alternative state control of the economy is that it does not work. According to Peter Singer, Marx also believed that a society's ethic is a reflection of the economic structure to which its technology has given rise. Thus a feudal economy in which serfs are tied to their lord's land gives you the ethic of feudal chivalry based on the loyalty of knights and vassals to their lord, and the obligations of the lord to protect them in time of war. A capitalist economy requires a mobile labour force able to meet the needs of the market, so it breaks the tie between lord and vassal, substituting an ethic in which the right to buy and sell labour is paramount. Our newly interdependent global society, with its remarkable possibilities for linking people around the planet, gives us the material basis for a new ethic (18). Marx would have thought that such an ethic would serve the interests of the ruling class, that is, the rich nations and the transnational corporations they have spawned. But perhaps our ethics is related to our technology in a looser, less deterministic way than Marx thought.

Ethics appears to have developed from the behaviour and feelings of social mammals. It became distinct from anything we can observe in our closest non-human relatives when we started using our reasoning abilities to justify our behaviour to other members of our group. If the group to which we must justify ourselves is the tribe, or the nation, then our morality is likely to be tribal, or nationalistic. If, however, the revolution in communications has created a global audience, then we might feel a need to justify our behaviour to the whole world. This change creates the material basis for a new ethic that will serve the interests of all those who live on this planet in a way that, despite much rhetoric, no previous ethic has ever done (Singer 18). If this appeal to our need for ethical justification appears to be based on too generous a view of human nature, there is another consideration of a very different kind that leads in the same direction. The great empires of the past, whether Persian, Roman, Chinese, or British, were, as long as their power lasted, able to keep their major cities safe from threatening barbarians on the frontiers of their far-flung realms. In the twenty-first century the greatest superpower in history was unable to keep the self-appointed warriors of a different world-view from attacking both its greatest city and its capital. The issue therefore is' that how well we come through the era of globalization (perhaps whether we come through it at all) will depend on how we respond ethically to the idea that we live in one world. For the rich nations not to take a global ethical viewpoint has long been seriously morally wrong. There can be no clearer illustration of the need for human beings to act globally than the issues raised by the impact of human activity on our atmosphere ... (Singer 98)

There is also an ethical issue about discounting the future. True, our investments may increase in value over time, and we will become richer, but the price we are prepared to pay to save human lives or endangered species, may go up just as much. These values are not consumer goods, like TVs or dishwashers, which drop in value in proportion to our earnings. They are things like health, something that the richer we get, the more we are willing to spend to preserve. An ethical, not an economic, justification would be needed for discounting, suffering and death, or the extinction of species, simply because these losses will not occur for years. No such justification has been offered. We put the interests of our fellow citizens far above those of citizens of other nations, whether the reason for doing so is to avoid damaging the economic interests of our nation at the cost of bringing negative challenges the people of other nations. While we do all these things, most of us unquestioningly support declarations proclaiming that all humans have certain rights, and that all human life is of equal worth. We condemn those who say the life of a person of a different race or nationality is of less account than the life of a person of our own race or nation. Can we reconcile these attitudes? If those “at home” to whom we might give charity are already able to provide for their basic needs, and seem poor only relative to our own high standard of living, is the fact that they are our compatriots sufficient to give them priority over others with greater needs? Asking these questions leads us to consider to what extent we really can, or should, make “one world” a moral standard that transcends the nation-state (Singer 152).

The popular view that we may, or even should, favour those 'of our own kind' conceals a deep disagreement about who 'our own kind' are. A century ago Henry Sidgwick described the moral outlook of his Victorian England as follows:

We should all agree that each of us is bound to show kindness to his parents and spouse and children, and to other kinsmen in a less degree: and to those who have rendered services to him, and any others whom he may have admitted to his intimacy and called friends: and to neighbours and to fellow-countrymen more than others: and perhaps we may say to those of our own race more than to black or yellow men, and generally to human beings in proportion to their affinity to ourselves” (Sidgwick 246).

There are many who think it self-evident that we have special obligations to those nearer to us, including our children, our spouses, lovers and friends, and our compatriots. Reflecting on what Sidgwick said about preference for one's own kind should subvert the belief that this kind of self-evidence is a sufficient ground for accepting a view as right. What is self-evident to some is not at all self-evident to others. Instead, we need another test of whether we have special obligations to those closer to us, such as our compatriots.

How can we decide whether we have special obligations to “our own kind,” and if so, who is “our own kind” in the relevant sense? According to Singer (51), there is some fundamental sense in which neither race nor nation determines the value of a human being's life and experiences. He argues that “this ideal rests on the element of impartiality that underlies the nature of the moral enterprise”, as its most significant thinkers have come to understand it. Immanuel Kant argued that for “judgments to count as moral judgments they must be universalizable, that is, the speaker must be prepared to prescribe that they be carried out in all real and hypothetical situations, not only those in which she benefits from them but also those in which she is among those who lose.”

Feminist philosophers, in particular, tend to stress the importance of personal relationships, which they accuse male moral philosophers of neglecting. Nel Noddings in his book titled '*Caring*' limits our obligation to care to those with whom we can be in some kind of relationship. Hence, she states, we are “not obliged to care for starving children in Africa (Noddings 85).” Those who favour an impartial ethic have responded to these objections by denying that they

are required to hold that we should be impartial in every aspect of our lives. A sound morality requires that nothing human should be regarded by us as indifferent; but it is impossible we should not feel the strongest interest for those persons whom we know most intimately, and whose welfare and sympathies are united to our own. True wisdom will recommend to us individual attachments; for with them our minds are more thoroughly maintained in activity and life than they can be under the privation of them, and it is better that man should be a living being, than a stock or a stone. True virtue will sanction this recommendation; since it is the object of virtue to produce happiness; and since the man who live in the midst of domestic relations will have many opportunities of conferring pleasure, minute in the detail, yet not trivial in the amount, without interfering with the purposes of general benevolence (Singer 161).

It is quite clear from the foregoing that the drive for happiness is inherent in human nature and this quest continues insatiably as long as one is alive. Moral philosophers have reached the conclusion that the only way one can remain in the state of happiness is by living the “examined life”. This is precisely the task of ethics through which one gains mastery over one's emotion and uncontrolled desires. Man risks bringing about his or her own self-annihilation if he or she continues to allow ruthless and selfish passions to guide and control his or her behaviour. Another possible origin expressed in a pithy idiom is: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Besides, it is fine rhetorical value, “Do unto others ... only works if the individual is moral to begin with; and how can the individual be moral to begin with if morality stems from the statement, “Do unto others...” Clearly a sense of right and wrong must already be at work when we ask the question, and so the question itself serves only as a guide and not a source of morality. The final possible source of universal ethics that would be examined is the law. Few people would disagree that the law is an ass. Unfortunately, it is the laws which demonstrates our ethical system and from which ethical judgments practiced from day to day, are derived. It is, nevertheless, a fallacy to suggest that it is the origin of universal ethics. We might more accurately say that it is the book of ethics and so the source of ethics in that respect, but not the author of those ethics.

Conclusion

From the discourse above, it can be inferred that Iroegbu's globalized ethics does appear feasible. It seems obvious that there is no universal standard of morality or ethics that the whole world must follow. On the issues of a universal set of human rights; the Declaration of human Rights, drafted by the United Nations, is merely a product of a majority vote of the United Nation. It is noted that the dissenters and those who violate these Rights, not a mere rarity, but a significant number of nations around the world, clearly prove that not all cultures value these rights. Only the countries that are members of the United Nations agree that these are universal, which does not actually empirically prove them universal.

The concepts of evolution negate a morality that is biologically universal. Murder is a prime example. Though the negation claims to establish that there are undeniable human rights that all humans are aware of, how can it be proven empirically when humans still kill each other, no matter their ideology? Killing is even built into laws of nations of all varieties. It is only absolute in some societies. Mantises or mantes (large insects) are not moral beings. They do not use reason because they do not have the evolutionary brain function to put the pen to paper, much less think about the concepts of morality and rationalize them. Because human have this capacity, we have the infinite potential to individually determine moral standards. This is what makes moral standards different among communities. The sub-Saharan African example serves as a stark reminder that cultures develop different moralities and ethics, and to superimpose one another causes integral damage to a society. Though it might be said that these societies did have a strong tribal sense, that moral standards was shattered in the wake of colonialism, and once peaceful tribes began to war furiously. We should seek in the most natural, harmonious and compatible way the possible ideal of authentic self.

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